

A Karamaikos Companion

Agathokles

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Chapter 1

History of Karameikos

This chapter covers the history of Traladara and Karameikos in the last two millennia, that is from the Beastman invasion to the present time of the Gazetteer.

1.1 The Beastman Invasion

Before BC 1000, the Traldar people, a nation of southern Neathar descent led by a small Nithian aristocracy, had settled in the lands now known as Traladara, which had previously been the northern frontier of the Taymor kingdoms. A few Taymor survivors had been absorbed into the Traldar colonies.

However, due to unfavorable climatic conditions, the colonization attempt had mostly failed. The Nithian aristocracy had been absorbed into the larger Neathar population, leaving traces of its presence in the culture of the few surviving villages.

The Hutaakans, jackal-like humanoids of Nithian culture, had taken control of the Traldar, providing training in agriculture, bronze working and other vital crafts in return for labor and goods, slowly allowing the Traldar to build a network of small city-states.

BC 1050 Nithian wizards create the Gnolls. [GAZ10]

BC 1000 Beastman invasion (BC 1000-992): the Gnolls escape Nithia and invade the Traldar lands, conquering the western half of modern Karameikos up to the Volaga and most of modern Darokin. [GAZ1, HW]

Hutaakans retreat to the Valley of Hutaaka. [B10, GAZ1, HW]

King Milen leads a migration towards Davania rather than fighting the Gnolls. [HW, HW3]

Part of the Traldar population is moved to the Hollow World by the Immortals. [HW]

Some western Traldar clans flee west through the Five Shires and the lands of the Atruaghin Clans, and settle in Sind, where they become known as the Dom.

King Halav of Lavv, Queen Petra of Krakatos and the Hutaakan-trained wizard Zirchev guide a coalition of eastern Traldar city-states in the war against the Gnolls. [GAZ1]

Elsewhere, King Blystar III of Rockhome defeats the Goblinoids of the Broken Lands. [GAZ10]

Other Orcish tribes found the Kingdom of Othrong in the territory of the modern Five Shires. [GAZ8]

BC 992 Battle of Volaga River: Halav defeats the Beastman king Flahgr. He dies in the battle, but is raised by Queen Petra. [GAZ1, WotI]

1.2 The Dark Ages

After the rout of the Gnollish horde, the Traldar lands are left almost devoid of population, and revert quickly to wildernesses. A number of Antalian tribes, related to the Yevo of western Brun and the Vatski and Viaskoda of Norwold, take part in the battles for control of the Hin lands, but are defeated by Loktal

Ironshield. These Vandars move into lightly populated lands between the rivers Achelos and Volaga and settle there, speeding the transformation of the Traldar people into the Traladarans.

The barony of Halag and the kingdom of Krakatos are the major human nations in the area, though Marilenev, Halavos and other city-states rise to power at the end of the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages end with the emergence of a unified Kingdom of Traladara under King Ithron.

BC 950 The last Gnolls are driven away from the Traldar lands, but the Traldar population has dropped to 20% of the pre-war level. [GAZ1]

BC 938 Fall of the Kingdom of Hindon at the hands of the Orcs. [GAZ8]

The Vandar tribes migrate from central Darokin to the Five Shires.

BC 933 The Vandars, northern raiders that had taken part in the Hindon wars, invade the western Traldar lands. Due to the massive damages wrought by the Gnolls in that area, they find no opposition. More Vandar tribes will enter the Traldar lands in the following twenty years.

BC 930 Petra becomes Immortal under the patronage of Khoronus.

BC 910 Halav becomes Immortal under the patronage of Odin. [WotI]

BC 900 First appearance of the Witches of Dymrak, a group of nine Cronos of Chaos.

BC 875 Zirchev creates the refuge-land of Haven as part of his path to Immortality. [B3, B1-9, GAZ1]

He also trains an apprentice, the Seer of Traldar, to whom he entrusts the Eyes of Traldar.

BC 870 Zirchev becomes Immortal under the patronage of Ilsundal. [WotI]

BC 800 The Traldar population rises, and the Traldar mix with the now sedentary Vandars. Elsewhere, Mealiden Starwatcher leads the Sylvan Elves to the steppes between Nithia and the Streel river, founding the Kingdom of Alfheim and beginning the creation of Canolbarth. [GAZ5]

Halag is founded around this time by a Vandar tribe.

BC 612 Nob Nar, a Hin adventurer, kills the Vandar baron Ulstagh of Halag. [GAZ8]

BC 600 The Dom people return to Traladara after a long exile, but no longer fit with the Traladaran culture.

BC 580 Reign of Tahrek the Radiant, lord of Krakatos and owner of the Crown of the Sun. Under Tahrek, Krakatos and Lavv rise to a new prosperity. Tahrek's descendants will become the Torenescu clan. [DMSK]

BC 500 The fusion of Vandars and Traldars has brought to a new people, the Traladarans. [GAZ1, HW]

Elsewhere, the Empire of Nithia is destroyed by the Immortals. [GAZ2, HW]

BC 492 Goblinoid hordes defeated by the Dwarven armies in the Battle of Sardal Pass. Death of Queen Ubdala. [GAZ6]

BC 491 Goblinoid hordes fleeing the Sardal Pass take refuge in the Cruth Mountains. [GAZ10]

BC 490 Lavv e Krakatos are destroyed by the hordes of the Hobgoblin king Leptar. The goblinoids themselves are decimated by the plague spread by Leptar to weaken the Traladaran cities.

BC 488 Traladaran clans chase back the hordes of Leptar and found the town of Halavos near the ruins of Lavv.

BC 480 The Goblinoid hordes are pushed back into the mountains and in the Dymrak woods.

BC 470 The Kerendas tribe conquers the southern Doulakki city-states.

BC 415 Hobgoblin king Leptar becomes Immortal under the patronage of Orcus.

BC 308 Trinkla, a young magician, steals the Black Opal Eye from the Isle of Lost Dream while the Seer of Traldar is absent. She flees to western Traladara and becomes known as the Black Seer.

BC 276 The Black Seer dies, and the Black Opal Eye is entombed with her.

BC 195-147 Traladaran prince (*Ban*) Ithron unifies the Traladaran clans and takes the title of King of Traladara. [KKoA]

BC 162-158 The Doulakki City-State of Salonikos is attacked by King Alear of Alfheim. The siege of Salonikos is broken by the intervention of a dwarven volunteer corps.

BC 100 Gnomes from the Hardanger Range, led by the Hilltopper clan, found the city of Highforge. [GAZ1, KKoA]

BC 7 The Thyatian wizard Elyas receives the Fire Opal Eye and becomes the next Seer of Traldar.

BC 4 Elyas recovers the Black Opal Eye from the tomb of Trinkla the Black Seer.

1.3 The Rebirth of Traladara

By the end of the millennium, the short-lived unification of Traladara, the arrival of friendly demi-human clans, the defeat of the Orcs in the west and the formation of the Thyatian Empire in the east help Traladara emerge from the Dark Ages. New trade centers rise to greatness along the major rivers. Traladara

is soon divided into a number of small principalities called Banates.

AC 1 Traladara's population raises, especially in the coastal and riverside areas. Marilenev is the major trade center. Halavos, Lugsid, Zadreth and other towns and villages are found along the rivers Volaga and Shutturga. The elven Callarii clan from Alfheim settles in the Radlebb woods. [GAZ1]

AC 3 Elyas, the Seer of Traldar, dies in a struggle with the Witches of Dymrak. The Black Opal Eye is lost.

AC 300 A dwarven clan, the Stronghollow, settles in Highforge. [B7]

AC 301-356 Bogdan Ivanovich, Ban of Marilenev, claims the title of King of Traladara. He manages to bring under his heel several clans, but the kingdom dissolves at Ivanovich's death. [KKoA]

AC 400 Thyatian missionary clerics translated the Song of Halav and set it in writing. [GAZ1]

This leads to the formation of an organized Church of Traladara. The Church assumes slightly different forms in the three main regions (Halag, Marilenev and the north-east). The church is known as the Church of Traladara only in Marilenev. Elsewhere, it is known as the Church of Halav.

AC 410 Minrothaddan merchants bring lycanthropy and vampirism to Traladara. [PC4, GAZ1, GAZ9]

At the same time, the descendants of the Taymoran Nosferatu resurface.

1.4 The Traladaran Wars

As the Banates assume a more stable form, Traladara falls under the greedy eyes of the Kings of Darokin, leading to a century of conflicts known as the four Traladaran Wars. While this is a time of

strife, it also leads to the modernization of the Traladaran Banates, thanks to the increasing contacts with both Darokin and Thyatis. The Traladaran League emerges as an attempt to form a unified Traladaran nation.

AC 412 Corwyn VIII of Darokin reduces the northern Traladaran clans, including those of Lugsid and Vaion, to vassal status. He is killed by assassins sent by the coastal clans with ties with the city-states of New Alphatia and Harbortown. His heir, Corwyn IX, declares war on the lords of Marilenev, Vidrin and Halavos.

The lords of Koriszegy, Salonikos, Dmitrov, Lumm, Gorenenov and Volaga ally with Marilenev, Vidrin and Halavos to counter the Darokinian egemony.

AC 415 The King of Darokin, Corwyn IX, dies in battle against the Traladaran League. His son, Corwyn X, continues the war effort. Harbortown and New Alphatia enter the war on the League's side.

AC 417 The First Traladaran War ends with the Peace of Marilenev. Darokin relinquishes all claims on Northern Traladara.

Traladaran nobles claim titles styled on the Thyatian and Darokinian model, replacing the old Ban and Zhupa titles. Marilenev, Salonikos and Halavos claim ducal rank, while the other nobles of the Traladaran League take the title of Count or Baron. The old Traladaran titles remain in use in western Traladara.

The Monastery on the Hill is founded by the Count of Vaion and dedicated to Halav.

AC 436 The Alasiyan warlord Sabir ibn Ibrahim conquers Salonikos, renaming the city Al-Zalenikah. He founds a state, the Imarat al Zalenikah, that will survive for two generations, and will be a centre of learning, especially in astronomy and geometry.

AC 443-445 The Silver Purge is unleashed against lycanthropes along the coasts of the Sea of Dread. New Alphatia is almost destroyed in a battle between

lycanthropes, humans and elves. Many lycanthropes survive deep in the woods of Traladara.

AC 450 Religious conflicts within the Church of Traladara and political manipulation by the Harbortown envoys leads to the Second Traladaran War, which pits Halag against Marilenev and Halavos against Vaion. The Hojah, ruling clan of Halag, and several of their allies are forced to flee to the eastern coast of the Gulf of Hule. Seven city-states (Kladanovich, Slagovich, Hojah, Zvornik, Nova Svoga, Zagora and Boyarski) are founded there. [RS]

Vaion is home to another heresy, which is uprooted within twenty years by priests from Halavos and Selenica, but survives in the isolated Monastery on the Hill.

AC 468 Duke Demara of Halavos unifies several of the northern clans.

AC 474 Demara is acknowledged as King of Traladara by the Barons of Volaga and Lugsid and the Count of Vaion. The coastal clans, Marilenev, Dmitrov, Vidrin, and Sulescu, oppose this move, but they obtain only limited support from Harbortown. In the following years, Demara manages to obtain the submission of the ruling clans of Gorenenov, Lumm and Koriszegy. [KKoA]

AC 488 King Demara marries the daughter of King Mithras V of Darokin and launches the Third Traladaran War. A combined force of Demara's and Mithras' troops conquer Al-Zalenikah, which is renamed Selenica and added as a duchy to the Kingdom of Darokin. Elsewhere, Hadric Corser found the city of Minrothad over the ruins of New Alphatia. [GAZ9]

AC 490 Death of King Demara. Mithras V of Darokin claims the regency of Traladara for his infant grandson Mithras Demarovich. The lords of Lumm, Volaga and Koriszegy rebel against the Darokinian king and form a new Traladaran League with the coastal clans. Mithras V sends an army to quell the rebellion.

AC 493 Mithras' army is defeated by the forces of the Traladaran lords in the Fourth Traladaran War. The Traladaran League is confirmed as a permanent institution, led by the Diet of Marilenev, an assembly of the Traladaran nobles.

1.5 The End of the Darokinian Hegemony

The Elfwar and the passage of the Darokinian crown to the Ansimont line mark the end of the hegemonic ambitions of Darokin on Traladara. However, the growing instability of the northern neighbour leads the Traladaran principalities to turn on each other, dissolving the Traladaran League.

AC 500 Lycanthropy and vampirism return in the more isolated regions of Traladara. [PC4]

Elsewhere, the Red Orc chief, Sitting Drool, becomes supreme chief of the Broken Lands hordes, leading to a twenty years-long war with the Kingdom of Darokin, the Kingdom of Alhambra and the Kingdom of Braejr. [GAZ10]

The Empire of Thyatis, meanwhile, is locked in a pitched war against Alpathia in the Alasiyan colonies. [GAZ2]

AC 501 Mithras V of Darokin blames "elven treachery" for his defeat in Traladara, bringing on the Elfwar right when Corunglain is threatened by Sitting Drool's hordes.

AC 503 Mithras V and his grandson Mithras Demaravich are killed by the elves of Alfheim. The Darokinian nobles name Corwyn Ansimont as the new King.

AC 504 Corwyn XIII puts an end to the Elfwar.

AC 511 The Diet of Marilenev elects the wizard Perrantin as Warlord of the Traladaran League, giving him power to lead an army to help the Flaems of the Highlands in case of a dragon invasion, which

never comes. The northern warrior Solveig White-Gold and Perrantin uncover the Shield of Halav, and present it to the Church of Traladara, helping its consolidation. They found the Temple of the Shield and the village of Zadreth [HtH]

AC 523 Sitting Drool conquers and sacks Corunglain.

AC 525 Corunglain is freed from the orcish hordes, but becomes an independent city-state.

AC 527 Sitting Drool is killed by adventurers.

AC 534 Charles III, an incompetent ruler, is the new King of Darokin. Due to a mix of incompetence and adverse circumstances causes the next three kings to be reduced to mere figureheads, as the nobles become more and more independent and the merchant houses become the real power in Darokin city. Selenica and Athenos claim their own independence as the Principality of Selenica and the Duchy of Athenos.

AC 570 The Hins of the Five Shires found colonies in the Ierendi achipelago. [GAZ4]

AC 585 Thyatis occupies the archipelago of Ierendi to use the islands as penal colonies for the Hattian rebels. [GAZ4]

AC 596 The Traladaran nosferatu Aden marries Emilia Ansimont, sister and heir to the King of Darokin, and sets in motion a plan to restore royal power in Darokin. In the following years, he manages to regain the power lost by the inept Ansimont kings, and takes the throne with the name of Aden III.

AC 600 The Traladaran League is finally dissolved due to dissension between the clans and the disappearance of the Darokin threat. In Vaion, the local lord, a descendant of Demara's sister, claims the title of King of Vaion, which is mostly ignored by the

other nobles. The Ban of Halag assumes the title of Duke, following most other Traladaran nobles.

In Ierendi, former Hattian rebel, pirate, and convict Mad Creeg leads a successful rebellion against the Empire of Thyatis. [GAZ4]

AC 612 The failure of the Traladaran League leaves the Duchy of Marilenev deprived of much of its political power. The trade guilds, led by the Radu family, oust Duke Alexandr Marilenev and replace the ducal government with an oligarchic republic.

AC 657 The undead nature of Aden III is revealed by spies from the House of Corun, and the nosferatu king is forced to flee. Without Aden's energetic rule, the Kingdom of Darokin dissolves.

AC 658 The lords of House Corun claim the title of Duke of Corunglain. In the following years, the northern and western regions of Darokin follow suit, claiming independence.

1.6 The Vampire Wars

Increasing Entropic cult activities build over the rivalries among the clans and the rise of religious fanaticism. Several clans are accused of harboring Entropic cultists or vampires, and another century of war sweeps away much of the progresses brought on by the Traladaran League.

AC 675 The vampire-king psychosis and the political chaos of Darokin reach Traladara as well. A number of "holy wars", more or less justified, are fought between the Traladaran nobles during the course of the following fifty years, instigated by Orcus in the form of a devil swine.

AC 681 The town council of Marilenev finances the construction of the city walls.

AC 691 Foundation of the Minrothad Guilds. [GAZ9]

AC 700 Zemiros Sulescu becomes a Nosferatu. [GAZ1]

By this time, the Monastery on the Hill is home to an obscure Entropic order devoted to Orcus, Leptar and other Fiends.

AC 720 Count Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlany, lord of Lumm and Gorenenov, becomes the nosferatu known as the Black Count of the Moor. The clashes between Traladaran lords become more violent, and Gorenenov, Lumm, Vaion, Volaga and Halavos are destroyed in the following decade.

AC 723 The Kingdom of Darokin is formally dissolved with the death of the last king, Santhral. A dozen of duchies, baronies, and city-states war over the former territory of Darokin.

AC 725 Queen Elendorath of Vaion is defeated and killed by the Prince of Selenica. Her goblinoid armies disperse in the mountains. The Monastery on the Hill is razed, but a few priests survive.

AC 728 Morphail, defeated by an alliance including Marilenev, Vidrin and Selenica, flees to Glantri with his people. [GAZ3]

AC 750 Favorable policies by the town council of Marilenev and the threat of war cause a large part of the rural population of Marilenev to settle within the walls of the city-state.

AC 783 Castle Koriszegy is struck by a curse that destroys the entire clan, except for the Count, who becomes a mad vampire. The territory around the castle quickly becomes a wilderness, as the local Traladarans flee to Halag. [KKoA]

1.7 The Modern Age

The IX century is comparatively quiet. Only the City-State of Marilenev, the Duchy of Halag, and the Principality of Selenica survive mostly unscathed.

However, the noble houses of Selenica are severely reduced in power, and the merchant houses take control of the city. North-eastern Traladara suffered the largest damage, and no major towns survive.

AC 802 Year of Infamy in the Highlands. [GAZ3]
Some Dwarven survivors settle in Marilenev.

AC 810 Blynos Kivinivich, a Traladaran priest, writes “My journey: story of a country preacher”, a collection of parables. [HtH]

AC 813 The mythical Sword of Halav is last seen in the hands of the Duke of Halag, Uidar the Quick. [DMSK]

AC 829 Foundation of the Republic of the Highlands. [GAZ3]

AC 830 Blynos Kivinivich, now an elderly priest, writes two more autobiographical tomes in the course of the next five years. [HtH]

AC 831 Foundation of the Emirates of Ylaruam. [GAZ2]

AC 858 Light of Rad: the Republic of Glantri becomes the Principalities of Glantri. [GAZ3]

1.8 The Thyatian Conquest and the Birth of Karameikos

The dissolution of Darokin leads the Emperors of Thyatis to plan the conquest of Traladara and eastern Darokin. However, the wars with Alphatia absorbed most resources, and the imperial plan never went beyond the occupation of Marilenev and the other major settlements of Traladara.

AC 900 The Emperor of Thyatis, Gabrionius IV, sends his legions in Traladara, and installs a governor in Marilenev, which is renamed Specularum. Garrisons are sent to the borderlands, with the goal of setting up spearheads for a campaign against the Darokinian successor states. [DotE, GAZ1, KKoA]

Traladara is incorporated in the Empire as an Imperial Province.

Thyatian troops invade Lugsid and raze it. A plague in Zadreth force the population to abandon the village and the nearby Temple of the Shield. The survivors settle on the lakeside villages and in Fogor. [HtH]

As a reaction, Selenica establishes closer ties with Darokin.

AC 927 Foundation of the Republic of Darokin. [GAZ11]

AC 960 The Spike Assault brings to the death of Gabrionius V and the rise of Thincol Torion. [DotE]

AC 970 Stefan Karameikos III trades the Duchy of Machetos to Emperor Thincol for the Grand Duchy of Traladara and independence. [DotE, GAZ1]

AC 971 The Radu, Torenescu and Marilenev clans rise against the new government, but fail. The clan Marilenev is almost destroyed. [GAZ1]

AC 972-978 Several lesser Thyatian nobles arrive in Karameikos, offering their fealty to the Duke, and receiving fiefs and titles. [GAZ1]

Threshold, Kelvin and Vorloi are founded on the ruins of Lugsid, Halavos and Vidrin, while Ludwig von Hendricks takes control of Halag, renaming it Fort Doom, and builds the Duumtor on the hill that overlooks the city. [B1-9, GAZ1]

AC 979 Duke Stefan marries Olivia Prothemian. [GAZ1]

AC 980 Birth of Adriana Karameikos. [GAZ1]

AC 982 Birth of Justin Karameikos. [GAZ1]

AC 986 Birth of Valen Karameikos. [GAZ1]

AC 989 Many Traladarans from Halag flee to the Five Shires. Baron Ludwig von Hendriks sends his troops in the Shires, but the Black Eagle is rebuffed by Hin militia. [GAZ8]

AC 990-991 Ludwig von Hendriks sends two military expeditions against the Hin, but fails in both attempts. [GAZ8]

AC 991 The wizard Krollan, a counsellor of Duke Stefan, is murdered. [DMSG]

AC 992 Duke Stefan orders Baron Von Hendricks to put an end to his war with the Five Shires. [GAZ8]

AC 993 Elwyn the Ardent founds a temple devoted to the Dark Triad in the hills north-east of Kelvin.

AC 996 Baron Desmond Kelvin I dies in a duel with the Ylari ambassador, Mustapha ibn Ibrahim. His son, Desmond II, is confirmed Baron of Kelvin.[GAZ1, GAZ2]

Chapter 2

Religions of Karameikos

This chapter expands the description of the religions and cults present in Karameikos. While the Church of Karameikos and the Church of Traladara together attract circa 95% of the human population of Karameikos, there remains a 5% of the population that either follow foreign cults (e.g., churches from Thyatis, Darokin or the Minrothad Guilds) or even darker, entropic cults.

2.1 The Church of Traladara

Circa 70% of the human population of Karameikos belongs to the Church of Traladara, the major native religion. While its belief date back to the Traldar Age of Heroes, the church itself has been around for circa six centuries. It has suffered several major setbacks with the Silver Purge, the holy wars, and finally the Marilenev rebellion, which all but destroyed a generation of church leaders.

2.1.1 Pantheon

The Church of Traladara worships primarily the three Great Heroes, Halav, Petra and Zirchev. None of the three is given precedence over the other, as the church stresses the importance of cooperation and strength found in unity.

Several other Immortals are acknowledged as powerful, but remote, forces. These are mostly the Immortals worshipped by the ancient Traldar – Ixion, Khoronus, Djaea, Tyche, Asterius, and so on. However, these Immortals are not generally worshipped

and only theology specialists are aware of their existence, names, and rituals. Most clerics just know that the Tarsian Twelve are powerful Immortals that were once the patron of the Traldar people, but left that role to Halav, Petra and Zirchev. Modern Traladaran cleric associate the Tarsian Twelve with natural phenomena that are beyond the control of humans – such as the sun, earth, and weather.

Finally, several lesser heroes are also acknowledged, and local cultural activities are held to honor them. These may be Immortals, such as Chardastes, or simply long-gone mortal heroes or kings, such as Tarhek the Radiant or Prince Ithron.

The church activities and rituals focus on the historical events of the Song of Halav, with festivals where the battles against the Beastmen are re-enacted, and, on a smaller scale, on the spiritual needs of the worshippers. Traladaran priests are generally down to earth, and so are their teachings – generally, they are oriented toward tolerance, goodwill, respect of fellow humans and similar virtues. The concept of sin is not clearly distinguished from that of crime – in general, the Traladaran priests did act as judges in the pre-Thyatian clan system, and the modern theology closely reflects that approach, even though modern priests do not have judiciary powers.

2.1.2 History

The Church of Traladara was formed around 400 AC in the town of Marilenev, as a result of the closer interactions between the local Traladaran population

and clerics from Thyatis, Harbortown and New Al-
phatia.

The original Traladaran cult had been much more informal, with clerics generally trained in a master-apprentice system within each major clan. Since the Traladaran culture was orally transmitted, the priests served primarily as bards, advisors and healers to the Traladaran nobles, in many ways like the modern *godi* in the Northern Reaches. Halav was the most popular patron, though Petra was also well liked by the townsfolk, and Zirchev had some following in the more remote communities.

When the Thyatian missionaries started collecting the Song of Halav, and taught the Traladaran how to write, they set the basis for the unification of the religious thought across all of Traladara. Three main ways of thought emerged, based in the towns of Svoga (near Halag), Marilenev and Selenica.

The Selenican church was heavily influenced by its ties with the Darokin monarchy, and, while named Church of Halav, did actually retain much of the older Traldar pantheon, including Ixion, Khoronus and especially Asterius. It quickly spread across the mountains to the northern Traladaran clans in Lugsid (modern Threshold) and Vaion (near the site of modern Penhaligon, but on the northern bank of the Shut-turga). Its coat of arms displayed *per pale: azure, the moon; or, Halav proper*.

The Marilenev church was more similar to the modern Church of Traladara, and was the first to bear that name. It was more influenced by Thyatian missionaries, and it was the first to adopt the brown robe as a formal clerical vestment. Its coat of arms displayed *natural, a priest argent*.

The Svogan church had more influences from the neighbouring Five Shires, as well as from Harbortown – the real power behind the throne in western Traladara at that time. This church focused its worship on Halav alone, leaving only a lesser role to Petra and Zirchev. It was also more militant, and in the decades between 400 and 450 AC, it raised a military order, the Knights of Halav. Its coat of arms displayed *natural, a sword or armed argent*.

The three churches had slightly different beliefs and philosophies, and controlled territories allied with different powers. Thus, they did not last long –

a cruel civil war erupted, and the Svogan Church of Halav was all but destroyed, while the Selenican church survived beyond the mountains under the Alasiyan emirs. The modern Church of Halav in the Gulf of Hule and the Church of Olgar in Hule are direct descendants of the original Svogan Church of Halav, brought to the Savage Coast by exiled priests from the Halag region.

The Church of Traladara managed to survive through a number of other crises, including the Vampire Wars and the Marilenev Rebellion. The rebellion brought the death of many church officials who had sided with the Marilenev against young Duke Stefan, leaving the church with few experienced leaders. Only now is the church recovering, under the leadership of Patriarch Aleksyev Nikelnevich.

2.1.3 Organization

The church is led by the Patriarch of Marilenev, Aleksyev Nikelnevich (C11), a capable, middle-aged warrior priest. Unfortunately, there are few other experienced clerics, as the old generation priests are getting too old, and the best members of the generation of the 940 died in the conquest and rebellion. Moreover, Sergyev's schisma of 995 brought away more priests – Sergyev himself was the second highest ranking church official, the Patriarch of Krakatos.

A crop of younger priests is being named to important positions, such as the freshly-named Bishop of Kelvin, Balahov, and the Patriarchs of Vaion (Penhaligon) and Vidrin (Vorloi). However, the Patriarch of Luln (actually, of Halag in exile), Arkadi, has recently died of old age, and the Patriarch is looking for a suitable replacement.

Historically, the Church was organized into twelve Patriarchates (Marilenev, Vidrin, Dmitrov, Krakatos, Halavos, Vaion, Lugsid, Lumm, Halag, Ourosco, Koriszegy, and Svoga), four from each of the three original branches of the church. In time, the see of the Patriarchs of Krakatos moved to Lazkow, the Patriarchates of Halag and Svoga were merged into a single see, and the Patriarchate of Halavos moved first to Volaga and in modern times to Kelvin. During the Vampire Wars, the Patriarchates of Vaion, Lumm, Koriszegy, and Lugsid

were all but destroyed, and have since remained vacant, or assigned as honorary titles to high-ranking priests in Specularum. Only the Patriarchate of Vaion was reestablished about twenty years ago, in Penhaligon. There have been talks of re-establishing the Patriarchate of Lugsid in Threshold, but the loss of the Shield of Halav, the famed relic traditionally protected by the Patriarch of Lugsid, as well as the strong presence of the Church of Karameikos in Threshold still render this project infeasible. The current status of each Patriarchate is reported in Table 2.1.

Below the Patriarchs, the traditional organization only had Priests and Novices. In modern times, Bishops have been introduced, modeled on the Church of Thyatis, to take responsibility for populated regions that are not part of one of the historical Patriarchates, such as Rugalov. Bishops also replace Patriarchs in some recently re-established sees, such as Kelvin and, until a few years ago, Penhaligon, or help the Patriarchs of sees that have grown beyond the managing of a single person, such as in Specularum.

2.2 The Church of Karameikos

The Church of Karameikos is a modern cult with roots in Thyatian theology and philosophy. It is the religion followed by the vast majority of Thyatian-blooded Karameikans, as well as by many Karameikans of mixed blood, and some Traladarans.

It is mainly a Lawful religion, even though its pantheon includes Immortals of all alignments. It basically teaches that the fate of each soul in the afterlife is based on its balance of sins. The Church provides rituals through which worshippers may free their souls from sins. As such, the beliefs of the Church of Karameikos tend to take the form of very detailed precepts of life, with the associated penances for each violation.

In this sense, the Church is much more dogmatic than its Thyatian ancestor – which simply mediates between Immortals and mortals, generally letting every Immortals’ priesthood set its own standard and preach its own doctrine, within a general framework.

This policy was chosen by the founders to ensure a greater cohesion of the new Church, and avoid the periodic crises that affected the Church of Thyatis.

The Church of Karameikos is also bent on proselytizing. Missionary efforts have been mostly directed towards the Traladaran natives, though recently clerics are being sent to the Five Shires as well – though, once more, with no success to report.

2.2.1 Pantheon

The major Immortal patrons recognized by the Church of Karameikos are Asterius, Pax Bellanica (Tarastia), Vanya, Valerias, Ilsundal, and Kagyar.

Ilsundal and Kagyar were chosen by the founders to appeal to the demi-human inhabitants of the Grand Duchy, though with very limited success, as the demi-humans have a very different view of religion, more related to personal or family worship than to public, ritualistic worship.

Vanya, Valerias and Tarastia were chosen as the major Thyatian Immortals – the presence of these Immortals guarantees that the Thyatians who come to Karameikos see the Church as simply a national variant of the Church of Thyatis. The philosophy of the church actually does not agree much with the teachings of Valerias, but the Girder-On of Weapons is so popular that the new Church could not expect much following, had it not included her.

Asterius is the personal patron of Patriarch Olliver Jowett, the leader and founder of the Church. This Immortal is worshipped in his aspect as the patron of trade and merchants.

2.2.2 History

The Church of Karameikos is a recent creation. Up to thirty years ago, its founders were priests of the Church of Thyatis. They were called by Duke Stefan Karameikos to cater to the spiritual needs of the Thyatian settlers who were colonizing Traladara.

Under the leadership of Patriarch Olliver Jowett, these priests decided to leave the Church of Thyatis and found a new church. There were several reasons for leaving the Church – political ones, as Duke Stefan wanted the Church to work towards the full

Table 2.1: Patriarchates of the Church of Traladara

Patriarchate	Holder	Vampire Wars age see	Current see
Marilenev	Aleksyev Nikelnevich	Marilenev	Specularum
Krakatos	Vacant since 995 AC	Lazkow	Specularum
Vidrin	Tamara Iliescu	Vidrin	Vorloi
Dmitrov	Zoltan Shtolin	Dmitrov	Dmitrov
Halavos	Vassily Balahov (regent)	Halavos, Volaga	Kelvin
Vaion	Vladimir Marushka	Vaion	Penhaligon
Lugsid	(not assigned since 900 AC)	Lugsid	Threshold
Lumm	(not assigned since 721 AC)	Lumm	N/A
Halag	Vacant since 1000 AC	Halag	Luln
Ourosco	Jozsef Kazmarek	Ourosco	Vandevicsny
Koriszegy	(not assigned since 743 AC)	N/A	N/A
Svoga	(merged with Halag)	Halag	Luln

independence of Karameikos from Thyatis, but also philosophical and practical ones. The Church of Thyatis was indeed prone to infighting, due to the many different Immortals and philosophies accepted, and to corruption, since position were awarded by the Emperor, the Senate, or by election rather than by the will of the Immortals. The constant quarrels between radical followers of Ixion and Vanya might be tolerable in cosmopolitan Thyatis, but would be a fatal weakness in a frontier land like Karameikos.

Thus, Patriarch Jowett and his followers selected a smaller set of Immortals that would be looked up as models for the new church, and used their own philosophies as the one and only doctrine of the church. Since many of Duke Stefan’s followers were Kerendans or Hattians, Vanya included in the pantheon, but Ixion was left out.

The new church was very successful in converting the Thyatian colonist, most of whom had been fairly poor, if not ruined, in Thyatis, and wanted to build a new life in Karameikos, much less in converting the Traladarans. Thus, fanatical factions developed within the Church, preaching the forced conversion of unbelievers. Only the authority of Patriarch Jowett keeps these factions from launching a crusade against the Church of Traladara. Unfortunately, Jowett is now old, and will not be able to keep the leadership for long. It is impossible to say whether the moderate wing, led by Patriarch Sherlane Halaran, will be

able to rebuff the extremist wing of Patriarch Alfric Oderbry.

2.2.3 Organization

The Church of Karameikos has many more Patriarchs and Bishops than the Church of Traladara, even though it has a much smaller number of Priests. Most priests of the Church of Karameikos live in structures owned by the Church itself, and work exclusively for the Church. Thus, there are fewer itinerant priests and even fewer village priests than in the Church of Traladara. On the other hand, each temple of the Church of Karameikos is generally manned by more priests and novices than the typical Traladaran shrine.

Geographically, the structure of the Church mirrors the administrative organization of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos. Each fief is considered a Diocese, which may be the see of a Bishop or a Patriarch. The Patriarcal or Episcopal titles, however, are not directly linked to the sees – though there are enough Patriarchs that none of the baronial Dioceses is held by a Bishop. Indeed, Patriarchs like Alfric Oderbry and Aleena Halaran are not attached to a specific see, having instead other positions in the church – either as high officials (Marshals) in the Order of the Griffon, or as Vicars (overseers of a single city) or Legates (ambassadors to other nations). The same happens

for Bishops not awarded their own Diocese.

Also, some Dioceses are not truly active, especially those in Traladaran fiefs like Marilenev, Sulescu, Vandevicsny, Rugalov and Dmitrov. The titles are still awarded to Bishops, but these priests actually reside in Specularum, mostly involved in political manoeuvres to obtain funds for missionary activities from the Duke.

In addition to the Dioceses, there are Chaplaincies, which are associated with less civilized territories under military jurisdiction. Currently, the Order of the Griffon does not have any hall or monastery outside Specularum. It does, however, provide military chaplains to the five keeps of Karameikos. Any Priest-Knight of the Order of the Griffon can be assigned as Chaplain, though often this is a position reserved to Bishop-Knights.

2.3 The Cult of Halav

The Cult of Halav is a small, newer religion. It was born in 995 AC, when Patriarch Sergyev received a vision in dreams, which told him that the Immortals had reincarnated King Halav in Stefan Karameikos. Surprisingly enough, Sergyev was able to persuade a number of clerics of the Church of Traladara, and founded his own cult.

While the priests of the Cult are generally considered madmen, they receive clerical powers, which means that theirs is not a fake religion. However, their powers do not mirror those of the priests of Halav, though this is not apparent.

The Cult has no strict organization. Patriarch Sergyev is the unchallenged leader. Under Sergyev there are cell leaders, who are in charge of smaller or larger groups of cultists.

The Cult of Halav currently exists only in Specularum and Kelvin, and has only a very limited number of followers, less than 1% of the Karameikan population.

2.4 Demi-human Religions

The three demi-human nations of Karameikos have their own cultures, laws, and religions.

The Kingdom of Highforge is, like most dwarven and gnomish groups, very secretive about its religious practices. The dwarves worship Kagyar, and the Gnomes worship Garal Glitterlode. The followers of this two Immortals generally do not interfere with each other, and keep their beliefs to themselves.

The Callarii Elves follow Ilsundal and Mealiden, while the Vyalia follow Ordana and Ilsundal. Both clans have their own Tree of Life, though the Vyalia tree resides in Thyatian territory.

Karameikan HIn are mostly clanless. Most of them remember the legends and songs of the High Heroes, but there is no organized cult.

Few demi-human have any interest in human religions. Those who do are seen as eccentrics, but are generally left to their own devices.

2.5 The Goblinoid Pantheon

Since Karameikan tribes are smaller than Broken Lands tribes, they generally stick with one or two Immortals at most. As usual, worship of opposed deities often leads to feuds and even open war between neighbouring tribes. However, the Bugbear followers of Bartziluth and the Gnoll followers of Ranivorous are divided by large expanses of Elven and Human territory, so open wars are uncommon.

Wogar is the most popular goblinoid Immortal, since there are many more goblin than goblinoids of other races. Bartziluth, Kaarash and Ranivorous follow, with Jammudaru, Yagrai and Kurtulmak having the smallest cults.

In addition to the traditional Goblinoid Immortals, several Entropic powers are worshipped, especially Orcus and Leptar.

2.6 The Dark Triad

Also known as the Temple of Evil Chaos in ancient sources, or as the Cult of Demons, the Dark Triad is a powerful force for evil in Karameikos.

2.6.1 Pantheon

This cult worships primarily Orcus, but also other Immortal Fiends, especially Leptar and Demogorgon – together, the three Entropic form the Triad that gives the name to this cult. In ancient times, Demogorgon was the primary focus of the cult, but since the great lycanthropic plagues, the Orcus faction has gained the upper hand.

The other Immortal Fiends are seldom worshipped, but are still part of the cult's pantheon.

2.6.2 History

The origins of the Dark Triad are lost in the depths of time. The *Temple of Evil Chaos* already existed in the heroic age of the Traldar. At that time, Demogorgon was the unchallenged leader of the pantheon, but was largely ineffectual in undermining the Tarsian Twelve. Thus, other Entropic Immortals took the initiative, leading the Gnolish hordes to the lands of Traldar. The cult barely survived the Beastman war, and was reduced to individual witches and the occasional isolated village of entropic cultists.

Then, Orcus came, set on becoming Halav's nemesis. First, he sent his pawns, the Witches of Dymrak, to recruit a great hobgoblin king, Leptar, securing many goblinoid clans to the cause of Evil Chaos. Leptar succeeded in his goals to a great extent, joining the cult pantheon as an Immortal, and leading to the modern Dark Triad.

Then, Orcus engineered the theft of the Black Opal Eye and the corruption of the magician Trinkla, reducing the power of the Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams. However, his plan was for a short time foiled by the Alphatian-trained, Thyatian-born wizard Elyas, who became the new Seer and recovered the Eye. Orcus sent the three witches, Karelena, Solorena and Trilena, to kill Elyas. They succeeded, but Elyas was able to bind the spirits of the three witches, and the Black Opal Eye was lost.

The Dark Prince then brought the lycanthropes, who desired revenge for the Silver Purge, into the cult, making it easier for the cultists to survive in the dangerous wildernesses of Traladara. The influx of lycanthropes in the cult brought not only the were-

wolf's hardiness, ferocity and survival skills, but, perhaps more importantly, the devil swine's ability to control and manipulate others. As the dust of the Traladaran Wars settled down, the cult was able to infiltrate the towns. Vaion especially fell to the cult, leading to the corruption of the Monastery on the Hill, and the rise of Queen Elendorath during the Vampire Wars.

In the end, the Cult of Demons was defeated, Vaion was destroyed and the Monastery on the Hill razed. The cult itself, however, survived – in the werewolf lairs of the Wufwolde hills and the Cruth Lowlands, in the goblinoid holdings in the Caves of Chaos, and in the dread forest of Dymrak.

2.6.3 Organization

The Cult of Demons is a chaotic organization – almost a contradiction in terms. Personal power and pacts with the Immortal patrons rather than hierarchy drive the cultists, making it difficult to eradicate, as not even the most powerful members have control over the whole structure. On the other hand, the organization suffers from infighting, conflicting personal agenda, and lack of communication.

The Cult of Demons is stronger in eastern Karameikos, especially in the Altan Tepee mountains, the Wufwolde hills and the Dymrak Forest.

The main strength of the Dark Triad is in their numerous, powerful pawns, including the following:

- The green dragon Argos the Worrier. From his lair under the Rugalov River, Argos controls several goblin tribes and a number of lesser dragons. In spite of his power, the dragon is exceedingly careful, as if his secret allegiance to Orcus was exposed, all other dragon kings would team up against him.
- The Witches of Dymrak. These nine mysterious witches have been around for almost two millennia, plotting and scheming – often furthering Orcus' goals, other times their own. The witches control several strong goblin clans, but have a powerful enemy in the Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams.

- The Gambler. The devil swine known only as The Gambler is a travelling agent of the Dark Triad.
- Several werewolf clans in the Wufvolde Hills and the Cruth Lowlands. The werewolf priest, Kalkask, leads the Cult of Demons in the Wufwolde hills.
- Ilyana Penhaligon. This warrior woman, the half-sister of Lady Arteris and self-proclaimed *Queen of Vaion*, is dominated by the spirit of Elendorath, the old Queen of Vaion, who was herself a cultist of Orcus. The evil priest, Bernal, acts as her advisor. Ilyana has recruited a number of mercenaries, both human and goblinoid.
- Elwyn the Ardent. A former priestess of the Church of Karameikos, Elwyn is now devoted to Leptar, and is the driving force behind the resurrection of the Cult of Demons in the area between Penhaligon and Threshold.
- Other goblinoid tribes. The ancient Temple of Evil Chaos still survives in the Caves of Chaos, near the Castellan's Keep, and attracts a number of orcish and goblin tribes. Also, the dungeons of the Monastery on the Hill are still home to goblinoid cultists.

2.7 The Gens Celaenes

This fractious cult is based in Fort Doom, and finds most of its adepts among the members of the Iron Ring. It is a Thyatianized version of the cult of Kala, which the Iron Ring clerics have taken up in Jaibul.

2.7.1 Pantheon

The Iron Ring imported from its primary trading partner, Jaibul, a number of dark gods, including Hel, Masauwu, Jammudaru, Loki and Brissard. The Iron Ring cultists rarely use the Sindhi names for the various Immortals, using instead the Thyatian names listed in Table 2.2.

The cultists refer to themselves as the Gens Celaenes, that is the “House of Black Goddess”.

2.7.2 History

The Iron Ring was formed when a branch of the Shadow Hand, the largest Thyatian Thieves' Guild, moved in to Halag in 973 AC.

At that time, the Black Eagle was facing the opposition of a local Thieves' Guild, an organization similar to Specularum's Veiled Society. He turned therefore to his court wizard for help in dealing with these stealthy enemies, who had already tried thrice to assassinate him. The wizard, one Lucius Pamphilion, decided it was best to use thieves to catch thieves. His own shady past gave him the right contacts, and he was able to persuade a high ranking Shadow Hand guildsman, Lamacus, who had made several powerful enemies within the guild, to move in Fort Doom with his followers, where they would enjoy the Baron's protection in return for taking care of the local thieves.

Within three years, the newly formed group, not yet known as the Iron Ring, got rid of the local opposition with the help of Pamphilion and his apprentices. However, there was little left for them to do – they could not steal from the rich, since the Baron had reduced the Traladarans to poverty, nor they could take over the protection racket from their Traladaran predecessors, since the Baron was already squeezing the local merchants dry.

Then, one of Pamphilion's apprentices had a brilliant idea – the Black Eagle's rule was raising more and more discontent among the local population. While the Baron seized as many political opponents as he could, his dungeons were getting full of them. So the wizard proposed to Von Hendricks to let the unemployed thieves dispose of the prisoners.

This led to the formation of the modern Iron Ring, as former Ierendi pirates joined in to provide the means to transport the prisoners to Jaibul, the prime market for slaves. Thyatis was originally avoided due to the enmity between the Shadow Hand and Lamacus. Some of the most regular customers of the Iron Ring were the priests of Kala, Bhrsharadha and Mahavasha. As the slave traffic became the most important source of revenue for the Iron Ring, some members started converting to the cult of these Immortals, especially Bhrsharadha.

Table 2.2: The Iron Ring Pantheon

Sindhi name	Standard name	Meaning of Sindhi name	Thyatian name
Kala	Hel	“The Black”	Celaene
Mahavasha	Masauwu	“Great Spirit”	Magnanimus
Jammudaru	Jammudaru	“Killer in revenge”	Antiphon
Bhajyagwan	Loki	“The Veiled One”	Aphantos, Farbautides (rarely)
Bhrsharadha	Brissard	“He who prospers through violence”	Hybristes

By 980 AC, the influx of political prisoner was down to levels insufficient to support the market request for slaves. So, the Iron Ring leadership, which, after the death of Lamacus, was composed of former apprentices of both Lamacus and Pamphilion, had to expand their business outside the Black Eagle Barony. The Iron Ring was now structured in two layers: the Masters, leaders of the organization, and the Reavers, some of whom served under the Masters in Fort Doom, while others, more experienced, served as contacts in the various Karameikan towns or as travelling agents. Reavers were in charge of procuring new slaves by kidnapping travellers, foreigners, or other people who would not raise much trouble on their sudden disappearance.

Contacts were established with goblinoid tribes such as the Vileraider Bugbears to provide further slaves and manage the secret transfers of slaves across the country. Meanwhile, the Reavers started working in the business of assassination as well as kidnapping rich people in order to exact a ransom.

The last major change to the Iron Ring structure came when Bargle the Infamous slew old Lucius Pamphilion and took his place as court wizard of the Black Eagle. Instead of killing the Iron Ring wizards, he helped them in disposing of the non-magic using Masters, and in establishing a further division between lesser and greater Masters. The newly established leaders of the Iron Ring, working on Bargle’s recommendation, started investigating into magical occurrences, old artifacts and treasures all over the nation. To this end, clerical help was now needed, and so were bodyguards. The Iron Ring itself had many fighters, but they were all needed to keep the flow of slaves, and to keep track of their goblinoid allies, lest they started pocketing slaves from the car-

avans.

So, the Masters turned to the Jaibul priesthoods. They offered favorable trading conditions in exchange for the training of priests, chosen among the Reavers of the Iron Ring, as well as knowledge of the hypnotic techniques developed by the priests of Bhajyagwan and Mahavasha. Armed with this knowledge, the Masters went on to create their perfect tools – the mindwashed warriors known as the Hounds of the Iron Rings.

Nowadays, low-level priests of the five primary Jaibulite Immortals are quite common in the ranks of the Iron Ring Reavers. While these priests serve the Iron Ring, they also advance the agenda of the Jaibul priests – and therefore of their allies from the Hulean Temple of Chaos.

2.7.3 Organization

In Karameikos, the Gens Celaenes is part of the Iron Ring organization, and shares its hierarchy and leadership. However, the priests also answer to the high priests of Kala in Jaibul. Since these leaders are so distant, and the Iron Ring Masters appear to support the Jaibul priests, the issue of double loyalties has not yet arisen.

Priests of this Sindhi cult often serve as support staff for the Iron Ring Masters or as liasons with several goblinoid tribes allied to the Iron Ring. Many lesser priests are also employed to “program” animated corpses used as guards or to select and mind-wash prospective Hounds.

This cult is gaining some following among the most evil goblinoids that serve the Black Eagle Baron or work with the Iron Ring.

2.8 Other Powers and Religions

A few other powers are worshipped in Karameikos, though these cults are generally followed only by a few individuals.

2.8.1 Nyx

Nyx is worshipped by a few humanoids (the Dark Web tribe under the Zargash mountains), as well as by a few Nosferatu, “grey” necromancers, witches and other odd individuals.

However, several major underground temples of Nyx are hidden in various locations under Karameikos. These are actually ruins of the Taymor civilization, and several contain sleeping undead servants of this Entropic power.

2.8.2 Thanatos

Like Nyx, Thanatos was the focus of much worship during the Taymor Age. Often, ancient temples to Thanatos are easy to confuse with those to Nyx, since few people are familiar with the esoteric Taymor symbology, and the underground temples have been abandoned for centuries.

One such error led the Count of Koriszegy to his tragic end – what he thought an altar of Nyx had actually been the focus of bloody rituals of Thanatos, and his attempts to contact the first Immortal attracted the attention of the Grim Reaper, who cursed Koriszegy and destroyed his county.

2.8.3 Alphaks

Followers of Alphaks are fairly rare in this part of the world. Alphaks is worshipped by the Temple of Evil Chaos, but is not part of the Dark Triad. His major foray in Traladara happened two centuries ago, when he gained the allegiance of Morphail Gorevich-Woszlany, a wizard and noble in the Moor in north-eastern Traladara. Morphail, however, was defeated and forced into exile by his enemies, and was never especially useful in establishing a strong cult of Alphaks.

Nowadays, some followers of Alphaks of Thyatian origin are found in Fort Doom and in Specularum, and a tribe of Hobgoblins has been converted to the worship of the Roaring Fiend.

2.8.4 Foreign Religions

Several shrines to foreign Immortals and cults are found in the Foreign Quarter of Specularum. These include the Eternal Truth, Minrothism, Augrism, the Church of Thyatis and the Church of Darokin.

These shrines mostly serve the foreign communities, or act as embassies for the churches to the Karameikan government.

Chapter 3

Societies of Karameikos

This chapter covers the secret societies, guilds and orders of Karameikos.

3.1 Knightly Orders

There are three types of ranks of chivalry in Karameikos. In descending order of importance, these include:

1. The Knight Bachelors
2. The members of the greater orders of chivalry
3. The members of the lesser orders of chivalry

Knighthood of the first type is granted directly by the Duke, while the second type is associated with membership in specific Knightly Orders. Currently, there is only one greater order of chivalry, the Order of the Griffon. These first two ranks are entitled to full knightly privileges, with Knight Bachelors having precedence over the members of the greater orders.

The last rank does not carry privileges, though often these honours are associated with a Court Lordship, the lowest title of nobility in Karameikos.

3.1.1 Order of the Griffon

Knights of the Order of the Griffon are entitled to style themselves Sirs, and receive the respect due to other knights. The Order of the Griffon is a military order of the Church of Karameikos, quartered in the Church district of Specularum.

The Order of the Griffon recognizes four internal ranks, based on the traditional structure of the Thyatian military orders of Vanya:

1. The Master
2. The Marshals
3. The Knight Commanders
4. The Knight Brothers

The Master of the Order is Patriarch Olliver Jowett. Both Baron Desmond Kelvin II and Aleena Halaran are Marshals in the order.

3.1.2 Knights of the Three Suns

The Order of the Three Suns is a lesser order of chivalry, founded by Lord Arturus Penhaligon and quartered in the Castle of the Three Suns in Penhaligon. The Order is acknowledged by Duke Stefan, who acts as its Sovereign Head, but does not grant any social right to the members – i.e., Knights of the Three Suns are Freeman, and not entitled to style themselves Lords or Sirs unless they are also Court Lords or Knights.

There are three ranks in the Order: *Squire*, *Knight* and *Knight commander*. In addition to these ranks, there are three high officers, the Grand Master, the Treasurer and the Hospitaller. Together, they form the Council of the Order.

Aspirants are admitted by selection, and since the order is quite small, this process is handled directly by the Council. Aspirant squires must be recognized

for their fighting skills (being Fighters or Clerics of 3rd level or more), though the requirement is less stringent than in the Order of the Griffon.

Squires can be promoted to Knights (this generally happens as the Squire reaches 7th level), and Knights may be named Commanders (usually at name level or more). Knight are often recommended for a Court Lordship, which is generally granted, and Knight Commanders are usually considered by the Duke for a Knighthood.

3.2 Secret Societies

There are three criminal rings in Karameikos: the Iron Ring, the Veiled Society, and the Kingdom of Thieves. This section describes them, as well as other secret societies.

3.2.1 The Iron Ring

The Iron Ring is based in Fort Doom, and has resident agents in all towns in Karameikos, as well as in Jaibul, Sind and Thyatis. Other agents of the Iron Ring travel across the Grand Duchy, furthering the agenda of the organization. The Iron Ring has almost no influence on the criminal underworld of Specularum, where the major players are the Kingdom of Thieves and the Veiled Society. It operates openly both in the Black Eagle Barony and in Jaibul, as well as among several goblinoid tribes (especially of Bugbears and Goblins) in the wildernesses of Karameikos. The Iron Ring is protected by Ludwig von Hendricks – in return it works to further the interests of the Black Eagle, operating as a sort of secret service for the Baron.

The members of the organization do not generally operate as simple burglars or pickpockets, and the Iron Ring does not have the manpower to run extortion rackets. The primary business of the Iron Ring is slavery, followed by espionage and assassination. Goblinoid tribes are employed to help with guarding the prisoners along their route across Karameikos to Fort Doom, where ships are loaded with the new slaves and sent to slave markets such as Jaibul and Thyatis, but also Zeaburg, Surra-Man-Ra and the

ports of the Alphatian Empire. Given the extensive amount of effort needed to hide the slave trade, the Iron Ring are also among the best smugglers in Karameikos, though they rarely work in this area, except to smuggle magical components and treasures to Fort Doom.

The typical agent of the Iron Ring is the Reaver. Reavers are not allowed to operate independently, and are either attached to an higher ranking member, or are assigned tasks in the slavery operations, such as leading caravans, coordinating the kidnapping of people in an area, or spying on the rulers of a town. The typical Reaver joins the organization when he is already a skilled thief, warrior or priest – there are no apprentices. Due to the peculiar nature of the organization, thieves are only slightly more common than warriors, and several priests of evil cults from Jaibul are also present.

The manpower of the organization is provided by goblinoid mercenaries as well as by brain-washed and conditioned slave warriors, called Hounds.

The Iron Ring organization is ruled by the Masters, almost all of whom are highly skilled wizards – at least as far as Karameikan wizards go. The real power is in the end of a few Masters, but even lesser Masters are able to pursue personal agenda, commandeering Reavers and Hounds as well as resources.

Joining the ranks The Iron Ring is only suited for the most villainous PCs, given its goals and methods. A PC Reaver should either be a plant in a group that is a known opponent of the Black Eagle, or a member of an Iron Ring-only party.

Progression in the organization is very limited – new members are recruited from those who demonstrate skill or strength (being second level Thieves or Fighters), or from the ranks of the Entropic priesthoods. At about fourth level, the Reavers are assigned to tasks or posts outside the Black Eagle Barony, and operate independently or in small groups. At about sixth level, the Reavers becomes more a threat than an asset to the organization – thus, only the most loyal Reavers are retained past this point, and are usually subject to magical screening and control. All others, with the exception

of Clerics, are assassinated by the Masters. Cleric Reavers, however, are allowed to leave the organization and return to their cult.

3.2.2 The Veiled Society

The Veiled Society is an old racketeering organization based in Specularum, and has only recently expanded into Kelvin, Threshold and Luln. Before the Thyatian conquest, there was a similar organization in Halag, which has been all but destroyed by the Iron Ring and Baron von Hendricks.

The Veiled Society mostly runs protection rackets, though it also controls prostitution and illegal gambling. In general, it focuses on activities that require relatively little skill and produce a steady revenue. The Veiled Society also controls a number of legitimate businesses, using its thugs to reduce competition by targeting guildsmen and merchants tied to the Torenescu or Vorloi factions.

The organization also tends to present itself as the champion of the Traladaran urban lower classes, thus gathering some support from the local population. It has also strong connections with several trade guilds, especially the powerful Merchants' Guild.

The Veiled Society is organized as a family, with an elder (*starosta*) leading each gang and controlling a territory – usually a number of city blocks in the Nest or the Old Quarter in Specularum. The elders report to the upper tier of the organization, which is former of white collar mobsters, led by the Radu family.

Joining the ranks The Veiled Society has strict rules, but respecting the rules is about the only requirement for joining. Some amount of brawn is also appreciated, but skill is entirely optional.

This organization is very appropriate for the business-oriented Thief – it can lead to power and wealth without too many risks. Fighters and Wizards can also join, but the latter are less common.

The Veiled Society also aims at controlling its territory – freelance thieves are not acceptable, and many members simply grow into the district gang.

3.2.3 The Kingdom of Thieves

The Kingdom of Thieves is a new Thieves' Guild, having existed for circa ten years only. It strictly limits its activities to burglary, and is based in Specularum, though its members sometimes operate in Kelvin or Vorloi.

Compared to the other Thieves' Guilds, the Kingdom is rather small, but is also composed of skilled members, thus focusing on high-revenue jobs, stealing mostly from the rich. The Kingdom as a strict hierarchy based on Darokinian, Traladaran and Thyatian aristocratic titles. The guildmaster, Flameflicker, is known as the King of Thieves, while his direct underlings are Princes. Dukes, Counts, Barons, Knights and Lords form the lower ranks of the membership, while apprentices are dubbed Squires. Members tend to act independently or in small teams, though the King and Princes assign jobs to specific groups from time to time.

The Kingdom of Thieves does not condone murder and other violent crimes, and members are required to use weapons only in self defense.

Joining the ranks The Kingdom of Thieves only invites professional Thieves to join. Former cutpurses, pickpockets, and small time burglars are accepted, as are adventurers with the appropriate skills.

A new member starts either as a Squire, if he is a promising young thief (1st or 2nd level) or as a Lord, and can work his way up to the rank of Duke by proving his skill. Currently, all Princes are founding members of the Kingdom, and are all quite young. New Princes can be named only by the King, and this has not happened yet.

3.2.4 The Brotherhood of the Woods

This semi-secret society was founded by the Callarii elf Lathan Spearhand, after he came back from an adventurous journey across the Sea of Dread. Lathan had to pay a large sum to the Black Eagle Baron to ransom his fiancée, an elven maiden from Rifflian whom the Iron Ring had kidnapped.

Seeing that the Duke's justice was not going to reach the Baron, Lathan decided to take the matter

in his own hands. He soon discovered he was not the only victim of von Hendricks' misdeeds. Thus, he contacted many of those who had reason to take revenge on the Baron, and formed a society devoted to bringing down the Black Eagle and the Iron Ring, by whatever means were necessary.

The Brotherhood is currently a small group, but is composed almost entirely of low to mid level adventurers. Lathan also has several contacts with other groups, including the Traladaran resistance movement in Fort Doom and Luln. New members are recruited by Lathan himself in Specularum. There are no fixed requirements to join, except a grudge against von Hendricks and the Iron Rings, and some fighting or magical skills.

The Brotherhood meets at the Hippogriff Inn, in the north market district of Specularum, near the old city walls. The innkeeper is a friend of Lathan's, and relays messages left by other members of the Brotherhood.

Joining the ranks Being an enemy of the Black Eagle Baron is the primary requirement. Adventuring skills of all types are appreciated, but the Brotherhood has a use for more mundane supporters.

The Brotherhood is a fairly informal organization, with no ranks at all.

3.2.5 The Ambassador's Men

Outwardly, the Ambassador's Men are just a theatrical company led by Darokinian actor-playwright Emilio the Great. Emilio, however, is also an agent of Duchess Olivia Karameikos. His specialty, of course, is mixing with the upper class, but some of the Ambassador's Men are more at home in espionage and furtive activities.

In addition to these spies, the Duchess can also rely on other agents – a well developed network with ears in almost every fief, and even in some of the neighbouring nations.

Joining the ranks Joining the Duchess' network is easily done at the lowest level – one just needs to relay important information to Emilio or other agents.

However, the real nature of the network will be kept hidden until the recruit has proven reliable. At that point, he will be inducted in the espionage network proper, and given assignments.

The main requirement for admission are loyalty to the crown and a keen mind – skills and experience come a distant third.

3.3 Trade Guilds

Trade guilds (*Arti*, in low Thyatian) are a long-standing tradition in Specularum. Due to the usage of Thyatian to record official documents, the names of the Guilds were often reported in Thyatian even before the conquest, and all guilds have names in both Thyatian and Traladaran.

3.3.1 History

Five hundred years ago, the town, then Marilenev, lived its first rise to greatness as the capitol of the Duchy of Marilenev, as well as being the location of the Diet of the Traladaran League. Marilenev was a trading town, acting as the hub of trade from Harbortown, New Alphatia and Thyatis to the Traladaran principalities along the Volaga, Shutturga and Waterolde rivers. Furs and hides have always been the major exports of Traladara, and in Marilenev the merchants and craftsmen that worked with furs and leathers formed the first guilds, the Merchants' Guild, the Leathersellers' Guild and the Skinners' Guild. These first guilds mostly managed trade between Marilenev and Halavos, Volaga, Lugsid and Vaion, while foreign merchants from Thyatis and the Isles of Dread handled sea-based trade.

After the foundation of Minrothad, and the Fourth Traladaran War of 493 AC, the increasing presence of foreigners and Traladarans from different principalities led to the formation of the Moneychangers' Guild. The Scriveners' Guild (*Arte dei Notai* in low Thyatian) was also formed to represent a new class of Thyatian-trained professionals who could read and write the Thyatian language, and were needed to prepare contracts, as well as to record the proceedings of the Diet of the Traladaran League. The Armor-

ers' Guild (*Arte dei Corazzai*) developed during the Traladaran Wars, and was formally chartered at the same time as the Moneychangers' Guild.

In the next century, several other trade guilds were formed, called minor guilds (*Arti Minori*) to distinguish them from the more powerful guilds.

During the first decade of the VII century, the dissolution of the Traladaran League caused a major loss of political power to Marilenev. Duke Alexandr Marilenev was not able to cope with the social changes imposed by this event, and the anti-ducal faction within the Merchants' and Scriveners' Guilds took the upper hand. With large financing from the Moneychangers, as well as the guilds prepared and enacted a bloody revolution. The Duke was deposed and beheaded, and the six major guilds (Merchants, Scriveners, Moneychangers, Skinners, Leathersellers and Armorers) declared their guildmasters (or Priors) as the Town Council of Marilenev. In the City-State oligarchic system, which lasted up to the Thyatian conquest in 900 AC, the Guildmasters of the Major Guilds formed the executive board of the government (the Priorate), with a number of elective boards and councils that acted as legislative offices. Each Guild had full judiciary and legislative power for what concerned their own members, and boards composed of members of the various guilds served as juries when members of different guilds were involved in a dispute.

The political system was not especially stable, however, and the Priors (often from the Radu or Torenescu families) were sometimes replaced with foreign governors (usually Minrothaddans, Darokinians or Thyatians) who were supposed to guarantee a less biased rule than the locals. This usually happened when the major guilds were weaker, and the minor guilds stronger.

In 681 AC, the threat of war led the town government to undertake a program of fortification of the city. The increased power of the masons and bricklayers allowed them to obtain a charter for their own guild (*Arte dei Muratori*).

The Vampire Wars of the VIII century threw the Skinners and Leathersellers guild in a crisis, as the northern trade was halted. These guilds lost their status as *Arti Maggiori*, and the Dyers and Taylors

were able to form independent guilds. On the other hand, Marilenev had to rely more on sea-based trade, developing its own merchant fleet – and leading to the formation of the Mariners' Guild. Moreover, the increased availability of exotic spices and herbs from Sindh, Ochalea and other remote regions (via the Ierendian, Minrothaddan and Thyatian merchants) gave a major increase in power to the Apothecaries' Guild (*Arte degli Speziali*), which moved among the major guilds.

After the plague in 802 AC, several dwarves of the Syrklist clan settled in Marilenev. These dwarves used their skills and their contacts with the Stronghollow clan of Highforge and the dwarven merchants in Thyatis to start a successful goldsmith trade. Unfortunately, the Moneychangers' Guild, which legally regulated not only the moneychangers and moneylenders, but also the jewellers, goldsmiths and silversmiths, set heavy measures against the dwarven craftsmen. In 902 AC, after the Thyatian conquest, the dwarven faction within the Moneychangers' Guild petitioned the Thyatian governor to establish a new Goldsmiths' Guild – a petition which was quickly granted by the Thyatians, who wanted to divide the guilds as much as possible.

The Thyatian conquest removed most political power from the guilds. The division between major and minor guilds remained, but was not as politically important as in the City-State times. Another Thyatian decree aimed at reducing the danger posed by the guilds was the division of the Armorers' Guild in three sub-guilds, forming first the Bowyers' Guild and then the Cutlers' Guild. The Armorers' Guild was also reduced to the status of minor guild.

A last governor's decree in 926 AC allowed the formation of three more guilds, Innholders', Vintners' and Fishmongers', and extended the authority of the guilds from the city of Specularum to the entire Province of Traladara. The Vintners' Guild (*Arte dei Vinattieri*) was a small and entirely Thyatian dominated guild, while the Fishmongers' Guild appealed to the smaller towns of Traladara, allowing them some representation in the government – traditionally, the guildmaster of this guild is never a Specularum native.

When Stefan Karameikos traded the Duchy of Ma-

chetos for the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, he confirmed the existing guilds, but allowed his friend Teldon to form a small Magicians' Guild. This guild is considered a major guild, even though its economic power is minimal.

The last two guilds, the Loggers' Guild and the Hunters' Guild, have been chartered by Duke Stefan in 980 AC, to help regulate the exploitation of the forests of Karameikos.

3.3.2 Guilds Politics

In modern Specularum, the guilds play an important economic role, regulating trade and professional activities. Therefore, they can still exert some political powers, and the various factions have close ties with several of the guilds, often dating back to the times of the City-State or the Thyatian provincial government.

The Radu faction

The Radu were one of the first mercantile families to reach an aristocratic status. The Prior of the Merchants' Guild who led the rebellion against Duke Alexandr Marilenev was a Radu, Petros.

The Radu family has kept control of the Merchants' Guild for much of its history. Thanks to the family's connection to the Veiled Society as well as the guild's power as the regulating body of trade, the Radu faction was able to attract also the Apothecaries, Grocers and Taylors to its faction. After the Thyatian conquest, the Armorers and Leathersellers have also joined this faction.

The Torenescu faction

The Torenescu family and its allies have controlled for a long time both the Scriveners and the Moneychangers guilds. Thus, they control many government and administrative officers, as well as the availability of (legal) loans. Unfortunately, the Veiled Society runs a successful illegal moneylending racket, which cuts into the Torenescu profits.

Several traditionally Traladaran minor guilds have

allied with Torenescu faction, including the Bricklayers, Skinners, Blacksmiths and Butchers.

The Marilenev faction

The Marilenev family has lost most of its support, though two of the older minor guilds, the Brewers and Bakers, still support this faction.

The Fishmongers are another matter – many of their adherents are not residents of Specularum, and the guild is traditionally not involved in the city politics. They are, however, the loudest opponents of the Thyatian rule, and especially of the Black Eagle Baron. Since the Duke does not listen to their complaints, they have lost faith in a pacific solution. Thus, their leaders plot with Magda Marilenev, while still trying to advance their agenda through the Karameikan bureaucracy.

The Vorloi faction

The Vorloi family has been able to counter the economic power of the Traladaran guilds, gathering around the family business some guilds that are traditionally associated with the Thyatian rulers, such as the Vintners and the Goldsmith, as well as those primarily oriented to sea trade, including the Mariners and Carpenters.

This faction is closely allied with the Karameikos ruling family, but is more interested in advancing its own economic interests than the New Karameikan ideals.

The Karameikos faction

A group of newer guilds, led by the Loggers and Magicians, supports explicitly the ideals of a New Karameikos espoused by the Duke. These guilds favor equality between Traladarans and Thyatians – and even foreign traders.

The Innholders have joined this faction due to their varied membership, which includes many Hin, some Dwarves and several former adventurers, while the Cutlers and Dyers mostly value the increased profits brought to their members by the presence of an independent government.

Table 3.1: Trade Guilds of Karamaikos

Major Guilds	Arti Maggiori	Foundation
Magicians' Guild	Arte dei Maghi	970 AC
Merchants' Guild	Arte dei Mercatanti	ca. 400 AC
Moneychangers' Guild	Arte del Cambio	493 AC
Goldsmiths' Guild	Arte degli Orafi	902 AC
Scriveners' Guild	Arte dei Notai	494 AC
Apothecaries' Guild	Arte degli Speciali	VI c. AC
Minor Guilds	Arti Minori	Foundation
Bowyers' Guild	Arte dei Balistai	903 AC
Armorsmiths' Guild	Arte dei Corazzai	493 AC
Blacksmiths' Guild	Arte dei Fabbri	VI c. AC
Cutlers' Guild	Arte degli Spadai	906 AC
Bricklayers' Guild	Arte dei Muratori	681 AC
Carpenters' Guild	Arte dei Maestri di Legname	VI c. AC
Loggers' Guild	Arte dei Legnaioli	980 AC
Brewers' Guild	Arte dei Birrai	VI c. AC
Vintners' Guild	Arte dei Vinattieri	926 AC
Bakers' Guild	Arte dei Fornai	V c. AC
Fishmongers' Guild	Arte dei Pesciaioli	926 AC
Butchers' Guild	Arte dei Beccai	VI c. AC
Innholders' Guild	Arte degli Albergatori	926 AC
Grocers' Guild	Arte dei Pizzicagnoli	VI c. AC
Skinner's Guild	Arte dei Pellicciai	ca. 400 AC
Dyers' Guild	Arte dei Tintori	VIII c. AC
Tailors' Guild	Arte dei Sarti	VIII c. AC
Leathersellers' Guild	Arte dei Cuoiari	ca. 400 AC
Hunters' Guild	Arte dei Cacciatori	980 AC
Mariners' Guild	Arte dei Marinai	VIII c. AC

Neutrals and Independents

The Hunters' Guild was chartered by Duke Stefan on a proposal by the Lord Forester and the Lord Seneschal to regulate hunting activities in the forests of Karameikos. Its purpose is to keep track of active hunters to minimize losses of life and ensure that taxes are properly paid to the crown. However, the current guildmaster has moved the guild from a prudential stance to a more neutral position, since he is more interested in the profits than in the ideals.

The Bowyers' Guild was one of the branches of the Armorers' Guild that were made independent during the initial stages of the Thyatian occupation. This guild maintains an extremely professional stance, and does not take part in politics.

3.3.3 The Major Guilds

Magicians' Guild

Guildmaster: Archmage Teldon.

Faction: Karameikos.

Affiliated trades: Magic Users.

One of the smallest guilds, the Magicians' Guild has only existed since the foundation of the Grand Duchy. Its goal is to regulate the teaching and use of magic in Karameikos. While magic users are not required by law to belong to the guild, guild regulations forbid exchange of magical knowledge with non-members. Specifically, only Masters are allowed to teach spells and spellcasting techniques, thus ensuring both the quality levels of the education provided by the guild and the respect of requirements from the students. The Magicians' Guild agrees with the Church of Karameikos in discouraging the traditional Traladaran divinatory practices, which it considers devoid of scientific value.

Apprentices and medium-ranking members (Journeyman and Magicians) make up the larger part of the guild, which has currently only four masters, including Teldon – five if Kavorquian Penhaligon is still alive.

In addition to its magical services, the guild offers also public access to the non-magical section of its library. The library is located in a low building near

the Guildhall, in the South End district of Specularum.

Merchants' Guild

Guildmaster: Anton Radu.

Faction: Radu.

Affiliated trades: import/export and wholesale merchants.

One of the oldest and more powerful, guilds, the Merchants' Guild controls wholesale trade, both domestic and import/export. While this guild has lost much of its official power with the Thyatian conquest, it still retains control over a large fraction of the Traladaran merchants, and uses it to boycott the Thyatian merchants of the Vorloi faction.

The Radu family has been part of the Guild since the foundation, and has provided one third of its Guildmasters over the last five hundred years. Other allied families, like the Kaison and Calihar, hold seats in the Masters' Council, providing the Radu a secure majority in all guild decisions.

The Guildhall is a broad, stout palace in the Stronghold district of Specularum. A statue of Zirchev, patron of the Guild, is located in the courtyard. Armed guards (mercenaries not associated with the Veiled Society) bar the access to the Guildhall.

The Merchants' Guild also organizes caravans and mercantile shippings by pooling the resources of its associates. Thus, it often recruits mercenary guards for its caravans and ships.

Moneychangers' Guild

Guildmaster: Ioan Azuros.

Faction: Torenescu.

Affiliated trades: moneychangers, moneylenders, pawnbrokers.

The Moneychangers' Guild rallies all bankers and pawnbrokers in Specularum. The guild membership is clearly divided in two levels: the small time pawnbrokers and moneylenders, and the magnates, powerful bankers and investors who vie with the Merchants' Guild for control over the Karameikan economy. This division can also be seen in the ranking system, which

differs from the typical *apprentice, journeyman, master* of the other guilds: the Moneychangers begin their training as apprentices, then move either directly to the master rank, if they are associate to an existing master's business or have the means to buy into the rank (and therefore also to open a large scale business), or to the *agent* rank. Agents are independent guildmembers of lesser status, generally working in the poorer districts of Specularum or in the countryside as moneylenders and pawnbrokers.

The Guild is ruled by a Guildmaster, currently Ioan Azuros, the maternal uncle of Alexander Torenescu, assisted by a council of six Wardens. Two Wardens are elected by the members from the Hill district, and one each from the Merchant, Bricktop, and Stronghold districts. The last Warden is elected from the Agents. The Wardens' Council meets in the Guildhall, located in the Hill district, within Torenescu territory. It is a square building in rusticated stone with large, arched windows, built to show the power and wealth of the guild.

Currently, the Guild is closely allied with the Torenescu faction, and is pouring a lot of money into the feud with the Radu and Vorloi. However, the agents are getting the worst damage from the feud, as they are more exposed to the Veiled Society thugs. Thus there is a growing unrest in the guild, which might lead to an attempt by the agents to get their own guild or at least to depose Guildmaster Azuros. The Guildmaster is considering hiring adventurers to put an end to the Veiled Society arsons and racketeering.

Goldsmiths' Guild

Guildmaster: Thorur Silverbeard the Younger, son of Thoric of the Syrklist.

Faction: Vorloi.

Affiliated trades: goldsmiths, jewellers, silversmiths.

A bitter enemy of the Moneychangers' Guild, the Goldsmiths' Guild is formed not only of goldsmiths, but also jewellers and silversmiths. Dwarves, mostly from the Syrklist, Buhrohur and Stronghollow clans, form one third of the membership. The other members are equally divided between Traladarans and Thyatians, with a few Highforge gnomes, Hins, and

Ierendians.

The guild is organized in the three traditional layers, and access to each layer is strictly dependent on professional ability – there are no honorary or non-practicing members. The members of the master rank form the Guild council, and elect the Guildmaster. The Guildmaster position last for life, or until retirement (the guild provides support for retired members). Thorur Silverbeard, the current leader, is the grandson of the first Grandmaster (Thorur Silverbeard the Elder). The Silverbeards always supported the Thyatian governors, and now they are allied with the Vorloi, as they see Duke Stefan as too lenient with the Traladaran gangs, whom they consider responsible for most of the crimes in Specularum.

The Guildhall, a dwarven-designed palace, is found in the Hill Market district, right out of the walls of Duke Stefan's castle. It is rumored that underground dungeons hold secret vaults where the gold reserves of the guild are stored.

Scriveners' Guild

Guildmaster: Simeon Torenescu.

Faction: Torenescu.

Affiliated trades: public notaries, scribes, heralds, judges, clerks, teachers, lawyers.

The Scriveners' Guild collects the *intelligentsia* of Specularum, including the government officials, the public notaries and the judges, as well as a less powerful class of scribes and clerks.

Like several other Guilds, this one is ruled by a Guildmaster assisted by six Consuls. Since the various professional activities represented by the guild have strictly separated careers and requirements, and are all incompatible with each other (thus a notary cannot serve as judge, and vice versa), the Consuls are selected to represent the more important groups: three Consuls for the public notaries, two for the judges and lawyers, and one for the heralds. Scribes, teachers and clerks are not full guild members, and thus do not receive representation on the council.

Contrary to most other guilds, the Scriveners' Guild does not have apprentice or master ranks. Once a member is admitted, he is either an associate or a full guildsman. Admission is based on strict re-

quirements: aspirant judges and lawyers must hold a doctoral degree in Law from the Imperial Academy in Thyatis or the University of al-Azrad in Selenica. All other aspirants must pass a series of exams, including a first one that is common to all, and verifies the aspirants' ability to read and write Thyatian and Traladaran. Associate members (scribes, teachers, and clerks) are only required to pass this first exam, while full members must pass two more exams on professional topics. These latter exams are presided by the College of Consuls, and all exams are open to all full guildsmen who care to take part as examiners (a minimum of four examiners is always required). Clerics and Paladins are never accepted as members, since they would not guarantee the professional neutrality required of judges and notaries.

Most ministers in the Karameikan government are chartered notaries of this guild, and Lord Valdo Tisza is one of the current Consuls. Currently, the guild has 300 notary members, 40 judges and lawyers, 30 heralds, and 1200 associate members.

In addition to the professional services of its members, the guild also offers public access to its library, where aspirants can consult the books needed to prepare their exams. Thus, the Scribes' Guildhall, in Bricktop Road on the edge of the Grand Market, is the major hub of intellectual life in Specularum, as well as the theater of nightly brawls between opposed factions of youths.

Apothecaries' Guild

Guildmaster: Dimitri Levinik.

Faction: Radu.

Affiliated trades: apothecaries, alchemists, general retailers, physicians, painters, barbers, glassworkers, cartographers, papermakers.

The Apothecaries' Guild is a composite association that collects not only apothecaries, alchemists and physicians, but also other technical or artistic professions such as painters, glassworkers, cartographers and paper and parchment makers. Barbers are also associated to this guild, as they perform small surgery, dental extractions, and bloodletting. General retailers are also associated to this guild, though as lesser members.

Admission is free for the children of guild members, while others must pay 60 royals if they are born in Specularum, 120 otherwise. Once admitted, the new member starts as an apprentice. Apprenticeship lasts very long (10 or 15 years) for most members, except general retailers – who, on the other hand, cannot reach the rank of master.

Chapter 4

Goblinoid Tribes of Karameikos

This article describes the major goblinoid tribes of Karameikos. In addition to these goblinoids, northwestern Karameikos houses also a number of small Hill Giant clans (5 to 10 giants each), for a total of circa 125 giants.

4.1 Dymrak Tribes

The Dymrak Woods west of the Thyatian border are infested with many large Goblin tribes. Argos the Worrier, a green dragon, rules the forest and has brought several of these tribes under his control.

4.1.1 Jaggadash

A tribe of Goblins, the Jaggadash (“Vipers”) are led by Dashka (Goblin 7). Known for their cowardice, Jaggadash goblins are nevertheless fearsome for their trademark ability, snake training. These goblins tame highly poisonous vipers and use them in combat, by throwing the snakes at their enemies. They also tattoo viper designs all over their bodies, which adds to their already bad looks.

The tribe is broken into six hordes, averaging 100 goblins each. The Jaggadash live in the northern fringes of the Dymrak forest, and worship the draconic Immortal Pearl, represented as a gigantic snake-like creature.

Jaggadash warriors prefer thrown weapons, especially hammers and dagger.

4.1.2 Gnassska

Holding the western reaches of the Dymrak forest from human encroachment, the Red Blade (“Gnassska”) goblins have recently lost their chief, Gnass, as well as many tribesmen to the Faz-Plack goblins and their Iron Ring allies. The new chief, Gnassarek (Goblin 8), has negotiated for the protection offered by the Witches of Dymrak, in exchange for the tribe’s switching from the worship of Wogar to that of Orcus. With many shamans dead, the change is happening quickly, but many lesser chiefs are still clinging to the old traditions.

With seven hundred-strong hordes, the Gnassska are still a large tribe, and they bolster their hunting skills and lair defenses with trained giant ferrets. Red Blade goblins wear clothing and use weapons died in their tribal colors. The warriors of this tribe are generally armed with short swords and slings.

4.1.3 Kloss-Lunk

The Kloss-Lunk (“Wolf’s Skull”) are a comparatively smaller tribe, formed of five hordes for a total of 400 goblins. Yet, their large wolf cavalry gives them a major strategic advantage, which has allowed the tribe to weather the recent defeat at Sukyskin and maintain control of their territory, the Petrified Woods.

King Kloss (Goblin 9) still leads the tribe, with the help of his lieutenant Klossarek (Goblin 5) and the support of the shamans of Wogar, including Ratgrob (Goblin 4/Shaman 4). Wogar’s is the only religion allowed in this tribe. Kloss-Lunk warriors wear close

fitting iron caps and wolfskin capes, as well as shield emblazoned with a wolf's head symbol. They wield spears and hand axes in combat.

4.1.4 Dread Horde

The strongest tribe of Dymrak, and one of the strongest in all of Karameikos, the Dread Horde includes both Goblin werewolves and Hobgoblin heavy infantry.

The horde's leader, Kosivikh (Goblin 10/Werewolf 9) is a powerful Goblin warrior, easily the equal of an Hobgoblin in strength and only slightly lesser in size. His fame is such that he is also known as "Zhul Dymrak", the Dymrak Dread. Kosivikh personal horde, the Dread Brotherhood, is composed of 50 werewolf goblins (at different stages of infection). He controls also 10 lesser hordes, each composed of about 15 Goblin wolfriders, 60 Goblin archers and 20 Hobgoblin heavy infantrymen.

Vylgrykk (Goblin 7/Wicca 7) is the chief wotan of the Dread Horde. Many Shamans of Orcus have been trained by the Witches of Dymrak, and Orcus has been the patron of this tribe for generations.

Dread Horde Goblins favor the short bow and short sword, while Hobgoblins prefer heavier melee weapons such as the mace and the battle axe.

4.1.5 Green Raiders

The Chosen One (Goblin 6/Shaman 6 of Orcus), an old but surprisingly well preserved Goblin shaman, leads this colorful tribe. Four lesser hordes have joined under his command, for a total of almost 400 goblins. One quarter of the warriors are wolfriders, armed with short javelins and large knives. The rest are skirmishers, with similar weapons, though some also use short bows. Shamans of Orcus hold absolute power in this tribe, and they bow to Argos, the green dragon ruler of the Dymrak Forest.

The Green Raiders use patched green clothes to camouflage in the depth of the forest. They control the western banks of the Rugalov river from their lair in an underground city.

4.1.6 River Wolves

Holding the eastern banks of the Rugalov, the River Wolves are Goblins that supplement traditional wolfriding techniques with a small flotilla of war canoes, rafts and one riverboat. Of the 350 River Wolves, circa one in five is a wolfrider, armed with light lance and a mace or club, while the others fight with short bows and small tridents or short spears.

The River Wolves' banners show a crudely dwarn seal-like animal with a wolf's head. Their riverboat counts as a mediocre war machine armed with a single light ram. The River Wolf chief, Derk Flathead (Goblin 8) commands the riverboat in battle.

Like the Green Raiders, the River Wolves serve the dragon king Argos. However, they have few shamans of Orcus, and mostly worship Wogar.

4.2 North-Eastern Tribes

The north-eastern quarter of Karameikos, between the Windrush and Volaga rivers, is a contested land, with Humans, Goblinoids Dwarves and Gnomes all living in the area.

4.2.1 Faz-Plak

The Yellow Fang ("Faz-Plak") goblins live in the ruins of the ancient Hutaakan city of Xitaqa along the banks of the Volaga river. Led by King Plak (Goblin 11), the five hordes of this tribe (totalling 600 Goblins) have applied their skill of animal training to the rock baboons that inhabit the ruins. Plak has also struck an advantageous deal with the Iron Ring, and maintains a profitable slave trade.

Faz-Plak Goblins worship Yagrai and Leptar. Their warriors wear heavy iron bracers and collars, similar to the Iron Ring manacles, and carry short swords and short bows.

4.2.2 Nightstalkers

Led by the visionary shaman Dhrom Dhum (Goblin 7/Shaman 6), the Nightstalkers are a typical Goblin tribe, worshippers of Wogar, but also of Hel – the chief himself is a shaman of this northern Immortal.

Dhrom Dhum controls five hordes of Goblin wolf-riders in the area between Highforge and Penhaligon, north of the Faz-Plak territory.

The shaman has a powerful vision of a united Goblinoid nation, and is trying to bring the northern tribes and those of the Dymrak to his side, but he is opposed by the Witches of Dymrak and, indirectly, by the green dragon Argos.

The Nightstalkers favor the use of hand axes, maces and short bows. They use grey-green cloaks and their shamans carry war drums in battle.

4.2.3 Galt-Kalat

Holding the valley of the Foamfire river north of Threshold and Verge, the Galt-Kalat are one of the few surviving Gnoll tribes in Karameikos. They are led by chief Gragszt (Gnoll 8), and include seven hordes, with giant boar riders as well as a small number of Ogre allies. Their necromantic shamans worship the Entropic powers Ranivorous and Yagrai. The Galt-Kalat are fiercely territorial, but rarely venture beyond their valleys.

The warriors of this tribe favor the use of large shields showing the tribal symbol, as well as javelins and swords.

4.2.4 Faceslashers

An independent, semi-nomadic Gnoll horde, the Faceslashers are mercenaries. Hassistrek (Gnoll 4) is the horde chief, and currently serves the mad "Queen", Ilyana Penhaligon.

Most Faceslasher warriors favor large weapons, and especially polearms. The Faceslasher tribe is quite small, compared with other goblinoid tribes, and only survives by allying with greater powers – usually evil human organizations such as the Iron Ring or the cults of Orcus.

4.2.5 Brokenshields

There are few Kobold tribes in Karameikos – pressure from neighbouring human and goblinoid population has pushed most of them into Darokin. However, the ruins of Castle Mistamere house the Bro-

kenshield tribe, a single horde of Kobolds that have struck a bargain with a flock of Harpies for mutual protection. The combination of Kobold archers and Harpy airborne attacks has kept the dangerous Gnolls of the Firefoam valley and the humans of Threshold and Verge from taking the castle.

Tervek Stormswift (Kobold 8/ Wicca 3), chief of the Brokenshields, is a magic user of modest power, and the tribe can also rely on a pair of shamans of Kurtulmak.

The Brokenshield Kobolds use the short bow as their primary weapon, drawing their daggers only to finish wounded enemies.

4.2.6 Leptar's Fist

A powerful, if smaller, tribe based in an abandoned monastery on the foothills of the Altan Tepee, Leptar's Fist is closely allied with the clergy of its namesake Immortal.

The tribe is composed of two hordes of Goblins, Hobgoblins, Bugbears, though a few Ogres are also present.

Horrack Elfslayer (Hobgoblin 8), a veteran of many battles against the Vyalia, leads the tribe, though the influence of the unnamed human priest of Leptar that hides in the monastery is getting stronger as he grows older.

The tribe's symbol is an apish arm, the hand clenched in a fist. Members of this tribe wear ape or baboon skins as cloaks or vests. They use large maces and warhammers.

4.2.7 Leghorn Orcs

The Leghorns are an emerging Orcish tribes in north-eastern Karameikos. Settled in the area between the fief of Penhaligon, the Castellan river, and the Duke's Road, they clash frequently with the troops of the "Goblin-Crushers" battalion and the Penhaligon militia. While they are excellent hunters (able to follow tracks by scent alone), they often raid caravans or villages from their base in Leghorn Nest, a village north-east of Penhaligon.

The Leghorns have a pasty white complexion that sets them apart from other Orcs. They play up on

this by using white garments, accented by bright red decorations, such as the red plummeted cuirbouilli helmets. In battle, the Leghorn warriors are typical skirmishers, fighting with axes, but often starting combat with a volley of spears.

The tribes' chieftain is traditionally known as "The Rooster". The current Rooster is Gakragh (Orc 7), a relatively young chief.

4.2.8 Yurlivsky Crowers

These Orcs have settled in a former traladaran outpost, from which they get their name. The Crowers have been enemies of the Traladarans for centuries, but managed to survive by combining ferocity in combat with cunning and trickery.

Gatgrum Greasetongue (Orc 6/Wicca 4), the current leader, is a prime example of this. While a reasonably skilled warrior, he is much more fearsome for his ability to manipulate other humanoids, as well as for his strategic cunning. His skill in ambushing enemies when they are at their weakest has allowed the Crowers to defend their territory between the Castellan and the Volaga rivers from humans and goblinoids alike, even though they are not a numerous tribe.

The Yurlivsky Crowers were traditionally worshippers of Kaarash, but since the times of the Vampire Wars they have aligned with Orcus and Leptar.

In combat, the Crower warriors wield spiked maces or short spears, and often add spikes to their armors or helmets to intimidate and hurt their opponents.

4.3 Altan-Tepee Tribes

4.3.1 Nyy-akk

An unconventional Orcish tribe living in cave complexes under the Zagrash mountains, north-west of the Lake of Lost Dreams, the Black Web Orcs are easily recognized for their characteristic black clothing and heavy gold earrings. Contrary to most Orcs, the Nyy-akk favor stealth over brawn, and use throwing axes and short swords in combat, as well as lighter armor.

Led by the great hunter Dyarr-Dakk (Orc 7), the Black Web's three hordes keep aside from the squabbles of the other goblinoid tribes, and are not aligned with one of the major players of the region. An additional reason that keeps the Black Web apart from the goblinoid society is their peculiar religion – Nyy-akk shamans worship Nyyk, the Spirit of Darkness (Nyx) and Dakk, the Spider spirit (Korotiku).

4.3.2 Pftark

The second major tribe of eastern Orcs, the Pftark ("Hairless dog"), lives in underground caves in the northern Zagrash mountains.

These Orcs mark their membership within the tribe by shaving their hair, and wield javelins both in war and hunt. In battle, they also carry short swords for hand-to-hand combat. Pftark's four hordes are led by warlord Tarkkag (Orc 9), and include a small clan of Cimarron Hairless Lupins, who have brought the worship of Atzanteotl to the otherwise Kaarash-following orcs.

Some odd genetic trait makes it so that the Pftark Orcs are all left-handed.

4.3.3 Vlackkag

A powerful Hobgoblin tribe from the Altan Tepee mountains, the Vlackkag (Bloody Head) is composed of 5 hordes including Hobgoblin winter wolf riders, Hobgoblin crossbowmen, Goblin wolfriders, Thoul guards and trained vampire bats. Swords and crossbows make up the largest part of the Vlackkag weaponry.

These goblinoids are followers of Wogar and Kaarash, and have powerful, ambitious leaders, including the tribe chief, King Vlack (Hobgoblin 10), and the horde chief Skrakkbak (Hobgoblin 6). They have been forging alliance with the major powers of Western Karameikos, including the Iron Ring, Ilyana Penhaligon and the Witches of Dymrak, but never fully commit to their allies' causes.

Vlackkag Hobgoblins wear gaudy clothes in contrasting colors, and are generally paler than other Karameikan Hobgoblins.

King Vlack wields a powerful blade of Ylari steel, the Sword of Gygar, which was enchanted by the ancient wizard-lord of Mystamere and lost in the Vampire Wars in 720 AC. In the hilt of the sword is set one of the Ionian Gems, which adds to the power of the sword. The Sword of Gygar is unique in its scimitar-like design, adapted to two-handed use.

4.3.4 Steelwarriors

The Steelwarriors are the traditional threat of the Altan Tepee – these fierce Hobgoblins have been a nuisance to the neighbouring human nations for centuries. At some point in their legendary past, the Steelwarriors have obtained superior knowledge of weapon crafting – a knowledge that is kept secret by the master craftsmen and by the tribal shamans of Yagrai and Bartziluth. Legends of the Steelwarriors point to Modrigswerg, Fire Giants, Fiends, renegade Ylari and even more outlandish sources for the origin of their secret techniques.

Armed with good swords and axes, and supported by an élite force of Thouls and Bugbears, the Steelwarriors' five hordes vie for dominance of the Altan Tepee against the Vlackkag and the humans of Karameikos, Ylaruam, and Thyatis.

Khorgul (Hobgoblin 12) is the Steelwarrior chief. Unique among the hobgoblin rulers in the area, the Steelwarrior chief bears the title of Kan – possibly derived from the Makistani or Hobgobland title Khan. The leaders of the lesser hordes, Vinek (Hobgoblin 7), Toktar (Bugbear 8), Umor (Hobgoblin 6) and Skevar (Hobgoblin 8), take the title of Kavkan.

4.3.5 Grey Rats

The least powerful of three tribes dwelling in the Caves of Chaos near the Castellan's Keep, these Kobolds' only skill is their ability to train giant rats.

Khizzk (Kobold 6) leads the single Grey Rat horde. He barely manages to keep the tribe alive, locked as he is between powerful orcish tribes and the human army.

The Grey Rats worship Kurtulmak, and wear grey ratskin shoulder guards. They wield javelins and daggers in combat.

4.3.6 Horned Heads

Form Grimclaw (Orc 5) leads this mixed tribe of Orcs and Gnolls from his hideout in the Caves of Chaos. The tribe is composed of an Orcish horde and a Gnollish one – Grantz Iceringer (Gnoll 3) leads the Gnolls.

The tribe members wear horned helmets with broad nosepieces. These Orcs are skilled at preparing traps, which makes their lair especially dangerous. They generally fight with broad sword and round shields.

Like the Chaos Horde, they are followers of the evil high priest of Orcus who resides in the Caves of Chaos.

4.3.7 Chaos Horde

The last and largest of the goblinoid tribes dwelling in the Caves of Chaos, this tribe marks its territory with skulls and is known for its extensive use of crossbows.

It is composed of two hordes, one of Goblins and one of Hobgoblins, but it can count on an Ogre ally. Rhuun (Hobgoblin 6), the tribal chief, leads the Hobgoblin horde.

The Chaos Horde was the first tribe to be contacted by the priests of Leptar and Orcus, and its members are fanatic followers of that Entropic cult.

4.3.8 Jagged Rocks

Horrack Rockgrinder (Orc 7), a massive Orcus Porcus warrior, leads this large horde of Orcs, Goblins and Hobgoblins. However, the powerful shaman Dguul (Orc 6/Shaman 6) is the true power behind the throne.

The Jagged Rock tribe is composed by four hordes: Mountain Raiders (500 Orcs), Hungry Wolves (300 Goblins), Bloody Noses (250 Goblins) and Deathslide (100 Hobgoblins). Chiefs Zoarh Bootlicker (Goblin 3), Arghal Rednose (Goblin 5) and Eaark Twofaces (Hobgoblin 4/Wicca 3) lead the Goblin and Hobgoblin hordes.

Zoarh has been imposed by the Mountain Raiders as the Hungry Wolves chief, and is not really able to handle his horde. Arghal Rednose knows it, and is manoeuvring to set himself as the chief of a new

horde, if Horrack and Dguul get themselves killed in one of the battles against the Ylari or Karameikan troops. This crafty goblin will therefore tarry long enough to see whether the tribe is winning or not before committing his own goblins to any battle.

These goblinoids use a variety of weapons, from axes and slings (the Goblins) to spears (the Mountain Raiders), swords and javelins (the Deathslide). The two Goblin hordes have a number of wolfriders, nearly a hundred in the Hungry Wolves, half that number in the Bloody Noses.

4.3.9 Killer Sands

A large Hobgoblin tribe (with about 300 goblinoids), originally from the Dythesthenian badlands, the Killer Sands have been pushed back to the eastern flanks of the Altan Tepee by the armies of the Emirates of Ylaruam. The tribe has been recently cowed into the service of the Magian Fire Worshipers, who killed most of the tribal leaders. Aptul the Survivor (Hobgoblin 5), the only horde chief to survive the onslaught, now leads the entire tribe.

Killer Sand warriors wield scimitars and short bows in battle.

4.4 Southern Radlebb Tribes

4.4.1 Bloodbears

Prowling in the woods west of Krakatos, the Bloodbears are hunters and highwaymen. A powerful Bugbear horde supported by two mixed Bugbear and Hobgoblin hordes, the Bloodbears are famed for their berserker rages in battle.

Led by warrior-chief Gorgar Bearheart (Bugbear 7), these followers of the Immortal Bartziluth wade into battle wearing rough bearskin caps and cloaks, and use freshly cut bear heads as their battle standards.

The Bloodbears favor the morningstar and longbow, respectively for battle and hunt.

4.4.2 Bargle's Bughears

This unusual Bugbear tribe has been long fascinated with the power of magic. It was originally composed of Bugbears, expert in forest lore and ambush tactics. While employed by the Black Eagle Baron, the tribal leaders met the powerful magic user, Bargle, and were awed by his magical prowess. However, rather than cower in fear, they asked Bargle to take them as apprentices. The evil magician has since kept the Bugbears as a personal experiment, training Bugbear wiccans while solidifying their loyalty to him alone – he plans to use them against Ludwig, if the Baron goes out of hand.

Since falling in with Bargle, this three hordes strong tribe has taken the name of Bargle's Bughears. The tribal chief is only known as The Ear of Bargle (Bugbear 6/ Wicca 5), and is one of the most powerful goblinoid wicca in Karameikos.

The Bughears have few shamans, as faith in Bartziluth was never especially strong, and has been almost completely replaced by a cult of Bargle himself, ministered by Bugbear Wicca.

4.4.3 Vileraiders

From the woods east of the Black Eagle Barony, the Vileraider Bugbears manage a successful slaver ring in a joint venture with the Iron Ring. Mostly, they kidnap people from Luln or ambush caravans on the Westron road.

Urrgh Blacktooth (Bugbear 8) leads the three Vileraider hordes, under the banner of the snake head.

These Bugbears originally followed Bartziluth, but entropic cults such as those of Orcus or the Iron Ring's Sindhi-originated religion are gaining more and more power in this tribe.

These Hobgoblins decorate their weaponry, usually large, curved blades, with crude carvings depicting dragons and other fierce monsters.

4.4.4 Nightseekers

A large band of mercenary goblins currently in the service of the Black Eagle, the Nightseeker are led by Nyark the Sly (Goblin 12/ Shaman 3), a powerful

warrior and a follower of the Immortal Nyx (known to these goblinoids as the Night Mother). While the cult of Nyx is dominant, goblin wardog handlers worship Wogar, the traditional goblin Immortal.

Training and handling of dogs, both for war and hunt, is the clan specialty, and the Nightseekers are employed to track and capture escaped slaves by the Black Eagle Baron. Contrary to popular belief, these goblins do not ride their war dogs, which are strong, but not nearly as large as the dire wolves raised by the Kloss-Lunk and other wolfriding tribes.

The Nightseeker are unique among goblinoid bands in that they use no symbol or battle standard – possibly because these would be useless during the night, which these goblinoid favor.

4.4.5 White Death

Faces painted in ghostly white, the White Death Orcs and Goblin are a group of fanatic followers of Yagrai that use their considerable mystic powers to terrorize their victims.

A single horde led by the shaman only known as The Ghost (Orc 12/Shaman 7), they serve Bargle and Ludwig von Hendricks as assassins.

The White Deaths are particularly feared among the other goblinoids, who consider them kin of the undead. White Deaths always carry at least three daggers hidden under their clothes, but wield a variety of other weapons in mass combat.

4.5 Cruth Mountains Tribes

4.5.1 The Roaring Fiends

An horde of mercenaries with an overinflated ego, the Roaring Fiends style themselves after their Immortal patron, Alphaks.

Under the guidance of their shamans, whose leader, Urgal Redhand (Hobgoblin 10/ Shaman 4), is also the current chieftain, they have taken up the use of sword and whip in combat, as well as the habit of dyeing their faces with red paint to resemble the typical image of a Roaring Fiend.

The Hobgoblin tribe is currently employed by Ludwig von Hendricks as part of his standing army.

4.5.2 Greyslayers

The Greyslayer Orcs are a medium-sized goblinoid tribe hailing from the Cruth Lowlands. Due to the relative lack of resources of the area, they often range into the eastern reaches of the Five Shire. The Greyslayers are also sometimes employed by the Black Eagle Baron, though they do not work well with other goblinoids, due to the many feuds they have – being followers of Jammudaru, these Orcs tend to be very thorough in their quests for revenge.

The main assets of this three hordes-strong tribe is the large number of Cruth Ogres they are able to recruit, and a certain ability with poisons – which probably inspired their symbol, a dagger dripping with poison. Daggers are also used by most Greyslayers as backup weapons, while wicked, dented large blades and massive mauls are favored as primary weapons.

Kardat Souleater (Orc 13/ Wicca 2) is the leader of this tribe.

4.5.3 Rashak's Reavers

Gnolls are the most hated goblinoids in Traladara, since they remind of the Beastmen invasion. So, Gnollish tribes either dwell in remote areas, or are small and nomadic. That Rashak (Gnoll 10) was able to gather such a powerful tribe under his red skull banner in the well populated area of Halag and keep it together for years is a testimony to the Gnoll chieftain's craftiness.

Rashak's Reaver is a single horde, composed of Orcs and Gnolls with a few Ogres. It serves the Black Eagle Baron as a heavy infantry unit. These Orcs and Gnolls are noted for their military organization. They use a variety of heavy infantry weapons, but favor halberds and swords.

Kaarash worshippers are prevalent in this tribe, as Rashak does not tolerate worship of Entropic Immortals – maybe fearing the treacherous character of their followers.

4.5.4 Blackstone

The largest Orcish tribe of the Cruth Mountains, the Blackstone is a survivor of the orcish invasions of the Five Shires. From that time, they keep the tradition of smoking pipeweed, though their weed is darker and much rougher in taste than the Hin product.

The Blackstone Orcs are also adept miners, a skill developed fighting the dwarves in ancient times and honed to great extent in time.

Sorghuul the Slasher (Orc 11), a vicious and experienced warrior, leads the six hordes of this tribe.

Like other Cruth tribes, the Blackstone often recruit Ogres and even Hill Giants as front-line fighters or living artillery pieces.

This tribe divides its worship between the traditional Orcish patron, Kaarash, and Leptar, who promises revenge on the Hin. Its symbol is a black rock, crudely drawn on blood red banners.

The Blackstone Orcs wield warhammers and battleaxes in combat.

4.5.5 Rotting Snakes

The Rotting Snake is a typical Orcish tribe. It controls a large hilly territory on the eastern bank of the Gustos river. These Orcs are skirmishers, adapted to fighting in the hills where cavalry is mostly ineffective, and the woods and rocks offer good protection against long-range missile weapons. They use short javelins for ambushes and first strikes, following up with a savage charge and pounding the opponents down with large maces and mauls.

Chief Luzlug (Orc 9), the tribal chief, is the paragon Orcish warrior, and a devout follower of Kaarash, like most of his tribesmen.

The Rotting Snakes are bitter rivals of the Blackstones, but are numerically much weaker. They do hire some Ogres to even the scores, but not as many as the Blackstones. Mostly, they rely on savagery, skill, and tactical planning of ambushes by Luzlug and his shamans.

4.5.6 Jagged Claw

The noblest of the Orcish tribes of the Cruth Lowlands, the Jagged Claw are the last direct descendants of the kings of Othrong. In spite of its infamous ancestry, this is only a medium-sized tribe. The Jagged Claw live in the western Cruth Lowlands, north of the Greyslayer territory.

They are led by Prince Bakghat (Orc 6), a young and comparatively inexperienced, if courageous, commander. Bakghat's father, the previous Prince, died in a raid against Werekaslot three years ago, and Bakghat has just emerged as the new tribal chief after dueling three of his half-brothers.

These Orcs have preserved the traditional worship of Yamag (Terra), though their primary patron is Kaarash. Shamans of both Immortals are present in the tribe – female shamans generally worship Yamag, while male shamans worship Kaarash.

4.5.7 Cruth Ogres

There are at least four hundred Ogres in the Cruth region – a powerful force, were they united. Luckily for Karameikos, the Ogres are quite stupid, and most of them do not have the vision or wisdom to see the strength of unity. Most Ogres do not like to be bossed around by others, and stay in small family groups of six Ogres or less. They are, however, sometimes lured by smarter humanoids (generally Orcs) into working as mercenaries, though no wise Orcish tribe would keep more than a dozen Ogre mercenaries. Not only these mercenaries would quarrell with each other, but, if not deterred by a 10 to 1 ratio in favor of their employers, they would be impossible to control.

Cruth Ogres have few leaders, and even fewer spellcasters, the most notable being a solitary shaman, Magdub (Ogre 4/Shaman 4 of Terra), rumored to commune with the spirits of the Cruth Mountains. An old, wise but irritable Ogre, Magdub is shunned by the other Ogres, who fear him and his scolding words – the old shaman acts as a father to the less intelligent Ogres. However, when an Ogre finally understand he has done a big mistake, he will run to Magdub. Luckily, the shaman is fairly peaceful, as

far as goblinoids go, and understands that the Ogre must coexist with both humans and Orcs.

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