

# GAZETTEER

UNOFFICIAL GAME ACCESSORY

## The Kingdoms of Alphatia

by Bruce Heard

Alphatian Sea

Draco



# MYSTARA



# GAZETTEER

Unofficial Game Accessory

## The Kingdoms of Alphatia

By **Bruce Heard**

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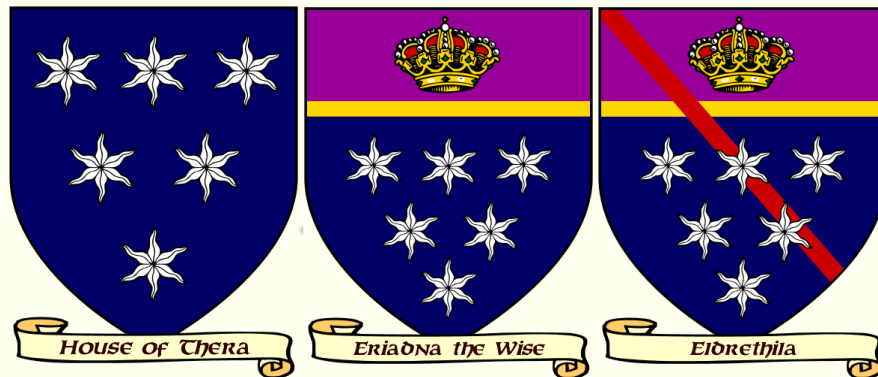
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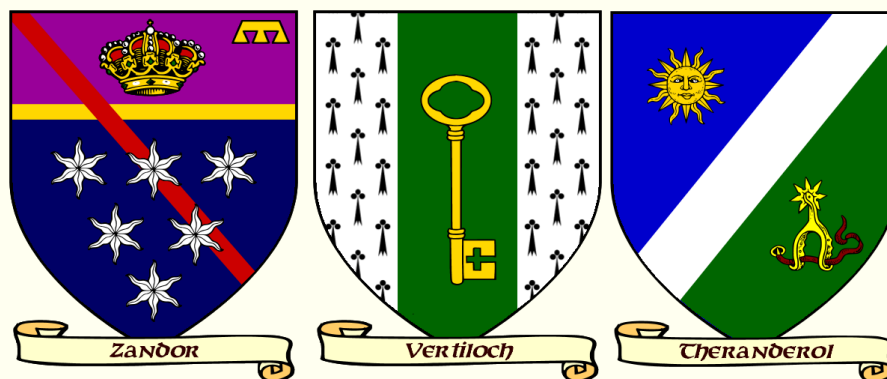
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# Famous Arms of Alphatia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



The House of Thera originates from the Kingdom of Theranderol, at least as far as its Mysteran ancestry is concerned. In fact, like many ancient Alphatian dynasties, it can trace its roots to families who came from another world, hence the six *estoiles* upon a nightly sky. Eriadna, as Empress of Alphatia, bears the *purpure* chief and crown as her personal arms. Her immediate offsprings' coat of arms are similar save for the *bendlet gules* and differentiating label.



It is easy to understand the design of Vertiloch's arms--the vertical green stripe stands for "vert" while the golden key implies a "lock." Ermine augmentations remind that the District of Vertiloch belongs to the throne of Alphatia. The popular arms of Theranderol display first and foremost the wizards' sun in its plenitude over and above the spurs of gallant knights. The field of azure represents the sky while the green is for the land below. Queen Eldrethila would always fight under her own banner if present on a battlefield. A military commander of Theranderol's army would otherwise use his own arms or those of Theranderol, perhaps both for good measure.

**From the Author:** The app I used at designing shields electronically is an Inkwell Ideas design called **Coat of Arms**.

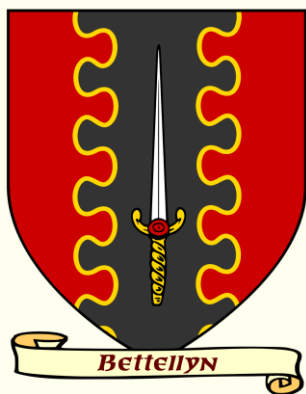


# Alphatian Coats of Arms

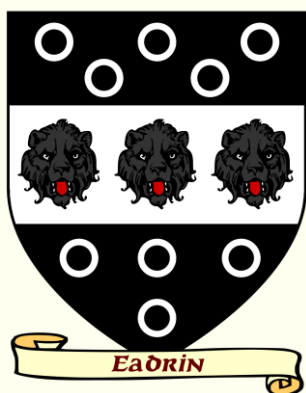
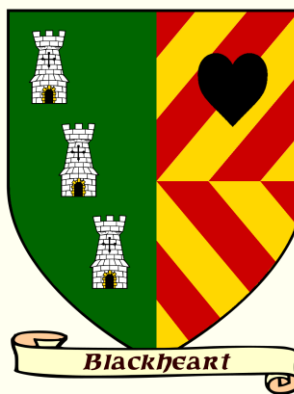
by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



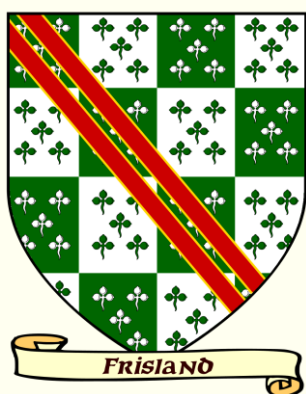
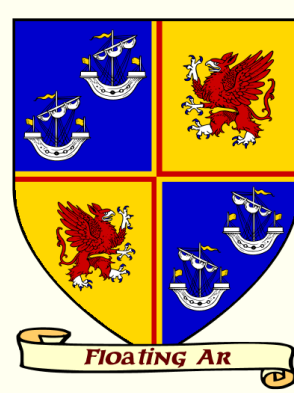
It took me a while to find a piece of art I liked to represent Ambur. I placed the "Eye" of Ambur at the center, which refers to the Great Observatory. Thanks to Andrew's help, I was able to add some white around the eye's pupil, using Gimp. Arogansa, on the other hand, was a cake walk. The dolphin connects with Arogansa's capital, Bluenose, a place with great beaches and lots of dolphins. I could not resist!



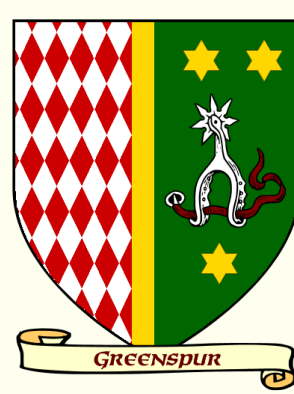
Naturally, places like Bettelilyn cause a slight problem since I haven't redesigned them and no information was presented in Dawn of the Emperors. I have a general clue what to do with Bettelilyn, based on the small part I worked on while dressing up the map for neighboring Theranderol, last week. I'll let you guess. Of course, Blackheart came together quite nicely. Wizard towers in a forest, a black heart, and sort of a hazard pattern to warn off trespassers: no peddlers allowed.

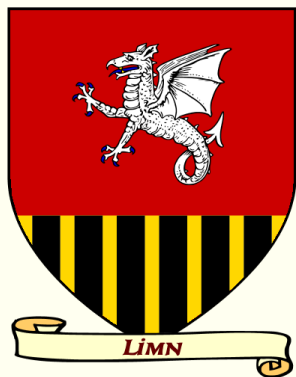


Eadrin is another unknown here. It's a neat pattern that reminds me of the arms of Pole (from the old Kingmaker game). Either I'll come up with something related to these arms when I get around to fleshing out Eadrin, or I'll redesign a new coat of arms. (Editor's note: I replaced the image on the left with the updated one from 2<sup>nd</sup> Eadrin chapter.) Of course, the old favorite, Floating Ar, features a straightforward and conventional design with, as can be expected, skyships and a flying beast.

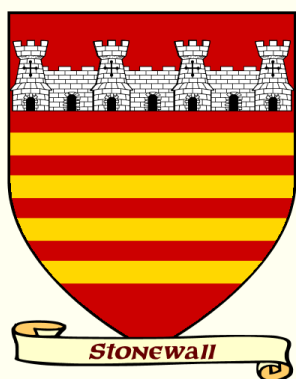
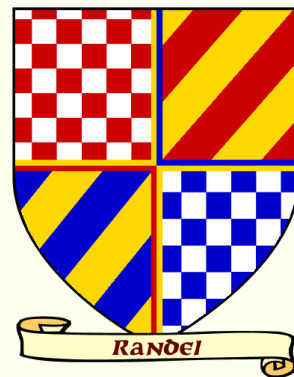


Frisland sent me scratching my head for ideas. I thought of some ghastly monsters or carnivorous plants. What I found on the internet was hilarious and, after wiping off a few tears of laughter, I followed a more subtle approach. Yum! Tiny clovers, and lots of them. What could possibly happen? Greenspur was another one that came right through. Green + Spur (of course) and a lozenge pattern just because I like it! So there. Designer's prerogative!

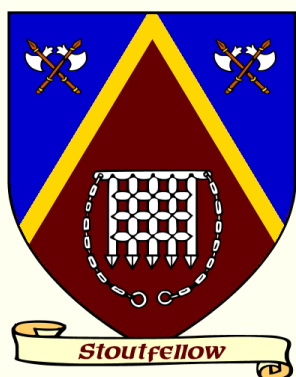




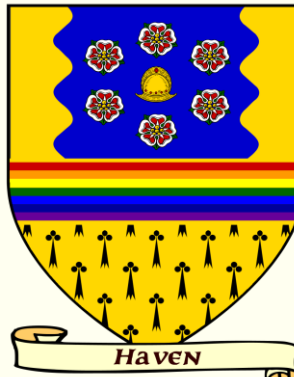
Which bring us to Limn. I'd introduced a very discreet connection to dragons and lindwurms. Since I didn't expect to find heraldic versions of D&D trolls (carrot-noses and all) I went for the true and tried beast, a wyvern if I recall correctly. If anyone finds orcs, ogres, trolls, and other such game classics done somewhere in heraldic fashion, please let me know! Randel was another illustrious stranger with no entry in Dawn of the Emperors. So, I went with elegant and very classic.



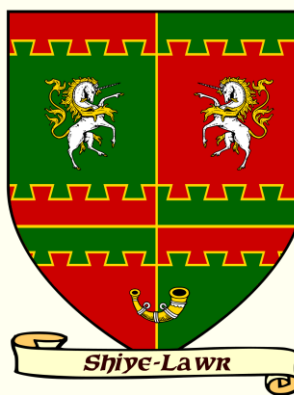
Another very obvious design, for Stonewall, actually incorporates three castles superimposed. Looks like a wall. Good enough, says I. Onward. The next one was an experiment I saved because it looked truly bizarre. Perhaps we'll find a spot for a culture focused on mechanical devices. Feel free to suggest. Naturally, there should be coats of arms for cities and aristocratic clans, such as the House of Thera detailed in the previous post, major guilds, the Great Council of Wizards, etc.



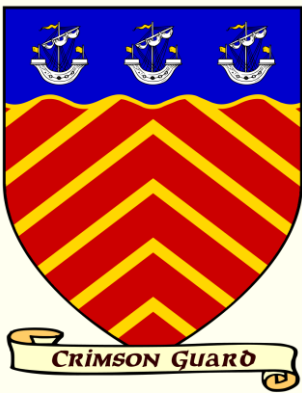
Moving right along, here's Stoutfellow: a great mountain whose heart a foreigner does not enter, and whose slopes are guarded by cold, dwarven steel. If not particularly artistic, it remains not nonetheless eloquent. Another scheme which, alas, fails from a visual standpoint, speaks clearly of Haven's nature: six forms or beauty in a lake, and at their center, the art of war. A rainbow runs across, above the mark of fashion. It was the last winner at the Aasla Festival. Thankfully, the design may change at a later festival.



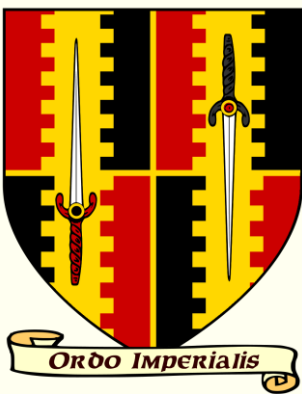
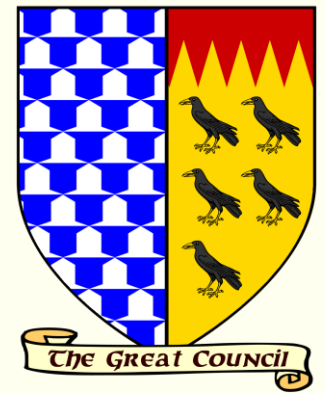
We'll conclude the collection of coats of arms with two great sylvan realms. On the left, Foresthome suggests a population of centaurs dwelling in the great woods of mainland Alphatia. On the right, the elves' colors feature a horn to hunt, to rally for war, or perhaps to call upon the unicorns and all other woodland beings living in the legendary and mysterious Shiye-Lawr.



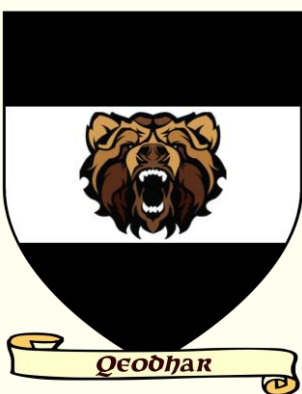




Wait, wait! There's more. There we have it—the Crimson Guard, the skyship force supposedly guarding Sundsvall, or was it Ampulia? Either way, it wouldn't take them long to cover the distance between the two. I thought of using a darker tone of red but it invariably looked more brown than crimson. Next comes the Great Council, or the Council of a Thousand Wizards. The vair pattern denotes the councilors' aristocratic status. The ravens refer to magical constructs once used as heralds to bring news of council resolutions. Many people quip that they represent the nobles tweeting and chirping all day, leaving behind nothing but bird droppings.



Of course, the list wouldn't be complete without the Imperial Guard—battlements gules and sable, and swords to defend them. Pretty straightforward. One that is far less so is the Department of Smoke and Mirrors, the folks responsible for maintaining the masquerade in Ampulia and of protecting the capital's secrecy. Naturally, very few people have actually seen this coat of arms. I'll let you judge if it is appropriate enough.

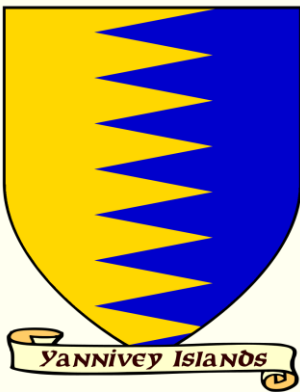
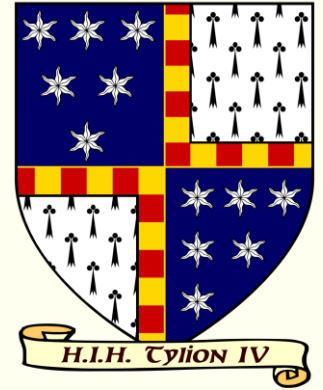


I almost forgot our friends from way up north, the Island of Qeodhar. I originally wanted a polar bear, but could not find a decent piece of line art. If I did (I may eventually), I'd probably reverse the black and white pattern, and place the bear's white face within the black section in the middle. I threw in Imperial Rangers, by popular demand of a loyal and devoted supporter! Leaves represent heraldic holly scattered by the wind, the azure band a river through a forest (the Greenlake or Elfriple Rivers), and the critter in the middle. . . well, I'm sure you'll come up with something.





As promised earlier, here is Aquas. This was a fun design to put together. It was a bit tricky but I like the result, and it's fitting for an underwater realm. The only trouble is the black area within the tail's coil, which I could not eliminate. If anyone has any ideas about this, please let me know. Tylion's coat of arms was another experiment. Since the application does not support borders, I managed a slight trick to get around the limitation. The design for His Imperial Highness (since he's no longer a "Majesty," having abdicated in favor of Eriadna) displays the House of Thera's colors along with ermine to connect him with his imperial stature.



Now I give you the colors for the Yannivey Islands. Simple and striking. This one took all of three minutes to compose. Most of the time needed to design these coats of arms comes from experimenting and thinking up new approaches. The one that took the most time (drafting rather than thinking) was Frisland's for obvious reasons. On the right stands Torenal's coat of arms, a pretty little thing that gets around the application's limitations with borders. Where there's a will there's a shield! I think I've pretty much covered mainland Alphatia. Let me know if I've forgotten anything.



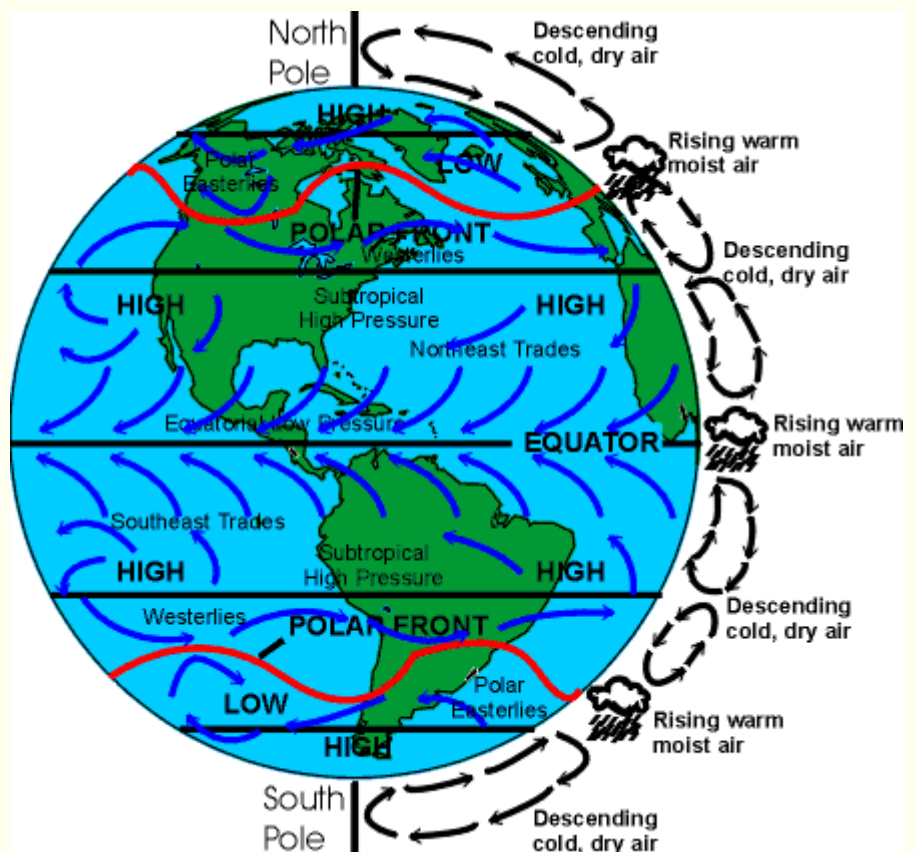
# Climate in Alphatia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

While developing the realms of Alphatia, it seemed that a clear sense of relative weather conditions on the isle-continent was missing. Having nearly completed the series on Foresthome, I felt I should take a break and focus on this topic. Not being a scientist or even remotely acquainted with the mechanics of climatology, I relied on various Earth maps as rough guidelines. Since Mystara is inspired from Earth's prehistory, this approach seemed to make sense. On the other hand, Mystara is a fantasy world, partly governed by magic and immortal fiat as the rationale for some of its improbable weather patterns. Suggested climates may also reflect pre-existing designs rather than scientific logic. This article isn't meant to change any of the latter (at least substantially), neither is it the last word on the subject. It remains open for debate, and its contents can (and probably will) be altered over time.

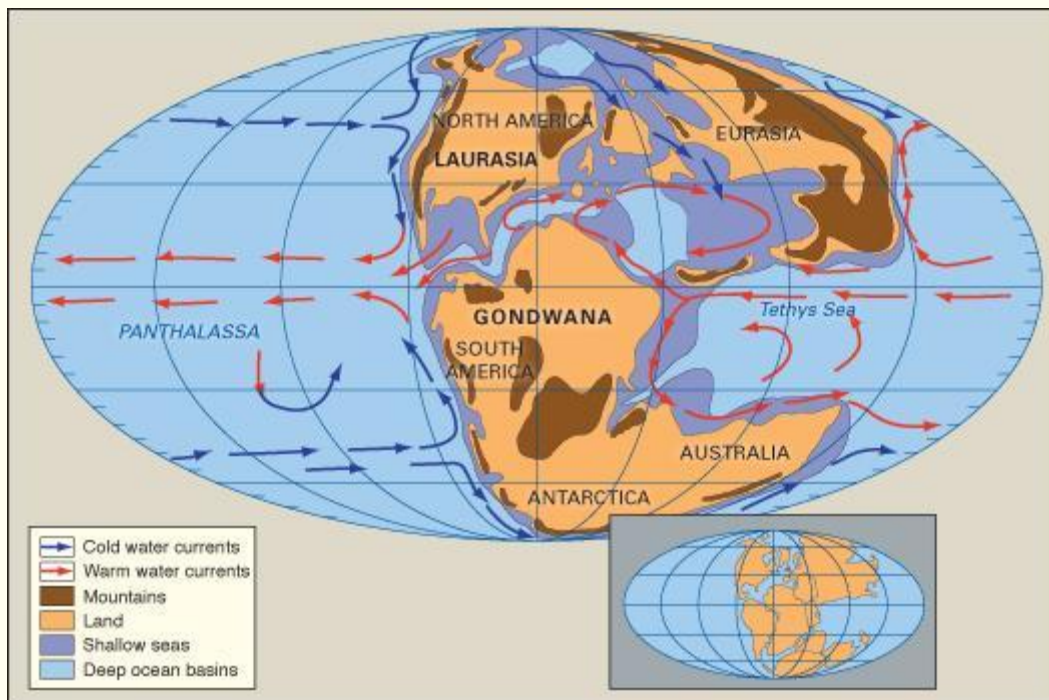
## WIND PATTERNS

Mystara's prevailing wind directions match those on real Earth. In the northern hemisphere between the equator and the northern tropic, trade winds blow toward the southwest. North of the tropic, winds blow toward the northeast. Along the equator and the 51st parallel (northern Europe), these winds pick up moisture, which generates more precipitation. Along both tropics, however, dry air tends to keep the land below arid or semi-arid. In the northern hemisphere, this is the latitude of the Yazak Steppes, Sind's desert, the Emirates of Ylaruam, and the southern Isle of Dawn. Alphatian winds blow predominantly toward the northeast.



# Sea Currents

The diagram below gives a general idea which way sea currents might be flowing. Just north and south of the equator, waters are likely to move westward. Mystara does not have an ocean equivalent to Earth's Atlantic. In its place lie a series of islands, including Alphonatia, surrounded by relatively shallow seas. The area around Alphonatia still is befuddling as regards local sea currents. The Coriolis effect that would normally cause warm waters to gyrate clockwise probably does not apply in this region. Polar currents are likely flowing southward. Warm equatorial currents are pushing northward. The problem around Alphonatia resides in three bottlenecks through which moving waters are channeled.



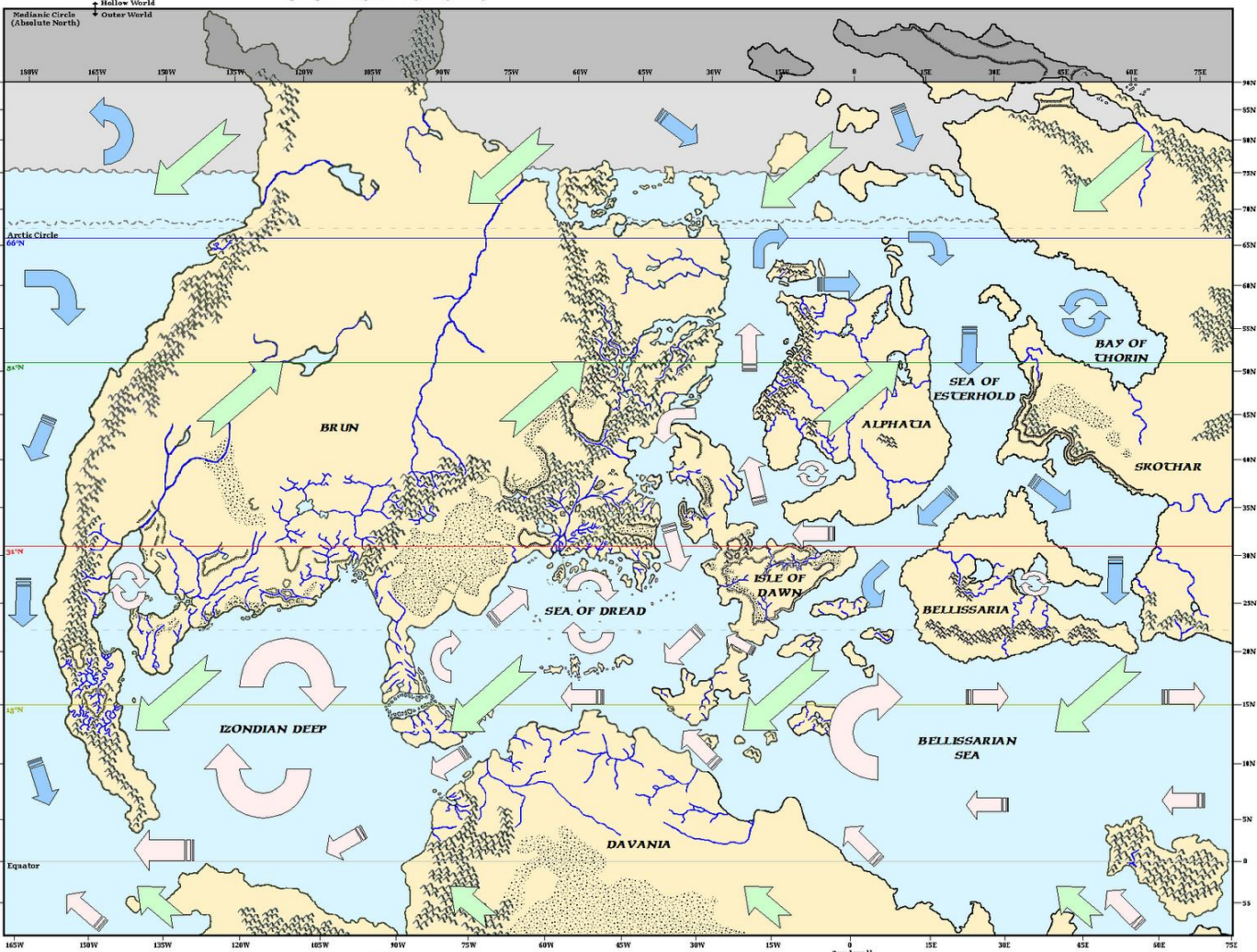
Following a pattern similar to real Earth, polar currents might flow down the east coast of Alphonatia, reaching warmer waters south of Bellissaria. On the other hand, currents also continue upward along its west coast, funneling slightly warmer waters. Part of this flow finds its way around the Isle of Dawn's northern tip, and south from there toward the Sea of Dread. Currents around Alphonatia are likely weak, except through bottlenecks such as Bellissaria's Strait of Minaea, the Strait of Dawn around Greenspur, and the Strait of Helskir by the Isle of Dawn's northern tip.

This contradicts a map published in the AC1010 Almanac, which shows a sea current heading north along the Isle of Dawn's western coast. This is debatable and I'm not sold on either version. The trouble with a northward flow is that it seems to conflict with the Sea of Dread's natural clockwise movement. A southward flow looks equally strange, with a northbound current near Alphonatia reversing itself to stream through the Strait of Helskir. One may assume magic is somehow involved here—*visions cross my mind of gargantuan koprus cursed for all eternity to flip their tails and fan sea currents.* ::cringe::

**Mystara: Map of 2/3 of the Northern Emisphere as of AC1000**

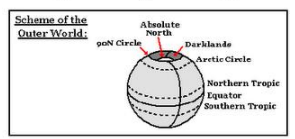
Scale map varies slightly with latitude and longitude: 5 latitude degrees = 405km (253mi)  
15 longitude degrees = 1296km (810mi)

Sea Currents Warm/Cold Dominant Winds



**Legend:**


**Notes:**  
 - Latitudes are calculated accordingly to an Eckert IV projection. They approximately match Ptolemy and UTM latitudes.  
 - Longitudes are calculated accordingly to an Eckert IV projection. They approximately match HW based set longitudes.  
 - Latitudes and Longitudes in the Darklands are difficult to calculate and so they are not showed in the map. Shapes and dimensions of landmasses showed in this area may be tricky.  
 - Map elements were considered if they appeared at least in an official supplement map and they added some detail to conflicting or more recent maps.  
 - Some details are canon deducted or based on some logical assumptions. Details in the area comprised between 40-60E and 70-90N comes from 1000mapature deductions about Blackmoor position.

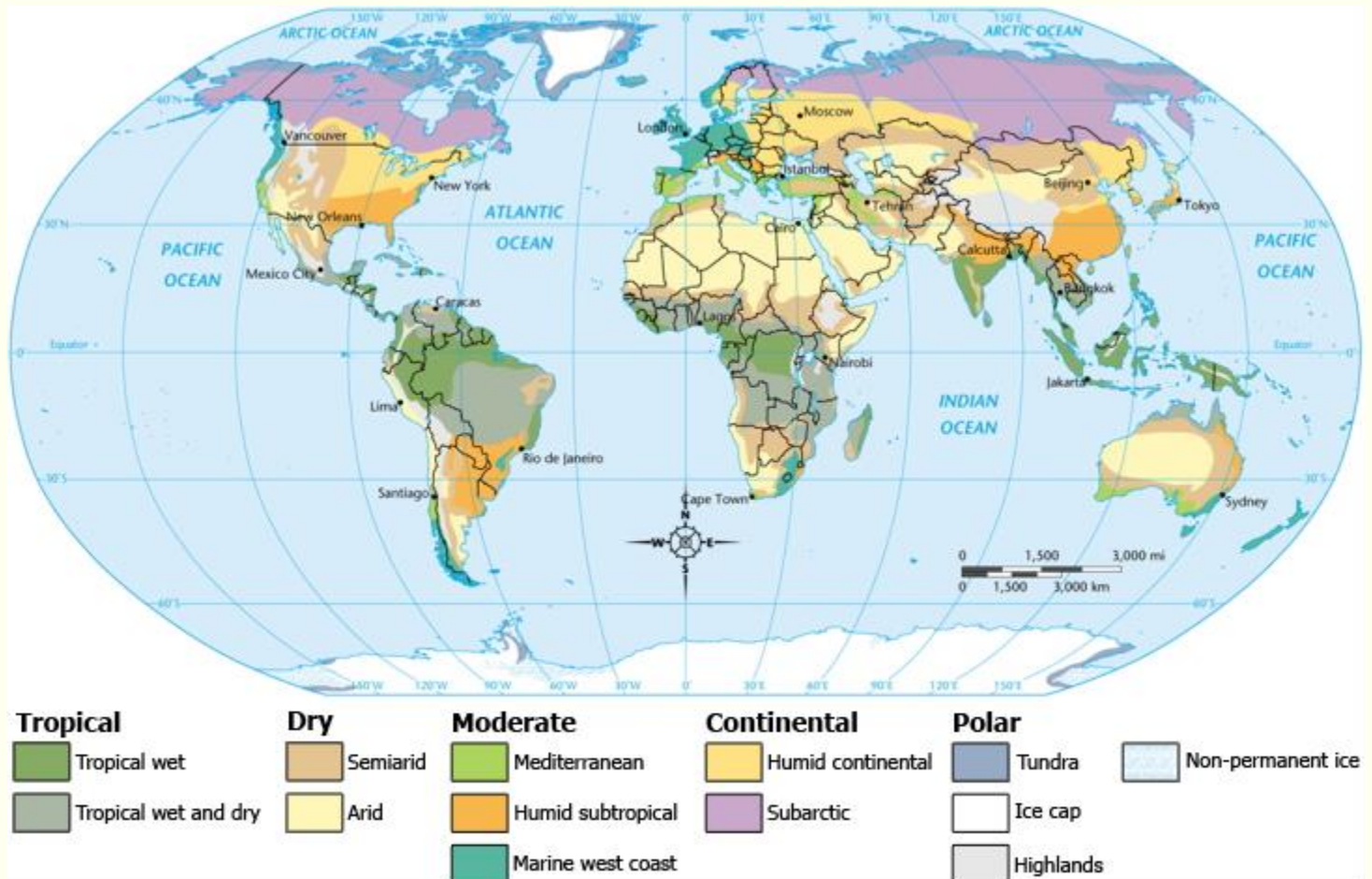


# Alphatian Climate

A cold sea current affects Alphatia's northeastern coast, while a relatively warmer one rounds its southwestern shores. The expectation is that its oriental side would therefore be cooler. A low pressure trough is likely to bulge deep from the north especially in the winter, inferring that much of Alphatia's upper half would often be overcast during that season. The far north would therefore be cool and moist, often foggy, as with real Earth's northern Scotland. The southern end, being very close to the 31st parallel, would be much drier. The red line on the map shown above is the 31st parallel (northern tropic).

Predominant winds blow from the southwest. Some moisture would likely come from the Sea of Dawn, hitting the Kerothar Mountains. In other words, Alphatia's west coast would have ample rain. Logically, a semi-arid band should exist on the eastern side of the Kerothar Mountains

since they would trap most of the sea's moisture. Pre-existing designs of Alphatia show instead two huge forests in that region—the Shiye Lawr and Blackheart. We'll have to assume that magic is used there to counteract the region's natural aridity. Winds would also pick up moisture in the Aaslan Gulf, showering its northern shores in winter. This region is home to the huge swamps in Haven and Vertiloch. South from there, a more Mediterranean climate might prevail, being close to the band of dry weather near the 31st parallel. Winds blowing in that area pick up little moisture from the Strait of Dawn, causing meridional Alphatia to remain drier than the rest.



### Here are actual real-Earth climate definitions:

**Tropical Wet:** includes rain forests and is characterized by rainfall at least 1,750 mm (69") per year. Mean monthly temperatures exceed 18°C/64°F during all months of the year. Seasonal monsoon winds prevail for several months, bringing the rainy season. Regions within North America, South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australia and East Asia are monsoon regimes.

**Tropical Wet & Dry:** includes tropical savanna in semi-arid to semi-humid climate at subtropical and tropical latitudes, with average temperatures at or above 18°C/64°F year round and rainfall between 750 mm (30") and 1,270 mm (50") annually. This climate is widespread on Africa, and is found in India, northern parts of South America, Malaysia, and Australia.

**Semi-Arid:** describes dry regions including scrubland and steppes most commonly found around the fringes of subtropical deserts. Hot semi-arid climates tend to be located in the tropics and subtropics, with sometimes extremely hot summers and mild to warm winters. Snow rarely (if ever) falls in these regions. Cold semi-arid climates tend to be located in temperate zones, typically in continental interiors some distance from large bodies of water. Cold semi-arid climates usually feature hot and dry summers, and cold winters with some snowfall. They tend to have higher elevations and are sometimes subject to major temperature swings between day and night, as much as 13°C/23°F.

**Arid:** describes the driest regions. Deserts usually have a large diurnal and seasonal temperature range, with hi/low temperatures depending on location (in summer up to 45°C/113°F, and low nighttime temperatures in winter down to 0°C/32°F).

**Mediterranean:** is a sub-tropical climate typically found near large bodies of water such as the Mediterranean Basin, most of California, West and South Australia, southwestern South Africa, and central Chile. It is characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. This climate's temperatures are generally moderate, with a comparatively small range between the winter low and summer high. It tends to be on the west side of continents.

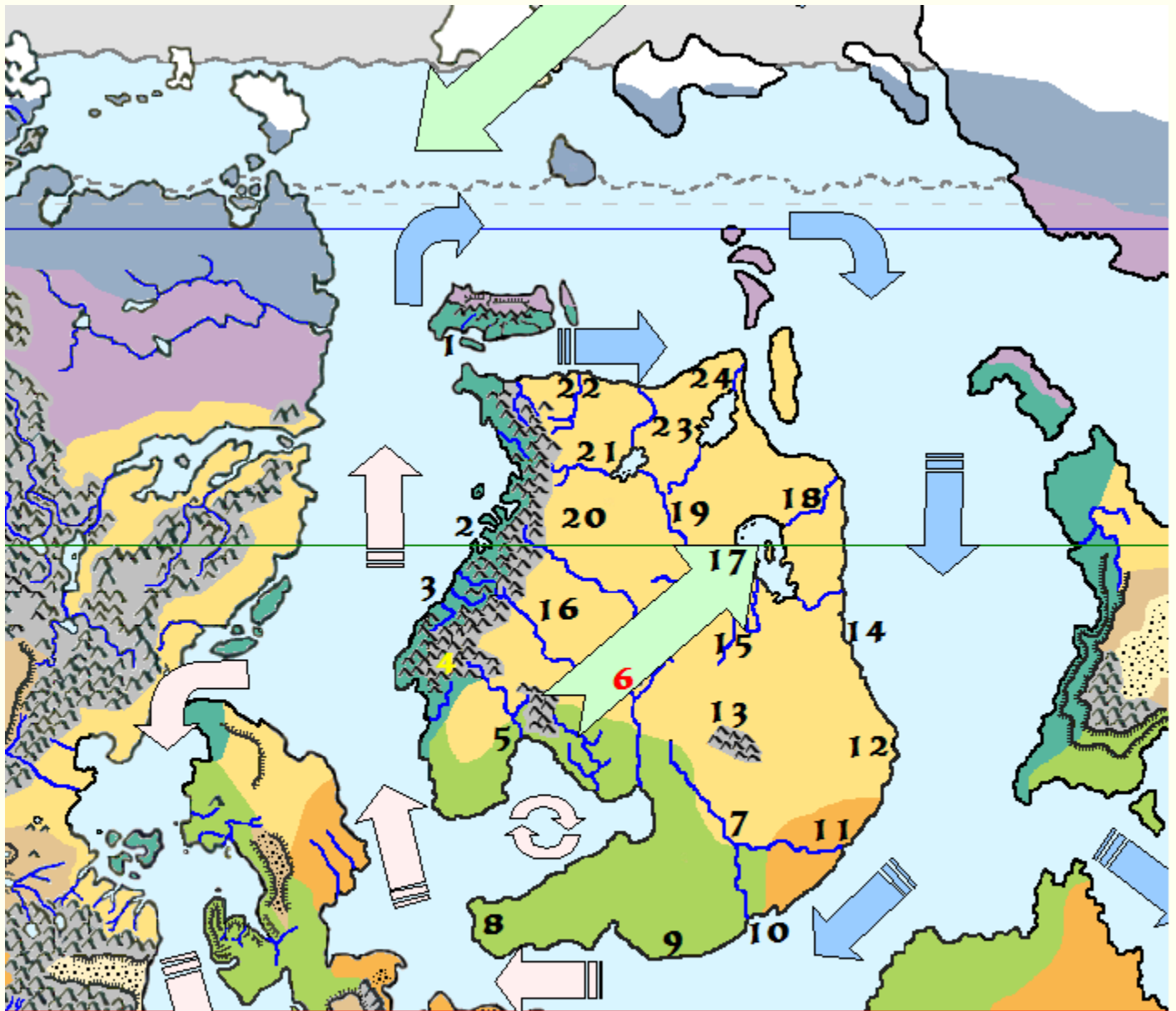
**Humid Subtropical:** this climate zone features winter rainfall (and sometimes snowfall) associated with large storms that the westerlies steer from west to east. Most summer rainfall occurs during thunderstorms and from occasional tropical cyclones. Humid subtropical climates lie on the east side of continents, roughly between latitudes 20° and 40° degrees away from the equator.

**Marine West Coast:** oceanic climate is typically found along the west coasts at the middle latitudes of all the world's continents, and in southeastern Australia. It is accompanied by plentiful precipitation year round, with cool/temperate weather such as in Northern Europe, North America's northern west coast, etc.

**Humid Continental:** this climate is marked by variable weather patterns and a large seasonal temperature variance. Places with more than three months of average daily temperatures above 10°C/50°F and a coldest month temperature below -3°C/27°F and which do not meet the criteria for an arid or semiarid climate, are classified as continental.

**Sub-Arctic:** describes a region with little precipitation and monthly temperatures above 10°C/50°F for 1-3 months of the year, with permafrost in large parts of the area. Winters include up to six months of temperatures averaging below 0°C/32°F. It includes taiga type terrain with boreal forests consisting mostly of pines, spruces, and larches.

**Tundra:** in this climate, one month is warm enough to melt snow, with a year round average temperature never more than 10°C/50°F, and extremely cold winters. Tundra climates as a rule are hostile to woody vegetation even where winters are comparatively mild by polar standards, as in Iceland. Rainfall and snowfall are generally slight, but swamps and bogs are the norm.



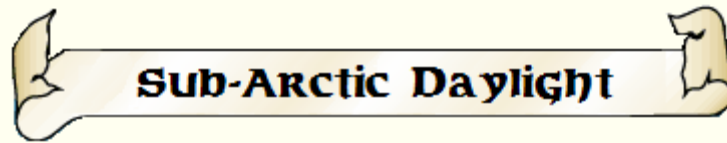
Tropical		Dry		Moderate		Continental		Polar	
	Tropical wet		Semiarid		Mediterranean		Humid continental		Tundra
	Tropical wet and dry		Arid		Humid subtropical		Subarctic		Ice cap
					Marine west coast				Highlands

## Comparable Cities

Here is a suggested listing of Alphatian cities and their (very approximate) real Earth equivalents. Temperature ranges shown below reflect winter and summer averages. Temperatures for cities on Alphatia's northeast side were decreased 1-3°C/2-5°F to reflect the Sea of Esterhold's colder current (relative to the US eastern seaboard). Figures listed below have been altered accordingly.



1. **Farend, Qeodhar:** *Trondheim, Norway* -9°C/16°F - 16°C/60°F (oceanic)
2. **Trollhattan, Limn:** *Glasgow, UK* 2°C/36°F - 20°C/68°F (oceanic)
3. **Draco, Stonewall:** *Seattle, USA* 2°C/36°F - 24°C/76°F (oceanic)
4. **Denwarf-Hurgon, Stoutfellow:** *Zürich, Switzerland* -4°C/28°F - 24°C/79°F (oceanic/alpine)
5. **Aasla, Haven:** *San Francisco CA* 8°C/46°F - 22°C/72°F (Mediterranean)
6. **Sundsvall, Vertiloch:** *Sofia, Bulgaria* -1°C/30°F - 28°C/82°F (humid continental)
7. **Errolyn, Theranderol:** *Belgrade, Serbia* -1°C/30°F - 29°C/84°F (humid subtropical/humid continental)
8. **Eagret, Greenspur:** *Los Angeles, USA* 10°C/50°F - 29°C/84°F (Mediterranean)
9. **Bluenose, Arogansa:** *Palermo, Italy* 8°C/46°F - 29°C/84°F (Mediterranean)
10. **Archport, Eadrin:** *San Diego, USA* 9°C/48°F - 25°C/77°F (Mediterranean)
11. **Rardish, S. Randel:** *Sydney, Australia* 8°C/46°F - 26°C/79°F (humid subtropical)
12. **Dmiliburg, N. Randel:** *New York City, USA* -6°C/21°F - 26°C/79°F (humid continental)
13. **Sabetta, S. Bettellyn:** *Colorado Springs, USA* -1°C/30°F - 28°C/82°F (continental semi-arid)
14. **Weitara, NE. Bettellyn:** *Boston, USA* -8°C/18°F - 25°C/77°F (humid continental)
15. **Citadel, N. Bettellyn:** *Cleveland, USA* -7°C/19°F - 27°C/81°F (humid continental)
16. **Alfleish, Shiye-Lawr:** *Budapest, Hungary* -4°C/25°F - 27°C/81°F (humid continental)
17. **Tirenios, Central Foresthome:** *Chicago, USA* -6°C/21°F - 22°C/72°F (humid continental)
18. **Greenwood, E. Foresthome:** *Montréal, Canada* -10°C/14°F - 21°C/70°F (humid continental)
19. **Haggleby, W. Forestome:** *Minneapolis, USA* -14°C/7°F - 29°C/84°F (humid continental)
20. **Shraek, Blackheart:** *Calgary, Canada* -5°C/23°F - 22°C/72°F (humid continental)
21. **Shiell, S. Frisland:** *Edmonton, Canada* -9°C/16°F - 18°C/64°F (humid continental), with extremes easily exceeding these numbers
22. **Mafertat, N. Frisland:** *Stockholm, Sweden* -8°C/17°F - 19°C/66°F (humid continental)
23. **Skyreach, Floating Ar:** *Uppsala, Sweden* -10°C/14°F - 19°C/66°F (humid continental)
24. **Starpoint, Ambur:** *Oslo, Norway* -5°C/23°F - 18°C/64°F (humid continental)



## Sub-Arctic Daylight

For adventuring purposes, it is important to know how latitude affects daylight. For example, in real Earth Trondheim (a bit above the latitude for Qeodhar in Alphatia) the sun rises in the summer at 03:00 and sets at 23:40 but stays just below the horizon—under cloud-free conditions, there is no darkness and no need for artificial lighting outdoors from 23 May to 19 July. In winter, the sun rises at 10:00, stays very low above the horizon, and sets at 14:30. At the level of Starpoint, daylight varies from more than 18 hours in midsummer to around 6 hours in midwinter.

Mystara features two large openings at the poles instead of ice caps. These lead to the Hollow World. The region at the rim, which neither Mystara's sun nor the Hollow World's own internal sun can reach, is anti-magic and remains permanently dark. Violent storms blow across this deadly frozen world, making exploration nearly impossible. Monsters that have adapted to these conditions survive there, compounding difficulties.

*Special thanks to Dean Gilbert, Richard T. Balsey, D. J. Hartel, and Janet Deaver-Pack for their contributions.*

# Comparing Dominion Stats

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Now looks like a good time to compare a few dominion stats. We have twelve regional provinces whose numbers are available. Comparing their land areas, populations, armies, and relative wealth may give some idea of the dynamics of their politics. The use of their lands and how their populations fit within them yield interesting insights.



**Settled** refers to the amount of land that is more fully inhabited (as opposed to borderland or wilderness).

**Urbanization** indicates how much of the total population resides in cities, towns, and villages. The remainder basically work the farms, hunt in the wilderness, etc.

**Total Revenues** refers to the total amount of money available to run the realm.

**Tax per Capita** differs from the figure listed in the earlier dominion stats because I needed a figure that did not include earnings derived from commerce, port duties and tolls, or mining. *Tax per Capita* refers only to *average* taxes levied directly from inhabitants.

The price of bread, on the other hand, caused me a great deal of grief because the “minimum wage” stated in the earlier dominion stats was too low to allow the purchase of enough bread to survive one month (28 days on Mystara). Here’s how I got to that conclusion -- please correct me if I got it wrong.

Assuming a slice of (rather rich) bread weighs 40g and yields 100 calories, and a typical worker requires 3,000 calories per day, 2.65 lbs of bread are therefore required daily, provided one only ate bread to survive. Thankfully, people eat various things, but for purposes of calculating buying power vs. local cost of living, this was the only tool available. A loaf of bread weighs 10 Lbs, therefore, a minimum of 7.5 loaves would be needed monthly for survival. That’s more bread than a minimum wage earner can afford!

I wasn’t about to completely rewrite the taxation mechanics (or assume bread in D&D somehow generated twice as many calories compared to the real world’s thing). Instead, I just dropped the face value of bread by 50% just for this calculation. In other words D&D/Mystara bread is worth only half what a medieval worker would pay in the real world’s Western Europe. It’s not a perfect solution, but it solves the immediate issue, which is comparing basic local wealth (that *Disposable Cash* entry).

**Price of Bread** indicates the modified price in copper pieces of a 10 lb loaf of bread, followed in parentheses with the figure quoted in the original dominion stats.

**Disposable Cash** is basically the number of loaves a worker might be able to purchase beyond the minimum needed for survival. So for example, a "poor" worker in Haven could purchase an extra two loaves, while one in Floating Ar could purchase four. It's just an indication of how better off one might be in which nation.



There is an interesting observation to be made regarding the balance of power around Randel. It would be logical for Theranderol, Arogansa, and Eadrin to be associated or even allied as regards the *Randel Peril*. Theranderol presently is the least likely of the three to be attacked, but that could change overnight should the Imperial House of Thera collapse. As a result, there could be a *League of Three* to face Randel, militarily and politically. This would make sense because these realms together have at their disposal a combined standing army and navy matching Randel's. Although coalitions aren't as effective as a single monarch's forces, the *League of Three* on the other hand tallies a combined financial income nearly twice that of Randel, meaning that it possesses a much better capability to sustain longer fights, not to mention the option of hiring mercenaries. As a footnote, there might be an internal tug of war between who would head the league: Queen Eldrethila or the Gray Circle? Considering the present weakness of its monarchy, Arogansa remains at best a participant. Whatever the outcome of the league's internal struggles, Randel would do its best to exploit it as much as possible.

	<b>AMBUR</b>	<b>Floating AR</b>	<b>HAVEN</b>
Total Surface (sq.m.):	11,369	43,637	209,925
Settled:	32%	18%	3%
Total Population:	470,689	913,640	2,263,988
Pop. Density/sq.m.:	41	21	11
Urbanization:	18%	7%	25%
Military (Total HD):	5,057	11,021	46,146
Fleet Size:	16	32	89
Total Revenues (gp/mo.):	136,372	131,601	388,218
Tax per Capita (sp/mo.):	1.7	1.1	0.9
Min. Wage (sp/mo.):	5.2	5.1	7
Price of Bread (cp/loaf):	5 (10)	4 (8)	6.5 (13)
Disposable Cash (*):	3.7	4.0	2.2
Price Inflation:	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Corruption:	<i>Occasional Venality</i>	<i>Occasional Venality</i>	<i>Common Corruption</i>
Farming:	<i>Ambur may export food.</i>	<i>Merchants may export food.</i>	<i>Population is self-sufficient.</i>

	<b>LIMN</b>	<b>Stonewall</b>	<b>Stoutfellow</b>
Total Surface (sq.m.):	9,363	17,750	154,152
Settled:	14%	63%	3%
Total Population:	340,248	1,074,476	768,438
Pop. Density/sq.m.:	36	61	5
Urbanization:	23%	24%	14%
Military (Total HD):	6,785	10,666	31,408
Fleet Size:	49	52	-
Total Revenues (gp/mo.):	80,861	436,011	210,816
Tax per Capita (sp/mo.):	1.9	3.2	0.6
Min. Wage (sp/mo.):	7.6	9.9	3 to 4
Price of Bread (cp/loaf):	6.5 (13)	8 (16)	3 (6)
Disposable Cash (*):	3.0	3.6	3.5
Price Inflation:	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>
Corruption:	<i>Common Corruption</i>	<i>Scandalously Rampant Greed</i>	<i>Unbelievable Integrity</i>
Farming:	<i>Population is self-sufficient.</i>	<i>Population is self-sufficient.</i>	<i>Upper Stoutfellow may export food.</i>

	<b>VERTILOCH</b>	<b>Theranderol</b>	<b>AROGANSA</b>
Total Surface (sq.m.):	49,461	116,562	116,924
Settled:	14%	13%	10%
Total Population:	1,353,990	1,421,954	1,112,230
Pop. Density/sq.m.:	27	12	10
Urbanization:	41%	10%	14%
Military (Total HD):	51,411	16,735	12,584
Fleet Size:	47	19	28
Total Revenues (gp/mo.):	1,957,101	230,778	286,599
Tax per Capita (sp/mo.):	-	1.2	1.3
Min. Wage (sp/mo.):	11.7	5.1	6
Price of Bread (cp/loaf):	6.5 (13)	8 (16)	6.5 (13)
Disposable Cash (*):	3.0	3.6	2.2
Price Inflation:	<i>Outrageous</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>
Corruption:	<i>Common Corruption</i>	<i>Occasional Venality</i>	<i>Common Corruption</i>
Farming:	<i>Vertiloch will need to import food.</i>	<i>Theranderol may export food.</i>	<i>Arogansa may export food.</i>

	<b>EADRIN</b>	<b>GREENSPUR</b>	<b>RANDEL</b>
Total Surface (sq.m.):	47,455	81,437	187,535
Settled:	17%	13%	9%
Total Population:	965,802	1,051,595	2,049,777
Pop. Density/sq.m.:	20	13	11
Urbanization:	27%	17%	13%
Military (Total HD):	19,063	11,685	46,646
Fleet Size:	38	52	86
Total Revenues (gp/mo.):	333,957	238,498	490,353
Tax per Capita (sp/mo.):	2.1	1.5	1.7
Min. Wage (sp/mo.):	8.7	3.5	7
Price of Bread (cp/loaf):	6.5 (13)	8 (16)	6.5 (13)
Disposable Cash (*):	3.0	3.6	2.2
Price Inflation:	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>
Corruption:	<i>Occasional Venality</i>	<i>Unbelievable Integrity</i>	<i>Common Corruption</i>
Farming:	<i>Eadrin will need to import food.</i>	<i>Greenspur may export food.</i>	<i>Randel may export food.</i>

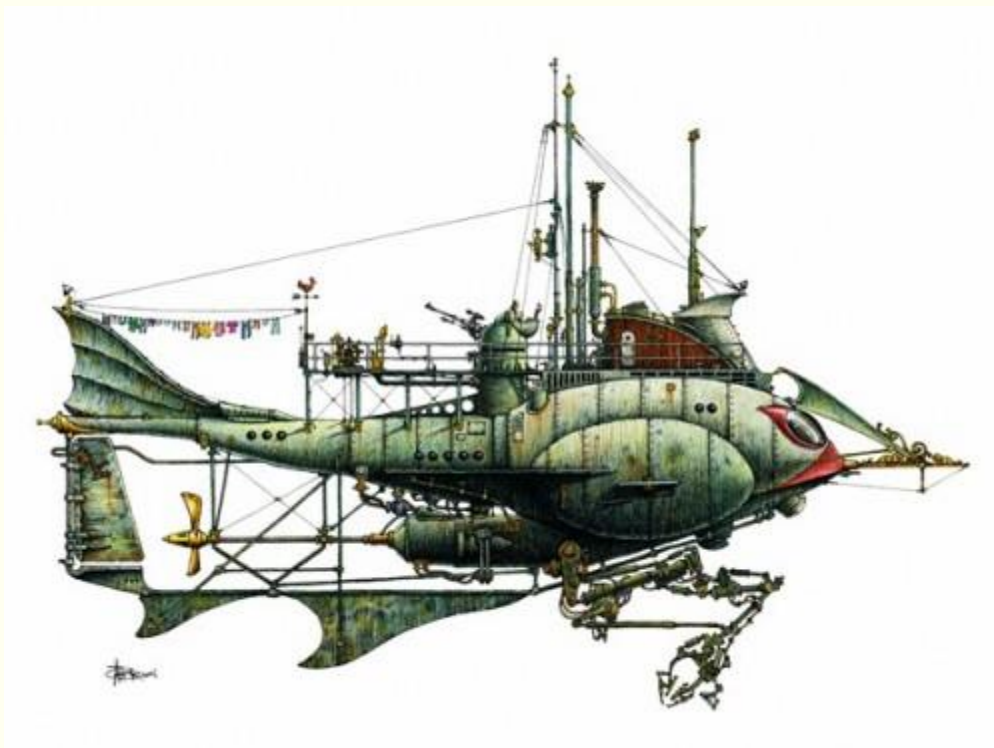


# Navies of Alphatia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

The question came up multiple times about airships and submersibles not being listed specifically with Dominion Stats. So, without further delay, here's an approach that should elucidate the matter. I devised mechanics to calculate how many ships among an established fleet should be surface vessels, airships, or submersibles. Naturally, I'm not going to re-post all existing dominion stats. Instead, I listed below the fleets of the few realms already covered, which provides an opportunity to compare them. In the future, however, I'll incorporate some or all such fleet data to dominion stats, space-allowing.

To accomplish this, I relied upon several factors already extant in dominion stats, such as basic fleet data, magical ability, seafaring profile, and general military focus. Another three were added: affinities with the elements of air or water, and a general fleet development strategy.



***Fanciful Submarine by Andrew George Brown***

	<b>AMBUR</b>	<b>Floating AR</b>	<b>HAVEN</b>
<b>Total Fleet Size:</b>	16	32	89
Average HP per ship:	100	94	109
Best Fighting Force:	75 Lvl 3 Marines	100 Lvl 4 Marines	750 Lvl 3 Marines
Affinity to Air Element:	<i>High</i>	<i>Highest</i>	<i>High</i>
Affinity to Water Elem.:	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Magic Availability:	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>
Seafaring Profile:	<i>Reluctant Shipbuilders</i>	<i>Hopeless Land-lubbers</i>	<i>Passable Navigators</i>
Military Effort:	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<b>Naval Strategy:</b>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Airborne</i>	<i>Combined</i>
<b>Surface Ships</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Airships:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Submersibles:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>12</b>

	<b>LIMN</b>	<b>Stonewall</b>	<b>Stoutfellow</b>
<b>Total Fleet Size:</b>	49	52	None
Average HP per ship:	113	105	--
Average Marines XP Lvl:	150 Lvl 3 Marines	150 Lvl 3 Marines	--
Affinity to Air Element:	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>None</i>
Affinity to Water Elem.:	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
Magic Availability:	<i>Magic is common</i>	<i>Magic is common</i>	<i>Some magic is available</i>
Seafaring Profile:	<i>Reluctant Shipbuilders</i>	<i>Reluctant Shipbuilders</i>	<i>Hopeless Land-lubbers</i>
Military Effort:	<i>Very High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
<b>Naval Strategy:</b>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>Surface Ships</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	--
<b>Airships:</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>6</b>	--
<b>Submersibles:</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	--

	<b>Vertiloch</b>	<b>Theranderol</b>	<b>AROGANSA</b>
<b>Total Fleet Size:</b>	47	19	28
Average HP per ship:	143	112	108
Best Fighting Force:	1,000 Lvl 5 Marines	250 Lvl 3 Marines	250 Lvl 3 Marines
Affinity to Air Element:	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>
Affinity to Water Elem.:	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Magic Availability:	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>
Seafaring Profile:	<i>Hopeless Land-lubbers</i>	<i>Hopeless Land-lubbers</i>	<i>Passable Navigators</i>
Military Effort:	<i>Very High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<b>Naval Strategy:</b>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Combined</i>
<b>Surface Ships</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Airships:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Submersibles:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>5</b>

	<b>Eadrin</b>	<b>GREENSPUR</b>	<b>Randel</b>
<b>Total Fleet Size:</b>	38	52	86
Average HP per ship:	118	108	131
Best Fighting Force:	300 Lvl 4 Marines	375 Lvl 3 Marines	875 Lvl 4 Marines
Affinity to Air Element:	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Affinity to Water Elem.:	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Magic Availability:	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>	<i>Magiocracy or Theocracy</i>
Seafaring Profile:	<i>Passable Navigators</i>	<i>Passable Navigators</i>	<i>Passable Navigators</i>
Military Effort:	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<b>Naval Strategy:</b>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Surface</i>
<b>Surface Ships</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Airships:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Submersibles:</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>



**Total Fleet Size:** number of ships as per original dominion stats.

**Average Ship HP:** by the book (*Rules Cyclopedia*) taking into account various ship types in a navy and their numbers.

**Best Fighting Force:** indicates how many of the highest level marines are available in a fleet. This one isn't perfect because it won't add up separate groups of marines if more than one qualifies.

The next five entries are various factors I use to profile realms and, in this case, their naval capabilities.

**Naval Strategy:** There are five basic choices here--1. Surface Only, 2. Surface Mostly, 3. Airborne, 4. Submersible, and 5. Combined. The last four are relative to the ability of a realm to build any airships or submersibles in the first place. A realm might purchase or lease such vessels, but it's up to a DM to make this decision.

The last three entries are self-explanatory.

The five basic factors profiling a realm are weighted differently during calculations. Initially, each runs from 1 to 5, 5 being best. Affinity with the Elements (Air for airships or Water for submersibles) receives an x4 modifier. Magical Ability comes next with an x3. Seafaring follows with an x2, and Military comes last with no modifier. A realm with a combined total of 30 or less enjoys neither airships nor submersibles. Otherwise, the ability to build either is proportional to how much higher than 30 that score is.

**Quibble time:** I'm sure some of you will argue about the basic factors. Seafaring gives an idea about how adventurous a culture may be, how good and eager it is at building ships and thinking in terms of naval strategy, etc. It's not just about surface vessels and their use. It also reflects the general population's culture rather than that of its elite or its rulers.

Ambur's wizards are content with mountain observatories and such, but they're very, very good with star charts, so they do set foot on ships, if reluctantly, to look at stars from a different angle, knowing there's little chance getting altogether lost at sea. Their problem is that they have a small fleet: naval warfare isn't exactly their focus (sorry for the pun).

Floating Ar is actually a bit of joke, paradoxically. Amburian stargazers like to poke fun at their neighbors about this. The truth is that Floating Ar yields some of the worst navigators in Alphatia. (oh, horror!) Their original culture isn't one of fearless and uncanny seafaring, far from it—that's why they primarily build ISLANDS, not ships! This explains only in part their "hopeless land lubbers" qualifier. The vast majority of Ar's population is made of peasants, serfs tied to their lands and who harbor little or no desire to set foot on any ship: where there's a noble, there's a knout--and airships usually carry lots of nobles, therefore it's best to flee in the opposite direction, given the option. Airships eventually became an unavoidable necessity to reach Ar's amazing levitating world but exploring faraway skies isn't really their stuff. So, the secret is out: Haldemar is the exception confirming the rule.

As regards Floating Ar's fleet, I had stated earlier that 100% of their fleet was airborne, and I'll stick to that. Technically, the system I devised only identifies 29 out of their 32 ships as airborne vessels and that's because their seafaring ability isn't the best and their military aura remains somewhat lackluster. But, given Ar's nature, it makes sense to override the system entirely, as I'll do for the same reasons whenever I get around to analyzing Aquas.

Haven is doing alright. Havenites aren't fantastic seafarers but their demography and wealth more than make up for it. Plus their ships look really, really snazzy, although Haven's shipbuilders may have gone a tad overboard using lace and sheers for sails, heavily adorning and gilding hulls, and giving a generally spotless and gleaming appearance to their ships. Haven has lots of decent marines and adopted a "Combined" strategy, which means they have a good number of airships and submersibles (in addition to the 12HD water elementals in their navy).

Limn spends extravagantly on its armed forces and, consequently, commands a respectable fleet given its relatively limited resources. Its lack of affinity for the element of air does not permit Limn to maintain a fleet or airships, but its "Combined" strategy provides a few sturdy submersibles instead. On a one-on-one basis, warships of Limn are actually better than those of Stonewall, which is Limn's main goal.



***Submariner by Jason Juta***

Stonewall fares a little better than Limn in that it benefits from a much higher population base, which affords the realm a bigger navy with both airships and submersibles, with a lesser burden upon its revenues. Stonewall's primary worry is to protect its shipping lanes, allowing merchants to bring their supplies safely and at the lowest cost possible. With neighboring Stoutfellow completely ignoring naval matters, pirates have exploited the otherwise unguarded gap, if not basing their nefarious activities in some halfling village along the coast. It is a lasting point of contention between Stoutfellow and Stonewall, the latter accusing the former of deliberately closing their eyes on the matter and scuttling any further discussion.

So, we have a grand total of 508 ships, 106 of which are airships, and another 58 of which are submersibles. More can be found in the remaining five realms. Compared to this, Vertiloch (which is to say Empress Eriadna) directly controls 47 ships, including 9 airships and 5 subs, or less than 10% of the current total.

# The Imperial District of Vertiloch

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

In Vertiloch, one honors the Ruling Family and the Glory of the Empire. It is a land whose borders were designed centuries ago; two vertical lines swiftly drawn on a parchment. It was the will of the empire to set what lay in between as territories attached to the throne of Alphatia. They cannot be divided, given away, or inherited by a family. They aren't the best of lands but they are centrally located. Flat, pock-marked with slow-draining lakes, they are home to the confluence of the Greenlake and Greenwall Rivers, augmented by the turbid eddies of the Elfripple.



To the north lie Imperial Lands officially reserved for emperors to do as they see fit, to carve out domains for new vassals, to hunt, or simply to preserve a vast wilderness at the heart of the empire. Stories abound on what really lies there. Some say the land is closed to outsiders for a great danger lurks within, one that defies even the authority of Mighty Alphatia.

To the west of Vertiloch still stands to this day the ancient Wall of Haven. It is Haven's duty to control all who would cross it. The Imperial District isn't one easily visited. It involves papers, controls, magic seals, *geas*, and many other unspeakable charms designed to protect the Imperial Family and the vast noble estates dotting the countryside. The east belongs to the Realm of Theranderol. Long ago, the choice had been made for Theranderol to watch its southern and eastern borders in order to fulfill its own obligations toward the security of the Imperial District. Vertiloch's Northeastern March wields powerful magic that permits the Watchmen to spy upon anyone seeking to enter. Guards and wards will thwart the evil-minded.

A fake capital city was created to trap foreign spies and other miscreants. Its true name is Ampulia. An illusory palace with phantasmal servants and imperial retinue dwell there, like a giant fly trap. The entire population of Ampulia has been *geased* to maintain the ruse or voluntarily do so as their duty to the imperial throne. Nearly all travelers are fooled into believing this location to be the actual capital and they will not believe any differently if told otherwise. The real siege of power, Sundsvall, stands twenty four miles northwest, along the Greenlake River. The city and its road are magically cloaked to appear as peaceful countryside. Illegal maps of the area are notorious among Sundsvall's spy circles (who gleefully spread them around) for showing the capital in the place of Ampulia.



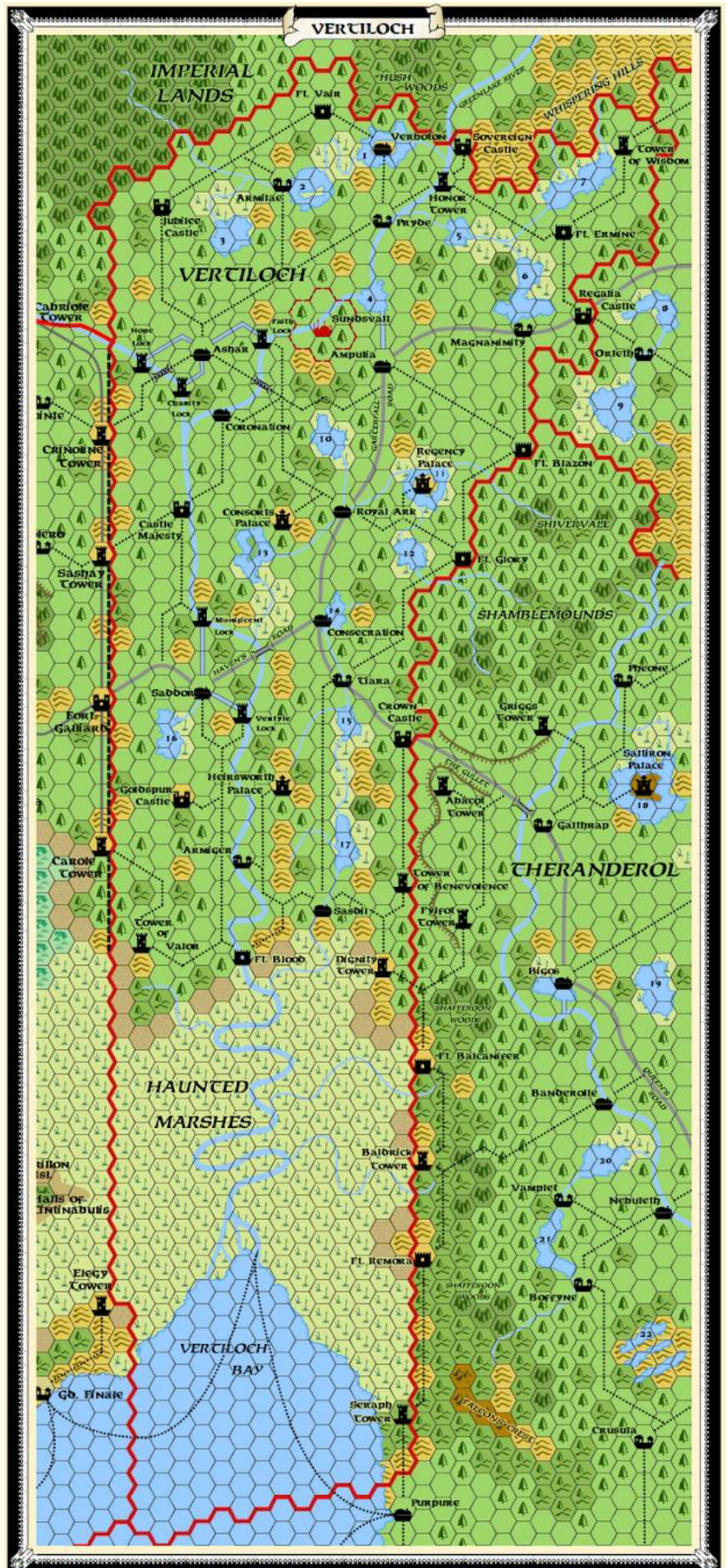
**River Lock, Canal, and Tower**

Vital supplies to the city may only be transported along rivers or roads and trails by officially-appointed courtiers familiar with the capital city's illusion and magical wards. Visiting merchants are obligated to entrust their merchandise to imperial courtiers at the hub-towns of Ashar or Coronation, or allowed to proceed to Ampulia instead. River traffic at the confluence of the two major rivers is tricky and requires sailing through locks and canals to avoid low-hanging bridges. The locks offer another opportunity to identify and magically "process" visitors.

The Greenlake River meanders through Lower Vertiloch and the Haunted Marshes. Native traders follow its twisting channels to ship merchandise to the Imperial District. Despite numerous imperial galleys patrolling up and down the river, the great water waste remains dangerous, and one must not stop there for any reason. Nightly navigation is unavoidable and requires an officially-registered guide. If a trader does not have such a guide among the ship's crew, it is then necessary to come in person to either Ashar, Coronation, or Ampulia/Pseudo-Sundsvall and submit a request through official channels to obtain one. Only then can a ship endeavor to navigate the Greenlake River into Vertiloch.

### Key to the Lakes:

1. Dynasty Lake
2. Seneschal Lake
3. Purity Lake
4. Oriflame Lake
5. Scepter Lake
6. Diadem Lake
7. Monarch Lake
8. Ambrosia Lake
9. Prophetia Lake
10. Lake Suzerain
11. Regency Lake
12. Lake Paragon
13. Lake Polymath
14. Lake Celestia
15. Lake Temporia
16. Lake Eternal
17. Hegemony Lake
18. Lake Chalice
19. Chancellor's Lake
20. Golden Badge Lake
21. Allegiance Lake
22. Immortal Claws

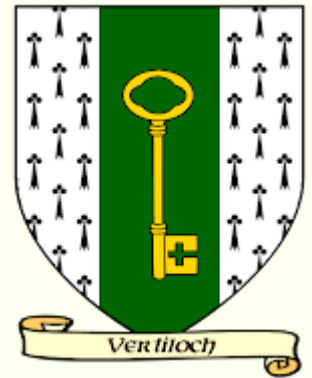


# Dominion Stats – Vertiloch

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Vertiloch remains definitely unique in Alphatia at least from the standpoint of its economy. Nearly half of the Vertilians are urban dwellers. Naturally, this implies food is being imported to support urban centers, especially the capital with its half-million civilian residents, and the military. The price of bread is, as one should expect, very high, perhaps the highest in the empire, setting off inflation in the region. This drives much of the merchant traffic from Aasla and Archport. It does help, however, that Vertilians do not pay taxes.

The quasi-totality of the realm's revenues come from tribute paid by all vassal states of the empire, nearly two million gold pieces per month. This crucial detail explains why Vertiloch places such importance on controlling who enters the realm and, more specifically, who might want to stay. Non-natives generally do not emigrate to Vertiloch. This land is reserved for natives and aristocracy able to purchase a city block in Sundsvall or a large piece of land outside the capital (see *Dawn of the Emperors* on this subject.) Others are undesirables who are eventually deported after outlasting their welcome. Visitors are strictly controlled and monitored, either by the realm's blooming bureaucracy, its spies, or by magic.



Naturally, it matters very much for natives to maintain proper documentation proving their Vertilian pedigree for at least seven generations. Woe be a Vertilian commoner who marries an outsider, for the happy bride or groom would be forever stripped of any Vertilian lineage. Petty criminal offenses also result in exile. This state of affairs explains why neighboring realms remain so eager to satisfy imperial obligations to control who might want to leave their lands and enter Vertiloch. Neither Haven nor Theranderol are eager to see their farmers pack up in mass and move into the Imperial District.

Open plains are used for farming. Small farms and hamlets dot the countryside in settled/suburban areas. Much of the population is concentrated around Ashar/Coronation, its bridges, roads, and canals, and likewise around Saddor/Consecration/Tiara/Crown Castle, as well as the Sasdil/Armiger area. The region surrounding Sundsvall, about a twelve-mile radius, remains entirely devoid of population, save for army patrols and encampments. On the other hand, the stretch including Ampulia and Magnanimity harbors a fairly dense population. This does create a problem: a savvy guest at the phantasmal palace in Ampulia (see my earlier post on this topic) might notice farms and hamlets outside surrounding walls. After unwittingly teleporting to Sundsvall, the lack of any such signs of life beyond city limits should strike one as strange. Sundsvall is a city of 500,000 people. Ampulia is not. The phony capital actually counts less than 5,000 inhabitants. The remaining 495,000 residents are. . . programmed illusions! As can be expected, in the vast majority of cases non-aristocrats inhabiting Sundsvall aren't permitted to ever leave this hidden city.

Outside the well-settled parts lay large stretches of borderland. These feature very large farms owned by land-owning aristocrats. There, unlike in the settled areas, farmers are exclusively serfs. Hills and forested areas are otherwise wilderness, with little or no population. Marshes occupy a huge stretch of land in the south which is completely wasted from an economical point

of view. It provides nothing (but trouble for bordering communities) aside from a physical barrier.

This of course brings up the topic of Vertiloch's armed forces. A significant part of the population is either under arms or providing some service linked to the military. Life in Vertiloch notoriously revolves around political and bureaucratic aspects of running the empire, the catering of the imperials and aristocracy in general, and military business. In total, 15-20% of Vertilians have something to do with the army or navy. Vertiloch enforces a policy of recruiting many of its troops from the best units across Alpathia. Money is no concern. Two thirds of Imperial Cohorts are foreigners who earned their permanent Vertilian pedigrees at the point of their swords or wands in some far-flung part of the empire, including the Isle of Dawn and Bellissaria. As a result, imperial troops are generally of a higher experience level than vassal counterparts. This recruitment strategy achieves two objectives. The first is to take the best warriors and officers from vassals, reinforcing imperial influence and prestige, and thus diminishing that of the vassals. The other is a counter-balance to the inherent loyalties of native Vertilian military. A host of highly skilled foreign troops could easily prevent a palace coup fomented by a native commander or some influential Vertilian aristocrat.

Sundsvall itself harbors few troops, precisely to limit the temptation to use them for a political coup. The same number of troops are posted in Ampulia, to help maintain the illusion. They are dressed and behave as if they were the Imperial Guard but the real stuff guards the capital. Nearly half of Vertiloch's land forces are stationed in and around Ashar. Ashar is notorious for being a major military garrison whose objective is to protect Sundsvall, should some sort of invasion take place. They are theoretically trained to address incursions from outer planes or magical gates. Anti-Glantrian or -Thyatian indoctrination is common.

The Imperial Fleet is another issue altogether. Although not huge, it is very much an elite force. It boasts the empire's best marines and best-built ships. Nearly all of its small galleys are used to patrol Vertilian rivers. They occasionally extend patrols into Haven and Imperial Lands to the North, if not into the Shiye-Lawr. Larger ships rarely remain within the Imperial District. If not dispatched to support a vassal, they are likely anchored in Aasla, at Haven's financial expense. The Imperial Fleet is meant to complement a vassal's force. If present among other Alpathian vessels, an imperial officer is likely in command. Several of these ships are either airships or submersibles. Some airships are used to survey the Haunted Marshes or the Imperial Lands to the north. Submersibles are likely watching Vertiloch Bay, but in general, they are the chosen transportation for Vertilian spies or aristocrats on a special mission for the imperials.

Rather than showing Sundsvall's garrison, Ashar is listed in the stats below, since the forces posted there far outnumber those in the capital city.

## The Land and People of Vertiloch

Rural Population: 745,169 farmers 55.0% 37,258 armed peasants and 27,871  
 Urban Population: 557,410 townfolk 41.2% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 51,411 Warriors (HD) 3.8% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 1,353,990 Vertilians** the seas, the air, and the ground below.

**Total Land Area: 49,461 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 27.37 people per Sq. Mile  
 53% Wilderness Price of Bread: 23 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 33% Borderlands Price Inflation: Outrageous  
 14% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 11.7 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Sundsvall	500,000	1,000
Saddor	8,400	5,000
Ashar	7,100	23,611
Sasdil	6,200	5,000
Verboton	5,500	2,500
Ampulia	4,800	1,000
Coronation	3,300	1,000
Consecration	2,800	1,000
Royal Ark	1,900	1,000
Magnanimity	950	20
Tiara	860	20
Pryde	770	20
Armiger	620	20
Armilae	510	20
-	-	-
Imperial Castles (6)	6,000	6,000
Fortes (5)	2,500	2,500
Towers & Locks (11)	2,200	1,100
Palaces (3)	3,000	600

### Mining Summary

Number of Mines: 0

### Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Papyrus & scrolls, Pottery, Trinkets, Registered Civil Servants

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Ceramic & Porcelain, Lacquered Goods, Tax on Magic, Political Lobby (Thousand Wizard Council)

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Banking, Books, Political Lobby (Imperial Circle)

## Treasury of Vertiloch

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	-	gp/month	0.0%	Farmer	0.0 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	-	gp/month	0.0%	Townfolk	0.0 sp
Total Revenues from Vassal States	1,800,000	gp/month	92.0%	Household	0.0 sp
Total Revenues from Trade & Mining	22,880	gp/month	1.2%	per Capita	14.5 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	134,221	gp/month	6.9%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>1,957,101</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	286,129	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	214,597	gp/month
Government & Politics	357,661	gp/month
Personal Prestige	286,129	gp/month
Treasury	143,065	gp/month
Military	357,661	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

Common Corruption

### Farming:

Vertiloch will need to import food.

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperous	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	5,106	1	Wizards	135	11
Guards	-	-	Air Elementals	29	12
Heavy Infantry	1,537	3	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	2,552	1
Mounted Archers	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	1,276	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	2,552	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	1,276	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	638	2	Trebuchet Artillerists	-	-
Light Horsemen	2,552	1	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Med. Horsemen	720	2	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	329	3	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	1,548	1
Pegasus Riders	-	-			
Wyvern Riders	-	-			

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

(Entire) Baggage Train		Mounts:	
Large Wagons:	6,495	Light Warhorses:	3,318
Mules or Oxen:	9,743	Medium Warhorses:	936
Draft Horses:	1,168	Heavy Warhorses:	428
Tents:	5,093	Riding Horses:	5,074
Camp Followers:	3,096	Camels:	-
		Elephants*:	-
		Pegasi:	-
		Wyverns:	-

Siege Equipment		War Machines:	
Ballistae:	638	Poor:	-
Lt Catapults:	212	Fair:	-
Hvy Catapults:	159	Good:	-
Trebuchets:	-	Best:	-

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

**Total Standing Army**  
**20,250 HD**

## Naval Forces

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	18	180	1,080	54	360	2
Large Galley	13	260	2,340	52	650	4
War Galley	8	240	2,400	40	600	5
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Troop Transport	8	240	--	40	400	5

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually. Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy: 2,930 Seamen HD**      **Total Fleet Size: 47**  
**9 Airships, 5 Submersibles, 33 Surface Ships**      **Average Hull Points: 123**

## Posted in Ashar

<b>Total Strength:</b>	23,611 HD	95% Human 4% Elves 1% Halflings 1% Dwarves
<b>Infantry:</b>	2527 Lt. Infantry, 761 Hvy. Infantry, 1263 Lt. Crossbowmen, 316 Hvy Crossbowmen,	
<b>Cavalry:</b>	1263 Lt. Cavalry, 356 Med. Cavalry, 163 Hvy. Cavalry,	
<b>Special Troops:</b>	67 Spellcasters, 14 Air Elementals,	
<b>Siege Weapons:</b>	2527 Artillerists with 316 Ballistae, 106 Lt. Catapults 79 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets	
<b>War Machines:</b>		
<b>Auxiliaries:</b>	711 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers	
<b>Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:</b>	2361 soldiers and seamen	
<b>At Port or at Sea:</b>	297 Sailors, 594 Marines (and 1782 rower convicts) 12 Small Galley 9 Large Galley 6 War Galley	
<b>Assigned Ships</b>	6 Troop Transport	
<b>Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison</b>		
Wagons:	2,983	<b>Ashar Militia: 355 People or HD</b>
Mules or Oxen:	4,475	
Draft Horses:	537	
Tents:	2,340	
Camp Followers:	1422 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)	



# The Hidden City of Sundsvall

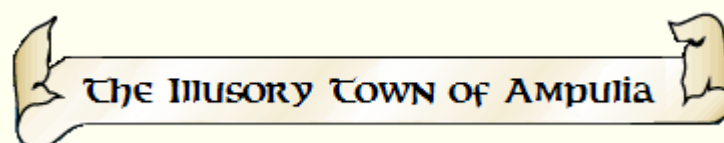
by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Sundsvall & Ampulia Vicinity - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Everybody knows it's located on that magnificent road dubbed *Garterfall*. One might wonder whose garter it refers to were it not for the old tradition of imperial newlyweds riding in the ceremonial coach toward *The Capital*, fast and with curtains down. One can imagine what happens inside. The Imperial Wedding Ceremony takes place at the Great Temple of Valerias in Consecration, about a hundred miles away. The scene of the imperial retinue and its military escort following the ceremonial coach at top speed sometimes leads to unpredictable and occasionally comical results. In some instances, a magical garter will fly out from behind the curtains and bring great joy and prestige to the one standing among the throngs of beholders who might catch it. Other clothing elements have been known to fall out as well but these are promptly confiscated by the guards. As practical and expeditious as it may seem, *teleporting* remains most definitely out of the question. It would be an insult to ancient protocol and the masses of people crowding the roadsides since the previous day. Imperial life revolves around old traditions, from quaint and charming to utterly outlandish and annoying.

There is a great deal more than the above tradition to make commoners believe Sundsvall indeed lies on Garterfall Road. In a way it does, at least a part of it. Several layers of indoctrinated Vertilian bureaucracy, key aristocracy, and the imperial family are involved in a vast conspiracy to dupe most of the population, the army, and foreign visitors about the capital's true location. Sundsvall is a hidden city on the banks of the Greenlake River. It huddles beneath a magical cloak that conceals the sprawling city and its half-million inhabitants from the outside and from the air. But before getting too involved with the true capital, let us first have a look at Ampulia, a nearby town on Garterfall Road made to look like Sundsvall.



What would have otherwise been a quiet country town was built and meticulously maintained with a single, unerring purpose since Alphatia grew into a burgeoning empire. Ampulia, whose

name is known only to those who orchestrate the wizardly ruse, duplicates almost exactly the capital's appearance. Every change in Sundsvall is rapidly replicated in Ampulia. Unilateral alterations in the *pseudo-capital* are strictly prohibited and will be remedied at once by watchful wizards acting for an exclusive circle called the *Smoke and Mirrors Department*.

In addition to its appearance, an elaborate illusion paints upon Ampulia's streets a simulacrum of activity consistent with a bustling city of half a million residents. Genuine Ampulians, all 4,800 of them, live there, profoundly proud and thoroughly convinced that their natal town is nothing but the illustrious capital. Added to this are cohorts of loyal workers and spies assigned to the *Smoke and Mirrors Department* and whose responsibilities include quietly watching the inhabitants and, most importantly, visiting outsiders. Spies address any threats to the illusion. Anyone behaving suspiciously, in particular if reacting to some puzzling effect of the town's many phantasms, is most likely to disappear. Such individuals are abducted, their recent memories magically altered, and their faces forever marked with some arcane sign visible only by those empowered to detect them. Undesirables wake up somewhere outside Vertiloch's borders several days later. The *Smoke and Mirrors Department* also hosts a large number of indoctrinated actors whose roles are to interact with visitors for the benefit of the illusion. At their sides reside an even greater crowd of convicted criminals, *geased* to enact imaginary lives in a fictitious city. They handle much of the dirty work, literally and figuratively, obeying the spies without hesitation. Their penance is meant to leave the convicts painfully aware of their sad fate, yet unable to depart, reveal their fates, or alter their daily behavior in any way. They are euphemistically referred to as the *S&M Squad*.

Encounter odds of running into various sorts of people are as follows (d20):

- **1-5** Genuine Ampulian
- **6** Vertilian spy
- **7-11** Vertilian actor
- **12-14** Vertilian convict
- **15-18** Phantasmal "extra"
- **19-20** Visiting foreigner

Beyond the above table, roll for encounters as listed on the city stats shown at the end of this article. Naturally, illusory characters and street events tend to ease interaction with Vertilian actors or, in an emergency, with Vertilian spies. The nature of this arcane masquerade is to depict a giddy, happy, carefree fantasy of Sundsvall, to the point of nausea for the more rugged visitors. The truth is more sinister.

From a gaming point of view, a DM should roll quiet saving throws for all characters, provided an event took place that could arouse suspicion. Those who fail will never believe the truth, even when presented with incontrovertible proof. Those who succeed do not automatically see through the illusion. They are merely allowed to conclude it probably exists, after piecing together available clues. These *phantasms* cannot be *dispelled*.

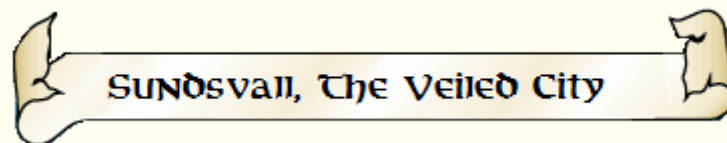
Naturally, there are many non-residents coming and going: for example, Imperial Courtiers bringing in or taking out goods to be traded. The goods either end up on Ampulia's streets or

underground where river barges await to transport them through a tunnel to and from Sundsvall.



**Sundsvall/Ampulia Underground Docks**

Uninvited travelers seeking to enter the Imperial District, visit its capital, or seek an audience with anyone at the Imperial Palace, are sent to Ampulia, provided they satisfied Vertilian bureaucracy. If it is determined that a solicitor has legitimate business with someone at the Imperial Palace (or the Council of Thousand Wizards, etc.), the solicitor will be permitted into the palace in Ampulia. During the visit, passage through a certain hallway will *teleport* the solicitor to the same place in Sundsvall, and back after the audience. If the solicitor somehow gets the chance to peek through a window and observe Sundsvall, some clues may be visible, such as a brewing storm that wasn't visible yet from Ampulia, or missing roads, hamlets, and farms beyond city gates. Ampulia's gates connect with two roads and a military trail--Sundsvall shows none of them. To avoid the risk of giving away such dangerous clues, especially if a visitor is someone meaningful yet untrustworthy, the counterpart in Sundsvall (including anyone in imperial circles) might instead *teleport* to Ampulia and meet the guest there. This often depends on how important the guest is and how busy the audience's target may be at the time. The palace in Ampulia is as well guarded as the one in Sundsvall, except that the real Imperial Guard roam the true palace's hallways.



When watching from the outside, the twelve-mile-radius Imperial Cloak alters the appearance of the capital's site to look like peaceful countryside. The city is plainly visible to those within the cloak. The affected area is officially called the *Greenlake Imperial Gardens* and entrance is strictly forbidden. There are no farmers, trappers, or other residents outside the city. Anyone caught prowling there will be summarily executed. Bounty hunters will be dispatched for

manhunts if needed. Imperial Courtiers may shuttle merchant barges in and out of Sundsvall, and galleys may patrol the estate, but all aboard have been properly indoctrinated if not copiously *geased*. This is an exception for the military since they don't normally receive such arcane conditioning. The vast majority of merchant traffic otherwise funnels through Ampulia by road.

Once inside the capital, apart from fake city gates leading nowhere, Sundsvall resembles Ampulia in all ways. There are full-time surveyors whose role is to note any alteration to the streets and buildings and report them to their colleagues in Ampulia. Not that the latter truly matters because the vast majority of resident commoners remain completely unaware of the scheme and certainly can't go around making comparisons: they are simply not permitted to leave. For them, Sundsvall is a prison. People are born and live their entire lives there, dying without ever seeing what lies outside the city's great walls. Those who are caught escaping are "reconditioned" (*please look at the wand!*) and promptly returned to their former existence. Recidivists are quietly executed. Should the population of commoners decline, uninformed families would be permitted to move in (to Ampulia) and obtain gainful employment, only to discover soon afterward that they are forever trapped (in Sundsvall).



**Sundsvall/Ampulia City View**

Vertilian aristocracy benefits from a different treatment altogether. Families of native Vertilian nobility are taught since birth about the importance of the veil and keeping quiet about it. They are fully cognizant of the consequences of betrayal. The nature of the families' allegiances to the empire, an immaterial web of divination magic linking each of them to the *Grand Prosecutor*, is such that any indiscretion will inevitably be traced back to them. Felonious families are stripped of properties and titles, their memories altered, and exiled at once from Vertiloch. Non-native aristocrats, if the situation comes up, will be asked whether they wish to be part of the empire's *Inner Circle of Secrecy*. It is explained that they will be required to pronounce the *Oath of Silence* and informed of the consequences for breaking it. Non-natives betraying the inner

circle are cast out of the empire altogether, if not executed along with their entire families and other associated individuals. After taking the oath, new members are given the details about the Imperial Cloak and the pseudo-capital and are granted unrestricted access to Sundsvall. If the offer is declined, the masquerade continues until the aristocrats are discretely pushed away from the empire's all-powerful center of authority. There is no second chance.

Major establishments like the Council of Thousand Wizards, the School of Magic, the University of Sundsvall, the military academies, (etc.) are all fitted with many *teleporters* connecting with twin-buildings in Ampulia. These *teleporters* are typically located at entrances leading into classrooms, laboratories, and other key areas. These chambers do not have clear windows (they use vision-limiting stained glass) or other visible exits. All aristocrats who are members of the *Inner Circle of Secrecy* wear talismans preventing their *teleportation* since they reside in the capital. Other attendees are unwittingly transported back and forth between the two locations as they pass through these portals. This commonly leads to people "vanishing" from the sight of those heading back to Ampulia, but in a world of wizards, this hardly arouses suspicion. In order for this to work, the lines of sight in and out of the affected chambers are altered. When looking through a portal, one sees and hears what happens in the corresponding hallway in Ampulia, and vice-versa. On the other hand, spells or spell-effects (except those altering light or sound, or producing physical projectiles like arrows and such), do not travel through *teleporters*. In other words, one cannot cast a *fireball* from a hallway in Ampulia into a chamber in Sundsvall. The spell would instead affect an empty room in Ampulia.

Some might believe Sundsvall a gleaming, magnificent megalopolis befitting a wizards' empire. Most of it is. Aristocrats own entire city blocks and are responsible for their upkeep and appearance. Many owners take pride in their properties, at least for the sake of prestige and resale value. Not all property owners are as thoughtful. Some are downright stingy. If their blocks usually look good on the outside, they may hide a sordid or hive-like interior. In the worst cases, financially strapped owners may resort to neglecting their share of the city's upkeep, failing to maintain pavement (or even to finance any paving at all), to pay for garbage removal, pest control, or to repair decrepit old buildings. In sprawling Sundsvall, such things happen. These failings are usually glossed over in Ampulia—yet another clue about the illusion. Eventually, these aristocrats are bought out by the city and replaced with new owners. The seedier parts are hotbeds of criminality. Although thieves and other miscreants are eventually caught and permanently assigned to the *S&M Squad*, new ones always seem to grow from the mass of well-dressed but poor commoners. Criminal or abusive exactions perpetrated by nobility are officially frowned upon but rarely prosecuted unless another aristocrat was the victim.

Sundsvall's nicer boroughs include buildings of monumental proportions with bridges arching six or seven stories above the streets, the towering mausoleums of long-forgotten emperors, great temples, and illustrious monuments. Some streets have been turned into canals. Forums may be located on top of buildings along with idyllic artificial gardens featuring garish, animated flora some think were bred from species imported from faraway Frisland. Many a structure, including the Council of Thousand Wizards and the Imperial Palace, are fitted with landing pads and skyship hangars; however, there is no air traffic entering or leaving Sundsvall. All such flights take place above Ampulia, from where select passengers may *teleport* to the capital city--

another clue about the illusion. There are, however, large numbers of *Yellow Roof-Hoppers* for hire, armed *Hover-Chariots* belonging to the Imperial Guard or bounty hunters, and a plethora of private airborne vehicles, flying carpets and other luxury devices owned by the more affluent aristocrats and employed exclusively for intra-urban transportation. Beneath it all lie web-like layers of catacombs, dungeons, and city sewers awash with the underground waterway's overflow. Used waters are then pumped into the Greenlake River, a few miles downstream from the capital, contributing to the river's muddy aspect (and its summer "fragrance") in Coronation. Incidentally, it is one of the ways to enter the capital city unseen.



**Sundsvall Imperial Library**

One of the largest structures is the Council of Thousand Wizards. Entirely coated with white-veined red marble, it is easily recognizable from statues of current and past councilors ensconced in the outside walls. The painted sculptures animate when corresponding councilors are attending, mirror-imaging their gestures and facial expressions, right down to their clothing. There are exactly one thousand statues. They stand in twos or threes in magically lit, heavily adorned alcoves reinforced with marble columns. When the council is not in session or when someone is absent, statues represent instead past councilors enacting their most memorable moments. Simply watching a statue enables anyone to hear it telepathically. Streams of schoolchildren and their teachers come to watch these displays and learn about Alphatian history. An immense stained glass dome covers the center of the building. Beneath lies the main council chamber, a circular, arena-like space vast enough to enable councilors, their scribes, and their servants to sit at individual hemicycles. At the center stands the Speaker's Rock, a spiral staircase and platform carved from a black monolith. The Speaker of the Council administrates the sessions. When speaking, the Speaker or a councilor given *The Voice* (the ability to address the august assembly) appears above the platform in three magnified and luminescent images facing outward. Their voices are amplified to be clearly heard despite the usually loud background noise. Circular galleries overlook the chamber, allowing visitors to observe from behind the stone railings or sitting in private loges. Observation terraces are permanently *silenced*. The Council of Thousand Wizards boasts its own uniformed watchmen, separate from the Imperial Guard, and whose role is to protect the assembly and handle any disturbances.



***The Flying Carpet, by Victor Vasnetsov***

Glaring in all of its sickening faux-Gothic-Baroque grandeur, the Imperial Palace is everything one might imagine, with spotless white walls and gleaming azure roofs, elegant turrets, slender towers reaching for the sky, enormous vitrailed bays, and an eclectic stone-built menagerie of arcane fauna adorning every corner, archway, and balcony. It is the towering result embodying eons of former emperors' whims and second thoughts. Alas, Vertiloch does not another Haven make. Although air transportation outside the city is forbidden, the imperial yacht, glittering in her black and gold livery, sits conspicuously on a landing pad atop of a bastion in the back of the palace. She's a fake. The real vessel is moored at the twin-palace in Ampulia. Although the replica hovers gracefully if sailed off its landing pad's edge, it would gently descend to the street below to

resume its hovering. As can be expected, the inside of the palace shines at least as much as the outside suggests. Perhaps even worse. Magical lighting, disconcerting tile patterns, odd floral arrangements, tapestries, paintings, and sculptures of every sort and style clutter the overloaded architecture. Everything is animated, provoking mild dizziness to splitting headaches for those unaccustomed to the palace. Pomp and circumstance is the daily order of things, replete with little nothings in the name of protocol and tradition. Much of it is entirely superfluous; the remainder is meant to circumvent magical guards and wards which are best left untriggered. Every event is highly stylized to the point of madness. Should one be unlucky enough to have to stay at the palace, the only respite is within personal quarters. Yet, despite the chaotic and frivolous appearance of their dwelling and the idiosyncrasies of Alphatia's capital city, the monarchy and its government run the empire well and efficiently. It's the way of wizards and magocracies. Embrace it.

*Or leave.*

*With the gracious participation of Janet Deaver-Pack.*

# SUNDSVAL City Summary

500,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
1,000 Troops 47.6 sq. miles

*Buildings often are inadequately maintained; some ruined or abandoned buildings. Most important streets are paved. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

	Number	% Random* Encounter		Number	% Random Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>			<b>Shops*</b>		
Humble hovels	8,900	1-8	Alchemists	71	1
Shoddy Tenements	20,025	9-41	Apothecaries	111	2
Cozy Cottages	656	42	Bakers	1,428	3-6
Laborers' Commons	1,476	43-45	Barbers	1,250	7-9
Bourgeois Dwellings	857	46-47	Bathers	263	10
Manorhouses, Small Palaces	677	48-53	Beer-Sellers	357	11
Large Palace	1	54	Blacksmiths	1,111	12-14
			Bleachers	238	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	166	16
Sordid Hostels	2,225	55-58	Booksellers	79	17
Cheap Taverns	1,593	59-61	Buckle Makers	357	18
Bawdy Houses	399	62	Butchers	1,000	19-21
Reputable Inns	162	63	Cabinet Makers	1,111	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	8	64	Carpenters	1,250	25-27
			Chandlers	714	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	1,250	30-32
Huge paved forums w/fountains, monuments, & daily markets	6	65	Coachmen, Porters	277	33
Imposing marble guildhouses, finely decorated	10	66	Coopers	714	34-35
Workshops, Manufactures	13	67	Copyists	250	36
Water-powered Mills	10	68	Cutlers	217	37
Warehouses, Granaries	40	69-75	Fishmongers	1,250	38-40
Average Port, with Spacious Wooden Docks	11 acres	76	Furriers	1,219	41-43
			Glovemakers	208	44
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	250	45
Religious Hospitals	9	77	Hatmakers	526	46
Chapels & Temples	180	78	Hay Merchants	416	47
Abbeys & Monasteries	12	79	Healers	294	48
Cathedrals	6	80	Illuminators	128	49
Catacombs	17 Miles		Jewelers	100	50
Cemetery	Huge	81	Locksmiths	263	51
Mausoleums	26	82	Magic-Shops	71	52
			Masons	1,000	53-55
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	714	56-57
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	83	Money-Changers	166	58
Theaters	13	84	Old-Clothes	1,250	59-61
City Library	1	85	Painters, Art	333	62
			Pastrycooks	833	63-64
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	357	65
Basic Learning Centers	147	86	Pursemakers	454	66
World Renowned University	1	87	Roofers	277	67
World-Class School of Magic	1	88	Ropemakers	263	68
Military Academy	1	89	Rugmakers	250	69
Naval Academy	1	90	Sages	104	70
			Saddlers	500	71
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	588	72-73
Huge Citadel with concentric walls	1	91	Sculptors	250	74
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district			Shoemakers	3,333	75-84
28 miles of massive walls, bastions, towers		92-94	Spice Merchants	357	85
			Tailors	2,000	86-90
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Tanners	250	91
Large gardens	13	95-96	Watercarriers	1,250	92-94
Immense stone complex for the Council of Wizards	1	97	Weavers	833	95-96
Imposing, marble-built Court House	1	98	Wine-Sellers	555	97-98
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99	Woodcarvers	208	99
			Woodsellers	208	100
Ruined or abandoned building		100			

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*



# The Alphatian Province of Ambur

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This small kingdom at the northeastern tip of the Alphatian Empire has been variously described as a quiet, underdeveloped, fog-shrouded realm engrossed in its passion for theaters and stargazing. There is far more to the story to explain the success of Ambur. This picturesque image, however, serves to veil a most peculiar and sinister secret.



Kingdom of Ambur - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

There was a time when this land and much of what is now mainland Alphatia belonged to ancient and primitive tribes of eastern Neathar folk, known as the Yan. They became strongest in the north after the Alphatian Landfall, two millennia ago. During the following centuries, when Air Wizards pushed from the south, Yani tribes were forced to cohabit with the Fey, mystical forest folk who'd claimed vast boreal woodlands. Those of mixed Yan and Fey stock, known as the Yanifey, eventually supplanted the old Yan folk.

With their ancestral hold upon the cold, misty woods increasingly challenged, pureblood Fey yearned for greater magic with which to keep the Alphatian invaders at bay. At the Fey's bidding, the Ogam, a swarthy people hailing from unknown shores, responded to the call and, for a time, stalemated the Alphatian onslaught. But as the fight lingered, these dark mages engendered a mysterious calamity. It withered woods in the northwest, impoverished the soil, and invited a harsher climate. As a result of the magical mishap, the Fey vanished overnight and surviving Ogam retreated into the northern Kerothar Mountains, leaving the dumbfounded and distressed Yanifey to hold the plains.

Under a new impetus spearheaded by the visionary wizard Jarastharram, Alphatians poured northward. A few eastern Yanifey escaped to the weather-beaten shores of the so-called Yannivey Chain and were forgotten. Ever so adaptable, the remainder joined the conquering Alphatians. In defiance to their allegiance to Sundsvall, followers of Jarastharram founded the Kingdom of Argonath, stretching from today's Frisland to Ambur. In time, it succumbed to local wars, internal strife, and sea raids from Qeodhar.

Imperial forces struck down the tattered dregs of Argonath, and split its territory into three realms: Frisland, Ar, and Ambur. These were little more than royal domains surrounded by city states, military outposts, and petty agrarian oligarchies centered around Alphatian families—or Houses. Their loyalties shifted as often as the prevailing weather. Larger domains gobbled up smaller ones, until they settled their borders as legitimate dominions of the three northern kingdoms that we know today.

**Ambur Today:** The realm largely turned inward. The land was poor to begin with and struggled to emerge from centuries of conflict. The northeastern realm bore a reputation as a cold, dreary backwater. Theater became one of the few sources of entertainment for both the mighty and the meek. While this art form grew in popularity with the addition of magic to enhance performances, a mage became curious about the local glassmaking tradition. In particular, she observed the skills of master crafters to produce near-perfect crystal objects—spheres, cubes, tear drops, prisms, disks, and occasionally skulls of various sorts. She identified the ancient technique as one dating back to the time of the Yanifey. Isolated shamans of a somewhat swarthy complexion said these objects enabled them to contact the world of spirits. Intrigued, the mage—one Lady Alathazam—dug deeper. Although failing to uncover evidence about the spirit world, she earned an uncanny understanding of optics as applied to the arcane. Sought after by many a younger wizard eager to learn her technique, she opened several schools across the realm. The savvy Amburian



monarchy intervened to regulate these learning centers and make sure their knowledge stayed within the realm's borders. After Lady Alathazam's death, these schools became private competing establishments, and financially successful. To reward itself for its shrewd foresight, the monarchy imposed hefty taxes upon the schools and their students, sparking unrest among academic circles, known as the Ocularian Riots. It was quickly put down after the monarchy agreed to yearly research grants, scholarships, and royal support for the expansion of the school system within the realm.

As a result of heavy controls over the source of Ambur's special knowledge, students were obligated to reside permanently in Ambur and submit to *geas* and other magically induced oaths in exchange for access. Optical mastery established Ambur as the leading source of telescopes and other magical viewing devices in Alphatia. In time, this specialty attracted many mages from southern realms, along with their extended families and their retinues. With the increased presence of wealthy aristocrats, farming was developed to sustain their extravagant lifestyles. Seasonal enchantments, now a legal obligation for landowners, helped alleviate climatic limitations, leading Ambur to grow from predominant wilderness to an emergent borderland dotted with farmsteads and urban centers.

Ambur boasts more than 470,000 residents over an area of 11,369 sq. miles (29.446 Km<sup>2</sup>), yielding a population density of 41 inhabitants per sq. mile (16 inh. per Km<sup>2</sup>). The kingdom exports farming products such as root vegetables, sheep, and goats, as well as some fishing. More than 18% of the population lives in urban areas, in addition to slightly more than 1% serving in the military. Amburian armed forces count 5,000 troops, including 11 seagoing vessels, three skyships, and two submersibles. Airborne ships are known as Her Watchful Majesty's Ships *Eye in the Sky*, *Wargaze*, and *Immortal Focus*. The submersibles are the HWMS *Sea Vision* and *Marine Ocularium*. Diplomatic relationships with the Kingdom of Ar have remained reasonably good, except for the Twin Peaks Campaign largely seen among Amburians as the theft of a rightfully claimed dominion by their western neighbor. As a result of this conflict, contacts between Ambur and Foresthome are polite but generally cool and reserved. The stargazing realm has otherwise no direct enemies. Contact with Frisland has been sporadic despite regular merchant trade along the Argonath Road. Suspicion marred Ambur's view of Frisland as the result of tales surrounding the disappearance of visiting traders. These may be exaggerated accounts of highway robberies but one cannot be too sure.



Ambur's royal domain centers around the City of Starpoint. The other five dominions making up the rest of the realm are counties owing fealty to Queen Elshethara. The royal capital is the starting point of the old Argonath Road. Since the demise of the earlier kingdom, the road was repaired and paved, running 500 miles to the City of Shiell in Frisland (800 Km). Nearly half of Ambur's army and a great deal of its fleet guard Starpoint, a fortified city overlooking the southern end of the strategically invaluable Ambur River. Much of the port remains within the defensive enclosure, with two large towers protecting the entrance. The river is the only outlet

to the sea from Crystal Lake. All merchant traffic in and out of the region channels through its ninety-mile length (145 Km) and must stop at Starpoint. Although deep, wide, and generally calm, the river can prove a challenge to navigation during the spring thaw. Swollen with melting snow, its muddy waters generate a strong northward current carrying large chunks of ice. During the winter, the river's surface is mostly frozen, enabling foot traffic to cross at several points.



**Domain of Skyguard (Royal Domain) - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

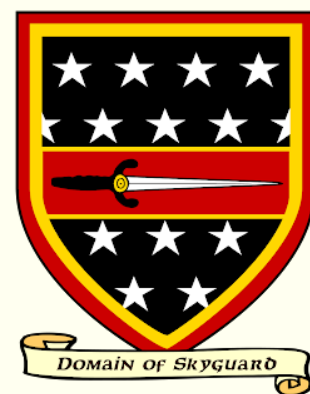
Lands beyond the eastern bank bulge several hundred feet high, preventing the river from cutting a shorter path to the sea, just south of the Great Observatory Peak. There has been talk at the Royal Palace about building a sheltered canal to enable year-round navigation eastward from Starpoint—at least for military purposes. Propositions have been made to fortify such a canal, which would make it relevant as a defensive position as well. Arguments about its financing have so far kept the project from getting underway. Yet, the vision of Wraith Prime floating 9,000' up in the sky, no more than 24 miles southeast of Starpoint, offers a stark reminder of the need for caution when military matters are concerned. One can never be quite sure of the whims of kings and history. And so, the debate goes on.

**The Theaters:** Starpoint is best known for its theaters, ranging from shoddy salacious cabaret to the glorious Royal Opera. Many rely on the skills of illusionists, some of the best hailing from Wyvern Prime, to enhance their spectacles. The most illustrious establishments master the art of balancing true talent with magic, the latter merely to enhance the former. Cheaper shows invariably replace talent with magical fakery. No self-respecting aristocrat would want to be caught dead in such sordid places. True theater and opera rely on the adaptation of literary

masterpieces, brilliant acting, fabulous choreography, heart-rending musical performances, and divine singing—with magic coming last. In this respect Ambur holds its place with distinction when compared with Haven’s virtuosity. Among Amburian intelligentsia, *everyone* is an expert, a critic, an ardent supporter of fabulous writers or divas, as well as their financial backer. Her Watchful Majesty—dubbed the *Drama Queen*—spent her youth as a memorable tragedian before inheriting the throne from her father, King Elshetharam. As a side note, her skills in the performing arts prove invaluable on the political scene, not so much within Ambur since everyone of noteworthy standing at the very least dabbles in acting, but when negotiations with foreign dignitaries are concerned. No one in Alphatia can tell what Amburians really think unless the latter want to share. Diplomats are masters at timing and staging their negotiations, using wit, theatrical flair, and insightful psychology to put their counterparts at a disadvantage. Amburian council members in Sundsvall and high-placed lawyers are most popular, not so much for what they advocate, but for the manner in which they do it.

**Astromancy:** The other aspect of Starpoint lies with quite another specialty. The capital city harbors one of the famous schools founded by the legendary Lady Alathazam. Its area of expertise is *astromancy*. The illustrious founder built her technique from two specific approaches, which is true with all of her Amburian schools. One concerns the proper use of optics, high-quality crystals, and shaped mirrors. The other relies on enchantments to manipulate light in order to produce a desired effect. Starpoint’s *School of Astromancy* specializes in the analysis of images carried by light. The concept is that an image one sees through a telescope is merely a reflection of the source carried by light through space. Given the speed of light and sufficient distance, one actually gazes at a version of the source that may be millennia old. The nature of *astromantic* enchantments consists in observing various points along a stream of light, yielding different views of the source, effectively traveling forward or backward in time. *Astromancy* enables its masters to build viewing devices that can perceive imagery beyond the present reflection. However, *astromancers* can never look into the future.

**For example:** the smallest *astromantic* telescope has extremely precise adjustments that allow a trained viewer to watch something or someone at least a mile away but no more than 360, slowly backing up in time to the instant the target is no longer in sight. *Astromancers* are historians and sometimes crime investigators. By simply positioning a telescope to observe light refracting from a particular site, they can refocus their devices to see what happened there. Because of the distances involved and the difficulty of properly aiming a device, a *locate subject* spell is sometimes needed. For this first-level spell to function, the subject must be known by the viewer, or discovered through a seventh-level magic-user *lore* spell.



**Scales and Scopes:** Devices are built with a specific scale of operation—miles, hundreds of miles, thousands of miles, up to billions of miles. The scale determines how far back in time one is able to go. Instrument scale might require observation from great distances, including from beyond Mystara’s skyshield. The latter explains the singular interest of Amburian stargazers in Ar’s secret Alphaia Quest (see Heaven’s Crown District). The enchantment of a telescope

calibrated for miles can only go back up to a day per mile, up to a year. Larger viewing devices can go much farther forward or backward in time, as shown below:

<b>Scale (in Miles)</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Cost (in gp)</b>
1-360	1 day/mile	10,000
100-10,000	1 year/100 miles	50,000
10,000-1,000,000	1 century/10,000 miles	250,000
A million to a billion	1 millennium/million miles	1,250,000
A billion and beyond	1 eon per full light-year*	6,250,000

(\*) Maximum range is 15 billion light-years.

The size and weight of these viewing devices increase drastically with their scales and scopes. The smaller device weighs about 10lbs and is about a foot long, with a series of smaller sights, mobile reticles and colored lenses, one or more convex mirrors, knobs, trombone-like controls, and a collapsible tripod. With each subsequent category, weight increases as follows: 500lbs, 3,000lbs, 10,000lbs, and 30,000lbs. Length increases threefold to 3', 9', 30', and 90'. The three largest telescopes must be mounted on a permanent supporting frame.

**Unsolved Issues:** Although Amburians became masters of stargazing and telescope technology, they have failed to truly fathom the deepest nature of their enchantments. It so happens that Lady Alathazam had "borrowed" certain shamanistic rituals as the basis for her magical methods, now the core of Amburian teachings. These fundamentals came from writings etched underneath some of the crystal objects she'd uncovered. The archeological artifacts had been kept at Starpoint's Royal Gallery but over time were misplaced or stolen. It was never realized that they weren't remotely Yanifey but rather of ancient Ogam origins. Whether this has had any tangible impact on Ambur's brand of wizardry or its illustrious alumni remains to be proven. So far, a few unexplained incidents have occurred. It isn't uncommon for fleeting visions to manifest themselves during long hours of telescope usage, appearing at the limit of one's peripheral vision and vanishing as soon as one attempts to look its way. As a result, no one quite knows what the visions are—only that they are odd and leave strange ominous feelings that can linger for days. The phenomena have been reported variously as the result of subconscious stress, eye strain, questionable eating habits, bad theater influence, cheap ale, optical illusions, accidental reflections in the lenses, lack of sleep, or the abuse of snorting *under-torrefecated juju leaves*. One observer reported creatures of cosmic proportions cavorting within his telescope's sight—but the poor fellow was proven quite mad. Oddly, no magic could restore his mind and he was entrusted to mystics caring for the hopelessly deranged. Some decades later, another alumnus made a similar claim but when they sought him, school academicians discovered only that his telescope had been activated and a cup of tea sat on a table next to his chair, still steaming. No other trace of the *astromancer* was ever found, despite the use of *lore* and *contact outer plane* spells.

## Illustrious Starpointers

### Her Watchful Majesty Queen Elshethara

The monarch spent her youth honing her acting skills and developing her love of fine literature, with very little time devoted to politics and administration. Her older brother Tharramden was the one slated to inherit the throne. A trained battlemage and *astromancy* alumnus, he was prepared for the succession but fate decided otherwise. The heir apparent had left Ambur with a group of eminent wizards in search of a crystal artifact missing from the Royal Gallery. His investigation took him into Frisland. He was never heard from again. In grief, his father abdicated, leaving Elshethara in power. Although the *Drama Queen*, after her trademark fit of temper, proved a quick learner, she would have rather left ruling responsibilities to her older brother. She ordered royal spies to look for any clue regarding his whereabouts. The queen didn't trust the Frisland monarchy to be of help—she suspected instead they might have something to do with Tharramden's disappearance. Over time, the spies identified the ill-fated expedition's last camping site near the Kerothar Mountains and unveiled signs of foul play. A fight had taken place there, possibly resulting in the prince's abduction. . . or his death. No bodies were found.



Without any other indication of who was behind the attack, the queen decided to take matters into her own hands. She consulted the royal magist, an accomplished *astromancer* himself, and requested he shed light on the attack. Several days later, Master Erzebor confirmed to the queen that her brother had been attacked by people unknown. At least, they did not look like Frisland troops but more like wild mountain men. Unable to ascertain the prince's fate, Erzebor appeared visibly shaken and asked to retire. He became ill soon thereafter and was taken from the palace to his personal residence in Starpoint to recover. The queen immediately ordered her spies to return to Frisland and search the Kerothar Mountains. None ever returned. Elshethara began looking instead for a group of mercenaries unconnected with either the Amburian or Frisland aristocracy, with the skills needed to survive a foray into the Kerothar Mountains. Meanwhile, she ordered her remaining spies to quietly re-examine circumstances surrounding the artifact's disappearance from the Royal Gallery and determine who might be involved.

**Appearance & Personality:** Queen Elshethara is a tall curvy woman with a strong stage presence. People, especially men, always look at her when she sweeps into a room. She never just walks: Elshethara processes, glides, or swoops. Her gestures are always wide and graceful. The queen has lovely features framed by long fine platinum-colored hair and she understands their impact on others when she is insisting on her way. She is also quite narcissistic. Any situation becomes an opportunity to milk it for all the drama it can provide; she also enjoys pitting people against one another to glean additional information from their disconcerts. Her brother had worn a mystical amulet of carved green jade, the same hue as his eyes. Elshethara

is therefore fascinated by finely wrought jade and collects it whenever the opportunity presents itself. She wears a silver-embossed dagger sheath on her belt.

MU24, AC2, hp 47, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger, Dmg by spell or special, Save MU24, ML8, AL N; St10, In17, Wi11, Dx16, Co 13, Ch15(17). **Magical Items:** *periapt of clear memory, robe of glamour, dagger of deathly fakery, and cloak of dramatic entrance (or exit).*

**Periapt of Clear Memory:** this pearl necklace enables Elshethara to recall all that she reads or sees without error. Any visual detail can be clearly remembered if needed. At the neck of a wizard, it enables the memorization of one extra spell per level.

**Robe of Glamour:** this garment's appearance changes every Turn, switching at random between any other formal outfit the queen owns (regardless of who actually wears the magical garment). The robe provides a +2 bonus to Charisma (up to 18) and a basic AC of 4.

**Dagger of Deathly Fakery:** this magical weapon's blade is fake, harmlessly withdrawing into the handle when pressed against someone. If used against oneself, it enables the owner to appear dead for up to an hour—complete with an illusory bleeding stab wound. When used against someone else, the weapon only requires a successful hit against AC9, in which case the victim must save vs. spell or become paralyzed for an hour. In all cases, the weapon forces victims (or the owner) to act out over-the-top theatrical deaths as they collapse to the ground.

**Cloak of Dramatic Entrance (or Exit):** about floor-length and fitted with a tall collar and a pectoral chain, the cloak produces bursts of light and smoke accompanied with dramatic music and choir (or whatever artifice required for a theatrical scene) when activated. It enables the owner to *dimension door* either to make a memorable appearing or disappearing act.

## Master Erzebor, Royal Magist

This old man is an eminent graduate from Starpoint's School of Astromancy. His distinguished career gained him employment at the royal palace. In his long hours behind telescopes of all sizes, he'd experienced firsthand the sort of strange visions reported by others. Unable to explain them, he dismissed the visitations as resulting from fatigue and eye strain. In truth, he came to fear them. Yet, he never admitted to the visions, like many others in his trade, to avoid being thought of as an old fool and lose his lucrative employment at the palace. All was for the best in the best of realms—until Queen Elshethara summoned him to shed light on her brother's disappearance.



Master Erzebor dutifully took his telescope aboard the royal flagship, the HWMS *Eye in the Sky*. The vessel flew to a high altitude and approached Frisland's border. From there, the magist correctly aimed the device at the crime scene. Looking back in time, he observed a night attack. Under a gleam of starlight, he witnessed a confused melee, with wizardly spells flashing ominously and eerie glowing shields blocking them. Erzebor was able to focus on the attackers'



leader, a wild man with a headdress bearing the flat, twisted horns of a goat. The individual stopped for a moment, slowly turned to look up and gaze into Erzebor's eyes, a wicked grin on his lips. The old man was so shaken, he backed away from the telescope and refused to resume the observation. Although he reported his findings to Queen Elshethara upon his return, he was soon thereafter taken ill, wracked with nightmares and fevers.

In the weeks following his strange encounter, Erzebor seemed to come to terms with the vision. In truth, he became secretly obsessed with it. As he resumed stargazing, he felt a new peace and a higher state of mind allowing him a better understanding of cosmic reality. Eager to learn more despite his failing health and the dreams disturbing his sleep, he sought the mysterious astromantic visions. He experimented with telescope settings to yield more of them, and above all, the enhanced awareness that seemed to dawn naturally within his mind. It beckoned him to search deeper. It told him where to look and perhaps what else to do.

**Appearance & Personality:** Erzebor is of small stature and has very wrinkled skin. He peers through faded blue eyes, with his head thrust forward from a scrawny neck at anything that interests him. His gray eyebrows look like they might take off by themselves and are too heavy for his oval face. Mist-colored hair, bushy and cotton-like, covers the back of his head. This astronomer's voice is high and on the edge of squeaky, both precise and pedantic. Since he is fairly short, he takes more steps than others do to get anywhere, which often makes him look like a quickly trotting cat. Erzebor smokes a lot when puzzled. He carries a small bag of tobacco with him at all times and a case that protects his precious pipe. He also wears on his belt a tooled leather case for a set of ocularia. Erzebor is always impatient to get to his telescopes, therefore he can be short with people. Occasionally he likes to wax eloquent with other magists over a small glass of port about viewing devices in his possession. If someone presses him for what he knows of stargazing visions, the astronomer purses his mouth, whirls, and walks quickly away.

MU11, AC6, hp 20, MV 90' (30'), AT one spell, Dmg by spell, Save MU11+2, ML6, AL C; St9, In17, Wi10, Dx13, Co 11, Ch12. **Magical Items:** *pipe of arcane meditation, amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP, ring of protection +2, and stargazer's ocularia.*

**Pipe of Arcane Meditation:** with the finest tobacco, this magical device confers a smoker a temporary +1 increase in Intelligence (up to 18 and for an hour), providing an Intelligence check to answer a puzzling question when none would otherwise be allowed. The question and its answer each must be thought through in no more than a dozen words. Once an Intelligence check succeeds, no more than one question can ever concern the same topic. The trouble with this item is that it enhances the smoker's subconscious perception, conferring by the same token a -4 penalty to any saving throws against mind-affecting powers until after the next resting period. Duration of mind-controlling effects are also doubled whenever possible. Any character class may use this smoking pipe. It has a long swooping stem with a small carved bowl and is made from ivory. Carvings detail miniature astronomers with their telescopes.

**Stargazer's Ocularia:** when looking through a telescope, these magical glasses automatically project against the owner's retina the names of stars and other celestial bodies, as long as they were first recorded in an Astronomer's Codex. When using this device, the owner must speak

the title of the volume which the ocularia can search to identify cosmic features. The device keeps searching the same book until told to switch to another. The written record must either lie within 180' of the owner or within the confines of Starpoint's Royal Astronomy Repository (however remote it may be at the time). If the phrase "*identify source*" is spoken, the ocularia indicate which book they are set to search (title and author) and whether it is a local source or one at the *Royal Astronomy Repository*. These ocularia are presently set to access information recorded in Master Erzebor's "*De Rebus Exterioribus*" in which he described visions that occurred during his experiments and their sidereal coordinates. This volume is hidden within his telescope's supporting frame. These ocularia do not function in the Hollow World, outside Mystara's Skyshield, or in the outer planes.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his gracious permission to use his intriguing Ogam-Orzafeth history and background. No doubt more of it will be forthcoming. Thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*

# Dominion Stats – Ambur

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Starpoint Area - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex

## The Land and People of Ambur

Rural Population:	379,032 farmers	80.5%	<b>18,952</b> armed peasants and	<b>4,330</b>
Urban Population:	86,600 townsfolks	18.4%	town militias can be levied temporarily to	
Military:	4,943 Warrior (HD)	1.1%	help the standing army defend the land,	
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>470,575 Amburians</b>		the seas, the air, and the ground below.	

<b>Total Land Area:</b>	<b>11,369 Sq. Miles</b>	Total population density:	41.39 people per Sq. Mile
	20% Wilderness	Price of Bread:	10 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf
	49% Borderlands	Price Inflation:	Acceptable
	32% Settled/Suburban	Min. Wage:	6.2 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Starpoint	65,000	1,711
Starfall	8,000	1,500
Apastron	4,000	50
Astra	3,500	300
Gr Conjunction	3,200	100
Aphelion	850	20
Nadir	700	20
Auriga	650	20
-	-	-
Perihelion Castle	100	300
Ft. Zenith	160	300
Ft. Zodiac	160	300
Ft. Umbra	240	300
Gt. Observatory	40	22
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

### Mining Summary

<b>Number of Mines:</b>	<b>2</b>
	550 Convicts or Slaves
	12 Administrators
	50 Guards
	248 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants
	<b>860 Total Mining Population</b>

### Industries Summary

<b>Basic Industries:</b>	<i>Papyrus &amp; scrolls, Livestock, Tools, Wool,</i>
<b>Mid-Lvl Industries:</b>	<i>Fine Woods, Jewelry, Mechanical Devices, Tax on Magic, Optical Devices</i>
<b>Hi-Lvl Industries:</b>	<i>Books, Magic,</i>

## Treasury of Ambur

Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	36,445 gp/month	26.7%	<b>Mo. Tax Averages</b>	
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	44,630 gp/month	32.7%	Farmer	1.0 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	2,475 gp/month	1.8%	Townfolk	5.2 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	31,360 gp/month	23.0%	Household	3.5 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	21,462 gp/month	15.7%	per Capita	2.9 sp
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>136,372 gp/month</b>	100%		
Available Treasury:	58,713 gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	13,047 gp/month
Government & Politics	26,095 gp/month
Personal Prestige	19,571 gp/month
Treasury	19,571 gp/month
Military	19,571 gp/month

### Corruption Level:

*Occasional Venality*

### Farming:

*Ambur may export food.*

## Leadership Rating

Poor

Acceptable

Ideal

Popularity

Charity

Administration

Order

Dominion's Prestige

Civic/Religious Prestige

Confidence Level

Justice

Prosperity

Technology

Fiscal Regime

Military Prestige

Healthy

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	456	1	Spellcasters	12	8
Guards	50	1	Storm Giants	6	15
Heavy Infantry	91	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	183	1	-	-	-
Longbowmen	91	2	-	-	-
Mounted Archers	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	274	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	183	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	183	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	91	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	183	1
-	-	-	Trebuchet Artillerists	91	1
Light Horsemen	183	1	-	-	-
Med. Horsemen	135	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	62	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Wyvern Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	161	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	891
Mules or Oxen:	1337
Draft Horses:	184
Tents:	568
Camp Followers:	321

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	68
Lt Catapults:	30
Hvy Catapults:	22
Trebuchets:	7

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	238
Medium Warhorses:	176
Heavy Warhorses:	81
Riding Horses:	536
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	-

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
2,435 HD

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Naval Forces

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	7	70	420	21	140	1
Large Galley	2	40	360	8	100	1
War Galley	1	30	300	5	75	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	4	40	--	12	100	1
Large Sailing Ship	2	40	--	8	100	1
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually. Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy:** 735 Seamen HD      Seamen on Shore Leave: 5  
**Total Fleet Size:** 16

## Posted in Starpoint

**Total Strength:** 1,711 HD      80% Humans 10% Elves 5% Dwarven  
3% Other 2% Halflings

**Infantry:** 146 Lt. Infantry, 29 Hvy. Infantry, 59 Shortbowmen, 29 Longbowmen, 59 Lt. Crossbowmen, 29 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 59 Lt. Cavalry, 43 Med. Cavalry, 20 Hvy. Cavalry,

**Special Troops:** 4 Spellcasters, 2 Storm Giants,

**Siege Weapons:** 235 Artillerists with 22 Ballistae, 10 Lt. Catapults  
8 Hvy. Catapults, 3 Trebuchets

### War Machines:

**Auxiliaries:** 56 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers  
**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 171.1 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 90 Sailors, 180 Marines (and 540 rower convicts)  
4 Small Galley 1 Large Galley 1 War Galley

**Assigned Ships:** 3 Small Sailing Ship 1 Large Sailing Ship

### Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison

Wagons: 309  
Mules or Oxen: 463      **Starpoint Militia:** 3,250 People or HD  
Draft Horses: 64  
Tents: 197  
Camp Followers: 112 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

# Starpoint City Summary

65,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
1,711 Troops 15.3 sq. miles

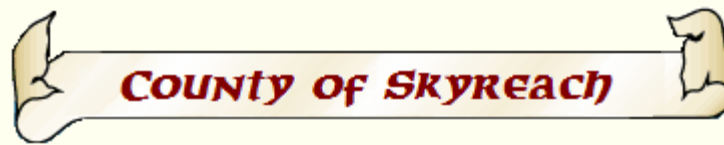
*Buildings often are in mediocre shape, some ruined or abandoned buildings. Main street alone is paved but poorly maintained. Streets are unlit at night.*

		% Random*		% Random	
Dwellings	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number	Encounter
Humble Hovels	650	1-2	Alchemists	9	1
Shoddy Tenements	1,463	3-13	Apothecaries	14	2
Cozy Cottage	603	14-15	Bakers	185	3-6
Laborers' Commons	1,356	16-23	Barbers	162	7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	52	24	Bathers	34	10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	87	25-27	Beer-Sellers	46	11
Large Palace	1	28-29	Blacksmiths	144	12-14
			Bleachers	30	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	21	16
Sordid Hostels	163	30	Booksellers	10	17
Cheap Taverns	209	31-32	Buckle Makers	46	18
Bawdy Houses	52	33	Butchers	130	19-21
Reputable Inns	149	34	Cabinet Makers	144	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	1	35	Carpenters	162	25-27
			Chandlers	92	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	162	30-32
Large, paved forums (daily markets)	5	36-37	Coachmen, Porters	36	33
Large guildhouses, stone-built	6	38	Coopers	92	34-35
Workshops, Manufactures	12	39-43	Copyists	32	36
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	4	44	Cutlers	28	37
Warehouses, Granaries	36	45-71	Fishmongers	162	38-40
Very Large Port, with Very Large Stone Docks	155 acres	72-76	Furriers	158	41-43
			Glovemakers	27	44
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	32	45
Religious Hospitals	4	77	Hatmakers	68	46
Chapels & Temples	27	78	Hay Merchants	54	47
Abbeys & Monasteries	2	79	Healers	38	48
Cathedrals	1	80	Illuminators	16	49
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	13	50
Cemetery	Huge	81	Locksmiths	34	51
Mausoleums	4	82	Magic-Shops	9	52
			Masons	130	53-55
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	92	56-57
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	83	Money-Changers	21	58
Theaters	4	84	Old-Clothes	162	59-61
City Library	1	85	Painters, Art	43	62
			Pastrycooks	108	63-64
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	46	65
Basic Learning Centers	18	86	Pursemakers	59	66
University	-		Roofers	36	67
World-Class School of Magic	1	87	Ropemakers	34	68
Military Academy	-		Rugmakers	32	69
Naval Academy	-		Sages	13	70
			Saddlers	65	71
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	76	72-73
Small Citadel	-		Sculptors	32	74
Troops reside in a military district			Shoemakers	433	75-84
			Spice Merchants	46	85
16 miles of stone walls		88-93	Tailors	260	86-90
			Tanners	32	91
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Watercarriers	162	92-94
Large gardens	4	94-96	Weavers	108	95-96
Imposing, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97	Wine-Sellers	72	97-98
Imposing, stone-built Court House	1	98	Woodcarvers	27	99
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level	1	99	Woodsellers	27	100
Ruined or abandoned building		100			

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

# Ambur: The Counties of Skyreach & Starfyre

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Not to be confused with the Capital City of Ar, this northern county lies within the Kingdom of Ambur's borders. Hotheads have gotten into violent arguments about the name's "intellectual property," each side claiming moral ascendancy over the label. In truth, it's neither here nor there, as both in their own ways do reach for the sky.



**County of Skyreach - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The seat of the county lies in the provincial town of Star Fall (8,000 inhabitant plus 1,500 military). It earned its name from a small meteoroid that once crashed in the vicinity. Wizards moved into the area shortly afterward, hunting for bits and pieces of the monolith. Local population grew thereafter, with peasants and workers seeking good fortune. In Ambur, wherever there are wizards, there is work and money to be earned.

It turned out that fragments from the outer space *bolide* bore special properties that, when combined with the manufacture of optical lenses, lead to a new branch of stargazing technology. A local school was founded, accredited by the renowned Lady Alathazam, which promptly acquired the technique and offered it to its students. It became known as the *School of Transposition*.

**Transposition:** These astronomers are the ultimate world explorers. Their technique involves the ability to project a sentient image, known as a *holomorph*, to a place observed through a telescope. In effect, the astronomer, otherwise known as a *transposer*, enters into a trance in order to send his/her consciousness to specific coordinates. The projection appears in every way like a real person, with the difference that it requires neither air nor sustenance to survive. *Holomorphs* are technically immune to natural elements.

This process ends whenever the *transposer* wishes, up to its maximum duration. It may otherwise end *prematurely* if someone or something pulls the astronomer from his/her trance, or if the *holomorph* faces a situation which the astronomer might instinctively believe to be deadly, such as a volcano exploding nearby or the stab of an alien blade through the heart. Wisdom checks with various penalties determine whether a projection ends prematurely. If so, the *transposer* sustains potentially lethal shock damage amounting to 1-point times the extent of the Wisdom Check's failure. An astronomer can only attempt one such visitation per day.



This technique does not overcome time lag due to cosmic distances (see Astromancy). When attempting a projection millions or billions of miles away, the *transposer's* trance must include a period anywhere from a few minutes to 5 hours in order to sync with the target because light can take this long to reach Mystara. Time lag and the enchantment's own limitations do not permit projecting beyond Mystara's solar system. Projecting on the shortest scale may require positioning a telescope on a skyship flying at high altitude or on a celestial body outside Mystara's skyshield. Distance and expertise also determine the extent of a *holomorph's* capabilities, as shown below:

	<b>Experience Levels</b>					
<b>Scale (Miles)</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>4-6</b>	<b>7-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>21+</b>
<b>1-10,000</b>	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<b>Up to 250,000</b>	—	I	II	III	IV	V
<b>Up to 50 Million</b>	—	—	I	II	III	IV
<b>Up to 1 Billion</b>	—	—	—	I	II	III
<b>Up to 5 Billion</b>	—	—	—	—	I	II

**Class I Capability:** the projection has a 30% chance of failing (without damage). The *transposer* can only sustain the projection 1d4+2 rounds, after which the visitation ends. At this level, the *holomorph* can only see its surrounding (it cannot physically touch anything although it seems bound by local laws of gravity).



**Class II Capability:** odds of failure are 25% and duration increases to 2d6+2 rounds. The *holomorph* gains the ability to hear, smell, and taste (provided an atmosphere is available).

**Class III Capability:** odds of failure are 20% and duration lasts 1d4+2 Turns. The *holomorph* gains the ability to touch, manipulate objects, and speak, just as if the *transposer* were actually present.

**Class IV Capability:** odds of failure are 15% and duration lasts 2d6+2 Turns. The *holomorph* gains the ability to cast spells levels 1-3 and maintain an ESP effect, as the magic-user spell.

**Class V Capability:** odds of failure are 10% and duration increases to 1d4+2 Hours. The *holomorph* gains the ability to cast spells levels 4-6 and communicate as if using the *speak with plants* or *speak with monsters* clerical spell.

**Class VI Capability:** odds of failure are 5% and duration increases to 2d6+2 Hours. The *holomorph* gains the ability to cast spells levels 7-9 and disregard local gravity laws.

**Other Concerns:** While in a trance, an astronomer remains unaware of what happens within the telescope's vicinity. Only physical contact or damage will interrupt this trance. More than once have facetious students at Star Fall's *School of Transposers* pulled pranks on their unsuspecting comrades, such as painting mustaches on their faces or pinning "kick-me" notes on their backs. A non-initiate looking through a *transposer's* unsecured telescope would incur double the chances of failure; class capability would be based on half the viewer's actual experience level (rounded up). Duration would also drop to half the normal timeframe (rounded up). Any shock damage due to premature termination would also double. Just as with *astromancers*, *transposers* also experience unexplained visions during their long hours spent stargazing.



This dominion centers around the Town of Astra (3,500 inhabitants plus 300 troops), a place about as remote and provincial as one would expect it to be. Coastal grasslands are renowned for their herds of shaggy aurochs, raised for meat, fat, sinew, and wool. Seasonal fairs take place on the main town square, when livestock is sold at the market, including bovines, ovines from farther inland, and pigs. Low cliffs facing the shoreline prevent the development of seaports except for the Fort Zenith area. The next closest mooring in Ambur can be found at Grand Conjunction in the neighboring County of Skyglint.



As the county took its current form, there was a desire to name it Skyreach, a label taken a few years earlier by its southern neighbor. Naturally, the House of Astra accused the inconsiderate

peer from “stealing” the idea. A few hotheads entertained savage duels to prove each other wrong, mostly young aristocrats with little or nothing better to do with their time. The current name was eventually chosen after observing a shooting star. As a sign of good luck, the House of Astra promptly registered Starfyre as the official county name with the *College of Arms* at the capital. Naturally, neighbors to the east complained bitterly about the fact, since they too had wanted that name, arguing the celestial event lasted longer in their sky. The issue became who actually reported it first at Starpoint’s *Royal Astronomy Repository*. The dispute was settled with the help of Greenspur advocates, notwithstanding a handful of firebrands who still beg to differ. From a foreigner’s point of view, there is nothing stellar or fiery about Starfyre, as predominant weather is overcast, foggy, and quite soggy as well.



County of Starfyre - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

**Luxoflexion:** Aside from oversized hairy bovines and obnoxious hotheads, Starfyre’s claim to glory derives from its *School of Arcane Luxoflexion*, a learning center teaching the mechanics of light-bending. As with other such schools, its techniques draw from fundamental approaches devised by Lady Alathazam. The concept is that light forming an object’s aura can be deflected, thus enabling *circumvision*. To put it simply, these curious wizards build telescopes that look around corners. Leaving behind sophomoric *circumvision* pleasantries in vogue among junior year students, such as “On a clear day, I can see. . .” (etc.), *luxoflexists* also developed related effects like reconstituting scattered light into a coherent beam, thereby defeating fog and cloud cover. Beside astronomy, *luxoflexion* finds many other uses, especially among adventurers, explorers, spies, and the military.

A number of standard dweomer-bearing telescopes are available for a price. Ranges denote up to what distance light deflection remains effective. As far as magnification is concerned, range also indicates the distance at which someone’s facial features can be easily recognized, especially with *Luxoflex-Plus* and more expensive models. Normal mechanical magnification otherwise applies beyond stated ranges, along with all optional enhancements. For example, the *Luxoflex-Stargazer* model enhanced with the *sidereal positioning* option can still locate celestial bodies well past its stated range.

<b>Device</b>	<b>Specifications</b>	<b>Cost*</b> (gp)
<b>Luxoflex-Mini</b>	Range: 300' with one angle up to 90° in any direction. Enc. 100cn. Length: up to 12" (collapsible). Leather pouch included.	1,000
<b>Luxoflex-Plus</b>	Range: 3,000' with up to 270°-worth of angles. Enc. 600cn with tripod. Length: up to 24" (non-collapsible). Waterproof, reinforced leather backpack incl. (garnet, buff, brown, or black). Discounted <i>levitation</i> enchantment on the backpack available for 1,800 gp.	5,000
<b>Luxoflex-Max</b>	Range: 48 miles (77 Km) with deflection capability sufficient to match planetary curvature. Enc. 8,000 cn with mount and counterweights. Length: 6' (non-collapsible). Navalized casing and deck-mounting available on request. Discounted <i>wizard lock</i> enchantment available for 1,800 gp.	10,000
<b>Luxoflex-Stargazer</b>	Range: 250,000 miles (155,000 Km) with deflection capability matching planetary curvature and all-weather imagery. Weight: 8 tons with mount and counterweights. Length: 15'. Vanity finish and custom enchantment available on request, up to sixth level <i>dweomercraft</i> .	60,000 (+) with installation
<b>Options</b>		
<b>All Weather Imagery</b>	Enables viewer to negate natural mist, fog, smoke, cloud cover, light diffusion, and atmospheric refraction	100 + 20% of model price
<b>Range-Finder</b>	Indicates in up to 20 different standards the range to the observed subject	50 + 10% of model price
<b>Infravision</b>	Outlines temperature variances within the field of vision	100 + 20% of model price
<b>Starlight Enhancement</b>	Amplifies residual light in dark environments	100 + 20% of model price
<b>Detect Invisible</b>	Outlines the presence of materials unnaturally concealed or lingering in the Ethereal Plane	1,000 + 50% of model price
<b>Sidereal Positioning</b>	Displays coordinates and size of a celestial body, in compliance with <i>Royal Observatory Repository</i> standards.	6,000 each. (Luxoflex-Max and Stargazer models only)
<b>Memorize &amp; Replay</b>	Records three-dimensional images and reproduces them on command as holographic projections; requires <i>sidereal positioning</i>	

(\*) *Royal Tax of 10% applies to undiscounted sales price, in exchange for domestic registration. One-time Export Duties of 20% also apply if the device is taken past Amburian borders, in exchange for a certificate of receipt and imperial registration. It is against Imperial Law to sell Amburian telescopes to non-Mainland-Alphatians; proof of citizenship and imperial registration are mandatory. It is against the Queen's Law to take locally made artifacts bearing enchantments above sixth level dweomercraft past Amburian borders. Penalties for non-compliance or forgery include a fine up to twice the value of the item, plus incarceration up to 1 day per 10 gp value of the item, plus hanging by the thumbs, flogging, and hard labor in the salt mines for recidivism or counterfeiting official documents. Overuse of these items may result in unexplained sensations including visual and auditory stimuli, dizziness, anxiety, mental fixation, incontinence, confusion, and other secondary effects. Please consult a healer if pregnant, subject to episodes of narcolepsy, or suffering from insomnia.*

Telescopes in excess of 2,000 gp of undiscounted value are fitted with tracking devices indicating their locations, places of manufacture, and basic registration information. A special department at the *Royal Astronomers' Repository*, which works in close association with Her Watchful Majesty's *Revenue Service*, can trace these devices or submit them to remote testing. Undercover officers occasionally purchase telescopes for the sole purpose of verifying whether tracking devices are present and functioning in compliance with the Queen's Law. Unresponsive telescopes will be confiscated without compensation and their owners summoned before Amburian justice.



## **Lady Nebulastra, Luxoflexist Cum Laude**

The younger daughter of Count Nebulastram III of Starfyre, somewhat of a spoiled and rambunctious offspring, graduated with honors several years ago from *Astra's School of Arcane Luxoflexion*. Snubbing the dilettante life at her father's court, she formed her own company, named *Luxoflex Anonymous Dweomercraft*. This corporation produces the items listed in the previous section. Unfortunately, the endeavor has yet to return enough profit to sustain Nebulastra's extravagant lifestyle. Following a quarrel with her imperious, irascible forebear, and the subsequent end of further parental funding, the young woman quietly indulged in the illicit commerce of unregistered devices. Those in the know pay a great deal of gold for untraceable materials, including unidentified clients as far away as Archport and Sundsvall. While they studied at the *School of Arcane Luxoflexion*, she and Lord Quazareth, a nephew of Queen Elshethara, engaged in a secret and enduring liaison. The nephew, himself a beneficiary and accomplice of her law-breaking activities, later became a prominent custodian at the *Royal Astronomer's Repository*. Relying on the quiet protection of her higher-placed connections, Nebulastra enjoys a very comfortable lifestyle and is gaining notoriety as a patron of the arts and a collector of ancient crystals.



**Appearance & Personality:** Charming, witty, adventurous, passionate, spoiled, and rebellious, Lady Nebulastra is a woman of medium height and in her late twenties. Her ability to focus intently as well as her abilities designing optical items of *luxoflexion* made her a constant subject of whispers while she was in school. She has thick reddish-honey colored hair braided back from her teardrop-shaped face. Expressing curiosity, one or the other of her rusty eyebrows often tents above her amber-flecked brown eyes. Her voice is a melodious medium soprano. Lady Nebulastra often wears a dark blue leather case set with silver stars hooked on her belt. Dull silvery slices of metallic meteorite dangle from her earlobes. She enjoys entertaining high-ranking guests with lavish dinner parties and always manages to do a little business before and after. Secretive about her clientele, she keeps them and their purchases in her prodigious memory. Despite her flirtatious appearance, her heart belongs to Quazareth.

M16, AC6 (or better), hp30, MV 120' (40'), AT dagger or one spell, Dmg 1d4+2 or by spell, Save M16(+2), ML7, AL N; St11, In17, Wi11, Dx16, Co 12, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *medallion of ESP 90'*, *hat of disguise*, *dagger +2*, *backward lorgnette*, and *robe of starlight*.

**Backward Lorgnette:** These collapsible enchanted ocularia are mounted on a carved white mother-of-pearl stem. The coverings of the opticals themselves are also elaborate mother-of-pearl. Once a day, they confer the ability to make objects or creatures observed through the lenses appear far smaller than reality, as if looking through binoculars the wrong way. Victims must save vs. spell or shrink to one tenth their normal size, for 2d4+1 rounds. Although their Strength ability and weapon damage are reduced in the same proportion, the victims' weight, AC, and other abilities are otherwise unaffected. Area of effect is a cone 60' long and 30' wide.

**Robe of Starlight:** This midnight blue, starry garment requires a combined intelligence of 25 to trigger its effect. On command, its silver star pattern animates and produces a light-bending *displacer* effect. It increases the owner's AC one point per round. For example, after five combat rounds, the owner's AC drop from AC6 to AC1. While under a *displacer* effect, the owner receives a +2 bonus to saving throws. The effect ends when the owner's AC reaches -10 or at the owner's command and requires 1 Turn to reset. The robe can also generate a blinding flash effect once a day, similar to a *light* spell, within a 30' radius.

**Detect Deflected Light:** Lady Nebulastra created this first level spell to sense whether deflected light is enabling someone to watch her from a distance. Area of Effect: self. Duration: 1 Turn.

## Captain Maelzeram, Royal Reeve

**The Queen's Revenue Service:** Universally despised in Ambur (yet highly praised among royal circles), this military organization enforces regulations pertaining to the *Ministry of Revenues*, such as tax collection. Although headquartered in Starpoint, the service maintains county offices with local jurisdiction. Their officers, along with requisitioned troops, collect common yearly poll tax and oversee the collection of tolls and duties. Their work involves setting school and student taxes, as well as



verifying tracking devices on sensitive equipment built in Ambur. The Queen's Law enables them the right to inspect any dwelling, question occupants, examine accounting records, perform arrests, and seize assets as needed. The *Royal Corps of Magistrates* has power to dismiss cases brought to their attention.

The head of the Starfyre Bureau in Astra, Captain Maelzeram suspects Lady Nebulastra of breaking the Queen's Law. In his view, her lifestyle seems out of scale with reported sales taxes. Her falling out with His Grace Nebulastram, which has become the subject of gossip at the count's court, and her direct connection with a sensitive business remain the basis for his concerns. A previous inquiry led to a meeting with the queen's nephew Quazareth while on a visit in Astra. Before the end of the day, Maelzeram received an order from the *Ministry of Revenues* to drop the case at once. His attempt to unveil the source of the order met with an icy rebuke from his superior in Starpoint. Maelzeram is certain the count must have heard of his investigation, yet it failed to provoke a reaction, which he finds eminently suspicious.

Frustrated by the lack of support from headquarters, yet hardly intimidated, the captain quietly continues the investigation on his own, seeking any information allowing him to build a steel-clad case against the young business owner. Speculating that the Queen was never informed of Nebulastra's alleged tax evasion, he plans on making the case public and sparking a scandal; this will either make or break his career. His staff at the Starfyre Bureau all suspect what he's after but out of loyalty to their captain and irritation at the brazen, defiant antics of the upper class, they have chosen to remain quiet. Maelzeram is likely to investigate any known client of Nebulastra or any unidentified individual visiting her business.

**Appearance & Personality:** Idealistic, tall, and unflinching, Captain Maelzeram is a successful military commander in his mid-to-late thirties. Part bean-counter and scent hound, he keeps his nose to the ground in search of those who flout the law, as demanded by the oath of loyalty to his queen. Elshethara requires obedience from her subjects and those who disobey pay a heavy price. Maelzeram has a thick neck with a square face topped by dark brown hair brushed severely back. His eyes change from mild light brown to intense green with a ring of darkness when he's intrigued by something or someone. A long straight nose like a blade divides his face. His thin hips pull to one side when he's thinking. Captain Maelzeram's willingness to put his career on the line to unveil Lady Nebulastra's clandestine dealings is typical of his personality. When addressing suspects, he has the habit of feigning to depart before stopping for just one more question. He returns again and again with yet one or two more queries, showing up at the most inopportune time for a suspect, like an irritating pest. Maelzeram deliberately exploits this guerilla tactic to keep his foes off balance at all times.

E9, AC1, hp32, MV 120' (40'), AT sword or one spell, Dmg 1d8+4 or by spell, Save E9, ML10, AL L; St17, In16, Wi13, Dx14, Co 12, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *wand of tracing, Luxoflex-Plus with all-weather imagery and clairaudience, ring of invisibility, scroll of communication, chainmail armor +2, sword +2.*

**Wand of Tracing:** This enchanted device is a standard piece of equipment for royal reeves. It enables the owner to "question" tracing devices imbedded in Amburian telescopes valued at more than 2,000 gp. A targeted telescope must be within 300' and within eyesight. The answer

appears on the wand's handle, identifying the object's registration information and manufacturer. If a telescope fails to respond to a wand's inquest, it is likely fraudulent. The wand, however, does not distinguish forged responses (some counterfeit tracing devices are sophisticated enough to yield misleading information). Double-checking the *Telescope Registry* in Starpoint should help unveil forged information. Conversely, the wand may locate a telescope whose registration information is spoken out loud; if the telescope lies within range, the wand guides the owner's hand, pointing in the telescope's direction and vibrating at an increasingly higher pitch when approaching.

A more powerful device at the *Royal Astronomers' Repository* can function as a *wand of tracing*, although its range blankets the entire Alphatian mainland. Pertinent information appears in a crystal ball since the artifact is too bulky to be moved.

*Thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*





# Ambur: The Counties of Skyglint & Stardust

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



This dominion, at the northernmost point of Ambur, is as much versed in the rational observation of the firmament as it is immersed in the mystical decryption of fate written in the stars. Prominent Skyglinters devote themselves to the study of planetary alignments and the secret patterns of stars which, when paired with one's exact date and place of birth, determines auspicious and inauspicious days in one's life. Their accuracy is reputed throughout the empire and the majority of Alphantian aristocracy seeks their guidance.



**County of Skyglint - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

This small dominion lies by the Town of Grand Conjunction (3,200 inhabitants, plus 100 troops). It is Ambur's second busiest port and a key stop of seagoing vessels rounding the tip of Alphatia from the Sea of Zebulon to the Strait of Yannivey. Low sandstone cliffs edge the county's coast, except for Grand Conjunction's vicinity. Two important lighthouses and several smaller ones near the port's inlet help guide ship traffic to the harbor. The area is prone to violent storms, due to its position at the edge of two seas. Though current is strong off the coast, ice may build up outside the harbor during the coldest months. Wizards regularly descend upon the inlet, shooting balls of fire to melt the ice. These events draw throngs of curious and awed townsfolk and result in impromptu festivals in the port area. Many a wizard will adorn the mighty displays

with faerie fires and other arcane fireworks for the pleasure of the count and the good people of Grand Conjunction.

**Skyglint Astrology:** Grand Conjunction supports a learning center teaching techniques which originate from fundamental approaches devised by Lady Alathazam. Students there learn about the celestial topography surrounding the sun but also the arrangement of stars and nebulae in faraway galaxies. Sidereal movements caught their attention. Masters of the Craft unveiled patterns among the stars corresponding to fateful events on Mystara. Arcane rituals provide the necessary divination tools to locate and identify meaningful alignments among asters. Sages then resolve complex calculations to determine how these stellar patterns affect individuals or large numbers of people. Predictions are never absolutely accurate, but over time, they tend to prove their value. This justifies the common habit among aristocrats of using astrological charts. These horoscopes are unique for each individual and, therefore, they require correct and precise information about one's birth.

Since long ago, astrologers have made the use of *birth divination* spells to determine the exact place and time of one's birth rather than take people at their words. Early on, it became apparent that some shady individuals used someone else's birth information to acquire personal knowledge about them—usually with nefarious intent. *Birth divination* magic supports privacy and accuracy and all resulting information is destroyed after charts are drafted. Amburians have become adamant about not revealing their birth information for this reason. Asking a woman about her age is twice as offending in this kingdom as anywhere else in Alphatia. Impersonating an astrologer is a breach of the Queen's Law and is punishable by permanent, non-regenerable blindness.



Charts are normally generated for a week at a time. The greater the period covered, the more expensive their prices. A single week, the one following the date of purchase, costs 100gp. Each additional week increases the basic cost as shown on the right, or (100 gp + [10 per extra week]) times the number of weeks. A human lifetime's worth drafted all at once would fetch an astronomical price. By law, therefore, only one year at a time may be drafted.

Weeks	Price
1	100
2	220
3	360
4	520
5	700
6	900
7	1,120
8	1,360
9	1,620
10	1,900
11	2,200
12	2,520

13	2,860
14	3,220
15	3,600
16	4,000
17	4,420
18	4,860
19	5,320
20	5,800
21	6,300
22	6,820
23	7,360
24	7,920
25	8,500
26	9,100

27	9,720
28	10,360
29	11,020
30	11,700
31	12,400
32	13,120
33	13,860
34	14,620
35	15,400
36	16,200
37	17,020
38	17,860
39	18,720
40	19,600

41	20,500
42	21,420
43	22,360
44	23,320
45	24,300
46	25,300
47	26,320
48	27,360
49	28,420
50	29,500
51	30,600
52	31,720

A typical weekly horoscope is listed below, with possible effects. Roll on the chart to find the predictions' first day and the following six, carrying over into the next Decan as needed. After a week, purchase a new horoscope and roll again.

<b>Weekly Horoscope</b>			
<b>Roll 1d6</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-6</b>
	<i>1st Decan</i>	<i>2nd Decan</i>	<i>3rd Decan</i>
<b>First Decan</b>			
<b>Roll 1d12</b>	<b>Daily Influence</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>+1 AC:</b> <i>the Crown of Stone prevails in House of Dragons. Fear not the mighty but beware the hidden one, for your heel is weak.</i>		
<b>2</b>	<b>-1 to Hit:</b> <i>the Dark Nebula obscures the North Star. Avoid romantic endeavors as you may miss the mark and earn a partner's eternal scorn.</i>		
<b>3</b>	<b>+1 Con Checks:</b> <i>the Mark of the Troll dawns in the east. Do not fear the unhealthy and purulent today, for your blood flows strongly.</i>		
<b>4</b>	<b>-1 save vs Poison:</b> <i>the Black Sting sits at the zenith. Beware of liars and traitors. Do not seek promises today as they may prove disastrous.</i>		
<b>5</b>	<b>+1 Str Checks:</b> <i>the Hammer of Steel rests in the west. Your mind is clear and your attitude is positive but beware of illusions and false prophets.</i>		
<b>6</b>	<b>-10% hit points:</b> <i>the Red Worm squirms in the House of Alphatia. Stay clear of red robes and unclean meat. Purple is your auspicious color today.</i>		
<b>7</b>	<b>+1 Dex Checks:</b> <i>the Breath of the Quicksilver Dragon blows from the south. Be bold, as good fortune awaits in high places.</i>		
<b>8</b>	<b>-1 save vs Dragon Breath:</b> <i>the Deathly Comet hurtles before moon and sun. Avoid pipeweed and all things fiery today, as weakness lies in your chest.</i>		
<b>9</b>	<b>+1 Wis Checks:</b> <i>the Eye of Razud gleams upon you. Make new friends and seek lasting business relations today, for they bring wealth and felicity.</i>		
<b>10</b>	<b>-1 Dmg per Attack:</b> <i>Valerias vanishes behind the moon. Today, seek restful repose and meditate about your achievements in life.</i>		
<b>11</b>	<b>+1 Initiative:</b> <i>the Celestial Archer stands at the zenith. Go forth and seize the day. Everlasting Glory will come to the quick and the bold.</i>		
<b>12*</b>	<b>-10' MV Bonus:</b> <i>the Wing of Pegasus rests upon the Southern Star. Do not trust your instincts today and take stock in defensive values.</i>		

## Second Decan

Roll 1d12	Daily Influence
1	<b>-1 Con Checks:</b> <i>the Death Cloud edges past the House of Razud. Avoid water and all things cold, as weakness befouls your blood.</i>
2	<b>+1 save vs Spells:</b> <i>the Eternal Sentinel watches from the north. Today is a good day to visit the Royal Library. Good things hide under the dust.</i>
3	<b>-1 Cha Checks:</b> <i>the Shadow of Yag sits upon the face of Matera. Her other side glares. Beware of secrets whispered behind your back.</i>
4	<b>+1 save vs Poison:</b> <i>the Black Sting wanes past Palartarkan's Robe. Today is a good day for house cleaning—fear not spiders, vipers, and scorpions.</i>
5	<b>-1 Int Checks:</b> <i>the Great River in the Sky stirs billows of stardust. Do only small things today, clip your nails, and meditate on your strengths.</i>
6	<b>+1 save vs Wands:</b> <i>the Celestial Chorus echoes in the ether. If a mage has a beard, pull on it three times and throw salt over your left shoulder.</i>
7	<b>-1 Str Checks:</b> <i>Angry is Azurnatham of the Crystal Shards. Stay inside today as an inauspicious wind may blow across your path. Do not use a broom.</i>
8	<b>+1 save vs. Paralysis:</b> <i>Hali-Kunant dances from Star to Star. An opportunity will come to pay homage to the dead at the Royal Cemetery.</i>
9	<b>-1 Wis Checks:</b> <i>the Celestial Pearl sits in darkness. Today is a good day to burn incense at the temple, ring the bells, and be mindful of a friend's advice.</i>
10	<b>+1 save vs Dragon Breath:</b> <i>Fierath Major pursues Embrillion Minor. Fear not noisome exhalations, snores, and snorts. Felicity will breathe from them.</i>
11	<b>-1 Initiative:</b> <i>Deihaux the Blue is depressed. Do not cross busy streets today or tickle woolly aurochs and narwhals. Drink wine and eat grasshoppers.</i>
12*	<b>+10% Dmg (sustained):</b> <i>the Black Kinigitt stands on both his legs. Visit the Royal Hospital today and show kindness to the maimed and the infirm.</i>

<b>Third Decan</b>	
<b>Roll 1d12</b>	<b>Daily Influence</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>+1 to Hit:</b> <i>the Great Ixion soars in the Third Decan. A good game of hardball is best on this day but beware of overexerting yourself. Shun zzonga.</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>-1 save vs Spells:</b> <i>the Celestial Chorus is dissonant under the Hammer's influence. Stay in bed and cover your head with a pillow. Drink more wine.</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>+1 Cha Checks:</b> <i>Haven's Muses shine upon your path. Today is a day for love, business, sweet little lies, and lasting friendships. Brush your teeth twice.</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>-1 save vs Wands:</b> <i>the Tree of Life shades you from Eye of Thanatos. Do not push your luck for one with a bigger stick hides past the next tree.</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>+1 Int Checks:</b> <i>the Scroll of Duryan unfurls at dawn. The Flying Fickle Finger of Fate will not point your way today but do not inhale foul things.</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>-1 save vs Paralysis:</b> <i>the Iron Cockatrice roosts at the Zenith. Today eat healthy portions of pickled jellyfish, eel, frogs, worms, or snails in garlic butter.</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>+10% hp:</b> <i>The Bulbous Belly of Boolbadrahma is replete with goodwill. Thump your chest three times today, spit over your shoulder, and be brave.</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>-1 AC:</b> <i>Alphatia pricked her toe on the Holy Pepper Bush of Narah. Do not sneeze today, for a precious item might fall at your feet and become lost.</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>+1 Dmg (per AT):</b> <i>the Stone Golem sits in the Hunter's House. Strike hard today, and your efforts shall be rewarded. Beware of the envious.</i>
<b>10</b>	<b>-1 Dex Checks:</b> <i>the Star Jester rides the Wyrn. Leave unto others what they would leave unto you. Better them than you. Rub ashes in your hair.</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>+10' MV Bonus:</b> <i>the Lightning Bearer fled from Sursax the Stolid. Seize the day, sally forth when the time is right, and tattoo the balls of your feet.</i>
<b>12*</b>	<b>-10% Dmg (sustained):</b> <i>The Skyshield gleams before the sacred firmament. Tell off the priests today if you wish, for the asters protect you.</i>

(\*) **Grand Conjunction:** on this day, planets have a 10% chance of being aligned in a most meaningful way. In addition to the current day's influence, roll once on the next two Decan charts (ignoring any other Grand Conjunctions) and triple their influences.

## County of Stardust

This dominion stretches from the mouth of the Ambur River to the center of the kingdom. Some fishing takes place from Aphelion and intensive farming borders the great river. Docks and hamlets enable passing vessels to stop for the night and enjoy a plethora of taverns and inns. The grasslands of the backcountry are reputed for the raising of draft horses.



County of Stardust - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

**Optomantics:** But the real center of interest in Stardust is Apastron (4,000 inhabitants, plus 50 troops). Where other dominions concentrate on a particular specialty in grand astronomy, Apastron wizards delight in their creativity, taking pride in their skills as tinkerers and inventors in the field of arcane *optomantics*. If anyone needs a unique and bizarre device, it's likely to be found in one of the myriad shops selling ocularia of every imaginable sort, and specialized telescopes. On a busy day, one can observe mages going about their businesses along popular streets, wearing the most peculiar arrays of colored lenses mounted on articulated frames. The better models are enchanted in such a way to automatically switch lenses to respond to their owners desires. At what they happen to be gazing and at any one time remains beyond anyone's imagination, since many of these devices are custom-crafted on demand. An occasional malfunction flings a lens or some pesky spring straight up in the air, provoking colorful curses from their owners for not having purchased an adequate warranty—another type of business usually handled by what would count as a money changer in Ambur. Warranties are

as optional as they are ubiquitous, considering the fragile and temperamental nature of arcane optics.

Here are examples of what sorts of lenses and frames are available. These types of items, if they require charges (indicated by the ☑ icon), can hold up to ten. Charges cost 1/10th of listed lens values.

<b>Lenses</b>	<b>Effects</b>
<b><i>Charm-o-Rama</i></b>	<p>This bright yellow lens with silver glitter reveals the presence of beings subjected to a <i>charm</i> spell or a <i>charm</i>-like effect. Range: 60'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>3,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Disinvisibulator</i></b>	<p>This lens and its frame are <i>invisible</i>. When activated the lens enables the viewer to <i>detect invisible</i> creatures or objects, as well as those in the ether or others intently hiding.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Dweomancer</i></b>	<p>This pale green lens enables the viewer to analyze enchantments cast upon an object. Uncommon, outlandish, or enchantments with more than four different effects may incur a chance of error equal to 10% plus the total number of magical effects times three.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1,500 gp. Duration: 1 Analysis. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Evilsnitch</i></b>	<p>This dark purple lens enables the viewer to <i>detect evil</i> within a 60' radius. The item comes with charges. One such charge can be used to switch the device to its <i>resident</i> mode, which allows it emits a slight vibration if something evil comes within a 30' range, alerting the viewer. <i>Resident</i> mode lasts an entire day. Viewing through the lens will use a charge, whether evil is present or not.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Footlocator</i></b>	<p>This brown lens identifies footprints in a simple manner (such as boot-dwarf, shoe-elven female, fox, elephant, etc.) provided the footprint silhouette exists within the enchantment's basis of lore. For monsters, the odds of a footprint being correctly identified are 100% minus the monster's HD times four (hence 96% for an orc or 12% for a huge red dragon). Identification requires a charge. Once a footprint is identified, the lens's magic remains active and searches for a match. If the corresponding appendage or footwear comes within 30', the lens projects against the viewer's retina an image showing an outline flashing around the searched item.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4,000 gp. Duration: until <i>dispelled</i>. ☑</b></p>

<b><i>Gazeguard</i></b>	<p>This non-magical device includes multiple oversized blue lenses reflecting whatever is being observed so that the viewer's eyes do not look directly at it. The device is particularly effective against basilisks, cockatrices, medusae, and other enchanted creatures with deadly gazes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Set for both eyes: 5,000 gp.</b></p>
<b><i>Gearmaster</i></b>	<p>This medium-blue lens analyzes non-magical devices (such as traps and machinery) and identifies their intended function. Several charges may be required to understand a complex contraption and how to operate it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,500 gp. Duration: 1 Analysis. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Ghostaway</i></b>	<p>This red lens enables a viewer to observe a red aura over beings that do not generate heat. Range 100'. Each use burns a charge.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4,000 gp. Duration: 1 Hour. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Kaleidoscope</i></b>	<p>This multicolored triangular lens confers pure satisfaction to the viewer. In an odd way, it is soothing and helps its user discard extraneous worries in order to better meditate. Once a charge is used, the effect lasts until an Intelligence Check (or a Wisdom Check, as appropriate) is required. The kaleidoscope-enhanced psyche provides a +1 bonus to the ability check (or a 5% bonus to perform a feat based on Intelligence or Wisdom).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1,000 gp. Duration: until a check is triggered. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Magictattle</i></b>	<p>This dark green lens enables the viewer to detect magical items within a 60' radius. The item comes with charges. One such charge can be used to switch the device to its <i>resident</i> mode, which allows it emits a slight vibration if a magical item comes within a 30' range, alerting the viewer. <i>Resident</i> mode lasts an entire day. Viewing through the lens will use a charge, whether magic is present or not.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn. ☑</b></p>
<b><i>Moodminder</i></b>	<p>This strange lens appears as a spinning spiral. It enables the viewer to observe the moods of sentient beings within 60'. Color auras surrounding people reflect their states of mind. An ESP-like dweomer conveys to the viewer their meanings.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn. ☑</b></p>



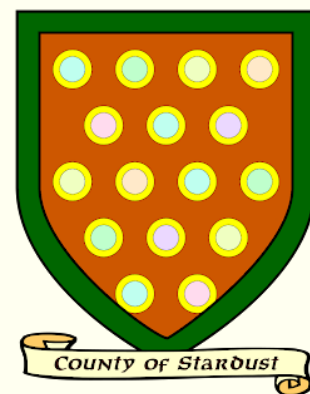
<p><b>Ooglemax</b></p>	<p>Pale blue, this coin-sized disk enables the viewers to pinpoint their locations on a geographical map, generally displayed using simple symbols on a hex grid. Map scales include 8 or 24 miles. In addition to the lens, a map enchantment must be purchased to function with the lens. Maps cover areas 100 miles radius from the capitals of most Alphatian kingdoms (<i>not</i> including Sundsvall or Blackheart). Other areas have yet to be enchanted and require extensive on-site surveys. Opportunities for competent mages are presently available at <i>Garmayne's Optomantics Ltd.</i>; salary negotiable—travel required; full benefits.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>3,000 gp + 1,500 gp per map.</b></p>
<p><b>Organoscope</b></p>	<p>This milky white lens enables the viewer to look through mineral or organic material, such as stone, wood, leather, or living flesh. Denser objects, like stones, bones, and various organs, appear as gray shadows. Metallic objects appear as black silhouettes. Basic range is 30'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,000gp (basic), or 4,000gp (deluxe, 60' range).</b></p>
<p><b>Peepingtom</b></p>	<p>This vaguely pink iridescent lens enables the viewer to eliminate some or all textiles entirely from the line of sight within a 30' range. Although not illegal, use is generally not accepted in public. It is more commonly found in certain theaters in the red district or in healing shrines. Users can often be spotted from the silly smiles on their faces. An entrepreneurial sorceress has begun selling enchanted charge-based rings as a response to the unfortunate device which causes offending lenses within a 30' range to shoot up into the air and burst in a small purple malodorous cloud.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2,500 gp. No warranty available.</b></p>
<p><b>Phantasmal Memorizer</b></p>	<p>This black lens records all within sight up to 150' and for up to 1 Turn. The vision can be summoned later and observed in a three-dimensional form, allowing the viewer to rotate the image and focus on small details up to an inch across.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>6,000 gp. Duration: 1 Turn or until dispelled. ☑</b></p>
<p><b>Raybanning Shades</b></p>	<p>Usually sold in pairs, these black lenses provide protection from solar light and general enchantments such as <i>light</i> spells and other blinding devices. When worn, they automatically disengage any other lenses in order to shade a viewer's eyes from any such attack. Most popular among skyship captains, the deluxe model provides a +1 bonus to Charisma checks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Pair of Lenses: 3,000 gp (basic), 4,000 (deluxe), +250 gp for mirror-like finish and other vanity details.</b></p>

<b>Retroscope</b>	<p>This mirror-like lens enables the viewer to see behind his/her back. The effect does not require a charge and prevents a foe from acquiring an attack bonus when performing a back attack.</p> <p><b>1,000 gp. Duration: Permanent until removed.</b></p>
<b>Scrollshop</b>	<p>This amber lens projects on the viewer's retina a map of the area within a 30-yard radius. The mapping function does not extend past doors and windows unless the viewer actually looks into or enters a building. The basic enchantment can record a square surface up to 100 yards across, in a 5' or 10' grid scale. Recorded material can be summoned, displayed, or deleted.</p> <p><b>2,000 gp (basic), 4,000 gp (deluxe; 200-yard square), 6,000 gp (limited edition; 300-yard square).</b></p>

**Headgear:** A proper non-magical headgear on which an array of lenses is mounted costs 100 gp (basic leather and iron model), 200 gp for an ornate silver model, or well above 300 gp for a golden version with precious stones. This type of headgear requires lenses to be switched manually (except for *Raybannor shades* which have their own enchantment) and can accommodate no more than ten lenses. Enchanted headgear costs ten times the prices quoted above but can accommodate as many lenses as the viewer desires and automatically switch to a desired combination based on an ESP-induced command. Double the magical headgear's price if it is *invisible*. Installing additional lenses to those initially sold with the headgear costs 10% of the value of the extra lenses, 20% if the headgear is magical. A padded case is normally included with the headgear. For a fee, various enchantments can be added to help secure this container. A magically-controlled switch does not count as an action during a combat encounter, but a manual switch does.

**Warranties:** Headgear and lenses are very fragile contraptions. Sustaining a direct hit to the head will randomly destroy as many lenses as hit points of damage were inflicted. Switching lenses manually can be tricky and may result in a broken mount (3% chance). Magical switches are better but not perfect (1% chance instead). Malfunctioning or damaged mounts usually cause the affected lens/lenses to spring loose and land 1d6 feet away in a random direction.

Basic enchanter warranties usually last 6 months and cover the replacement (if damaged components are returned) and mending of damaged parts. Magical charges, theft, damage resulting from neglect or combat, and lost components are not covered under an enchanter's warranty. Premium warranties are similar, except they last 3 years. Insurance can be purchased from money lenders. Yearly premiums range from 10% to 20% of the total value of the headgear and its lenses. Deductibles range from nothing to as much as 20% of the damage to the insured object. Coverage may not include theft, and never includes the cost of magical charges or, under the Queen's Law, damage/loss resulting from illicit usage of the insured object.



## ILLUSTRIOUS AMBURIANS

### “Loop-head” Caliostrim, *Private Loremaster*

Old *Loop-head* is an eccentric Amburian of good repute, a right and honorable member of Alphatian wizardly society. Certainly from the point of view of non-wizards or foreigners, all mages in the arcane empire must indeed be rather strange to fit the established norm, therefore in this respect, he appears to be abnormally ordinary. Caliostrim’s nickname came from his headgear, which he wears most of the time. No one ever saw him without it and some conjecture, he sleeps with the thing strapped to his head. The magical contraption supports an array of lenses of all sizes, shapes, and colors. Whirring and clicking with occasional twangs, spring-loaded mounts constantly flip and switch optical appendages to provide answers the loremaster seeks. He is known for unfortunate bouts of delirium and, even by Alphatian standards, his usual demeanor remains on the odder end of the behavioral spectrum. In fact, despite his encyclopedic mind and uncanny talent at unearthing obscure legends, those closest to him do believe poor old *Loop-head* to be quite loopy indeed.



During his decades of research, day after day using lenses bearing tainted enchantments, the loremaster experienced visions rooted in unsolved issues with Lady Alathazam’s fundamental teachings. Like so many Amburians before him, Caliostrim ignored these manifestations to the point they drove him to the brink of utter madness. In a way, his prevailing insanity both protects the loremaster and enables him to witness what human eyes ought never behold: bone-chilling, intellectually-rending emanations of an outer world embodying ungodly denizens filled with wicked, repulsive, and unfathomable purposes. At times, he dreams of a dark temple and, despite his instincts to recoil in horror, he joins a multitude of faceless followers, chanting with them an odious hymn. During moments of relative lucidity, old *Loop-head* is aghast. He cannot explain the heathen elation he feels deep inside, and yet he senses an inexorable doom approaching.

The loremaster knows full well that unveiling his experiences would get him locked up for good. Abandoning his craft remains too inhumane an option to contemplate. Yet, he seeks answers to his dilemma. His uncanny skills and the ubiquitous usage of the odd lenses led him to suspect several other people of being linked to his predicament. He doesn’t know quite how they are connected but made it a goal for the rest of his troubled life to unveil the disturbing truth and inscribe his knowledge in a compendium. Somehow, it is a cultural trait of Alphatians to believe that if something is written in the ancient script of wizards, it must be inherently true. Caliostrim counts on this and hopes that someone will read his work and continue his mission. As irrational as his behavior might get, his search for answers and a way to end the madness keeps him focused on his quest. The loremaster has no known relatives.

**Appearance & Personality:** Loop-head is an old man, no one knows exactly how old. His long face is mapped with wrinkles. Silver-white hair stands straight out from his scalp anywhere his headgear allows. Translucent ears of unusual size also poke beyond hair and headgear. His eyes are pale faded blue and have a perpetually startled look to them. One often crosses to the center as his magical lenses change. His full mouth is often pursed behind a thick white beard desperately in need of trimming. Caliostrim's hands are bent and swollen at the joints: his thumb and the first two fingers of his right hand are always stained with night-blue ink. He is thin and appears somewhat sickly because he is so often mesmerized by emanations or the visions given by his magical lenses that he forgets to eat. Caliostrim mutters and snickers in his beard, twitches, and groans randomly. He also suffers from a pathological terror of batrachians and invertebrates.

MU12, AC5, hp26, MV 90' (30'), AT magical claw, Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1 or by spell, Save MU12, ML6, AL C; St10, In18, Wi10, Dx11, Co 12, Ch13. **Magical Items:** *limited edition loremaster headset with custom options, quill of introspection, robe of scrolls, talisman of monstrous talons, and ring of freedom.*

**Limited Edition Loremaster Headset with Custom Options:** This magical device features all of the lenses described earlier plus a few others. *Custom Dreamcatcher Lens:* identifies a real-life being or an object connected to a dream or a vision experienced within the past month. *Custom Outer-Planar Monitor:* identifies objects or beings connected with outer-planes (they either came from or visited an outer-plane within the past month or used magic of outer-planar origins during that time). *Mad Eye Lens:* identifies people who've experienced *optomantic* delirium. Caliostrim's headset will *teleport* to a hidden receptacle if removed from the loremaster's head. His compendium and spellbook are also located there. In the event of his death, Caliostrim has already bequeathed this wondrous item to the Royal Gallery in Starpoint.

**Quill of Introspection:** When activated, this large quill puts into words the owner's thoughts and feelings, transcribing them in wizardly script to a scroll or a tome lying underneath. It moves as if held by some invisible hand. The loremaster uses this magical item to log his dreams and bouts of delirium. The quill is able to flip pages of a tome as needed. Its range is no more than the chamber in which it rests.

**Robe of Scrolls:** This garment provides the owner with a basic AC of 5. It also features a score of tiny *bags of holding* intended for individual scrolls. The openings are concealed among the robe's ornamental embroidery. Sewn inside the robe, these dimensional spaces protect any carried scroll from outside damage. The loremaster carries 1d20 scrolls levels 1-3 at all times.

**Talisman of Monstrous Talons:** On command, this talisman enables Caliostrim to produce two spectral talons he can control with the motion of his hands. Each talon either attacks as a 12HD monster, or automatically blocks one physical attack. The talons emulate +1 magical weapons as regards their ability to hit enchanted monsters and enable the owner to make two attacks per round, up to 60' away. The talisman bears 2d4+2 charges. When summoned, talons last for one combat encounter or 1 Turn, whichever is longest. When all charges are spent, the talisman is destroyed.

**Ring of Freedom:** As the *potion of freedom* (*Rules Cyclopedia*, pg. 233).

## **Bobaldiggan, Cesspit Cleaner**

This unsavory denizen of Ambur's lowest class professes the most unenviable responsibility of emptying or unclogging the earthly receptacles of urban civilization. Dressed in tones matching his work environment, capped with a leather bonnet of dubious salubrity, and smudged up to his eyebrows, no one can tell what he really looks like or observe his swarthy complexion. For fear of somehow becoming soiled, those among whom he dwells stay well clear of him and can't suffer to behold his presence, let alone experience his smell. The more observant might think him of Yanifey stock, a penniless vagrant from the islands in the nearby east in search of a meager living in Ambur. In truth, the humble muck-digger dabbles in much more than the lowest of muds. Bobaldiggan is an expatriate from the wild and mysterious mountains of western Frisland, an Ogam shaman well versed in the ancient lore of his people.



This peddler of wicked beliefs came to Ambur in search of wizards who've become adrift amid the psychic spheres of his outer-worldly masters. He sought employment from those he identified as suffering from acute *optomantic* hallucinations, visiting as needed to perform his sanitary service within the very depths of their private dwellings. Somewhat like a demonic spirit seeking entry into a house, he was willingly bidden entry, which enabled him some power over the occupants. As he endeavors to fulfill the task for which he was hired, he intones working chanteys in his native language. These are slightly modified versions of the odious hymns Master Caliostrim finds himself obligated to repeat during bouts of delirium that invariably happen during the shaman's visits. The event is traumatic enough to repeat itself well after Bobaldiggan's departure.

As he monitors his victims' descent into utter madness, the shaman eventually seeks to gain complete control over their minds. When this happens, their madness ends, but the victims become quiet fanatic followers of the shaman's mystic practices. They perpetrate and promote the ancient rituals that established the basis for Lady Alathazam's teachings. This vicious circle is aimed at creating a strong movement among Amburian high-born, one fully devoted to the Ogams' other-worldly masters. Bobaldiggan does not carry magical items at work but does hide a few in his room in the slums of Apastron.

**Appearance & Personality:** Bobaldiggan seems brown all over, from the top of his bonnet to the bottoms of his filth-encrusted boots. No one remembers seeing his hair, which is either tucked under his close-fitting cap or covered by the muck in which he works. Occasionally, however, a flash of intelligent dark eyes is caught by an astute observer who can brave the stench long enough to apprehend that rare occurrence. Beneath the streaks and clumps of drying filth, his face is wide, with long flat cheeks, a prominent flared nose, and a forward-thrusting chin. His mustache sags from beneath his nose into two long braids on either side of his mouth: these get lost in the scraggle of his unkempt beard. Bobaldiggan is short, swarthy,

and single-minded regarding his task: muck-shoveling seemed the best way for him to find at least a reluctant welcome into the abodes of his victims. With immense patience and determination, he will persevere until his mission is accomplished.

C9, AC4, hp40, MV 120' (40'), AT sting, Dmg 1+4 + poison or by spell, Save C9, ML11, AL C; St16, In14, Wi17, Dx13, Co 15, Ch8. **Special Abilities:** as a wiseman of the Ogam can create a *phantasmal force* once a day. **Magical Items:** *amulet of good health, ring of human control, bracers of quickness, and sting of wickedness.*

**Amulet of Good Health:** provides the owner with immunity to non-magical diseases and a +2 bonus to saving throws against magical diseases (mummy rot, lycanthropy, etc.)

**Bracers of Quickness:** as a *ring of quickness* (Rules Cyclopeda, pg. 238). It also provides a basic AC of 5.

**Sting of Wickedness:** this metal device fits within Bobaldiggan's fist and features a small leather pouch with a sting protruding just past his knuckles. It is a +2 magical weapon bearing a poison. The pouch contains enough poison for 6 successful attacks. A victim must save vs. poison or sustain 1d4 pts of damage at the beginning of each round for 2d4 rounds. While the venom is in effect, a victim suffers hallucinations, as if affected by a wizard's fourth-level *confusion* spell.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for the gracious permission to use his intriguing Ogam-Orzafeth history and background. Thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and editorial contributions.*

# Ambur: The County of Stargaze

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This last dominion in the Kingdom of Ambur is a long sliver of coastline stretching 80 miles north to south between the Strait of Ambur and the Ambur River. Its successive counts were chiefly responsible for pressuring Amburian monarchy to issue the *Starpoint Edict* and for provoking the Twin Peaks Campaign soon thereafter. They bore the largest share of the cost of the military campaign into what would later become Aran territory. The invasion eventually failed and, as a result, the heirs to the county have born grudges against both Foresthome and neighboring Ar. Soon after Ar established their hegemony over the eastern shores of Crystal Lake, the Counts of Stargaze vowed to never again be caught at a disadvantage.



County of Stargaze - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

The campaign nearly bankrupted the county. Today, farming prevails along the river, yielding velvet-coated winter pears, magically enhanced turnips and spinach, and the local specialty—explosive mustard seeds used in the making of the heart-warming condiment. Fishing and shepherding are more common along the coast. With inland farming, these generate a meager income for the counts. The lack of a large town is the biggest drawback. The present count, his family, and their retinues reside at *Perihelion Castle*, an imposing stronghold overlooking the Amber River's mouth. The fact that royal funds largely financed its construction has been quietly forgotten, save for a required presence among its garrison of a Queen's Detachment. *Perihelion-upon-Ambur*, a village with a port,

occupies the lower banks at the river's mouth just outside the castle. All river traffic must stop here and pay passage fees, generating a substantial part of the county's income. Another source of cash resides in the salt mine halfway down the county. The challenge for Stargaze has always been the development of a better source of income which coincides with the vows of its counts never again to be caught at a disadvantage.

**The Great Observatory:** Since the county lacks any sort of a magical optical school, the idea dawned that major educational centers in neighboring dominions should be exploited. Thus was

born the idea of the Great Observatory. It started out as an experiment to combine all sciences derived from the teachings of Lady Alathazam. The result yielded a fantastic tool for astronomy, largely financed by the Amburian monarchy. In exchange for the cost of facility maintenance and expansion, Stargaze retains the lion's share of the income the observatory generates. This was the first goal. The second was to develop the facility as a secret weapon. Its location on top of a tall rocky promontory (3,000' above sea level) assures a good line of sight from its dome to nearly anywhere within a 360-mile-radius (45 hexes) which includes all of Ambur and the entire strip of land east of Crystal Lake. Intervening mountains and the curvature of Mystara's surface are entirely irrelevant since the Great Observatory relies on *advanced* luxoflexion to see past large obstacles. The telescope does, however, have a minimum range of 12 miles, beneath which the device cannot be physically aimed.

Dubbed by some in Starpoint as "the telescope to end all telescopes," it has been fitted with many optical enhancements that aren't available on Ambur's marketplace for the arcane. It is heavily guarded and those who wish to use the observatory for purely scientific research—such as stargazing, a task for which it was originally promised—must now obtain a royal warrant. Access is for a limited time, considering the very long waiting list. To those granted usage, it isn't entirely intuitive that the telescope can actually be angled to point toward the ground and its potential military uses are kept secret. The large presence of both county and royal troops guarding the facility might be a clue. The Queen of Ambur, the garrison's commander, the House of Perihelion, and a small circle of mages managing the telescope are the only people to know about the observatory's full capabilities.

So far, the telescope relies on optical enhancements sufficient to recognize facial traits up to 360 miles, as well as deep space observation. Luxoflexion available to this telescope includes all relevant options. Many optomantic lenses have been installed as part of this telescope's array. Astromantic enchantments allow scrolling up to 360 days back in time to observe prior events in Ar and Ambur, or eons when looking into outer space. Transposition enables effects up to Class VI. Additional *transpositional* fittings also permit remote spellcasting directly through the telescope, up to a 160-mile range (20 hexes). That part is a carefully guarded secret.

<b>Spell Level</b>	<b>Max. Ranges (miles)</b>	<b>Area of Effect Magnification</b>	<b>Saving Throw Penalties</b>
1	160	times 10	no save
2	144	times 7	-8
3	128	times 5	-6
4	112	times 3	-5
5	96	times 2	-4
6	80	+75%	-3
7	64	+50%	-2
8	48	+25%	-1
9	32	Unchanged	Unchanged



**Area of Effect Magnification:** this alters the spell's area of effect and also the magnitude of the spell. Unless a DM decides otherwise, magnification also affects data listed under "Duration:" and "Effect:" at the beginning of a spell's description. Fractions are always rounded up. For example, a *death spell* could be cast up to 80 miles away (not 240'), cover an area 105'x105'x105' (rather than 60'x60'x60'), and affect up to 7d8 hit dice of creatures (instead of 4d8). Magnification does not, however, change the immunity to this spell of the undead or creatures with 8 or more Hit Dice. On the other hand, a *lightning bolt* could be shot up to 128 miles away, cover an area 300' long and 25' wide, and incur a -6 penalty to saving throws, but with no other alteration to the spell. Extreme ranges involved prevent any chance of *lightning bolts* bouncing back at the telescope. A *light* spell would illuminate a 300' diameter 160 miles away, last 120 Turns, and forbid any saving throws. The standard rule on maximum damage applies (*Rules Cyclopedia* page 32), limiting harm to *individual* targets to 20d6.

**Safeties:** A different command word for each spell level is needed in order to cast magic through the telescope. Only Queen Elshethara knows the command words for spell levels 8-9. Furthermore, the telescope bears further enchantments that prevent viewing the royal palace and several other buildings in Starpoint without a command word which the queen alone possesses. Levers needed to aim the telescope beneath the horizon are concealed inside a *wizard locked* compartment under the device which isn't known to warranted visitors. Yet another command known only to the administrators is needed to safely reach these levers. If tampered with, two magical traps are triggered: 1. *cloudkill* (centered around the telescope's base) and 2. *power word blind* (cast at 20th level).



The trouble with the telescope is that it can't be used to its full potential without alerting neighboring realms of its capabilities. For now, Queen Elshethara prefers keeping the matter quiet because her immediate neighbor, the Kingdom of Ar, would be outraged. From a political aspect, it would provoke a rift between the two realms. On the other hand, Queen Elshethara is prepared to defend her position in view of the tremendous tactical advantage Ar enjoys over Ambur because of their skyships. In any event, knowledge of the telescope's capabilities is likely to damage relations between the two realms. Six military encampments occupy the ring of hexes surrounding the rocky promontory, in addition to the observatory's own garrison. Aside from local roads, the area is thoroughly off limits to visitors, and heavily patrolled. Several barges are kept aside in Starpoint to allow for the shipping of reinforcements, should a need arise. Furthermore, the capital's skyships patrol the observatory's vicinity and the nearby border with Ar.

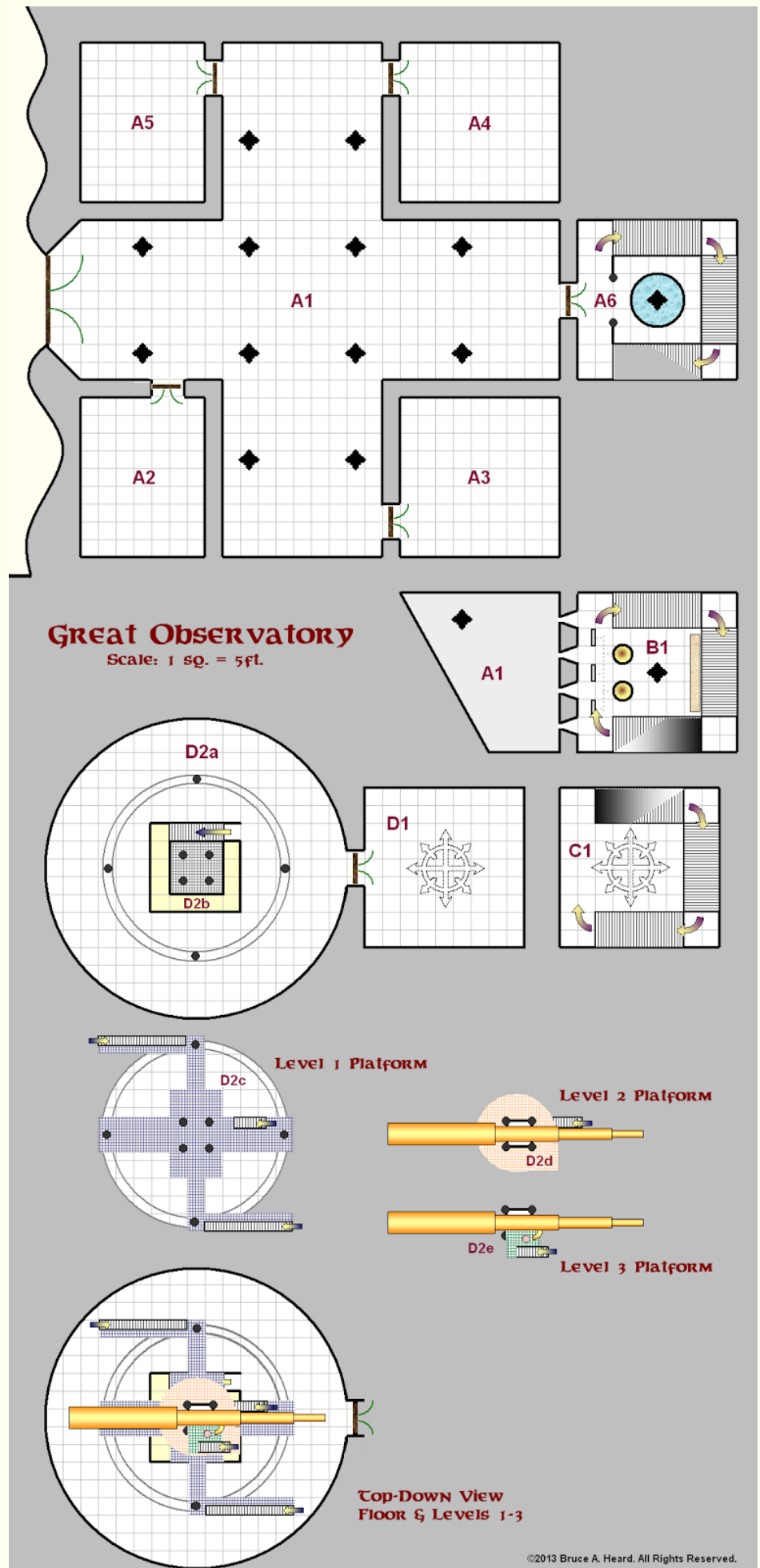
***I'd like to see them try their little trick now.***

**Count Perihelion XII**

# Great Observatory Map Key

This map is meant as a rough overview of the observatory. Several blank areas are shown for general positioning only and should include a number of separate chambers. The main entrance, 25' wide, features heavily reinforced double doors plated with carved bronze. They brim with enchantments, so much so that visitors can feel hair on the back of their necks rising as if charged with static electricity. One smaller panel, about 5'x12', opens at the base of the right-hand door. These doors are barred and *wizard locked* at night. Main doors are opened only for royal events or to accommodate occasional carriages.

Unless indicated otherwise, levitating globes light the entire facility. They can be switched on and off or their outputs adjusted with a command word. The facilities are magically ventilated and heated through cloud-like faces carved in the rock. The front doors are resistant to spells levels 1-3 and can respond to damage with *magic missiles*, *protection from normal missiles*, *phantasmal force*, *hold person*, *charm monster*, *confusion*, *polymorph other*, *dimension door*, etc. (at the DM's discretion). The best way to get in is to obtain a royal warrant and various items while remaining as a guest which will permit access to the telescope (magical key, spellcasting medallions).



**A1. Grand Hallway:** this cross-shaped chamber stretches 145' west to east long and 45' north to south, with two lateral wings 50'x45'. Pillars and arches, reaching 150' high into darkness, buttress the stone vault which is carved directly into the base of the observatory's promontory. About 30' overhead, a giant pendulum swings back and forth at the center of the hallway, its slow movement extending into the lateral wings. A set of 20'-tall double doors stands opposite from the entrance.

Four narrow embrasures hide in the shadows, about 55' above the double doors opposite the entrance. The pendulum is part of the mechanism that keeps track of time and also provides the mechanical force enabling the rotation and aiming of the telescope (see Area D2a for details). The pendulum's arm is made of smooth, polished brass. *Continual darkness* conceals the top end of the pendulum's arm where it connects with the grand hallway's stone vault.

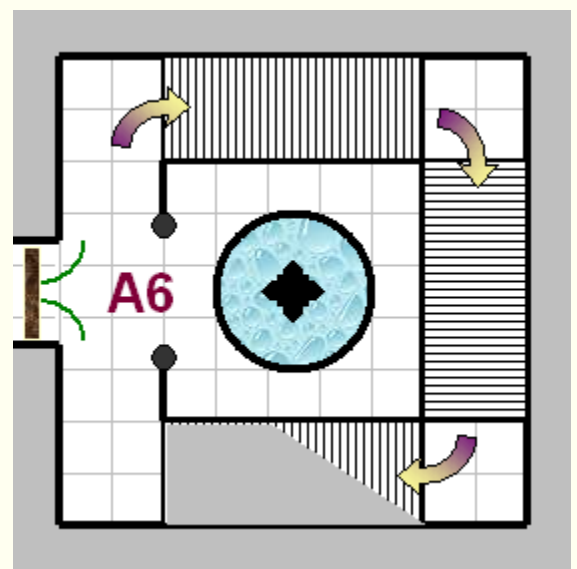
**A2. Stables:** this is the area where horses and royal carriages are housed.

**A3. Military Quarters:** this area is limited to the observatory's garrison and includes dormitories, officers' bedchambers and their offices, mess halls, a chapel, an armory, a water well, and utility chambers. The DM may expand this area both above and below the entrance level.

**A4. Guest Quarters:** this section provides bedchambers and meeting halls for guests and the observatory's administrators, including royal quarters, offices, workrooms, a library, and utility rooms. The DM may expand this area both above and below the entrance level.

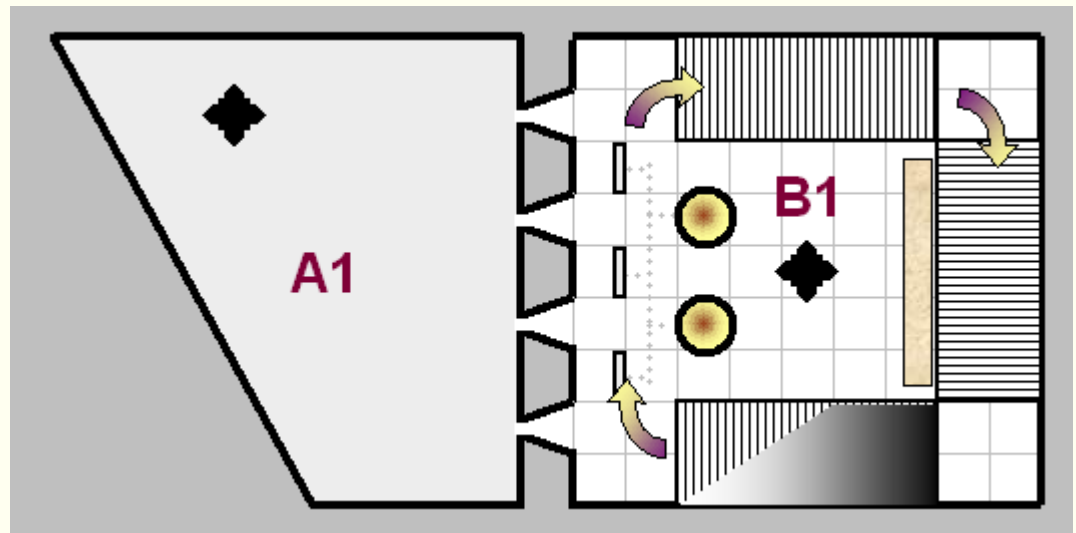
**A5. Ancillary Quarters:** this area is for servants and cooks, providing their living quarters, equipment and consumables storage, workshops, a water well, a refuse pit, and other utility rooms. An unbelievably well-informed cave-dweller could conceivably climb up the wells from an underground river.

**A6. Stairwell Lower Landing:** a corridor 10'x45' extends north-south. An archway opposite the double doors enables access to a central chamber with a water pool and a support pillar standing in its middle. Lighting in the corridor is embedded in the walls just above eye level. In the darkness overhead are three slits connecting through the stone vault with the chamber above (Area B1). They are normally shuttered. A stairwell past the corridor's northeast corner allows access to the upper floor. It rises at a steep 45° angle, or 25 feet per section. If the double doors are forced open, an illusion shows someone looking like a mage fleeing past the corridor's southeast corner. To anyone looking past that corner, the illusion also depicts a stairwell heading to a lower floor, and the *phantasmal* fugitive disappearing past the next corner. If anyone touches the 10'-wide southeast wall, a 10'x10'x30' pit opens. A gelatinous cube lives at the bottom. Two-inch-wide holes concealed with dirt can be detected in the floor across the



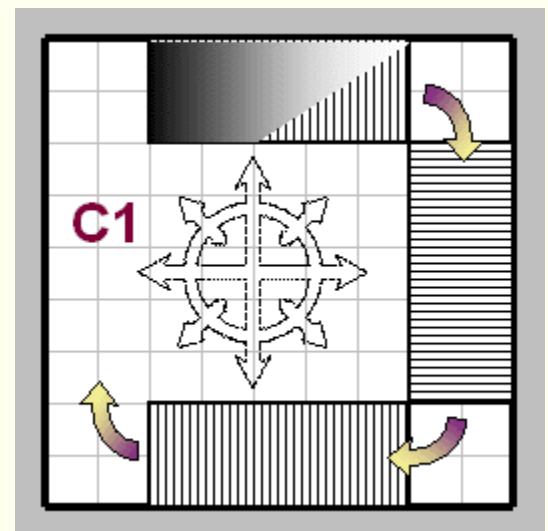
entrances from Area A1 and the fountain chamber. They are part of an elaborate trap (see Area B1).

**B1. Guard Room:** a passageway matches the layout of the corridor on the lower level (Area A6). This area is generally kept unlit. Two magically heated oil vats stand in a 25'x25' chamber opening directly onto the passageway. If the vats are tipped,



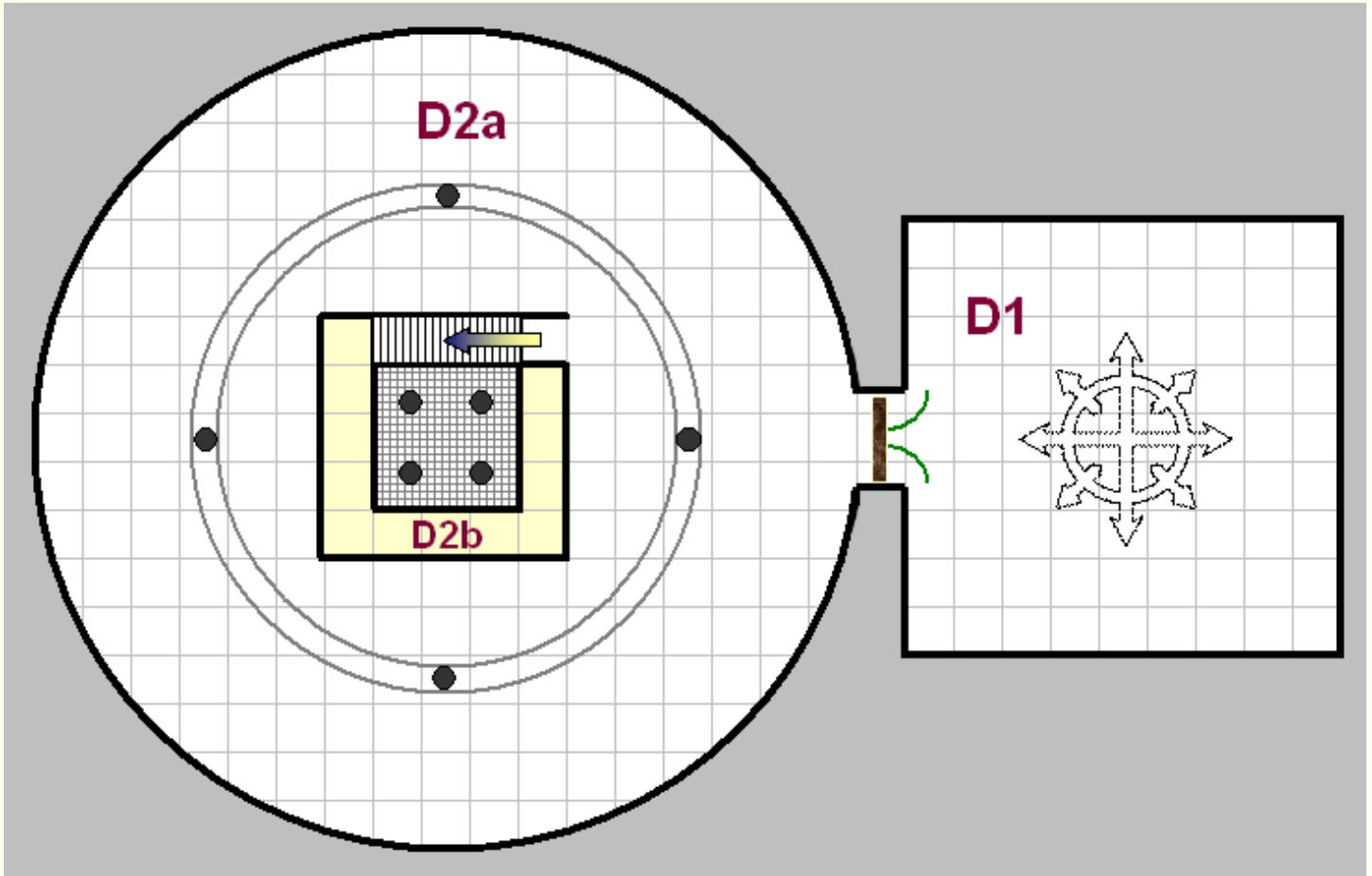
grooves carved in the stone floor channel the boiling oil to slits aligned with the corridor below. Wooden shutters can easily be swung open. Four arrow slits on the west wall enable archers or spellcasters to target the Grand Hallway (Area A1). A weapons rack stands in the back of the room. A large stone ball hangs from the vault just above Area B1's southwest corner. A lever in the pillar at the center of Area B1 releases the boulder, causing it to roll down the stairs and through the corridor in Area A6 (and into the pit, if triggered). When the boulder is released, iron bars rise from holes concealed Area A6's floor, blocking the two entrances to that corridor. A low wall separates the stairs to Area A6, providing good cover against anyone coming up. At least a dozen guards remain at this post, some with spellcasting ability commensurate with the skills of intruders.

**C1. Lower Teleporter Room:** stairs from Area B1 lead to this square chamber. A magical circle lies on the floor at the center. If it is tampered with, one or more gargoyles (commensurate with the intruders' overall experience) start *teleporting* into this chamber, one per round. They will attack anyone they see and pursue them to the lower levels. These creatures vanish 3d6+2 rounds after they initially appeared, or if they attempt to exit into Area A1. A command word, issued to guests with a royal warrant for use of the telescope, enables one to enter the magical circle and teleport to Area D1, just beneath the top of the rocky promontory.



**D1. Upper Teleporter Room:** a magical circle at the center of this chamber connects with the teleporter in Area C1. It is safe because no gargoyles can appear in this room. Double doors allow access to Area D2. This room and Area D2 are enchanted to completely prevent all forms of teleportation in or out (including *dimension door* and travel-related abilities), other than through the magical circle. The dome and outer walls in these two rooms are also immune to all *stone shape* and other stone-related effects (such as *passwall*, *rock-to-mud*, etc.). Spell-use,

whether wizardly or clerical, is suppressed in these two rooms, except for bearers of special medallions (worn by the observatory's administrators and the garrison commander). Magical items are, however, unaffected. The doorway to Area D2 also generates a permanent *dispel magic* ability which negates any prior spell or spell-like ability still affecting those who teleported into this chamber, such as (for example) *invisibility*, *charm*, *resist fire*, *protection spells*, etc. Magical items such as potions are unharmed, although their effects are momentarily disrupted.



**D2. Observatory Dome Chamber:** this circular chamber covers an area 85' across. A huge, seamless stone dome arching 70' overhead does not appear to have any openings. In the middle of the chamber stands a multilevel, 45'-tall, wood and iron structure surmounted by an immense brass telescope, about 75' long. Rail-mounted posts enable the entire structure to pivot. Supports at the center of the structure extend into a 15'-deep pit. Ropes, pulleys, and crenellated supports enable the telescope to be aimed. Twelve 35'-tall iron bas-relief statues embedded in the outer walls depict great astronomers of Ambur's history, all in postures praising the telescope. A graduated band adorned with gilded runes, astrological symbols, and numbers mark the bottom edge of the dome, just above the bas-relief heads. If a statue is attacked, it pulls free of its stone recess and defends itself (see Area D2e). There is a 95% chance that a mage and an apprentice will be working at the telescope at any time of the day or night, as this telescope is capable of ignoring daylight refraction to observe space.

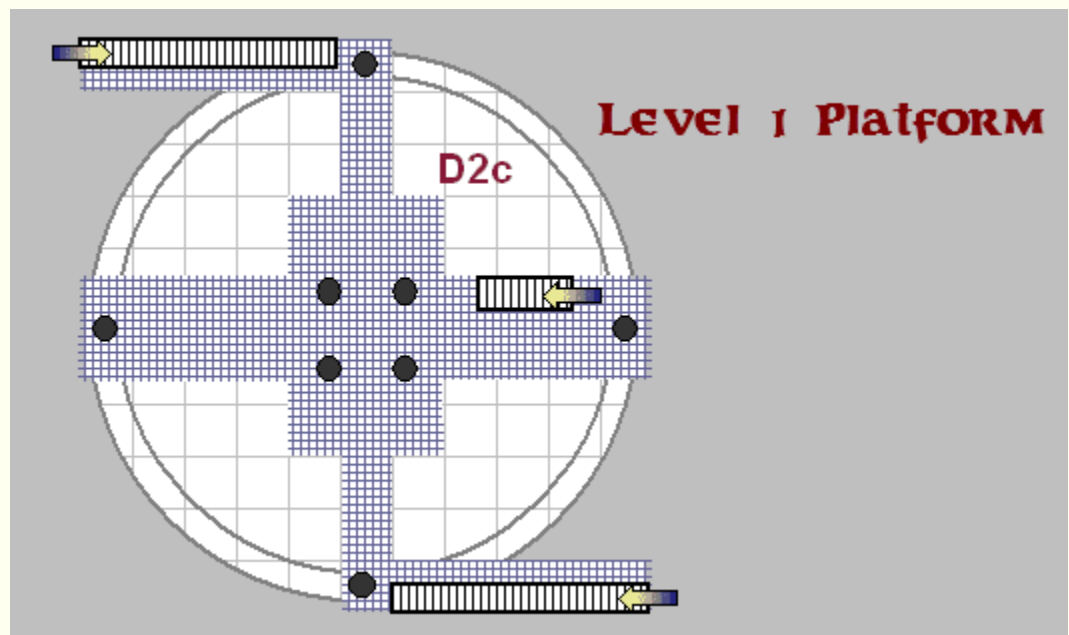
**D2a. Main Chamber's Ground Floor:** this view shows the disposition of grooves carved in the floor, which serve as rails for the telescope's mobile supports. This map displays the ground floor without the various platforms leading up to the telescope. A staircase enables access to the bottom of Area D2b.

**D2b. Main Support Pit:** the map area shaded in yellow shows the bottom of the pit, 15' below the main chamber's ground level. Wood and iron beams occupy most of this pit, providing the main support for the telescope's mount. A sturdy bronze chest lies in a secret compartment in the floor at the eastern edge of the support structure. This chest is solidly fastened to the floor and *wizard locked*. It contains levers allowing the telescope to be aimed beneath the horizon. A command word is needed to safely open it. If the chest is physically tampered with, two magical traps are triggered: 1. *cloudkill* (enough to fill the pit and the row of ground floor squares bordering the pit's edge) and 2. *power word blind* (cast at 20th level).

A *wizard locked* trapdoor is located exactly at the bottom center of the support structure. It leads to an engine room filled with clockwork mechanics needed to aim the telescope. A vertical shaft about 2,000' deep, 10' diameter, and fitted with stonework providing hand- and footholds leads down from this utility chamber to the top of the huge pendulum described in Area A1. Chains connecting the pendulum with the clockwork mechanism run the entire length of the shaft. Short of breaking through the dome, it is the only other access route to the telescope aside from the teleportation device. It requires jumping on the swinging pendulum base, scaling its arm, and ascending through the service well. This shaft is secret, rarely visited (if ever), and is home to random *creepy-crawlies* and large spiders. This shaft is also trapped. At the top and bottom of the shaft, hidden compartments house levers that disarm the trap. If the trap wasn't disarmed, all hand- and footholds retract into the stonework when someone reaches the shaft's midpoint. As with the doorway between Areas D1 and D2, the shaft's top and bottom rims (where the hidden compartments are located) also feature permanent *dispel magic* effects.

### D2c. Level 1

**Platform:** this elevated surface is made of a sturdy wooden latticework fitted with an outer handrail. It lies 25' above the chamber's floor. Ropes and pulleys connect the edges of this platform to fittings along the telescope, two levels higher, and to a chamber underneath the central supports' pit

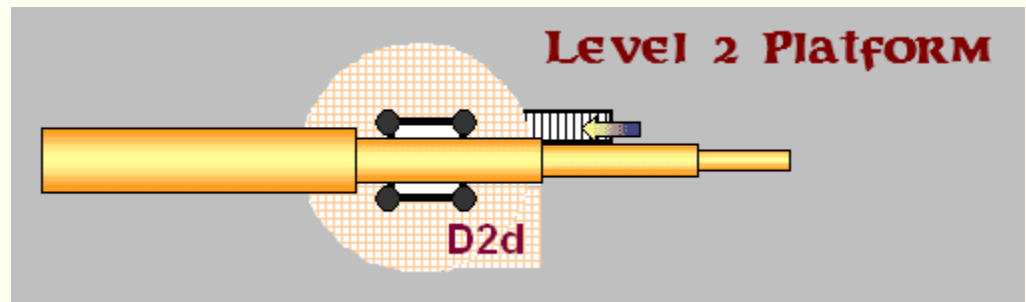


(see Area D2b). Circular rails can be seen just beneath the latticework where central posts connect with the telescope's structure. Four external supports mounted on wheeled bogeys stabilize the telescope's mount and its platforms. Two narrow flights of stairs enable access from the floor to this level. Small wheels at the bottom of these stairs enable them to rotate with the rest of the telescope's structure. A shorter staircase leads to the next platform, 10' higher (area D2d).

### D2d. Level 2 Platform:

this intermediary access platform is similar to the previous level in its construction. A circular landing enables access to mechanical workings just beneath the telescope.

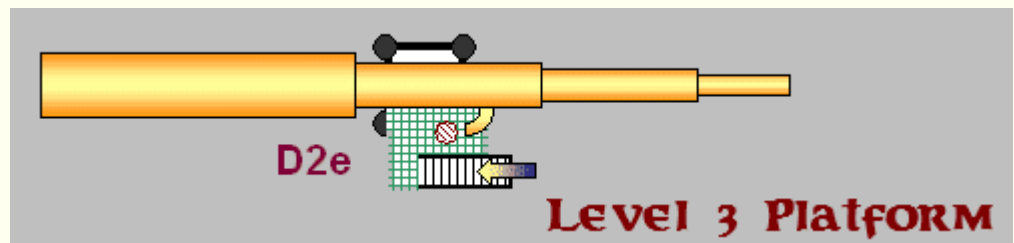
Wooden stairs connect from a 10'x10' square area to the structure's top level, 10' higher.



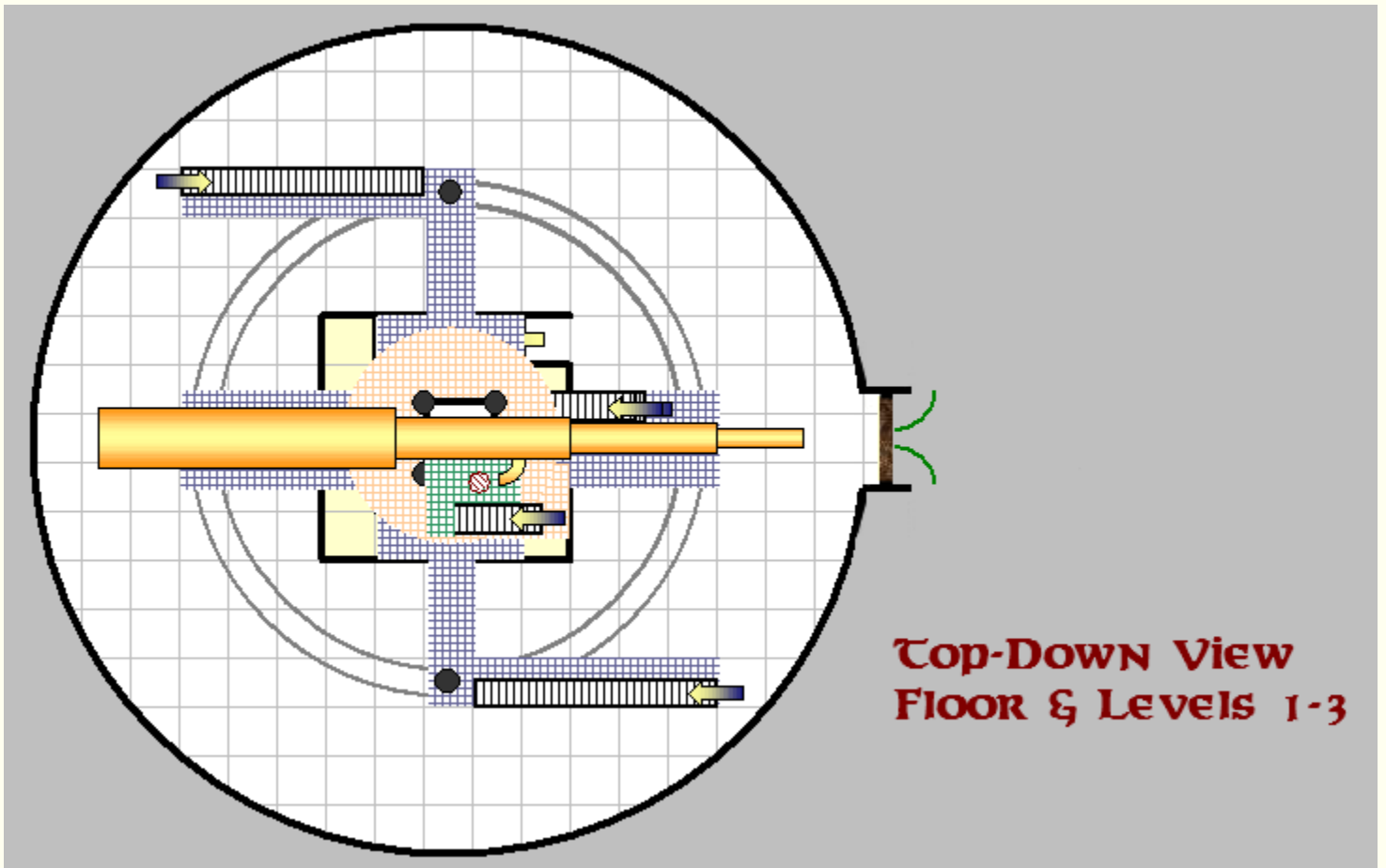
### D2e. Level 3 Platform:

this small area features a single astronomer seat next to small table and an array of levers, pedals, and wheels. A brass tube

extends from the side of the telescope, through which astronomers look (therefore facing opposite from the direction of the telescope). On the side of this tube lies a keyhole. The controls are meant to maneuver the telescope, including the structure's rotation and the telescope's elevation. Small levers manually activate the various enchanted *optomantic* lenses. The keyhole is part of a final security device. Tampering with the telescope's commands without inserting the required magical key results in the twelve-bas-relief animating. If awakened, they attack anyone in the chamber. They are tall enough to reach the top of the telescope structure. These are iron statues (RC page 208) whose HD should be adjusted to reflect the skills and experience of intruders. Only four magical keys exist. They lie in the possession of Queen Elshethara, the observatory's head administrator, Count Perihelion, and one visiting guest with a warrant to access the telescope. This last key is returned to the head administrator when the guest leaves or is most likely handed to the next visitor listed on the long waiting list. When the magical key is inserted as required, the portion of the dome obstructing the telescope's line of sight becomes entirely translucent, the effect moving to match the telescope's aim.

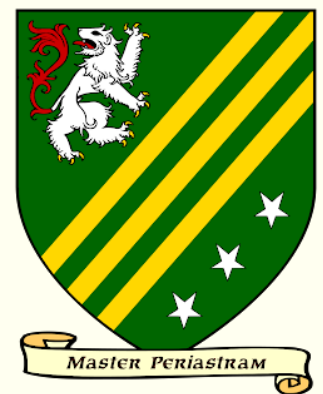


The last element shown on the map displays all of the platforms seen from the top. If the ropes and pulleys are cut off and an attempt made thereafter to move any part of the telescope, serious damage will ensue in the engine room beneath the main support pit (Area D2b). As a result of such damage, the link to the pendulum will shatter, releasing its chains which will thunder down the shaft and crash into Area A1 below. The earthshaking collapse is certain to alert anyone there of mischief under the dome and provoke maximum armed response. The noise of fouled machinery (springs snapping, gears grinding, chains falling) and an ominous rumble can be heard as well through the stone floor in Area D2.



## **Master Periastram, Lord Administrator of the Observatory**

This mage is what upper-crust Amburian aristocracy snidely refers to as “petty landless nobility.” There was a time when Master Periastram’s forebears commanded baronial status but following the failure of the Twin Peaks campaign, whose leadership had been entrusted to his kin, his family was ruined and the precious title sold for cash. The House of Periastram now holds on precariously to its minimal wizardly status accorded to spellcasting Alphatians. He is one of the rare mages to have earned a degree from each of Ambur’s teaching centers.



Master Periastram resents the fate his forefathers bequeathed him and the red tail added to the family’s heraldic lion—a sign of infamy. His requests to Queen Elshethara for a baronial elevation have so far remained unanswered, despite his good record as Lord Administrator of the Observatory. By tradition, any such request must obtain approval from the majority of counts. From Master Periastram’s point of view, the latter are a gaggle of foppish, self-adoring snobs who look down upon his forebears’ failure in the south as if they blamed him personally for “that sorry event no Amburian wants to talk about.”



Bitter and disgruntled, the managing mage has pursued nefarious aims. His official functions at the observatory enable him relatively frequent access time to the telescope, usually in response to a request for confidential information from the queen. Exploiting this precious privilege, Master Periastram has been spying on various nobles of the kingdom. After each session, he transfers incriminating *phantasmal* footage onto a small crystal ball for possible future use. Relying on an alias, the administrator then blackmails his victims for cash or favors that indirectly benefit him. It is worth noticing that, despite Periastram's dubious pedigree, the queen favors his tenure at the observatory as a counterbalance to the count's otherwise-unchallenged influence there.

While working at the telescope, Master Periastram discovered that its *disinvisibulating* lens had been magically tampered with. He doesn't know who did it but understands why—which prompted him not to take action. After magical analysis, he found that this lens ceased to *detect invisible* whenever the telescope was pointed at a certain spot in the sky. After temporarily replacing the tampered lens and observing the sky at that spot, he unveiled the presence of a heretofore-unknown celestial body gravitating just above northeastern Ar. It is the evidence of the secret Alphania Quest engineered by followers of Palartarkan. Master Periastram, once again, was profoundly offended that he hadn't been brought into this confidence and that an unknown party had altered the telescope—*his* telescope—without his knowledge. He suspects his subordinate administrators, the queen herself, and perhaps Count Perihelion as well. But he holds no proof.

Shortly after this discovery, he decided to become an informant for Empress Eriadna, in exchange for which he expects to be granted a higher status and a domain in Vertiloch, perhaps even a backseat at the Grand Council of Wizards in Sundsvall. He hasn't revealed to anyone what he knows of the Alphania Quest (or the hidden nature of the telescope), saving this valuable information as a bargaining chip to negotiate an imperial pardon should he ever get in trouble for routinely blackmailing members of the Amburian upper-class.

**Appearance & Personality:** Master Periastram appears to be in his mid-sixties. Of medium height and build, but he owns a paunch from long hours peering through the telescope. The rest of his body is emaciated. Thick hair and eyebrows like avalanches waiting to happen crown a fierce set of wrinkles above and between squinting dark amber eyes. A bulbous nose bisects his face, between cheekbones like twin stone escarpments. His chin angles out and up beneath an unkempt bristle of yellowish white whiskers. Abrupt with his subordinates, he keeps his gruffness to himself when attending to his duties with important visitors. His inner feelings of bitterness, hatred, and anger reveal themselves in acidic statements spat in a pointed tenor with little inflection, which he occasionally fails to suppress. Devoid of empathy for anyone, the Lord Administrator acts as if everyone's life revolved around his problems and his are consequently the only ones worth attention.

M21, AC2, hp44, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger, Dmg 1d4+1, Save M21, ML8, AL N; St11, In18, Wi13, Dx14, Co 13, Ch12. **Magical Items:** *hat of disguise, robe of blending, magical key, medallion of spellcasting, dagger +1, ring of protection +2, and potion of gargoyle control.*

**Robe of Blending:** as the fabulous potion of the same name, plus a gosh-darned basic Armor Class of 5 for good measure.

**Magical Key:** disables the iron statues in the observatory's main chamber if inserted into the telescope's keyhole.

**Medallion of Spellcasting:** enables normal spellcasting in the observatory's main chamber and upper teleporter landing.

## Count Perihelion XII, "Strongblade"

This narcissistic aristocrat often thinks in terms of brute force, legendary battles, and martial glory (his own, of course). In love with his private army—the county's forces proudly bearing his coat of arms (or else)—he drills them continually, keeping them ready at all times for a hypothetical conflict. As with the Great Observatory's Lord Administrator, he too never accepted the slight once inflicted upon Ambur and his county in particular as a result of Ar seizing the east shores of Crystal Lake. He still bears a grudge against Master Periastram whose forebears led Ambur's unfortunate campaign to its historical end. Since he wasn't able to block the mage's appointment to the observatory's lordship, he makes it a matter of principle to act against the administrator's personal interests wherever possible, such as at the Queen's Court, and manipulates facts in order to take credit for the mage's accomplishments. The count also intrigued to earn his youngest son a royal commission as Captain of the Guard at the Great Observatory. A dilemma lingers in his mind and his son's, both seeking opportunities to set up Master Periastram for failure without jeopardizing the precious telescope.



Not for lack of trying, the Lord Administrator has failed so far to unearth anything concrete that might compromise the House of Perihelion. On the other hand, he did catch sight of a nocturnal meeting between the count's older son and some shady types outside the village of Foggy Digs, in Ar's Wyvern District. The heir to the county *teleported* away shortly after handing over substantial funds to the other party. After investigating further, Master Periastram concluded these fellows were members of the *Grünfold Connection* or republican activists. The mage now surmises that the House of Perihelion is somehow implicated in seditious activities across the border. What he hasn't unveiled yet is that the count is plotting to provoke a new rebellion there and drag Ambur into a war with Ar. Perihelion dreams of recreating the Twin Peaks campaign to recapture the eastern shores of Crystal Lake, thus augmenting his own county. Using the conflict as an excuse, he is certain his son can overcome the Lord Administrator's unavoidable objections to the telescope's commandeering, after which he will personally take over the facility and use them to eliminate his foes mercilessly—in particular Aran skyships.

**Loyalties:** Royal troops posted at the observatory are loyal to their captain, until the queen shows up. County troops are always loyal to their captain or the count. Subordinate

administrators are loyal to the queen. Master Periastram is loyal to himself or, depending on circumstances, Empress Eriadna (preferably) or Queen Elshethara (as a last resort).

**Appearance & Personality:** Ramrod-straight, brave, and ready for conflict, Count Perihelion is the epitome of an elven career soldier. His body is still thoroughly muscled and trained even though he's in his mid to late forties. His bullet-shaped head, which he keeps neatly shaven, makes his elven ears unusually pronounced. Fair skinned, square-faced, and with a long nose knotted from being broken several times, he looks oddly similar to his battered shield. Flashing blue eyes demand nothing less than complete obedience. From between thin lips, he issues orders in a parade-ground baritone. Always marching everywhere at a good clip, the count never admits to fatigue. Temperamentally and morally inflexible, he believes everyone else should be like him. Arrogant and egocentric, Count Perihelion "*Strongblade*" boldly leads all under his command into whatever fray is available.

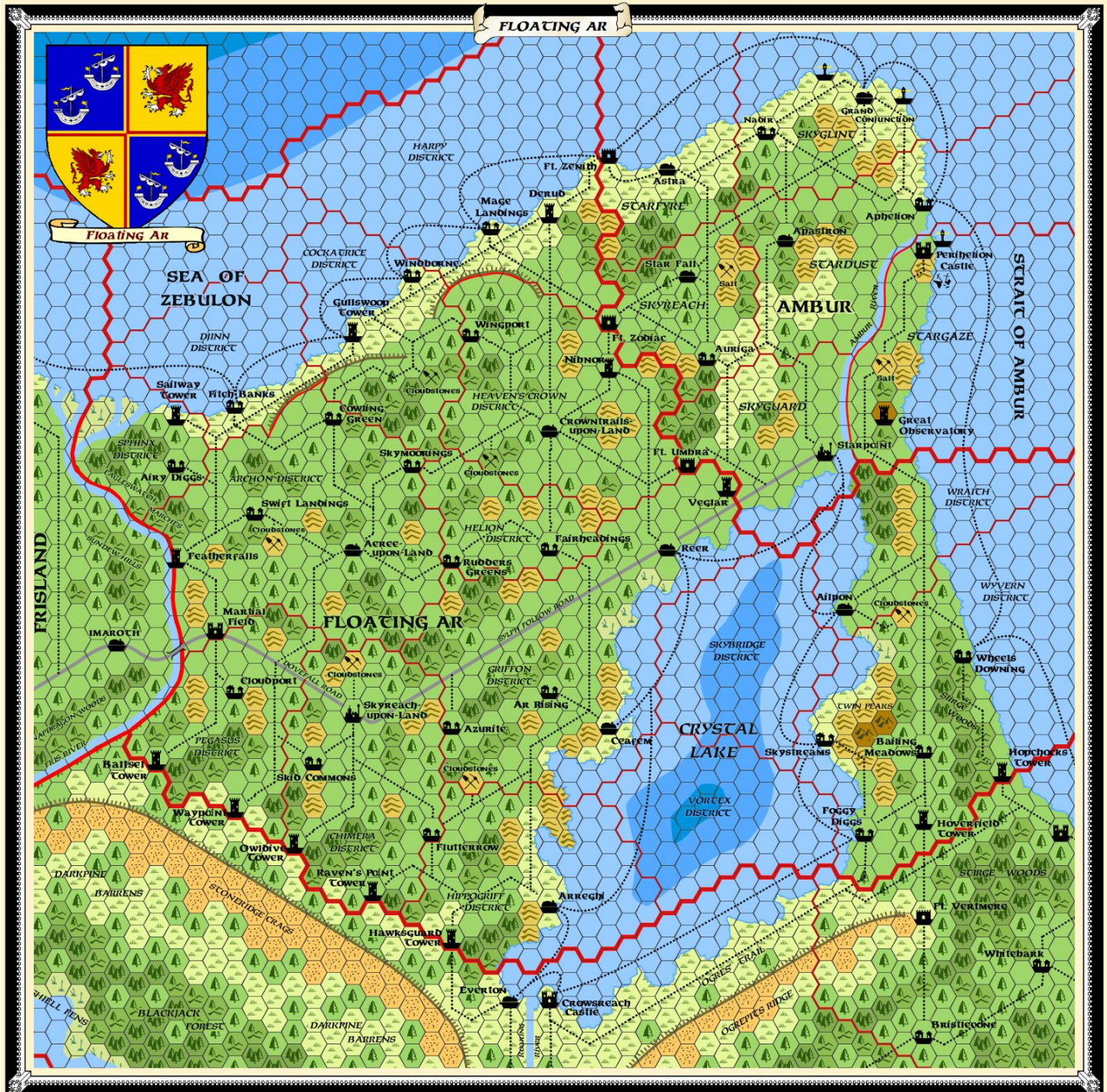
E16, AC-5, hp48, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8+4/+6, Save E10, ML11, AL C; St16, In17, Wi10, Dx13, Co 14, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *potion of healing, ring of water-breathing, suit of armor +2, shield +1, sword +2/+4 vs aquatic creatures (intelligent sword, Chaotic, Int 12—Primary Power: detect magic; Secondary Power: telekinesis), magical key, and spellcasting medallion.* **Note:** using variant rules listed in the RC, pages 266-267, the elf attacks as a cleric of the same level; saving throws do not improve beyond those described for the standard elven class; spellcasting ability is identical to a magic-user's of the same level.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and editorial support.*

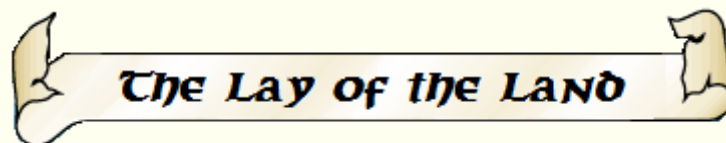


# The Alphatian Province of Ar

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Kingdom of Ar - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



Although Floating Ar is the name most commonly used when outsiders refer to this famous realm, it isn't what locals call their nation. For most of the latter, there is nothing floating or uplifting about their livelihoods. They are the legions of laborers and sky farmers living on the

ground. Levitating islands in Ar's sky are the domain of the wealthy and the aristocrats who own just about everything down below, including throngs of servants. Floating Ar is merely the most notorious and yet smallest part of the kingdom. Ar was the name of a wizard specializing in air-related magic. Aside from his expertise with all things celestial, Ar unlocked the secret of the Cloudstones which enabled the enchanting of great flying monoliths and the creation of Floating Ar.

The Kingdom of Ar includes 16 districts with jurisdictions both in the skies and on the land. King Quissling appoints a viceroy (either male or female) to administrate each district, along with a military captain. Viceroys focus on running the affairs on the Land of Ar, maintaining security, collecting taxes, developing cities and farming. Although they have authority over their corresponding districts in Floating Ar, the latter remain largely autonomous due to the presence of aristocratic domains, mostly those of wizards who resent being disturbed. There is little for a viceroy to administrate in the skies, since no farming takes place there, and islands are generally the private properties of families who contributed to their creation. Nobles employ their own household guards and flying ships. Where Floating Ar is concerned, viceroys and their captains usually limit themselves to organizing military matters when needed, such as levying feudal troops and mustering skyships, or collecting taxes.

First and foremost, the Land of Ar is home to a huge farming community. The majority are serfs whose role is to grow food. Land-dwelling bourgeoisie, skyborne aristocracy, viceroys, and the king own patchworks of small farming plots, which account for much of the surface. A few free farmers hold the deeds to their own lands, while a much greater number simply rent farms and fields from their owners. Ar is a northern kingdom with harsh weather and a relatively short growing season. Without the use of enchantments, the kingdom would never be able to support its population of nearly one million people. Magic is generally dispensed at a fairly low cost to ensure the success of crops despite difficult conditions. A Guild of Peasant-Wizards in Skyreach-upon-Land ensures the availability of such magic throughout the kingdom, assigning their alumni to specific territories. Peasant-wizards are benevolent magic-users who seek to improve the condition of the poor. Their arcane talents also make it possible to preserve excess production, which is sold to foreign seaborne merchants. Most of this traffic takes place through the ports of Arregghi, Ceafem, Reer, and Ailpon on Crystal Lake. So far, ports on the northern coast remain woefully underdeveloped and iced up during winter months. Goods destined for local consumption are carted to the closest town or village, all of which feature airfields where skyships pick up supplies and ferry them to Floating Ar. Fishing is also plentiful on the kingdom's shores, with some whaling along the northern coast.

Peasant-wizards occupy an ambiguous position in Aran society. Nobles and high-brow air mages living in the skies tend to look down upon their poorer, earth-loving colleagues. Yet peasant-wizards, despite their meek origins and sometimes rough and uncouth appearances, wield a certain power. The poor and oppressed regard them as their saviors—which they are. Peasant-wizards are the first to oppose aristocratic or royal abuse, infuriating the powers that be; yet they are tolerated because food production would tumble without them, causing famine and unrest among the lower classes and royal insolvency in the long term. This is what the small minority of Ar's ultra-rich fear most. Peasant revolts are no laughing matter in these parts. There are no major rivers in the kingdom and, as a result, water comes from wells exclusively.

Thanks to peasant-wizards, many of them are enchanted to help satisfy the needs of the people while ensuring proper irrigation.

## Weather in the Realm of Ar

In the vicinity of Skyreach-upon-Land, climate fits in the Humid-Continental category. Summer temperature averages 19°C/66°F, with moderate rainfall in the form of thunderstorms. Winter temperature averages -10°C/14°F, with dry conditions and generally light snow. Spring and fall are wettest. Northern districts are coldest, while easternmost districts receive the highest amount of rain and snow due to predominant winds picking up moisture from Crystal Lake. Climate conditions in Floating Ar vary significantly with altitude (from 1,000 ft to 16,000 ft). Trees generally grow no higher than 8,000 ft, higher under a protective dome. Rain turns to snow or ice above 10,000 ft while some cloud formations may remain below the highest islands. Force fields preserving both heat and air pressure to avoid hypoxia are needed above 12,000 ft. Diagrams and charts below show the various effects of altitude.

<b>Effect of Altitude on Temperature</b>			
<b>Altitude</b>		<b>Temperatures</b>	
<b>Feet</b>	<b>Meters</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>C</b>
16,000	4,900	2	-17
14,000	4,300	9	-13
12,000	3,700	16	-9
10,000	3,000	23	-5
8,000	2,400	31	0
6,000	1,800	38	3
4,000	1,200	45	7
2,000	600	52	11
sea level		60	16



### High Clouds

Because of the cold temperatures at high altitude, high clouds are made up of ice crystals. The prefix *cirro-* is used to describe high clouds.

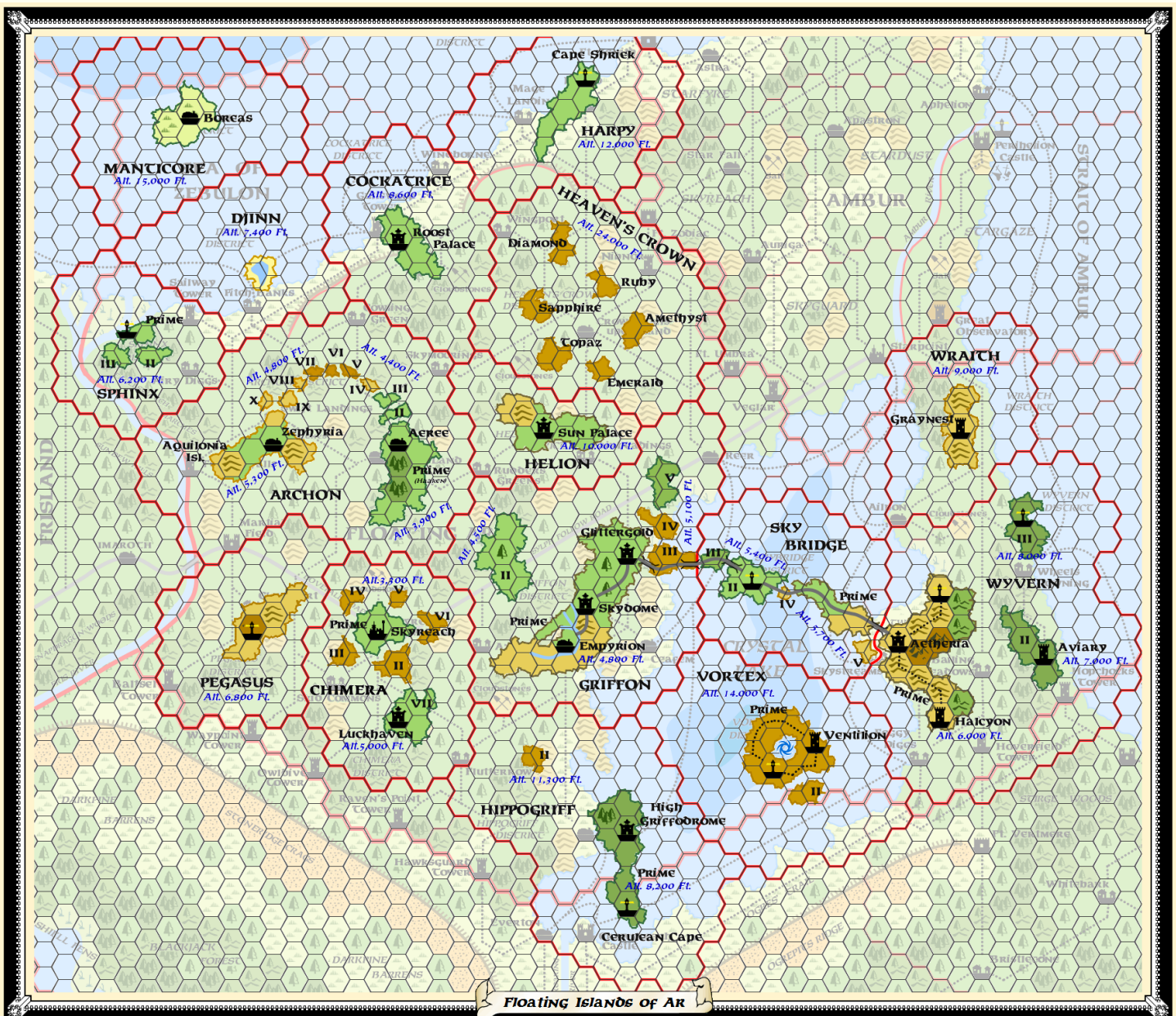
### Middle Clouds

Middle clouds can be made up of both water droplets and ice crystals. The prefix *alto-* is used to describe middle clouds.

### Low Clouds

Low clouds are made up of water droplets. The prefix *strato-* is commonly used to describe these types of clouds.

More than fifty permanent islands occupy the kingdom's sky. This does not account for scores of small monoliths levitating around them. These include manor houses, towers, castles, and ruins on rocks long abandoned by their makers, anywhere from a few hundred feet above the surface to at least 30,000 ft. The latter remain exclusive hideouts of anti-social, snobbish mages yearning to rise higher than the rest. Some islands are continually shrouded in clouds, suggesting tales of storm giants living in the skies. Amused by these legends, elder mages, known as steam-wizards, actively research magic to create semi-solid clouds capable of supporting structures. They established their own specialty of magic, neither quite air-inspired nor water-soaked, but somewhere in-between, dabbling with clouds, fogs, and other elemental vapors. All inhabited floating islands come with at least one private skyship, from small air sloops to fancy three- or four-masted yachts, and for the largest islands, flying traders to fetch supplies from the surface. The military maintains a few fortified airbases where summoned airships muster.



**Floating Islands of Ar - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**



Mirror-imaging the land below to a point, floating islands form 16 districts. Each may feature one or more major islands. Using the imperial nomenclature, islands are referred to by the name of the district followed with a numeral. The first island (if more than one) is called Prime, while the others are listed by sequential numbers. Few large islands actually have an official name. For example, in the District of Archon, the first island is named Archon-Prime, followed by Archon-II, Archon-III, etc., while the last island is named Aquilonia. This scheme refers to the historical sequence in which islands were sent aloft.

Arans refer to floating islands based upon the leading wizards who contributed to their creation, or upon the main noble houses controlling them. Only home islands bear their proprietors' names if multiple islands are owned. The ages of wizards can be surmised from the manner in which they refer to islands (original creators vs. present owners), older mages preferring the former to the latter. In the case of Archon-Prime, locals would know it as Haaken Island. If only one island lies in a district, it may bear the name of the district or its main town. For example, the island in the District of Manticore is called Boreas, from its town, while neighboring islands are simply referred to as Djinn, Cockatrice, and Harpy. Some towns exist on both the surface and on the islands—such as the royal capital, Skyreach. The one on the land is called Skyreach-upon-Land while the one in the sky simply goes by Skyreach. As for naming smaller structures crowding the skies, imagination is the norm. It may seem confusing to outsiders but in the minds of Arans it all makes perfect sense.

Islands are usually created using a magical mineral found deep below the surface. Called Cloudstone, the material ranges from white to dark gray, sometimes black, and is naturally infused with anti-gravity properties. Weightless when mined, Cloudstones are easily fitted to ships or fashioned into huge rocks or castles. They are quite susceptible to further enchantments enhancing their properties. Spells determine exactly how high Cloudstones can levitate and how much weight they may lift. Mooring spells help keep floating structures in place, although they do shift and bob like anchored ships, especially in high winds. Floating islands are meant to be stationary. They may be displaced in times of war but the intent is to move them back to their registered locations as soon as possible. Matters of taxation, law, and politics govern their positions. The only islands that do move around on a regular basis are military fortresses. Spells are needed to displace such large structures and prevent them from drifting in the winds but their travel speed remains very slow. Raw magic may be used to drive floating islands, occasionally sails or steam-powered propellers may be of help, or huge creatures of the skies, like dragons or air elementals. Combinations of the above aren't rare.

A project is undergoing study at the University of Air Magics in Skyreach. It concerns the establishment of permanent power beams intended to help set into motion the heaviest structures along predetermined paths. It would require an enormous source of power buried beneath the nation's geographic center, from where kinetic energy would be transmitted through airborne relays, thereby creating a transportation network, a sort of celestial highway. One would merely need to push a floating island onto a beam to move it around the kingdom. The actual source of power is the main problem, which remains to be solved. A select few steam-wizards and top Stoutfellow engineers have been drafting plans for a gigantic



machine to generate such power. Aside from the staggering expense of building this device, another issue concerns the obligation to keep flight paths clear of floating islands and skyship traffic. So far, this requirement has limited the concept to peripheral air channels preventing major islands from being permanently relocated. Although unfortunate frictions have resulted from rival air- and steam-wizards working side by side, the military wholeheartedly support the Sky Ways Project and have gone to great lengths keeping it secret.

The Celestial Bureau located in Skyreach-upon-Land administrates the allocation of air space above the kingdom. Its main chamber features an immense translucent cube (called the Aegis Ocularium) in which miniature images of islands and other floating structures light up. The bottom surface reproduces the land beneath Floating Ar. Celestial Bureaucrats use the magical ocularium to regulate Ar's airspace, property easements for the safe navigation of skyships, and yearly levitating fees based on island sizes. The device may also track the movement of airborne vessels. Celestial Bureaucrats rely on flying platforms to move alongside the immense cube, and sometimes through it, to examine something in detail. They closely monitor all progress with the Sky Ways project.

Sky districts are peculiar in that some actually overlap borders with Foresthome, Frisland, and Ambur. In exchange for the right to use their airspace, these realms collect levitating fees but otherwise allow Aran jurisdiction over any islands or levitating structures edging past mutual borders. Several districts exert jurisdiction at surface level although it concerns mostly water, such as Manticore, Vortex, and Skybridge, as well as much of Djinn and Hippogriff. Their authority there concerns mostly surface navigation.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial assistance.*

# Ar: Flight of the Archonians

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



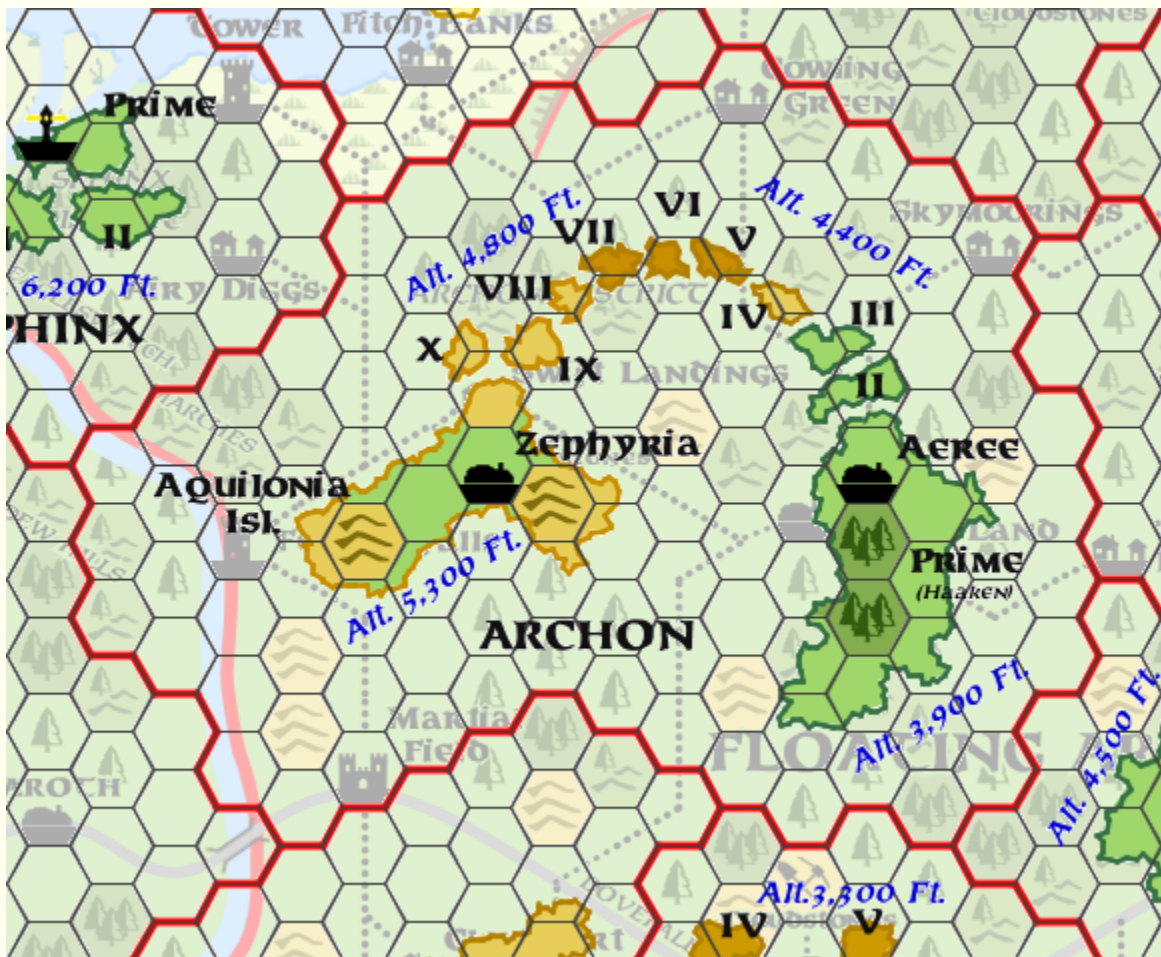
**Floating District of Archon - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Archon is one of the more important districts in Ar. It includes the towns of Zephyria, Aere-upon-Land, Aeree-the-White, and the fortress of Martial Fields. Slightly less than 100,000 Archonians call this region home. Under 10% of the population lives in urban settings. Three other villages provide safe landing areas for skyships, barn-like hangars, and loading docks for local farming produce. Just over a tenth of Archon's total area levitates above the surface. Lord Aerithern, Viceroy of Archon, commands about 400 royal troops and 1,200 local military, 400 of which are stationed at Martial Fields with the royal troops. These soldiers handle local law enforcement and guard the main passage into Frisland. Cavalry frequently patrols the river. Crossing is only permitted at Dovefall Bridge. The viceroy (whose estate lies in Zephyria) also relies on four skyships to patrol the skies: three vessels equivalent to small sailing ships (His Heavenly Majesty's Skyships *Nimbus*, *Cirrus*, *Stratus*, and one large skyship, the H.H.M.S. *Cumulus*).

As Aran districts go, Archon is fairly large. Griffon, to the southeast, is the oldest and the one that originated the kingdom's foundation. The latter's Cloudstone mine attracted air-mages to the area. The discovery of a second deposit prompted the kingdom's expansion to include

today's Archon territories. Archon's Cloudstone deposit is nearly depleted today (AC 1000) and only provides small amounts from very deep beneath the surface. Huge quantities were extracted in much earlier times, forcing mages to shore up endless galleries and nearly bottomless chasms. Thousands of spells creating stonewalls and stoneshapes produced colossal pillars and arches in the natural rock that would make a dwarven engineer proud. Yet, this vast underground expanse now remains empty and dark, save for monstrous denizens who've made it their home. Small flying vessels occasionally patrol the greatest mining canyons, concerned about recent sightings of ogres there, possibly from the crags (see Marches of Ogresfell and Grünfold for details).

Mining outposts linger to extract remaining Cloudstones. Skyships transport the minerals directly to the surface. A great stone dome with metallic gates protects the main vertical shaft, to prevent rain or distracted people from falling in. Secondary galleries, large enough for ten mammoths abreast, spread from the main shaft at various levels. Stone towers lock the entrances to galleries reaching the surface. Smaller ventilation shafts still furnish breathable air to this artificially-manufactured underworld. More than seven billion cubic feet of Cloudstones were extracted to create Archon Prime alone. This feat was accomplished with the help of mining constructs, enchanted beasts toiling incessantly to remove the minerals. Eerie witnesses of bygone times, most of them now sit silently in dark passages, abandoned, their command words forever filed off their metallic skins.



Upper District of Archon - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Since they've become much rarer, Cloudstones now fetch much higher prices. Business is still brisk but far more hazardous. An aspect of Aran common law and a series of circumstances described below lie at the source of a waste of the precious mineral. Before any wizard is declared dead, legislation demands a body be found and positively identified. Anti-social beings consumed by their obsessions to unlock secrets of magic, many wizards neglect to form families and secure heirs. The most powerful ones live isolated and very long lives. Relying upon enchanted constructs as servants is also common practice in Floating Ar—therefore, when wizards happen to die or disappear, no one may notice. The Celestial Bureaucracy collects levitating fees in units of ten years or more. As a result, any number of abandoned floating structures exist in the sky. A new and rather risky business consists in identifying abandoned monoliths and claiming them, as a maritime salvage operation would. After investigation, and if no heir comes forth to claim the property, salvage recovery can begin. If it is successful, the minerals can be resold at market price, along with anything else found inside. The danger in this business lies in disgruntled wizards resenting impromptu visits, wizards' guardians that survived their creators, monsters that took over abandoned monoliths, or rival salvage businesses. Several guilds compete for such opportunities, sometimes in brutal ways. If levitating fees are overdue, the Celestial Bureaucracy will seize the property and auction it off publicly.



Oldest among Archon's floating islands, it results from the conglomeration of several neighboring properties acquired during the past forty years by the House of Haaken, a dynasty of shipbuilders and Cloudstone magnates. The original Haaken island stretched about eight squares miles and supported a small village named Colbin. The core of the Haaken family now lives in a large manor on top of a small hill in Aeree. Cousins and other kin reside in separate demesnes in the surrounding town or on neighboring Aquilonia (Archon-XI). The original village's name can still be found on a fancy guest house in Aeree, at the site of Colbin's old town square: *The Colbin Plaza*.

Archon Prime levitates 3,900 ft above ground. It is the lowest of an archipelago rising another 1,400 ft to Aquilonia. Average temperatures are a good 15°F (9°C) lower than at ground level, giving Archon Prime an alpine-like feel. It does not benefit from a protective dome, and with the absence of a nearby body of water, temperatures vary significantly between night and day. About 32 miles long, 8 miles wide, and extending in a rough wedge-like shape about half a mile beneath the surface, it offers a landscape of gentle rolling hills, green like an emerald in the sky, with some heavily forested lowland in the west, and the white spires of Aeree rising in the north. The land is pristine and largely unpopulated, save for the small town. Rain, magically summoned during the night, forms small rivers whose runoff drops past the floating island's ragged edges, forming a fine cloud-like mist in the air beneath.

Aeree is built partly of weightless Cloudstones, anchored with white marble, thus the local name of Aeree-the-White. It is quite different from Aeree-upon-Land, which lies almost directly beneath. The latter is a typical medieval town of 3,700 inhabitants, with wooden buildings and narrow alleys, while Aeree-the-White looks more like a resort town for the rich and famous, with not more than 1,850 residents. Enchanted streetlights, animated statues, monuments, fountains, and varnished cobblestones are the norm here. Aeree features private palaces and fancy municipal buildings. Military quarters seem more fit for royalty than for mere *boltmen*. Servants living with their employers typically dwell at street level or below. The well-to-do live above them, the higher the better. Near the small municipal quarter lies the town's market and skyship landing platform. Theaters, libraries, temples, small squares with freeze-resistant topiaries are interspersed with elegant dwellings. Aeree stretches no more than a mile and a half across. A ten-foot-high wall surrounds the small town, supporting a fashionable promenade. There are no gates but upon uttering a command word, stairs appear on either side of the wall to access the surroundings.

Aeree-the-White operates a mechanical elevator allowing day-laborers to come and go. Aristocrats never use it, preferring instead their own skyships or teleporters when time is short. At an average speed of 250 ft per minute, the elevator can reach the floating island in a little more than 15mn, carrying up to 50 people at a time. Due to Archon Prime's slow shifting and bobbing, special gears and cables allow some flexibility at the expense of comfort. On rough days, travelers may feel sick from the oddly weaving ascension. The elevator does not operate during storms. Its top end is anchored in a shaft opening beneath Archon Prime where a platform allows users to disembark. Holds enable merchandise to be safely stored until dispatched to their owners. Tunnels lead to the main places of employment, mostly municipal buildings, and a few street-level exits in Aeree. Provided a visitor obtains a pass to Aeree-the-White, the elevator is the cheapest way to get there.

<b>Fees for Legal Passes</b>			
<b>Period</b>	<b>Land Laborer</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>	<b>Aeree Resident</b>
<b>Day</b>	N/A	5 gp	No charge
<b>Week</b>	7 cp	30 gp	
<b>Month</b>	2 sp	100 gp	
<b>Year</b>	2 gp	N/A	

Legal passes can be obtained from City Hall in Aeree-upon-Land. The Bailiff-of-the-Chits issues these permits if he or she is satisfied that requests are genuine and honest, usually for a specific floating island. "Multipasses" costs twice the fee and are valid anywhere within Archonian airspace, although they are limited to merchants and visiting aristocrats. Naturally, transients of uncertain pedigree need not apply. A pass comes in the form of a stone chit magically engraved with the owner's profile, name, destination, and dates valid. Passes must be presented both when boarding and stepping off the elevator, a skyship, or one of several public teleporters. The chit teleports back to the bailiff's office at the end of the permit's period. Guards working with

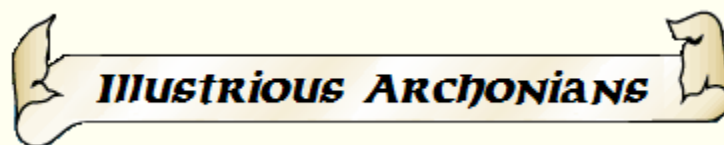
the bailiff will come looking for anyone staying longer than permitted, as chits reveal whether a former owner returned.

- **Elevator:** 1 cp per ride. + 1 cp per 100 lbs of merchandise; travel time approx. 15 mn. Frequency 1 per hour.
- **Air Freighter:** 1 sp per ride + 5 cp per 100 lbs of merchandise; travel time 30 mn. Frequency per individual schedule, weather allowing.
- **Skyship Shuttle:** 1 gp per ride + 5 sp per 100 lbs of merchandise; travel time 20 mn. Frequency 2-3 times per day, weather allowing.
- **Luxury Yacht:** 30 gp per ride (no charge for personal gear; no merchandise allowed; full meal and cabin included); travel time 1-3 hours. Frequency 1 per day, weather allowing.
- **Public Teleporter:** 100 gp per use (n/c for personal gear; no merchandise allowed); travel time instantaneous. Frequency on demand, regardless of weather conditions.

Aristocrats also operate private teleporters capable of displacing non-living objects. Public teleporters have a chance of error. To avoid fatalities, public teleporters aim 100 ft above their destinations, triggering automated featherfall effects that can be disconcerting to first-time users.

**Standard Disclaimer:** *If of the dwarven persuasion, pregnant, faint of heart, suffering from back pains, dimensional disorders, anamorphic deficiency, or orthophasing distopia, please consult a healer for advice. Public teleporters are not liable for bodily harm or damage to property during or after teleporting.*

Other modes of transportation are available from Aeree-upon-Land, usually riding or being pulled by various beasts. These fit in the recreational category, providing maiden flights, romantic rides, weddings, anniversaries, and other pleasurable tours. All transportation to and from Aeree-upon-Land is regulated and relevant to one traveling guild or another. Unregulated air transport is illegal in the District of Archon, as with throwing or dropping anything past the edges of a floating island or while in flight. The offense may result in fines, community service, and/or imprisonment depending on the severity of the damage. The latter law explains why all above-land refuse is either burned, disintegrated, or transported to be dumped at sea. For this purpose, garbage scows trawl from one island to the next, collecting trash. And yes, there is a Guild of Sanitation. . . or two.

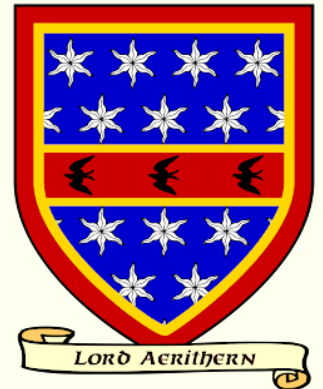


Many of the magical items in this section are listed in the *Encyclopedia Magica Vol. I-IV* or in *AC 4 Book of Marvelous Magic*. Those marked with an asterisk are explained in the text below.

## Lord Aerithern, Viceroy of Archon, Sky Lord of Aquilonia

Being a cousin of King Qissling was the main factor in being nominated as a viceroy. Aerithern is an able administrator and an advisor to Qissling. The viceroy, a close friend and ally of Lord Niborray, the Grand Secretary to the Council of Wizards in Sundsvall, strongly suggested to King Qissling that he approve a recent request from Queen Llynara of Bettelwyn that an Aran aristocrat marry her daughter. Qissling, eager to get rid of the trouble and return to his research, quickly sealed his consent. Aerithern is well aware of Niborray's hostility toward Empress Eriadna and Haldemar of Haaken, the future groom. He sensed a marriage between the famous admiral and a Bettelwyn princess may in time become a source of embarrassment for Eriadna, as well as force Haaken's missing son to return to Alphatia. The latter outcome offers Niborray an opportunity to seal the admiral's fate in some way. Although Aerithern does not have anything personal against the House of Haaken, its possible demise might mean the dismantling and resale of Archon Prime, from which he expects to profit. Once the queen's request was approved, the viceroy intrigued to have it forwarded to Lord Niborray for endorsement by the Council of Wizards, bestowing the request with a quasi-imperial status.

**Appearance:** Lord Aerithern is in his mid-forties and a man of powerful presence. A heavy brow accents his habitual squint but his light brown eyes gleam shrewdly. Once pale blue, strands of white and silver now grow among his hair which form a peacock-like crest on the back of his head. His chin is sharp and so is his nose. He enjoys playing politics. Lord Aerithern often wears iridescent pearl gray robes with a thick gold chain of office.



M18, AC0, hp 50, MV 120' (40'), AT 1staff, Dmg 1d6, Save M18, ML9, AL N. St11, In17, Wi12, Dx16, Co13, Ch14. **Magical Items:** *robe of winds\** (see below), *dagger +2*, *wand of lightning bolts*, and *desk of studying* in his quarters.

**Robe of Winds:** it is an heirloom of the viceroy's family. When in combat, the robe's magic deflects normal missiles, insects and other small vermin, and provides an effective AC of 2. It also enables its wearer to *fly* (as the spell) and sustain only half damage from cloud-based attacks (quarter damage with a successful saving throw).

## Haldemar of Haaken

Born in 1911 AY (AC 911) in Colbin (now Aeree-the-White), this adventurer of princely status was an explorer and diplomat at the service of Empress Eriadna. His journeys in command of the Princess Ark led him to leap 36 years through time and reappear in Mystara in 2000 AY. During the following year, Haldemar uncovered the existence of the Nucleus of the Sphere in Glantri and warned Eriadna. After he narrowly avoided a deadly palace intrigue when he returned to Alphatia several months later (Sulamir 2001 AY), the empress convinced Haldemar to flee with his crew. She was researching at the time an enchantment to counter the effects of the dreaded nucleus, which had the potential of killing both Haldemar and Berylith, the air



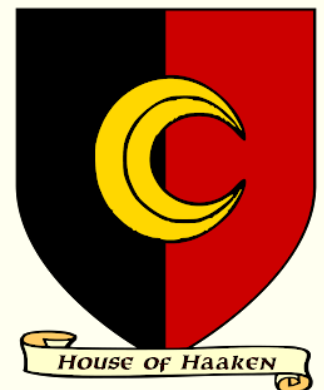
elemental bound to his flying ship (*from the Princess Ark's last episode in Dragon Magazine, early 2006*).

A year later, the wayward admiral still lingers far away from Alphatia. Before leaving the empire, he'd stopped at Aeree and made a stunning return to the survivors of his family. Some were overjoyed that he was still alive. His younger brother Felldorian—born 1912 AY, thus approaching ninety years old—his consort Ethrenielle, and multiple generations of offspring in their sixties, forties, and teens, proved much less than enthused about Haldemar's unexpected reappearance, as it reshuffled matters of inheritance. House Haaken and Archon Prime represented a coveted fortune entirely in the hands of Widdemar, Haldemar's father, now about a hundred and ten years old.

Haldemar's "younger" sister, Lady Auriane, remained friendly and quietly maintained communication while he sailed away once more. They relied on a miniature dragon construct, a clockwork device capable of skipping through the fringes of the outer planes to travel the world of Mystara quickly. Otherwise known as Ratchet, the clicking, whirring construct contains locks of Haldemar's and Auriane's hair in its enchanted heart. It is what enables Ratchet to home in on either of them, wherever they may be, despite its limited intelligence. Its magical coils can record a message of no more than 100 words. The two siblings understand the construct's mechanical language and have the keys to rewind it before each trip. Ratchet is a clumsy flyer, crashing into walls, decks, or people when it skips back into the prime plane. The copper and silver machine looks like a wreck after its arrival, before springs, wires, and coils of golden magic pull the pieces back together, 2d4 rounds later.

It was through Ratchet that Haldemar learned of a certain request for marriage. The strange document, worded more as a royal summons than an offer, was apparently from the hand of Queen Llynara, and adorned with seals of approval from King Qissling and the Council of Wizards in Sundsvall. The object of the matrimonial endeavor identified the queen's daughter, referred to as Her Eminence Llyndara, Cardinal-Princess of Bettellyn. Lady Auriane also informed Haldemar that their father approved the imperious demand straight away, positively charmed that the House of Haaken would become related to royalty. Naturally, the accompanying dowry promised to be more than adequate, which settled the arrangement. Lady Auriane did note that, although somewhat of a headstrong youngster, Llyndara was quite beautiful, adventurous to a fault, and should no doubt provide her promised husband with much pleasure, felicity, and ample progeny.

Haldemar, an incorrigible adventurer in his fifties, had always been too involved with his duties to the empire to consider truly settling down. If he did, Lady Abovombe, who joined him aboard the Princess Ark before his time leap, comes closest to a romantic interest. Having his marriage arranged by his father and a gaggle of foreign royals isn't remotely what he'd expected to have to live through. The specter of a political conspiracy dawned on him, possibly a scheme to get him to return to Alphatia and become embroiled in something that would later embarrass Empress Eriadna. Increasingly suspicious, Haldemar dispatched Ratchet back to Auriane, letting her know he'd mull the offer for some time. . .



and promptly set sail in the opposite direction.

**Appearance:** Haldemar is a typical Alphatian aristocrat of medium height, slim, proud, with long black hair, pale skin, and deep blue eyes. He keeps his hair neatly tied at the back of his neck. Graying strands at his temples and slight wrinkles at the corners of his eyes fail to betray his actual age—53 in AY 2000, following a 36-year time warp. Physically, he looks and acts more like a swashbuckler in his mid-forties. Haldemar's expressive face is a pleasant rectangle, with high clean-shaven cheekbones and a strong jaw. His voice is a light baritone. A slightly upturned patrician nose sits above a mobile and generous mouth that compresses when he's tense. His lapis eyes glint with good humor most of the time but turn stone hard when he's confronted in battle or by a conundrum. He sometimes dons a broad-brimmed, high-crowned black leather hat with a swooping pale plume when he thinks it's necessary to make an impression. While on duty on the Princess Ark, Haldemar wears dark blue pants tucked beneath the tops of his knee-high boots. A swirling thigh-length cloak that matches his eyes covers an ample white laced shirt with full sleeves. On more formal occasions, he sports a knee-length, midnight blue and white silk tunic with silver knot and loop fasteners rather than the shirt and cloak.

M21, AC2, hp 35, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger, Dmg 1d4+2 or by spell, Save M21, ML10, AL C. St10, In16, Wi12, Dx17, Co11, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *ring of protection +3, dagger +2 of warning, pouch of security*, and one of three wands (one per adventure) of *fireballs, lightning bolts, or disintegration*. Haldemar also recovered during his last call to Aeree a *displacer cloak* (dark blue) and a *swashbuckler's dagger*\*. For the **AD&D Game**, Haldemar is a Chaotic Good M21/T4 adventurer with 40 hp (1st Edition) or 38 hp (2nd Edition). **Thieving Abilities (1st Ed.):** PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 35%, MS 38%, HS 30%, HN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%; or **(2nd Ed.):** PP 35%, OL 47%, FT 5%, MS 70%, HS 15%, DN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%.

**Swashbuckler's Dagger:** on command this +2 weapon can turn into a magical rapier (1d6 damage). Since the weapon is attuned to its owner, a wizard may use it, provided three weapon proficiencies are spent training with it (dagger + rapier + attuning). The weapon also confers its owner with a +1 bonus to Dexterity, Charisma, and saving throws when used on a ship (it must be unsheathed, held in hand, and in its rapier form).

## Felldorian of Haaken

The likeness between Felldorian and his older sibling Haldemar was almost incredible in their youths, although Felldorian now owns a slightly shorter stature and looks much older. Having grown up in his brother's shadow, Felldorian was eager to prove himself, and spent much of his time experimenting with new skyship designs, in pursuit of a vessel faster and more nimble than anything else in the skies which, he hoped, would help him make a name for himself. Unbeknownst to him, he did acquire a moniker, "*The Sky Terror*," among Floating Ar's elite, owing to his habit of "buzzing" other skyships while testing his latest designs. (*Thanks to Geoff Gander for Felldorian's original entry on Pandius.*)

During the decades following his brother's absence, Felldorian began to see himself as the presumptive heir to the Haaken fortune. Now close to ninety (in AY 2001), he bitterly resents his father's longevity. Haldemar's relative youth and persistent fame feel like salt in a festering wound. Perhaps the family fortune will instead go to his own oldest son, Ethredorian, a cocky, brash, vain, and ungrateful wizard living beyond his means, even though in his early sixties. Felldorian considers this possibility with mixed feelings but the news of Haldemar's possible marriage with a young, healthy royal prospect comes as the worst of news.

**Appearance:** actual age 89, Felldorian is altered magically to look like a healthy seventy-year-old. His features are much like Haldemar's except a bit thinner and sagging. He hides his straight dull black hair beneath a sherry-colored velvet hat with a medium brim pinned up on one side by a nail. Various other magical doodads flash, shiver, or crawl from place to place on the hat. Their movements sometimes reflect his emotional state. Like Haldemar, he favors wearing blue but chooses stormier shades. His robe has an embroidered yoke of blue-on-blue that shows only in certain light. It appears to be a complicated blueprint of an airship. Most onlookers see only a fraction of the detail. The rest of the robe is in graduated shades of blue that trick the eye by seeming to twist into and out of one another.

M16, AC4, hp 30, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 staff, Dmg 1d6+1 or by spell, Save M16, ML9, AL C (Chaotic Neutral in AD&D Game terms). St7, In16, Wi13, Dx12, Co9, Ch14 (reflecting his advanced age). **Magical Items:** *robe of Ar\**, *Widdemar's tiny staff\**, *lens of far seeing* (set in a pair of leather goggles), *nail of building* (stuck in his hat), and *portable mast\**. Felldorian also commands the *Archonian Shadow*, a small but fast and nimble skyship.

**Robe of Ar:** this magical garment confers AC4 to its wearer and the ability to step on any vertical or upside-down surfaces as a house fly would, or climb a ship's rigging, masts, and booms with no more than a 1% chance of falling.

**Widdemar's Tiny Staff:** Felldorian's father gave it to his younger son for his fiftieth birthday. On command, this magical staff can shrink to the size of a 2" matchstick. As a +1 weapon in its normal size, it also can store up to 12 levels of spells (spell levels 1-3).

**Nail of Building:** it is an enhanced version of the original item, working with enchanted materials and reusable.

**Portable Mast:** it is a compact version of the one described in the *Book of Marvelous Magic*, about the size of a normal wizard's staff. It answers to three command words. "Set" causes the staff to grow into a mast up to 30 ft high. The staff must be held upright above a wooden surface in order to function. The mast grows 10 ft per round or until the second command is spoken, "Expand," at which point corresponding booms, main lateen sail, jib sail, rigging, and centerboard materialize. The last command, "Return," causes the contraption to vanish, leaving the original wizard staff in its place. The staff and resulting mast/sail arrangement can only be harmed with natural or magical fire. The staff is equivalent to a magical +1 weapon.

**Archonian Shadow:** Felldorian had used his *nail of building* when he constructed this 20' skyship. He removed it when he retired from airship regattas and, as he expected, the ship

vanished. He keeps the magical nail stuck in his hat. The *Archonian Shadow* does not require a crew other than its captain. It looks like a giant black hawk whose wings and tail were replaced with large red sails. The sails can be rotated to enable the *Archonian Shadow* to glide, dive, or fly with the wind. AC6, HP 30, MV 300' per round (flying) or 180 miles/day, Capacity 10,000 cn + 1 pilot.

## **Widdemar, Sky Lord of Haaken**

This venerable old wizard is the head of the House of Haaken. A bit confused and prone to becoming distracted as the result of his advanced age, Widdemar remains in control of the family fortune and still manages to run its shipbuilding business effectively. He pays generous stipends to Auriane, Felldorian, and his grandchildren Ethredorian, Dardaniel, and Felldorielle. His face is a map of wrinkles, and what's left of his hair is white, long, and stringy. Widdemar wears a floor-length robe embroidered with cloudstones, black at the hem and ending in a white stand-up collar reaching from ear to ear. His long-sleeved outer robe features various shades of gray. Oddly, Widdemar always seem to walk an inch above the floor, as if levitating.

M28, AC4, hp 42, MV 60' (20'), AT spell only, Dmg by spell, Save M28, ML8, AL C (Chaotic Neutral in AD&D Game terms). St6, In16, Wi13, Dx9, Co9, Ch13 (reflecting his old age).

**Magical Items:** *abacus of calculation, amulet of spell resistance (30%, spell levels 1-6), balance of coins-to-gems conversion, excellent rod of engineering (applies strictly to wood and shipbuilding), periapts of health and proof against poison, ring of clear thought (protects from mind-affecting powers and old age dementia), robe of cloudstones\**, and *scarab of protection*.

**Robe of Cloudstones:** provides Widdemar with an AC of 4 and an invisible floor under his feet enabling him to walk in mid-air even if he stepped off the edge of a cliff. The floor extends 10' radius and moves along with him as he walks about. Anyone staying within this radius may safely accompany Widdemar. The effect can be cancelled upon command. When lifting a knee a foot or more, Widdemar can change the floor's level, as if climbing steps. Lower tiers only last one round, which requires anyone in his company to carefully time their progression with Widdemar's, or tumble. Steps may be made to go down if bending one knee instead. The invisible surface does not interfere with intervening obstacles (walls, cliffs, floors, natural ground, vegetation, or living beings unaware of the robe's enchantment). It prevents Widdemar from triggering weight-sensitive traps or leaving any footprints regardless of ground cover (sand, mud, water, grass, carpet, snow, etc.), or his feet from making any noise. The invisible floor moves with the surface immediately underneath, such as the deck of a skyship.

## **Lady Auriane**

Auriane is a spinster spending much of her waking hours building clockwork devices of all sorts. Although she's thought to be an eccentric loner by the rest of the family, her brother Haldemar knows better. Auriane doesn't say much but fears the day either Felldorian or his oldest son inherit the family business. She would much prefer that Haldemar did. Her relation with

Felldorian's consort, Ethrenielle, is at best distant. The two have never developed any friendship, due to Ethrenielle's greed and jealousy. Dardaniel is most often away, having essentially given up on ever inheriting the Haaken estate due to his illegitimate birth. Auriane relies on a variety of automatons large and small to spy upon the family and watch over her when she sleeps. She has the appearance of a seventy-year-old with amber colored eyes like her late mother. Her wide-set features seem odd because of her long-pointed nose and cleft chin. She usually wears a wimple at her hairline, with a stiffened hood rising a hand-width behind her head. Yet, her attire is cloth of platinum embroidered in antique gold threads that outline gears, sprockets, keys, and mechanical articulations. She also wears an elaborate gold pectoral featuring bits of machinery that occasionally animate when then she thinks.

M14, AC3, hp 28, MV 90' (30'), AT spell only, Dmg by spell, Save M14, ML8, AL C (Chaotic Neutral in AD&D Game terms). St8, In17, Wi12, Dx12, Co9, Ch9 (reflecting her old age).

**Magical Items:** *bracers of defense AC3, flask of sovereign glue, flask of oil of slipperiness, pectoral of analysis\**, *rod of many things* (a small rod Auriane uses to create various clockmaking tools), and a *tome of minute workings\**.

**Pectoral of Analysis:** worn on the shoulders and upper chest, Auriane's semi-metallic garment enables her to temporarily boost her Intelligence rating halfway up to 20, rounded up. Duration lasts up to 1 Turn per point of Constitution or until dismissed, at which time each Turn of use demands an hour of narcosis-deep sleep. The effect also enables Auriane to grasp the general nature and function of any mechanical device, including enchanted ones. It provides answers up to five words to simple questions (1d4 answers per Turn active), such as "*what happens if I pull this lever?*" Responses and general concepts unveiled earlier remain intelligible when Auriane wakes up, however, the effect does not enable her to understand, learn, or use spells not normally available to her.

**Tome of Minute Workings:** this volume enables anyone reading it to acquire a free clockmaking proficiency. If the owner already had this skill when first reading the tome, its contents enable the devising and assembly of complex clockwork mechanisms, such as automatons. With an Intelligence score of 19 or more, the reader may draft blueprints usable by lesser workers. The two last feats require the tome be used as reference during the process.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support, and to Pandius fans for their contributions.*



# Ar: Of Kings and Chimeras

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Lower Chimeras - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

There was a time when royalty called the town of Ceafem home but the earlier dynasty met an untimely end for lack of a direct heir. Several accusations of usurpation flared but the matter was eventually dropped and faded into historical obscurity. The throne passed to the present house and the capital moved to Chimera.

Much like Archon, Chimera had become part of Ar's growing kingdom with the discovery of a new Cloudstone mine. Alphatian population had already begun to spread to that region and the "conquest" of the future Chimera district remained only a matter of negotiation with local landowners resulting in their eventual elevation to the status of Aran Skylords. Shrewd viceroys (later monarchs) attracted both common population and mages, and the original village that served as the dominion's center was renamed Skyreach. With time, the suffix "upon-Land" was added when flying monoliths populating the skies merged to form a larger island, and the capital was moved one last time to the top. Previous landlords became part-owners of Chimera Prime with commensurate rights to build their abodes in Skyreach. Such rights today fetch exorbitant prices.

Chimera is a bit smaller than Archon but has more than 141,000 people thanks to the sizes of both "Skyreaches". The lower town is home to 25,000 residents while the royal capital houses another 9,000. Including about 1,400 land and skyborne troops, more than a quarter of all Chimerans live in urban areas. As a result, Chimera imports food from other districts, driving up the local cost of living. Two villages, Flutterrow and Skid Commons, exist mostly for the purpose of gathering supplies and shipping them to floating islands. Most of the air traffic concerns Chimera Prime, with additional routes to Luckhaven, a gambling resort about 30 miles southeast from the capital.

All of the military in Chimera consists of royal troops, about 200 of whom are the king's guards in the floating capital. Two towers stand along the southern border, watching for any monstrous activity in the crags. It's been a long time since the last war with the ogres. Since then, the need for a line of castles faded from the kingdom's priorities. Some argue it may one day become a regrettable and deadly oversight. Instead, budget was diverted to embellish Skyreach and promote the development of gambling palaces. These joint ventures with local aristocracy provide a good source of revenue and prestige for the monarchy. This policy has been pursued at the cost of Ar's military. Aran forces are small, relative to what neighboring realms spend on theirs. The argument that most of it can be transported rapidly by air is often used as justification. Whether this line of reasoning is well-founded remains to be proven. The reliance on skyships to keep everyone safe has induced a certain amount of complacency and short-sightedness among the aristocracy.

Airborne vessels based in Skyreach-upon-Land include three troop transports and a two large sailing ships. Aran skyship crews all wear magical *rings of air pressure*. This equipment, not always available on other Alphatian skyships, enables them to operate at high altitude. These flying vessels either guard Chimera's airspace or, based on an agreement with Foresthome, patrol Stoneridge Crags and the Darkpine Barrens south of Ar's borders. Their mission is to search for monstrous activity and interfere with them as much as possible. The local fleet consists of the following airborne vessels: H.H.M.S. *Auster*\* and *Boreas* (LSS); *Coromel*, *Diavolo*, and *Etesian* (TT). The *Auster* is an old skyship, a relic from the Ogre Wars. Although combat-ready, it often serves to train cadet officers, and as such it normally operates under the purview of the Skyship Academy in Skyreach. Its figurehead is the mummified and magically preserved upper body of the ogre king whom the original crew had butchered during the war's final battle. Ogres find the matter utterly offensive and await the opportunity to get their hands on the ship and its crew.



To a lesser degree compared with Archon, Chimera's floating islands resulted from the conglomeration of smaller ones. There are two main islands, essentially devoid of population save for Skyreach and the Luckhaven resort. The two islands float at 3,300 ft and 5,000 ft respectively. The capital lacks a protective dome but the gambling facility doesn't. It prevents mountain sickness from afflicting the more fragile newcomers. Discomfort due to altitude may



start at 5,000 ft (about 1,600 m) and becomes most acute nearing 16,000 ft (5,300 m). Outdoor temperature in Skyreach stays about 12°F (4°C) lower than at the surface.



**Upper Chimera - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

A ring of mountain islands hovers around Chimera Prime, the domains of well-connected wizards. The highest peaks rise 3,000 ft to 6,000 ft above their islands' stated altitude, giving Chimera Prime the impression it lies in a deep valley. Chimera-Prime supports the highest peaks, Chimera-II the highest, Chimera-V the lowest. These islands were conceived as stationary monoliths but a proposal now in the king's hands suggests they should be propelled so as to slowly orbit Chimera Prime without altering their original orientations. A full rotation would correspond to a Mystara moon cycle, thus requiring a speed of 4 miles per day counter-clockwise, or slightly over 131 feet per Turn (10 minutes in BECMI). Allowances could be made for an unobstructed line of sight from Skyreach through the gap between Chimera-III and -IV to enjoy sunset on the Summer Solstice, an important celebration in Ar. Ongoing studies are evaluating the impact on wind patterns in the capital and the safety of airborne navigation.

Chimera Prime lies roughly 16 by 22 miles, with a rocky wedge protruding from its underside. Hills and light forest ring a lake, at the center of which stands the royal capital. A stone embankment surrounds Skyreach where it meets the lake's inner shore. A two-mile causeway

connects the town to a large, paved area serving as a landing platform, about a mile-wide. It is the largest skyport in Ar. Levitating *sedan chairs* and flatbed carriers quickly shuttle common passengers and merchandise along the causeway at no charge.



Passengers are dropped off near City Hall, while goods are taken to storage holds beneath a main warehouse facility. Animated constructs manage a mind-boggling jumble of conveyor belts to sort out barrels and crates before timely dispatch to their final destinations via freight tunnels and elevators. All merchandise must be properly labeled along with triplicate forms and arcane warranty seals when shipped to Skyreach. Lost goods are kept at the main warehouse for their owners to claim before being auctioned off or discarded as waste. On a far more earthly level, residences connect with sewers and trash disposals channeling all refuse to holding cisterns, which garbage scows frequently empty from beneath the island. Fully accredited by the Guild of Upper Sanitation, day-laborers on these airborne barges service damaged or blocked conduits for an extra fee, a dangerous occupation given the tendency of certain monsters to live there. Skyreach lacks a

people-elevator like Aeree's but its skyport and public teleporters are more than capable of handling the increased traffic. Visitors must rely on a pass scheme similar to the one in the District of Archon.

Skyreach rivals Aeree in beauty and style. Most buildings feature stonework whose colors shift from pale blue during the day to jet black with silver specks at night. At dawn and sunset, the royal capital seems ablaze with shades of amber, red, purple, and indigo matching the sky. At the time of the Summer Solstice, the last rays of the setting sun reflect perfectly along the main street and all other passageways thanks to series of mirrors embedded in the buildings, monuments, and the plinths of statues. For a brief moment, the entire capital glows as if it were made of gold. Glazed tiles adorn the roofs along with elaborate draconic, leonine, or goatlike motifs at the corners. Gleaming statues resplendent in auras of *continual light* often point lost visitors in the right directions. The same levitating *sedan chairs* as the ones servicing the causeway travel the streets of Skyreach, stopping near strategically-located statues and monuments to pick up or drop off passengers. Most aristocrats rely on personal skyships flying overhead to travel the capital. Especially near the town's center where the king's palace stands, the Royal Guard also performs frequent roof-top patrols aboard sleek airborne vessels, usually in small squads of 3-4 guards. No less than business attire is required by day-laborers employed in Skyreach. A good number of town residents are household servants wearing uniforms appropriate to their employers' coats of arms.

As with all fashionable floating towns of Ar, there are no shops in Skyreach since most business is conducted on land. One finds the smells and noises of a typical medieval town singularly absent. Gone are town criers, shop owners hawking their wares, dogs barking, palfreys whinnying, horseshoes and cartwheels clattering upon the cobblestones, the smithy's hammering, bells tolling, and townsfolk chattering. Everyone goes about their business and keeps to themselves. Wafting scents of food, rubbish, horse dung, and human labor are strangers here, leaving in their place those of stone crisp and cold, ice, pine and juniper, along

with fleeting hints of magic imbuing all things. Wizardly serenity replaces the bustling chaos of common life that personifies the muddy, gritty streets of Skyreach-upon-Land. Guest houses and places of recreation are very common, such as a grand opera, theaters, libraries, museums, indoor monster shows, spas, magical dueling establishments, and others catering to the spiritual, such as temples and chapels. During the coldest season, the surrounding lake freezes and ice racers compete for the Skyreach Cup. By far, the most common form of entertainment among the high-born involves kingly banquets, masked balls, and other fancy receptions at private palaces. None are as prestigious in Ar as the lavish soirées at the royal palace. As regards visitors, it is an unmistakable sign of status to be a guest at a personal abode rather than rely on a guest house, however nice or expensive it may be.



For various reasons, some wizards may seek to establish themselves outside Skyreach, which is illegal. No one is permitted to reside outside city limits. Those who do must falsify their identities and their appearances to escape common security. This enables them to build secret lairs, usually underground, to escape the Celestial Bureaucracy's vigilance and their levitating fees. Rogue wizards rely on teleportation to travel to and from their hideouts. Criminals, undesirables, and foreign mages up to no good may be the ones most interested in this sort of life. King Qissling employs well-paid adventurers to seek out and dispatch stowaways.

Nearby Luckhaven owns a convenient skydome that shades sunlight when it is brightest, as well as provide a soft ambient glow after hours, especially on moonless nights. Year-round temperature within remains steady at about 75°F (24°C). The dome helps maintain air ground-level atmospheric conditions. Inbound vessels must dock inside a hangar fitted with an airlock. Docking facilities at Luckhaven only accommodate up to two airborne vessels 140 Hull Points each. Most of the traffic there consists of luxury yachts from the main towns in Ar, with occasional visits from Sundsvall, Haven, Errolyn, Alfleish, and Blackheart. Non-Alphatian vessels are not cleared to dock at Luckhaven. Traders handle the resort's supplies. Servants and their overseers number about 500 souls living permanently in the resort.

Aside from conventional gambling, Luckhaven also features a combat arena where wizards pit their favorite construct monsters against one another. Walkways inside the skydome allow guests to safely observe outside scenery, the sky, or the arena from above. Aside from luxury facilities under the dome, individual airlocks enable access to the surrounding land where guests are permitted to hunt—generally small parties on foot, with an experienced guide. Luckhaven sits on a roughly flat disc, about 16 miles across, with chest-high grass, clusters of evergreens, a few gentle hills, and artificially recreated ruins from Alphatian history. It is a herbivore paradise, mostly Aran dire-buffalo, with a few predators in the shape of chimeras preying upon the large, woolly bovines. Predators are fitted with magical devices preventing them from flying off the island. If they try, an electrical discharge knocks them out and, after a time, chimeras know not to try again. They do reproduce naturally on the island, albeit slowly, and the license to slay one is very high, even by Alphatian standards. Cubs and their mothers are absolutely off limits. The facility declines any responsibility for injuries, fatalities, or loss of property occurring in the course of adventuring outside the dome. Luckhaven relies on an invisible giant net made of force-field strands trapping any dire-buffaloes stampeding off the island's edges. After hunters

have had their fun, fallen buffaloes are winched back to the surface and released, save for the one that ends up as the high point of the safari: an evening roast on a campfire. During full moons, guests may also use small telescopes mounted on the dome's walkways to watch chimeras on the hunt. Their mating season occurs in the fall, during which fights between males take place, followed with elaborate flight rituals to seduce a female. The telescopes require a silver coin to be inserted into their bases, allowing for 1d6+1 rounds of use.

## *ILLUSTRIOUS CHIMERANS*

Many of the magical items in this section are listed in the *Encyclopedia Magica Vol. I-IV* or in *AC 4 Book of Marvelous Magic*. Those marked with an asterisk are explained in the text below. Game statistics, based on those from the *AC1010 Almanac*, have changed since these entries are designed for AC1000. Equipment not listed in the AC1010 descriptions is assumed to have been stolen or destroyed.

### **His Heavenly Majesty King Qissling of Ar and Floating Ar, Viceroy of Chimera, and Royal Sky Lord of Chimera Prime.**

Qissling stands as one of a long-lived dynasty ruling the Realm of Ar. Alas, he is neither quite so illustrious nor the most inspired. Although very intelligent, this monarch lacks the leadership, social graces, and moral fiber which enlightened statesmanship demands. All he ever cares about lies within the pages of his spellbook and the myriad contraptions cluttering his research laboratory. If it doesn't come in a glass beaker or in a magical formula, it must therefore be delegated to those beneath him. And so, much of the decision-making in Ar stems from advisors—a gaggle of manipulative, self-serving aristocrats lacking any sort of common vision. The strategy of the floating kingdom is wholly adrift, at best reflecting short-term interests. The king's passion revolves around his secret quest to transform himself into a quasi-elemental able to master all aspects of air, winds, pressure, and related areas such as clouds, smoke, dust, and static electricity resulting from atmospheric inner workings. The truth is that it may transform him in ways that he does not fully grasp, forcing him to acknowledge greater powers than his—something Qissling hasn't yet truly experienced.



**Appearance:** Born 1932 AY, he appears as a man in his fifties. Standing 5'11" when straight, Qissling exudes a creepy spectral quality. Even with copper skin, he appears pale and hunched, his head poking forward from between elevated shoulders. His eyes are wide reflective pale blue, wide-set on either side of a hooked nose. Veins at his temples pulse when he becomes tense or worried. Qissling has wispy gray hair and is clean-shaven, which shows the world his odd, pointed chin. He always wears a garment known as the fabled *Robe of Moods*, long-sleeved, floor-length attire made from medium-weight silk. It has a short stiff collar covering the back of the king's neck, and a slightly darker V-shaped placket fastened by knotwork that begins at the collarbone and tapers to his belly. Sleeves feature floor-reaching dags.

M23, AC special, hp 37, MV 120' (40'), AT dagger or spell, Dmg 1d4 or by spell, Save M28, ML4, AL N (Chaotic Neutral in AD&D Game terms). St13, In18, Wi6, Dx10, Co12, Ch11. **Magical Items:** *robe of moods\**, *dagger of vortices\**, *ring of teleportation* (3d10 charges), pouch with *dust of absorption*.

**Robe of Moods:** its appearance and magical properties match the owner's emotions. Although effects are temporary, if an affliction was previously negated, it remains so after the King's mood changes again. Although others exist, the most common feelings and resulting effects are listed below. The robe can display up to four dominant emotions in a day, after which it reverts to its normal appearance (see indifference, below). In the case of madness or confusion, effects change quickly and continually, causing 1 hp of damage each round to the owner until removed.

1. **Love:** AC +1, Ch +1, *protection from evil*—pale pink to salmon, pink shell buttons with hook-and-loop closures replacing the knotwork.
2. **Happiness:** AC +2, Co +1, *immunity to curses & poisons*—emerald green with sparkles, which seem to form a wave pattern and race across the fabric in constant motion.
3. **Sadness:** AC +3, Co -1, *immunity to mind-affecting magic*—billowing dark gray topped by a tunnel-shaped cowl.
4. **Indifference:** AC +4, In -1, *immunity to 1st-3rd level spells*—a rich mahogany shade with deep brown embroidered scrollwork.
5. **Pride:** AC +5, Wi -1, grows 1d4 inches taller + *immunity to fear*—fiery orange-gold-red, it has what appear to be flames rising from the hem, up the dags on the sleeves, and through the stiff half-collar surrounding the back of the king's neck.
6. **Jealousy:** AC +6, Ch -1, *detect invisible*—sickly green with shifting yellow tinges reminiscent of infection and jaundice. This incarnation has chevrons of the deeper yellow on the placket.
7. **Puzzlement/Alarm/Reflection:** AC +7, Wi +1, *detect magic*—amber with small red bursts in odd places at odd times. Embroidery embellishes the placket, with rows of antique gold braid crossing Qissling's chest between gold buttons.
8. **Anger:** AC +8, St +1, +2 to *saving throws*—bright crimson with an animated pattern of white lightning. People standing near the king actually feel their skin prickling as with static electricity. The lightning is associated with a sharp crackling sound.
9. **Pain:** AC +9, St -1, *regenerates 1d4 hp per round*—deep black with red veins intensifying with the king's emotion. A throbbing matches Qissling's heartbeat betrayed by the veins on his temples.
10. **Fear:** AC +10, Dx -1, shrinks 1d4 inches + *haste*—sickly, pale, muddy blue with slightly darker "worms" in the fabric that twine around and chase each other.

**Dagger of Vortices:** acts as a magical +2 dagger. When hit, a victim must save vs. spell or be engulfed in a 12HD air elemental vortex. The whirlwind dissipates when either the victim or the elemental is killed. Each successful use of the dagger requires a charge. The weapon has 1d6+1 charges left when taken from Qissling.

## Prince Qirklin

This twenty-year-old-man recently inherited the title to a significant portion of Chimera Prime. Charming, enterprising, and brave to a fault, Qirklin already spent four years in the Chimeran air fleet, first as a cadet on the H.H.M.S. *Auster*, and in various roles aboard the *Boreas* and *Etesian*. His service record is impeccable and his previous commanders regard him with utmost respect. After a short tour of duty in the imperial air fleet, he resigned his commission to pursue a calling as a cleric of Valerias, manage his estate in Skyreach, and provide assistance to royal advisors as a naval liaison, such as Lord Aerithern.



Many of the aristocrats dwelling at the palace see in Qirklin someone with good potential. The prince is already popular with a number of aristocrats, commoners, and military. Those well-placed at the palace who are familiar with him seem intent on making Qirklin "their man" before he gets ahead, spinning webs of influence around him. Qirklin, a sharp and well-educated fellow, is fully aware of the forces at work and plays along, for now. Compared with his experience among the military and his clerical order, he sees what happens behind the palace's closed doors as a deplorable state of affairs and Ar's eventual downfall. He's not certain that he may ever be able to do anything about it but is willing to let time, fate, and his faith in Valerias lead his steps in the right direction.

The prince is a tolerant and forgiving soul, yet keenly conscious of human nature. Although respectful of laws, his faith leads him to enjoy life, romance, adventurous escapades, and dueling for sport. Among those closest to him, he presents a slightly roguish image, questioning hard facts of wizardly life in Alphatia, and challenging those that seem unfair or abusive. His sense of humor aims to bring people to face their own weaknesses and come clean. Above all, he is a patriot, an Aran through and through, and a proud Alphanian. Qirklin may be found at his residence in Skyreach, at the Temple of Valerias, at the royal palace, at the Skyship Academy, at a theater, in good company at a ball, or at a dueling establishment to spar with a staff. He sometimes travels to Luckhaven to hustle the unwary like no one's business. He then promptly flies down to Skyreach-upon-Land to donate his gains to a hospital or to the poor.

**Appearance:** standing 6'1" with dark red wavy hair, assessing black eyes with a merry glint, and a handsome copper-skinned face, Qirklin is the quintessence of the romantic adventurer. He sports a short manicured beard and mustache slightly darker than the rest of his hair. The prince is athletic and duels often with a stout staff. His clothing is predominantly combinations of black, red, and silver. The plate armor he dons occasionally is as dark as the smith could make it, embossed or inlaid with brilliant red, thorn-bearing roses in honor of his immortal patroness.

C10, AC0, hp 43, MV 90' (30'), AT warhammer, Dmg 1d6+3 or by spell, Save C10, ML9, AL L (Lawful Good in AD&D Game terms). St16, In10, Wi17, Dx12, Co13, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *plate armor +1, war hammer +2, boots of cloudwalking.*

## Master Qin, resident cadet at "The Academy"

This eleven-year-old boy is believed to be the child of a wizardly couple named Rezethem and Qwynnatria, minor nobles who own a fragment of Chimera Prime and enough of a claim to hold an abode in Skyreach. Qin isn't remotely connected to the couple: he is the grandnephew of his Heavenly Majesty Qissling, and the last remaining heir to the old royal line. His parents, grandparents, and others with a potential claim to the throne of Ar had been dying in suspicious circumstances from horrid diseases, catastrophic accidents, ghastly murders, and other eerie natural causes, or simply vanished inexplicably. Qin's forebears concealed his birth and sent him away to trusted friends, along with the family signet and arcane warranties attesting to his true identity. After basic schooling and apprenticeship in magic-use, his adoptive parents enrolled the youngster as a cadet at the Skyship Academy to strengthen his character, hone his wizardly skills, and earn a leader's demeanor.

Qin developed the habit of wandering the academy at night, looking for his pet, Trikkitikki, a tarsier-like oddity with wings. He earned his moment of fame when he caught an individual rifling through registration scrolls in the principal's office. With his limited skills, he was able to delay the marauder until older cadets could capture him. The stranger *disintegrated* shortly after his incarceration but not before he was identified as a suspect in an unsolved murder of someone related to the royal house several years earlier. As naval liaison, Prince Qirklin, remitted the child with a medal for bravery on behalf of His Heavenly Majesty who was detained by other duties. Qirklin had a hunch there was something unusual about the child when he first met him but couldn't quite define it. Since then, the prince quietly keeps tabs on wily little Qin, making sure he remains healthy and safe.

**Appearance:** This engaging youngster has glossy black shoulder-length hair, a startling contrast with his white skin. A bit skinny and tall for his age, he has an oblong, determined face, and odd purple eyes that can appear either blue or brown depending on the colors he wears. The academy uniform for underage students is his normal dress, a simple ankle-length robe with a modest hood and wide sleeves made of dark blue cotton. Qin is curious and smart. He also has a tendency to try bending the rules a little when he thinks it necessary. He's a budding adventurer who relies on his palm-sized furry friend for companionship. The creature has short black fur, a long hairless tail, leathery wings, and huge, opalescent eyes.

M3, AC9, hp 9, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 spell, Dmg by spell, Save M3, ML7, AL L; St6, In16, Wi8, Dx9, Co14, Ch16 (in a boyish way). **Magical Items:** *boots of speed* (from his adoptive parents), *gem of ideas* (acquired after playing marbles with friends; 3 charges left), *potion of gaseous form* (1 small vial for a child—an anonymous birthday present from Qirklin).

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*





# Ar: Song of the Cockatrice

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Cockatrice is a region of Ar notorious for monsters of the same name. Alphatians were slow to spread into that area, for obvious reasons, but when a vein of Cloudstones was discovered there, the Aran monarchy became determined to put an end to the poultry peril. An alchemist from the town of Arregghi devised a *periapt of supple flesh* that could keep cockatrice petrification at bay. The amulet can have any shape, but often comes with a rooster motif and 1d4 charges.



Lower & Upper Cockatrice - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Periapt-bearing wizards thus directed the effort to capture the beasts and carefully segregated a select stock. As it were, cockatrice eggs proved exceedingly profitable, both as exotic delicacies and spell components since the dreaded ability does not manifest itself until after hatching. The market for cockatrice feathers, beaks, eyes, and tongues is also quite brisk among wizardkind. As the land was freed of its monstrous roostery, commoners followed, searching for employment or farmland. Mining started in earnest, and monoliths began populating the skies.

Cockatrice is a small dominion of less than 40,000 *Cockatenes* with relatively low population density. The only urban area consists of the coastal village of Windborne. Air traffic from the village involves mostly freighters supplying the floating island. The upper class and their servants dwell there, no more than 4,500 souls in about 50 large manor houses scattered outside the Roost Palace gambling resort. Less than 500 warriors guard the upper and lower district, including three skyships, the H.H.M.S. *Gregale*, *Levanter*, and *Maestro*. Cockatrice is a net exporter of farming goods, mostly through the villages of Wingport, Cowling Green, and Sky Moorings in neighboring districts.

At 8,600 ft altitude, the floating island of Cockatrice remains the domain of wizardly aristocrats seeking isolation from the remainder of the realm. Each of them owns a piece of the island.

Local temperatures are 30°F (16°C) lower than at sea level. It is a flat, unprotected, and windswept land with ravines that channel rainwater off the island's edges. Medium-height grass covers the ground with a myriad alpine flowers, such as *apprentice buttons*, *sky daisies*, *bleeding hearts*, *Aran hat flowers*, *moon lupines*, and *golden mage rods* painting a sea of bright colors under the cerulean vault. A few native trees are hardy enough to grow here, including *cockspur hawthorns*, *popping crabapples*, *shadowberries*, and *shivering poplars*. The island is devoid of most pests, diseases, and mildew commonly affecting lower altitudes. All cockatrices were removed from the lowlands and brought here long ago. Most manor houses include cockatrice enclosures where the monsters can be bred safely. A fair takes place regularly "down under" on Windborne's town square where feathers, eggs, and live specimens can be bought and sold. Foreign merchant ships show up for that purpose, late-comers anchoring near the shore.

Roost Palace owns its own protective dome, keeping temperature and air pressure more to the liking of wizardly visitors from lower-levitating islands. Most of the air traffic connects the resort to the main towns of Ar. Protected moorings lie in an underground chamber with a large circular opening beneath the island. Passengers and supplies are brought topside through pneumatic tubes. Roost Palace is more remote than Luckhaven, and consequently more private, making it a favored haunt for Aran wizards. It is notorious for its cockfight pens, involving specially bred and magically-enhanced cockatrices. Various enchanted card games, dice, roulette, and other games of chance are also available. Less known is the existence at the palace of a permanent outer planar gate. Cockatrices originally entered Mystara through this opening. Once identified, the portal was removed from its original lowland location, altered, and placed on the floating island. For a fee, one may use it to visit the plane of cockatrices.

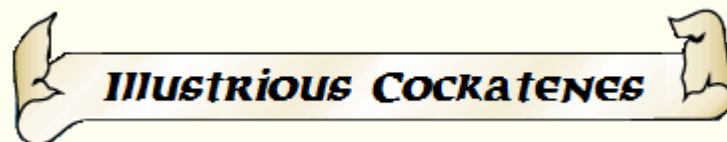


The problem with the gate is that something came through that wasn't meant to enter the prime plane. An elemental spirit had blended into a jade cockatrice figurine which a visitor stole from an outer planar shrine. In effect, the figurine worked as a Trojan Horse, allowing the creature through with the returning wizard. The elemental spirit now haunts Roost Palace, following cockatrice owners until no one watches, to wreak revenge upon them for mistreating her kin. Although invisible to all but earth elemental beings, she typically remains hidden inside the figurine for 3d20 hours before coming out, to avoid detection. She generally does not venture more than 300' from the figurine, and as a result hasn't yet exited the dome. If she does, or if the figurine is taken outside, she will wander the island, taking note of cockatrice farms. In her own way, she will communicate to the captives that on one cold winter night she will set them free. They are to petrify as many of their captors as they can before taking the resort by storm and fleeing back to their plane.

**Elemental Spirit:** AC0, HD12\*\*\*\*, MV 120' (40')/360' (120'), AT 1 beak/2 claws/1 tail, Dmg 1d8/1d4/1d4/1d6, Save F12, ML10, In 9, AL N. **Special Defenses:** +1 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to spells level 1-3; minimal damage from air-based attacks; *meld into stone*. **Special Attacks:** *dissolve/harden* breath weapon; petrifying touch.

This elemental spirit has the ability to blend into a mineral object that originated from the plane of earth. The object must be at least fist-sized, and it will radiate a magical aura if such is detected. The spirit can be expelled with a successful *dispel magic*, or if the object is crushed. Once expelled, the elemental spirit is invisible and remains so even while she attacks. She can be observed with a *detect invisible* spell, appearing then as an eight-foot-tall, iridescent cockatrice.

As soon as she can, the elemental spirit uses a breath weapon, up to twice in a day, in two different ways: 1. *Dissolve* (as the spell) or, 2. *Harden* (the same, reversed)—usually one of each to trap foes standing on a stone floor. The breath weapon is cloud shaped (50'x40'x30'). As a cockatrice, her touch turns a victim to stone unless negated with a saving throw. The elemental spirit requires a +1 or better magical weapon to be hit and is immune to spells level 1-3 (except for *dispel magic* and *detect invisible*), as well as *conjure elemental* spells. This elemental spirit otherwise suffers double damage from fire-based attacks.



## Prince Qibban, Sky Lord of Cockatrice

Qibban is the younger brother to Lord Qiessan, the Viceroy of Cockatrice. The prince holds a majority stake in Roost Palace, which he runs and uses as his primary residence. He also operates a cockatrice farm nearby. Qibban is aware of the great trouble besetting his resort although he has failed to identify it. Instead, he has petrified guests quietly removed in order to suppress any hint that a killer is loose in the resort, and dropped at sea, away from prying eyes. He and a handful of trusted henchmen have been trying in vain to lure the intruder and destroy her. They haven't yet connected her to the cockatrice figurine. So far, the jade piece has been used variously as a bedchamber or lobby decoration. Most of the victims were alive when they were turned to stone. If pulled from the sea, they could be revived with *stone to flesh* spells. None but one of them is aware of what happened since they were surprised when the elemental spirit attacked them. The witness is a wilier, more cunning mage who'd detected and fought off the creature for a short time.



**Appearance:** in his 30's, of average height, with copper skin, collar-length flame-colored red hair, and deep-set amber eyes. Qibban's pointed gaze misses little in his business: he is able to sort out most difficulties among his staff quickly. However, the true nature of the murderer in the Roost Palace still eludes him. He wears a crimson *robe of talons* (see below), with black mid-calf boots ending in pointy toes matching the epaulets on his garment.

M12, AC1, hp 38, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 spectral talon or spell, Dmg 1d6 or by spell, Save M12, ML6, AL C; St10, In16, Wi8, Dx13, Co14, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *periapt of supple flesh* (3 charges), *ring of protection +2*, *staff of the avians\**, and *robe of talons\**.

**Staff of the Avians:** a black staff surmounted with the white carving of an eagle's head, it confers its owner the ability to control up to 10 HD of bird-like creatures, including cockatrices, once per day for 1d4 Turns. It does not affect the elemental spirit in any way.

**Robe of Talons:** is a crimson garment showing random shadows of talons on its fabric. Black leather epaulets point upward from the ends of both shoulders, joining in the back of the neck to form a curled collar featuring thorn-like edges. Eight box pleats from beltline to ankles allow Qibban plenty of room to move. The robe confers its owner with an AC of 4 and the ability to use spectral talons to fight a visible foe, up to 30 ft away (one encounter per day). Spectral talons can hit creatures requiring +1 or better weapons. Attacks require an unmodified hit roll (no Strength bonus). The owner can master the attack style with the expenditure of a weapon proficiency slot, and may then apply any Strength bonuses as well as increase the attack range to 60 ft.

## Lord Qiessan, Viceroy of Cockatrice

The viceroy often acts as a diplomat for King Qissling, especially when a journey abroad is needed. As a result, he may be found in Sundsvall or any other Alphatian provincial capital, or at the royal palace in Skyreach. When not performing ambassadorial services, he resides at a private palace on a lone monolith, about 2,000 ft above Windborne. There, he manages the affairs of the district. When away, his seneschal takes over military matters, while the vizier handles tax collection and financial concerns. Qiessan is unaware of the nasty business going on at Roost Palace. While grievously disenchanted if he found out, he'd have the resort shut down for "redecorating" to settle the crisis. The viceroy would rely on all resources available to him to protect his younger brother and prevent any truth about the affair from spreading. Should he become compromised as well, the king may intervene to prevent a scandal, since he happens to be one of the investors in Roost Palace.



**Appearance:** In his mid-thirties, Qiessan resembles his younger brother Qibban, although he sports a closely-trimmed beard lining his strong jaws and chin, and keeps his hair neatly tied on the back of his neck. He wears a regal robe of thick purple silk. A subtle pattern of book spines and scroll tips embroidered upon the fabric in a slightly deeper tone can be seen only in the right light.

M18, AC4, hp 50, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger or spell, Dmg 1d4+3 or by spell, Save M18, ML7, AL N; St11, In17, Wi10, Dx12, Co13, Ch16. **Magical Items:** *dagger +3, librarian robe\*, medallion of protection vs. ESP and scrying, scroll of seeing* (which may identify the elemental spirit), *mirror of messaging\**, and *wand of charm monsters* (as the spell; 1d6+1 charges).

**Librarian Robe:** it allows its owner remote access to any and all written material placed in his/her private library. The target area must fit within a space no more than 1,000 cu-ft +100 cu-ft per experience level of the owner. For example: an 18th level mage could designate a 280' long, 10' high, one-foot-deep set of shelves (or a combination of contiguous shelving) in his

library as the robe's literary source. Casting a *read languages* spell inside the library enables the owner to assign a target area to the robe. Remote access requires a Turn of concentration, after which the owner may mentally consult any book, scroll, or written material within the target area, including any available spellbooks there. The range of the effect is 250 miles per experience level for mages up to level 9, or 500 miles/level for mages level 10-19 with up to two separate target areas, or any range/outer planes for higher experienced mages (except from the Hollow World) with up to three separate target areas. The oldest assignment is dispelled when casting a new *read languages* for the purpose of connecting a new target area to the robe. Unless the owner looks specifically for a particular item, an Intelligence check is needed to notice something out of place or missing entirely. The robe also confers an AC of 4. *The robe does not provide access to material which the owner has not already read and understood, or to material protected with magical wards not under the owner's control.*

**Mirror of Messaging:** this small silver mirror enables its owner to communicate through larger mirrors, one located at the royal palace in Skyreach and the other in his seneschal's quarters in Cockatrice. Although communication is possible from anywhere on the surface of Mystara, it does not extend to the Hollow World, outer space, or the outer planes. It can be used once per day for 1 Turn. Any of these mirrors can be used to call another on command, causing the other to glow, or leave a message no more than 100 words. Someone familiar with a mirror's command word can use it to eavesdrop on a conversation between the other two or listen to an earlier message.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial input.*



# Ar: A Dream of Djinni

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

The District of Djinn emerged entirely for one purpose. A permanent gate to the elemental plane of air had been, somewhat inconsiderately, opened by an Archonian mage. As a result of this action, inhabitants of that plane strayed into northern fringes of Ar, engendering some disconcerting encounters with human residents. To solve the problem, the viceroy of Archon at that time offered to create a small island that could be used by both people, Alphatian and elemental denizens of air, as permanent ambassadorial grounds. Thus was the District of Djinn created.



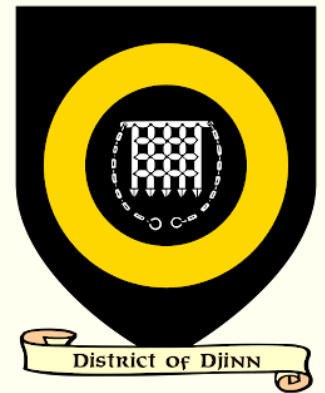
Lower & Upper Djinn Districts - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

This new dominion includes a small strip of what used to be a part of Archon along the northern coast, along with the village of Pitch Banks. In total, less than 10,000 *Djinnites* now live in the area, including 470 islanders. The coastal lowland yields enough food for local consumption and actually exports part of it, usually pickled flying fish sticks and dancing giant crab legs, local specialties. A tiny military force of slightly over 100 holds the village below (20) and the two embassies above (40 each). To patrol the coast and Upper Djinn's airspace, the force employs one small skyship, the H.H.M.S. *Sky Fennec* whose crew includes several individuals from the elemental plane of air. Although few, these troops are well paid, well trained, and reliable.

At an altitude of 7,400 ft and about ten miles across, Upper Djinn rests beneath a weak *force field* that traps heat and humidity. The temperature stays around 80°F (27°C) year round. The semi-solid, porous dome allows slow-flying skyships through. Upper Djinn looks like an oasis similar to those lost in the desert of Ylaruam, surrounded by a rocky ridge. Under an intense, cobalt-hued vault, the land within features white to pale pink sand dunes, with a lake in the middle, ringed with swaying palm trees. A slight breeze circles counter-clockwise around the

island. Predominantly turquoise, the lake turns entirely translucent depending on where an observer stands, making dhows plying its surface look as if they flew in mid-air. It rains rarely on the island, and any snowfall outside melts on contact with the dome. Condensation or infiltration streak down the sides of the force field, dripping past the rocky ridge. The water then gathers under the desert's surface to form a spring that feeds the central lake.

Lone towers and Ylari-looking abodes dot Upper Djinn. They house families of landowners, Alphatians and denizens of the elemental plane of air who contributed to the island's enchantments. The Embassy of Ar, which stands on the northeastern shore of the oasis, also harbors an imperial consulate. An elemental pasha referred to as Siadet Al Safeer (or Syadt Alsfeer), a greater djinni, dwells in the Embassy of Air, on the opposite shore, with a staff of thirty lesser djinn. Also known as "The Cloud" (or Haroon of his Truename), Al Safeer represents a djinni kingdom lying on the other side of the gate. The Alphatian embassy is the typical sort of wizardly palace, with slender towers, wide open bays, columns, statues, and enchantments galore. The pasha's embassy looks more like an Ylari palace, with onion domes, elaborate latticework engravings, mosaics, atriums, and fountains. It floats on a small cloud, about 900 ft above the oasis's shore. Visitors on flying carpets can be seen frequently entering or leaving.



The magical portal levitates above the lake, halfway to the dome's vault, and is large enough for small skyships to travel through. Flying in or out of the magical gate requires approval of the pasha and either Ar's ambassador (Her Highness Qiaa), or the imperial consul (His Highness Naberral). The gate's steel iris does not open without a certain scroll bearing all the appropriate diplomatic seals, which acts as a sort of passport. Both embassies include landing platforms for the H.H.M.S. *Sky Fennec* or other visiting vessels. Traffic from Pitch Banks includes freighters with supplies from the surface, exclusively headed to the Aran embassy or the various surrounding residences. The pasha's staff magically produce their own food which they often exchange with that of their neighbors for the sake of hospitality. Ship traffic usually involves private vessels carrying dignitaries from other dominions or from Sundsvall, seeking business with His Highness Al Safeer. All Alphatian business must be first approved by the Embassy of Ar or by the imperial consulate. Qiaa and Naberral are highly unlikely to approve foreign missions through the gate, provided they even permit them on Djinn Island.

Access to the floating island is restricted to inhabitants or official business. Merchant traffic must remain at Pitch Banks. A possible way for a foreigner to gain access to Upper Djinn would be through a personal invitation by a resident, subject to ambassadorial approval. There is no tourism on the island, but flying past its dome is tolerated as long as skyships do not loiter nearby. Nocturnal flybys within less than 8 miles (or any other sort of concealed passage) are strictly forbidden. If in doubt, boltmen aboard the *Sky Fennec* will shoot first, then ask questions.



## Illustrious Djinnites

### Siadet Al Safeer (Haroon, "The Cloud"), Ambassador to Ar for the High Kingdom of Samaa, also known as Al Mamlaka Al Samaa.

Al Safeer is the cousin to the Queen of Samaa, otherwise known as Her Majesty Faiza *Al Malika Al Samaa*. The ambassador resents Faiza's reign. His openly mitigated attitude toward the monarch earned him the posting as a diplomat on the prime plane and as the "ruler" of no more than a palace on a tiny cloud. This ambassadorship is tantamount to a banishment from djinni heaven. Al Safeer chose to use his time secretly finding allies among Aran nobility who'd support his move to overthrow the queen. In exchange for their help, Al Safeer promised many things—perhaps more than he should have—among which were magical knowledge about the element of air and native slaves presumably chosen from supporters of the defeated queen. His djinni servants are loyal to his house except one individual who spies for Queen Faiza and communicates of all information he can glean.



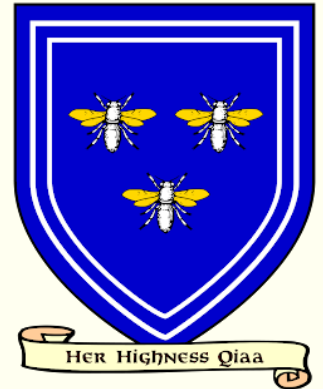
Al Safeer is instrumental in permitting "friendly" Aran aristocracy to visit his native world. Though good-hearted, Djinn are cautious about outer planar travelers, especially the sort who arrogantly summon their kin through magic and bind them into service, however short-lived. This disposition reflects Queen Faiza's distant attitude toward Alphonatians in general and Aran aristocracy in particular.

**Appearance:** Out of courtesy, Al Safeer takes an illusory human appearance when dealing with Alphonatian visitors. To his guests, he is a handsome, six-foot-tall man in his early forties with creamy skin, intense brown eyes, and short black hair. A closely-trimmed beard outlines his strong chin. Al Safeer's dashing good looks attract admiring and envious attention. As a greater djinni, he stands 9' tall, with long black hair tied in a knot and a pale blue skin. His favorite weapon is the Scimitar of Al Samaa, a huge weapon made for a nine-foot-tall owner. Made of 21 folds of steel and having a hilt encrusted with gray pearls, the scimitar rests otherwise on a special stand never far from his hand. He is an excellent swordsman and equally good with his fists.

AC-2, HD 15\*\*\*, hp 70, MV 120' (40')/360' (120'), AT 2 fists, or 1 scimitar, or 1 whirlwind, Dmg 3d10/3d10 or 4d10+2 or 3d12 + special, Save M30, ML 11, In 14, AL C. **Special Attacks (once per round):** *create whirlwind, create illusions, enter or leave the ethereal plane.* **Special Defenses:** *invisibility* (once/round), +2 or better magical weapon to hit, regenerates 1d3 hp/round, cannot be summoned by spell. **Other Special Powers (once/round):** *create food & drink, create metallic objects, create soft wood or wooden objects;* (and once per day) *grant someone a wish, cloudkill, water to gas, and weather control.* **Magical Items:** *scimitar of Al Samaa +2/+4 vs. efreeti and fire elementals* (provides Al Safeer with one attack inflicting 4d10+2 or +4 dmg).

## **Her Highness Qiaa Esq., *Ambadress for the Kingdom of Ar and Floating Ar, Acting-Viceroy of Djinn***

The ambadress, a high-born native of Emyrion in the Griffon District, is a fairly young aristocrat, as Aran diplomats go. An ambitious and sharp negotiator, she attended both the prestigious School of Magic at Sundsvall and obtained a degree in magic law at the University of Eagret before obtaining employment at the Royal Palace in Skyreach. During her time there she forged a good relationship with King Qissling and became a trusted advisor. The king later assigned her the ambassage at Upper Djinn to handle Ar's relation with Queen Faiza, to promote Ar's interests, and to develop as much as possible the ability of Ar's residents to visit the Kingdom of Samaa.



Her new duties bear the title of "acting-viceroy." The District of Djinn is peculiar in that it is partially shared with subjects of Queen Faiza, and a middle ground between the two realms. As a result, there is no Sky Lord for the floating island, and the ambadress handles general administrative responsibilities for the lowlands and Aran properties on Upper Djinn. Her counterpart, Al Safeer, does the same for djinni assets on the floating island. So far, all diplomatic issues have been resolved in an amiable and constructive manner, at least from Qiaa's point of view.

The ambadress frequently meets with Al Safeer. The two get along awfully well—perhaps too well. Qiaa, despite her businesslike demeanor, developed feelings for the handsome djinni. In keeping with her main mission to further Ar's interests and access to Al Samaa, she became a key player in Al Safeer's political scheme. The ambassador is well aware of her feelings but sees her as a romantic conquest he'd just as soon lock up in his harem. Qiaa is a great source of potential allies in his endeavor, and so the djinni treats her and her liege royally. King Qissling, coveting exclusive secrets about air magics, quietly encourages Qiaa's liaison with Al Safeer, hoping for a marriage of convenience and a formal alliance should the outer planar envoy's ambitions succeed.

**Appearance:** In her mid-thirties and very good looking, Qiaa stands about 5' 7". Her white skin, delicate nose and gently molded cheekbones, long blue-black hair, and celadon green eyes suggest ancient Alphatian ancestry. Her movements are extended and graceful. She wears the Gown of Al Samaa, given to her by Al Safeer. With a stand-up collar behind her head and wide sleeves gathering into narrow, jade-studded cuffs, the robe's translucent fabric reaches down to her ankles. A string of pearls rings her chest, well above the waist at the point of a gentle V-shaped neckline. Despite Al Safeer's wishes, Qiaa retains beneath the gown a more austere and functional Alphatian outfit, a close-fitting emerald green tunic buttoned to its mandarin collar, narrow treads of darker green and black, and knee-high boots.

M16, AC4 (see bonuses below), hp 30, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger or spell, Dmg 1d4+2 or by spell, Save M16 (see bonuses below), ML10, AL N; St10, In17, Wi12, Dx12, Co11, Ch18.

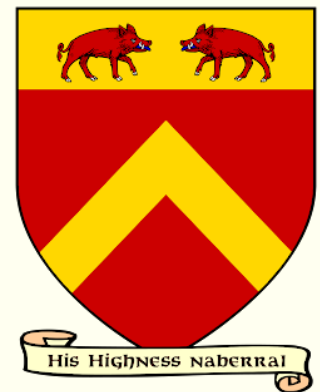
**Magical Items:** *Gown of Al Samaa\**, *ring of flying*, *bracers of defense AC 4*, and a *+2 dagger of banishment\**.

**Gown of Al Samaa:** offered by Al Safeer to Qiaa, it confers her with *protection from evil* (as the spell). Although it isn't powerful enough to affect Al Safeer, it does prevent lesser djinn from touching her. The robe also provides a bonus to AC and saving throws of +6 against water-based attacks, +4 against fire- or air-based attacks, or +2 against earth-based attacks.

**Dagger of Banishment:** if wounded by it, an outer-planar foe is automatically *teleported* back to its home plane (no save). If already in its home plane, the foe must save vs. petrification or become *paralyzed* for 1d4+3 rounds. If thrown, the dagger vanishes at the beginning of the following round and returns to its golden, bejeweled sheath. Alternatively while visiting Al Samaa, Qiaa could prick herself for a point of damage to return to her latest residence on the prime plane. It was given to Qiaa by her father when she received her commission to Upper Djinn.

## ***His Highness Naberral, Consul General for the Empire of Alphatia in Upper Djinn***

*Poor, poor Naberral. . . a man torn by love and duty.* The Consul General, a native of Aasla, was appointed to this post by order of Empress Eriadna, to watch over Alphatia's interests in the Kingdom of Samaa. Therein lies the seed of rivalry with the ambadress. To complicate matters, Naberral was smitten with Qiaa's beauty the moment he first saw her, a sentiment she doesn't share in the slightest. In the course of his duties, he became well acquainted with Al Safeer, and perceived unmistakable clues about his liaison with the ambadress. The consul soldiered on despite his broken heart, hoping that somehow, he'd find a way to conquer hers.



Nonetheless, wisdom compelled Naberral to worry about the ramifications of this affair and how it threatened imperial diplomacy. He didn't miss the fact that his requests to allow passage through the gate to aristocrats linked with Sundsvall were almost always denied, while Aran nobles well connected with Qiaa or King Qissling easily obtained access. Through roundabout ways, a hint then came across the consul's desk that Queen Faiza did not see Al Safeer in the best of light—far from it. Equally troublesome, Naberral used his Robe of Intrigue (described below) to reveal a connection between the queen and an obscure servant of the ambassador. The consul concluded the queen was spying on Al Safeer. With the same device, Naberral also unveiled a growing network among Aran nobility connecting with Al Safeer far more frequently than legitimate business ought to suggest. Thinking like a seasoned diplomat, he became convinced that the pasha was plotting something against his queen that almost assuredly implicated Aran aristocracy, and therefore the empire. A few well-placed spies in Floating Ar confirmed the matter. The thought that Queen Faiza might be aware of it all was beyond sobering. It would explain her reticence to communicate with him despite his best efforts. The consul knows full well that Empress Eriadna would never be a party to backing a coup against a peaceful monarchy, outer planar or not. Not only is such an attempt very risky but the empire would suffer a regrettable setback regardless of whether it succeeded. If it did, Alphatia as a whole would be shut out for the exclusive benefit of Aran supporters. If the coup failed,

Queen Faiza would sever ties with the empire—seen as Ar’s “treacherous” liege—or possibly declare war. And he, Naberral, would either be a lame-duck diplomat at best or a scapegoat at worst. And there we have it: the consul’s unfortunate conundrum of a soul torn between duty to the empire and his love for a delusional Aran ambassadress. Despite it all, Naberral hopes to demonstrate to Qiaa that Al Safeer is using her, ending her exotic idyll and Ar’s perilous political adventurism before it is too late.

**Appearance:** In his early forties, Naberral conceals premature balding under an elaborate, curled black wig flowing past his shoulders to his back and chest. Of coppery complexion and medium build, he stands between five and six feet tall, leading him to wear high-heeled shoes giving him a more regal stance. To steady his walk, he relies on his magical staff, a slender, shoulder-high ebon cane with a silver knob at the top. Naberral normally wears the Robe of Intrigue, a black, floor-length garment with ample sleeves, showing a subtle web pattern that can only be seen under the right light. From his clothing and demeanor, one might think Naberral less manly than the norm, a first impression belied by angular facial traits, gray eyes, and a baritone voice as sharp as a blade.

M20, AC-1, hp34, MV 120’(40’), AT 1 staff or spell, Dmg 1d6+2 or by spell, Save M20, ML9, AL N; St11, In18, Wi16, Dx16, Co9, Ch12. **Magical Items:** *Robe of Intrigue\**, *spectral chainmail\**, *+2 ring of protection*, and *staff of power*.

**Robe of Intrigue:** this garment can “tag” with an invisible mark a person in the presence of the owner. The robe then tags anyone this person meets later on, and others these people encounter next, and so on, forming a never-ending diagram of connecting lines akin to a spider web. The mental diagram only reveals to the owner the names by which newcomers introduce themselves to a previously tagged subject. The robe does not reveal hidden identities, concealed natures, motivations, appearances, locations, time of day, circumstances, or what was said—just a name and the number of encounters if more than one. Connections do not register at all if a tagged subject relies on a device or a spell to communicate remotely. If a creature has no name, it is tagged as “unknown.” The total number of tags is equal to the owner’s wizardly (or clerical) experience level, +1 per point of Intelligence. A tenth level, 18 Intelligence mage would therefore be able to track up to 28 names with any number of interconnections. Since the number of simultaneous tags is finite, the owner may “reset” his mental web of connections or erase a part of it to allow another to grow. There is no time limit on a tag so long as it isn’t erased, allowing later connections to appear. A successful *dispel magic* cast on a subject will erase its name (along with any other downstream tags unless they connect with another valid part of the network).

**Spectral Chainmail:** it isn’t armor, but an elaborate enchantment upon oneself. It consists of a force field that is weightless and does not impede the owner’s movements or spellcasting ability. This protection is only visible for an instant as a ghostly suit of chainmail when stricken with force, such as a blow from a weapon or a fist. It does not interfere with slow-moving objects. Spectral chainmail confers its owners a basic AC of 5.

*Special thanks to Janet-Deaver-Pack for her editorial contribution.*

# Ar: Where Griffons Dare

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Lower Griffon District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

This grand old district lies at the heart of the kingdom, on the west bank of Crystal Lake. It was the original seat of Aran monarchy, dating back to the time of the Archmage Ar himself, until this first dynasty ended for lack of an heir. An unfortunate punitive foray into ogre lands resulted in the sole successor passing away. The last words of Dalberron the Skald tell the story:

*"Out of the mist, one fateful winter dawn, the devourers appeared. Filled with hatred and feral bloodlust, the deathly tide swarmed the village. Not a soul among town and gown, neither cattle nor poultry, dog, cat, wall, or barrel were spared. The demons fled as fast as they'd come, leaving death and desolation in their wake. Good Prince Teliddes on his heavenly warship raced*

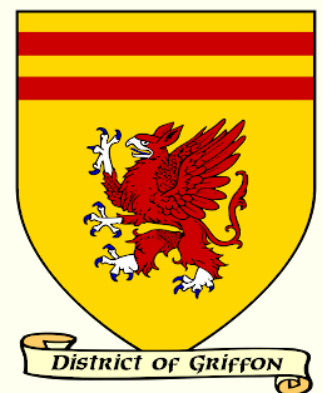
*by the plume of smoke rising high, and bravely gave chase. Standing at the prow, he motioned the Nashi and the Ostro to join the hunt.*

*"Together with the Shamal, they tore apart the fleeing mob, piercing ogrish flesh with heavy javelins or riving their bodies asunder with sizzling bolts. Many a wondrous rod was depleted and replaced as the merciless punishment was wreaked upon the demons. Despite their losses, there was always one to turn and stare defiantly at the prince while its brood sank deeper into the woods. The game went on until their leader, a horrid giant covered in blood and dangling upon its misshapen body the severed heads of once-fair maidens, stood its ground and challenged the prince. It was then, when Aran justice at last was dispensed high from the Shamal's deck, that the unthinkable happened. A powerful device, hot with wokani magic, shot a mighty harpoon from the mouth of the demons' hideout. It was a trap.*

*"The weapon struck the Shamal's underside, its wicked barbs jamming hard in the planking. A solid line fastened to the iron shaft was anchored to great boulders, forbidding escape. Instead, two, nay, three more harpoons struck the Shamal and a gut-wrenching sound of winches followed while the prince's vessel was reeled ever lower. The Nashi and Ostro swooped down to bring help but the veil masking the true nature of the trap dropped and revealed the beasts' final scheme. Foliage suddenly pulled from the surrounding woods, bared enormous catapults, and on them, ogres bearing armor of steel, grappling hooks, and monstrous cleavers. All at once, the siege machines released their deadly loads. As they landed upon the three ships, the demons stuck their hooks through the gunwales and dropped ropes for their brethren to climb. Though these champions all fell in their mission to protect the iron claws, the clamoring throngs overwhelmed the crew by the sheer force of numbers.*

*"I now end this story and send a plea for help through my enchanted scroll but I fear that none of us shall live through this battle. The prince has already been taken. I now stand alone at the stern. They are coming."*

Forewarned of the ruse, subsequent airborne missions changed their combat tactics when fighting ogres. The three burned-out wrecks of the stricken skyships were found a day later along with the destroyed remains of the siege machines. Adventurers sent into the lair determined that its occupants had withdrawn, taking with them their treasures and possibly Good Prince Teliddes. The ogres had held a victory feast and left such a heap of gnawed-upon bones that no one could tell beast from man, let alone those of the monarch's son. Stricken with grief, the old king died within a fortnight. So deep was his sorrow that none could revive him.

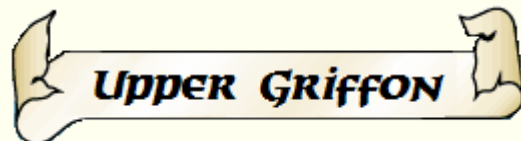


Thus did the crown of Ar pass to Lord Damyon, the First Vizier to the late king and the power behind the waning royal house. Token vengeance was exacted upon the ogres to please the aristocracy. Most of the nobles fell in line, except for a faction rejecting his authority. It seemed their motivation might have been linked to a dispute between shareholders of a nearby Cloudstone mine—the only one in Ar at that time. They broke from the kingdom and established the Principality of Arregghi around its fortified town. Of comparable strength, the two factions

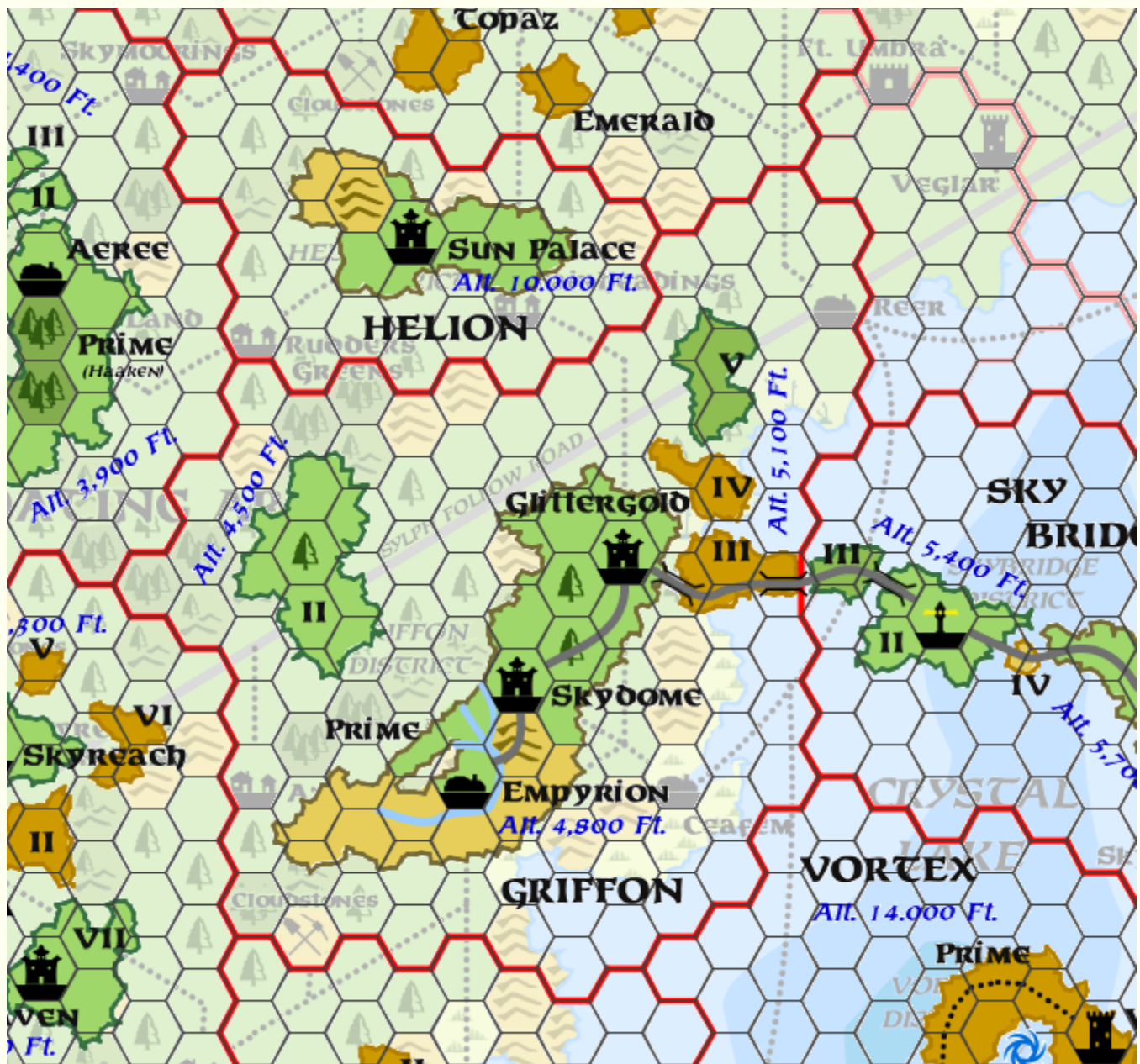
began a long standoff, resulting in the mine falling eerily silent. It was during these unrestful times that the kingdom grew to include new dominions in the northwest.

Lord Damyon died soon afterward when he choked on a piece of pickled flying-fish stick. Oddly, no one sought to revive him. After a speedy burial, leading aristocrats selected a new ruler who was halfway acceptable to all and twice so to themselves. The crown went to the House of Qimeth which resulted in the old capital moving from Ceafem to Skyreach. The new royal demesne chose Chimera as its name and symbol while the appointed viceroy of the former dynasty's lands raised the Banner of the Griffon. In view of the change, Arregghi rejoined the realm as a district with Hippogriff as its name and symbol. At long last, mining resumed for the relief of all concerned. The Qimeth dynasty, dubbed after its first inheritor, has ruled Ar since then. Its present monarch, King Qissling, is the last of this line.

Griffon hasn't lost much of its former prestige or wealth. Ceafem is an important urban center and it still possesses all the trappings of its former royal status. It is the only district to include two key towns, Ceafem and Reer. The latter town, a bustling commercial center, has outgrown the sleepy old capital. Upper and Lower Griffon now claim more than 121,000 souls, the vast majority are farmers and common folk. Slightly more than 16,000 live in towns above and below. In total, more than 7,600 people inhabit Griffon Prime and the other four floating islands. Forces on the land and in the sky account for nearly 1,400 of the overall population. Griffon boasts ten skyships including six small vessels (*H.H.M.S. Zephyrean, Gilavar, Vardar, Halny, Vendavel, and Zonda*), three large ones (*Prince Teliddes, House of Ar, House of Qimeth*), and one troop transport, the *Spirit of Shamal*.



The skyborne dominion consists of five islands, ranging progressively from 4,500 ft to about 5,100 ft altitude (approx. 1,400-1,500 meters). Prime is the largest island in Ar and the best known, bearing the small town of Empyrion, two gambling resorts, hills, plains, forests, and a small river cascading in multiple waterfalls from the edge. More uniquely, it boasts a paved road connecting with Griffon-III and the Skybridge District. Bridges hang from chains fastened to levitating spheres and are flexible enough to allow for the islands' slow bobbing and weaving. Positional anchors prevent the spheres from drifting with the wind. Enchanted lamp posts line the road along its entire length. Compared with conditions prevailing at the level of Crystal Lake, insular temperatures drop 17°F to 25°F (9°C to 14°C) as altitude increases, even more if one climbs mountains topping Griffon-III and -IV. The latter reach another 20,000 ft high (about 6,000 meters). *Before saying more about Prime, minor islands are summarized below.*



**Upper Griffon District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

**Griffon-II:** this island, about 30 miles long and 18 miles across at its widest point, offers a gentle wilderness with manor houses scattered between lightly forested expanses. From a real-estate point of view, local properties fetch moderate prices. Abodes near the southeastern cape are actually available to land-dwelling gentry wishing easy and affordable access to the wonders of Griffon Prime without the exorbitant price ranges prevailing there. Residence in these very small domains can be purchased through an arrangement by which joint owners share time slots. They all feature small skyships suitable for a family of moderate size and capable of reaching the Skydome resort in less than an hour, at 35 Aran knots (31/3 leagues per hour).

**Griffon-III & -IV:** they feature high mountains with towering peaks, perilous precipices, and narrow rocky valleys. Part of the road on Griffon-III goes through vertiginous viaducts and tunnels dug through the island's rocky face. Pressurized towers and underground lairs can be found at various altitudes, usually far apart from each other. Many are home to griffon ranches. The creatures are tamed at birth and made to serve whoever purchased their eggs. Griffons are wild creatures at heart and interacting with them bears certain risks inherent to their



temperament. By law, purchased griffons must be registered and their operation requires both recurrent training and renewable licenses. Screening is routinely performed by the Celestial Bureau for both owners and their beasts to ensure their characters are compatible and that griffons aren't abused, used without permit, employed in unlawful endeavors, lost, stolen, turned loose, sold illegally, or otherwise smuggled in or out of Ar. Finally, any droppings upon public places are subject to fines, public service, and/or confiscation in the case of recidivism. This legislation is in force, *urbi et orbi*, thus throughout the Kingdom of Ar and Floating Ar if not beyond if such can be enforced there. Cultural taboos forbid using griffons for military purposes other than personal transportation. This Alphatian atavism contributes to the dislike of all things Thyatian considering their despicable Retebius Air Fleet. *"By the Ears of Ar, proper wizards fly or use skyships—not petty, temperamental beasts!"*

**Griffon-V:** the fifth island consists of heavily-forested hills for more privacy. It is peculiar in that its access remains entirely restricted. Hidden in the woods and below ground are a number of abodes used specifically for high-level spell research on behalf of the monarchy. Each residence houses the leading mage, wizardly assistants, common laborers, and everyone's immediate families. Constructs guard the manor houses and patrol the woods. Other activities include monster research or the manufacturing and storage of enchanted rods for Ar's *boltmen*. The H.H.M.S. *Zonda* is typically assigned to watch this sector. This skyship operates from a levitating monolith stationed 3,000 ft above the island. It acts as a halfway stop where all incoming or outgoing vessels are inspected. A magical barrier around the island negates teleportation in or out. It may be switched into a solid force field from the fortified monolith above.



Prior to its present size and shape, a number of smaller islands populated the sky above Griffon. The town of Empyrion did not yet exist at the time of the Ceafem-based monarchy. When other mines were excavated elsewhere in Ar, existing islands slowly combined to form Griffon Prime. This process ended after the Qimeth Dynasty began its rule. A few more floating islands were created nearby, the last one being Griffon-V. But with the majority of Cloudstones already extracted, the pace at which new monoliths were released has been slowing. Current proprietors were owners of these former islands, most of whom now reside in Empyrion or in huge estates scattered across Griffon Prime. The latter can cover 30,000 acres each (120 Km<sup>2</sup>), or about 23 such domains for the whole of the island not including the vicinities of Empyrion and the two gambling resorts.

**Empyrion:** The town rests on the gentle slope of a rocky promontory ending at a cliff. A white wall topped with an elegant promenade edges the precipice. In winter, children use its smooth and well-protected walkways for sledding. The viceroy's palace sits on the highest spot, overlooking a valley and the Griffon River extending northward. The western branch of the Griffon falls through a huge chasm and then into open air. Within four to six miles, grassy hills ring the Empyrion on all other sides. Griffon's capital is the typical sort of Upper-Ar wizardly town celebrating beauty and peace. Its architectural style involves straight lines with heavy

rustication and stately columns. Colors are very pale, powdery blue, green, pink, or yellow, with white or ochre accents. Roofs are typically light gray, occasionally with golden cupolas and pointy spires. Animated bas-reliefs depict scenes of historical relevance. They react to the presence of live visitors and to a certain degree may communicate silently with gestures, such as pointing someone in the right direction (intelligence score: 1d4+3). They can read as well as demonstrate a modicum of emotions and good manners.

Empyrion is a town of 2,830 inhabitants, about a mile and a half across (2.4 Km). Assuming average households of seven aristocrats, each with a staff of forty to fifty and commensurate facilities to house them, there would be about forty-nine manor houses in the town, plus structures for municipal administration, entertainment, hospitality, education, faith, and general logistics. Everything else remains in Ceafem, especially shops, workshops, and main warehouses. Horses and carriages are permitted throughout Griffon District. Typical domestic staff is listed below with usual yearly wages.

<b>D%</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Wages</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>“House” Staff (live downstairs or below ground)</b>			
<b>01</b>	<b>House Steward</b>	110 gp	<i>Handles purchasing, hiring, firing, disbursing servants salaries. This is an educated freeman rather than a servant. Could also work as a secretary to the master of the house.</i>
<b>02</b>	<b>Butler</b>	60 gp	<i>Runs all domestic staff in the house.</i>
<b>03</b>	<b>Housekeeper</b>	50 gp	<i>Directs female staff and handles issues regarding the house’s furnishings.</i>
<b>04</b>	<b>Cook</b>	30 gp	<i>In charge of the kitchen and its staff.</i>
<b>05-06</b>	<b>Lady’s Maid or Master’s Valet</b>	30 gp	<i>Private servants of the lady or master of the house.</i>
<b>07</b>	<b>First Footman</b>	25 gp	<i>Assists the Butler; must be tall and dashing to make the household look good.</i>
<b>08</b>	<b>Second Footman</b>	20 gp	<i>Assists the First Footman. Both get a 5 gp bonus if they look like twins.</i>
<b>09</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	100 gp	<i>Provides education to the children of the house. Salary is ten times higher if basic magical apprenticeship is included.</i>
<b>10</b>	<b>Governess</b>	25 gp	<i>A member of gentry forced to rely on employment to survive. Generally oversees teenage ladies in the household.</i>

<b>11</b>	<b>Head Nurse</b>	25 gp	<i>In charge of nurses watching over small children.</i>
<b>12-20</b>	<b>Footmen</b>	20 gp	<i>Wait on tables, open doors, assist residents in all ways possible.</i>
<b>21-29</b>	<b>Chamber Maids</b>	20 gp	<i>Keep bed chambers tidy.</i>
<b>30-39</b>	<b>Parlor Maids</b>	20 gp	<i>Keep all other rooms clean.</i>
<b>40-49</b>	<b>House Maids</b>	16 gp	<i>General purpose laborers.</i>
<b>50-59</b>	<b>Between Maids</b>	15 gp	<i>Work as needed in the house or at the kitchen.</i>
<b>60-69</b>	<b>Nurses</b>	15 gp	<i>Watch over young children.</i>
<b>70</b>	<b>Under Cook</b>	15 gp	<i>Cook's apprentice; prepares meals for the staff.</i>
<b>71-80</b>	<b>Kitchen Maids</b>	15 gp	<i>Assist the Cook.</i>
<b>81-90</b>	<b>Scullery Maids</b>	13 gp	<i>Wash dishes.</i>
<b>91-99</b>	<b>Laundry Maids</b>	13 gp	<i>Wash and iron clothes.</i>
<b>00</b>	<b>Page</b>	13 gp	<i>Apprentice Footman.</i>
<b>"Out of House" Staff (separate dwellings on estate grounds)</b>			
<b>01</b>	<b>Land Steward</b>	300 gp	<i>Manages farms on the lowland and collects rents. As an educated freeman, lives in a separate dwelling on the estate's grounds.</i>
<b>02</b>	<b>Stable Master</b>	50 gp	<i>Runs the stables. Wages can be ten times higher if any monsters (such as griffons) or unusual beasts are part of the stable</i>
<b>03-22</b>	<b>Grooms</b>	15 gp	<i>Care for mounts and saddles</i>
<b>23-42</b>	<b>Stable boys</b>	12 gp	<i>Clean the stables</i>
<b>43</b>	<b>Coachman</b>	20 gp	<i>Drives the household's carriage. If a magical device is involved, double the wages.</i>
<b>44</b>	<b>Head Gardener</b>	120 gp	<i>Manages the manor's grounds and their appearance.</i>
<b>45</b>	<b>Game Keeper</b>	50 gp	<i>Ensures that birds and fish are plentiful on the estate for hunting and fishing. Wages fetch ten times as much if monsters or unusual beasts roam the grounds.</i>

<b>46</b>	<b>Master of the Hounds</b>	50 gp	<i>Responsible for hunting events. Can receive wages ten times higher if monsters or unusual beasts are involved.</i>
<b>47-66</b>	<b>Grounds Keepers</b>	16 gp	<i>Assist the head gardener, planting trees, cutting grass, etc.</i>
<b>67</b>	<b>Caretaker, Handyman</b>	12 gp	<i>Makes minor repairs around the house; lives/works in a workshop by a shed.</i>
<b>68</b>	<b>Gate Keeper</b>	10 gp	<i>Guards the estate's entrance; lives in a small house by the gate.</i>
<b>69</b>	<b>Skyship Captain</b>	400 gp	<i>Commands the household's private yacht; lives in a stand-alone residence.</i>
<b>70</b>	<b>Skyship First Officer</b>	100 gp	<i>Assists the Captain; lives in a stand-alone residence.</i>
<b>71-73</b>	<b>Junior Officers</b>	50 gp	<i>Assist Senior Officers; live on the yacht.</i>
<b>74-80</b>	<b>Petty Officers</b>	20 gp	<i>Man the vessel; live on the yacht.</i>
<b>81-00</b>	<b>Common Crew</b>	15 gp	<i>"Part of the crew, part of the ship. . ."</i>

Downtown Empyrion estates typically cover about 10 acres, including gardens with surrounding walls, fences, and gates, or areas equivalent to 800'x800' blocks (or about 240x240 meters). Main buildings are at most 500'x200', multileveled, and possibly featuring additional wings or separate structures. Forty-nine such domains cover about half of Empyrion. Streets, public squares, the viceroy's extensive palace grounds, a public airfield, abodes of minor gentry, and other town facilities take up the rest.

**Skydome:** it is one of two gambling resorts on Griffon Prime. As others elsewhere in Ar, this resort benefits from a protective force field. It blends together steel and stone, reflecting a more daring, avant-garde Alphantian architecture. Aside from traditional games of chance, Skydome hosts über-popular regional "hard-ball" games, such as the ones played in Sundsvall (or Ampulia, its urban alter-ego). Its stadium can seat up to 10,000 eager spectators. Weekly games of the Aran League involve teams owned by the wealthier aristocrats. During the right seasons or the right years, competitions include the *Empire Cup*, the *Pan-Alphantian Tournament*, or the *Crown Championship*.

Wagering is fast and furious, involving all possible aspects of the game's performance as well as victory or defeat. Losing a wager entails anything from revealing a unique spell, handing over money or property, or (more commonly than one might imagine) having to do something quite silly and in plain view of all. Since beverages are permitted during the events, the atmosphere remains exceedingly jocular. Teams sport the most garish colors one could imagine and bear names related to their mascots or their origins. Blimps flashing messages supporting teams fly lazily overhead, adding to the traffic jams of skyships full of spectators. Others loiter in the area

before games, allowing “sterngate parties” on deck where brats and good spirits are the norm (the latter either demonstrated or imbibed with reckless abandon).

The top team in the Aran League is the *Ailpon Drillers*, a team drawn from Cloudstone mine workers. In the Imperial League, the best hard-ball team lines up elven athletes from the Shiye-Lawr, absolutely deadly accurate and well-rehearsed. Stoutfellow is hot on their heels, sparking a fierce rivalry between the two teams. Games showcasing the *Sundsvall Imperials*, the *Trollhattan Trotters*, or the *Eadrin Shadows* are always popular. . . and routinely over-sold.

**Glittergold:** built with the same general aspirations as neighboring Skydome, this resort provides a totally different feel. Slender towers and alleys of brass adorned with artful silver motifs, mirrors galore, arcane halos on all things, and impalpable golden glitter suspended in mid-air give the estate a heavenly atmosphere. Imaginary fireworks visible from as far away as Empyrion grace the nocturnal skies. Much of this relies on fancy illusions rather than precious metals or chemicals of any sort.

Aside from its striking appearance, Glittergold is best known for its mysterious *Dungeon of Dread*. It is a sort of arena, although spectators observe from the privacy of their chambers using three-dimensional projections issued from a network of specially-enchanted crystal balls. The action takes place inside a large cubic space where illusions generate monsters, obstacles, tricks, riddles, and traps, each one more wondrous than the next. Relying on their imagination, cash bets, dice-rolling, and popular votes, spectators determine the nature of the encounters. Competitors, young aristocrats in search of strong emotions and adventure, must complete a maze-like circuit and exit the *Dungeon of Dread* without being eliminated. If successful, the competitor collects part of the monies paid by the spectators, and a great deal of prestige. The instigator of the winning trick otherwise collects the prize. There is quite a bit of pride in “surviving” the maze, and famous champions wield an enormous amount of esteem among their social peers, as top gladiators once did in real-Earth ancient Rome.

Spell-use is a key component in a “dungeon crawl.” In reality, none of these spells actually work there, but illusions are programmed to respond to the choice of magic or to a physical course of action. As competitors become more skilled in the game, difficulty increases accordingly. Lower levels are entirely inoffensive to participants. Higher level games attract the greatest crowds and yield even more prestige (and profit). They involve a certain physical risk, and some unfortunate participants have died or were grievously injured. The danger is well understood and accepted by all. Competitors who perform with panache, as actors would on a theatrical stage, draw throngs of young, screaming aristocratic fans. Even for passive spectators, the spectacle is well worth the visit.

## ILLUSTRIOUS GRIFFONESE

Some of the magical items in this section are listed in the *Encyclopedia Magica Vol. I-IV* or in *AC 4 Book of Marvelous Magic*. Those marked with an asterisk are explained in the text below.

### Her Highness Aerielle, Viceroy of Griffon

Aerielle, a native of Griffon-III, spent much of her adult life in the service of King Qissling in Skyreach. After demonstrating the soundness of her magical skills, she was appointed Viceroy of Griffon a few years ago, after its previous administrator passed away. A few months later, a security breach on Griffon-V came to her attention. A creature resulting from magical experiments escaped the floating island. Following investigative reports, she began suspecting that the creature was linked to a series of odd murders in the district. She endeavored since then to have news of the situation suppressed to avoid panic among lowlanders. She also became concerned about the king's response if he found out because of her responsibility to oversee Griffon-V. She did, however, have the magical laboratory connected to the creature shut down and its wizards dismissed. Aerielle is also connected with Griffonese aristocrats scheming to return the crown to Ceafem. Since Qissling does not have an heir at this time, these nobles are quietly recruiting supporters to take action when their monarch passes away. In preparation for a possible clash, Aerielle's had part of the *boltmen's* rods produced on Griffon-V relocated to one of her cronies' manor houses outside Empyrium.



**Appearance:** in her late 40s, Aerielle's conformation belies her name. She is large-boned, strong, and hard-footed. Long blond hair, which she keeps braided in whorls on her head, makes her all the more conspicuous. Rounded cheekbones, a snub nose, and a wide forehead do not make her pretty; instead, a sense of authority gives her unmistakable charisma. Her eyes are deep turquoise, and never still. She wears the *Gown of Hearing* at all times, its silky bright turquoise surface marked by multiple intersecting ripples as if someone tossed pebbles into a quiet lake. Aerielle also habitually carries the *Staff of Earsplitting* or has it within reach. It is six feet high, made of pale willow withes twisted together, and terminates in a globe of perforated black metal.

M17, AC0, hp31, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff, Dmg 1d6+3 or by spell, Save M17, ML8, AL C; St14, In17, Wi12, Dx14, Co12, Ch13. **Magical Items:** *gown of hearing\**, +2 *staff of earsplitting\**, +2 *ring of protection*, *earrings of safeguard vs. clairaudience/clairvoyance* (negate either powers).

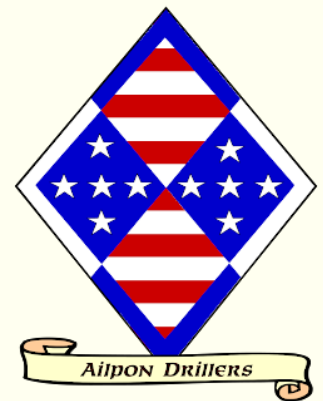
**Gown of Hearing:** this magical garment confers upon the owner AC4 and two other special powers upon command. Once a day, the first power enables Aerielle to eavesdrop on a conversation taking place at least partially within sight, regardless of ambient noise or of whether words are whispered. The second power is permanent and enables the viceroy to become aware of instances when her name is spoken and by whom (no other information is revealed, such as who else was involved in the conversation, what was said, or the location).

The latter power only concerns those on whom Aerielle already eavesdropped. The gown can monitor up to 6 people, discarding the least recent targets as more are added. A successful *dispel magic* negates either powers.

**Staff of Earsplitting:** with a successful attack, this +2 magical weapon enables Aerielle to inflict upon a foe extreme sensitivity to loud noises. A saving throw vs. spell negates the effect. A small voice utters the words: "*Can you hear me now?*" anytime Aerielle smites a foe with her staff. Loud sounds, such as someone striking a person or an object, a roar, a door slamming, etc., causes 1d4 points of damage to the affected victims (up to a maximum of 3d4 per round). Damage can be reduced to a single point when holding both hands against one's ears. Beings who are deaf, devoid of hearing organs, or within a magically *silenced* area are immune. The effect lasts for another 1d4 hours after Aerielle takes her leave. If a thief is affected, hear noise checks increase halfway up from the present score to 100% as long as the immediate area remains silent.

## Master Trevon, Hardball Champion at Large

Unbeknownst to all who know him, Trevon was born in a wizard's beaker as the result of an attempt to create an improved soldier for the Aran military. Although human in appearance and quite handsome, he is a monster that escaped Griffon-V one stormy winter morning. Not only was Trevon immune to mind-control from the start but his improvement powers did not "switch off" as expected after the initial indoctrination period. His abilities enable Trevon to drain the quintessence of his victims when they are unconscious (no save). This power requires victims with at least half as much experience levels as Trevon has HD. The entire draining process takes 1 round per level or HD of the victim and, when complete, randomly provides one of the elements listed below. Some of them reflect the victim's prior knowledge or skills:



<b>1-3</b>	<i>+1 to an ability score (taken from the victim's best score)</i>
<b>4-9</b>	<i>+1 HD</i>
<b>10-12</b>	<i>a new spell or weapon proficiency</i>
<b>13-15</b>	<i>a non-weapon proficiency</i>
<b>16</b>	<i>A single class-related ability, or a +10% bonus to such</i>
<b>17-19</b>	<i>d% of the victim's entire life memories, starting from the most recent ones (these memories do not include spells or class abilities)</i>
<b>20</b>	<i>+1d4% magic resistance</i>

Victims die and dry out like mummies at the end of the process. If revived, their memories of what happened to them remain permanently erased. Victims are also diminished, according to what Trevon took from them. If memory was stolen, that portion of the victim's life remains void, denying all experience levels gained during the affected period. All losses can be restored with a *wish* spell after the beast is killed.

When Trevon escaped from Griffon-V, his facial features weren't yet formed. His present appearance developed within the next several months while he hid in the marshes outside Reer, feeding on muck and vermin. His later wanderings took him to Ailpon where he found employment at the nearby Cloudstone mine. His abilities enabled him to secure his place among the *Ailpon Drillers* hard-ball team. He now travels Ar and sometimes Alpathia with his team, taking opportunities to quench his burning thirst in various cities. Trevon is now a star player in the Aran League. Some trainers in the Imperial League already covet his amazingly fast-growing skills. His present manager would go to great lengths to protect his star player if he suspected Trevon was "in some kind of trouble."

The Viceroy of Griffon District, Her Highness Aerielle, dispatched investigators and bounty-hunting adventurers to track the creature, without revealing its origins or its appearance. She suspects someone in the hard-ball team (or its traveling supporters) to be involved with the killings. Her henchmen are now watching the players. Trevon is aware of this surveillance and has begun burning the mummified remains of his victims. He also learned that the viceroy was looking for him well before he found employment at the mine, when he ambushed and killed a bounty-hunter trailing him. It is unknown at this time how much further Trevon's abilities may grow or how long he may live.

**Appearance:** seven feet tall, athletic, perfectly proportioned with wide shoulders and a narrow waist, Trevon appears to be in his early 20's. Wavy medium brown hair with gold highlights tops his handsome, tanned triangular face. His wide mouth often shows a winsome grin, and his green eyes sparkle with good humor. The brown leather *Bracers of Defense* buckle on mainly during games, along with a body-hugging padded cloth uniform in team colors of brilliant red, white, and blue. Trevon's cleated hard-ball shoes complete his sports attire. During time off the pitch, he affects rich colors for shirt, jerkin, and trows, finished by a swirling deep gold cape. A wide silver and jeweled belt buckle helps assert his reputation as the star of his team.

HD15, AC-1, hp92, MV 150' (50'), AT 2 fists, Dmg 1d6+6/1d6+6 or by spell, Save F15, ML11, AL C; MR 12%, St20, In17, Wi14, Dx21, Co19, Ch18. Regarding inhuman ability scores, see *Codex of the Immortals*, pages 52-53 (bonuses apply as listed). **Magical Items:** *AC3 bracers of defense*, +2 *hard-ball gauntlets and boots*. **Special Attacks:** when fist-fighting, "killed" victims are knocked out instead; *smash* (fighter combat option); *drain quintessence* (once per moon cycle). **Special Defenses:** immune to poison, drugs, and mind-affecting powers. Trevon may cast any spell he learned from past victims as a magic-user with an experience level matching his own HD. Class-Related Abilities: as required by a DM, including a few thief abilities. Clerical abilities cannot be taken because they are provided by a patron Immortal. Many monster abilities cannot be taken either, especially if they reflect a certain morphology (wings, dragons breath, etc.)



**Hard-Ball Gauntlets & Boots:** this leather gear gives an additional +2 (or +10%) bonus to intercept/throw/kick\*/punt\*/drop-kick\* hard-ball-sized items, as well as tackling, wrestling, and punching. They are equivalent to +2 magical weapons as regards Trevon's ability to hit magical monsters. (\* Bonuses specific to the boots.) Hard-ball is a non-weapon proficiency based on Dexterity, except for tackling, wrestling, and punching, which are Strength-based.

## **Prince Theslan (a. k. a. The Great Theslan), Most Valuable Dungeonmaster, Current holder of the Tour of Alphatia Trophy**

This young elf, the son of the Sky Lord of Griffon-IV, is a dashing adventurer. He became famous as a survival virtuoso in the *Dungeon of Dread* at Glittergold. His irresistible charm and stardom earned him throngs of adoring fans, a majority of young screaming ladies chasing him everywhere he appears for autographs, a lock of hair, or better yet, a place in his heart. As he discovered to his horror, there are few things in life worse than a rabid pack of magically-endowed, obsessed juveniles. Naturally, his dungeon crawls are highly sought after and advertised throughout the kingdom, on animated billboards, enchanted daily gazetteers, on fine porcelain mugs, flashing on the sides of skyships, and even as living embroideries on blouses and capes. Theslan became a household figure and valuable asset for the House of Glittergold.



The prince has been gradually removing himself from the limelight for this reason and also because the *Dungeon of Dread* no longer offers the sort of strong emotions that attracted him there in the first place. Instead, he now seeks true adventuring, either in the service of the viceroy or to help out someone in distress. The prince also enjoys skyship regattas, especially the sort that involve cross-continental journeys fraught with dangers and unexpected mishaps. He's already won several great races to and from Skothar, Davania, and Sind, and the prestigious *Tour of Alphatia*. Fluent in griffon-speak since his childhood on his father's ranch, he's also become an ace griffon-rider in competition. *Out-paladining* paladins, Theslan is the sort of unsinkable good-hearted hero who almost always comes out clean of whatever muck surrounds him (literally and figuratively), partly the result of an enchantment bestowed upon him at birth.

**Appearance:** At the peak of his prowess, Theslan is tall (for an elf) and ruggedly handsome, having shining bright blue eyes and blue-black curly hair. A fleeting glint on perfect teeth always accompanies his brilliant smile. He loves the limelight, except occasionally when his public gets too insistent. His white pleated, open front, suede jerkin reveals the *Chainmail of Silverness* covering his snowy shirt. Knee boots and white leather leggings complete his habitual attire. A specially-designed harness rides his back, carrying his bow, arrows, and sword; these are never far from his dextrous hands. The *elven dagger* hangs in a silver-embossed sheath from his belt. He never goes anywhere without his white archer's plumed cap, and for good reason. Theslan does everything with such grace, verve, and light-hearted determination that even his enemies, should he have any, adore him.

E10 (Rank E, or a 12th level elven F/MU with the AD&D Game), AC0, hp33, MV 120'(40'), AT 1 sword or bow, Dmg 1d8+3, or 1d6+2, or by spell, Save E10, ML11, AL L; St14, In16, Wi14, Dx17, Co11, Ch18. **Magical Items:** +3 *elven chainmail of silverness\**, +2 *sword and long bow of showmanship\**, *arrows of faerie fire* (6), *elven dagger*, and a *hat of survival* (similar to a *cloak of survival*).

**Chainmail of Silverness:** it is equivalent to a +3 *elven chainmail* with additional powers. Under normal light, let alone in full sunlight, this armor scintillates, giving Theslan a fabulous demeanor. It confers to his foes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, AC, and saving throws. It also gives Theslan a permanent *protection from evil*, and prevents small pests, creepy-crawlies, creatures less than ½ HD, and all monsters hit only by silver from touching him.

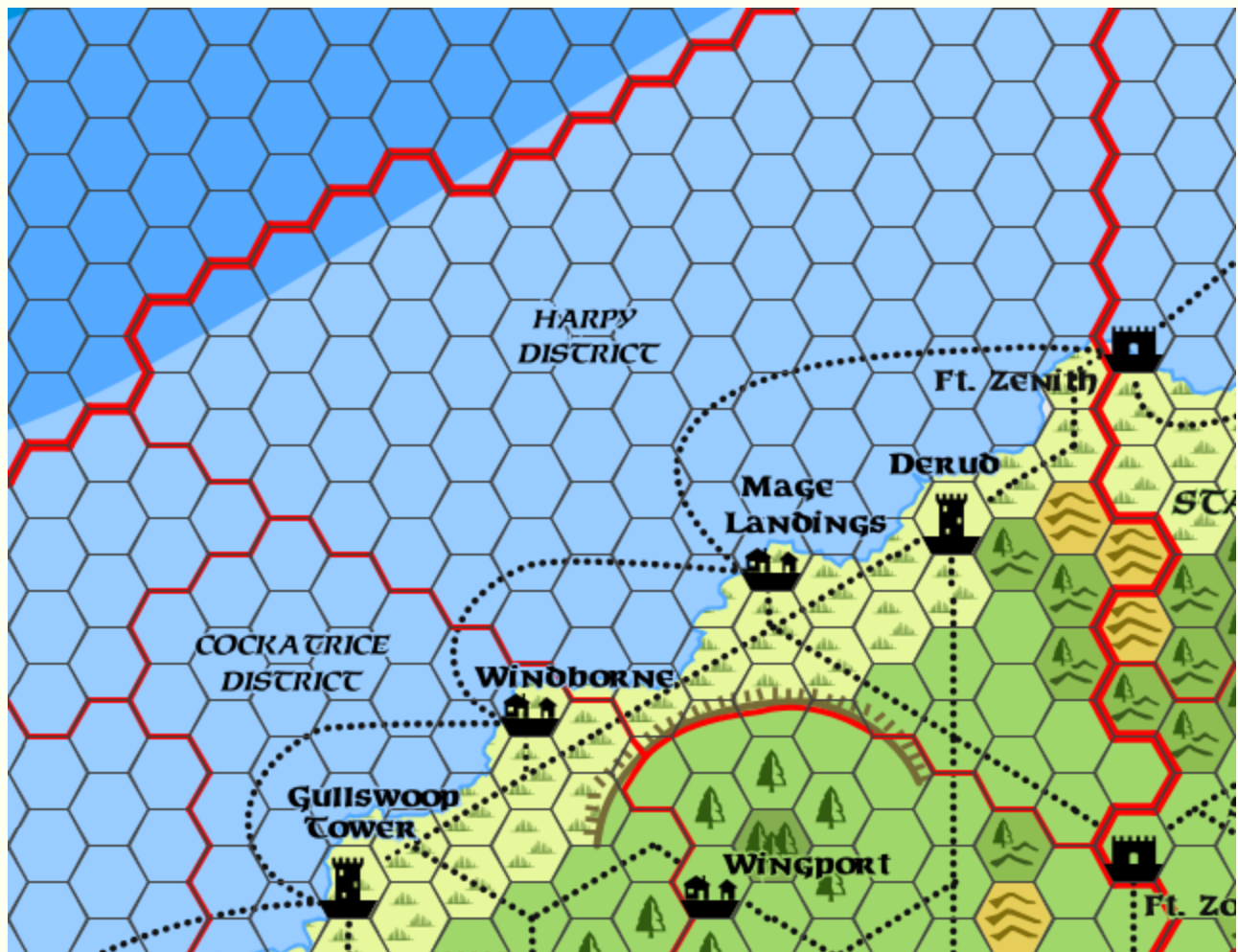
**Sword and Bow of Showmanship:** they enable the prince to strike foes in most spectacular ways, at least from a visual sense. The weapons are immune to fumbles, and unmodified damage scores of "1's" are always rerolled. When foes are defeated (whether real or illusory) they expire in the most theatrical manner possible, provoking "ooh's" and "aah's" from delighted spectators.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and editorial support.*

# Ar: Harpily Ever After

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Wedged at the northeastern corner of Ar, Harpy became the last territory to join the kingdom. For the longest time, it had been the heart of a festering plague of harpies feasting upon all that strayed onto their hunting grounds. Yet, the wizardly world moved in, inexorably reducing the harpy horde to its smallest expression. Thoroughly enslaved, a small population survived in what became known as the Harpy District. Levitating monoliths soon coalesced into a large island in the sky.



**Lower Harpy District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Harpies were removed and secured in magically silenced prisons on Upper Harpy where they could be better controlled. It became customary for manors scattered on the flat, grassy island to include prison wards for the purpose of providing magical components. Clerics of various benevolent faiths questioned this barbaric and amoral practice. Alpathian paradigms and wizardly justification failed to prevail. Clerics were therefore allowed an opportunity to help address the *unharpy* situation.

It was decided manor houses would build chapels where clerics could indoctrinate these rancorous demi-avians (the latter being well restrained and gagged) and sway them from their evil. This clerical effort pieced together a number of facts. Harpies are the reincarnations of beautiful but evil women's spirits, which explains why there are no males. They lay eggs, but

only when new spirits emerge from the world beyond. The young are typically sent away on their own as soon as they can fly, a matter of a few weeks. In their pursuit of *harpiness*, these wretches are meant to devour live creatures. Humans and demi-humans are preferred, not just for their taste but also because of their souls. During the slumber that follows hearty meals, harpies in their dream-forms take the lingering souls of sentient victims to their immortal patrons. With enough captive souls, especially good, lawful ones to be tormented in the pits of chaos, harpies may regain their former appearances (more or less) and become undead spirits under the control of their lieges. This explains the fierce competition among harpies and their jealousy of people. They resent better-looking prey or females in particular, whom they will try to disfigure during their savage attacks. Although they aren't undead, harpies do not age after they reach adulthood.



**Upper Harpy District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

These hapless beings only have vague recollections of their former lives. Part missionaries and part psychiatrists, clerics use these memories as the starting points of the creatures' journeys toward redemption. Clues are gained as to their former identities and what brought their horrid penitence upon them. Adventurers are then dispatched to investigate the past crimes of harpies and glean additional information that may help cure the "patients." Bringing back a former lover remains a potent medicine. This general treatment, although proven the most effective, rarely succeeds. A few actually adopt the cleric's faith, although a number of them revert to their evil ways after a time. Most become even more resentful of their handlers for bringing back painful lost memories. The oldest and most bitter among them simply go raving mad and must be put out of their miseries. Naturally, Bettelwyn clerics strenuously oppose any such work—in their view, harpies are servants of chaos that will sooner or later betray their saviors.

With so many individual dungeons, Harpy Island eventually became the kingdom's penitentiary colony. A prison was built, a huge tower also serving as a navigational lighthouse. Perhaps the most dismal place in the whole of Ar, this dark structure is the place where criminal wizards are

incarcerated. Occasionally, evil mages from other kingdoms are committed to “the Lighthouse,” usually when hope of redemption still exists. The penitentiary’s “light” is enchanted to always point toward an escapee, regardless of physical obstructions or distance. This searchlight does not extend to outer planes or to the Hollow World. It otherwise works as a normal lighthouse. Ironically, “reformed” harpies guard both the tower and its inmates, singing to keep them quiet and obedient.

The District of Harpy is one of the poorest of Ar, with one lowland village and a tower. Upper Harpy features scattered manorial prisons and the Lighthouse Penitentiary at the northern tip. The monarchy pays the district 8,000 gp per month for its maintenance. Hovering at 12,000 ft (3,700 m), temperatures on the floating island are 44°F (25°C) lower than conditions at sea level. This very harsh place does not benefit from a protective dome and storms there can be deadly. Access to the island is restricted to residents and vessels bringing inmates. Overall, the district is home to nearly 27,000 Harpers, mostly lowland farmers. Less than 3,000 live on Upper Harpy, a hundred of whom are re-educated harpies employed as prison guards. The military accounts for 350 inhabitants. They are mostly assigned to lowland guard posts and manorial dwellings, or to serve aboard the viceroy’s three skyships. They patrol the district’s border with the neighboring Realm of Ambur, about 100 miles of coastline (160 Km), and the vicinity of the Lighthouse. These vessels are based at the viceroy’s private palace, on a separate monolith levitating 6,000 ft above Mage Landings. They include the H.H.M.S. *Leuconotar*, *Altana*, and *Ornithian*.



*Some of the magical items in this section are listed in the [Encyclopedia Magica Vol. I-IV](#) or in [AC 4 Book of Marvelous Magic](#). Those marked with an asterisk are explained in the text below.*

## **Lady Hope, Warden of the Lighthouse**

Hope is a truly reformed harpy, perhaps the most successful product of clerical diligence. She became a follower of Koryis as the result of her indoctrination and later a faithful cleric. As the result of her profound change of heart, her new immortal patron granted her gradual transformation to a more human-like appearance. Of her former self, she retained a very large set of black wings which protrude through slits in her clothing or armor. Hope clearly remembers her past condition which now makes her sick. She feels mostly compassion for her avian kin, leading the effort to save those who can be saved and end the torment of others truly hopeless. Over the years, she was approached with an offer to govern the Lighthouse Penitentiary. She saw this as an opportunity to return the favor once made to her, helping misguided wizards find a path to their salvation or deliverance from their torment.

There is another side to Lady Hope. She never revealed to her original benefactor that she had total recollection of her previous life as a wicked woman. She was in fact an Aran aristocrat

known in her time as Slydrielle, the lover and accomplice of one Master Deborran. As it were, her companion betrayed her in order to seize her possessions. Although this happened a very long time ago, when kings ruled from Ceafem, Lady Hope sensed that her killer still was of this world. His quintessence survived in the flesh of his descendants, just as evil as always. Today, one refers to him as His Highness, the Viceroy of Harpy. Knowing his ways, Lady Hope was able to surmise what crimes Deborran had committed in order to become a viceroy and an influential member of King Qissling's entourage. All she needs now is enough proof to have him locked up in the Lighthouse, so that she may cleanse him of the stench of evil and, perhaps, either regain a lost love or smite him forever.

**Appearance:** Tall (6.5'), slim, yet muscular, Lady Hope has a wide forehead that tapers into a small delicately pointed chin. With a straight nose and lovely sculpted mouth, her features are those of a classic beauty suggesting both sadness and dignity. Her eyes are dense black, matching her thick long hair. A steel cuirass covers her torso front and back. It features an ornate pattern of twining golden vines. Beneath her cuirass, she wears a suit of fine chain mail with long flared sleeves and a skirt reaching to just below her knees. A girdle fits against the lower end of the cuirass and a red robe under her armor flows down to her boots.



Lady Hope's shield displays the badge of her faith. She wields a war hammer having a foot-long head of dull silver metal. Her impressive double-jointed black wings are normally kept furled against her back. If something unexpected elicits a strong emotional reaction, the wings fold out to extend to their full 20-foot span.

C15, AC-1, hp68, MV 120' (40')/180' (60'), AT 1 hammer, Dmg 1d6+3 or by spell, Save C15, ML11, AL L; St15, In14, Wi17, Dx12, Co16, Ch13. **Magical Items:** +2 *plate mail of weightlessness\**, +1 *shield of invisibility*, +2 *hammer of silence*, *girdle of inescapable faith\**, and *pendant of hypnosis\**. **Special Abilities:** Hope still can sing as harpies do, either to *charm* foes or simply to calm irate or frightened people around her. Likewise, she is ageless and can fly.

**Plate Mail of Weightlessness:** as the name indicates, this armor has no weight and minimal encumbrance, enabling Hope to use her wings.

**Girdle of Inescapable Faith (C):** this ornate, silver-inlaid leather girdle provides Hope with *protection from evil* once a day, as well as a permanent +3 bonus to save vs. mind-controlling and *charm* attacks, so long as she wears it. If she ever performs an act contrary to her nature or alignment, the girdle is destroyed. The girdle does not protect its owner from illusions.

**Pendant of Hypnosis (C):** this gray pearl set in bird-like claws hangs from a silver chain. She inherited it from her benefactor when he died of natural causes and departed to serve Koryis. When swinging this pendant before someone's face for 1 round, the victim must save vs. spell or become enthralled. The pendant can be used to ask a number of questions equal to the cleric's Wisdom bonus +1, after which hypnosis ends. Questions can relate to the victim's inner psyche, such as details of one's previous incarnation or something in possession of the victim's soul. Answers must be simple (less than 30 words). As an alternative to questions, one suggestion may be implanted into the victim's subconsciousness, such as performing a simple action at a

given time or under specific circumstances (a precise set of events, a trigger word, etc.) Once activated, a suggestion's power lasts only one round.

## **His Highness Deborran, Viceroy of Harpy (a.k.a. Deborran the Undying)**

The initial instigator of the Deborran bloodline cursed himself in a scheme to live forever. In truth, there always has been and will only be one person involved. After he marries, while his first-born male successor is being born, Deborran dies and effectively becomes his son. Death occurs exactly when the baby's umbilical cord is slit. It is far more insidious than a case of possession since the newborn has no soul other than his father's. Deborran retains all skills and memories from his previous self, earning in this way a sort of immortality. Although the infamous name comes into use with every other child, adult facial traits hardly change, save for hair style, a beard, a mustache, or a possible scar.



Deborran always marries when he becomes old, feigning frailty and absent-mindedness, in order to attract the kind of spouse who would expect a quick inheritance. To avoid later complications, Deborran's child reincarnation eventually provokes the "accidental" demise of the mother and all other siblings, if any. The very few old enough to be aware of the situation believe this to be the *Curse of the Deborran Blood*. In reality, this wicked wizard is guilty of many murders, not only of his own kin, but of others who crossed him or whose magic he coveted. He was able to devise this spell after obtaining necessary elements from a former lover, Lady Slydrielle, whom he eliminated to make sure no one else would know about the purpose of his final enchantment. In the case of Slydrielle, he led her to fall into a pit filled with wights, whom he later destroyed in the name of "justice." Fatalities always happen in such a way that they cannot be traced back to him. Evidence usually points to someone else. This black-hearted mage has failed so far to unveil Lady Hope's true identity (only her late benefactor did).

**Appearance:** At present, Deborran is an old man, with one shoulder slightly higher than the other from a hunched back, a wrinkled face, sunken unfocused hazel eyes, elongated earlobes, and wavy pale gray coarse hair with an odd yellowish cast. His garb, a *robe of some sort*, seems a uniform pallid gray but it reflects the faces of people around him in ghostly parodies. Should Deborran be in the midst of a crowd, this can be quite haunting, especially since some faces resemble his former victims. It hangs from his bony shoulders to his ankles. His staff, clearly *one of another kind*, is about eight inches taller than his hunched appearance, made of amaranth wood with darker-hued veins along its surface. It is crowned with oddly-shaped upstanding fingers of amaranth, which encircle a fist-sized teardrop of transparent crystal. He also conceals a dagger in his sleeve, remarkable for its fluted bone hilt and matching sheath.

M30, AC-1, hp44, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff, Dmg 1d6+2 or by spell, Save M30, ML8, AL C; St11, In18, Wi13, Dx15, Co12, Ch14. **Magical Items\*:** AC3 *robe of some sort\**, +2 *staff of another kind\**, +2 *dagger of neither here nor there*, +3 *ring of unspecified use*, and *amulet of nondescriptness*.

**Robe of Some Sort:** aside from providing an armor class of 3, this robe is designed to thwart magical attempts to spy or gather information about its owner. Its main power is to “disinform.” For example, the robe generates false images and sounds when its owner is the object of *scrying*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, or *true sight* attempts. If alignment is detected, the robe will show the same as the observer’s. With *ESP* or other mind-reading powers, the sensation is that of harmless, absent-minded thinking. If location is detected, it will show Deborran in his private laboratory, a place to which no one else has access. Detect magic paints magical auras on his boots, a gold tooth in his mouth, a silver chain at his neck, and a set of earrings. This garment also blocks tracking devices, such as those described in earlier posts (the gown of hearing and the robe of intrigue). After several magical detection attempts, one might be allowed an Intelligence check to realize some clues seem not to add up. Although the robe is a wondrous one to be sure, it isn’t sentient and therefore remains imperfect. Its enchantment relies on a good number (but not infinite) of pre-generated illusory elements to mislead observers. Some might be repeated accidentally.

**Staff of Another Kind:** this +2 weapon requires a saving throw vs. spell. If the roll fails, the victim falls unconscious. The staff also erases from the victim’s mind all memory of recent events, at the rate of 1 hour per point of damage inflicted from the time of the attack.

**Dagger of Neither Here Nor There:** its target must save vs. spell or be sent into a pocket plane. This plane is timeless and therefore anything entering there remains eternally motionless. Provided one knew where to find the victim, a *wish* could return it to the prime plane. This wicked blade crumbles to dust when it successfully traps someone.

**Ring of Unspecified Use:** although it is a +3 *ring of protection*, this ring bears one of four additional powers which must be selected at the start of the day (1. *Fire Resistance*, 2. *Quickness*, 3. *Regeneration*, or 4. *X-Ray Vision*). If the daily choice is omitted, the power is chosen randomly. Four tiny gems are embedded in this ring’s gold band—a ruby, a sapphire, an emerald, and a topaz. Depending on the ring’s usage, three of the gems remain black. It is a powerful item crafted specifically by Deborran. Anyone else with lesser Intelligence wearing it falls under Deborran’s mental control if within 100’ of him (except beings immune to mind-control magic—no save). The mage can always sense the location of his ring, as well as see and hear as all that its bearer does, whether the ring is worn or not. Its magic vanishes when Deborran is killed.

**Amulet of Nondescriptness:** on command, this magical object enables its owner to blend in with a group of humanoid creatures no smaller than kobolds and no larger than gnolls. Its power is such that no one in the crowd will notice, address, or attack the owner. The effect can be triggered in the middle of a battle, in which case attackers simply “forget” entirely about the owner (while his/her companion can still plainly see through the amulet’s magic). So long as the owner appears to act in exactly the same manner as the rest of the crowd, the amulet imitates their clothing, racial appearance, mannerisms, voices, languages, and smells. The effect ends as soon as the owner does anything that departs from expected behavior, such as addressing or attacking someone, casting a spell, taking something, or suddenly running away. The effect requires congregations of at least 20 creatures. For every 10 additional creatures, the amulet may extend its powers to a companion of the owner. With this amulet, Deborran can remain



unnoticed among a crowded street, den of thieves, a lair of orcs, or a ball at a palace, etc. The amulet does not affect beings immune to illusions. Creatures with 5HD or more are allowed a saving throw.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*



# Ar: From Heaven's Crown to Eternity

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

What later became the District of Heaven's Crown had always been a quiet corner of Ar, tucked between Harpy, Griffon, and Ambur. It joined the kingdom later during its formative years, mostly as the result of pressure from the monarchy. An important Cloudstone deposit beneath the surface became the primary motivation for Alphatian settlers to accept royal infeodation, seeking protection and greater market access for their precious mineral.

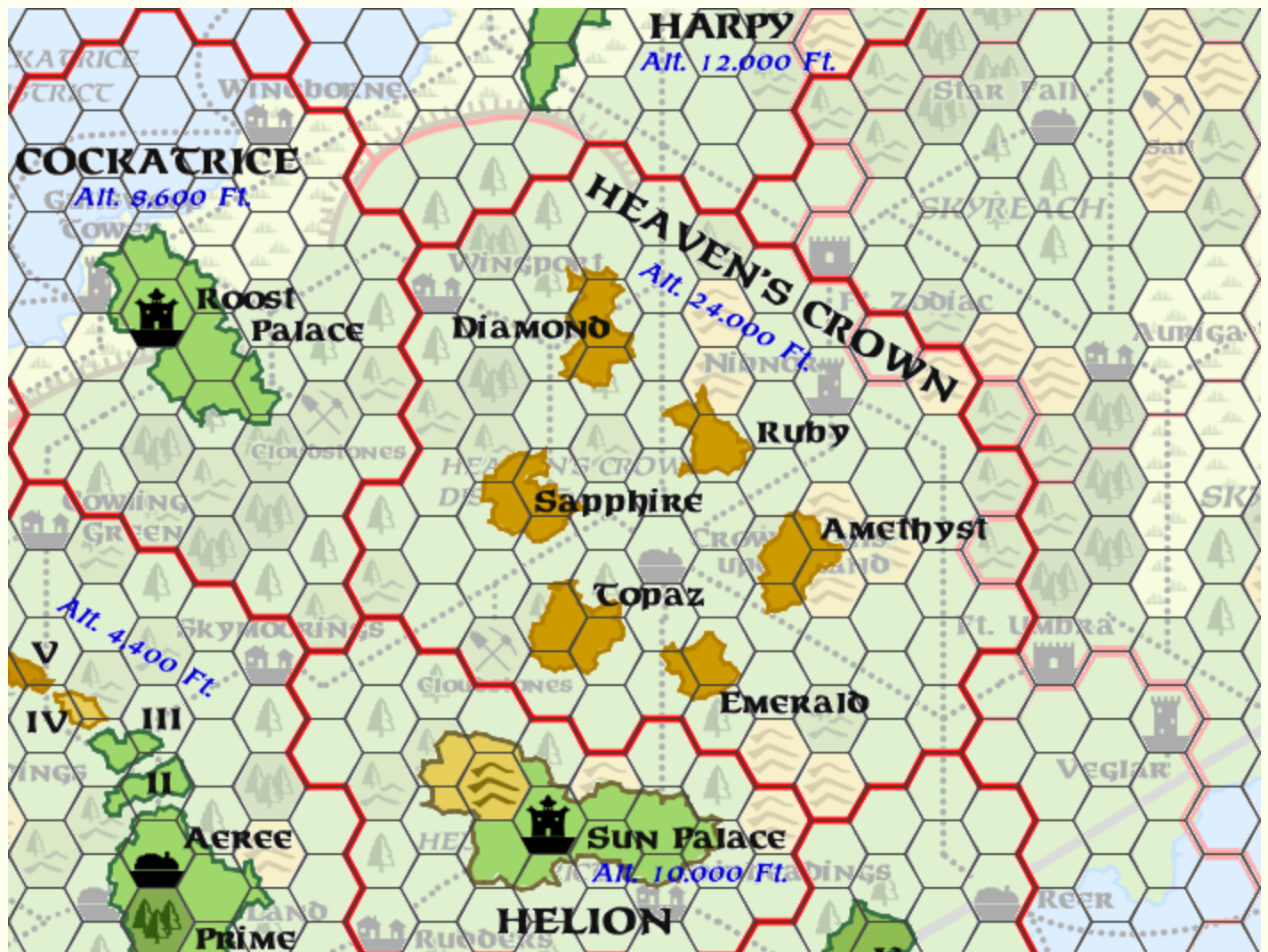


Lower Heaven's Crown District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

A small town grew from the influx of miners and business-minded people, now known as Crowntrails-upon-Land. Floating islands soon came together, very high in the sky. Seven levitating mountains were sent aloft, with the one named Onyx bearing the viceroy's capital. The islands were meant to follow a complex rotation pattern but a miscalculation led Onyx to fly out of control and capsize. A horrendous collision ensued which destroyed Onyx and damaged nearby Amethyst, showering the land below with tons of debris. The rubble formed miles of tall hills west of Crowntrails-upon-Land. It is rumored that victims of the crash still haunt those rough and jagged formations, an eerie jumble of walls and domes torn apart, half-sunken monuments, and fragments of statues askew. Bits and pieces of the old capital still exist

trapped beneath the surface in upside-down dungeon-like pockets. The most striking thing is the profusion of bones strangely suspended in mid-air, petrified by Cloudstone dust. Most of the Cloudstones in Onyx were either destroyed, buried under rubble, or escaped through the skyshield. The dust from the collision and the ensuing crash covered much of Heaven's Crown and took months to settle.

Since then, the remaining six mountains came to a halt and the idea of propelling them again was abandoned. These towering monoliths stretch 10,000 ft into the sky, reaching as high as 34,000 feet (10.000 meters). A few isolated laboratories exist on these mountains, all of them pressurized. Since the Onyx disaster, six huge monuments were erected on the highest peaks. They depict Alphatian wizards brandishing crystal spheres that gather sunlight during the day and release it after dark. Each beams a colored ray at a 45° angle toward the firmament, forming a crown of light wondrous enough to be the envy of all in the Kingdom of Haven.



Upper Heaven's Crown District -- Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

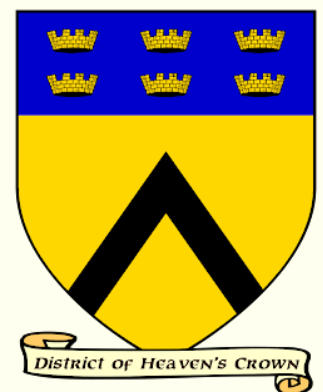
During the summer, storm clouds reach the foot of the floating mountains. Denizens of the celestial billows fly in and out of the roiling darkness below, looping gracefully through the sky and releasing bolts of lightning before diving back into the storm. These are called *thunderheads*, lizard-like creatures that awaken when storms roll in and return to their lairs beneath the mountains when the weather clears. It is also believed that giants inhabit these

storms and that they are masters of the thunderheads. Due to the perils of flying skyships through storms, no one was able to contact them. Suspicion lingers that these giants come and go through the skies as they please, perhaps dwelling in castles hidden among passing clouds, and creating storms for reasons only known to them.

Diamond also harbors an important spiritual center, the Temple of Palartarkan. This immortal is none other than Ar himself, the mage who sparked the creation of floating monoliths which earned him his quasi-divine status. Private skyships with pressurized decks commonly take passengers from Crowtrails wishing to go on a pilgrimage to the fabled temple. Services for the faithful take place three times per day, at dawn, noon, and sunset. An extensive library on air magics is also available there, as well as study facilities. Accommodations welcome visitors to stay more than a day, for a price. From individual bedchambers and the main temple hall, one may behold breathtaking views of Diamond's frozen peaks with a stark celestial backdrop slightly darkened by the skyshield's proximity. Winds pick up thin clouds of ice and snow, and blow them through the heavens like translucent, iridescent veils sparkling in the sun.

There is more to the Temple of Palartarkan than first meets the eye. The catastrophe that befell Onyx created a unique opportunity. The Cloudstones that escaped through the skyshield coalesced into a stone ball in open space. The High Priest of Palartarkan, His Loftiness Arvast III, and his closest followers crossed through a rip in the skyshield and reached the derelict monolith. They gave it an atmosphere, mostly from air that had escaped through the damaged skyshield, and built a fortress upon it, enchanting the monolith so that it would remain *geostationary*. It was thereafter rendered invisible, to keep it secret. Meanwhile, a translucent "patch" was devised to help repair the torn skyshield—one allowing temple skyships through, provided one knew the aperture's exact position. As it were, prying eyes in Ambur witnessed the event before the monolith could be removed from sight. Quiet negotiations ensued, leading to Amburian witnesses earning a place on the monolith from which they could install stargazing devices in exchange for their total discretion.

It's been many decades since this event took place. On behalf of their immortal patron, clerical and wizardly followers now toil to recreate Old Alphatia as it was meant to be. For now, their work consists mostly in research; two topics dominate their efforts: *aeroforming*, to create vast bubbles of air in space, and the manipulation of dark energy to enable this brave new world to travel. Because of the enormity of the project and its cost, such an endeavor is likely to take a century or more to complete. Arvast III demanded total secrecy because he wasn't willing to relinquish the project to imperial authorities, let alone King Qissling. He trusted neither and the same can be said of his successor today, Arvast VI. There is dissension among his followers about this. Some believe that results could be reached more quickly with direct support from Skyreach or Sundsvall. Others fear the ghastly thought of the Alphatian public discovering their plan and all demanding a piece of it. So far, they all agree the "Alphatia Quest," as they dubbed it, must remain under the supervision of the Temple of Palartarkan. This immortal is described below for the readers' convenience.



*Thanks to Marco Dalmonte for his work on the Alphatian pantheon listed on Pandius.*

# Palartarkan the Lofty One

Developed from the original text by Marco Dalmonte

## Patron of Ar, Lord of the Air

**Nature:** 12<sup>th</sup> level Temporal of Energy (Neutral)

**Symbol:** a flying mountain

**Interests:** Alphatia, Floating Ar, astronomy, astrology, elemental plane of air, magic related to gravity, air, and flight.

**Locations:** Alphatia and Alatian Islands on Mystara, and Hiakrai Neathar in the Hollow World.

**Appearance:** a tall and muscular human with thick, pure-white, well-groomed hair, beard and moustache, dressed in a robe having tones of blues and whites recalling clouds. He's usually represented as floating in a position of meditation with crossed legs.

**History:** Ar was a native of Old Alphatia during the reign of Alphaks. When Alphatians were forced to migrate, Ar had just started on the immortal Path of the Paragon. He followed his compatriots to what would become the Alphatian Empire on Mystara. Fascinated by air and flight, he enchanted *levitating* monoliths that led to the creation of the famous floating islands. After teaching his knowledge to his students, Ar attained immortality around 840 BC, later revealing himself as Palartarkan to Alphatian spellcasters. He'd created the first few Cloudstone deposits in Ar as part of his quest to immortality and vastly expanded them afterward knowing full well that they might provoke the sort of disaster as the one that befell Onyx. It was all part of his plan.

**Personality:** Palartarkan is a recognized patron of Alphatian magic, as well as all those who are interested in the mysteries of the Elemental Plane of Air, the laws of gravity, the secrets of *aeroforming*, as well as the art of flight. He is generally magnanimous; his association with air make his moods unpredictable—they change as quickly as winds during a storm.

**Liege:** unknown (presumably Ixion)

**Allies:** Alphatia, Razud, Zalaj

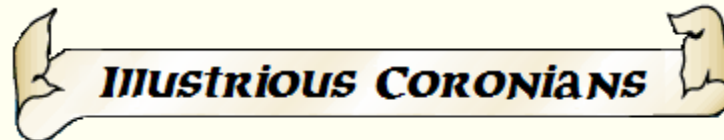
**Enemies:** Alphaks

**Followers' Alignment:** any; clerics must be Neutral

**Favored Weapons:** followers may spend proficiency slots on any hand-thrown weapon (daggers, hammers, axes, spears, etc.), regardless of class limitations. Fighters receive a +1 bonus to hit with any missile weapon, including bows, crossbows, and siege weapons.

**Clerics' Abilities:** 5<sup>th</sup> level clerics can *fly* up to two hours per day (innate ability, cannot be *dispelled*); +5% bonus for any attempt to create spells or magic items related to air or flight.

From a more general point of view, the District of Heaven's Crown is home to 84,000 Coronians, of whom 5,000 live in urban areas. No more than a few hundred reside permanently on floating islands. Constructs, which aren't counted in the district's demography, handle much of the domestic work at altitude. Temperatures in Upper Heaven's Crown drop 90°F (50°C) compared with conditions prevailing at sea level. Lower Heaven's Crown is a net exporter of farming goods, and its Cloudstone mine, one of the latest to have been excavated, is still producing good amounts of the precious mineral. The viceroy keeps at his disposal about 1,000 troops, 400 of whom are serving on six small skyships and one flying troop transport. The smaller vessels are known as the H.H.M.S. *Aethere*, *Argonae*, *Methylia*, *Heliuma*, *Kryptonae*, and the *Xenonia*, and the troop transport as the *Spirit of Ar*.



## **His Loftiness Arvast VI, High Priest of Palartarkan**

The top spiritual leader in Ar is a crafty fellow. Not only has Arvast demonstrated a prodigious ability as an administrator but he's also a talented negotiator. His skill has enabled him to advance the Alphania Quest, recruiting trustworthy followers and expanding the fortress while increasing the temple's revenues. A few wealthy Aran aristocrats in on the secret provide regular funding in exchange for a place on Alphania. King Qissling, unaware of the quest, has agreed nonetheless to name the Temple of Palartarkan as the realm's official faith. Although other philosophies are readily tolerated, this temple now conveniently benefits from a small percentage of royal revenues thanks to its official status, while none of the others do.



Arvast's real challenge is one of security. As the project grows, more people need to be involved. Ensuring their discretion can be a thankless task. For this purpose the high priest devised spells not only to help keep the faithful in line with their vows of silence but also to identify oath-breakers. Clerics of Palartarkan are neither evil nor chaotic but for practical reasons they must rely on stealth to safeguard their veil of clandestinity. Specially trained monks handle security in the temple and, if need be, the elimination of oath-breakers and all associated individuals. Arvast must budget his time between visits to Alphania, heading services at the Grand Temple, directing guardian monks, and maintaining proper relations in Skyreach. Open rivalry with the Temples of Ixion, Alphania, and Razud—established elsewhere in the kingdom—resulted from Palartarkan's official status. It sparked many audiences before the king, which Arvast must monitor carefully and address with his usual tact and diplomacy.

**Appearance:** Arvast is tall and with a well-developed musculature that makes him appear stocky. His hair, hanging in ringlets to his shoulders, has been magically altered to deep sapphire blue. A full square-trimmed beard frames his rugged face. His intense eyes are a

complimentary shade and appear very analytical. He never stops thinking about how to bring an enemy or a vacillating nobleman to his side of the discussion. The armor he wears most of the time fully covers his frame but is embossed to resemble an ancient monarch's lamellar protection. His bracers fit beneath his armor's gauntlets. Arvast wears on his chest a thick gold chain with a flying mountain symbol carved in golden and brown amber.

C25, AC-8/-3, hp48, MV 120' (40')/360' (120'), AT 1 spear, Dmg 1d6+2 or by spell, Save C25, ML10, AL N; St14, In13, Wi17, Dx12, Co11, Ch15. **Magical Items\*:** +1 *spear of the oath-breakers*, +1 *suit of airsteel armor*, +2 *bracers of binding*, and *amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP*. **Special Abilities:** as a priest of Palartarkan, he can use a spear and *fly* up to two hours per day (innate ability, cannot be *dispelled*).

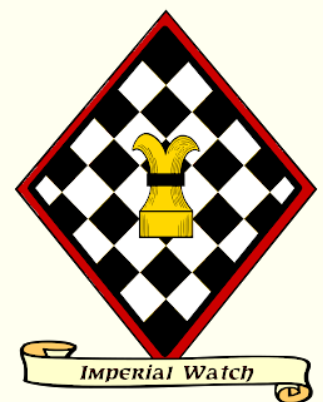
**Spear of the Oath-Breakers:** when used in melee combat, this spear is equivalent to a +1 magical weapon. When thrown, it becomes a +3 projectile that reappears in its wielder's hand at the end of the round. If an oath-breaker (see *bracers of binding* below), the target must save vs. spell or be struck dead.

**Bracers of Binding (C):** these leather bracers function as +2 *bracers of protection*. In addition, they enable a cleric of Palartarkan to magically seal an oath. The cleric becomes immediately aware of whether an oath was broken, by whom, in whose company, and where. Such oath-breakers and those implicated all become permanently vulnerable to the deadly effect of Arvast's magical spear.

**Suit of Airsteel Armor:** this +1 suit of armor is made of enchanted blue steel. It is immune to air-based attacks and non-magical projectiles. It also generates an invisible shield of compressed air floating around the owner. During a battle, this mobile shield confers a +5 AC bonus against a first attack (regardless of the direction), +4 against the next, +3 against a third, and so on until it ceases to function. The shield magic needs 5 hours to fully regenerate. The suit has the encumbrance of leather armor.

## Master Ellorian, *Imperial Master Spy*

Ellorian (code named *Doppleganger*) was assigned to look into a curious political development, so far one unheard of in the empire, concerning the establishment of Palartarkan as a state-financed philosophy in the Realm of Ar. The concern was whether this tithe adversely affected imperial revenues. Satisfied that Qissling's bookkeeping was sound and imperial interests were safe, the spy decided to investigate Arvast instead. He observed that the high priest frequently absented himself from services at Grand Temple of Ar. Unable to pry loose any more information, he attempted to fly back to Crowntrails-Upon-Land aboard the *Old Alphantia*, a vessel privately owned by the temple. He'd been her passenger on the way up a few days earlier, along with a score of other pilgrims. He was abruptly denied boarding for reasons that appeared very suspicious despite apologies, since there still was room





on the skyship. Standing in a service gallery away from beaten paths, he subsequently watched the *Old Alphatia* sail west and climb high enough that he lost sight of her entirely. Clearly, she wasn't headed toward Crowntrails. She returned a day later with different passengers and embarked new ones for their voyage back home. This time, the spy was allowed aboard, and the vessel sailed back to Crowntrail following a normal course. After reporting his concerns to his overseer in Sundsvall by way of a magical *scroll of communication*, he was ordered to infiltrate the ranks of Palartarkan followers and shed more light on their activities.

**Appearance:** Thin and of medium height, Ellorian bears commonplace features allowing him to remain unremarkable in a crowd. He divides his brown hair in the middle and ties it tightly at the nape of his neck. His eyes are a mild medium blue with darker lapis rings around the irises. A former actor, Ellorian prides himself on being able to think on his feet and improvise as needed. He's always on the scent of information: somewhat badger-like, his nose searches out clues to follow. He customarily wears a dark red jerkin over ivory-hued collared and cuffed shirt, along with black pants and supple leather boots. An odd tattoo rendered in bluish-black ink covers his right hand and wrist, showing the masks of tragedy and comedy with a constantly moving snake coiling through their eyes and mouths.

T25, AC1, hp73, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8(+1/+6), Save T25, ML9, AL N; St13, In14, Wi12, Dx17, Co14, Ch11. **Magical Items\*:** *ring of the blood-thorn*, +2 *leather jerkin of stealthy pilfering*, +3 *torque of protection*, *buckle of banality*, *doppelganger tattoo*, and *scroll of communication*.

**Ring of the Blood-Thorn:** it looks like a silver ring on which is engraved a delicate pattern of thorns. With a flick of his hand, Ellorian can turn the ring into a sword, or back into its ring shape. The *blood thorn blade*, when used in a thief's backstab, requires the target to save vs. spell or drop unconscious for 1d4 hours. It draws from the victim a small amount of blood and vital energy to "charge" itself. After a successful back-stab, the weapon gains a number of magical "plus" bonuses depending on the target's experience level (or HD). Level 1-5: +1, Level 6-10: +2, Level 11-15: +3, Level 16-20: +4, and Levels 21+: +5. Earned bonuses remain in effect for a subsequent combat encounter, after which they vanish. The blade can be used for successive backstabs, in which case it accumulates charges up to a maximum of +5. When the blade is charged, at least partially, the ring's thorn pattern turns red.

**Leather Jerkin of Stealthy Pilfering:** is a light leather garment providing no natural protection but that can be enchanted to do so. In addition, this jerkin conceals normal tools a thief would need which can be made to appear on command. While hidden, these tools do not count against the owner's encumbrance and cannot be detected. The jerkin can accommodate up to 100 coins in addition to the tools.

**Torque of Protection:** it is equivalent to a *ring of protection*.

**Buckle of Banality:** this belt buckle prevents *detect magic* spells from functioning when directed at the owner.

**Doppelganger Tattoo:** this strange tattoo is actually alive. It is a piece of enchanted doppelganger flesh that grafts itself to a host. Each time Ellorian uses its powers, he must succeed a Wisdom check or allow a bit of his psyche to fall under the tattoo's control. Ellorian will die if the number of failures matches his Intelligence score, allowing the tattoo to travel to the next person/creature touching the dead body (usually a thief). If the number of failures exceeds half Ellorian's Intelligence score, the tattoo may exert some control over his actions (further Wisdom checks resolve any conflicts). So far, Ellorian has already failed five Wisdom checks. A past failure can be "erased" provided the tattoo's powers aren't used for at least a month. The doppelganger enchantment has an Intelligence score of 9 and a Chaotic alignment. It belongs to a doppelganger shaman somewhere in the world. Its purpose is to travel Mystara and eventually return to its master and transfer its knowledge. Several of these tattoos exist, issued as preludes to possible doppelganger incursions. The tattoo enables its bearer to adopt someone else's identity (including body and facial appearance, voice, and smell) for as long as needed. Like a doppelganger, the bearer also learns much of what the victim knows (other than spells or class abilities). The initial emulation process does not require the victim's death but takes nonetheless a full Turn. While the impersonation is in effect, the victim remains in a catatonic state. A *dispel magic* (rated against the bearer's experience level) cast either at the victim or at the tattoo will end both deception and paralysis. Killing the victim achieves the same result. As it is a living thing, the tattoo does not radiate magic if such is detected but its alignment will show if the tattoo has reached the point where it can influence its bearer. The tattoo cannot graft itself to someone with an active *protection from evil* spell. Only a *wish* spell can free a bearer of this tattoo.



**Scroll of Communication:** this curious parchment enables its owner to shout, speak, or whisper while the scroll is held open, resulting in a written message appearing on another similar scroll. The scroll can transmit as many as a hundred words in a single message once per day and receive one other during that period. As part of its original enchantment, it remains connected to a specific master scroll. The master scroll can transmit and receive one daily message to/from each connected scroll. Without the proper command word, the writing on the scroll appears as a romantic letter to anyone studying it. There are no chances of error or malfunction for non-wizardly classes attempting to use it. The scroll does not work between the surface world and the Hollow World. Ellorian keeps the scroll folded and hidden inside his jerkin with his tools.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*

# Ar: Helion Rising

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

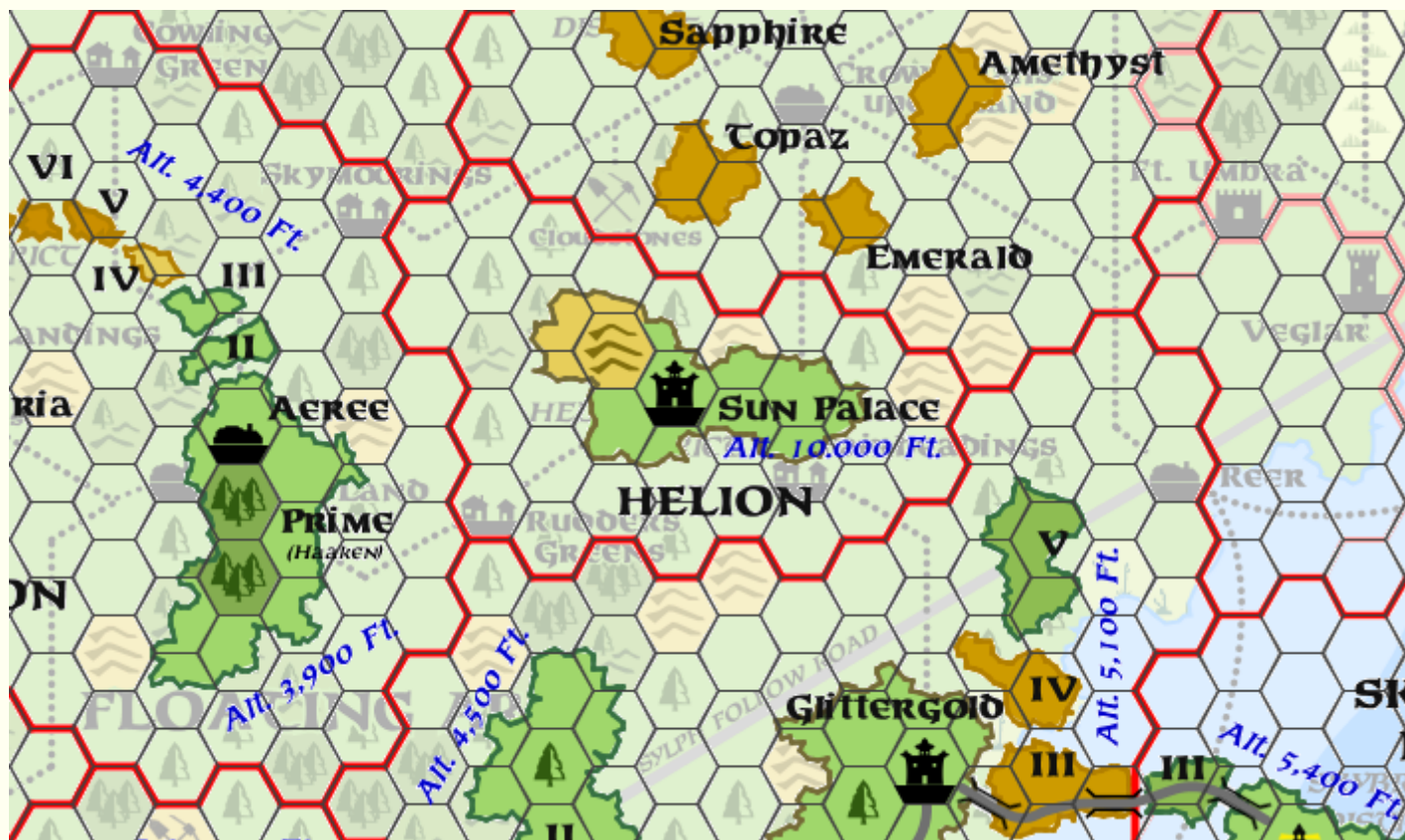
At the time of the Ceafem monarchy, thick woods covered the territory that would later become the District of Helion. With low population and no valuable mines, it failed to develop major towns. Over time, much of the forests were felled, and precious wood sold to neighboring urban centers, allowing the land to be farmed. After the House of Qimeth inherited the throne, local landowners joined the growing kingdom. After negotiation among Alphatian proprietors, which ended with a number of estates going up in smoke, one of them prevailed and stood as their viceroy on behalf of Skyreach.



The district's name came from fragments of a meteoroid that showered this small area. The celestial object's trajectory had grazed the sun which led Amburian astronomers to call it a "helion." Meteorites sank through the soft soil on impact, vegetation overgrowing the sites during the following decades. Since Alphatians colonized the region, a number of fragments have been retrieved and brought to laboratories. It was found that they bore unexpected properties, such as heat radiation. Sages assigned to studying these metalloïd shards also discovered, much to their horror, that they also provoked physical mutations in living organisms exposed to their auras for long periods. At about that time, clerics became interested. They determined that the original meteoroid was connected with Ixion, an immortal associated with energy, fire, and the sun in particular. Powerful in the empire as a whole, his followers demanded the meteorites be remitted at once to the Temples of Ixion. After a nudge from Emperor Tylon IV and an agreement that all fragments must remain in Helion District, several new shrines were built to collect and house these metalloïd shards. Since then, Helion became the center of Ixion's philosophy in Ar and an important one in the whole of the empire. The

Grand Temple of Ixion stands in Sundsvall.

As it were, Ixion was indeed connected with the meteoroid. Unbeknownst to Alphatians, a war had been going on centuries, far away from Mystara. An efreeti kingdom took over a part of the sun, against Ixion's wishes. The creatures, immensely powerful, equally arrogant, and as fiery as one should expect them to be, caused the immortal's wrath when they sent his heralds packing. In response, Ixion arranged for sollux and helion forces (both sun-related creatures) to launch a counterattack. They used for this purpose a meteor shower aimed at the sun. The bolides were intended as one-way portals allowing Ixion's army to teleport to strategic areas in the sun. Efreeti magists intercepted and sent some of them careening out of control across space. It was one of those that broke up while plunging through Mystara's skyshield, releasing ninety 22 lb pieces (10 kg). A greater problem with this meteoroid is that its opposite end (from which *teleporting* takes place) lies elsewhere in Mystara space, in an area presently disputed between sollux and efreeti forces. There is no telling which would try to use the gate, as armies surge forth and fall back during their epic war. Fire elementals and flame salamanders are involved but whose side they favor is unpredictable (roll at random). Fire giants always side with the Efreet.



A large temple complex stands on Helion Prime, in the hills outside the Sun Palace gambling resort. It fitted together 25 fragments of the meteoroid. Six more Ixion Shrines exist in the lower district, each with 2d4 fragments. Remaining lost pieces (17-53 of them) still lie beneath the ground. The number of these pieces when assembled determine the frequency and magnitude of *teleportations* as shown in the table below.

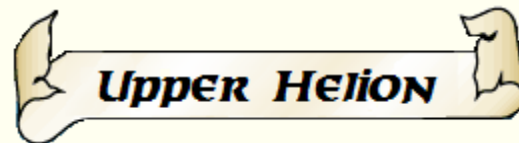
## *Helion Teleportation Calendar*

<b>Fragments</b>	<b>Odds</b>	<b>Visitors</b>		<b>Frequency</b>			
<b>1</b>	1%	1	Sollux (10HD)	10 Years			
<b>2</b>				9 Years 6 Months			
<b>3</b>				9 Years 1 Month			
<b>4</b>			1%	1	Fire Elemental	8 Years 7 Months	
<b>5</b>						8 Years 2 Months	
<b>6</b>					Lesser Efreeti	7 Years 9 Months	
<b>7</b>						7 Years 4 Months	
<b>8</b>						Helion	6 Years 11 Months
<b>9</b>							6 Years 7 Months
<b>10</b>	2%	2	Sollux (10HD)	6 Years 3 Months			
<b>11</b>				5 Years 11 Months			
<b>12</b>				5 Years 8 Months			
<b>13</b>			Flame Salamanders	5 Years 5 Months			
<b>14</b>				5 Years 1 Month			
<b>15</b>			Lesser Efreet	4 Years 10 Months			
<b>16</b>				4 Years 7 Months			
<b>17</b>				4 Years 4 Months			
<b>18</b>				Helions	4 Years 2 Months		
<b>19</b>			3 Years 11 Months				
<b>20</b>	3%	3	Sollux (10 HD)	3 Years 9 Months			
<b>21</b>				3 Years 7 Months			
<b>22</b>				3 Years 4 Months			
<b>23</b>			Lesser Efreet	3 Years 2 Months			
<b>24</b>				3 Years 1 Month			
<b>25</b>				2 Years 11 Months			
<b>26</b>	4%	4	Sollux (11 HD)	2 Years 9 Months			
<b>27</b>				2 Years 7 Months			
<b>28</b>			Lesser Efreet	2 Years 6 Months			
<b>29</b>				2 Years 4 Months			
<b>30</b>				2 Years 3 Months			

<b>31</b>	5%	1d4+1	Sollux (11 HD)	<i>2 Years 1 Month</i>
<b>32</b>			Fire Elementals	<i>1 Year 11 Months</i>
<b>33</b>			Lesser Efreet	<i>1 Year 10 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>34</b>			Helions	<i>1 Year 10 Months</i>
<b>35</b>	6%	1d4+2	Fire Giants	<i>1 Year 9 Months</i>
<b>36</b>				<i>1 Year 8 Months</i>
<b>37</b>				<i>1 Year 7 Months</i>
<b>38</b>				<i>1 Year 6 Months</i>
<b>39</b>	7%	1d6+1	Lesser Efreet	<i>1 Year 5 Months</i>
<b>40</b>				<i>1 Year 4 Months</i>
<b>41</b>	8%	2d4	Sollux (11 HD)	<i>1 Year 3 Months</i>
<b>42</b>				<i>1 Year 2 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>43</b>				<i>1 Year 2 Months</i>
<b>44</b>	9%	2d4+1	Flame Salamanders	<i>1 Year 1 Month</i>
<b>45</b>				<i>1 Year</i>
<b>46</b>	10%	2d4+2	Lesser Efreet	<i>11 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>47</b>				<i>11 Months 1 Week</i>
<b>48</b>	11%	2d4+3	Lesser Efreet	<i>11 Months</i>
<b>49</b>				<i>10 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>50</b>				<i>10 Months 1 Week</i>
<b>51</b>	12%	2d6	Helions	<i>10 Months</i>
<b>52</b>				<i>9 Months 3 Weeks</i>
<b>53</b>	13%	2d6+1	Sollux (12 HD)	<i>9 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>54</b>				<i>9 Months</i>
<b>55</b>				<i>8 Months 3 Weeks</i>
<b>56</b>	14%	2d6+2	Fire Elementals	<i>8 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>57</b>				<i>8 Months 1 Week</i>
<b>58</b>				<i>8 Months</i>
<b>59</b>	15%	2d6+3	Lesser Efreet	<i>7 Months 2 Weeks</i>
<b>60</b>				<i>7 Months 1 Week</i>
<b>61</b>				<i>7 Months</i>

<b>62</b>	22%	2d10+2	Helions, 1 Lesser Phoenix	6 Months 3 Weeks
<b>63</b>	23%	2d10+3		6 Months 1 Week
<b>64</b>	24%	3d8		6 Months
<b>65</b>	25%	3d8+1	Sollux (12 HD <i>Sun Brothers</i> ), 1 Leader	5 Months 3 Weeks
<b>66</b>	27%	3d8+3		5 Months 2 Weeks
<b>67</b>	28%	3d8+4		5 Months 1 Week
<b>68</b>	30%	3d10	Lesser Efreet, 1 Amir	4 Months 3 Weeks
<b>69</b>	31%	3d10+1		4 Months 2 Weeks
<b>70</b>	33%	3d10+3		4 Months 1 Week
<b>71</b>	34%	3d10+4	Helions, 1 Lesser Phoenix	4 Months
<b>72</b>	36%	3d12		3 Months 2 Weeks
<b>73</b>	38%	3d12+2		3 Months 1 Week
<b>74</b>	40%	2d20	Sollux (13 HD <i>Sun Brothers</i> ), 1 Leader	3 Months
<b>75</b>	42%	2d20+2		2 Months 3 Weeks
<b>76</b>	44%	2d10+4		2 Months 2 Weeks
<b>77</b>	47%	2d10+9	Fire Giants	2 Months
<b>78</b>	49%	2d10+9		1 Month 3 Weeks
<b>79</b>	52%	5d10		1 Month 2 Weeks
<b>80</b>	54%	5d10+4	Lesser Efreet, 1 Amir	1 Month 1 Week
<b>81</b>	57%	5d10+7		1 Month
<b>82</b>	60%	3d10		3 Weeks
<b>83</b>	63%	3d20+3	Helions, 1 Greater Phoenix	2 Weeks
<b>84</b>	66%	3d10+6		1 Week
<b>85</b>	70%	3d20+10		6 Days
<b>86</b>	74%	3d20+14	Sollux (14 HD <i>Sun Brothers</i> ), 1 Leader	5 Days
<b>87</b>	77%	3d20+17		4 Days
<b>88</b>	81%	4d20+1		3 Days
<b>89</b>	86%	4d20+6	<b>Odd:</b> Sollux (as above) <b>or</b> <b>Even:</b> Lesser Efreet & 1 Amir	2 Days
<b>Entire Meteoroid</b>	90%	4d20+10		24 Hours

Helion District is a fairly small dominion in the Kingdom of Ar, a little more than 60 miles at its widest. It counts about 30,800 inhabitants. Two hundred of them reside in lowland villages by the district's two airfields and five hundred actually work at Sun Palace on the floating island. In other words, Heliots are overwhelmingly of the peasant class. About 400 troops belong to local armed forces including personnel assigned to four skyships: three small vessels and a large one. They are named, respectively, H.H.M.S. *Flame*, *Blaze*, *Pyre*, and *Spirit of Ixion*. The first two generally act as a mobile police force while *Pyre* patrols the Upper District. The *Spirit of Ixion* is often subject to assignments at Skyreach or wherever she may be needed, occasionally flying the *Oriflamme of Helion*, a fiery war banner. *Flame* and *Blaze* hail from Rudders Greens and Fairheadings (25% chance one would find them there) while *Pyre* and *Spirit of Ixion* (when the latter isn't called away) operate from the viceroy's palace (25% chance of finding the first at the palace, 10% for the other).



The floating island is a fairly narrow monolith, about 8 miles wide and 40 miles long (13x64 km). The western edge forms hills, at the highest point of which gleams the Temple of Ixion. The Sun Palace resort occupies a grassland about eight miles away. At an altitude of 10,000 ft (3,000 m) its average temperature drops 37°F (21°C) compared with conditions prevailing at sea level. Both the temple and the resort enjoy protective domes. A few estates belonging to aristocrats, including the viceroy's private palace grounds, claim the remainder of the island's surface. Upper Helion is home to more than a thousand Heliots in total, plus visiting gamblers, their families, and domestic retinue.

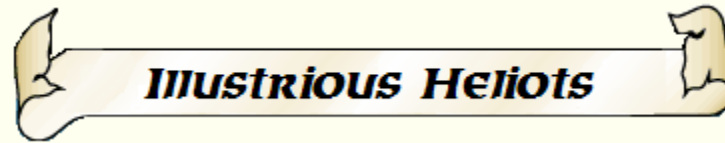
**Sun Palace:** this resort celebrates a daily triumph of fiery colors. Buildings radiate hues ranging from antique bronze to red, with golden accents and solar motifs. Translucent veils above the streets cast shades saffron to ivory, protecting guests from the merciless injuries of high-altitude sunrays. The resort boasts a glitzy shopping mall for the rich and famous. Great towers rising past the dome's force field end with light-polarizing glass spheres from which guests may observe the progress of skyship regattas. Aside from common games of enjoyment or gambling, Sun Palace is best known for its air races. The fastest vessels of the kingdom, and at times of the entire empire, regularly gather here for competitions, events that Felldorian rarely missed during his youth. Their flight paths form complicated figures requiring barrel rolls and loops at specific points while the skyships spin around, below, and above Helion Prime. Spectators can immediately identify competitors from colored trails shining in their vessels' wakes. These illusory tracers, most striking during nocturnal competitions, produce Moebius-like ribbons in the sky before slowly fading as ships pursue their dizzying ballet.



These races are dangerous as skyships often cross each other's paths—accidents do happen. Nocturnal races justify the presence of pylons with flashing-colored lights above and below



Helion Prime to guide skyships through the night. For an extra fee, *levitating* seating for blocks of 20-30 fans and private floating loggias enable a much better view from different angles during the race. Flag-waving, hooting spectators, some with great horns, drums, magically-enhanced cowbells, confetti-launchers, and *faery fire* cheerfully add to the frenzied chaos in the skies. Some of the most jaw-dropping, eye-popping races take place before approaching storms, with lizard-like thunderheads swooping by, chasing skyships, or releasing lightning bolts in their excitement. No two races are ever the same at Sun Palace.



## His Grace Emberan, *Head Flamen of Ixion*

This high-ranking cleric governs Ixion shrines and temples in the Kingdom of Ar, as well as the quest to recover holy shards and assemble them. He resides at the Temple of Ixion in the upper district. Emberan knows that fragments of the meteoroid act as one-way gates which explains why he permitted a number of the recovered shards to remain in separate lowland shrines. As he sees it, his followers are de facto at war with the efreeti kingdom on behalf of their immortal liege. Squads of heavily armed clerics are always at hand in the event something hostile comes out of the meteorites. If allies do instead, Emberan will provide any healing needed and help return them to an appropriate plane, along with any captured salamanders and efreet. Special restraints are enchanted for this specific purpose. Fire giants and other notoriously evil creatures are dispatched without delay while fire elementals are always dismissed back to their native plane. In the event of an attack, H.H.M.S. *Pyre* has a 25% chance of showing up every 3 Turns (5% for the *Spirit of Ixion*). So far, Emberan has not deemed it useful to alert King Qissling or Empress Eriadna of the conflict's existence or of his unusual prisoners (which could lead either of the rulers to demand the shards' immediate destruction). More recently, the head-flamen has made some quiet efforts to get past ambassador Al-Safeer and seek a possible alliance with the Djinni Kingdom.



**Appearance:** a leader as well as a warrior, Emberan owns a commanding presence. He is six feet tall, has wild mahogany-hued hair, copper skin, and flashing dark amber eyes. His long rectangular face is clean-shaven. When concentrating, Emberan clenches his teeth, making his pronounced jaw muscles stand out. He habitually wears his plate armor which glows gold and crimson and is patterned with flame-like designs that appear and disappear across its surface. The armor minimizes the cleric's pronounced paunch to a small extent. When he carries his two-handed sword, it rides in a specially-constructed harness on his back. Emberan wears a ring consisting of a twisted gold band showing a yellow phoenix inlaid with ruby eyes.

C19, AC-3, hp61, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 two-handed sword, Dmg 1d10+3 or by spell, Save C19, ML11, AL N; St15, In12, Wi17, Dx13, Co14, Ch12. **Magical Items:** +2 *armor of Ixion's Might\**, +2 *fireblade\**, *holy orb of Ixion\**, and *ring of phoenix fire resistance*. **Special Abilities:** +1 to Turn Undead rolls; can cast druidical *produce fire* twice a day in addition to normal spells.

**Mutations:** *detect invisibility*; acute allergy to feathered avians within a 100' radius (temporary -1 penalty to St, Dx, Co, and Ch; affliction cannot be magically *cured* short of a *wish* spell).

**Armor of Ixion's Might:** this gold and crimson suit of armor provides a magical +2 bonus to AC and saving throws, as well as the ability to control creatures native to the plane of fire with no more than 16HD individually (including salamanders, elementals of fire, and lesser efreet). On command, a cleric of Ixion may attempt to control any such creature within 100' when it first enters the area of effect. Targeted creatures must succeed a saving throw or be bound into service to the cleric. The effect lasts 1d4 days plus the cleric's Wisdom score and minus the target's HD or until dismissed.

**Fireblade:** this +2 two-handed sword can produce an elemental aura of flame that adds 2d4 points of burning damage to normal attacks (save for half damage). If spun around the cleric while ablaze, the fireblade can create a *wall of fire* once a day, as if cast by a 9th level magic-user.

**Holy Orb of Ixion:** it is an egg-sized ball of brass etched with perpendicular grooves. When cast at foes in the name of Ixion, the orb releases a powerful wave of raw energy wreaking 11d6+7 points of damage to enchanted, planar, or undead creatures of Chaotic alignment. It inflicts double damage to the undead but successful saving throws halve damage. The affected area fills a 40' sphere. The device is destroyed after it is used.

The Immortal Ixion is described here for convenience.

## Ixion, The Fiery One

*Developed from the original text by Marco Dalmonte*

**Patron of Energy, Light, & Banishment of Darkness**, also known as *Ayazi, Himayeti, Aksyri, Dazbog, Horon, Idu, Orisis, Otzitiotl, Pyrak, Pyro, Solarios, Sun Prince, Tabak, Tubak the Lawgiver, Tyr, Warruntam, Xi-Yang*

**Nature:** 36<sup>th</sup> level Hierarchy of Energy, Neutral

**Symbol:** a flaming wheel

**Interests:** sun, fire, power, heroism, war, light, banishing darkness, fighting Entropy

**Locations:** Alphatia, Bellissaria, Pearl Islands, Cestia, and parts of the Isle of Dawn, the Known World, the Great Waste, the Yavdlom Divinarchy, the Savage Coast, the Yazak Steppes, the Arm of the Immortal, Davania, and the Hollow World.

**Appearance:** a man whose apparent race changes depending on who observes him. In all cases, he has a long mane of shining golden hair and flaming eyes. His skin is a golden tone. He wears a golden silk robe and carries a flaming sword as a symbol of power. Ixion always travels on a giant flying wheel of fire.

**History:** Ixion is one of the oldest immortals and his origins are lost in the mists of time. He always purports not to remember how he attained immortality. Ixion helped Ka and Ordana create the Hollow World and preserve endangered races of Mystara. It earned him the scorn of Fugit from the Sphere of Time who thinks nobody should play with destiny. Ixion rules immortals of the Sphere of Energy and remains the unswerving bane of Entropy.

**Personality:** the embodiment of sun and light, Ixion has been honored since the beginning of time. While he's been recognized elsewhere as a lawgiver and a protector of justice, he represents in Alphatia power, both raw and magical. Like fire, he is hot-tempered, passionate, and always in motion but can sometimes demonstrate thoughtfulness, wisdom, and leniency when tempered by immortals of other spheres. His code of ethics dictates generosity in peace and harshness in war. Valerias is his soul mate despite quarrels marring their steamy relationship. Ixion and Nyx, the Queen of Darkness, also feel strangely attracted to each other, feelings he buried deep since she heads the Sphere of Entropy.

**Liege:** Unknown (possibly an Old One)

**Allies:** Valerias, Ka, and Asterius

**Enemies:** Atzanteotl, Thanatos, and Hel

**Followers' Alignment:** any

**Favored Weapons:** none; clerics can spend proficiency slots on bows and two-handed swords in addition to normal clerical weapons.

**Clerics' Abilities:** +1 bonus to Turn Undead, clerics can cast the druidic spell *produce fire* twice a day.

## Emir Al Shams, Efreeti Warlord

Some of the "visiting" efreet escaped from Mystara and eventually reported to Al Shams what lay on the other side of the *teleporter*. At the time, adventurers were involved with collecting shards for the Temple of Ixion. It wasn't determined whether efreeti or sollux forces control the device but if the efreet do, Al Shams intends to use it as best he can to wreak destruction upon the Temple of Ixion. The mission of any efreet or their allies showing up in the District of Helion is to collect as many shards as possible and assemble them in order to increase the *teleporter's* capability, thus allowing in more of his troops. It will be he who shows up if an "Amir" is listed in the teleportation calendar. If he ever does, Al Shams and his escort will fly to the District of Djinn and challenge Al Safeer. His goal is to kill the ambassador and destroy the gate to their kingdom. If he survives, he'll travel to Thothia or Ylaruam in search of a passage back to the Elemental Plane of Fire.



**Appearance:** Al Shams stands 20 feet tall, is very muscular, and does not change his appearance except to become a pillar of fire. He has red skin. Deep orange-red hair matches the long tapering moustache and the beard reaching from underneath his pointed chin to his waist. Al Shams has startling emerald green eyes. Two intense red full-curved horns grow from his hairline: his turban sits between them. He wears flowing silk robes of vivid gold that show subtle shades of scintillating dark green and sapphire blue as the light upon them changes. A belt of many braided gold cords ties in a complicated knot at his waist, the individual ends cascading to his knees. He wears a ring formed from a single piece of peridot engraved with efreeti script around its circumference. When pensive, he fidgets with a four-foot-long rod of smooth rainbow obsidian.

**Greater Efreet,** HD20\*\*\*(L), hp90, AC-2, hp90, MV 120' (40')/360' (120'), AT 2 fists, Dmg 3d10/3d10, Save M36, ML11, AL C, In14. **Magical Items:** *ring of telekinesis* (400 lbs/200 Kg), and *rod of cancellation* (which he can *summon* at any time). **Special Defenses:** +2 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 2 hp/round, cannot be *summoned*. **Special Attacks (once per day):** *fireball*, *explosive cloud*, and shapechange into *pillar of flame*. **Other Powers:** all those available to lesser efreet including *wall of fire* and *invisibility* (once per round), grant a *wish* to someone (once daily), enter or leave the Ethereal Plane (this ability is currently blocked by Ixion).

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*

# Ar: High Dive of the Hippogriff

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This land was once a part of what later became the District of Griffon, just north along the banks of the Crystal Lake. During the troubled times that followed the end of the original royal dynasty, Alpathian aristocrats whose properties centered around Arregghi revolted. The conflict had more to do with control over the Cloudstone mine that lay between lands owned by the two factions. With the ascension of the House of Qimeth to the throne, the civil war came to an end, and the breakaway region became the District of Hippogriff.



**Lower Hippogriff District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The Cloudstone mine, although it presently lies within the District of Griffon, belonged to a large number of aristocrats hailing from both regions in roughly the same proportions. It is chiefly responsible for the creation of floating islands in both districts and is now functioning at a reduced pace since much of its deposit has been depleted. Worse, infiltration from the lake flooded parts of the giant excavation still bearing Cloudstones. Efforts are still being made to pump water out, shore up weakened shafts, and reinforce porous areas of seepage—a costly

project as thankless and gargantuan as it is fraught with dangers. Rogue ogres were seen sabotaging reinforcements, presaging new troubles with the hated race.



**Upper Hippogriff -- Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Since the times of the Ogre Wars, Arreghi benefited from local wealth and afforded itself heavy fortifications. Although the line of towers at the southern border leaves a lot to be desired regarding its ability to forestall an invasion, at least Arreghi could withstand a determined assault. Of all the districts of Ar, Hippogriff is the one most concerned about such a possibility. Under pressure from its aristocracy, successive viceroys maintained a good relationship with Foresthome's Marches of Ogresfell. Hippogriff Prime is a springboard from which Hippogrene vessels perform regular scouting missions well into Foresthome and participated in joint actions against monstrous raids. Pegataurs from Westford are also welcome on the floating island, occasionally occupying bivouacs near the southern tip. Although Foresthome's monarchy harbors mixed feeling about Hippogriff Prime's encroachment into Ogresfell's airspace, the elves of the Marches see it more as a protection and a form of commitment from Ar—not to mention the significant fee Hippogrene aristocrats pay for this privilege. From the point of view of Aran landowners, they'd rather pay their neighbors than the obtrusive Celestial Bureau. An

agreement between Ogresfell and Hippogriff requires these monies be used for military purposes. If a disagreement should occur, Hippogrene wizards remain confident they could reposition the island along an east-west axis.

Hippogriff is a diverse province, with hills, deep forests, fertile plains, grasslands, and access to a lake teeming with fish. Although Aran aristocracy turn up their noses at surface ships, humble fishermen rely on a flotilla of small boats to harvest the lake's bounty. Crystal Lake isn't the safest place to throw one's net, for ancient aquatic creatures also dwell there. To face the danger, a skyship usually patrols the lake, if not to engage a monster emerging from the depths but at least to give fishermen an early warning. Occasionally, a large flock of hippogriffs may swoop down and skim the lake's surface, seizing large fish or whatever else lurks just beneath the surface, and return to Hippogriff-II to feed their young. This is especially common during the spawning season when aquatic life lingers frenetically near the surface. On occasion, a fish or two might drop accidentally into a street of Arregghi while hippogriffs quarrel over prey, leading locals to look up before exiting buildings. . . and getting run over by a cart whose driver was doing the same. Although approaching these creatures can prove challenging, they generally do not attack people.

In total, 43,000 Hippogrene live in the district, with 1,200 on Hippogriff Prime. No more than 6% of the land is settled, leaving the remainder as borderland or complete wilderness. Its thousand-strong army includes seven skyships. Two of them are large sail ships, and a third qualifies as a troop transport, a solidly-built warship meant to operate deep in the Ogresfell. Among the small skyships, the H.H.M.S. *Caecos* patrols the lake. The *Favon* concerns herself with border surveillance and special police duties outside Arregghi. Based on Hippogriff Prime, the *Volturnal* and *Argestian* watch the upper district. The *Sky Horse*, the *Star of Arregghi*, and the troop transport *Voice of Razud* scout the Ogrepits Ridge and the Stoneridge Crag, lending a helpful hand to the elves of Ogresfell as needed.



**Hippogriff Prime:** This long and narrow island, stretching 44 miles (71 km) north to south, is home to the High Griffodrome and a very large lighthouse. Levitating at an altitude of 8,200 ft (2,500 meters), temperatures drop 31°F (18°C) compared with sea level conditions. The entire floating island is heavily forested, mostly with spruces, firs, and aspen. Conifers grow taller than usual despite the altitude, due to local magical conditions. Amid the deep and dark woods lay a handful of manor houses belonging to landowners. These estates, including the viceroy's palace, look more like hunting lodges than a typical Alphatian dwelling, at least from the outside. The grounds are used for hunting primeval deer, cave bears, giant boars, dire wolves, and cold-weather breeds of saber-toothed leopards. Other monstrous beings do dwell in the sylvan depths, feeding on local wildlife. The hunt is purely for sport and magic-use there is considered bad form. Hunters may go individually, equipped with wands duplicating the power of a bow and which require feats of dexterity to aim correctly. It is considered a primitive sort of magic

harking back to Alphatia's ancient times, and which comes closer to nature. It enables mages to test their mettle without the full accoutrements of wizardry. Master hunters are very well regarded throughout the realm. Hunts on horseback with packs of dogs are far more stylized and social by definition, and quite popular among visiting Aran aristocracy.

**High Griffodrome:** Although a gambling establishment like others so common in Ar, this one seems very proper and selective, a triumph of snobbism at its highest. Guests are always impeccably dressed and behaved, aside from the usual gossiping. It is the sort of place where one goes to be seen, a who's-who of Alphatia's upper crust bent on showing off the latest fashion from Aasla. Facilities were designed by the best artists from the Kingdom of Haven, resulting in a classical style, with monumental gilded domes and cupolas atop marble colonnades and archways, tall windows, and baroque decoration starkly contrasting with the deep, primal forest surrounding the grounds. A magical vault preserves comfortable air pressure and temperature. High Griffodrome is best known for hippogriff races. It features a circuit within the protective vault that demands ground speed and aerial prowess, a sort of steeplechase for winged mounts requiring them to fly through hoops, dive beneath horizontal obstacles, or bounce off vertical panels. Also common, sulky racing involves *levitating* carriages and jockeys armed with *telekinetic wands* to up the ante. Many a family rivalry is fought during these rough and tumble races. The best known include the *Royal Hunt*, the *Triple Wand Stakes*, and the *Imperial Derby* enshrined as yearly pilgrimages for the rich and high born. The best stallions can fetch very high prices, as do wagers during the races.

**Hippogriff-II:** this small floating island, near the district's northern borders, is home to throngs of wild hippogriffs. Its jagged, rocky spires float in the sky at 11,300 ft (3,400 meters) and is very cold year-round. A few noble houses cling to icy slopes, usually for the purpose of raising hippogriffs for the famous races. Isolated clerical or druidical hermits are known to live on the island. The monarchy also maintains a laboratory on the island. Its presence has to do with a curious aspect of hippogriffs' fantastic nature. Hard to breed in captivity, these creatures ought to result from griffons mating with mares—highly improbable since the winged beasts prey upon horses. The popular expression "*to mate griffons with horses*" clearly evokes impossible endeavors. Yet, hippogriffs do exist as a breed of their own. Confirming the wisdom that extraordinary creatures ought to achieve extraordinary deeds, a patrolling skyship observed a large rip form in the air, revealing a hundred hippogriffs diving at high speed. The tear vanished as abruptly as it had opened when the last creature barreled out. The flock circled the skyship for an agonizingly long moment during which her captain hesitated to order his boltmen into action. At the last second, the swarm suddenly veered and raced toward the floating island, which curiously had been sent aloft the previous day. There, among caves in what was later dubbed Hippogriff-II, the winged community chose to roost.



Ever since this event took place, mages have studied hippogriffs. As it were, domesticated stock proved unable to accomplish the feat leading to their appearance. Among the wild, a swarm of a hundred or more seemed necessary to provoke a tear. Their flight acted at times like migrating



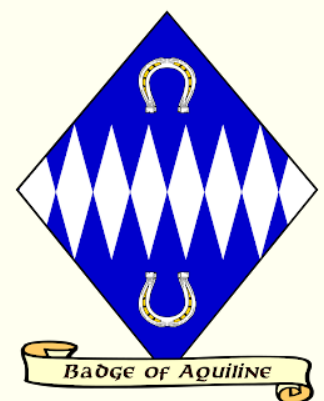
geese, and at others like clouds of sparrows suddenly changing direction for reasons unknown. A courageous mage riding a tame mount once joined a travelling flock. Accustomed to his presence while he'd studied them, the creatures did not chase him away. The rift opened after the glorious creatures flipped over and hurtled toward the ground in a perilous high-speed dive. The plunge took him through a wormhole which led above mountains in faraway Norwold. Soon after reaching Eastern Brun's vast wilderness, he was able to observe rituals of the hippogriff mating season. There was no clue about what had led the creatures to seek this remote region, perhaps an auspicious alignment among the asters. Many hippogriff communities, without a doubt from other regions of the world, appeared in neighboring mountain ranges and followed similar rituals, inferring these were habitual mating ground for these creatures. Whether others existed elsewhere remains unknown. Soon after the mating season ended, the swarm took off once more. After a long time spiraling up Norwold's cold, pristine sky, the hippogriffs opened another rift and returned to their roosting grounds in Ar. Why and how they'd initially chosen the floating island exactly when it was created remains another mystery.

Research goes on to this day, with the wondrous hope that perhaps the hippogriffs' secret might someday enable Aran skyships to travel in a similar manner. It is illegal to harm hippogriffs in Ar and they benefit from the same laws as those devised for griffons. Hippogriffs crave horsemeat but they only attack unguarded horses. They are quite fond of flying fish traveling through the skies of Ar in large silvery clouds or those fatter ones they can skim from the surface of Crystal Lake. Although they do not stray more than 80 miles from their floating island, the nearby lake and the Ogresfell are their preferred hunting grounds. Hippogriffs often fly in packs of ten or more while seeking prey.



## **Lady Aquiline, Royal Sage**

This research-minded mage is the grand-daughter of the one who'd once flown to Norwold with hippogriffs. She walked away from her high-born destiny and endeavored to continue her forebear's effort. Her office, appointed by the king, provides her with adequate resources. She works from an isolated tower on Hippogriff-II, which includes her personal quarters, a small library and laboratory, and a stable for her pet hippogriff. She spends much of her time surveying the floating island, counting couples and their young, documenting their lives, and monitoring their seasonal flights. Like her grandfather, she occasionally departs to Norwold to further her research. In more recent years, she was able to approach hippogriff lairs unharmed to watch their behavior more closely. She has developed a bond with a number of these creatures, especially those she helped heal of disease or injuries, and took their part against poachers and other unwanted intruders.



She sends yearly reports to the court in Skyreach. Filled with obscure or bizarre observations, none of these ever proved of any practical value to anyone, leading some at the royal court to

wonder if Aquiline might have “gone native.” She is seen as a nature-loving eccentric and an activist against the raising of hippogriffs in captivity, their commercial trade, and their recreational use at the High Griffodrome. The latter earned her the enmity of many Aran aristocrats. Although none of the above is factually incorrect, the truth is that Aquiline unveiled rudiments of the magic enabling hippogriffs to create a wormhole and to accurately target its opposite end. She chose not to reveal any of it, for fear of exposing her winged friends to damaging attention. Aquiline is even more concerned with political consequences of this knowledge, fearing inevitable abuse by those in on the secret, and conflict with those who seek it. For years, she has therefore engaged in the skillful practice of propagating distorted observations and false conclusions to mislead anyone else looking into hippogriff arcane abilities. Her high-born status, illustrious pedigree in the field of hippogriff research, lack of a consistent and sound government scrutiny, and the potential embarrassment to King Qissling if she were discredited, have so far protected her.

**Appearance:** in her fifties and standing just under six feet tall, Aquiline owns a sturdy demeanor; she strides everywhere she goes, her wooden-heeled knee-high boots announcing her arrival. Her skin is light copper, her eyes wide and brown, and her unusually elongated nose gives her a vaguely equine expression. Large square yellowed teeth set in her narrow mouth reinforce the image. Naturally ringleted chestnut hair falls past the middle of her back; untamed by comb or pins, it has attained the character of a small bush, including occasional twigs. In it, she often twines hippogriff feathers. Aquiline is often marked by bruises and streaks of earth or mud. She smells strongly of a combination of horse sweat, foetid blood, and the peculiar reek of raptors. She’d rather be riding a hippogriff or observing them than doing anything else. Aquiline gives little thought to how she speaks or acts in company; her attitude is rough and tumble, and she deliberately puts forth the impression she is quirky and very odd. Her robe is a dark brown leather jacket with a wide ankle-length skirt divided front and back.

M13, AC1, hp53, MV 120’ (40’), AT 1 blowgun, Dmg 1 or by spell, Save M13, ML9, AL L; St11, In17, Wi16, Dx13, Co16, Ch9. **Magical Items:** *sky rider’s robe AC4\**, *+3 blowgun\**, *+2 saddle of bonding\**, *ring of regeneration*, and *potion of extra healing*.

**Sky rider’s Robe:** this magical leather garment protects Aquiline from natural weather conditions prevailing at high altitude. Although it doesn’t enable her to survive in a void, it helps breathing at high altitude to avoid hypoxia. While wearing this robe, Aquiline never takes more than half damage from air- or cold-based attacks (quartered with a successful saving throw).

**Aquiline’s Blowgun:** this magical weapon is a four-foot-long wooden tube through which small darts are shot. It provides a +3 bonus to hit only. It usually is strapped to the harness on the flank of Aquiline’s hippogriff. This blowgun has an increased range compared with a non-magical weapon (30’/60’/90’). Its long, feathered darts inflict only a point of damage but a victim (up to 4HD) must save vs. poison or fall asleep for 1d4 Turns. Even with a successful saving throw, an enraged or frightened victim would be calmed. Subsequent darts are needed to affect a larger creature, at the rate of 2 extra HD per dart. Aquiline uses her blowgun as an Expert with BECMI game rules (a weapon specialist in the AD&D Game, ignoring class limitations).

**Saddle of Bonding:** this colorful set of black braided halter and tooled saddle enable Aquiline to communicate her intent to her mount from the standpoint of three-dimensional maneuvers. It confers a +3 bonus to AC and saving throws to both herself and her steed, as well as extend the protection of her robe to the hippogriff. While riding the *saddle of bonding*, Aquiline cannot accidentally fall off her mount while it engages in aerobatics.

## **Abateene the Hermit, Cleric of Palartarkan**

Ever since Aquiline's forebear explored the hippogriffs' ability to summon wormholes, the Temple of Palartarkan has maintained an uncanny interest in his research. Since he'd fended off all attempts at shedding light on the subject, a hermitage was erected in the general vicinity of the mage's dwelling on Hippogriff-II. During following decades, a succession of priests lived and died in utter solitude in what amounted to little more than a monastic cell on the icy, wind-swept mountain slope. Each sought divine enlightenment through prayer and meditation, while spying on the mage and now his grand-daughter, in the hope of unveiling clues. Over the years, Abateene, the sort of half-wild character matching Aquiline's demeanor, naturally developed a friendship with the *Hippogriff Lady*. He pays her an occasional visit, usually on holidays of clerical significance, providing any help he may and receiving some back. Although he is painfully aware of how Aquiline's research could impact the Alphaia Project, of which he'd been an architect, his growing feelings for Aquiline have resulted in a silent conflict between love and faith, or trust and duty. Which may prevail remains uncertain at this point. He hasn't pierced her secret as yet but a few clues here and there have been forthcoming (although Aquiline treasures his visits, she remains wary of her burden and of Abateene's possible motivations). Until their relation changes, the two quietly watch and protect each other should trouble arise.



**Appearance:** Abateene has the appearance and habits of a man who has been solitary in the wilds for a long time. He stands around six feet but looks taller because of his long-furred conical hat. The intense conditions in which he lives weathered his skin and his hands are gnarled and crooked. One hazel-hued eye glares either feral gold or intense green with brown flecks. The other turned milky from the puckered scar of an old wound that runs from his forehead to the middle of his cheek. He has wild pale brown hair and enough of a beard to toss over his shoulder to get it out of his devotions. Both are tied in knots decorated with bird bones, which sometimes clatter when he moves quickly. He wears felt boots lined with fur matching his hat and coat. Abateene's chainmail gives off pale blue glints and looks oddly civilized against his unkempt appearance. He bears a curious elbowed stick made from ironwood, about two feet from point to point, and carved on both sides with arcane designs.

C15, AC2, hp51, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 boomerang, Dmg 2d4+2/d6+2 or by spell, Save M13, ML9, AL N; St13, In14, Wi17, Dx13, Co15, Ch9. **Magical Items:** +2 *chainmail of the faithful\**, *stick of Palartarkan* +2/+4 vs. avians\*, *candle of shielding*, and *ring of air pressure*. **Special Abilities:** as a priest of Palartarkan, he can *fly* up to two hours per day (innate ability, cannot be *dispelled*).

**Chainmail of the Faithful:** this suit of pale bluish metal mesh provides Abateene with complete immunity to non-magical diseases and a +3 to saving throws versus other afflictions (including lycanthropy and such). It also informs his leader whether Abateene is alive, hurt, or dead, and the location of the armor (unless one is in the Hollow World and the other on Mystara's surface). Loss of faith or starvation would qualify as being "hurt." The chainmail only confers its magical benefits to faithful followers and clerics of Palartarkan, but if detected, it will radiate a magical aura.

**Stick of Palartarkan:** known elsewhere in Mystara as a boomerang, the weapon is magical and confers a +2 bonus to hit and damage (+4 vs. birdlike creatures 3HD or less). This item hits the same target twice: once when thrown and again during the following round when it returns to Abateene, usually with an additional +2 to hit for a back-attack if the victim isn't paying attention. Separate rolls are needed for each attack. The weapon requires open space to spin and fly. Within limited quarters, the weapon only provides a single attack, and it will fail to fly back to its owner. It can otherwise be used as a club. Catching a returning boomerang does not constitute an action and takes place at the end of the round; it doesn't require a Dexterity check unless hampered by adverse conditions. As an *Expert* with this weapon (see *Sling Weapon Mastery*, RC. pg.79), Abateene receives several bonuses and can move after throwing his boomerang. A player using a boomerang in this manner must announce before throwing the weapon where he/she intends to be at the end of the following round, otherwise the boomerang clatters on the ground at the wrong spot. For the AD&D Game, use weapon specialization mechanics (ignoring class limitations).



*Thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*

# Ar: Into the Manticore's Lair

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

A unique district, Manticore owns no surface land—its floating island levitates entirely above the Sea of Zebulon, off the coast of Djinn. Just as unusual, its inhabitants aren't remotely Alphatian. Well before the establishment of this curious dominion, three Ethengarian wizards, known as *hakomons*, approached the King of Ar, some time after the monarchy relocated to Skyreach. The encounter took place at a time when manticores terrorized the northern lands. In exchange for their services and fealty to the monarchy, these hakomons were charged with the difficult task of rounding up the beasts. Following their success, they became accepted in Aran high society, to a point. These enterprising mages became exceeding skillful tradesmen, using their exotic origins to initiate trade outside the traditional Alphatian spheres of interest, and acquiring goods desired by the local wizards. In time, they purchased a stockpile of Cloudstones and negotiated the creation the Island of Boreas, at the northern fringes of Ar. There, they built their capital city, and moved their captive manticores to networks of caves and dungeons opening on the island's underside.

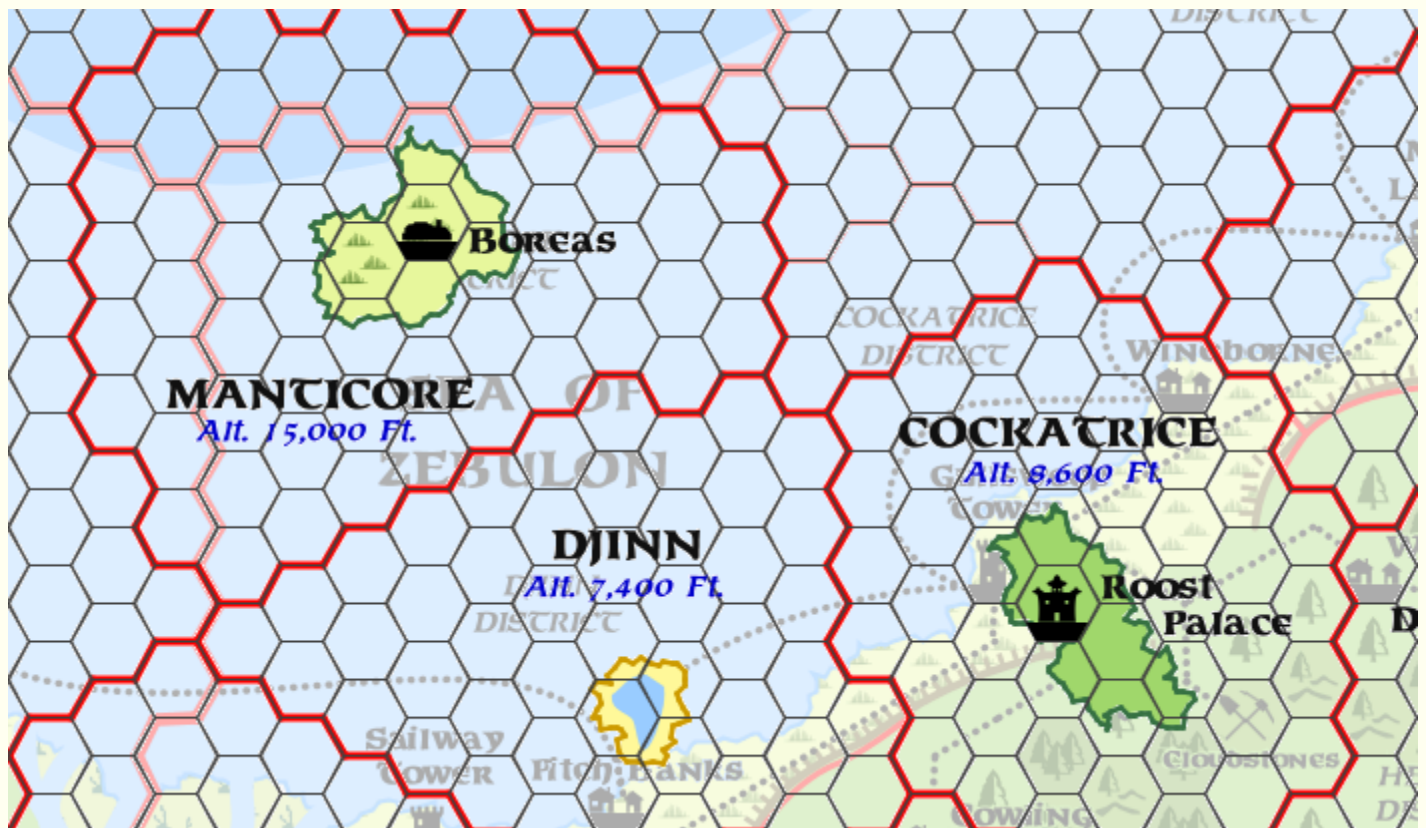


Sea of Zebulon/Lower Manticore - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

In the decades that followed, descendants of the hakomons' servants began populating Boreas. Other fellow Ethengarians trickled in, usually from visiting tradeships. They helped settle this strange new land and give it a thoroughly foreign look. Manticenes, as they became known, have discarded their Ethengarian preference for felt yurts and nomadic lifestyle in favor of more refined Ochalean manners and architecture, which now prevail in the town. Although accepted

as vassals of the Skyreach monarchy, citizens of Boreas do at times run into an invisible wall of unfortunate prejudice when dealing with high born Alphatians. A sort of distant politeness prevails in their relationship, which is perfectly fine since it works both ways. Manticones neither care for nor concern themselves with what stiff-necked Alphatians think of them. They remain wholly content with their miniature realm, out there above the sea, of which they are rightfully quite proud.

Boreas stretches about 8 by 20 miles (13 by 32 km), with a flat, grassy surface reminiscent of Ethengar. Although the overwhelming majority of the population lives in the town, about six hundred souls dwell in the three hakomons' manor houses and related properties in the open plains, usually involved in the raising of horses and sheep. For the most part, townsfolk in Boreas work in large trade guilds, rival houses with jealously defended commercial territories ranging from eastern Brun to western Skothar. If not running shops, taverns, or workshops, Manticones have learned out of necessity the business of fishing. There are two approaches when it comes to harvesting the marine bounty. One consists in flying a skyship and casting fishing nets along migratory paths or using ballistae to harpoon passing whales. A cheaper way involves large cranes at the edge of the island, which are capable of lowering nets all the way to the sea, 15,000 ft below (4.600 m). The cables are magically reinforced and anchored to reach deep beneath the surface. This leads to an odd spectacle of many lines stretching from the island, lowering nets and retrieving their catches at all times of the day. Occasionally, some are enchanted with *continual lights* for nocturnal fishing. Despite this practice, food must still be imported to support Boreas and, consequently, local prices are higher here than elsewhere in the realm.

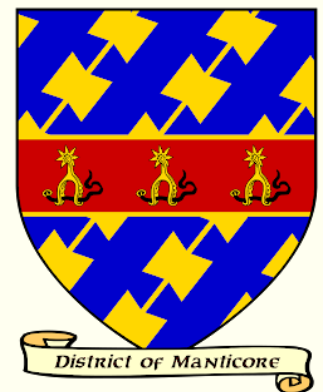


Upper Manticore District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

In total, 2,215 Manticenes live on the floating island, 1,574 in the town of Boreas alone. As such, the entire island's surface constitutes a borderland, with scattered sheep and horse farms, and fishing outposts dotting the island's rim. Its armed forces number all of 74 warriors, well paid and trained, with an average 5th level of experience (the highest in Ar). Part of this force serves aboard the H.H.M.S. *Sting of Boreas*, a small skyship whose mission is to patrol the sky above the island and the sea below, especially as regards sea monster activity that might disrupt fishing. This province of Ar does not benefit from a magical dome, and the population has adapted to living at high-altitude. Boreas features a heated core within its Cloudstone layer, which keeps temperatures higher than they should be at 15,000 ft altitude (4,600 meters). Compared with conditions at sea-level, air temperature only drops 22°F (13°C). Heat loss is immediate as one leaves Boreas, and beyond 100 yards, temperature drops instead 55°F (31°C). The relative difference between the two layers of air generates ground-hugging fog on all but the windiest days.

Of greater concern are 50 manticores living underneath the island. These are the last monsters of the sort in Ar. They are bred in captivity for special reasons. The first concerns the business of acquiring and selling spell components involving manticore parts, usually garnered from elder beasts that are dying or have recently died. Although Aran laws pertaining to aerial beasts do not entirely apply to manticores because these are sentient, evil, man-eating monsters, their handlers take care not to mistreat their livestock. Trade involves the production of *potions of manticore control*, which are popular in places like Blackheart (which still harbors manticores), and other regions outside mainland Alphatia. Boreas stockpiles these potions precisely to ensure handlers can control the beasts and their young. To stay healthy, manticores must fly, which demands the use of these potions to prevent their escape.

**The Triad:** The three hakomons still live on Boreas, withered old fossils preoccupied with their magical research. Although each of them runs a rival trade house, they often get together to direct the affairs of Boreas. The viceroy appointed by King Qissling appears as a figurehead at the service of this triad. An ulterior motive had driven these wizards to come to Ar, aside from their arrangement to rid the kingdom of manticores in exchange for becoming subjects of his Heavenly Majesty (a thoroughly meaningless issue from their points of view). In reality, they sought a quiet place from which they could pursue their research and experimentation on a stock of healthy manticores. Based on an ancient prophecy, they hoped to recreate a greater beast, which could command all lesser breeds. They intended to use this regal manticore to remove the present leadership in Ethengar and turn loose their monstrous allies, all of them, upon nearby Glantri. This last part, of interest to the House of Qimeth, sealed the association between the Aran monarchy and the triad. The fact they had been exiled and chased out of their native lands was conveniently glossed over. Since the time of the original agreement, the scheme has been largely dismissed as a pipe dream in Skyreach. All three hakomons are followers of the minor immortal Cretia. Hakomons are described in GAZ12, *The Golden Khan of Ethengar*.



**The Manticore Gambit:** The truth is that the research has already been completed. Each of the three hakomons has built a part of a construct meant to become the physical manifestation of the greater manticore. One fashioned its head, the other its chest, shoulders, front paws, and wings, and the last its hind quarters and deadly tail. The plan was to assemble the three parts so each of the hakomons could maintain control over the fantastic beast, individually or as a group. The creature's spirit would be forcibly summoned after the parts were assembled. Since they reached this crucial milestone, all three wizards have had second thoughts about sharing power. Each began scheming to summon the greater manticore's spirit separately and binding it to their own construct section in order to control the other two. This approach didn't work and may now provoke their downfall.

In their bids for power, the hakomons failed to notice that they had indeed summoned the greater manticore's spirit. However, separate body parts proved inadequate to forcibly contain the magical entity. Instead, it went in search of a more suitable host, the living body of a man, a warrior of substance who would better suit its own purposes. Meanwhile, now locked in stalemate, the hakomons behave as if nothing unusual happened, finding excuses not to assemble the construct until they can think of a way to make their schemes work. Time will tell if one of them does or if they choose instead to go after the other two parts. This latter move would trigger a war between the triad's trade houses, spurring a bloody conflict in the foggy streets of Boreas.

**Potions of Manticore Control:** they function like *potions of dragon control*, affecting up to three creatures at a time for 1d6+6 Turns. The manticore spirit and the construct are totally immune to the potions' effects. Heretofore "uncontrolled" manticores get a saving throw against a potion's effect but none against the spirit's power. Manticores already under a potion's control are immune to other potions and receive a saving throw vs. the spirit's power. Manticores under the spirit's control receive a +2 saving throw to resist a potion's effect. Enough potions should be available to balance out protagonists, at least initially.



## **His Highness Tegujin, Viceroy of Manticore**

This bland, meek-looking character is Alphatia's pawn in the Boreas chess game. Somewhat foppish, effeminate, and faint of heart, he'd been nonetheless appointed by King Qissling as viceroy on the basis of his upbringing and lineage. Although he never served in Ar's military, a drawback raising many eyebrows in Skyreach, Tegujin demonstrated excellent skills as an administrator and a financier. Perhaps more critical is the fact his mother was a high born Alphatian who married a past Manticene general, one who'd saved her from certain death during a far-flung mission for the empire. At the time, the affair was deemed scandalously audacious, but the matter eventually was forgotten. Tegujin grew up as a half-caste, uncomfortably straddling the wall separating Alphatian and Manticene societies, heir to both and beloved by none. In Qissling's tortuous mind, it seemed to make him a better candidate to extend



Skyreach's authority upon Manticore. In view of Tegujin's apparent submissiveness, the triad tacitly approved the choice.

Tegujin, whose name translates as "one who makes perfection," isn't remotely a fop or a weakling. His appearance is a ruse to fool the triad into believing he is their pawn. He'd received martial training from his late father when he was a child, as well as political and business acumen from his mother. He despises the triad and has been secretly working to undermine their hegemony. During his later youth, at a time when adventuring took him to Ethengar, he became a faithful follower of the immortal Yamuga (Terra), and later received his calling as a cleric, a fact he kept to himself. At a higher level, Yamuga rewarded him with a



unique tabi servant endowed with a Lawful alignment. Tegujin doesn't object to the business involving manticores but he is convinced the triad must be eliminated because their plan will bring about Boreas's doom, undue chaos in Ethengar, and ultimately war with Glantri. Part of his plan involved earning the loyalty of Boreas's small army and its commanding general. Tegujin made sure troops were well paid and well trained, so that one day they may confront the dreaded hakomons. A thorn in his plan is the triad's reliance on private guards, gangs of mind-controlled thugs, to guard the captive manticores and the stocks of potions beneath Boreas. A few of his own informers have already infiltrated their ranks.

**Appearance:** Tegujin works hard at keeping his mild and rather dysfunctional side foremost. Of medium height, he bears a teardrop-shaped face with unremarkable features. His long hair is brushed straight back from his wide ivory forehead and tied in an elaborate knot adorned with golden sticks topped with green jade and malachite at the nape of his neck. His eyes are black and typically almond-shaped, with heavy lids which further his public character. Tegujin wears a robe of midnight blue silk with a stiff Mandarin collar. A placket with a confection of whorled gold braid fashioned into knotted buttons and loops ends in a gold braided belt at his waist. Golden thread embroidery finishes the collar and hems of the narrow sleeves and skirt, worked so subtly that the device of tiny monkeys climbing along vines escapes the notice of most observers. His staff appears delicate and is a plain length of mahogany. The hammer atop the shaft is fashioned of black agate. Arkhi, Tegujin's tabi, is a little beast the size of a house cat, with long golden fur and brown leathery wings. Its face is flat and has lively round black eyes and a small black nose. Arkhi has pointed ears atop its head that swivel toward any sound. Its voice is small and piercing.

C11, AC1, hp45, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff, Dmg 1d6+2 or by spell, Save C11, ML10, AL L; St12, In14, Wi18, Dx16, Co13, Ch8(15). **Magical Items:** *robe of monkey spirit* AC5\*, *stone of stolen strength*\*, and +2 *ring of protection*. **Clerical Abilities:** +1 to hit/dmg with stone weapons; as a cleric of Yamuga, can cast *renew*, *produce fire*, and *feast* spells. Alternatively, as a cleric of Terra, Tegujin may have the mystic's ability to *speak with animals*.

**Robe of Monkey Spirit:** this curious garment confers Tegujin with a +1 Dx bonus as well as the skills of an accomplished *escape artist* (including *acrobatics*, *alertness*, *jump*, and *climb*). Its enchantment is good enough to give him a basic AC of 5. It is a trickster's attire, which helps

protect his true personality—Tegujin gets a saving throw with a +2 bonus against any magic used to see through his subterfuge. If he succeeds, the magic yields a false result.

**Stone of Stolen Strength:** This +1 magical weapon is a seven-foot-tall staff imbedded with what looks like a small stone hammerhead. On command once a day, it enables Tegujin to swap his strength score with an opponent's within his weapon's reach. A saving throw vs. spells negates the effect which otherwise lasts until the foe is defeated, until the end of the combat encounter, until *dispelled*, or until Tegujin is disarmed—whichever happens first.

**Arkhi:** AC6, HD5\* (S), hp25, MV 60' (20')/240' (80'), AT 2 claws, Dmg 1d4/1d4 + special, Save M5, ML12, AL N, Int 8. **Special Abilities:** venom in its claws causes delusions (negated with a saving throw vs. paralysis). Delusional victims attack someone else for the next 2d6 Turns, or until the venom is neutralized. The tabi also has a 40% chance to *pick pockets*, *move silently*, and *hide in shadows*. Its favored combat tactic is to wait in ambush, attack, and retreat while its delusional victims attack each other.

## *Terra*

**Patroness of Life and Fertility**, also known as *Mother Earth*, *Yamuga*, *Yamag*, *Cay*, *Marau-Ixuí*.

**Nature:** 36<sup>th</sup> level Hierarchy of Matter, Lawful

**Symbol:** a circle of stones with a plant in the center

**Interests:** the element of earth; the creation and protection of Earth-based races. Especially as Yamuga: balancing the cycle of fertility, birth, and the return to earth; livestock herders and farmers.

**Locations:** Known World (Ethengar), Yazak Steppes, Savage Coast (Cay, Jibarú), Alphatia, Bellissaria, Davania, Skothar, Hollow World (Neathars, Nithians, Jennites), Elemental Plane of Earth, and other planes.

**Appearance:** a strongly built, dark-skinned woman clad in simple brown robes, showing a stern yet compassionate expression. Hair color varies from rosy red at dawn, brown in the morning and afternoon, blonde at midday, and black from sunset on.

**History:** Terra began her existence as an earth elemental, a great warrior against invaders from other elemental planes. An incorporeal voice contacted her during her youth, leading her on the path to immortality. She later explored the multiverse and became fascinated with the way worlds could spawn whole cultures and races. The latter became her hobby as well as the sponsorship of new Immortals of Matter. She is the most powerful Hierarchy within her sphere.

**Personality:** Though she despises the daily plots and intrigues of immortals, she does her best to promote her sphere above the

others. She is stubborn, literal, and dislikes change in general. She prefers unwavering laws and insists that justice be served.

**Liege:** Unknown (possibly Ouranos)

**Allies:** Diamond (ruler of Lawful dragons), Djaea (whom she sponsored as an immortal). Terra has few friends but shares with Nyx an interest in new races.

**Enemies:** none.

**Followers' Alignment:** Lawful or Neutral; clerics must be Lawful.

**Favored Weapons:** any hand-held stone weapon, mattocks, hammers, or tools to work the earth (picks and shovels). Followers get a free weapon slot (using optional proficiency rules) for these weapons. Clerics of Terra also receive a +1 to hit and damage with these weapons.

**Clerics' Abilities:** as a cleric of Yamuga, can cast *renew*, *produce fire*, and *feast* spells. As a cleric of Terra, may have the mystic's ability to *speak with animals*.

## General Gangaldai

Manticore's military caste chose Gangaldai as their commander, a decision entirely based on merit. A follower of *Tubak the Law-Giver* (otherwise known as Ixion), the general had more than once fought aquatic monsters fouling Boreas's fishing nets and spent time with a small squad of fellow horsemen in the service of Sundsvall where he demonstrated excellent fighting and leadership skills. Two pet Hyborean tigers (7HD) normally stay by his side when in his quarters or while campaigning. Gangaldai, whose name means "of fire steel", doesn't like the triad any more than his liege the viceroy does, but he is a pragmatic character. He isn't likely to make the first move against anyone, preferring to wait for an opportunity to present itself. The general isn't likely to risk his small army in a vainglorious and foolish rebellion against the triad or set himself up for a war against the rest of Ar, let alone the empire. At least, this was the case until recently.



Gangaldai has become the recipient of the greater manticore's spirit. The entity has effectively taken control of the general's mind. Its goal is to identify Tegujin's informants, coerce them to Gangaldai's service, and if enough are swayed, to have them free all the manticores. The monsters are to kill everyone on Boreas and reclaim their ancestral territory in Ar. The entity knows what the triad is up to and will try to prevent them from assembling the construct. If they do, the hakomons would force the great manticore's entity into the construct and control it for good. It would, however, rid the general of his unfortunate possession, leaving him with useful memories that may prompt him into action. The entity is fully aware of the parts' hidden locations and how to steal one of them. The two tigers do not obey Gangaldai while he's possessed.

**Appearance:** Gangaldai is well above average height for his race, standing about 6'1". He has black straight hair with a stripe of white, drawn into a long ponytail at the back of his head. His face is square and strong, with bright black eyes beneath heavy epicanthic folds, and a long straight nose ending in a wide flare. Deep wrinkles frame the sides of his mouth. He has a long mustache and a trimmed beard. Robust energy difficult to contain and a muscular physique make him a formidable foe. Gangaldai is always ready to leap into action. He wears a fur-trimmed pointed helmet matching his armor and that affords protection for the back of his neck. He wears his horseman's sword at his side, as well as a recurve bow made from horn and bone along with a quiver of arrows on his back.

F14, AC0, hp74, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8+5, Save F14, ML11, AL N (C); St17, In12, Wi13, Dx15, Co16, Ch14. **Magical Items:** +3 *armor of tiger spirit*\*, +3 *sword of steppes*\*, *potion of flying*, and *ring of invisibility*.

**Armor of Tiger Spirit:** this magical suit of lamellar armor provides a +1 Strength bonus and immunity to fear. It also enables Gangaldai to speak with tigers at will, as the clerical spell *speak with animals*, and, once a day, *hold* up to 9HD of tigers or tiger-like animals, as the druidical *hold animals* spell.

**Sword of the Silent Steppes:** on command once per day, this traditional Ethengarian's horseman's sword can release a *lightning bolt*, as the wizard's spell, or *control winds* as the druidical spell. Both effects are cast as a 10<sup>th</sup> level spellcaster. The sword is sentient, Neutral in alignment, and has an Intelligence of 9 with empathic ability. As long as the greater manticore controls Gangaldai, the sword will completely negate its own powers and entertain a far-less-than-cordial empathic relation with the intruder. Its name is "*Storm*" (also its command word), and it seeks glory in battle above all. It is likely to release its *lightning bolt* against its owner if used in a treacherous way or if the owner acts in a cowardly manner (fleeing from combat, refusing a challenge, discarding the sword, etc.). This sword can only be wielded by a character with a combined score of 150+ (Charisma score times the character's experience level), although it can be transported like any normal object.

## Greater Manticore Spirit

Although entirely immaterial, this entity can cast spells while possessing a host, each once daily: (I) *charm person*, *darkness*, *protection from good*; (II) *detect good*, *detect invisible*, *ESP*, (III) *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, (IV) *bestow curse*. It can also control any number of manticores within 300' radius (see *potions of manticore control*, listed earlier). Once the spirit's control is established, it remains permanent, regardless of distance. If its host is killed, defeated, or otherwise disabled, the spirit may cast *magic jar* up to three times per day until it acquires a new host (if the spell succeeds, the host's soul is stored in a random object within 60'). The spirit is never bound by the object of the *magic jar* spell since it does not have a body of its own and may roam Boreas in an incorporeal form in search of a new host—MV 360' (120'). If the general is killed or defeated, the entity will attempt to possess Tegujin next or any resilient character other than the hated hakomons. Assembling the three construct pieces immediately forcibly binds the spirit to the construct, which remains fully under the triad's control (no save). Destroying the construct after it's been assembled will kill the manticore spirit

(a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell cannot separate the spirit from the construct once the binding has occurred).

**Greater Manticore Construct:** AC2, HD15\* (L), hp100, MV 210' (70')/360' (120'), AT 1 bite, 2 claws, 6 spikes, Dmg 3d8/2d8/2d8/1d8 per spike, Save F10, ML12, Int12, AL C.

**Special Abilities:** +1 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *charm* spells; immune to poison and gas-based attacks (does not breathe or require sustenance); *detect invisible 60' radius* at all times. **Tactical Notes:** spikes have the range of a long bow (70'/140'/210'); the construct has 32 spikes, but it can only regrow them if it eats fresh meat (1HD worth per spike).

## ***Suggested Sequence of Events***

**1.** With mounting tension among the triad and Gangaldai's growing reluctance to obey his orders, Tegujin hires adventurers as bodyguards. Hakomons are no longer communicating with Tegujin and the dungeons' entrances have been closed.

**2.** Tegujin and Gangaldai (possessed by the spirit) independently send parties into the dungeons, either to secure *potions of manticore control* (Tegujin) or destroy them (Gangaldai). PCs participate in this effort as their own party. Sensing their grip slipping, the hakomons begin fighting each other, trying to capture the other two construct segments. Gang warfare erupts in the streets of Boreas.



**3.** PCs are ordered to hold the viceroy's compound against assassins and manticores sent by the hakomons. Tegujin transmits a message to Skyreach about the bloody unrest. The *Sting of Boreas* takes position above the compound but does not intervene, other than defending herself against manticores.

**4.** Tegujin dispatches a message to Gangaldai, ordering him to restore order with his troops. Feigning obedience, Gangaldai leads all of his troops into the dungeons. While utter chaos and destruction reigns in the streets above, the general takes control over all remaining manticores still in captivity. He orders them to attack everyone on the surface.

**5.** Skyships from neighboring districts start arriving to investigate the chaos. Assisted by the general's manticores, the *Sting of Boreas* attacks them. The fight rages above Boreas. Tegujin and the PCs leave the compound to find a secret entrance to the hakomons' fortress, hidden in the dungeon.

**6.** Meanwhile, Gangaldai and his troops assault the hakomons fortress in upper Boreas. Two of the hakomons are killed during the onslaught but the third assembles the construct in the nick of time. Manticores now under the hakomon's control turn on Gangaldai and his troops. The *Sting of Boreas*, if not destroyed, strikes her colors at once.

**7.** Tegujin and the PCs mount a surprise attack upon the surviving hakomon. They must first destroy the construct before they can defeat him. With surviving troops, Gangaldai rallies and counterattacks, distracting a number of manticores guarding the fortress. Skyship reinforcements are now inflicting a shellacking upon manticores taking to the skies. If the construct is destroyed, the last beasts either retreat to the dungeons or flee into the woods in neighboring lower districts. If the hakomon somehow dies before the construct is destroyed, the latter immediately flees and attempts to hide somewhere in the Imperial Territories.

**8.** After the smoke clears from Boreas's rubble, PCs are offered bounties to recapture escaped manticores that have begun preying on Aran farmers once more. Magical nets and lassos are loaned for the job. Live male manticores fetch a full payment, half only for dead ones, double for mares. PCs are not permitted to stray into the Imperial Territories to go after the construct (if it fled there).

*Thanks to Janet-Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial support.*

# Ar: His Heavenly Majesty's Boltmen

Updated from the original version in *Champions of Mystara* by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

	<b>Boltman</b>	<b>Chief Boltman</b>
<b>Armor Class</b>	8	4
<b>Hit Dice</b>	MU1 or E1	MU3+ or E3+
<b>Move</b>	120' (40')	120' (40')
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1 wand	1 wand or spell
<b>Dmg/Attack</b>	6d6	8d6 or by spell
<b>No. Appearing</b>	1 squad (1d6+6)	1
<b>Save as</b>	MU1 or E1	Per class level
<b>Morale</b>	10	10
<b>XP Value</b>	20	150+
<b>Alignment</b>	Any	Any

The Imperial Alpathian navy and fighting skyships of Ar commonly use troops armed with *wands of lightning bolts*. Reliance on boltmen elsewhere in Alpathia varies with individual kingdoms. Differences may exist between imperial and provincial boltmen, depending on local culture and traditions. These experienced troops are well trained in the arts of aiming and discharging such weapons and they understand limitations and risks involved with such magic. They neither use it inconsiderately nor without orders.

The wands typically contain six charges each and can be recharged, normally by a navy magist after a battle. If a warship hasn't engaged in battle for several days, it is likely that the boltmen's wands are fully recharged as per navy regulations.

Boltmen are usually 1st-level magic-users or elves. In the Imperial Skyfleet each wears knee-high hoots, white knickerbockers, a laced shirt, a blue padded jacket with epaulets, and a black velvet cloak. In Ar's skyfleet jackets are red, and rods are slowly replacing wands. Rods are harder to conceal, come with a leather lanyard to secure them around their boltmen's wrists, and can be used as clubs when depleted. Boltmen wear leather headgear and carry equipment on their belts in leather cases. Their equipment normally includes a wand (or a rod), one or two daggers, a score of darts, food, and other minor field equipment (rope, hooks, spade, bandages, waterskin, torches, etc.). Aran skyship crews all wear magical *rings of air pressure*. This equipment, not always available on other Alpathian skyships, enables them to operate at high altitude.



**Chief Boltmen** (*Chief Petty Officer rank*): these higher-level spell-casters use wands with more charges and causing more damage than regular boltmen's wands. Chief Boltmen wear magical headgear made of very thin metal over leather. This does not provide magical protection, except perhaps from sun, but does provide magical protection granting a +2 saving throw against any magical attack.

Chief Boltmen command boltman squads. They report to the Chief of the Guard on their ship. Boltmen have different command words to activate their weapons and have sworn never to reveal them. However, many boltmen who have fought together know each other's magical words. Chief Boltmen ensure that these words get changed, especially after a major battle. In addition to the Ordinary Boltmen, there are *Able-Bodied* Boltmen (MU2 or E2) and *Lead Boltmen* (also known as *1<sup>st</sup> Class Boltmen*, MU3 or E3, but not yet qualified for NCO status).

In addition to boltmen, squads may rely on various specialized troops. They have the same game statistics as those of the standard boltmen but use different magical items. *Dispel Wardens* use wands with six charges of *dispel magic*. *Protection Wardens* use wands with six charges of *protection from normal missiles*. Light marines use wands with 20 charges of *magic missiles* (1d6 damage/shot). Heavy marines are not commonly seen: these are low-level fighters, complete with chain or plate armor and bastard swords. Heavy marines are used only during large-scale battles, usually on imperial vessels.

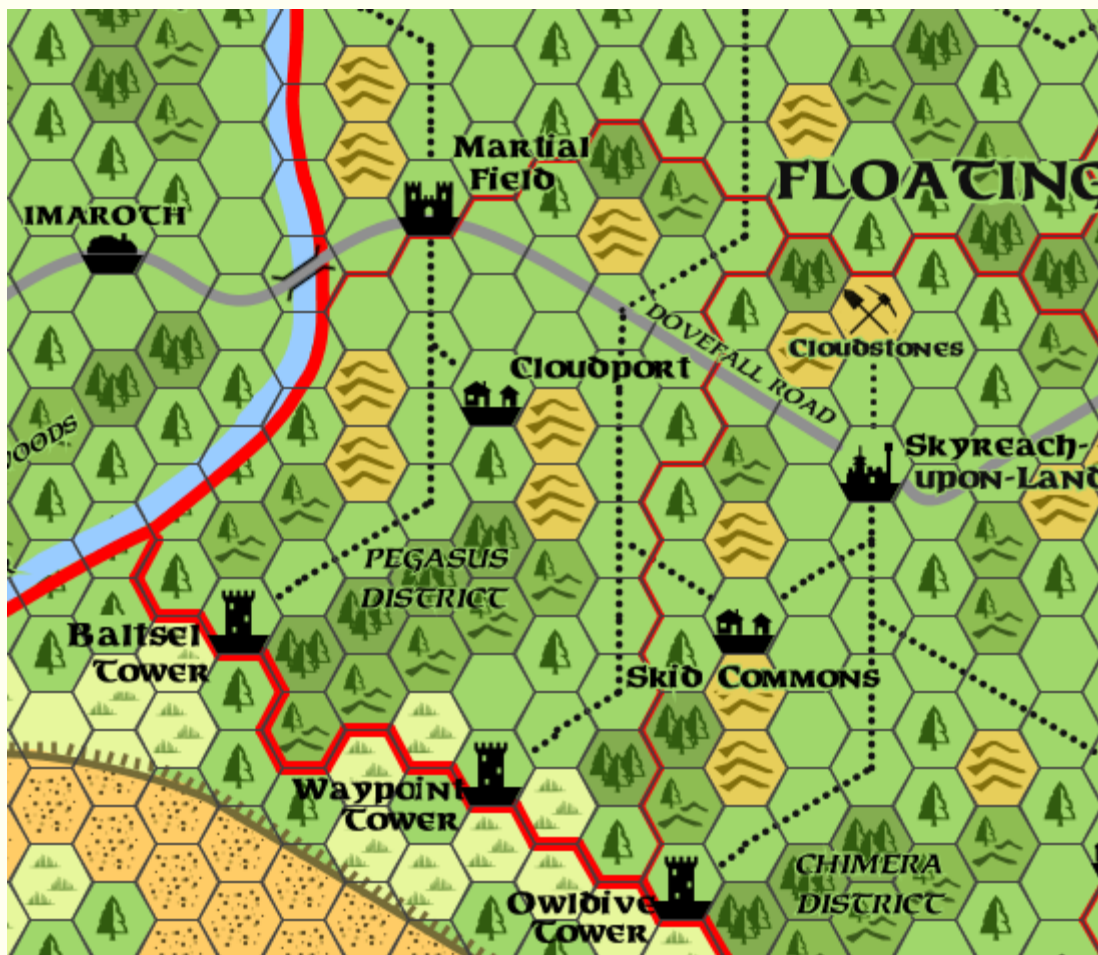
Although enlisted personnel, boltmen are paid better and have a few more liberties than non-spellcasting crew members.



# Ar: Where Pegasus Roams

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Pegasus is an unusual district of Ar. It became a center of philosophy regarding the universe and immortals not long after Alphatians settled the region. Pegasi frequently visited the woods that once covered the entire area, especially near certain ponds and streams which, after observation, proved magical. The latter radiated dweomers beyond common Aran enchantments and did not flow from natural underground sources. The notion that immortals had created them became widely accepted, especially since monsters that otherwise populated the region never approached them. Word spread that this water had healing and soul-enhancing properties. As settlers took over the lowlands, many began abusing or capturing pegasi for profit, or fought for access to magical water. Some bottled the liquid and promptly set up shop while shady individuals sold common water at outrageous prices to unsuspecting victims. This deplorable state of affairs ended when a floating island was sent aloft, taking with it all of the enchanted sources. The undesirables were evicted and the lowland was revitalized to make up for large sections of soil taken from its surface. Since then, the floating island became a natural preserve for pegasi and a carefully managed area dotted with shrines dedicated to immortals of Ar.



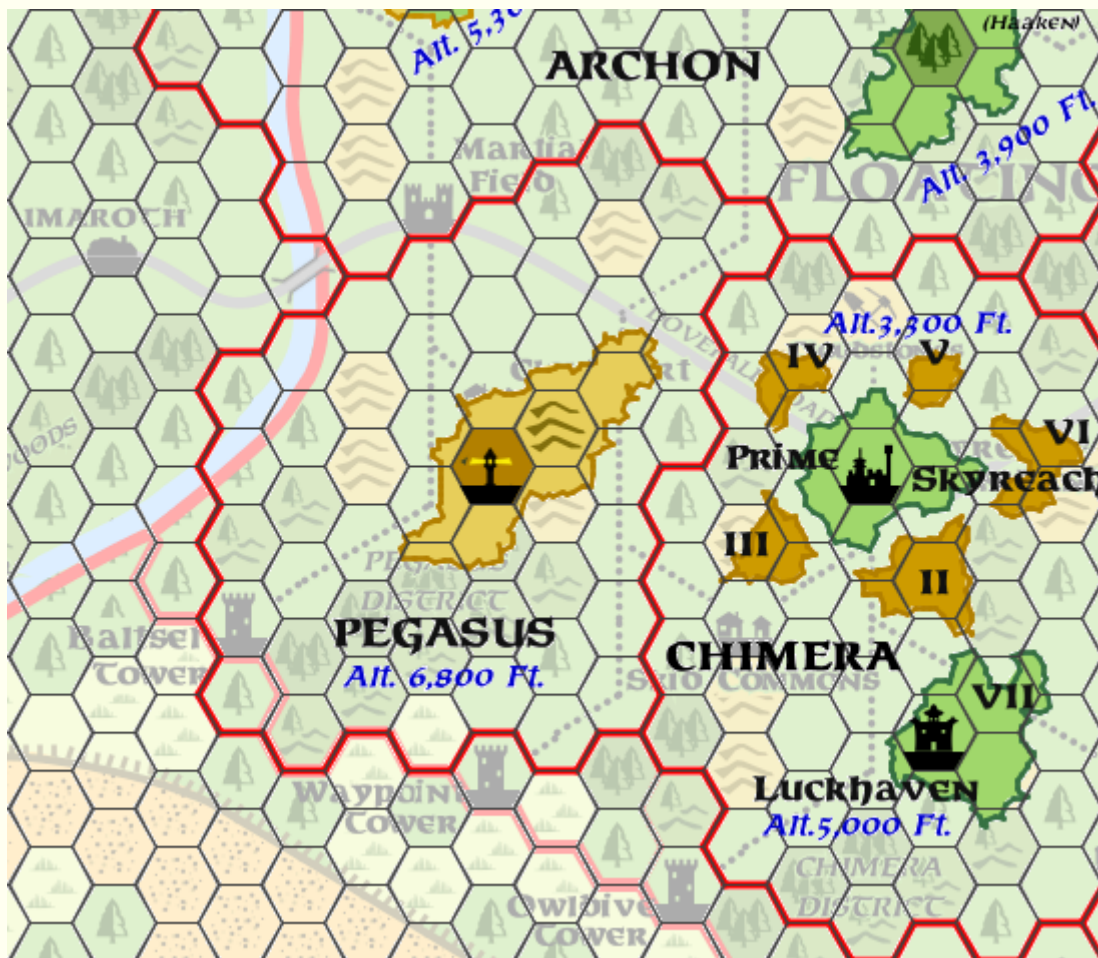
**Lower Pegasus District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Today, the lowland harbors about 40,000 people, or 97% of the district's entire population. This quiet dominion features one village, Cloudport, and two towers on the border with the Stone

Ridge Crags. Plains have largely been turned into farmland since the “reseeding” that followed the floating island’s departure.

## Upper Pegasus District

Hills cover its entire surface, with a large mountain near its center. The original magical sources were incorporated to the new topography to enable as much privacy for visiting pegasi as possible. Access is restricted and requires approval of one of the clerical orders overseeing the island. Orders present on Pegasus Prime include Palartarkan, Ixion, Alphatia, Razud, Pharamond. . . and Nyx. In total, 1,147 people reside permanently on Upper Pegasus, most of them in the “lighthouse.” The latter is a fortress carved directly into the mountain. It harbors temples, quarters for visitors, military barracks, the viceroy’s palace, a skyport, and a large navigational beacon on the mountain’s peak. Although visitors can gain access to the lighthouse without too much clerical red tape, visits to the rest of the island are strictly controlled and require an escort.



Upper Pegasus District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Most of the district’s military remains at the lighthouse, along with five of their six skyships. The Pegasite navy includes one large and five small vessels used mostly to patrol the lower and upper districts, as well as the Stone Ridge Crags. The fleet’s vessels are the H.H.M.S. *Arcane*

*Steam, Sky Dust, Fog of War* (the latter based in Cloudport), *Star Bolt, Moonshadow*, and the large skyship, the *Great Mare*.

**Magical Ponds and Streams:** immortals created them early during the world's advent, one of several similar places on Mystara and in the Hollow World. They were devised to enable the faithful to come closer to their immortal patrons and receive guidance. They are most relevant to Spiritual Classes (clerics, paladins, druids, mystics, etc.). Among Secular Classes (common fighters, thieves, magic-users, elves, dwarves, etc.) only the most devout individuals may benefit from powers available to Spiritual Classes if they are consistently role-played as pious characters and enjoy Wisdom scores 16 or higher. Up to three potion doses per person may be kept in containers if the latter are *blessed* and coated with gold on the inside. Attempts to abuse the water's bounty, such as making very large containers or a great number of them, will spoil their contents. Effects are always relevant to the drinkers' faiths (ponds and streams are not specific to any immortal) and are always subject to time limits given below. Unlike a common magic-user's potion, if this hallowed water is saved in a container its effects vary with circumstances and a time factor must be considered between doses (see below).

**Spiritual Classes:** medicinal powers are available once a week, including *cure serious wounds, cure blindness, cure disease, or remove curse*. For characters 11th level or higher, the water also provides a temporary +1 Wisdom lasting one day; the modified score may exceed 18. Only one effect applies, based on the character's own priorities at the time of consumption. The water does not cure lycanthropy or vampirism unless the drinker is of a Spiritual Class and at least of 11th level (no exceptions). Once a month, the water confers a *commune* spell. Although up to three questions may be asked, very often answers will be given in such a way to further the patron immortal's personal goals. They often result in quests.

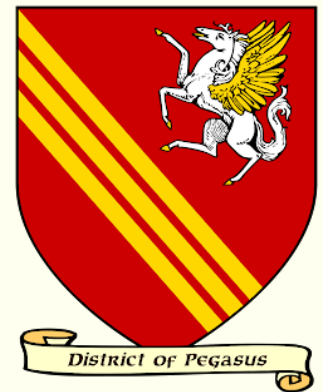
**Secular Classes:** medicinal powers are available once a month, including a *cure light wounds, or a cure blindness, or a cure disease*. Once in a lifetime, the water confers a *commune* spell, as above.

**Where Pegasus Roams:** the presence of flying horses near these ponds and streams is no coincidence. These mythical creatures came into being during the early eras of Mystara's existence. Intended as the mounts of great leaders and heroes, they soon strove to reach loftier ends, not in terms of physical altitude but of spiritual elevation. Over time, the mightiest of them became directly associated with immortals. Greater pegasi enabled their riders to touch upon the world of the divine. In some unusual circumstances, they could bring worthy riders (or their souls) to meet their immortal patrons.

There are presently twelve greater pegasi. The oldest of them is the Great Mare, also known as the Star Pegasus, who attained immortality on her own. She answers to no one among the spheres. She concerns herself with the wellbeing and protection of common pegasi and to a certain extent of all equines. In past centuries, she also engendered five greater pegasi who remain at the disposal of immortals requiring their services. They are named Dust, Fog, Smoke, Bolt, and Shadow. Although the Great Mare and her offspring are Lawful beings, the latter

temporarily reflect the alignments of immortals they serve. Such service is always short lived, often involving a single, straightforward task. Great pegasi usually correspond to a specific sphere: Dust/Matter, Fog/Time, Smoke/Thought, Bolt/Energy, and Shadow/Entropy. However, immortals likely pick a servant best matching their temperaments. For example, Al Kalim from the Sphere of Time might select Dust or Smoke rather than Fog to serve his purposes. For a time, a grateful immortal may assign a greater pegasus to a worthy follower (high level paladins, knights, avengers, and clerics), usually for no more than the length of a quest or to complete unfinished business. Should one of her five greater pegasi be destroyed, the Great Mare would create another to take its place.

The remaining six greater pegasi are called rogues, creatures of chaos that came to light from diverse and obscure origins. They include Steel, Antimony, Amber, Quicksilver, Flash, and their leader, Crystal, all of whom can somewhat imitate their Lawful rivals' appearances. They serve no one but themselves. They delight in waylaying those who associate with their rivals and swaying to their side common pegasi. Rogues may choose to become someone's mount for a time as long as it benefits their schemes and purposes. Crystal presently seeks immortality under Nyx's aegis. She secretly harbors the desire to become the Great Mare's nemesis.



**Greater Pegasus\*:** AC-6, HD20\*\*\*\*\*, MV 300' (100')/600' (200'), AT2 hooves, Dmg 3d6/3d6, Save F20, ML11, In12, AL special. **Monster Type:** Planar Monster (unique). **Special Abilities:** although not an immortal, it is "ageless"; can cast *dispel magic*, *word of recall*, and *travel* once per day; can cast *protection from lightning* and *control winds* once per day as a 20<sup>th</sup> level druid. **Special Defenses:** +2 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to poison, fear, petrification, and 1st through 4th spell levels. **Special Attacks:** summon 2d6+6 pegasi once per day; can cast an *earthquake* spell as a 20th level cleric once per adventure—requires the greater pegasus to spend 1 Turn trampling the ground with its hooves.

- **Bolt:** white—can also cast *magic missiles* as a 20th level magic-user once per day. Bolt has a reputation for being short tempered and grumpy, but otherwise loyal to a fault.
- **Dust:** palomino—can turn itself along with its rider into a *dust devil* (a djinni's *whirlwind*), once per day. This is a cheerful creature, somewhat of a prankster despite its prevailing Lawfulness.
- **Fog:** dapple gray—can turn itself and its rider *invisible* three times per day. Fog is bashful when in the presence of many people or strangers and may accidentally adopt a *gaseous form* (10% chance), unceremoniously dropping its rider.
- **Shadow:** black—immune to level draining attacks or creatures related to shadows. It likes darkness and can see perfectly through it but tends to fall asleep if idle. When taking a nap in the dark, Shadow is thoroughly undetectable.
- **Smoke:** chestnut—can cast *confusion* three times per day (rider is immune). Somewhat ADHD, Smoke is also known for sneezing and chuffing loudly when excited or angry (10% chance), accidentally producing an *obscure* effect (as the druid's 2nd level spell).

- **Amber:** palomino—this mare is part amber dragon. She may revert at will to her true appearance, revealing light golden reptilian scales and leathery wings. In this form, she can breathe fire three times a day like a 10HD ruby dragon.
- **Antimony:** black—is poisonous to the touch (save vs. poison or die) but may also cast a *cureall* spell once per day. Any parts of this being are highly sought after by powerful alchemists and healers. The poison does not affect its rider.
- **Crystal:** chestnut—in her true vitreous appearance, this mare can create and manipulate ice crystals once per day, as a magic-user's *stoneform* spell. She is immune to cold-based attacks.
- **Quicksilver:** dapple gray—in his true form, this stallion appears as if he were made of mercury. He can squeeze through small spaces at will. Single physical attacks inflicting 20 point of damage or more against this creature will split its body into smaller replicas with half the original's HD. Separate parts remain under Quicksilver's mental control and can attack individually. They will seek to recombine after a battle.
- **Steel:** blue roan—its true appearance reveals a mechanical creature. In combat, any metallic object coming in contact with Steel must succeed a saving throw vs. magic or rust. Each rusted item heals 1d6 points of damage inflicted upon Steel, +1d6 for each magical plus. The effect does not apply to its rider.
- **Flash:** white—once a day, this mare can produce a powerful flash equivalent to a 10HD *fireball* spell (as regards damage and area of effect). Blind creatures are immune but all nocturnal and negative energy beings save with a -4 penalty. If basic damage exceeds 30 points, the flash also produces a *timestop* effect, as the 9th level wizard spell. The amount of damage sustained indicates how long victims remain blinded: **5-20** 1d4 rounds, **21-30** 1d4 Turns, **31-40** 1d4 hours, **41+** permanent.

## The Great Mare

**Patroness of Pegasi**, also known as the *Star Pegasus*, or *Epona* in other cultures.

**Nature:** 17<sup>th</sup> level Celestial of Matter, Lawful—AC-6, hp260, HD31, MV 600' (200'), AT 2 hooves or fists/1 wing or kick, Dmg 3d6, AM 60%, Save IM17, AL L; St20, In30, Wi50, Dx20, Co20, Ch26.

**Powers:** *call other* (60% odds for a greater pegasus), *detection suite*, *enhanced reflexes*, *increased movement rates*.

**Symbol:** a white pegasus over a blue lozenge

**Interests:** the element of air; the creation and protection of pegasi, equines, and benevolent airborne races; she's also a patron of messengers, heroes, adventurers, and explorers.

**Locations:** Wherever pegasi roam on Mystara and in the Hollow World; Floating Ar, the Elemental Plane of Air, and other planes.

**Appearance:** a large pegasus with a night-blue coat studded with stars like a nocturnal sky and silver hooves. In a human form, she appears as a copper skinned woman. Star-like specks glitter in her

black hair. Her clothing is always in shades of dark blue with silver edges. She may or may not have wings protruding from her back.

**History:** The Great Mare started her existence as a common pegasus. She served many times as the mount of heroes and learned from them about immortals and their paths to quasi-divine status. By rights a hero herself, more than once did she snatch a champion from the jaws of certain death. Alas, she had no patron from whom she desired sponsorship. Oddly, she found her inspiration from magical pools immortals allegedly created for their followers to commune with them. In a higher state of mind from the mysterious water, a thought dawned and revealed a unique path. By then, she was developing her own brand of magic. The hallowed water prolonged her life and healed her wounds as she worked with the faithful of other immortals or guided through the underworld the souls of the fallen to find solace. She grew in strength and ability until she attained immortality. Since then, she has instructed her kin to visit hallowed brooks on a regular basis, gain strength from them, and commune with her. In her long existence, the Great Mare engendered six offspring to serve the immortals in thanks for the pools. She is also rumored to have given birth to many legendary mounts.

**Personality:** The Great Mare honors true, selfless heroes, and strives to behave in a similar manner. She expects her followers to heed this philosophy. She despises cowardly, lying, and manipulative manners. She also loves freedom, wide open spaces, and as such she favors explorers and adventurers. Warriors are only accepted as long as they rise to defend their freedom and loved ones. She developed a friendship with Diamond with whom as they share a common experience in searching for a path to immortality and protecting one's own kind.

**Liege:** None

**Allies:** Diamond (ruler of Lawful dragons), Odin (whose mount Sleipnir is rumored to have come from her), Palartarkan who once helped Bolt out of a nasty spot.

**Enemies:** none, other than the most chaotic, unpredictable, and malingering immortals, especially those seeking to harm her kin.

**Followers' Alignment:** Lawful or Neutral; clerics must be Lawful.

**Favored Weapons:** a hammer or mace with hoof-like or horse-head designs. Clerics of the Great Mare also receive a +1 to hit and damage with these weapons. Helmets with horsehair and wings are a must for paladins and knights.

**Clerics' Abilities:** encountered pegasi are always friendly; can speak with pegasi; at 5<sup>th</sup> level can ride pegasi as experts; at 10<sup>th</sup> level can care for, breed, and raise pegasi (skills are based on Wisdom and Charisma averaged); 4% chance per experience level of gaining the service of any encountered mature pegasus for one day, up to a maximum 80%. Hippogriffs and their allies are worst enemies.

**Clerical Concerns:** the hallowed streams and ponds remain an issue for the faithful who haven't unearthed a fully satisfying answer to their presence. Exactly who created them remains unknown. The clerical orders on Pegasus Prime have not been able to receive a clear answer from immortal patrons as to their involvement. Only that it is fine to use them and to protect them has come through. Most of the faithful content themselves with the idea that their immortal patrons are the ones behind the hallowed water but others long for closure on the issue. Divination and paleomancy seem to point out that these magical sources predate human civilization on Mystara and possibly the earliest immortals native to this world. This eliminates a good number of immortals.

While constructing what later became Pegasus's floating island, wizards and clerics excavated petroglyphs and other archeological artifacts alluding to the sources' pre-Blackmoorian existence and their spiritual powers. Observers wondered that if not immortals, at least the known ones, then who else created the sources? It led a few philosophers to question the established order of immortals' existence, their origins, and more importantly, their ultimate function. If "natural laws" enabled mundane life forms to attain immortality, then who brought them into effect and why? A notion emerged that something greater than immortals themselves had been at work in the shadows during eons, initiating the earliest immortals and implementing watery devices for the faithful to commune with them. Although the final purpose of it all still escapes the keenest minds, the entire philosophy struck a nerve among clerical orders, quickly earning disapproval and stern retribution. Peddlers of such dangerous beliefs are at best sought after so that they may be cleansed of their error, or at worst hunted down and executed for heresy. Concerned with what could weaken the fabric of society and thus the empire's stability, Alphatian monarchies support traditional clerical dogma and outlawed the offending philosophy—all except one. Bettelilyn has yet to come through on the matter.

In particular, *Companions of Samarion* have been curious about the hallowed ponds and the subversive philosophy surrounding them. Their presence in Ar remains exceedingly discreet. Under various guises, they seek out clues about the water's origin, looking for renegade philosophers to extract whatever secrets they may know, all in hopes of explaining how their own patron attained immortality. Anyone captured in Ar or elsewhere by the clergy, the local monarchy, or imperial justice in connection with the mystery are clear targets. Companions of Samarion are likely to attempt securing them for questioning. Any and all assets unveiled in their search are likely to be spirited away to Citadel or the lower levels of the Grand Cathedral of the Shroud.



## **Desmal the Vagabond**

Followers of Razud captured this penniless vagrant, one suspected of questioning the place of immortals in the multiverse. He is being detained at the main Shrine of Razud in Upper Pegasus's Lighthouse, awaiting a hearing and quite probably judgement. He'd been first identified in Lower Pegasus when he questioned the faith of villagers bound to Razud, in his view

an immortal of little merit and scant pedigree. He was later found meditating on Upper Pegasus after he'd consumed hallowed water without permission and taken into custody. He did not appear to have obtained passage aboard a private vessel bound for the Lighthouse. An inquiry is likely as to how he got past skyship patrols and clerical surveillance.

Desmal is a paladin in the service of the Great Mare. His faith to his patron immortal is unwavering and he believes true immortals are those who attained their heavenly status without the self-serving patronage of others. He is proud of his belief and unwilling to retract his words. He is a man consumed with his self-imposed quest to locate all the hallowed sources on Mystara, convinced that in them lies a hidden message alluding to the meaning of immortality. Slightly mad from his years of wandering the world, he was able to partake of several magical sources and perform communions. During each, an image began forming in his mind compelling him to pursue his effort, all under the auspices of his patron immortal. His paladinhood stems from a fellowship whose few members have all perished during their quest for the *Holy Truth*.



**Appearance:** Desmal was once tall and stately but is now stooped. His skeletal head juts forward from a scrawny neck, allowing dark brown eyes to peer intently from deep sockets. His old liver-brown leather cap, having peculiar projections resembling worn wings jutting from its crown, covers long locks of scraggly, greasy hair. The cap covers Desmal's wide wrinkled brow and pendulous ears. It is all he has left of his original paladin equipment, lost long ago. He wears an array of mismatched clothing: bits are new, others old, and all of it is tattered and smudged with stains that might be food, mud, or blood. One worn, cracked boot covers one leg, and he wears a thick-soled sandal with a heavy sock full of holes on the other. This odd footwear makes his gait uneven. On Desmal's right palm is a dark blue tattoo of the Great Mare's badge, its outline disguised by dirt and often covered by his long-curved fingers.

F15, AC8, hp72, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 fist, Dmg 1d4+2, Save F15, ML11, AL L; St17, In12, Wi16, Dx13, Co14, Ch15. **Magical Items:** none. **Special Powers:** can *detect evil 120' radius*; cast spells, Turn Undead, and interact with pegasi as a 5<sup>th</sup> level cleric of the Great Mare.

## **Azramelia, Bettelilyn Inquisitor**

This little old lady was originally born in Pews, a pious village outside Quanfax, a diocese of Bettelilyn, from a modest family of farmers. She spent most of her life in religious seclusion, either studying theology or in contemplation. As she rose through the ranks of Bettelilyn's clergy, she became an expert theologian at the Grand Cathedral of the Shroud, one particularly well versed in the conundrum of Samarion's birth and his accession to immortality. Having reached the limits of what could be researched there or at nearby Archonia, she took on inquisitorial duties, whose aim is to unveil clues on unsponsored immortality.

When her work took her past Bettelilyn's borders, she adopted the scribe profession as a front, and traveled to the Imperial District of Vertiloch. Making use of magically doctored papers, she



passed herself off as a subject of Haven under the pseudonym Amelia. In this respect, the long years spent during her youth honing the artful skill to illuminate clerical manuscripts proved useful. While in Vertiloch, she learned about the spiritual properties of certain pools in Ar's Pegasus District and about a dissident movement questioning the place of immortals in the multiverse. She later found employment for some years in Skyreach-upon-Land in the service of the Royal Courthouse. Feigning troubles with chronic asthma, she requested and obtained a transfer to the courthouse at the Lighthouse on Pegasus Prime.



Since then, she has become well informed about the streams and ponds, and heretics cropping up now and then. She also built a covert team of Aran natives specialized in non-lethal abductions and prison escapes. They provided Azramelia with a number of rebellious philosophers. She relies on her inquest and *binding* abilities as a *Prophet of Samarion* to control her agents and ensure they cannot betray her. She's also converted them to her faith, along with their families. The prior at the Shrine of Razud notified the courthouse of pending accusations against Desmal the Vagabond, unwittingly alerting Azramelia. If ever cornered, she will use her *word of recall* spell to escape back to Bettelbyn.

Lawful orders typically hang on to dissidents to "re-educate them" in proper ways, however long this might take. Chaotic ones do not and often execute such renegades on fairly short notice. Neutral orders, after a proper hearing, turn them over to face secular justice. Depending on the severity of charges and evidence submitted, penalties include long prison terms or execution, and very rarely acquittal. These trials always take place behind closed doors. The Viceroy of Pegasus systematically suppresses all evidence of misguided philosophers and activists.

**Appearance:** Azramelia is in her mid-fifties and still has the steady hands required to be a good scribe and manuscript illuminator. She has a kindly roundish face with blue eyes set amid wrinkles formed from squinting at tomes wherein she researched under indifferent light. Her mouth is wide with narrow lips which can give her a disapproving appearance, especially when she frowns. And her prisoners find out quickly that frowning is not good. Azramelia wears her long graying hair in many braids twisted together at her nape. Her robe looks like a staid matron's amber-hued garment with long sleeves and a discreet neckline but occasionally reflects deeper gray-browns heralding imminent storms.

C12, AC5, hp35, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 spell, Dmg by spell, Save C12, ML9, AL L; St10, In16, Wi17, Dx11, Co12, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *Bottomless Chest*, *Robe of the Inquisitor*, and *Ring of Human Control*. **Special Powers:** as a Prophet of Samarion—*heal*, *minor contrition*, *protection from evil*, *ardor*, *cure affliction*, *exorcism*, *cure greater affliction*, *Samarion's inquest*, *major contrition*, *cure minor magical disease*, *immunity to poison*, *galvanize*, *rally*, *cure greater magical disease*, and *Samarion's bond*.

**Bottomless Chest:** This large travel chest contains all of "Mistress Amelia's" personal effects, at least if casually searched. It radiates magic if such is detected. If contents are fully removed, an elf or a thief might succeed in detecting a false bottom and the concealed method to spring it open. Forcing open the false bottom will ruin the chest and permanently dispel its magic. If

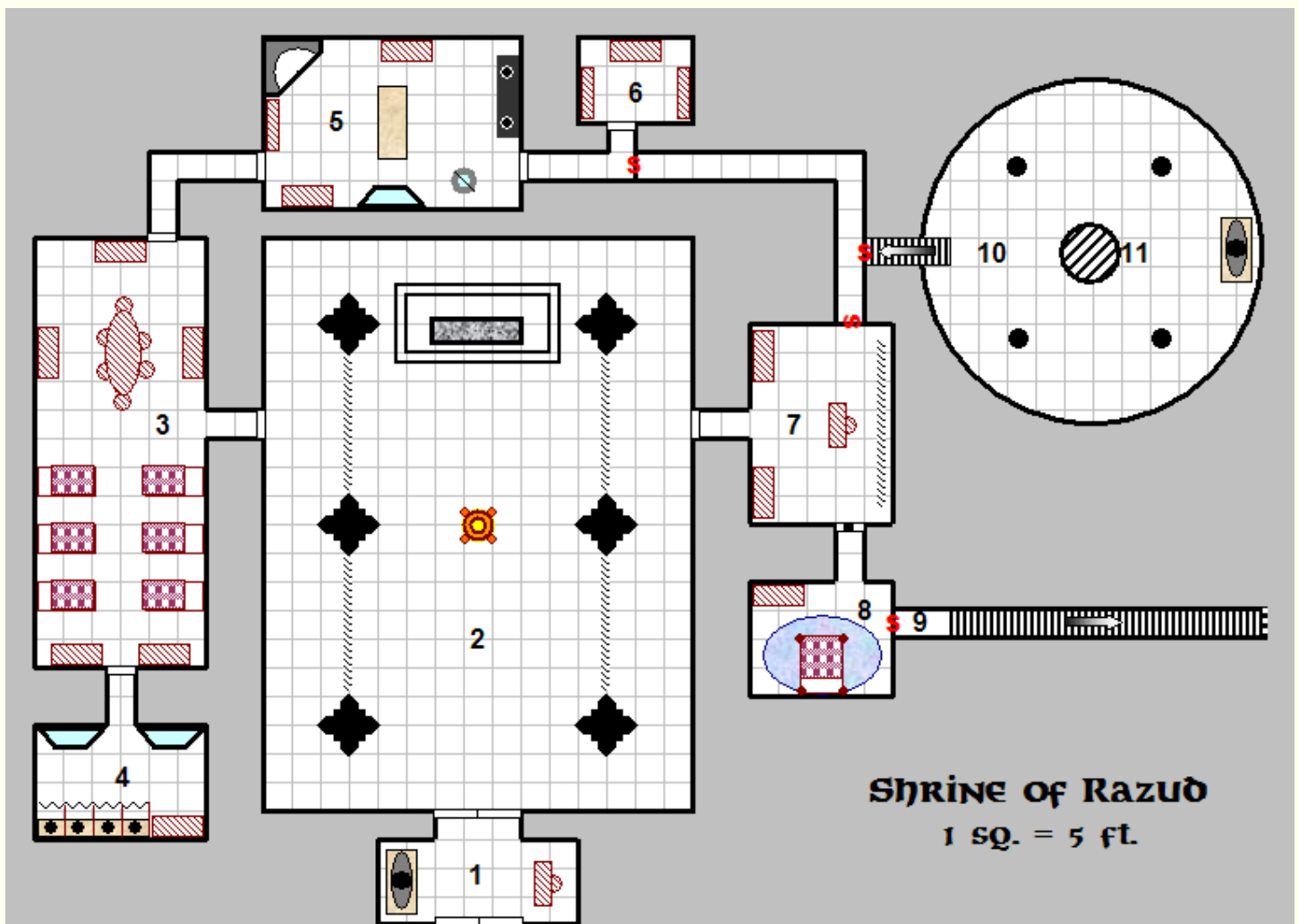
properly opened, the bottom reveals unfathomable darkness below. It is a one-way teleporter to a cell under the Cathedral of the Shroud. Azramelia uses the chest to submit renegade philosophers to questioning in Bettelilyn.

**Robe of the Inquisitor:** This garment provides a basic AC of 5 and confers a *Companion of Samarion* with special abilities. Each day for 1 Turn, it may detect lies and half-truths, although it does not reveal the nature of a lie or misrepresentation (only whether it is one or the other). It may also help determine if someone is guilty of a specific charge. An accusation must be carefully worded (spoken, shouted, or whispered) as the garment does not distinguish or analyze attenuating circumstances such as self-defense and other relevant factors. Only one such attempt can ever affect the same individual. In all cases, the subject must be within 30' of the inquisitor.



Desmal the Vagabond is presently detained at the Shrine of Razud. Agents of Azramelia are preparing to abduct him. They plan to gain access to the shrine during service through a secret passage leading to the prior's personal chambers. If they succeed, they will take Desmal to a safe house, a carpet-cleaning workshop which they use as a front for their covert activities. Posing as carpet cleaners, they will come to Azramelia's residence when all seems quiet with the paladin rolled up in a large rug. A party of *undercover* adventurers are paid by the viceroy to investigate the alarming spate of prisoner escapes. He suspects inside jobs. As a result, the party is ordered not to reveal their identity or mission to anyone including the Shrine of Razud. Rewards will be awarded for the capture of anyone involved with the breakouts.





### Short-Hand Key to the Shrine

The shrine is located inside Lighthouse Mountain on Pegasus Prime. Its main entrance is on a main gallery crossing through the temple level. Above it lies a warehouse level connecting with the skyport. The next floor up is reserved for the military and the viceroy's quarters. Highest stands the actual navigational lighthouse and military observation posts. Beneath the temple section lie private housing for residents and visitors, as well as businesses. A main shaft with a 60ft wide, 500ft tall spiral staircase connects all levels of the mountain. Although steps end at the residential floor, a 20ft wide gap at the center of stairwell continues more than 1500ft through the bottom of the floating island, serving as a main air vent. Unless indicated otherwise, at least one *continual light* globe floats near the ceiling in each room.

1. **Antechamber:** statue of Razud, reception desk.
2. **Main Worship:** columns, curtains, altar, brazier, high vaulted ceiling, large censor whooshing back and forth from the ceiling
3. **Cleric's Quarters:** table, chairs, chests, bunk beds
4. **Latrines and Washroom**
5. **Kitchen:** iron stove, fireplace/oven, table, chest, well, sink, shelves lined with pottery and glass
6. **Pantry**

7. **Prior's Office:** desk, chests, curtain
8. **Prior's Chamber:** (locked and trapped) bed, carpet, chest
9. **Secret Exit:** leading outside Lighthouse Mountain
10. **Iron Gargoyle Room:** the stairwell is much longer than appears on the map. The room is dark save for a golden glow about a 12' tall winged statue of Razud opposite the entrance—an iron gargoyle that answers only to the prior. Its tail is coiled behind its back. It will attack anyone tampering with a metal grate at the center of the chamber's floor. The construct was originally lowered in from a warehouse through a large trapdoor in the ceiling, about 60ft above. The access is barred from the inside with two heavy iron rods. The latter require scaffolding and winches to manually remove, or at least two *knock* spells.
11. **Holding Cell:** 40' deep. Desmal is chained at the bottom.

**Iron Gargoyle\*:** AC -1, HD 16\*\*\*\*\* (L), MV 30' (10')/90' (30'), AT 2 fists/1 bite/1 headbutt/1 tail + special, Save F8, ML12, In5, AL N. **Special Abilities:** *detect invisible 60' radius*; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; immune to fire and gas attacks; immune to spells 1st through 3rd levels; requires a +2 magical weapon to hit; cold-based attacks inflict double damage. **Special Attacks:** breathes fire every 3 rounds, (a 30' long 10' wide cone) causing 3d10 points of damage—save vs. dragon breath for half damage. Rather than fight while surrounded, the gargoyle can fly and drop on top a victim for 3d10 points of damage (save vs. death ray to dodge). Crushed victims are stunned for 1d3 rounds.

**Gnostinian, Prior of Razud:** C9, AC2, hp41, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff, Dmg 1d6+1, Save C9, ML9, AL N; St13, In14, Wi17, Dx14, Co15, Ch13. **Magical Items:** +2 *chain mail*, +1 *staff of healing*, and *ring of holiness*. **Special Powers:** as a cleric of Razud, +1 to initiative rolls and +1 to Wisdom (included in statistics). A number of clerics levels 1-4 also faithfully obey his orders. Although the iron gargoyle in Area 10 is bound to Gnostinians' *ring of holiness*, a Wisdom score of 16+ is required to control the beast. If someone with a lesser Wisdom steals the ring and awakes the gargoyle, it will attack anyone on sight and go on a rampage past the trap door in Area 10's ceiling.

**Ligonel the Carpet Cleaner (Azramelia's Lead Agent):** T11, AC4, hp34, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8+1, Save T11, ML8, AL L; St12, In13, Wi11, Dx17, Co14, Ch16. **Magical Items:** +1 *sword*, +2 *leather armor*, *elven cloak*, and *ring of teleportation* (can be used on self or other—6 charges left). **Special Powers:** Ligonel will use his magical ring to get past the grate into Area 11, *teleport* Desmal back to accomplices safely standing at the top of the stairs, and then escape. The remainder of his motley crew includes fighters and thieves levels 3-5, and one keenly observant 5th level elf. All of them are Lawful followers of Samarion. If left to his own devices, Desmal will make every effort to escape to a pegasus conveniently awaiting outside Lighthouse Mountain.

**Note:** a battle between Lawful protagonists may involve many apologies, contrite hand-wringing, and promises to atone.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial contribution.*

# Ar: In Search of the Sphinx

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This district of Ar occupies a very small corner of the kingdom, yet it has a unique and macabre function among nobility, warranting its existence as a separate entity. Well before Alphatians reached this region of Mystara, a war took place there, leaving behind countless burial mounds and, to this day, the errant souls of twisted beings. A clan of sphinxes came to the site in search of kin who'd died in the conflict, seeking to allow them proper funeral. Powerful in the arts of magic and clerical might, these creatures confronted throngs of lost souls, some in distress, many consumed with bitterness and anger at those still enjoying the fruits of life. To reach their fallen kin, sphinxes developed skills needed to put undead masses to peaceful rest. Since then, all but the swamps of the Fris River's delta have been cleared of hauntings, at least most of them. Many of the sphinxes remained thereafter to keep watch on their burial grounds, thereby claiming this land as theirs. In their own language, they euphemistically named it: "*Erset La Tari,*" or Land of No Return.



**Lower Sphinx District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

It was at about that time that Alphatians arrived in the region. With human population expanding, frictions between native sphinxes and settlers grew, in particular when burial grounds were at risk. Unlike many examples elsewhere in the world, a clash did not follow. Concerned with the notorious power of Alphatians, sphinx leaders accepted an offer to prevent conflict. The agreement enabled sphinxes to retain their hallowed lands and protect the dead as they had been doing for so long, all under the protection of the Kingdom of Ar and with formal recognition of their special status from the empire. Ar would also graciously provide food and supplies needed to support the sphinx community. In exchange,

Alphatian ambassadors convinced sphinxes to extend their protection and guidance to deceased Aran highborn for agreeable fees, providing the leonine caretakers with a steady and significant income.

Three stretches of hallowed lands were thus sent aloft which became Ar's necropolis. Lowlands were revitalized and farmers moved in safely. Part of the local agriculture now serves to feed the sphinxes, most of whom reside above. Others continue to live freely in the deepest forests. The swamps remain off limits, still dangerous to the living. The village of Airy Diggs was founded as the district's main skyport from which supplies are transported. Sailway Tower

stands above a small seaport where occasional foreign traders may pick up or offload merchandise. The tower was erected with the additional duty to keep watch on the swamps and steer nearby vessels away from them. It isn't rare when undead reefers ignite phantom fires to trick ships navigating at night, running them aground in the muddy quagmire. Tales of horror abound in the "*Erset Lalartu ma Lalassu*," otherwise known as the Land of Phantom and Spectre.

Today, slightly more than 16,000 people populate the lowland. They are called Sphinxfolk, although the vast majority are humans with a few halflings and elves among them. Nearly 96% of the entire population consists of farmers. Merchant ships sail up and down the river, edging past the swamp only during daylight hours and under guard. Although they often speak in riddles, sphinxes may be hired as guides to avoid sand banks. Local military includes another 2.6% of the population or a little over 400 well-paid warriors. Half of this force operates five small skyships. The H.H.M.S. *Immortal Enigma* and *Moon Riddle* are based at Airy Diggs. They watch the Fris River and serve as mobile law enforcement should trouble arise in the district. The *Star Puzzle*, hailing from Sailway Tower, patrols the coast and watches the swamp from a safe altitude. The last two vessels, the *Cloud Conundrum* and *Solar Mystery*, are assigned to a navigational lighthouse on Sphinx Prime, an Aran military and clerical outpost. Their mission is to maintain strict control over who visits the floating islands. Only those bringing their dead or visiting the tomb of a loved one are permitted through.



Upper Sphinx includes three small islands, six to eight miles across. Covered with high grass and few evergreens, the surface is mostly flat with gentle hillocks under which sphinxes built homes somewhat in the spirit of comfort-minded halflings. All local signs are written in cuneiform characters attesting to the ancient origins of the race. A navigational lighthouse stands on Sphinx Prime, which houses the viceroy's quarters, part of the district's military, several clerical shrines, and a small skyport. Facilities are available to grieving families and it is tradition among Aran nobles to linger there until they are certain that the souls of lost ones have indeed found solace. The beacon is magical in that its beam can be seen in the outer planes, helping Sphinxes with their guidance of the dead. It also conveniently shines through fog and clouds helping navigators stay away from the dreaded lowland swamps.

In their long years of caring for the deceased, sphinxes built several necropolises. Some only contain graves of their leonine kin and remain off limits to other races ("*ikkibu*," or forbidden in their language). Others were consecrated to Aran nobility. A unique feature of these islands is the erection of monuments in the form of sphinxes containing multiple tombs. They call them "*kimah*." The smaller ones are still spacious enough to house a family crypt. The faces on these dynastic mausoleums are that of families' ancestors, or at least the first ones to have been buried there. The heads are animated to imitate the manners of their former owners. Sometimes, they can recite their own eulogies when asked. Huge monuments also exist for those who long ago lost touch with their kin. This includes a large number of wizards far too busy during their arcane-minded lives to build families. Most of them had purchased funeral contracts from one of various sphinx-owned businesses to ensure their remains would be

preserved in the event of their deaths. Depending on the terms, burials include cozy spots in quaint catacombs or more imposing crypts within one of the huge monuments dominating the islands. Naturally, sphinxes guard all these graves along with riches and magical legacies buried therein.



**Upper Sphinx District & Vicinity - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Burial grounds, catacombs, and passageways inside large mausoleums remain devilishly riddled with puzzling mazes. Enigmatic conundrums to get past portals and mysteriously shifting walls and stairs demand the guidance of sphinxes who built them to find any single tomb. Monuments often feel as if they had minds of their own, reacting sometimes in bewildering ways to people's intrusions. With this many wizards resting so close to one another, hauntings are bound to take place. As in life, such residents despise being disturbed. Each of these restless souls seem to feed upon the other's magic. As it were, even in death, magic lingers in wizardly remains which those who never left (or indeed did return as a result of unfinished business) still crave. This explains why Aran highborn prefer burying their dead well away from residences of the living—hence the historical offer that was made long ago to sphinxes. Aran necropolises are for this reason dangerous places.

One might question the usefulness of the sphinxes in this context. If they really are so good at guiding spirits to the world beyond, then why should necropolises be haunted? In truth, wizards

in life and death alike remain tough customers. They can be calmed and sent away but they often return, especially those who'd been so intensely involved with their craft. These are "*Gidim Xul*," or evil ghosts. Once acquired, magical power is a hard thing to leave behind. Disturbing graves usually triggers the reawakening of souls. Sphinxes know this and take as many precautions as possible when bringing in new residents or when families come to pay their respects to forebears. Especially during hallowed times, such as the *Day of the Dead* or when past heroes are honored, ceremonies need to be held on site. All mature sphinxes are at work on those days.

It is also a marvel that sphinxes were able to build such mausoleums. After all, although they are magically gifted, they only have leonine paws. Without the use of an opposable thumb, how do they manage the actual construction and elaborate carvings that cover all stonework? Their secret is that they simply don't. Male sphinxes of Mystara are as good as 12th level wizards, while their female counterparts are equivalent to 12th level clerics. The former are master architects, skilled at casting *stoneform* spells to erect their famous *kimah*. The latter concern themselves with honoring ancestry, matters of the soul, and spiritual guidance. They've learned long ago to practice their craft in non-denominational ways, since it often isn't clear whether an Aran deceased had a spiritual preference or none at all. They are closely associated with clerical shrines at the lighthouse.



What exceedingly few Arans know is that sphinxes, when acting in concert, can call upon the souls of those in their care and use their powers to fully animate the monuments. This ability can affect small *kimahs* up to a mile away (within sight) or half a mile for the largest ones. Because of the growth of Aran necropolises, it may be necessary to reposition some of the mausoleums. Although this has never happened so far, monuments could also be used to fight an invader. If so, they would be truly terrifying foes, gigantic in proportion and surrounded with screaming souls infuriated by the disturbance. In other cases, sphinx guardians may instead cause *kimah* to vanish entirely, to better protect their residents until a threat recedes. Some visitors once observed curious depressions in the ground, like giant footprints, leading to the resting place of their loved one. Oddly, they could have sworn the grave was elsewhere the last time they visited but the sphinx guardians never revealed what actually happened. All traces were later removed to avoid attention. Sphinxes love answering questions with riddles. Because of this and the endless odd happenings on Upper Sphinx, visitors simply don't bother asking. One just goes along or stays away.

**Small *Kimah* (stone):** AC4, HD 10\*\* (L), HP 80, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 paws + special, Dmg 1d12/1d12, Save F15, ML12, In4, AL N. **Monster Type:** *Construct, Enchanted + Undead*. **Special Abilities:** these enchanted mausoleums are built of stone blocks magically bound together. As such, they have structural Hull Points rather than the usual monster hit points (see RC pg. 115-116 on *Siege Combat*). Individual weapons inflict only 1 for every 5 points of maximum possible damage (including all bonuses, rounded up), save for metallic blunt weapons which inflict 2 instead of 1 point of base damage. Siege weapons or *kimah* fighting each other inflict full structural damage. Small *kimah* suffer a -2 penalty to Initiative Rolls but, as constructs, are immune to all mind-affecting spells and poison. During each combat round, one



of the *kimah*'s residents also attacks (roll 2d8: 2-7 a shadow, 8-11 a wraith, 12-14 a spectre, 15-16 an apparition or a shade). A small *kimah* can have up to 2d4 specific residents. They appear at random within their mausoleum's immediate vicinity and change at the beginning of every round until their controlling *kimah* is destroyed. If so, remaining residents flee to the *Land of Lalartu and Lalassu*. Appearing undead can be individually destroyed or Turned (keep track of their identities and accumulated damage). Only one Turning attempt can be directed at the same creature. Each resident has its own treasure; however, guardian sphinxes may not permit plunder after a troubled *kimah*'s destruction.

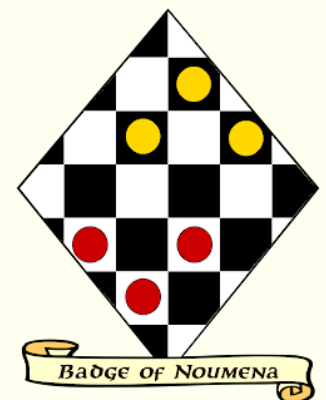
**Large *Kimah* (stone):** AC4, HD 25\*\* (L), HP 200, MV 90' (60'), AT 2 paws + special, Dmg 2d12+3/2d12+3, Save F36, ML12, In4, AL N. **Monster Type:** *Construct, Enchanted + Undead*. **Special Abilities:** large mausoleums differ from small ones in that they always go last on any given combat round. Undead residents are no longer specific individuals due to the large number of graves inside. As a result, destroying or Turning any of them has no bearing on what may appear next. A cleric can spend every single round attempting to Turn them. Each round, up to 24 HD of undead appear, not counting HD bonuses (roll 1d4: 1. shadows, 2. wraiths, 3. spectres, 4. any of the three phantom types or a specific undead as needed by the DM). Any remaining treasure is likely damaged or destroyed under tons of rubble if/when the *kimah* collapses.

**Famous Sphinxfolk Adage:** "*Eli Baltuti Ima' 'Idu Mituti*"  
(the dead will be more numerous than the living)



## Mesharra, Viceroy of Sphinx

The viceroy in this district is traditionally chosen by Aran monarchy from native sphinx matriarchs elected as candidates by exclusively male assemblies. Tenure is for life or until a viceroy resigns. As a result, this dominion qualifies as a constitutional matriarchy, of which Mesharra became the latest ruler. She accepts Ar's supremacy as long as sphinxfolk rights in both the upper and lower district are respected. Ever since Alphatians became involved with sphinxes, the latter have benefited from human servants to take care of simple tasks for them, especially those requiring hands. Any sphinx worth a riddle will admit that there is nothing like a pair of hands to scratch one's back (*Yes, right there, between the wings! O Rapture!*). Mesharra once said: "*Human civilization has its good sides, especially where paws cannot reach.*" As a result, servants are very well treated.



This matriarch earned her notoriety as an investigator. In her many missions to pacify troubled *kimah*, she gathered clues that some of the revenants were forming a secret coven to oppose sphinxfolk control. It has become amply clear to her that if they succeeded, it would eventually

tear apart the fabric of sphinx society. The idea of thousands of disembodied angry wizards loose among the living and in control of their animated *kimah* is frightening even to sphinxes. So Mesharra keeps digging for more clues to put an end to the growing danger. The trouble with the situation lies in the treaty signed with the Kingdom of Ar, and binding contracts with relatives of the deceased, not to harm Aran restless spirits. The traditional mission is to appease and lead them to the afterworld but never to destroy them. Mesharra is not about to jeopardize this relationship or offend native culture demanding ancients be honored, be they of sphinxfolk or Aran pedigrees.

She presently has two objectives. The first is to identify who is behind the coven. Among the undead, only a very powerful entity could rouse spirits and bind them to its will, such as a necromancer or a monstrous undead liege. It hasn't been clear so far whether a resident is involved, or some external force. Removing this influence should solve the problem. While her quiet investigation goes on, Mesharra works on a more powerful spell than those already available to sway recalcitrant souls. One of the primary tools given to matriarchs is the spell of *appeasement*, approved under both Aran and sphinx laws.

### **Appeasement\* (Level 4 Clerical)**

Range: 180'

Duration: permanent until disturbed

Effect: sends one undead creature to its grave

The spell compels a hostile undead to return to its grave and rest in peace. The undead may save vs. spell, with a modifier equal to its own HD minus 12 (a sphinx's spellcasting level). If the saving throw fails, the undead must return to its grave at full speed and remain there until disturbed once more. It is one way to determine which tomb an undead came from, provided its flight can be followed. If the saving throw fails, the undead singles out the caster, intent on destroying the source of the offense. The reversed version of the spell, *rouse*, is "*ikkibu*" and punishable under sphinxfolk law. *Rouse* summons a spirit from its tomb, to guard it against anyone approaching. *Aroused* spirits are always angry but remain within 150' of their grave until someone comes within the area of effect.

Mesharra is working on a *greater appeasement* which could affect multiple targets and with higher odds of success. The spell would be a sixth level prayer but she hasn't yet solved the great riddle of correct supplications to her immortal patron. She may in fact have to first vanquish the force behind the coven to earn the key to the riddle. Only then would she be granted such a powerful new spell.

**Appearance:** Mesharra is a prime specimen of her kind. She has short tawny fur covering most of her body. A long sinuous tail with a chocolate brown tuft sometimes reveals her emotions in short sharp flicks when she isn't controlling it. When she's at rest, her tail lies over her hips and back. Her expressive features are those of a lovely woman with a wide brow and large amber eyes. Mesharra wears a thin coronet of braided red gold over the many tiny braids in her chocolate-brown hair, set at one side with three golden plumes and a large golden carnelian cabochon. She is as comfortable seeking clues during night as she is by day. Her personality is normally one of quiet watchfulness.

**Mesharra\*:** AC -4, HD 12\*\*\*\*\* (L), MV 180' (60')/360' (120'), AT 2 claws/1 bite + roar, Dmg 3d6+2/3d6+2/2d8, Save F24+2, ML10, In13, AL N. **Special Abilities:** casts spells as a 12th level cleric; detects hidden and secret doors as a cleric of Noumena; can roar twice a day (within 120': save vs spells at -4 or flee in *fear* for 1d6 Turns; within 60': in addition to the above, save vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1d6 rounds). **Special Defenses:** immune to spells 1st through 3rd levels and non-magical weapons. **Magical Items:** *potion of undead control*, *leonine barding +1*, *war claws +1/+3* vs. undead, and *bracers of protection vs. level draining attacks* (4 charges left).

## **Arvesian, Master Summoner—1888-1991 AY.** *May he find in death what he sought in life.*

This powerful wizard never was one to rest in peace. Tireless and obsessed with unveiling the ultimate magic to summon the most powerful creatures of Mystara, he went too far one day and met an untimely end. Or so the story tells. Arvesian sought to become an immortal, using his specialty magic—the craft of summoning beings of terrifying power and binding them to his will—to achieve the ultimate goal. In fact, his quest for immortality hasn't ended at all. He became a lich in order to pursue his research. His cadaver was recovered one cold winter morning in the outskirts of Graynest, in the District of Wraith. The cause of his death could not be ascertained and clerical magic failed to bring him from the dead or to contact him. It was therefore assumed that his latest experiment snuffed the very life from his withered old bones—details committed to official records. He was embalmed without further delay, his skin varnished against the injury of time, his eyes replaced with glowing agates, his innards preserved in sealed jars, and thus buried on Sphinx Prime along with crucial volumes of his encrypted research and several other valuables. Curiously, he had purchased a few months earlier a fairly modest tomb for a wizard of his rank, near the center of the largest available *kimah*. After raised eyebrows of his peers dropped back to a thoroughly more bored and uncaring position, he was soon forgotten by those who benefited from his apparent demise.



Years later, the negative life force that he had summoned prior to his death slowly began to infuse his corpse's hollow, desiccated husk. He had designed his spell's effects to manifest themselves only after such a long delay so as not to attract attention. He'd fooled everyone, save for one matriarch assigned to his death ritual. She was unable to call upon his soul to send it forever to the world beyond, a troubling thought she recorded in a crystal ball, now relegated to an archival crypt under the lighthouse. She who was then known as Shuhaza among her kin met her own end when she visited the summoner's tomb years later and sensed his brooding, lingering soul. Her body was never found. No one else knew her whereabouts that day and all attempts to contact her among the dead later on met with stubborn silence. There was no evidence of her leaving and so the mystery remains unsolved.

Since his encounter with Shuhaza, Arvesian carefully built a network of wizardly souls within his *kimah*, summoning them from the world beyond and binding them to his service. He filched

some of the better magical items from their graves, preparing to unleash his power and take over the islands and all their monuments. He has become aware of Mesharra's suspicions and patiently awaits the day she may come unescorted. Arvesian is capable of wresting control of his *kimah* from sphinx guardians or of animating it himself. He can mentally change the position of shifting walls and stairs, track the position of any living being within the mausoleum, and cause the entire structure to temporarily vanish into a void-like plane, trapping everyone inside.

**Appearance:** Arvesian appears odd because his skin is the color of caramelized flesh and varnished. It has cracked in several places where wear is greatest, such as his knees, elbows, fingertips, and the joints of his hands: this reveals viscous dark blood oozing from around a dull gray skeleton. Every time he moves, his skin crackles. Because of the varnish, Arvesian cannot stand straight, and his speech is slurred and raspy. He wears a lopsided, permanent rictus. Deep gray bullseye agates serve as his eyes with several circles of white orbiting the central round. Neither match. No one alive likes looking into those eyes. His brow features a deep vertical gap running from his nose almost to his hairline, with wrinkles to either side. Blood sometimes drips from this rift, traveling slowly down his shriveled lips. His robe seems made of shadows and the insubstantial grays of dusk, showing furtive wings, talons, tails, or heads of eagles. His ring is a large irregular chunk of black onyx with a hole carved through it. The talisman at his neck is a disk of blackest obsidian surrounded by a twisted silver bezel.

**Arvesian\* (lich):** AC 0, MU32\*\*\*\*\*, hp 9d4+23, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 touch or spell, Dmg 1d10 + paralysis or by spell, Save MU32, ML10, In18, AL C. **Special Abilities:** casts spells as a 32<sup>nd</sup> level wizard; has the permanent ability to *fly* and *detect magic* (as the spells). **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep, charm, fear, feeblemind, polymorph, cold, lightning, and death spells* and non-magical weapons. **Special Attacks:** *causes fear* in all characters level 4 or less (no save); paralysis lasts 1d100 days or until dispelled; can summon other undead to his side multiple times each day as long as different creatures are selected (see RC pg. 188 and pg. 217 for Undead Lieges). **Magical Items:** *cloak of mirror images, ring of deathly fortitude, summoner's robe, talisman of entropy, wand of cold, and (in lair) crystal ball with ESP, censer of controlling air elementals, and whatever else at the DM's discretion.*

**Ring of Deathly Fortitude:** this black ring enables an undead owner to repair damage to its physical form when inflicting open hand or claw damage upon a living creature. Any such damage converts into negative energy essentially healing the owner. A living creature wearing this ring will permanently lose one experience level when succeeding an open hand attack against a foe. If such is detected, the ring radiates both magic and evil. It is a prized possession for liches and vampires who will seek to obtain it if they hear of its existence.

**Summoner's Robe:** It is Arvesian's original garb. The robe enables its owner to boost the effects of certain spells such as *conjure elementals, invisible stalker, or any of the create monster* spells. The enhanced spells summon two creatures instead of one or twice the number of HD as appropriate. When used in this manner, the garb leaches some of the owner's magical energy to boost its magic, inflicting 2d6+6 points of damage.

**Talisman of Entropy:** when activated, this device engulfs a Lawful character of the owner's choice (within 60') in a set of shadowy jaws rising from the ground. If the character succeeds a

saving throw vs. spells at -4, damage from the jaws amounts to half the victim's current hit points, after which the jaws vanish. If the saving throw fails, the character is instantly paralyzed and transported to a featureless plane to begin a slow descent toward undeath. The process can be stopped and reversed if the talisman is destroyed within a Turn, which brings the victim back to the Prime Plane. Paralysis still lasts for 1d100 days. Otherwise the victim returns instead as a vampire or a nosferatu under the lich's control (and does *not* count against the undead liege's normal control ability). The talisman enables its owner to detect Lawful characters, in particular those with strong spiritual dispositions, such as clerics and paladins. Arvesian will select a sphinx matriarch before anyone else. The talisman radiates both evil and magic if such is detected and can only be used once. If the transformation was successful, the victim's face is engraved on the talisman. If the talisman is destroyed *after* its use, the undead permanently breaks free of the lich's control and will seek its demise. If the lich has been destroyed, the undead either seizes control of the lich's remaining pawns or flees to pursue new goals. At the DM's discretion, the vampire/nosferatu may grant those who destroyed the talisman or the lich a safe retreat from the lair—this one time only.



The three most common faiths for sphinx clerics involve Noumena, Terra, and Nyx. The first one was attracted to sphinxes because of their love of, and talent with, riddles and puzzles. Terra actually created their race, and therefore acts as their protector and the one who bestowed upon them skills to erect great stone monuments. Nyx came along to offer these clever beings an alternative to the other two immortals. She patrons sphinxfolk honoring of ancestors and their quest to protect the undead from their own cravings or from those among the living who would seek to destroy them. Although Mystaran sphinxes can be of any alignment regardless of their genders, clerics of Nyx aren't necessarily Chaotic (read *evil* in this context). Both Noumena and Nyx are members of the *Council of Intrusions*.

# Noumena

**Patron of Riddles and Mysteries**, also known by sphinxes of Ar as *Dingir Buzur, the Spirit who Solves Secrets*.

**Nature:** 34<sup>th</sup> level Hierarchy of Thought, Neutral—AC-22, hp 1250, HD 48, MV 150' (50'), AT4 fist or sword, Dmg 5d6+7 fist or 4d6+11 khopesh, AM 90%, Save IM34; St30, In98, Wi66, Dex20, Co38, Ch20.

**Powers:** *detection suite, height decrease, improved saving throws vs. mental attacks, increased damage.* **Magical Item:** *Nithian khopesh sickle-sword or stone mace +4 (or rapier +4 as per Wrath of the Immortals).*

**Symbol:** a gameboard

**Interests:** puzzles, riddles, mysteries, secrets, obscure knowledge, trivia, ancient citations, history, games, strategy, military tactics.

**Locations:** Savage Coast, Known World, Isle of Dawn (especially Thothia), Norwold, Alpathia, and in the Hollow World (especially Nithia).

**Appearance:** Noumena often takes the shape of a withered old man, balding and with a long gray beard. Intense black eyes that miss little contrast with his elderly appearance. He commonly wears black robes covering all but his head and hands. Legends say that he carries a pouch filled with wondrous magical dice.

**History:** Prior to becoming an immortal, he ruled ancient Nithia as a mighty pharaoh with a passion for solving puzzles. Although a successful military tactician, he lost interest in his kingly duties which no longer presented a challenge. He abdicated and left in search of yet greater puzzles to solve. His most memorable success was to unravel the secret behind the decay affecting his former realm. He sacrificed his own life in a bid to defeat the entropic scheme. This heroic deed attracted Odin's attention, who sponsored his quest for immortality in the Sphere of Thought. As a legendary sleuth and mystery-solver, he rose to prominence among the *Council of Intrusion*, a watchdog for outer-planar threats to Mystara in particular.

**Personality:** As can be guessed, Noumena is a compulsive puzzle-solver. The outcome of a riddle isn't his concern and consequently he tends to ignore the fates of those involved. Though occasionally thoughtful, he more often appears as a detached and analytical introvert, seldom interacting with his peers. His discretion and somewhat *geeky* self-absorption with inner thoughts cause others to overlook or underestimate him. Laconic if not stubbornly silent, when he does speak, everyone listens.

**Liege:** Odin was his liege for a very long time but as Noumena grew

to become a hierarch, the two are more like peers.

**Allies:** Mostly Odin as a result of their past history. Noumena also appreciates Ssu-Ma's qualities and attention to detail.

**Enemies:** none specifically. Noumena is likely to oppose those who challenge the *Council of Intrusions*.

**Followers' Alignment:** Any; clerics must be Lawful or Neutral.

**Favored Weapons:** a khopesh sword *or* a stone mace. Cleric, paladin, and knight followers of Noumena receive a +1 to hit with one of these weapons.

**Clerics' Abilities:** In addition to the above, clerics can also detect hidden and secret passages as elves do. With an Intelligence of 16+, clerics may obtain one or more extra clues through meditation to help unravel unsolved puzzles.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character descriptions and editorial contributions.*





# Ar: Through the Vortex

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This unique doughnut-shaped floating island is the last district to have been created in the Kingdom of Ar. A royal edict abruptly carved out a large area of open space and prime fishing waters once shared between Hippogriff, Griffon, Skybridge, and Wyvern Districts. Sour feelings remained ever since the partition because viceroys weren't consulted about the decision or even told of its rationale. Instead, a haze of secrecy surrounded the event, letting on solely that the new dominion was off limits to all but a select few in the Aran military. The new District of Vortex has no viceroy but a shadowy military governor. From neighboring floating islands and ships skirting the forbidden area's borders, one can observe two floating islands and, fairly frequently, an enormous whirlwind spinning through the main island. The turbulence stretches from the lake's surface to 13,200' (4.400m) through the monolith's midsection before blending with thick clouds above. At various times day and night, lightning bolts randomly discharge from Vortex Prime's outer rim, adding intermittent rumbles to the tornado's distant roar. The sight alone is enough to keep most visitors out. On certain days, freak storms develop on Crystal Lake, showering the shores with hail, miscellaneous debris, frosted fish, and occasional monster bits.



**Vortex Military District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The roots of the mysterious event go back to a skyship commander, one Captain Aerwatt, who was concerned with the clear and present threat of a possible new ogrish invasion. He'd always shared with his friends and peers his concerns about the lack of adequate fortifications along Ar's southern border and troops to hold them. Tired of his commanders' apathy, he came up with a radical approach that was guaranteed to earn King Qissling's interest, and his eventual approval. A top graduate in *air magistracy* and aspiring grand wizard, Aerwatt's basic idea spun from proverbial "mopping up" efforts to rid the land of foes and other undesirable features littering battlefields in one fell stroke—or in his case, in a gigantic whoosh. He devised the construction of a ring-shaped monolith fitted with magical devices accelerating air within its midsection, angled in such a way to create suction beneath. If properly focused, the resulting whirlwind could sweep a mile-wide stretch clear of any marching army and, quite certainly, damage beyond recovery any siege equipment. The prospect of building a controllable tornado was so appealing to the king that the project got underway overnight. Captain Aerwatt was made governor and head of the project. That's about it for good news. . .

. . . for bad news abounds.

Cloudstones and building materials were sent aloft for the construction of two monoliths. The largest one, Vortex Prime, contains kinetic devices generating the whirlwind. The other, Vortex II, houses a fortified control deck. Unlike other floating islands, these two were designed from the onset as mobile war platforms. Not only did Vortex II protect flight controls, it could rotate around Vortex Prime in order to remain ahead of it, regardless of heading. Full speed rotation to the opposite side of Vortex Prime takes slightly less than an hour, moving at 48 miles per hour (77Kmh), or approximately one 8-mile-hex per Turn. Needless to say, the enchantments to make all the parts move together smoothly proved daunting to Aerwatt and his team of air wizards.

The next problem lay in difficulties associated with moving a tornado about two miles wide at its midsection. The first predicament came with a powerful clockwise torque effect due to the twister's counter-clockwise spin conflicting with flight control. Naturally, it would have to be reversed in Mystara's southern hemisphere, a process taking many hours to complete. Some degree of weather control became necessary to alter relative temperatures, barometric pressures, and humidity above and below the islands. The present position above Crystal Lake helps create the most favorable testing conditions. Nonetheless, flight control issues and perilous vibrations on Vortex Prime due to the funnel's violent weaving have yet to be fully resolved. At full power, the cyclonic device may tear apart the main island or cause catastrophic loss of stability. Icy conditions, hurricane-strength currents buffeting Vortex Prime's surfaces, the wind's horrendous howl, and random lightning bolts resulting from static electricity buildup preclude anyone exiting tunnels and chambers inside the two islands. The only safe way aboard or across the two islands is via *teleporters*. Internal chambers and above ground structures, including an observation deck and a lighthouse, are fully pressurized and built to withstand the enormous forces at work. Challenges resulting from the giant whirlwind's existence were foreseen, which explains why the command deck lies within Vortex II rather than the main island. Should something go catastrophically wrong, at least the command deck could separate and move to a safe distance.

**Vortex Prime:** A closer look at Vortex Prime reveals the use of *force fields* as observation bays. No defensive stations are needed since outside conditions are dire enough to prevent skyships or flying creatures from approaching. A circular hallway, 100' wide (30m) and about 50 miles long (80Km), allows access to 12 chambers facing in the inner rim, or one every 8 miles (13Km). Evenly-spaced *levitating* chariots of steel fitted with a dozen seats follow a single rail enchanted with magical sigils, hurtling at up to 40Mph (64Kmh), taking 15 minutes to reach each chamber and stopping there for another two. The latter are about 30'x30'x30' large, contain magical machinery generating kinetic power needed to induce the twister, and a *teleporter* to reach the command deck. Another twelve compounds lay across from accelerator chambers, enough for a dozen boltmen each, which accounts for 144 military on Vortex Prime alone, if fully crewed. Since Vortex Prime is still undergoing testing, only three boltmen are assigned to each compound. Another six also remain at the observation deck, also called Ventilion Tower, and at the lighthouse. Both connect via *teleporters* with the command deck.

**Vortex II:** The smallest of the two monoliths contains the flight deck, officers' quarters, a teleporter chamber, and a compound large enough for another twenty boltmen. The flight deck includes three table-like displays arranged in a semi-circle and with two seats each. One enables operators to maneuver the island tandem. The next one is responsible for navigation, positioning, and the use of a telescope. The last one controls the machinery generating the twister in Vortex Prime, as well as local atmospheric conditions; officers assigned to this post handle the whirlwind's power settings. Displays feature crystal balls glowing with information pertinent to each post, and *phantasmal* levers relaying the officers' commands. At the center of the three displays sits Captain Aerwatt, facing a *force field* acting as a large view screen. This aperture can magnify forward sight or be angled to observe the ground. Behind him stands a portal leading to the other quarters. The *teleportation* chamber includes a transport platform and a nearby display to select a destination: 1. Skyreach\*, 2. Ventilion Tower, 3. Lighthouse, 4a-4h Accelerator Chambers, 5. Away-Team\*. Normal transportation takes place to and from connected *teleporting* platforms.



(\*) The *Skyreach* address targets restricted military quarters at the royal palace on Chimera Prime. Troops can always be transported from Skyreach's own *teleporting* device. The *Away-Team* setting *teleports* to the surface a group of up to 12 or as much as 10,000 cn in freight, directly beneath Vortex II, about 20 miles from the whirlwind's touch-down location. The command deck's *teleporter* has limited capability to retrieve a landing party due to the absence of a connected platform on the ground. Members of an away team must therefore wear magical bracers to enable remote *teleportation*; retrieval range is limited to 7,000' (2.350m); up to 1d4 crew randomly selected can be retrieved at a time. Magically "tagged" freight can be brought up at the rate of 1d4 x 800 cn. Remote *teleportation* can only be performed once per Turn.

**His Heavenly Majesty's Flying Fortress Immortal Storm:** Cost (classified); Crew: 176 boltmen and petty officers, 6 officers, 1 captain; Capacity: 1,200,000 cn; Move: 60 miles/day,

200'/round (ground speed with idling whirlwind), 90'/round (ground speed with fully active tornado); HP: Vortex Prime 2,220, Vortex II 850. AC: 0 to *pin-point* a specific spot or AC9 to hit any part of either monolith. Full-strength tornado can only be sustained 4d6+2 combat rounds before causing 4d100 structural damage per round to Vortex Prime. With *pin-point* damage of 600 Hull Points or more, kinetic accelerators malfunction, causing the tornado to inflict structural damage. In any case, the tornadic device incurs a cumulative 1% chance of malfunction per round of use.

**Special Abilities:** Individual weapons inflict only 1 point of *structural damage* for every 5 points of maximum possible *hit points* (including all bonuses, rounded up), save for metallic blunt weapons which inflict 2 instead of 1 basic point of *structural damage* (see RC pg. 115-116 on *Siege Combat*).

**Special Defenses:** while the twister is in operation, 20d6 *lightning bolts* shoot at random in any direction up to 12 miles (13Km) from Vortex Prime's outer rim; odds of one hitting any approaching vessel or flying creature are 70% per Turn *minus* 10% for every mile (1,6Km) of range or fraction thereof. Odds can fluctuate further depending on the size of what approaches: +60% for ships HP 120+, +40% for ships HP 40-119, +20% for smaller ships, large creature *nil*, -10% for a man-sized target, -20% for a small target, +20% if metal armor or hull plating are present. Wind reaches hurricane strength within 12 miles of the whirlwind's center; no flight is sustainable within Vortex Prime's inner rim.



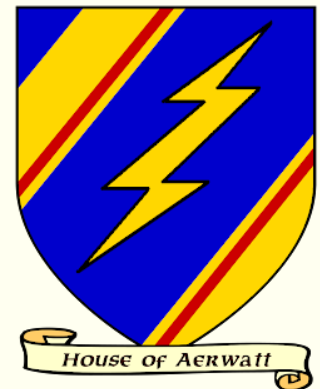
**Special Attack:** tornado—the twister stretches two miles across at its midsection. At its lowest point, it covers an area a mile wide. At its highest point, about 6,600' (3.300m) above Vortex Prime, it forms an eight-mile-wide funnel (13Km). Anyone caught inside the funnel beneath Vortex Prime suffers 8d12 damage per round (save for half). Man-sized debris rises through the tornado at the rate of 1d4 x 600' per round (200m). Damage above Vortex Prime drops to 4d12 per round (save for half) not counting exposure to rarefied oxygen environment and cold temperatures at the DM's discretion. At the top of the funnel, debris is then dropped 1d8 eight-mile-hexes away from the tornado's center. The funnel is equivalent to a +3 weapon as regards its ability to harm magical beings, except for native creatures of the elemental plane of air which are immune. Any magical equipment +2 or less is destroyed; other magical items with enchantments costing 5,000 gp or less are also destroyed (see RC pg. 250-252 on magical item creation costs).

# Illustrious Vorticians

## Captain Aerwatt

Born from a family of Shyie-Lawr elves, he became a top graduate in *air magistracy* at the Skyship Academy in Skyreach and, for a time, a rambunctious cadet aboard the H.H.M.S. *Auster*. Throughout his career in the Aran navy, Aerwatt always kept in mind possible combat applications for ideas he or others conceived. His approach to militarizing forces of nature earned him a direct and personal link with King Qissling with whom he now often exchanges ideas. Brash, heroic, flamboyant, somewhat narcissistic, and an incorrigible womanizer, Aerwatt had a knack for irritating his commanders. His propensity to disregard orders and his recent promotion to military governor of Vortex District didn't help. Jealousy runs high at the Skyship Academy. Enterprising and strong-minded to a fault, this elf never abandons a quest he feels is crucial, relying on unconventional problem-solving skills to get around problems. Odds of success are not a concern. Nonetheless, those who serve under his command will follow him to whatever end and beyond.

Aerwatt has become aware of an odd phenomenon on both islands that has remained unexplained and is suspicious. While running tornado tests, he discovered areas inside Vortex II that somehow became wet. Oddly, the crew that should have reported that curious event failed to do so. Some said they hadn't noticed until it was pointed out to them; others said they thought it didn't matter. All indicated they suffered from violent headaches at some point, including a number of officers. There didn't appear to be any location or frequency pattern to the wetness. On several occasions, Aerwatt feigned headaches during a tornado test as an excuse to absent himself which several officers readily acknowledged with sympathizing nods. This subterfuge gave him the opportunity to turn *invisible* and quietly visit various areas of the islands. Leaving the first officer in charge, the captain used *teleporters* to move quickly. During one of his random visits, he found a dead boltman in one of the accelerator chambers. The body bore electrical burns and lay in a pool of water. The captain remained near the humming machinery, patiently waiting. Two other boltmen came in, quietly gazed at each other for an instant, picked up their companion's body, and carried it away. As the captain stepped from his hiding spot to follow them, a mind-splitting headache tore through his skull, stopping him in his tracks. A moment later, the machinery's hum changed, indicating the end of the tornado experiment. Just then and inexplicably, the floor dried up and his headache faded. The captain left the chamber and later found the two boltmen. When asked if everything was fine, they both nodded, seemingly unconcerned. The missing crewman was never reported nor did Aerwatt find his body. He kept his suspicions to himself thinking that at least part of the crew and the officers had become compromised. His quiet investigation goes on.



It so happened that farmers discovered the boltman's remains not far from Crystal Lake, battered and badly frosted, after it had fallen from the sky along with fish, birds, and other debris. They brought his body back to a local guard post. News reached King Qissling and was immediately suppressed. Worried about possible treachery, the king directed one of his trusted aides to hire reliable individuals unconnected with the military and pass them off as boltmen with all appropriate passwords and equipment, as part of the next crew rotation to Vortex Prime. Their mission is to quietly observe, ascertaining the captain's loyalty and shedding light on the reason for the unreported casualty.

**Appearance:** Captain Aerwatt is tall for an elf and muscular, with a handsome longish face and a strong square chin. His pale cream skin contrasts with his shoulder-length glossy blue-black hair, which he wears in a single braid tied at his nape. His cheekbones are high-set, with hollows beneath that make them appear like cliffs. Confidence and command exude from him: Aerwatt is a magnet for any soldier or lady within range of his large, dark blue eyes and authoritative baritone voice. He gives the impression of always being in the midst of something intriguing, even when he's sitting still. His eyes drink in details, and he's trained his sharp mind to analyze these and provide unusual options faster than anyone else in Qissling's army. Aerwatt wears a short leather long-sleeved military jacket of blue so deep it borders on the hue of midnight. Leather form-fitting pants tuck into knee-high boots of the same color. His gestures are sure, and he prides himself at being seldom wrong about anything.

E15, AC3, hp 47, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword or spell, Dmg 1d8+2/+4 or by spell, Save E10+2, ML11, AL L; St13, In17, Wi11, Dx16, Co 14, Ch15. **Special Abilities:** using optional demi-human rules in RC pg. 266—hit rolls made as a 15<sup>th</sup> level cleric; spells cast as a 15th level magic-user; detects hidden and secret passages as an elf. **Magical Equipment:** *sword +1/+3 vs. Ogres, sky commander's leather jerkin, ring of protection +2, wand of many settings, and boots of resistance to electrical attacks.*

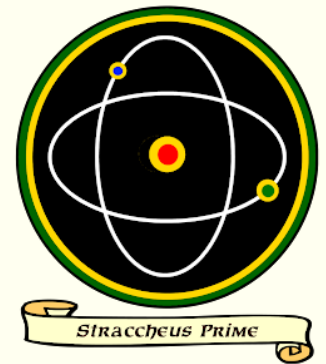
**Sky Commander's Leather Jerkin:** it is a standard element of an upper-ranking skyfleet officer's uniform. It provides a basic AC of 7 as well as the effects of *ring of survival*. A small metal badge embedded in the leather on the upper left chest cycles through *phantasmal* symbols displaying the officer's skills and past history. The badge's shape and metal indicates the officer's seniority. Silver or gold tooling in the leather relates to rank and general branch of service.

**Wand of Many Settings:** this rechargeable silver wand holds 3d10 charges. It comes with four separate powers and different command words to activate them. The first power enables the owner to produce a *sleep* effect, as the spell (240' range, cost 1 charge). The second power unleashes three *magic missiles*, (150' range, cost 2 charges). The third power invokes a *disintegration* ray (60' range, cost 3 charges). The last power provokes a delayed kinetic blast equal in strength to the total number of charges left in the wand +5, up to a maximum damage of twenty HD. Damage applies within a 30' radius, +2' for every HD. Damage applies fully to wooden structures (half as much against stone or metal). The blast erupts 1d4+3 rounds after the command word is spoken and destroys the wand in the process.

## The Uninvited

With the debauchery of energy Vortex Prime generates, it was a foregone conclusion that something entirely unexpected would happen. At a very specific rotation speed, the twister and the magical power running the kinetic accelerators create a unique resonance capable of opening a wormhole into another plane. The power setting corresponding to the wormhole isn't commonly used, thus preventing the phenomenon from lasting more than a few rounds. The wormhole is entirely invisible and randomly connects with one of the accelerator chambers. The part of the conduit in the Prime Plane otherwise leads from the chamber to the center of the tornado's funnel before reaching the other world. So far, Captain Aerwatt and his crew have failed to detect either the event or the presence of a creature that came through the wormhole.

Thusea is a Stracchyan, an entirely alien being who feeds on energy, from the faraway Straccheus universe. Attracted to the immense source of power emanating from the wormhole's opposite end, she traveled through and reached Vortex II just as the tornado's regime changed, trapping her aboard. Since then, she has explored the two floating islands inside and out, taking note of the crew and learning the way they communicate. Her goal is to first understand how the tornado works. Meanwhile, she uses her abilities to influence the crew. Her next goal is to use the contraption and bring in more of her kin. The end game is to hijack the two islands into the ethereal where its tornadic ability would be vastly magnified. The resulting wormhole would be large enough to take the two islands back to Thusea's world where her race would use it as a source of energy.



**Appearance:** Thusea's native universe is very similar to the ethereal plane, although a somewhat more aquatic version of it. In an ether-based environment, she appears as a thirty-foot-long leathery white snake with spiny diaphanous fins—two sail-like pectoral fins, two pelvic, one long anal, one dorsal stretching almost her entire length, and one caudal fin. She can float along with ethereal currents to travel, or slither and swim more quickly using her tail fin for short bursts of speed. Her head features two large iridescent eyes and a large mouth with long, crystalline fangs. While in the Prime Plane, she appears as a watery snake with large eyes. She can modify her shape at will to seep under doors and through small spaces, create up to three appendages with hands to manipulate objects, lay quietly as a pool of water, or imitate the human faces of her victims to appear on any part of her body. Ripples travel back and forth along her entire length as she moves or thinks. When she bears her fangs in either environment, they crackle with electrical energy. A *detect invisible* spell is needed to see her ethereal form from the Prime Plane.

**Personality:** Thusea is a sharp-minded being, ruled by logic and necessity. Curiosity and the acquisition of a source of energy motivated her to study the wormhole. Normally emotionless, Thusea became fascinated by "sensations" provoked by the wave lengths of Captain Aerwatt's voice. Intrigued and desiring to experience more of these strange impressions, Thusea refrained from altering the elven officer's mind. She now faces a dilemma, hesitating between the necessary task of acquiring the source of energy and the fascinating effect of the captain's

voice. She also found worthy of further examination the synergy of two rival races cohabiting in close quarters: an isolated and resourceful elf leading intellectually advanced humans.

**Stracchyan\* (Ethereal Plane):** AC 0, HD10\*\*\*\* (L), MV 180' (60') or 360' (120') for 1d4 rounds during an encounter, AT 1 bite + special, Dmg 1/HD or Strength drain, Save F20, ML7, In19, AL any (Thusea is Neutral). Type: *Planar Monster*. **Special Abilities:** Hear Noise 30' radius into the Prime Plane; mind meld once per day (save vs. spells negates); *charm* + ESP if mind meld succeeds; *telekinesis* from extra HD; may trade excess HD to lay eggs. **Special Attacks:** electrical bite—or—Strength drain; gains extra HD when draining Strength or from enemy attacks. **Special Defenses:** +1 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to most attacks originating from the Prime Plane; one 30'x30'x30' cloud of ethereal *inkiness* when moving at 360'.

In most cases, Thusea remains in the ethereal. While there, she can move at will and sense to a certain degree creatures in the Prime Plane. Unlike most other life forms, Thusea's eyes can perceive energy originating from the Prime Plane—heat appearing in reds, electricity in blues, kinetic forces in greens, and magical energy in shades of purple. She cannot sense the absence of heat, such as extremely cold temperatures. She can detect noise originating from the Prime Plane as vague echoes, forcing her to concentrate to be able to decipher what she hears. Hearing range is no more than 30' radius (Thusea is effectively deaf when the tornado is active). She does not have the ability to *detect invisible* or see very clearly into the Prime Plane.

This hearing ability is crucial in that it enables her to identify members of the crew. At first, it is a subjective idea of who they are based on their conversations. As she learns more of the Alpathian language, she acquires the sense of where those individuals fit in their hierarchy and what their functions are aboard the floating islands. She may attempt a mind meld once a day. Targeted crew are allowed a saving throw vs. spells at -1 for each subsequent encounter to resist the intrusion. Victims succeeding their saving throws suffer splitting headaches for 1d4 rounds; they do not identify their origins or the alien being's presence. If the saving throw failed, Thusea immediately learns all that a victim knows, which she perceives as images and sensations. Victims are subject to a *charm* effect (permanent until dispelled) and an *ESP* link with Thusea allows her to place suggestions into their subconscious minds. The *ESP* range is limited to the two islands. Mind meld, *charm*, and *ESP* work from the Ethereal into the Prime Plane.

As a creature feeding on energy, Thusea is able to absorb any ambient energy to survive. She does not require air or any other food. Her mouth and fangs aren't connected to a digestive system. They are meant as power-draining nodes which, in the eyes of Prime Plane inhabitants, look like a fearsome feeding apparatus. Anytime Thusea "bites" someone, she either inflicts 1 pt of electrical damage per HD or temporarily drains a point of Strength from her victim (no save). At zero Strength, a victim dies. Drained Strength is otherwise recovered within the hour. With each successful power-draining bite, Thusea gains 1HD. She's immune to physical attacks, spells, and other magical abilities originating from the Prime Plane. Instead, she gains another Hit Die for each such attack. Damage and spell effects apply normally when inflicted directly in the Ethereal Plane. Although extra HD vanish after an hour, each adds a further -1



penalty to saving throws vs. a mind meld attempt. She also gains *telekinetic* powers, at the rate of 500 cn and a range of 10' per additional HD (10 cn = 1 lb).

At any time while in the Ethereal, Thuusea may trade earned HD and lay eggs, at the rate of 10 HD per egg. While they are concealed, eggs take two months plus 1d4+1 week to hatch. Hatchlings need 100 years to reach maturity, -10 for every 1 HD of subsequent energy Thuusea feeds to them. Early on, Stracchyan eggs look like gossamer foam, which solidify as days go by. By then, ectoplasmic dust conceals them.

**Stracchyan (Prime Plane):** AC 0, HD10\*\*\*\*(L), MV 180' (60'), AT 1 bite + special, Dmg 1/HD or Strength drain, Save F20, ML7, In19, AL any (Thuusea is Neutral). **Special Abilities:** Watery body; mind meld once per day (save vs. spells negates); *charm* and ESP if mind meld succeeds; *telekinesis* from extra HD. **Special Attacks:** electrical bite—*or*—Strength drain; gains extra HD when draining Strength or from enemy attacks. **Special Defenses:** immune to most attacks while on the Prime Plane. **Special Weaknesses:** double damage from cold-based attacks; subject to freezing; highly vulnerable to absorption and dehydration.

When the tornado runs at full strength, Thuusea is immediately forced into the Prime Plane and must revert to her physical watery form (her eggs are not affected). She returns to the Ethereal when the tornado goes idle. Thuusea cannot use *teleporters* to get across the two floating islands while in any form; she can travel at normal speed through the ethereal, taking 2-8 hours depending on how far the destination is. While in Prime Plane, one effective way to neutralize her is to trick her to come in contact with a massive sponge or any other absorbent large enough to contain her aqueous form. Thuusea does not get a saving throw and is immediately soaked up. In that state, she can still exert her *charm* and ESP effects but cannot move or return to the Ethereal plane. However, if she happens to have acquired *telekinetic* abilities, she may "squeeze" herself free provided she has gained at least +10 HD. Otherwise, if left in the sun for a day while so trapped, she will die.

If aware of her presence, a *telepath* or someone with ESP abilities can communicate with her and, if she's trapped, learn about the wormhole. Pushing her into the wormhole will forcibly return her to her native plane. Cold-based attacks on the Prime Plane cause double-damage to her kind. If her foes inflict (singly or cumulatively within a same combat round) at least as many dice of cold-based damage as she has Hit Dice, Thuusea must save vs. paralysis or be frozen and go dormant. Unless refrigerated, she will thaw 1 Turn later and wake up. If split apart, pieces will always seek to recombine (*charmed* crew will try to help her in this respect).

# The Ethereal Plane

*For convenience, I've summarized and updated information about the ethereal environment for those without access to out of print source materials.*

The Ethereal Plane is contiguous with Mystara's Prime Plane, occupying the same space. It is breathable and uniformly at a 50°F temperature (10°C). Objects in the Prime Plane exist in the ethereal as fog-like solids or semi-solids affecting movement and combat. Concepts of gravity or weightlessness do not apply here. As a result, visitors need magic to travel through the ethereal, such as a *fly* spell (120' per round) or a *potion of ethereality*. Kinetic energy can be used to throw projectiles, but laws of physics may affect their ranges (see below).

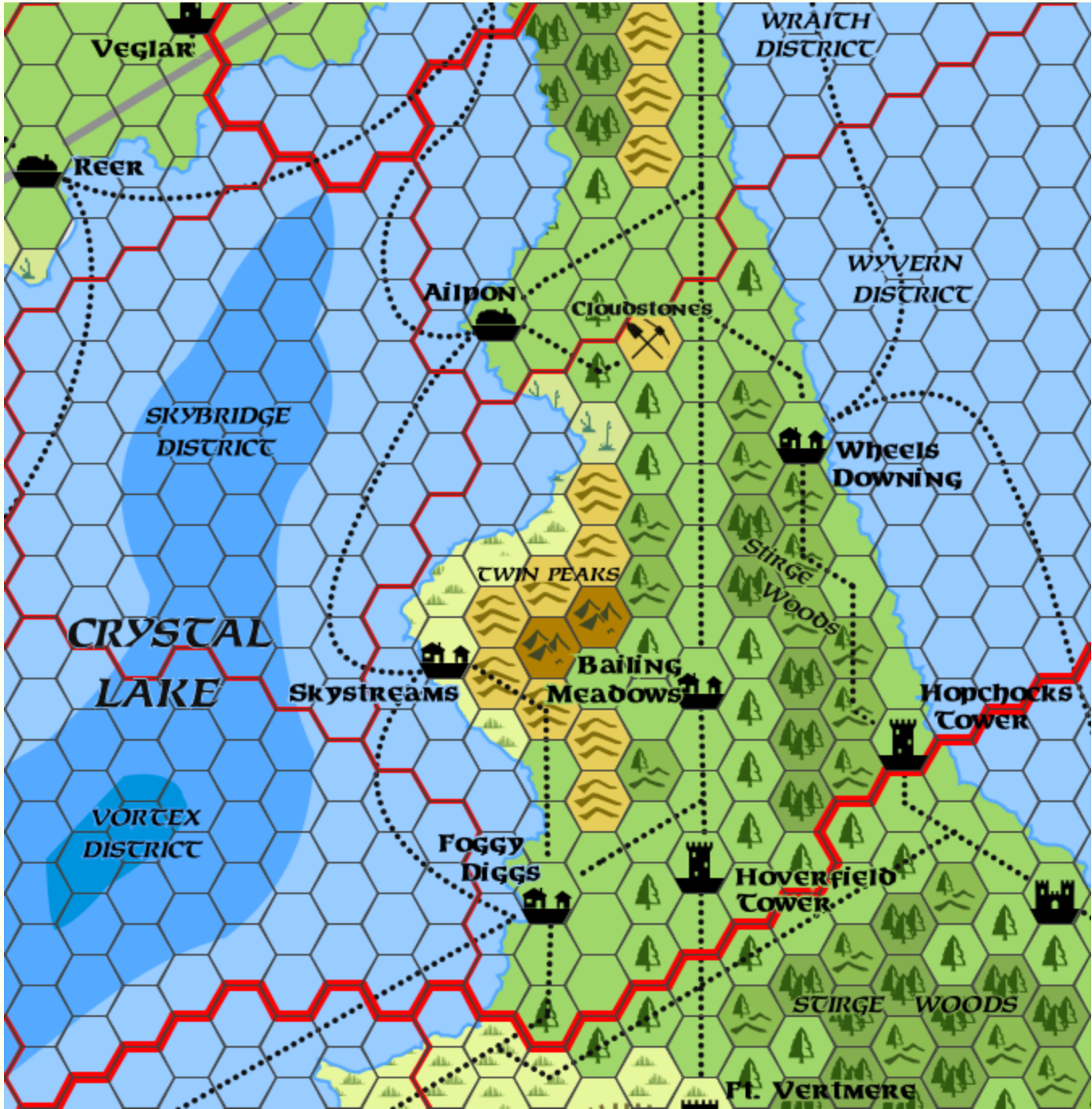
Travel speed doubles when traversing an area corresponding to vacuum. Movement through normal open space is unaffected. Movement through fire or water is at  $\frac{3}{4}$  speed,  $\frac{1}{2}$  speed through soil, wood, or flesh, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  speed through rock. Metal objects are solid in the ethereal. These penalties apply as well to missile weapon ranges, rounded to the previous 10' increment—for example, when cast through ethereal rock a javelin's normal range of 30'/60'/90' should drop to nil/10'/20' ( $\frac{1}{4}$  original distances), counting all hit penalties due to range. Using these mechanics, a hammer could not be thrown through ethereal rock at all, stopping in midair a few feet away. Spell ranges and areas of effect remain unaffected. Objects and creatures in the Prime Plane cannot be damaged or hurt from the ethereal unless a special ability makes it possible.

The denser the objects, the darker they appear. Light from the Prime Plane glows but faintly in the ethereal and provides its only ambient luminosity. Torches and magical lighting function normally but cannot be seen from the Prime Plane. A *detect invisible* spell enables a visitor to see clearly into the Prime Plane and vice-versa. The Ethereal Plane does not feature weather patterns; however, creatures with inherent affinities with the ethereal can sense arcane eddies and use them to travel. This region of the multiverse is adjacent to the Elemental and Astral Planes.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial contributions and character descriptions.*

# Ar: Figment of the Wyvern's Mind

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Lower Wyvern District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

This region became a part of the Kingdom of Ar as the result of a conflict between Foresthorne and Ambur. The stretch of land east of Crystal Lake was a marshy wilderness infested with stirges. It had become a hideout for runaway serfs and renegades of all sorts. They established an "underground" network to help others like themselves escape from the Kingdom of Ar through Ambur and then south into what was called the Twin Peaks Borderland. The *Stargazers' Realm* feigned concern when Aran nobility complained but in truth Amburians professed a deliberate indifference. Fugitive communities were doing well, settling the region and confining the stirge peril to the darkest woods. Amburian nobility and merchants eyed the Twin Peaks

Borderland with mounting interest. Bowing to pressure, their king finally issued the *Starpoint Edict*, formally claiming these new lands. When they heard the news, settlers banded together and established a free and independent republic, sparking the Twin Peaks Campaign.

What should have been an easy takeover for Ambur's small but capable army turned sour when the republic's beleaguered supporters offered their allegiance to Foresthome in exchange for protection. The *Sylvan Realm* agreed and sent troops. Although Foresthome wielded a much stronger force, it lacked the cohesion and focus needed to dislodge Amburian occupiers. The northerners' commanding cadre of astrophysicists and engineers proved a match to their opponents' wild and spirited élan. The three protagonists became mired in a costly, drawn-out conflict featuring countless sallies and counter-attacks.

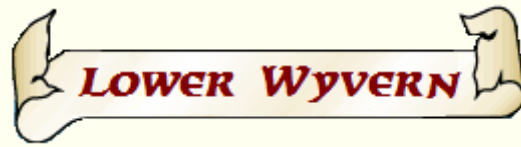
Meanwhile, serfs in Ar got wind of the brave little republic's advent and became increasingly restless. After putting down several small peasant revolts, the Kingdom of Ar decided to intervene. The recent discovery of cloudstones across the lake helped fuel the bellicose resolution. In the name of "peace," a large fleet of skyships flew in unexpectedly from Ceafem, the old capital, and in great fanfare ostensibly took Ambur's side. They spearheaded a speedy aerial offensive, dropped troops behind enemy lines, and quickly routed the sylvan rabble. Along the way, Aran forces repatriated or summarily executed whomever they pleased, with a particular predilection for captured leaders of the offending republic. Throngs of refugees and shattered remnants of the republic's fledgling volunteer army fled south into sasquatch tribal lands, while skyships rained fire and destruction upon them.

Royal troops from Greenwood rushed to the rescue and the clash degenerated into another stalemate. A neutral ground, which became known as Forestmeet, was set up for negotiations. Unwilling to sink deeper into a conflict with both Ar and Ambur, Foresthome obtained a peace resolution in exchange for withdrawing support for the ill-fated republic. An agreement was drafted formally recognizing Ar's suzerainty over lands east of Crystal Lake, rashly locking Ambur out of the equation. As a peace guarantee, Ar acknowledged woods south of the Twin Peak Borderland as Foresthome's exclusive sphere of interest. Soon thereafter, the *Sylvan Realm* established the County of Grünfold along with a clearly defined border with Ar and began working to resettle refugees. The former republic's surviving forces formed the new county's backbone and laws were put in place to outlaw serfdom. Ever since that time, Ar has patrolled the new border to prevent further escapes.

In the face of Aran military supremacy in the region, Ambur's army proved unable to alter the course of events leading to the *Forestmeet Treaty*. In a way, the King of Ambur was relieved to see Ar standing between his realm and rambunctious, sprawling Foresthome. At last, he could leave the conflict behind and go back to his true passion: *stargazing*. To this day, however, the fateful treaty still stirs bad feelings amid local nobility, especially those who'd stood to gain lands down south, and bankers who'd financed the settlements. Having formal borders with Ar so close to Ambur's capital, Starpoint, failed to inspire its military caste.

Over the following decades, Ar divided newly gained territories into two districts: Wyvern in the south, and Wraith nearest Ambur. The latter became an open dominion, a sort of free-trade

area. It aimed to assuage Amburian bankers who still claimed civil property in the area, especially in the boomtown of Ailpon, a fast-growing borough connected with the nearby cloudstone mine. Wyvern covers the defunct republic's stronghold, and the sons and grandsons of those who didn't follow refugees to Foresthome see Amburians as the instigators of the Twin Peaks Campaign. Those of the stargazing pedigree rarely if ever stray into these parts.



Since the war, the land has been mostly rid of swamps and wetlands. Stirges still hold the woods covering a long ridge that nearly splits the dominion in half. Border patrols run from the fortified village of Foggy Diggs to two military checkpoints, Hoverfield and Hopchocks Towers, along the border with Foresthome. More than 61,000 Wyvernians tend the fields for the benefit of some 1,500 urban dwellers and Aran aristocrats, or toil in the cloudstone mine. The deeper half of the excavation requires water-breathing equipment since it is flooded. Sub-aquatic work is dangerous and is either well paid or reserved for condemned criminals.

Much of the farm crops are flown out from the district's four villages or carted over to Ailpon. In total, Lower Wyvern ranges about 90 miles north to south (145Km), covering an area nearly 4,200 square miles (10,900 Km<sup>2</sup>). Nearly 40% remains as wilderness and 55% qualifies as borderlands. Farming population is deliberately spread out as a measure to help deter peasant revolts. Local specialties include spicy *black stirge boudin* which is preserved and exported as a delicacy to Skyreach. With much more rain in the summer or snow in winter due to the presence of Crystal Lake on the west shore and the Strait of Ambur on the opposite side, local climate is otherwise typical of Northern Ar.

Law enforcement remains in the hands of a military force exceeding 700, or slightly more than 1% of the district's total population. It operates seven small skyships and two large ones. Each of the lighter vessels is assigned to a village, a tower, or one of the three floating islands hovering in the sky above Lower Wyvern. They include the H.H.M.S. *Eagle, Vulture, Buzzard, Falcon, Kite, Harrier, and Osprey*. The larger vessels hail from two strategic lighthouses on Upper Wyvern, including the H.H.M.S. *Twin Peaks' Condor* and the viceroy's flagship, *Spirit of Forestmeet*.

Local serfs resent the grim reality of their servitude even more than their counterparts in mainland Ar. Since the war, ties with Grünfold relatives survived and their underground network still runs. . . *with Amburian complicity*. Out of spite, most *Starpointers* deliberately fail to report to authorities serfs escaping from mainland Ar. Instead, runaway workers trickle across Wraith and Wyvern Districts, and past Foresthome borders. Aran skyships maintain a constant vigil for "strays" near the border. Another sixty or so horsemen go where skyships cannot, patrolling woods and seldom-trod paths at night, or searching farmsteads. Captured fugitives are sent to the cloudstone mine and never again heard from. Meanwhile, dangerous renegades return from the *Sylvan Realm*, via stirge-infested-glens, with news and undying seditious ambitions.

# Wyvern Heights

The skyborne part of this region includes two separate districts. One is Upper Wyvern proper, the other the District of Skybridge for which Wyvern has become the caretaking authority. Both are described here, as they are currently related. Their weather is subject to the effect of altitude, and many of the structures are pressurized or involve protective domes.

## Skybridge District

It originally was a joint venture between investors from Griffon, Chimera, and Crown Heaven who went bankrupt before the islands could turn a profit. Multiple rival parties hired Greenspur lawyers to defend their cases, causing litigation to go on interminably. As a neutral party, the Viceroy of Wyvern was named arbitrator and *vice-regent* for the derelict district.



Skybridge District - Map Scale: 8 Miles per Hex

This monumental achievement in Aran eccentricity incorporates five separate islands rising eastward from 5,200' (1.700m) to 5,900' (2.000m). A paved road runs along the entire length, flanked with enchanted lampposts. Bridges spanning the islands between Griffon and Wyvern Districts hang from chains fastened to levitating spheres and are flexible enough to allow for the islands' slow bobbing and weaving. Positional anchors prevent the spheres from drifting with the

wind. The idea of a grand road in a realm where wizards mostly *fly* or *teleport* was seen as exquisitely quaint, beckoning trend-setters to use it for the sole purpose of departing from the norm. Heavily promoted, *Adventures-on-Wheels* did indeed appeal to the psychology of bored and blasé Aran nobility looking for something new. Seventy-two miles of it (116Km), however, came off as overkill, and consequently, residential and recreational real estate sold much more slowly than expected despite the breathtaking view across Crystal Lake. When bankruptcy reared its head, everything else there came to a halt.

Skybridge became literally abandoned for decades, a perilous wilderness with a spanking-new road running across it and palaces in various states of completion, now dilapidated. Feral creatures with flight capability moved in, along with criminals on the run, squatters, bizarre sects, and Palartarkan-knows-what else. Under Wyvernian tutelage, however, things have begun to change—some think not for the best. Parts of Skybridge Prime and much of II were cleaned up and rehabilitated. Three weathered old skyships were purchased and armed to patrol the road. Force fields were erected at either end to prevent anything questionable and potentially dangerous from getting out. In order to generate cash for the district's recovery, Wyvernian administrators solicited outside businesses and encouraged adventurous forays, wizardly hunts, and guided visits along the road from which one could observe fights (mostly staged) between monsters and mages. The entire project earned a bewilderingly tacky reputation. . . and the upper crust loved it! In search of new sensations, the rich and glamorous began showing up under guises, as a sort of *masked-ball-turned-safari*.

Since Skybridge's tawdry renaissance, a plethora of new businesses flourished along the road on the two safest islands. Entrepreneurs from various neighboring realms set up shop with Wyvern's blessing, generally living directly on site with their staff. Taverns bearing the garish colors of owning franchises sprouted almost overnight. Low-cost *fast-feast* establishments perched on top of 100'-tall-pillars catered to passing skyships, with repair and service facilities below. Sprawling lots became the domains of used skyship dealers, monster zoos, imitation-haunted houses, artificial dungeons, phantasmal jousting, cheap museums, bungee-jumping off the islands' edges, enchanted miniature-golf parks, kiddie dragon rides, as well as shops and inns with enough space for everyone to park mobile-lounges and skyships. *Aeroferries* full of foreign sightseers endowed with moderate budgets now regularly visit, crowding cheap attractions like waves of locusts. Meanwhile, certain nobles have begun blocking efforts to remove the surviving wilderness. Instead, they wish to preserve it out of nostalgia or to keep out the riff-raff. It's become fashionable to build secluded summer residences on the smaller three islands, southern exposure with a view of Vortex being most popular.

In total now, more than 4,000 Bridgelings live on the floating islands, with a whopping 264 troops (more than 6% of the population) keeping the law and endeavoring to strip out dangerous wildlife from at least the main two islands. Altogether, Skybridge District covers an area more than 500 square miles (1.300 Km<sup>2</sup>), half of which is now considered a borderland. All food and merchandise must be flown up, generally from the District of Wyvern.

## Upper Wyvern District

With the discovery and acquisition of a major cloudstone mine in the area, it didn't take long before the first few floating islands were sent aloft. After decades of acquisitions and mergers, Wyvern Prime took its shape, followed with two other large islands.



Upper Wyvern District - Map Scale: 8 Miles per Hex

**Wyvern Prime:** It is the best known and most popular of the three islands. The V-shaped-aerolith features a large lighthouse at its northern tip, the gambling palace Aetheria near the center, and the Tower of Halcyon at the opposite end. Steep hills surrounding a small mountain range at the center are home to secluded estates and a few temple complexes. Aetheria became a *Mecca* for Alphatian illusionists, embodying their craft with trade fairs and carnival festivals replete with phantasmal magic of all sorts. Fantastic parades march down the main thoroughfare across the resort, featuring giant animated monsters, as well as dancers, acrobats, jugglers, mimes, and marching bands augmented with the most delirious illusory trappings one can imagine. Booming drums and blaring trumpets accompany the overall cacophony of joyful amusement, while magically-propelled silly-string rises in air to festoon everyone and everything. Colored paper lamps levitate overhead and perform delightful ballets while great



beams of light radiate in all directions, flashing here and there or drawing the jovial figures of King and Queen Carnival against the resort's artificial dome. It is the capital of utter exuberance and imagination, perhaps the best ambassador of *illusionism* in Alphatia. Meant as an Epicurean experience, Aetheria celebrates the unbridled apotheosis of the five senses, liberating the subconscious mind to freely indulge in dreams.

One might wonder how the district earned its name. In the view of illusionists, wyverns were always thought to be products of popular imagination. Their existence was attributed to *The One*, a greater illusion that created a living specimen, one that engendered all the others. In a way, the ideal quest of Alphatian illusionists is to master the secret of turning phantasms into the real thing. Naturally, as district mascot, *wyvernkind* is treated and protected much in the way other aerial beings are in the rest of Ar. Lairs exist in the mountains and a few establishments specialize in raising tamed specimens.

Alphatian illusionists are a strange bunch with a philosophy that departs radically from magic-use. It is so foreign that many traditional wizards have come to loathe this bizarre craft. Rather than treating it as a separate branch of the arcane, they see it as an insult to the ancient Arts, an odious distortion of what true and respectable sorcery is. Traditional magic-use relies on spells that affect the environment. *Illusionism* in its purest form alters instead one's perception of the environment, which helps explain why some wizards feel illusionists are cheats seeking shortcuts around the true craft. A few are exceedingly militant about it, seeking punitive legislation and legal ostracism as far away as the *Council of Wizards* in Sundsvall. But they never quite got enough support, and the party goes on all the more in Aetheria, cynical testbed of *neo-illusionism* applied to the masses.



**Wyvern II:** It is also known as The Aviary. It was once the center of the *Mesmerati* movement. Otherwise known as the *Enlightened Fellowship of Illustrious Illusionists*, it was outlawed during the past decade by most kingdoms of the empire, following a series of criminal abductions perpetrated by its members. The Viceroy of Wyvern, one of its leaders, was arrested, and his replacement ruthlessly spearheaded the hunt, seeking clues and leads about any members still at large. Most known alumni were captured and incarcerated with their families at the sinister lighthouse in the District of Harpy for re-indoctrination in the proper use of Alphatian magic. Others narrowly avoided the same fate, escaping into the thick woods on Aviary thanks to anonymous tip-offs. There are a lot of places to hide on the island and they are very difficult to locate because, as one might expect, skillful illusions conceal hideouts and safe-houses. It is believed the *Mesmerati* still meet somewhere on the island, plotting their return.

The Aviary got its name from a tower that was the center of *Mesmerati* experimentation. Near the tower stood large domes within which all sort of curious bird-like creatures lived—and still do to this day. It appeared that most were flesh constructs made from various avian parts grafted together, no doubt the result of unspeakable experiments at the tower. It explained oversized raptor components found in the tower's laboratories, and nearby pits full of bird bones. Still unexplained are the lightning rods on the tower and chains connecting them to coils and metallic

bird cages in the dissection workshops. Birds and reptilian crossbreeds with two heads, or four wings, multiple pairs of legs, snake-like tails, and diverse magical abilities still populate the domed sanctuaries. In time, well-concealed observation decks were unveiled, from which the strange wildlife could be conveniently watched. From these vantage points, careful surveillance revealed that all these creatures were hermaphroditic, capable of reproducing on their own with completely unpredictable results. It probably justifies why these creatures were secured in the domes. The reason for all this was never quite understood despite the interrogation of Mesmerati captives. From the point of view of air-wizards, birds and creatures of flight are generally seen as beings worthy of protection and freedom under the heavens. These ghastly experimentations came as shocking news to most well-intentioned Arans and reinforced the image of the Mesmerati as heartless torturers and persecutors.

**Wyvern III:** this floating island is a quiet neighborhood of aristocratic manor houses scattered among a sylvan environment. A few of the residents were unmasked as members of the Mesmerati early during the chase, but since then, things have quieted down. The island is reputed for sages specialized in outer-planar studies, and in particular of eggs from alien creatures. Generally, unexplained devices brought back from the ethereal or the astral planes end up in one of the local abodes for further examination. Wyvern-III is a good place to sell dragon eggs or the eggs of any *wyrm* kin. Many wizards couldn't help but connect the two neighboring islands, one dwelling upon the crafting of bird-creatures and the other on studying eggs, but no further evidence of a link was found after the arrest of Mesmerati fugitives. A military garrison operates the navigational lighthouse. They remain on the lookout for any signs of Mesmerati activity.



### **Lady Dredmorn, Viceroy of Wyvern District**

This highborn Aran wizard is the most hated figure by illusionists in general and by surviving alumni of the Mesmerati Society in particular. As the appointed agent of the monarchy, she seeks adepts of the Mesmerati and anyone consorting with them. A former magistrate of Ar's justice system, she often forgets the difference between prosecuting and persecuting, the ends justifying the means as long as they are enforced in the name of the law and by order of the king. She does not condone the exuberant festivities of Aetheria but has so far failed to curb the enthusiasm and earnings they generate. Local aristocrats, many of whom are investors in the resort and major landowners on both Wyvern Prime and Lower Wyvern, see to it that no one tampers with the island's established traditions. Lady Dredmorn avoids confronting such influential nobility directly but she remains on the lookout for any hint of a connection with the Mesmerati, which she would ruthlessly use as a basis for (at best) discrediting them or (at worst) ordering their arrests. The viceroy is not above entrapping those she dislikes or resorting to blackmail to further her aims. Her mercilessness is the reason why she was chosen for the position. The viceroy's regency over Skybridge District is just as tyrannical.

She holds her court at Halcyon Tower, a sinister symbol of her power notorious for swift winds maddeningly sweeping through at all times. Surrounding hills still bear gallows from which mummified remains of tortured Mesmerati are left to swing at the whim of the gusts as a warning. Only highborn Arans whose execution Lady Dredmorn could not get away with were committed to Harpy District. She has recently turned to skillful thieves and high-paid cutthroats to eradicate the hated fellowship and intimidate supporters of the craft. These shadowy characters occasionally manage to spy on the secret society, learning about their goals and habits. They are usually eliminated fairly soon, but unfortunately some linger long enough to share their observations with their employer. The viceroy has been patiently collecting bits and pieces of information to identify not only the fellowship's leading members but those who consort with them. These connections bear ramifications extending as far as Sundsvall. She will mount a large-scale operation when she knows enough. Lady Dredmorn is also directly involved with the mission of dismantling the *Grünfold Connection*, the underground network smuggling runaway serfs into Foresthome and pro-republic activists into Wyvern District. The latter are seen as the greatest threat to the district's political stability and to the kingdom as a whole. It explains why Lady Dredmorn remains in power despite her many enemies.



**Appearance & Personality:** She stands a little over medium height but her ascetic appearance and burning inexhaustible energy make Lady Dredmorn seem younger than her late 40s. She has hard, sharp features on an elongated triangular face. No one has seen her thin mouth smile in recent memory. She wears her long black hair brushed straight back and tied or knotted at her nape. A nasal and perfunctory voice completes her portrait. Her severe character was molded at a relatively young age when she had to assume leadership of her house: her beloved brother had been groomed for the position but he'd been killed during a manhunt on Lower Wyvern. His death motivated her to become a priestess of Verthandi. Early in her training, she'd hoped she could travel in time to save her brother. Wisdom eventually revealed her dream's futility and she became bitter and unforgiving. Since then, Lady Dredmorn has long watched activities in Lower Wyvern and has come to suspect that the *Grünfold Connection* might have connections with the Mesmerati. Her vow to destroy both led her to earn the title of viceroy and a royal mandate to seek revenge.

C25, AC3, hp 57, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 mace or spell, Dmg 1d6+3 or by spell, Save C25+2, ML10, AL C; St13, In15, Wi17, Dx11, Co 13, Ch10. **Special Abilities:** once a day as a cleric of Verthandi, any adverse die roll such as an attack, a saving throw, or an ability check (hers or an opponent's) is cancelled and rerolled. **Magical Items:** *hourglass of time-bending*, *gauntlet of investigation*, *robe of safety*, *ring of protection +2*, and *mace of delaying +2*.

**Hourglass of Time-Bending:** this flat, silver medallion is an enchanted clerical symbol of Verthandi. Once per year, it may be activated to cause a local time shift, moving back 2d4 rounds. All events or actions taken during that time are cancelled. The effect is unnoticeable by all but upper-level clerics of Verthandi, the immortal himself and his outer-planar servants, and

those who witnessed the cleric using this symbol. Time-bending involves an area corresponding roughly to a dungeon or a specific building and all its contents.

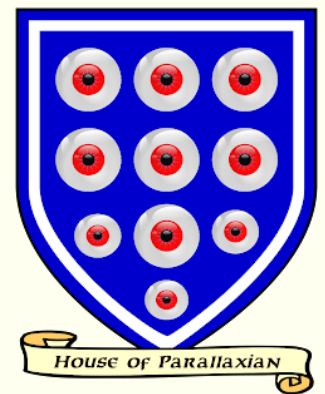
**Gauntlets of Investigation:** these gloves enable Dredmorn to touch a non-living object and receive a vision revealing events that occurred around it. The vision is limited to a 10' radius and does not generate sounds. The gauntlets hold 2d6 charges. Each use burns one charge for every day into the past. The gauntlets are destroyed when the last charge is used. The vision takes no more than 1 round per day observed.

**Robe of Safety:** aside from an AC5 protection, this enchanted garment provides a permanent *detect danger* effect (as the 1st level druidic spell) and *protection from normal missiles* (as the 3rd level magic-user spell). The robe also *teleports* its owner to her shrine if the latter is reduced to less than 10 hit points (no save). Anyone less than 10th level who happens to wear this garment is immediately *teleported*. Its color is like hematite, dense silvery-black.

**Mace of Delaying:** initially, this item comes in the form of a silver bracelet. When suddenly flicked, it turns into a mace with a lanyard wrapped around the owner's wrist. A word of thanks to Verthandi will revert it to its original form. The mace is a +2 magical weapon inflicting upon a target a *slow* effect (as the reversed 3rd level magic-user *haste* spell) any time the owner scores an unmodified 18 or better on a hit roll. A saving throw vs. paralysis negates the effect which otherwise lasts until the end of the combat encounter.

## Parallaxian the Seer, Imperial Observer

King Qissling, under pressure from a group of influential aristocrats at the Council of Wizards in Sundsvall, appointed this elder Vertilian mage as an observer for the prosecution of the Mesmerati case. Rumors of brutality and abuse of power filtered back to the elite at the imperial capital which stirred some mixed feelings there. Wishing to shed light on the matter, the council issued a request, to which the king, immersed in spell research at the time, readily agreed so he could return to his business. A vote named councilman Parallaxian as their representative. It so happens that the venerable seer is a skillful illusionist, although that fact remains known to an exceedingly few souls. Armed with an imperial warrant, Parallaxian began his role as an observer at Halcyon Tower. He has legal access to all judicial proceedings and related records. The mage may observe any event related to the prosecution of the Mesmerati case, including arrests and interrogation procedures.



Although not a member of the secret society, Parallaxian believes it was unjustly treated. Fully aware that Lady Dredmorn keeps tabs on him, he manages to elude her attention and pursue his own investigation into the affair. This led him to connect in a very indirect manner with one of the society's prominent members. Although he does not condone law-breaking, Parallaxian occasionally forewarns his shadowy contact of impending raids and the presence of spies. Lady

Dredmorn resorts to an array of stratagems to avoid revealing her immediate plans to Parallaxian but the old fox can sniff out a few things occasionally. He objects to the viceroy's methods and in particular to her deplorable use of cutthroats to intimidate or eliminate troublesome aristocrats. He's been unable to gain incontrovertible proof but circumstantial evidence alludes to her practice. A development has been disturbing him of late, however. After recent investigation, the mage concluded that the fellowship colluded to some degree with the *Grünfold Connection*, especially as regards the latter's ability to smuggle fugitives out of the kingdom. The full nature of the association remains disconcertingly unclear.

**Appearance & Personality:** Smart, wise, diplomatic, and philosophical, Parallaxian appears to be around 70 years old. Although his stature is average, his presence makes him seem taller. His head is smooth and perfectly bald except for coarse silver hair that fans from the back of his head. His sparkling bright blue eyes are not perfectly aligned and can be confusing to look at. Even more disconcerting, blinking eyelike earrings dangle from the extended lobes of his ears. He often uses his knobby hands emphasize points he thinks are important. His voice, a velvety calm baritone, is soothing and pleasant. Parallaxian never walks in a straight line and never explains why. Earlier in his life, he was a victim of emanations from the Dimension of Nightmares. This led him to study *illusionism*, hoping one day to unveil the deepest secrets of the craft and eliminate its connection with the other dimension. In his dealings with Lady Dredmorn and the Mesmerati, he often finds himself having to choose the lesser of two evils. He would prefer convincing those with blood on their hands to surrender to justice and let the others live in peace.

MU9/IL18, AC3, hp 41, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff or spell, Dmg 1d6+1 or by spell, Save MU18, ML8, AL L; St11, In17, Wi15, Dx16, Co 13, Ch14. **Special Abilities:** Parallaxian's class abilities are described in the next section. **Magical Items:** *amulet of protection from ESP and crystal balls, scroll of encryption, knack of correlation, staff of blindness, spectacles of the marked, and robe of eyes.*

**Scroll of Encryption:** it enables the owner to copy any inscription fitting within the scroll's surface by simply placing the vellum on top of the area of interest. Alternatively, the owner can manually recopy maps and writings, however incomprehensible. A command word then causes everything copied, drawn, or written to vanish. A second command restores everything to perfectly readable form, decrypting any non-magical cipher or foreign language in the process. Using *read magic* or *detect invisible* spells on the scroll will trigger a *feblemind* effect on the caster (as the 5th level magic-user spell).

**Knack of Correlation:** this item looks like a tuning fork. It is used to find a link between one or more items. When tapped against an object, it chimes with a precise A tone for a moment. Any time afterward, tapping on another object will yield the same tone if the objects are somehow connected (a murder weapon, a victim's bones, or the front door of the one who paid the cutthroat). If an object bears no connection to the first, the fork emits instead an F sharp lower in the same octave as the A. Tapping twice resets the fork.

**Staff of Blindness:** this +1 staff is equivalent to a *wand of enemy detection*, with 2d20 charges. Each detection uses a charge. The staff also inflicts *blindness* upon detected enemies unless they save vs. spell. The affliction last 1d4 hours.

**Spectacles of the Marked:** this set of wizardly oculars relate to Alphatian *illusionism* (described later in this article). When worn, an illusionist can identify anyone within sight who's come in contact with emanations from the Dimension of Nightmares, either another illusionist or victims. Their auras' strengths indicate how recent or severe the exposure was. Someone "marked" by the Dimension of Nightmares, however, bears an unmistakable sign. If worn by a non-initiate, the oculars only display people distorted with silly illusions; if wearing them more than three rounds, a non-initiate must save vs. spell or become *confused* (as the 4th level magic user spell).

**Robe of Eyes:** this garment is blue and with blinking eyes from collar to floor-length hem that allow Parallaxian to see in all directions. It provides an AC of 5 and also generates permanent *detect invisible* (240') and *infravision* (120') effects. A *light* spell cast at the robe negates its perceptive abilities for 1d4 rounds, 2d4 rounds for a *continual light*. While the robe works, the owner cannot be surprised.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and editorial contributions.*



## Illusionists of Alphatia

The craft of illusionists is one that is open to magic-users, elves, and clerics of the appropriate faith (chiefly Korotiku and Loki but also immortals such as Harrow and Tiresias). Unlike the Sphere of Thought, the Sphere of Energy is generally the least conducive to *illusionism*. This path requires a minimum score of 14 in Dexterity. The technique of Alphatian illusionists partly involves emanations from the Dimension of Nightmares, which demands a certain caution. Illusionists described in the *Seven Secret Crafts* (see GAZ3 *Principalities of Glantri*) differ fundamentally from the Alphatian variety in that they remain a branch of traditional magic.

Characters with compatible classes may adopt *illusionism* before reaching level 10. When they do, they stop advancing in their original classes, focusing their efforts on the new craft's mastery. Illusionists keep their current hit points, hit rolls, saving throws, and class abilities, but restart as first level characters in their original class with new illusionist skills. Once an illusionist gains enough experience to reach the original class level, normal advancement resumes—except that traditional spellcasting *never* improves beyond the point where it had stopped. Higher-level spells cannot be learned, however hard one might try, because *illusionism* conflicts with traditional magical or clerical spellcasting. At the DM's discretion, thieves may be allowed as illusionists. If so, their thieving skills no longer improve, and their abilities to weave illusions compare with a clerical illusionist's.

Illusionists learn early on to "get into people's minds." It is the basis of their technique which allows them to alter their subjects' perceptions of reality. Intelligence or lack thereof isn't an issue. Smart folk are vulnerable to their imaginations and what lurks in their subconscious minds, while others aren't perceptive enough to know better. "Unintelligent" creatures, such as primordial life forms, plants, animated skeletons, golems, and constructs all have in common some ability to perceive their environments, without which they couldn't function. Illusionists can alter these sensory faculties, no matter how primitive, alien, or superficial. In this regard, no one is immune, including creatures listed as "immune to mind-affecting spells," although the scope of effects should be limited to the victims' cognitive capabilities. The biggest difference with a wizard's *phantasmal force* spell is that a true illusion does not vanish when touched. It remains active for a specific duration.

**Getting Into Someone's Mind:** This ability is to illusionists what the *read magic* spell is to magic-users. Although it doesn't enable reading one's thoughts, it gives the illusionist a feeling of what a subject would consider most relevant—a killer cell to a giant amoeba, a swinging hammer to a skeleton, or the ghost of a former victim to a human assassin, and so on. This action takes 1 full round of careful insight and is required for every single illusion. The subject may save vs. spells to overcome altered senses. Saving throws represent the difficulty of getting into a victim's mind. An illusionist can keep trying as many times as desired during an encounter. Once an illusionist gets into a subject's mind, senses can be altered to produce one of various illusions described later under *Oneiromorphic Abilities*.

**Saving Throw Adjustments:** If the illusionist is of a higher level, -1 penalty; if at least twice the victim's level, -2 penalty; three times the level, -3, down to a maximum of -4. The opposite is also true if the illusionist is of a lower level, up to +4. A natural roll of "1" is always a failure and a "20" is always a success. Getting into minds of people or monsters never before encountered or affected results in a +2 bonus to saving throws (see *book of phantasms* below). A specific being affected at least once before incurs instead a -2 saving throw penalty since the illusionist already knows about the victim's personal psychology. Trying to *disbelieve* sensory alteration is futile and may result in further *confusion* (10% chance, as the 4<sup>th</sup> level magic-user spell).

**Multiple Victims:** The senses of *multiple* subjects can be affected at the same time, based on the rank of the illusionist's ability (see *Tricks of the Trade* later). A first rank ability can affect up to 5 victims, a second rank 7, a third rank 10, a fourth rank 15, a fifth rank 20, a sixth rank 30, a seventh rank 50, an eighth rank 70, and a ninth rank 100. Only one saving throw is rolled, based on the best available score in a group of victims. At the DM's discretion, the victims' party may receive a saving throw bonus up to +4 if their HD total exceeds the illusionist's level, using the method suggested in the previous paragraph. Basic illusionist tricks can affect any number of people close enough to experience the effect.

**Book of Phantasms:** Illusionists "collect" sense-altering events much like magic-users do spells, keeping track within their *books of phantasms* of which creatures' minds were penetrated during their careers. The arcane script used is unique to each illusionist, due to the complexity and personal nature of the books' entries. An illusionist must first "break" the ciphers of a rival's book to comprehend its contents. This requires a d20 roll above the author's Intelligence, with a +/-1 adjustment reflecting the difference in experience levels, as shown in the previous paragraph (though *reversed* in this case). A natural score of 20 always succeeds provided the author's Intelligence is 18 or less. Further attempts for each book entry can be made when attaining a new experience level. Dwelling upon another illusionist's psychological insights is tricky business. A modified score of zero or worse causes *feeble-mindedness* (as the 5<sup>th</sup> level magic-user spell). The affliction cannot be *dispelled* but a clerical 6<sup>th</sup> level *cure all* spell will restore an illusionist's sanity.

There are three general categories of subjects—people, wildlife, and objects. Human and demi-human character classes are too vague to be of use by themselves, therefore they must be split into at least one subcategory describing culture, profession, philosophy, or nationality. Specific people can be listed as well. People entries could be listed as follows—Stoutfellow dwarf, elven merchant prince, Aran wizard, halfling pirate, cleric of Thanatos, Amburian astronomer, Bagnigobblak the Troll King, etc. Wildlife, including animals and monsters, only requires the specific race to be listed (*grizzly bear, giant scorpion, orc, storm giant, red dragon, lich, etc.*) as described in the standard list of D&D Game monsters. Things of an unusual nature, such as traps, falling walls, and other uncommon animations also require entries in *books of phantasms*. They must have been experienced personally in an illusionist's career before they can be simulated and therefore listed here (see *Tricks of the Trade*). Illusions of people and wildlife in this book may be created later.



## Tricks of the Trade

Illusionists rely on *oneiromorphic abilities* to affect their subjects. These abilities are innate and do not require preparation at the beginning of each day. They are ranked to emulate traditional spell levels, inferring that illusionists can use these abilities as traditional spellcasters would spells. However, illusionists can never cast more traditional spells than their previous class allowed. Furthermore, each *oneiromorphic ability* takes the place of one traditional spell of comparable power. When outgrowing their original class levels, illusionists must use any additional spell slots exclusively for *oneiromorphic abilities*. Unless written otherwise, effects described in this section take place the round after which an illusionist succeeded in tampering with a subject's senses. There are no additional saving throws beyond those related to "getting into someone's mind".

**Spellcasting Example:** a 9th level cleric inspired to take on *illusionism* would still cast clerical spells as a 9th cleric but qualify only as a 1st level illusionist initially. As such, a clerical illusionist has no *oneiromorphic abilities* until 2nd level, whereas arcane or elven illusionists have at least one. There are, however, basic tricks illusionists always have, regardless of experience level, which will be described later.

**Range & Duration:** How far away from the subject any illusion appears is irrelevant, since it is part of sensory alteration. An illusion could be seen as standing within arm's length or at the limit of eyesight. Illusionists, however, cannot affect anyone they cannot clearly see—in this respect "range" remains 240' in broad daylight, half that in dimmer conditions. Unless stated otherwise, effects last as long as an illusionist can maintain concentration. While concentrating, the illusionist can move a few steps but not take any other action or sustain any damage. *Dispel magic* does not work against illusions unless directed at the victims (but measured against the illusionist's experience level).

**Basic Illusionist Tricks:** These harmless tricks are somewhat equivalent to magic-users' cantrips. Any illusionist always has at least four of these in addition to *oneiromorphic abilities*. Beyond the initial four, a first rank *oneiromorphic ability* can be traded for another four tricks. Some do not require "getting into someone's mind" to succeed. An ability check is enough to perform some of these tricks. They are described below:

**Card Tricks:** these are typical tricks involving card games, based on Dexterity. An illusionist can manipulate cards once during a game to help determine who wins or loses. Those fleeced in such a manner get an Intelligence check to realize what happened.

**Legerdemain:** this skill is sufficient to perform one trick on stage and entertain people, such as manipulating small objects, pulling a rabbit out of a hat, etc. The trick is based on Dexterity.

**Pick Pockets:** illusionists can *pick pockets* as thieves half their experience levels.

**Optical Illusion:** it enables the creation of very simple eye tricks, usually within a 10'x10' area, such as casting a furtive shadow, changing the color of an object, making a

static object look as if it stood a foot away from its actual position, etc. The effect is limited to specific victims whose senses are affected.

**Auditory Component:** it enables the creation of background sounds, such as soft music, distant footfalls, an indistinct conversation, an eerie whisper, a knock on a door, etc. It can be used to add an echo effect to a location or remove it entirely. The effect is limited to specific victims whose senses are affected.

**Olfactory Component:** it is used to add or alter any single odor, specific to a nearby object, person, or location. It can be used instead to mask a scent well enough to confuse animals. This trick can also alter an object's *gustatory* properties. The effect is limited to specific victims whose senses are affected.

**Tactile Component:** it alters the physical feel of an object, swapping rough with smooth, furry with scaly, warm with cool, soft with hard, dry with wet or viscous, and so on. In the absence of visual perception, the apparent shape of an object can be altered. The effect is limited to specific victims whose senses are affected.

## **Oneiromorphic Abilities**

### **Unless stated otherwise:**

1. Effects described below are limited to specific victims whose senses are affected (see *Getting into Someone's Mind* earlier).
2. Physical damage is illusory. *Petrifaction* only results in *paralysis*, level draining is temporary, and imaginary death only causes unconsciousness, all of which lasting 1d4 Turns.
3. Physical damage should be no more than what is expected from a real version of a simulation and vanishes when the illusion ends.

### **Nagging Invulnerability**

#### **Rank 1**

**Duration:** one combat encounter

This subterfuge convinces affected victims their attacks aren't reaching the illusionist, although they might. Any damage actually inflicted (secretly recorded by the DM) cannot be observed on the person of the illusionist who appears instead to be mocking attackers. The illusion ends if the illusionist actually passes out. Once triggered, this subterfuge does not require further concentration.

### **Phantasmal Summons**

#### **Rank 1**

**Duration:** concentration

This ability convinces victims whose senses have been affected that they see imaginary creatures. *Phantasmal summons* must be chosen from creatures listed in the illusionist's book of phantasms. What they do is entirely at the illusionist's discretion while concentration is maintained. Up to five creatures of the same type can be imagined, totaling no more than 10 XP (as described in the D&D Game's standard monster listing). A 1<sup>st</sup> level illusionist could therefore produce five illusory rats, two goblins, or one orc. From the point of view of victims, creatures

respond exactly as described in the game rules, including their hit points, attacks, armor class, saving throws, special abilities, etc. Unlike a traditional magic-user's *phantasmal force*, these imaginary creatures do not vanish when merely touched or hit.

## **Simulcast**

### **Rank 1**

**Duration:** concentration, up to the emulated spell's own duration

*Simulcast* imitates a traditional spell meant as an attack against someone, such as *magic missile*, *hold person*, *web*, *fireball*, *polymorph other*, *insect plague*, etc. There are several conditions for what can be imitated. The illusionist must have been the victim of the spell at least once *and* have missed any required saving throw. As such, the spell should be recorded in the illusionist's *book of phantasms*. The illusionist must be of an experience level appropriate to the emulated spell. Victims must also be spellcasters or have some knowledge of the emulated spell in order to fear its effects. The latter is at the DM's discretion or subject to a random check (10% chance, +5% per HD up to +130%, minus 5% per spell level down to a minimum 1% total chance). For example, a 7th level illusionist could emulate a *polymorph other* spell, causing victims to think and act as if they had been transformed into red dragons; they would drop what weapons they held, roar, claw the air in front of them, pretend to breathe fire, or attempt to fly off a cliff to escape. "Getting into the victim's mind" enables the illusionist to know whether a spell effect is known.

## **Divination of Contrariness**

### **Rank 2**

**Duration:** One day.

This ability causes victims whose senses have been affected to "misread" any future detection spells, observing instead the exact opposite of what they were hoping for, or indeed what they worried about. Once triggered, this deception does not require concentration; it feeds on the victims' imagination. For example *detect magic* might inform a spellcaster that nothing magical lies in a treasure, or that indeed something does which isn't enchanted at all. The same subterfuge affects spells and natural detection abilities, suggesting incorrect conclusions (*detect alignment*, *danger*, *evil*, *invisibility*, *hear noise*, *track by smell*, etc.).

## **Hallucinatory Recall**

### **Rank 2**

**Duration:** permanent until triggered

This ability enables the illusionist to affect a "delayed" version of the magic-user's traditional *phantasmal force* spell. The illusion, based on what the illusionist learned of a past victim, is centered on a 10'x10' area or on a specific object. It is triggered when the intended victim enters the area of effect or touches the object. The victim gets a saving throw only at this point, as described in *Getting into Someone's Mind*. The illusionist needs not be present when the illusion is triggered. The *phantasmal force* acts in part according to the author's initial intent and the victim's own distraught imagination. Victim and effect must both have been listed in the illusionist *book of phantasms* before using this ability. If more than one victim is affected, only one of them can actually trigger the effect.

## Phantasmal Watch

### Rank 2

**Duration:** concentration + 2d4 rounds

As the first rank *phantasmal summons*, except that up to seven creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 25 XP. If imaginary creatures survive past the illusionist's concentration, they linger another 2d4 rounds, acting in accord with the victims' own distraught imaginations, possibly pursuing them beyond the illusionist's sight. Concentration can be voluntarily or involuntarily ended. The illusionist can always dismiss his or her own *phantasmal summons* at any time.

## Ominous Dream

### Rank 3

**Duration:** one rest period

When getting into their minds, the illusionist "tags" the senses of victims' *for later use* rather than effecting an illusion straight away. Such a sensory tag can be preserved no more than a day. During this deferred period, residual influences trigger disturbing dreams when victims attempt to rest, implanting fake messages, misleading suggestions, vacuous portents, etc. Once triggered, they last 1d4 rounds after which victims startle awake with impending feelings of doom preventing any further sleep until the next resting period.

## Phantasmal Squad

### Rank 3

**Duration:** concentration + 2d6 rounds

As the second rank *phantasmal watch*, except that up to ten creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 55 XP.

## Subjective Aura

### Rank 3

**Duration:** one encounter

The illusionist implants the affected victims' minds with the notion that a course of action would be in their benefit. Because it relies on unspoken concepts much like ESP, the illusory hint must be fairly basic and limited to the victims' cognitive faculties. The notion cannot suggest an act obviously harmful to the subjects. It can be used to alter the subjects' response to the illusionist and his/her companions' presence.

## Phantasmal War Band

### Rank 4

**Duration:** concentration + 2d8 rounds

As the second rank *phantasmal watch*, except that up to fifteen creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 130 XP. The *war band* also exposes the victims' senses to influences from the Dimension of Nightmares. As a result, 20% of damage inflicted to victims (rounded up) counts as actual shock damage. Other forms of attack that do not inflict physical damage remain entirely illusory.

## Resilient Mirage

### Rank 4

**Duration:** Special

The mirage enables the illusionist to alter the appearance of a victim's environment, as a magic-user's traditional *hallucinatory terrain* spell would. The difference is that the illusion does not vanish when touched and can be "programmed" as a second rank *hallucinatory recall*. It demonstrates all expected sensorial components (optical, auditory, tactile, and olfactory), with some limited animation (birds flying by, leaves rustling, a splashing brook, etc.). Any interaction between this altered environment and the victim remains entirely a product of the latter's imagination. Although the illusion itself is harmless, walking on a bridge that does not actually exist could still prove lethal. The effect lasts a day per experience level of the illusionist.

## Subjective Cloak

### Rank 4

**Duration:** Concentration

When getting into their minds, the illusionist "tags" the senses of victims' *for later use* rather than effecting an illusion straight away. Such a sensory tag can be preserved no more than a day. During this deferred period, the illusionist may trigger a kind of *invisibility* undetectable from the victims (but not from observers who weren't affected). This subterfuge convinces victims that the illusionist and accompanying party aren't present, negating objective evidence such as footprints in the dust, noise, smell, *faerie fire*, etc. Attacking victims does not break this illusion either. The effect requires uninterrupted concentration during which the illusionist may only half-move and take no other action. The accompanying party is free to act but must remain within sight of the illusionist at all times. If concentration is broken or anyone among of the accompanying party exits the illusionist's field of vision, the deception ends.

## Lesser Discombobulation

### Rank 5

**Duration:** concentration

In the victims minds up is down, down is up, left is right, right is left, everyone speaks backward, and nothing looks straight. Victims incur a 2pt penalty to their hit rolls, armor classes, and saving throws, and cannot cast spells or use any magic requiring spoken commands. If concentration lasts more than 3 rounds (plus the victims' Intelligence or Wisdom bonuses—whichever is highest), victims must save vs. spell of contract a form of insanity (permanent until treated with a *cureall* spell).



## Phantasmal Battle Clan

### Rank 5

**Duration:** concentration + special

As the fourth rank *phantasmal war band*, except that up to twenty creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 300 XP. If they survive, imaginary creatures last for an entire battle encounter plus 3d6 rounds.

## Lesser Impersonation

### Rank 6

**Duration:** 1 Hour

When getting into their minds, the illusionist “tags” the senses of victims’ *for later use* rather than effecting an illusion straight away. Such a sensory tag can be preserved no more than a day. During this deferred period, the illusionist may trigger a *lesser impersonation*. The victims’ senses are altered, enabling the illusionist to impersonate one of them or a previous victim. There is no way to tell the two apart unless the illusionist does not speak the subject’s language. In all other respects, the illusion faithfully emulates tone and timber of voice, clothing, gait, mannerisms, smell, physical size, equipment *including* magical items but only in the view of those affected and what they know of the subject being impersonated. Victims have every reason to believe the impostor is the *real McCoy* unless the two stand next to each other and one does not know an agreed-upon password or some such verification if any had been established.

## Phantasmal Swarm

### Rank 6

**Duration:** concentration + special

As the fourth rank *phantasmal war band*, except that up to thirty creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 750 XP. If they survive, imaginary creatures last for an entire battle encounter plus one Turn (or until victims faint from their own imaginary deaths).

## Nightmare

### Rank 7

**Duration:** one rest period

Similar to the third rank *ominous dream*, this ability also causes a single victim to face one or more malfera during the dream stage (see description below). The visiting malfera’s hit points should be no more than the victim’s. Up to 80% of any imaginary damage converts to shock damage when the victim awakes. If he/she “died” in the dream, the victim must save vs. spell or suffer a form of insanity (permanent until treated with a *cureall* spell).

**Malfera\*:** AC3, HD9\*\* (L), MV 60’(20’), AT 2 claws/1 bite + special, Dmg 1d10/1d10/1d6, Save F13, ML 11, Int 10, AL C.

**Special Attacks:** if both pincers hit, victim is dragged to the malfera’s chest on the next round; tentacles on the malfera’s chest trap the victim and inflict 2d6 points of acid damage per round; poison breath—save at +3 or die. **Special Defenses:** +1 or better weapon to hit. **Special Abilities:** *knock* and *detect invisible* at will. **Description:** elephant head with large fangs and horns, short slimy wriggling tentacles on chest, jagged pincers, webbed and clawed feet, black skin with throbbing red veins, glowing red eyes.



## Phantasmal Phalanx

### Rank 7

**Duration:** concentration + special

As the fourth rank *phantasmal war band*, except that up to fifty creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 1,800 XP. If they survive, imaginary creatures last for an entire battle encounter plus one Hour (or until victims faint from their own imaginary deaths). The *phantasmal phalanx* exposes the victims' senses to greater influences from the Dimension of Nightmares. As a result, 50% of damage inflicted to victims (rounded up) counts as actual shock damage. Other forms of attack that do not inflict physical damage remain illusory.

## Greater Impersonation

### Rank 8

**Duration:** 1 Day

Similar to the sixth rank *lesser impersonation*, except that the illusionist and his/her companions can each impersonate previous victims (or the illusionist if desired). Though they can all mimic the same person or different people each, impostors must have some familiarity with impersonated subjects. The subterfuge holds true only in the eyes of this illusion's victims, therefore impostors all see each other as they really are. While the deception is in effect, impostors do not necessarily need to stay together.

## Phantasmal Cohort

### Rank 8

**Duration:** concentration + special

As the seventh rank *phantasmal phalanx*, except that up to seventy creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 4,300 XP. If they survive, imaginary creatures last for an entire battle encounter plus one Day (or until victims faint from their own imaginary deaths).

## Greater Discombobulation

### Rank 9

**Duration:** Permanent

This ability is a stronger and permanent version of the fifth rank *lesser discombobulation*. The illusionist's mind's eye evokes a reflection of the Dimension of Nightmares, *discombobulating* an area 300' radius. It lies halfway between the Prime Plane and the Dimension of Nightmares. In addition to the effects of *lesser discombobulation*, gravity is reversed for any loose object weighing 5cn or less, an illusory wind blows in slow motion through unbound hair and clothing, "black light" illuminates the area, grotesque squeals and grunts sound from random spots, and physical structures become twisted as in an Escher-like world. A saving throw vs. paralysis is required to reach portals or stairwell landings. Failure causes the last few steps to extend inexplicably; a subsequent saving throw must be successful to get through. Anyone who attempts to run is *slowed* (as the reversed third-level-magic-user *haste* spell—no save). Each Turn, random



creatures from the Dimension of Nightmares have a 10% chance of appearing or disappearing. Likewise, visitors have the same odds of *bleeding through* into the other dimension unless they save vs. spell. Although the illusionist is immune to these effects, companions or illusionists 20th level or less are not. *Greater discombobulation* is a permanent effect that only a traditional magic-user's *wish* spell can undo. This ability does *not* require "getting into the minds" of victims; it is a tangible emanation from the Dimension of Nightmares.

## Phantasmal Legion

### Rank 9

**Duration:** permanent

As the seventh rank *phantasmal phalanx*, except that up to a hundred creatures can be imagined, totaling no more than 10,000 XP. Imaginary creatures are permanent until "killed" or victims faint from their own imaginary deaths. The *phantasmal legion* exposes the victims' senses to tangible emanations from the Dimension of Nightmares. As a result, 80% of physical damage inflicted to victims (rounded down) counts as actual shock damage. Other forms of attack that do not inflict physical damage remain illusory. This ability does *not* require getting into the minds of victims as it is a tangible emanation from the Dimension of Nightmares.

## Dimension of Nightmares Influence

Most Alphetian illusionists think their craft is entirely due to their personal skills and ingenuity. This isn't entirely true. *Oneiromorphic abilities* are laced with influences from the Dimension of Nightmares which may leave residual traces in the Prime Plane. Any time a victim (or at least 1 out of 3 if more than one) faints as the result of imaginary death (or actually perishes as the result of an illusion), the Dimension of Nightmares may "bleed-through" the Prime Plane at that spot. An ominous event takes place when the illusionist ceases to concentrate on the illusion unless he/she succeeds a saving throw vs. spell. Average out the illusionist's experience level and the victim's HD (rounded down). If multiple victims were involved, add a +2 adjustment to their basic HD for every full group of 10 creatures. Look up the total on the chart below and roll 2d4. With a roll of 2-3, shift one row down; with 4-6 no change; 7-8 up one row.

Relative HD	Dimension of Nightmares' Influence
<b>31 and above</b>	<b>1. Stalker:</b> a nightmarish alter-ego of the victim (with as many HD as the illusionist or a comparable party of malfera) stalks the illusionist; waits for the best opportunity to attack; appears at night 3d% feet from the illusionist and vanishes at sunrise if still alive; permanent until slain.
<b>26 to 30</b>	<b>2. Gate:</b> opens an invisible gate to the Dimension of Nightmares for 3d6 days.



<b>21 to 25</b>	<b>3. Greater Emanation:</b> a cloud of flies centered on the illusionist fills a 40'x40' area for 3d6 rounds (Dmg 10/round, MV 60'/20')
<b>18 to 20</b>	<b>4. Chaos Stigmata:</b> illusionist gains +1 Int linked to a mental affliction; both are permanent until treated with a <i>cureall</i> spell.
<b>15 to 17</b>	<b>5. Marked:</b> add 1 HD to the illusionist when consulting this chart; effect is permanent and cumulative.
<b>12 to 14</b>	<b>6. Dark Omen:</b> outer planar visions disable the illusionist for 1d4 rounds and negate the illusionist's next rest period
<b>9 to 11</b>	<b>7. Psychic Wound:</b> -1 Int or Wis (whichever is highest) until someone else faints as a result of the illusionist's talents
<b>6 to 8</b>	<b>8. Lesser Emanation:</b> reverse gravity in effect for any loose object weighing 5cn or less within a 30' radius; lasts 4d6 hours.
<b>3 to 5</b>	<b>9. Minor Portent:</b> outer planar visions disable the illusionist for 1 round
<b>1 to 2</b>	<b>10. No Effect</b>

**For example:** a 36th level illusionist affects 100 centaurs, adjusting by 20 (2x10) the centaurs' basic 4HD. The average is therefore 30 (36+24=60, 60/2=30). A d10 roll yields an 8, shifting the result one row up.

**Note:** Several references are made to insanity in this article. *Geoff Gander* wrote an excellent article on Pandius, labeled *Insanity, Horror, and the Outer Beings in Mystara*. [Click here for details](#) and scroll down to the section labeled *Losing Sanity*.

## The Mesmerati Society

This association originally adopted as their main goal the promotion and protection of *illusionism*. They seek to establish their craft to be accepted and treated as any other branch of magic. As the skills of illusionists grew, rancor among traditional magic-users surged. Critics often accuse illusionists of selling out the Prime Plane to the Dimension of Nightmares in exchange for their craft, a deep-seated, gut-level fear that isn't exactly baseless. High-placed wizards in subject kingdoms or in Sundsvall are pushing for laws to eradicate the strange craft, while others quietly take matters into their own hands. Yet, enough influential mages and clerics, some of whom are illusionists, have prevented any official measure from being taken. Attitudes among subject kingdoms and colonies vary accordingly.

To protect its members from abuse, the association became clandestine and militant. Several unresolved abductions have led Sundsvall to outlaw the Mesmerati. To pursue their goal, the Mesmerati have become talented in the art of penetrating circles of civilian society or the military to stay informed and take action where most appropriate. In truth, the shadowy association has indeed made a pact, but not with anyone or anything in the Dimension of Nightmares. Their secret allegiance lies with the Dimension of Mirage and all matters concerning the Sphere of Thought. Their belief is that the original wyvern that led to the birth of the monster race on the Prime Plane was the figment of an immortal's thought on Mirage. It was strong enough to have traveled the multiverse and reached the Prime Plane where it reproduced and vanished for reasons unknown. Consensus infers that "The First" faded from existence as it created the new race.



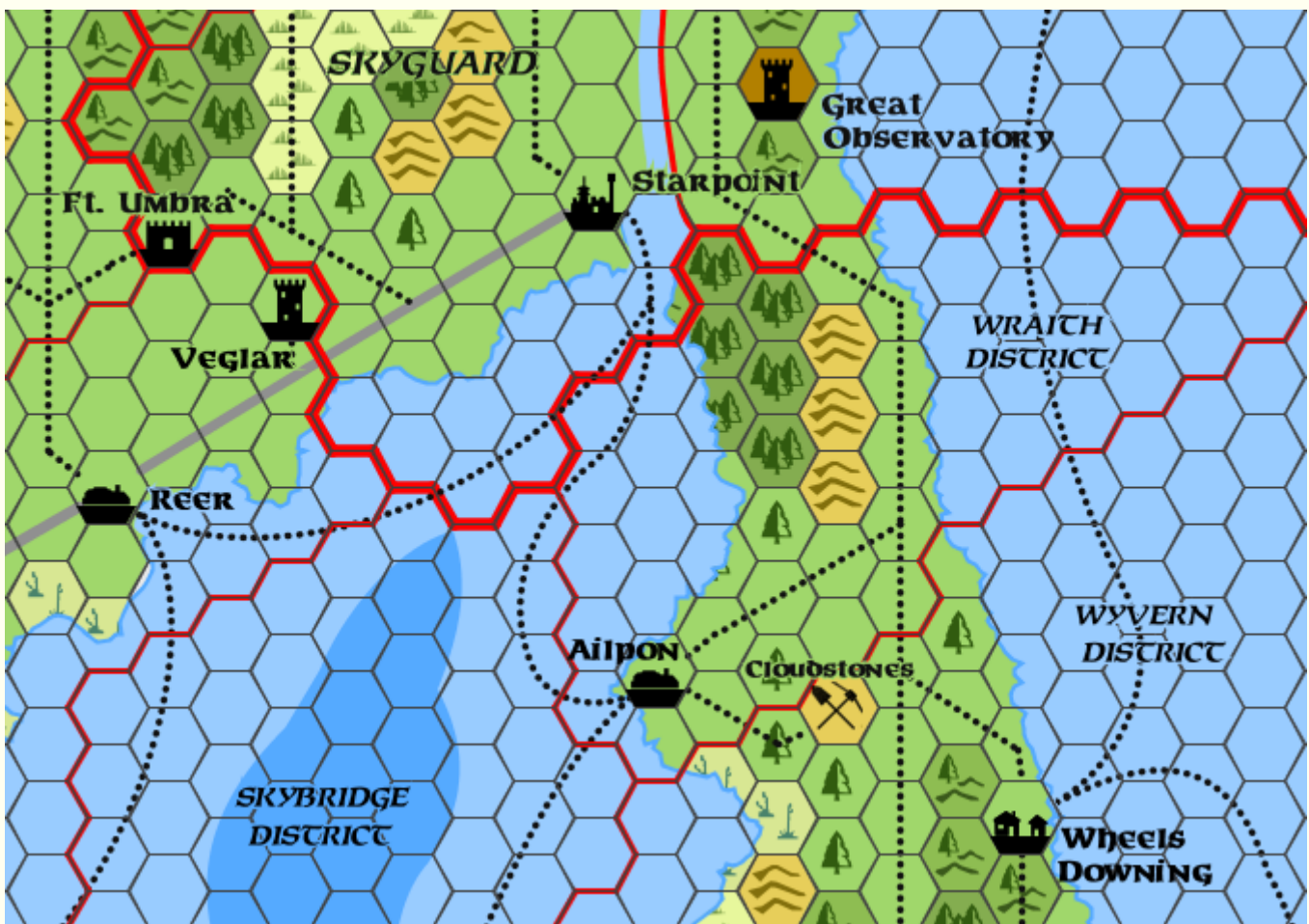
It was further understood by those who visited Mirage that reviving The First would be a step on the path toward immortality. An appropriate herald from the Sphere of Thought would come forward and offer guidance at that point. Since this idea pervaded the Mesmerati's upper circles, high-level members have sought ways to construct such a mythical being. Although allied to support the tenets of their secret society, Mesmerati leaders compete toward this goal. They established networks of lesser illusionists to research and produce spectral elements of "their" wyvern—here a spectral heart, there a bone shadow, a wisp of tongue, or the ethereal blink of an eye. These endeavors require distilling *Essence of Mirage*, obtained at great cost from outer-planar sources. Resulting components are fleeting at best, intolerant of the slightest error and lasting a few days each while the moon reaches plenitude. These phantom parts are secretly delivered to the top of the chain and tested, in hopes of, one day, assembling the myriad working, living pieces that will embody The First.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for editorial contributions.*

# Ar: Walking with the Wraiths

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

In the wake of the Twin Peaks Campaign, Ar annexed this stretch of land but left borders open to merchants and bankers to help alleviate bad feelings among Amburian neighbors. Many among Amburian nobility and the military still consider what is now Ar's Wraith District as rightfully theirs, having led their army to wrest this land from a rabble of ungrateful renegades. In view of their fiscal advantages, bankers and merchants have gradually forgotten the divisive issue and shared in the wealth from Ailpon. Once a fishing village, it grew as the result of the nearby cloudstone mine and became a boomtown, complete with a sprawling seedy quarter, daily tavern brawls among free miners and sailors, and restricted areas reserved for wealthy upstarts or the military. Amburian nobles now see these investors as greedy turncoats, adding fuel to their discontent.



**Lower Wraith District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

To make matters worse, a strange and intimidating race of people moved into the area and made the district a haven for their kind. They are the ones who gave the district its name and the real reason why this piece of land was separated from Wyvern. Aran *Wraithlings* are people who'd fallen victims to incorporeal undead but were returned to life. As a result of the magic used, their minds and bodies bear the stigmata of their ordeal. Their flesh is somewhat translucent, showing bones, muscles, sinew, and organs as shadows. Their facial traits, however diaphanous, remain gaunt and disturbingly morbid. With clothes and makeup,

Wraithlings appear as normal people but, to put it simply, the similarity is skin-deep. Since their arrival, Wraithlings reproduced and formed a prominent caste of aristocrats. Their request to establish this land as their own district was quickly approved in Skyreach for two reasons. It was a good way to entice Wraithlings to leave other districts of Ar where they were often unwelcome. Another reason was to exploit the Wraithlings' presence on the eastern shores of Crystal Lake as a deterrent for Amburian pretensions—another singularly unpopular decision across the border. The intimidation is purely psychological, based on common prejudice and irrational fears because Wraithlings are neither monsters nor a threat to society. Their looks and the idea of what they once were is what causes most people to loathe them.



## **LOWER Wraith District**

Since the land was settled, the original marshes were drained and turned into arable soil. The stirge menace has been entirely eradicated as well. Farmsteads dot the land. Aside from a few hamlets and the rowdy town of Ailpon, there are no villages in Wraith District. There only remains a thick forested wilderness to the northwest which serves as a reserve of fine timber for ship building. Upper and lower Wraith District covers an area close to 1,650 sq. miles (4.250 Km<sup>2</sup>), with a population density of nearly 21 people per sq. mile (8 inhabitants per Km<sup>2</sup>). In total, a little over 34,000 people, called "*Wraithers*," dwell in upper and lower Wraith District. Peasants make up nearly three quarters of the population and the military nearly 5%, 1,440 of whom garrison Ailpon. About 1,100 of the latter are Royal Troops answering to a commander appointed directly by the monarchy. Their presence was deemed necessary and is largely financed by revenues generated by Ailpon. Such a heavy military force quartered locally is an expensive proposition for Wraithling aristocracy but this was agreed upon as one of the conditions for creating the district.



Seven skyships are based in Ailpon, six small vessels and one large one. Their role is to patrol the land and the coasts, enforcing the law, and watching for runaway serfs. This fleet includes the H.H.M.S. *Sceadwen*, *Gæstanic*, *Skinean*, *Gheestere*, *Veshtar*, *Vortha*, and the larger vessel, *Spirit of Ailpon* which acts as the Royal Commander's flagship. Two other skyships hail from Graynest on Wraith Prime, the small vessel *Arrachan* and a larger one acting as the viceroy's flagship, the *Hunter in the Night*.

Serfs living in lower Wraith are a terribly unhappy bunch. They revile the presence of the military, as their behavior often reaches beyond the pale when they patrol the land. Many of the serf families are descendants of those who'd once fled Ar, only to become oppressed once more decades later. Wraithling aristocracy ruling them is yet another source of discontent and fear. Over time, a small wraithling caste was born illegitimately from the peasant class. They are pariahs in a world of pariahs and detested by all. Nonetheless, they remain a notch above the serf caste, usually renting small farms or running obscure shops in Ailpon's port district. They've also cornered the funeral industry, drawing business from the town's middle class.

## Upper Wraith District

The district's heights only include one island floating more than 9,000' (2.740m) above sea level. Barren and hilly, it is the domain of Wraithling aristocracy. They reside in manor houses scattered about the island, all of which extend below ground. All abodes are pressurized or feature protective domes, including Graynest. Outside temperatures remain 33°F lower than conditions at sea level (19°C lower)—see *Climate of Alphatia* for more detail on local weather. District troops garrison this stronghold which includes the viceroy's palace. Ship crews and troops based at Graynest are issued from Wraithling commoners, save for their commanders.



Upper Wraith District - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Although called a tower, Graynest is a bit more than that. From a distance, it appears as a tall, rounded structure, but up close, it is a fairly large, dark gray, tube-shaped building. Turrets ring the opening at the top, featuring ballistae and squads of native boltmen. A mooring platform for skyships lies at the bottom of the inner courtyard. There are no outside doors at ground level, and a hemispherical dome between the turrets protects the top. The latter allows slow movement through it. The palace occupies the tower's upper levels, while the remainder remains the domain of the military, about 200 troops including the two skyships' crews.

## Wraithlings of AR

One wizard of a past century, a ghost hunter by the name of Mordod the Gloomy, once discovered a secret to reverse the damage of incorporeal undeath inflicted upon humanity. It was never quite mastered and the result yielded a strange new race of people known as Wraithlings. No longer undead, they retained somewhat ghoulish traits and an unnerving translucence related to their former conditions. They all have in common a hatred of the living dead mixed with pity; the latter especially as regards incorporeal undead. They abhor all that is evil, for they have tasted it and they know to what ends it leads.



**Necromancer**

Wraithlings have an attraction for all that is alive, young, and healthy, which explains their propensity for seeking illicit romantic encounters outside their usual circles. One might wonder who among humankind would feel compelled to consort with such sinister-looking individuals. Yet, there is no coercion, magic, or trickery involved. It is true that when gazing deep into Wraithlings' eyes, one contemplates poignant visions of pain stirring their souls across generations and beckoning them toward darkness. There are people who are genuinely attracted to the deathly and otherworldly. They are called the "children of the dark," generally youngsters with black hair and pale skin who, if given any sort of wealth, would spend it all on flesh-piercing trinkets with which to adorn their faces and bodies, or cosmetics to darken their eyelids. Strange bunch as they are, they fit well with Wraithlings, sometimes becoming their servants. And many end up with child,

Wraithlings in the making like their fathers. It isn't exactly true that illegitimate progeny is despised—they can never be recognized due to their parents' aristocratic background. Some money and a proof of emancipation might be left behind for mother and child, but no more. This prospect alone has tempted many a desperate serf.

As a race, Wraithlings are either Lawful or Neutral. One of their goals in life is to research true healing of their bodies and souls, in hopes of freeing themselves of their torment once and for all. Some become clerics specialized in the cycle of life and death, or the guidance of the dead toward peaceful rest. Others become undead-hunters. And indeed, some of the most famous in history are Wraithlings, although the fact is often covered up as the result of Aran society's prejudice.

Level	hp	Experience	Spells/Level						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1d6	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	2d6	2,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	3d6	4,000	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	4d6	8,000	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
5	5d6	16,000	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
6	6d6	32,000	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
7	7d6	64,000	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
8	8d6	120,000	3	2	2	—	—	—	—
9	9d6	240,000	3	2	2	1	—	—	—
10	+1	360,000	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
11	+2	480,000	3	3	2	2	—	—	—
12	+3	600,000	3	3	2	2	1	—	—
13	+4	720,000	4	3	3	2	1	—	—
14	+5	840,000	4	3	3	2	2	—	—
15	+6	960,000	4	3	3	2	2	1	—
16	+7	1,080,000	4	4	3	2	2	1	—
17	+8	1,200,000	4	4	3	3	2	1	—
18	+9	1,320,000	4	4	3	3	2	2	—
19	+10	1,440,000	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
20	+11	1,560,000	5	4	3	3	2	2	1
21	+12	1,680,000	5	4	4	3	2	2	1
22	+13	1,800,000	5	5	4	3	2	2	1
23	+14	1,920,000	5	5	4	4	3	2	1
24	+15	2,040,000	5	5	4	4	3	2	2
25	+16	2,160,000	6	5	4	4	3	2	2
26	+17	2,280,000	6	5	5	4	3	2	2
27	+18	2,400,000	6	6	5	4	3	2	2
28	+19	2,520,000	6	6	5	4	3	3	2
29	+20	2,640,000	6	6	5	4	4	3	2
30	+21	2,760,000	6	6	5	5	4	3	2
31	+22	2,880,000	6	6	5	5	4	3	3
32	+23	3,000,000	7	6	5	5	4	3	3
33	+24	3,120,000	7	6	6	5	4	3	3
34	+25	3,240,000	7	6	6	5	4	4	3
35	+26	3,360,000	7	6	6	5	5	4	3
36	+27	3,480,000	7	6	6	5	5	4	4

As a D&D Game class, Wraithlings are unusual folk. They use a fighter's combat abilities, saving throws, and experience table. Their limitations regarding equipment and proficiencies are those of a thief. They have a thief's ability to *hide in shadows* and *move silently*, as well as detect hidden and secret passages as an elf. Finally Wraithlings can cast magic-user spells if their Prime Requisite is Intelligence or clerical spells if their Prime Requisite is Wisdom (see table below). All Wraithlings can Turn Undead as clerics of the same level. Wraithlings benefit from a permanent *protection from evil*. They also receive a +1 to hit undead creatures, which qualifies when attacking undead creatures requiring a +1 magical weapon. This bonus comes in addition to any other magical bonuses their equipment may hold. Wraithlings receive a -2 penalty to Charisma as regards their relations with other races, including intelligent undead beings.

**Hereditary Influence:** all Wraithlings are related to a dominant ancestor who'd been rescued from undeath. To whom they relate determines to which clan they belong. The spouses' relative experience levels determine their progeny's ancestry if parents were from different clans. Marriages between a female Wraithling and a male outsider always engender Wraithlings. The opposite leads to a Wraithling's birth only half the time.

Heredity is important because Wraithlings retain an affinity to undeath in general but more so to the type of undead their ancestors had become, (2) a wraith, (3-5) a spectre, (6-8) an apparition, (9-11) a ghost, or (12) an odic. Against creatures related to their ancestry, Wraithlings receive a +2 bonus to saving throws and Turning attempts and an Undead Lore skill.

**Vulnerabilities:** Although their ancestors were rescued from undeath and brought back to humanity, Wraithlings' distant relation with death never quite lets go. The dark world keeps beckoning them to return and accept their rightful fates. This is the source of their enduring torment. Powerful undead use this vulnerability to regain control over the "stolen ones" (see mechanics on *Undead Lieges and Pawns*, Rules Cyclopeda pg. 217). A Wraithling must save vs. spell to resist falling under an undead liege's will. If the unthinkable happens, the undead may not reveal the fact immediately but instead only observe through the victim's own senses until such time it feels it should assert its control for good. This hold can only be broken if the undead is destroyed. As regards an undead liege's ability to overpower a Wraithling, use the following equivalents found the on the chart on the right.

Wraithling Level	Corresponding Undead
1	Skeleton
2-3	Zombie
4-5	Ghoul
6-7	Wight
8-9	Wraith
10-12	Mummy
13-15	Spectre
16-18	Vampire (a)
19-21	Vampire (b)
22-25	Phantom
26-29	Haunt
30+	Spirit



**Faith & Magic:** Wraithers typically are followers of immortals from the spheres of energy or time, especially Pflarr, Ixion, Tarastia, and Petra. It is expected that a Wraithling will one day rise to attain immortality. All Wraithlings have access to the following spells (always understood as part of their training at the appropriate level) in addition to clerical or magic-user spells:

### **Detect Undead, Level 1**

**Range:** 0

**Duration:** 2 Turns

**Effect:** all undead within 60'

The spell is similar to the clerical *detect magic*. The spell does not identify the type of undead. From the size of the glow, the caster may surmise either the number or the size of the undead but this judgement remains subjective at best. Undead within the area of effect do not receive a saving throw. The spell is potent enough to detect undead hidden in an area of *continual darkness* or in the ethereal. The area of effect is reduced to 40' if any organic material separates the undead from the caster, such as a wooden door, and to 20' through inorganic material, such as stone. Lead and gold thicker than an inch block the spell.

### **Examine Corpse, Level 2**

**Range:** 30'

**Duration:** instantaneous

**Effect:** one undead type within 60'

The spell enables the caster to examine remains of a fallen prey and determine what undead killed it—provided it was an undead creature. The exact type of undead is revealed only if it has as the same number or fewer Hit Dice than the caster. If it has more, the spell only reveals whether the creature is corporal or incorporeal.

### **Invisibility to Undead, Level 3**

**Range:** 240'

**Duration:** permanent until broken

**Effect:** one creature or object

The spell is similar to the magic-user's 2nd level spell, except it affects only the undead. The spell is potent enough to suppress basic evidence of presence, such as smell, faint noises, and heat radiation coming from the recipient.

### **Appeasement\*, Level 4**

**Range:** 180'

**Duration:** permanent until disturbed

**Effect:** sends one undead creature to its grave

The spell compels a hostile undead to return to its grave and rest in peace. The undead may save vs. spell, with a modifier equal to its own HD minus the casters' spellcasting level. If the saving throw fails, the undead must return to its grave at full speed and remain there until disturbed once more. It is one way to determine which tomb an undead came from, provided its flight can be followed. If the saving throw fails, the undead singles out the caster, intent on destroying the source of the offense. The reversed version of the spell, rouse, is forbidden and punishable under Wraither law. Rouse summons a spirit from its tomb, to guard it against

anyone approaching. Aroused spirits are always angry but remain within 150' of their grave until someone comes within the area of effect.

### **Aura of Exaltation, Level 5**

**Range:** 60'

**Duration:** 6 Turns

**Effect:** all within a 20' square area

The spell protects the caster and companions from all fear effects generated by undead creatures. It also confers the caster's party with the ability to hit undead that normally would require +1 or better magical weapons, although they might be wielding non-enchanted weapons. Ranged weapons can be affected as long as projectiles remain within the area of effect. Any undead within the area of effect suffers a -2 penalty to saving throws.

### **Undo Undead Affliction, Level 6**

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** permanent

**Effect:** negates a loss of level or ability

The spell negates the effect of one undead attack provided the caster has at least 50% more levels (HD) than the original undead. If so, such effects as paralysis, poison, aging, and loss of level, strength, or constitution (etc.) are undone. The spell is, however, limited as to how long ago the damage was inflicted, at the rate of 1 Turn per experience level. If cast on a dead body, the spell puts the victim's soul to rest, and the corpse will not rise as an undead.

### **Reclaim Lost Soul, Level 7**

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** permanent

**Effect:** reincarnates the fallen

This is Mordod's old spell. It allows the caster to reclaim a soul that has risen as an incorporeal undead. The original corpse must be available, at least its bones or ashes for the spell to function. It differs from the clerical spell *raise dead fully* in that it turns the recipient into a first level Wraithling, preserving all past memories. If the recipient was a cleric or a magic-user, the original experience level is preserved, at least as regards the new character class. Wraithlings do not have access to either *raise dead* or *raise dead fully* as a result of their very nature. Their duty is to promote their own kind. The belief is that one day the undead will rise and the Wraithlings will stand alone before them.

## Illustrious Wraithers

### Dalvarna, Innkeeper

The *Dead Velya*, a tavern near Ailpon's docks, is a favorite of many sailors. It is a boisterous place where ale is cheap, the singing merry, and fights as common as mangy rats in the town's port. Occasional freeborn miners descend upon the establishment, and when they do, trouble soon follows. Dalvarna is the daughter of a Wraithling aristocrat who went missing a few years ago after a foray into northern Kerothar Mountains. As it were, *Wraith* law enables bastard issue to claim property in the absence of any other legitimate claimant. The only information extent to this day that would identify the aristocrat's daughter is a birthmark in shape of a scythe on the top of her thigh, a mere shadow on the Wraithling's nearly transparent flesh. Since she doesn't know who her father was, none of this is of any concern to her.



Dalvarna is a tough and clever character, trained in the arts of magical-spellcasting. The inn happens to be a front for her real business. Aside from revenues from her establishment, she leads a smuggling network. In fact, a select few free miners do visit the *Dead Velya*, bringing back from the pits fragments of cloudstones and rough, uncut gems. Dalvarna provided her associates with *invisible* pouches in which they can conceal whatever they glean. Fights between miners and sailors are (mostly) staged to divert attention while carriers discreetly drop off their pouches and recover empty ones at the bar. Later at night, during curfew hours, the goods are taken to the smugglers' vessel at the port. The *Drunken Sea Hag* then sets sail shortly at dawn, heading straight for Starpoint, Ambur's capital city, or Stonerim in the Marches of Ogresfell where their hidden goods will fetch a good price. On occasion, Dalvarna has been a

party to arranging passage for a fugitive aboard the *Drunken Sea Hag*, dealing with renegades or members of the Grünfold Connection.

**Appearance & Personality:** Dalvarna retained her late human mother's grace which, thanks to cosmetics skillfully applied, enables her to exude an oddly charming demeanor, even though she appears somewhat gaunt. She wears blue-tinted ocularia to mask her nearly translucent eyes. Dalvarna rarely entertains romantic liaisons beyond a tantalizing flirt. Her guests tend to think of her as a beautiful ghost, especially since she seems to glide rather than walk. Her gestures are slow and elongated, which enhance her phantomlike demeanor. Dalvarna tends to wear long robes that whisper along the floorboards, hiding her slippered feet. Narrow sleeves drop to the knuckles of her hands. She also often wears a hood that shadows her eyes behind the ocularia and hides most of her long black hair. Also unusual is her husky well-modulated alto voice. When she speaks, guests lean toward her, as if imbibing her dulcet tones along with their beverage.

WL6, AC8, hp 21, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 mallet, Dmg 1d4+1 or by spell, Save F6, ML8, AL N; St12, In16, Wi13, Dx15, Co 11, Ch14(16). **Special Abilities:** as described for Wraithlings; her ancestor was a ghost. **Magical Items:** *ring of invisibility*, *Haven's marvelous makeup*, *Haven's praiseworthy pigmentation*, and *potion of gaseous form*.

**Haven's Marvelous Makeup:** these creamy contents lie in a porcelain jar, amounting to 3d6 applications. The compound gives someone's skin a healthy, natural complexion, hiding any diseases, scars, birthmarks, and blemishes of age. The fragrance is discreet but pleasant, overcoming any other body scents. Each application lasts until washed off or *dispelled*.

**Haven's Praiseworthy Pigmentation:** a silver container holds up to 3d6 applications of a glittery black powder. When sprinkled, it provides a fine luster of the darkest black, and thick, supple body to the hair, masking any damage due to age, disease, or neglect. Each application lasts until washed off or *dispelled*.

## Baron Grimdod, Usurper

This aristocrat of petty Wraithling origins inherited the title and fortune of one Baron Ghaladod residing on Wraith Prime. He'd been the companion and close friend of the original baron during an expedition to the northern Kerothar Mountains, in search of some obscure spectre haunting a ruined tower. It wasn't remotely what they had expected to find. Instead, they confronted a Lich King, possibly connected with Shadow Dwarves living in Frisland's underworld. The undead imprisoned the baron and overwhelmed petty, little Grimdod, forcing him under his control. The victim was thereafter sent back to Ar. Under the influence of the undead, Grimdod intrigued to inherit the baron's assets. This involved the falsification of magical paperwork and bribes. Since then, the usurper quietly arranged for other



Wraithlings to go after his liege, setting them up for an equally unfortunate fate. Some returned to their abodes, quietly remaining at the Lich King's beck and call, like Grimdod.

The usurper learned from his companion about his daughter and her unusual birthmark. In the absence of any other heir, Ghaladod had mentioned his hesitation to reveal her existence and his scandalous liaison with a lowborn human, so that she could claim the barony when his time came. Grimdod's liege now forces his pawn to search for this mysterious offspring—Dalvarna—and deliver her to him with all due diligence. Her father was able to resist the Lich King's willpower but the undead believes he could force Ghaladod into submission if he held his daughter as well. For this purpose, Grimdod hired various shady characters to locate adequate females in Lower Wraith.

When one is found, Grimdod pays her a visit under an appropriate guise, hoping for a glimpse of any birthmark. If his charms fail to unveil the information he seeks, the suspect is abducted soon thereafter, only to be found gruesomely slain a few days later. The Ailpon guard has been hunting for a serial murderer ever since this affair started, occasionally hiring skilled adventurers for this purpose. So far, nobody is aware of the fact Grimdod accompanied Ghaladod on the ill-fated expedition. If questioned about it, the usurper will lie about his whereabouts at that time. A forgotten clue remains in an adventuring equipment shop in Ailpon where Grimdod had made some purchases against a letter of credit noted in the shop owner's ledger. It shows a date, amount, items purchased, buyer's name, and a line about an "expedition to Kerother."

**Appearance & Personality:** As with other Wraithlings, Grimdod has translucent skin, very pale eyes, and shoulder-length white hair, which he wears brushed straight back from a widow's peak. His features have an odd ethereal quality and are quite handsome at least among his kind. Female Wraithlings can't help discussing him when he enters a room. Even though his smile seems genuinely warm, there's a faint quality of distance to it. Grimdod's personality is forceful but he keeps that hidden so he can better manipulate chosen subjects. He saves the full aura of his power for coercing those wanted by the Lich King. Grimdod wears shiny black shoes with buckles, white stockings, fawn-colored knee britches, a satin waistcoat with a heavy gold watch and chain, a tailored jacket of deep pink and silver brocade, and a froth of white lace as a cravat.

WL12, AC4, hp 44, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8+2/+4 or by spell, Save F12+2, ML6, AL L (C while under control); St13, In16, Wi11, Dx14, Co 15, Ch15(17). **Special Abilities:** as described for Wraithlings; his ancestor was a spectre. **Magical Items:** *sword +1/+3 vs. spectres, +1 leather armor, amulet of the Lich King, and ring of human control.*

**Amulet of the Lich King:** this mummified piece of human flesh enables Grimdod to *teleport* back to his liege's lair should he ever be reduced to less than 1 hit point. If such is detected, the amulet radiates a strong aura of evil. Anyone touching it experiences a strong vision of the Lich King's eyes staring back and his beckoning whispers. The amulet provides a magical +2 protection bonus, and +3 hp *regeneration* per Turn. The owner cannot be killed while wearing the amulet unless damage comes from fire- or acid-based attacks.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and editorial contributions.*



# The Alphantian Province of Arogansa

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Kingdom of Arogansa - Map Scale: 8 Miles per Hex**

Arogansa is first and foremost, at least from the point of view of those who may benefit from it, a realm where one goes for rest and recreation. It offers in good faith, if the price is right, anything ranging from mindless entertainment to secluded serenity. Phantasmal fakery defines the most popular and affordable attractions. Yet, those whose arcane skills and standards of living permit may experience profound and perhaps life-changing events at the more exclusive estates. Nonetheless, beach-going wizards, their families, their retinues, fun-seeking bachelors, sight-seeing sages, underage warlocks celebrating their season breaks, and overworked

enchanters swirl together amid a debauchery of high fashion and utter snobbery. Truly idyllic and enthralling palaces remain within the sphere of the wealthy wizardkind and select ecclesiastics of eminent talent. For the masses of native workers, alas, it imposes a humble life spent hiding from sight until summoned. They remain entirely at the service and mercy of the ruling class. All said, Arogansa embodies all that is fabulous about magocracies, and all that is deeply reviled.



Aside from all the glitz and excitement, one should notice seven military wards. The first five guard the Great Gouge and three small craters partially filled with bubbling tar. There was a time when flesh-craving horrors crept from these dismal depths and clashes were as common there as monsoon rains in Ochalea. The region has been at peace for many generations but wizards are slow to forget and wisely maintain a solid watch. Other important military marches are the Sixth and Seventh Wards on the western border. In a realm whose hinterland is at best sparsely populated, hills and forests always remain sources of trouble. The Arogansa Range is no exception but this isn't the entire story.

Important mines of magnetite and arcanium lie there. These minerals are crucial for the production of alloys capable of boosting arcane potency. Behind their jovial (if snobbish) façade, the ruling class jealously guard these minerals and access to them. More valuable than gold or gems, they lie at the heart of Arogansian upper class.

Aristocratic domains and private estates are nested between the military marches, the River Thera, and the coasts. They represent a pecking order not unlike those prevailing in other realms. Mechanics governing wizardly titles and estates are, however, a bit different than traditional apanages, such as baronies and counties. Although nobility remains entirely hereditary, the size of the land attached to the title and the degree of aristocracy may all change over time. What determines one's place in the Arogansian establishment includes wizardly ability, the size of territorial holdings, diplomacy, and lifetime achievements.



Inheriting a title is a crucial event affecting the formal standing of a dominion, as a successor rarely matches a predecessor's skills. Some allowances are made to be fair. However, if the successor stands too far below the predecessor's status, a demotion may be in order. Failure to reach the predecessor's status over time, inexcusable crimes, involvement in a felony, or dismal mismanagement also are grounds for demotion if not banishment. A non-wizard cannot inherit a nobility title and attached lands. Catastrophic demotion involves loss of some or all lands, which are set up as one or more Vice-Coventries. The *Council of Seven*, composed of the realm's seven top mages, chooses the new dominion's leader.

Aristocratic hierarchy is listed below with approximate equivalents. A "Vice-" prefix connotes a lesser degree, while "High-" infers a greater status (usable for all titles except Archmagency), for a total of nineteen discreet ranks.



1. *Coventrie* (*Barony--address as My Lord/Lady*)
2. *Conjuracy*
3. *Theurgy* (*Marquisate--address as My Lord/Lady*)
4. *Thaumaturgy*
5. *Sorcelry* (*County--address as Your Grace*)
6. *Wizardate*
7. *Archmagency* (*Duchy--address as Your Highness*)



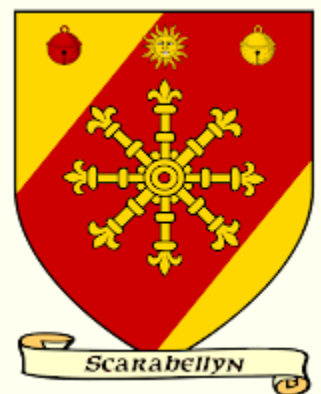
The king and queen are addressed as *Your Majesties* or *Your Royal Majesties*. Princes and other members of the royal house are addressed as *Your Royal Highnesses*.



These titles are crucial in that they determine access to Arogansian magnetite and arcanium. Shares of this ore, called *Potencies*, come in tenths of the mines' entire monthly production. Aristocrats may purchase as many *Potencies* as they are entitled to, provided any are available. Highest titles are served first, and *Potencies* are payable to the *Royal House of Potencies*. Arogansian monarchy does not pay for its purchases but remains limited to what its original title allows. An Archmagency commands as much as three *Potencies*, a Wizardate two, a Sorcelry one, a Thaumaturgy one half, a Theurgy one tenth, a Conjuracy one twentieth, and a Coventry one hundredth. Naturally, if the top few nobles purchase

their entire allocations, none is left for their peers. It is rare when they all do at the same time or for very long, so eventually, *Potencies* become available to the lower tiers. Unsold ore is auctioned off by the ounce to petty landless nobility (and there are plenty of those) or sold at negotiated prices to high-paying Alphatian aristocrats outside Arogansa, usually the Imperial House of Thera. It is illegal in Arogansa to trade privately in *Potencies*. Any ore purchased must be kept, processed, or donated to the *Royal House of Potencies*.

The Vice-Wizardate of Scarabellyn enjoys an unusual status in that one of the mines lies within its borders. This does not change its access to *Potency*, and royal guards still monitor local output. This results from a long-ago negotiation between the monarchy and the earlier High Sorcelry of Scarabellyn. When the ore deposit was discovered, a dispute flared between the two houses. It was resolved when Lord Scarabellyn agreed to relinquish ownership of the mine, in exchange for which he earned his Vice-Wizardate.



Before moving on, a note about royalty in Arogansa is needed. When a royal dynasty ends, the *Council of Seven* chooses a new monarch. It isn't necessarily one of their own since rivalries among the councilors is often fierce and merciless. Rather than allowing a monarch to spring from the upper ranks, a coalition of weaker members may succeed in putting a lesser aristocrat on the throne. This is the case of King Mattereddy of Arogansa, Arbiter of Taste, and Lord of the Coventrie of Yalastrian.



Although the monarchy confers great powers, wealth, and responsibilities, King Mattereddy has his hands full with two disgruntled Wizardates and a borderline-hostile Archmagency. The Royal Palace is located just outside the capital city, at *Crown-on-the-Hill*, an enclave in the midst of the Archmagency of Merlioness, an unfortunate state of affairs.

Psychologically at least, it bears a significant effect on the monarchy's diplomacy. At his current level of wizardly expertise, Mattereddy comes off as an upstart and a weakling in the eyes of many. He presides at the *Council of Seven* but cannot vote since technically he is merely a coventrie's lord. Nonetheless, he does wield the authority to veto title elevations or demotions. As can be expected, there are some who would benefit from seeing the House of Yalastrian extinguished. As a result, none among the royal family are safe. They survive thanks to the old coalition watching out for them. Chief among this cabal stands Lord Scarabellyn, the other grey eminence behind the throne.

In addition to seven military wards, there are two Coventries, one Conjuracy, two Theurgies, one Thaumaturgy, one Sorcery, three Wizardates, one Archmagency, and a dozen autonomous estates. The latter answer only to the crown, for which they generate income. The estates are exclusive palaces with extensive grounds designed to attract and entertain the highest paying wizards in the empire. In almost all instances, estates are created when an aristocrat cedes some land for that purpose, generally in exchange for a title elevation. Estates occasionally fail commercially and are seized by the crown. Seized estates may be attributed later to an adjacent dominion as a reward or through negotiation.

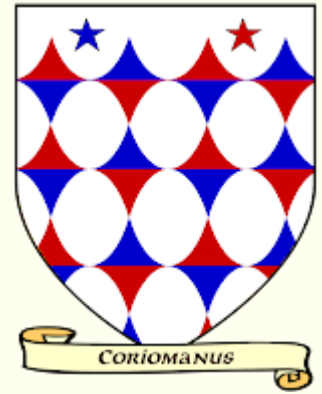


**House of Eternal Lore:** is a sprawling library heaven. Sages and alchemists abound, as well as a host of arcane creatures whose duty is to serve the guests. Crystal balls, enchanted suites, testing laboratories, conference halls famous for the yearly Warlocks' Symposium, and a vast chamber for purveyors in magical devices and wizard tools are available to support anyone's magical research. The estate is otherwise a peaceful retreat where a wizard may find absolute peace and quiet, in addition to unbreakable anonymity.

**Elven Palace:** this estate focuses on the needs and aspirations of elven wizards. Non-elves must demonstrate a reasonable command of elven culture to be admitted. Poetry, art, communion with the spirits of nature, control of the elements, swordfight mastery, the perfection of elven metallurgy, and fey archery are among subjects covered here. Elven grand-masters and outer-planar beings serve as instructors and guides to attending guests. Scientific excursions to the *Wooddrake Preserve* are permitted under strict conditions.

**Wooddrake Preserve:** is actually not a private estate. A *Royal Charter* was obtained to set aside the forest as a place for wooddrakes to thrive. As part of the arrangement, the earlier High-Theurgy of Llyndemar obtained its elevation to a Vice-Thaumaturgy. Although sponsored by the Elven Palace and the Royal House of Arogansa, the park is presently closed to the general public. Ranger serfs, druids, and wizardly sages look after the drakes well-being.

**Hook Haven:** is a fisherman's timeless paradise. This secluded mountain island features a large fisherman's lodge and individual cabins scattered throughout the island. All fantasies are fulfilled, including conventional fishing, live or phantasmal, of all fish breeds, large and small, common or exotic, and aquatic monsters. The hobby can be satisfied from shore, from surface or flying vessels, or underwater for the more daring. The true aficionados can be recognized by fishhooks and magically animated lures which adorn their wizard hats. For the right price, time alteration enables guests to extend their stays without affecting their normal life obligations. At Hook Haven, there is no end to a holiday if one isn't desired.



**Serenity Manor:** is perhaps one of the better known guest houses. The country lodge is fit for royalty. Its main purpose is to organize soul-searching journeys to Serenity Crater, which has existed at this place since ancient times. A crystal-clear lake filling the crater exceeds the capabilities of a more common crystal ball, if peered into. Only experienced spellcasters can withstand its power and control it to unveil their inner secrets. A mysterious stone monument stands atop the stone formation at the center of the lake which allows the more powerful spellcasters to commune with the dead.



**The Stag House:** stands as one of the shallowest and frivolous sources of entertainment in Arogansa. It is the place where those soon to be married, man or woman, bury their bachelorhood. Racy shows, rambunctious parties, erotic experiences, naked chases through the woods, and other activities performed with reckless abandon are the stuff of the Stag House. Snobbism and most forms of social restraint are promptly shed in this estate. Hypocrisy and established conventions lead most to publicly condemn the establishment as scandalous, although the quasi-entirety of native aristocracy has visited the place under false identities.

**Evergreen:** one of the more curious establishments, delves into the secrets of eternal youthfulness. Evergreen is a fantasy spa, complete with steam baths, luxury mud pools, otherworldly massages, cosmetic alterations to the face and body, all of which endeavor to soften or reverse the injuries of time upon one's flesh and mind. Naturally, this most expensive service relies on arcanium alloys dissolved in waters, creams, and phylacteries. A *Royal Charter* entitles the managing aristocrat to purchase *Potencies* as a Conjuracy would, in order to run this ultra-select business. Oddly enough, Evergreen also operates one of the best gastronomic establishments in Arogansa, serving all sorts of exotic dishes, magical or not, with calories or without. Multi-layered drinks and culinary concoctions are specialties enabling patrons to experience the most divine flavors imaginable. Unlike the Stag House, it is the place to be seen.

**Bluenose Beach:** refers to the coastline from Perponaz to Dhobig. Naturally, the most popular and prestigious area centers around the city of Bluenose. The coastline is home to several major estates. *Nautilus Manor* features a large, luxury submarine and year-round underwater cruises to Seashield. The Bluenose Beach Estate actually counts three associated palaces: *Sand Castle*, which allows guests to shape their own dwellings, *Starfish Palace*, which uses phantasmal magic

to recreate a safe and enthralling aquatic environment, and *Seahorse Palace*, where one learns to ride live giant seahorses and play with bluenose dolphins (summer season only). The extensive estate includes sand banks a few miles offshore and a gorgeous lagoon enhanced with evocative magic painting breath-taking sunsets against a fabulous backdrop of stars and planets. Farther east stands the *House of the Seven Seas*, a must for lovers of regattas offering an unforgettable kaleidoscope of grace upon the seas or across the skies. Finally, east of Nasperid lies Treasure Palace whose theme is pirates, spectral naval battles in which guests may participate, and buried treasures. The hoards are real troves of gold and gems that lucky guests get to keep. Naturally, it's all reflected in the price. A succession of public and private beaches stretches between the major estates, ranging from idyllic settings to some of the tackiest establishments in Arogansa.



**Crystal Palace:** is exactly what it sounds like--a fantastic abode made of crystal, mirrors, dizzying force fields, and solid light. Despite its translucence, the palace sparkles and shimmers with rainbow-like rays sufficient to enable complete privacy in one's quarters. Crystal Palace is best known among the rich and fabulous for the game it hosts. It consists in hitting a magical ball with a club, called a *mashie-niblick*, sending the sphere across ranges looping across the sky and around the clouds, before ending in a mind-wrenching spiral back to the palace. Wherever the ball goes, players must follow. It is a game that blends both hand-eye coordination and social graces.



**Divination Estate:** concentrates on the concept of Immortality as wizards understand it. A guest may focus on learning more about the *Paths to Immortality*, questioning one's own motivations, or reflecting upon the intent of the spheres, their place in the universe, and other philosophic issues. Divination is a great part of this learning process. On a more lighthearted side, phantasmal suites may be booked to enact hypothetical endeavors such as completing immortal quests, trials, testimonies, and tasks. They are designed to teach a better understanding of the purposes of immortality. Naturally, true Immortals quietly monitor the establishment, watching whom they know to harbor

great potential. Although very rarely, an Immortal may surreptitiously "hijack" a phantasmal suite to fulfill whatever divine schemes. Naturally, this was never proven, although some of the less unwitting actors do harbor strong suspicions. The Divination Estate is the only major establishment fully open to non-wizards.

**Blinkwoods:** were once part of a popular establishment whose magic went out of control. The place is now closed, ruined, infested with strange beings, and lost amid a magically mutated forest. None of the neighboring wizardates or successive Royal Houses were able to undo the occult damage. It wasn't for lack of trying. Although lying within the borders of the Wizardate of Festerilandus, none of the forest within twenty miles of the ruined palace is actually under anyone's control but its monstrous denizens'.

# Coats of Arms of Arogansa

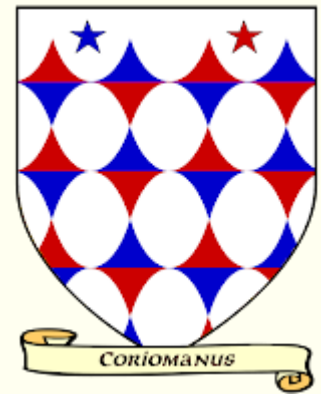
by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



This is a quick recap of the coats of arms I devised for the main Arogansian aristocracy. There is a peculiarity with these shields, in that they display a pattern of symbols on the top area that indicate precisely to what degree of nobility they belong.

The progression is as follows.

**Coventries:** a vice-coventrie bears one star (a mullet), a coventrie bears two, and a high-coventrie, three. There presently are no vice- or high-coventries in Arogansa. See Coriomanus & Yalastrian.



**Conjuracies:** a vice-conjuracy bears two stars and a crescent, a conjuracy bears one star and two crescents, and a high conjuracy bears three crescents (see on the right).

**Theurgies:** a vice-theurgy bears two crescents and an annulet (a ring). A theurgy bears one crescent and two annulets (see Liliendo on the right). A high-theurgy bears three annulets.



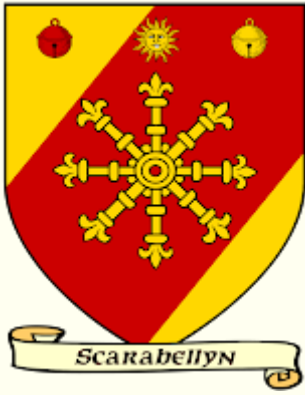
**Thaumaturgies:** a vice-thaumaturgy bears two annulets and a quatrefoil (see Llyndemar). A thaumaturgy bears an annulet and two quatrefoils. The high-thaumaturgy bears three quatrefoils.

**Sorcelries:** a vice-sorcelry bears two quatrefoils and a hawk's bell (see Talismeroeth, just below). A sorcelry bears a quatrefoil and two hawk's bells. A high-sorcelry bears three hawk's bells.



**Wizardate:** a vice-wizardate bears two hawk's bells and a resplendent sun (see Scarabellyn, just below). A wizardate bears a hawk's bell and two suns (Festerilandus). A high-wizardate bears, as you expected, three suns (see Cacodemus at the top of the page).





**Archmagencies:** the augmentations do not apply to archmagencies. They are recognizable by the stone coronet above their arms. There is only one such title in Arogansa—see Merliones, just above.



# Dominion Stats - Arogansa

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Arogansa, for all its uniqueness and prestige in Alphatia, fares no better than its neighbors as regards its general demographics. It remains sparsely populated and mostly rural. The highest density population clusters along the southern coast and the Thera River with an island of Alphatian civilization clinging to Avrads in the far north.



**Designer's Note:** for those who wonder how population is distributed, I do apply an empirical method, described below.

**Suburban Areas:** First, the highest density population is marked on the map (referred to as "Suburban," shown in **purple** on the map below). Hexes with urban centers including large and small towns are considered suburban. They get a purple square. In other words, plenty of hamlets and farms dot the countryside in the immediate vicinity of towns. Cities are different in that their suburban populations spill over into most adjacent hexes, depending on terrain. Furthermore, city suburbia spreads out one more hex along roads and rivers.



**Bluenose Area - Population Density Key**

**Settled Areas:** Settled areas are keyed next on the map. Hexes with villages get a **red** square (no pun intended). Second, most hexes adjacent to suburban areas are considered settled as well, depending on terrain--usually extending one more hex along roads and rivers. So, for areas such as Bluenose, the settled/suburban area can extend as far as 32 miles from the city center. One might wonder why then the village of Grimoire has a red square on the road to the west. It's actually a settled area extending from the town of Perponaz, two hexes away, off the map's edge.

**Borderland:** This is “your basic” D&D game standard. Some farms and hamlets lie here and there but lots of space remains for random encounters and some convenient lawlessness. Borderland spaces display **blue** squares. Hexes adjacent to settled areas are considered borderland, extending one more space along roads and rivers, depending on terrain. Some common sense is useful here in filling out small pockets of land within a patchwork of borderland hexes. In Arogansa, armies of workers service the beaches—therefore, some population should be expected among the sand dunes.

**Exceptions:** For the sake of simplicity, hexes with forest, swamp, marsh, broken lands, desert (etc.) do not qualify as any of the above. This varies with the predominant race. Naturally, orcs and such would have no problem with badlands and broken terrain. Elves would do just fine with woodlands, while dwarves would be perfectly able to settle mountains, etc. It’s a matter of common sense. In the case of Arogansa, private estates are ultra-select, gated communities. For the most part, nobody lives there other than staff serving the guests, their families, and the visitors themselves. So, in effect estates are considered wilderness from a demographic point of view. The same can be said of the royal domain, just north of Bluenose. This is another highly restricted area. Castles by themselves may yield a settled hex. Isolated forts and towers may yield borderland hexes. The presence of towns and cities on a national border would inevitably result in higher population on the opposite side, as is the case for Errolyn in Theranderol.

**Wilderness:** All hexes not falling within the above categories are therefore “wilderness,” keyed in **yellow**. Population level there is lowest, if any. Some areas bear no population at all; this varies with each setting. For example, Arogansa’s tar pits and the Great Gouge have no population (besides possible monsters). Lake and sea hexes bear no population (unless aquatic communities that are relevant to and part of the realm exist below the surface). Again, it’s a matter of common sense. Fractions of hexes along coastlines and national borders are counted “approximately.” Inner seas and lakes are included as part of the realm’s surface (area in sq. miles) but not sea hexes.

**Urban Areas:** their population figures, listed separately, come in addition to basic hex population. In particular with towns, a suburban hex can bear as much population as the town itself, if not many times as much. Suburban hexes are critical to a realm’s demography and economy, so are large towns and cities.

## **Back to Arogansa**

Arogansa’s economy is fairly straightforward. Realm revenues are well spread out without requiring heavy taxation of the population—a meager consolation for the working class. As can be expected, a fair portion of revenues derive from trade, mining, port duties, and road tolls. This makes for a fairly balanced economy. Trade includes earnings from the “tourism” industry. Bread isn’t cheap but nowhere near as expensive as in Vertiloch or Stonewall. Farming in Arogansa is good enough to export a fair portion of grain and other produce. Much of this would be shipped up the Thera River via Theranderol. Greenspur and Randel have sufficient agriculture not to require imports.



Naturally, this is a gross over-simplification of reality. To be correct each of Arogansa's dominions ought to have their own economies calculated separately, each paying a 20% tribute to the crown. Likewise, military forces would be divided according to each dominion's troop contribution (and therefore with separate chains of command). So, when dealing with a military garrison, one must always wonder who really commands it--an officer loyal to the king or one in the pay of another wizard aristocrat? Is this aristocrat a supporter of the king or an unruly rival? Are troops of mixed origins or from the same dominion? The amount of "cash" the king actually enjoys would be much lower for the same reason. King Mattereddy "only" relies on royal tribute and what his own dominion generates up north.

Land forces in general are located at critical points of Arogansa. A little over 2,000 troops garrison Avrads in the north and about as many hold Charmydon at the mouth of the Thera River. A fair portion of Arogansian forces are spread out among two major castles (1,000 each) and six forts (500 each). Many of the latter guard the northern marches along the Great Gouge. Much of what remains enforces law and local authorities in villages, towns, cities, the estates, and near the towers. Mines have their own garrisons. This infers that 500 Merlionese troops control the capital city, while 200 household Yalastriani guards defend the (heavily-fortified) royal palace, just outside Bluenose. Conveniently (for the monarchy) the bulk of Arogansa's army is nowhere near Bluenose. This is just another indication of what local politics would be like.

The military apparatus features a number of unusual troops. Illusionists are on hand (AD&D-style) to cause phantasmal mischief on a battlefield. Pegataurs concern themselves with aerial observation and rapid deployment. Wooddrakes provide necessary recon and spying services, sometimes outside Arogansa's borders. On a more somber level, a few velyas are available, essentially for naval commando-style missions.

Arogansa's sea forces include a fair proportion of skyships and submarines. Part of the navy is based in Avrads while the remainder patrol the bay south of the Thera's estuary and the Bluenose Beach coastline. Skyships are more likely to patrol the Arogansa Range, its mines, and some of the realm's potential trouble spots, including The Great Gouge, the Tar Pits, and the Blinkwoods. As regards the latter, it is fortunate that its denizens conduct few forays out of the forest, which explains the lack of surrounding defensive works. Aerial patrols in that area, either by Pegataur squads or skyships, are occasional and unpredictable.

Rather than detailing the forces posted in Bluenose, stats below depict the much larger and significant garrison in Avrads. It is nearly identical to the one guarding Charmydon, on the opposite side of the country. Both of these are "mixed," in that they include troops from different dominions for obvious political reasons.

Figures below indicate that average Arogansian ships have 108 HP. The proportion of skyships in naval forces is 6 out of 28 ships (or about 21%) and 5 subs out of 28 (or 18%). Ten ships operate from Avrads. This implies two skyships and two slightly smaller subs are part of that fleet, leaving the remaining six as surface vessels.

## The Land and People of Arogansa

Rural Population: 948,886 farmers 85.3% **47,444** armed peasants and **7,538**  
 Urban Population: 150,760 townfolk 13.6% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 12,584 warriors (HD) 1.1% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 1,112,230 Arogansians** the seas, the air, and the underworld.

**Total Land Area: 116,924 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 9.51 people per Sq. Mile  
 70% Wilderness Price of Bread: 11 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 21% Borderlands Price Inflation: Acceptable  
 10% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 6.6 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Bluenose	50,000	500
Ascopal	9,800	200
Avrads	9,200	2,400
Perponaz	8,600	500
Dhobig	8,000	100
Nasperid	7,400	100
Hajura	6,800	100
Rhuboka	6,600	100
Shavadze	6,000	100
Abjureth	4,900	100
Charmydon	3,400	2,004
Conjureth	2,900	100
Crown-on-the-Hill	500	200
Villages (27)	13,500	540
Castle Numinaar	2,000	1,000
Castle Eerie	2,000	1,000
Forts (6)	6,000	3,000
Towers (14)	560	280
Palaces (13)	2,600	260

### Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 5**  
 2700 Convicts or Slaves  
 45 Administrators  
 240 Guards  
 1140 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**4125 Total Mining Population**

### Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Trinkets, Fine Beverages, Food  
 Delicacies, Pearls & Coral, Pottery,  
 Cheap Thrills  
**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Ceramic & Porcelain, Perfumes,  
 Pipeweed, Tax on Magic, Hospitality,  
 Transport  
**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Banking, Books, Merchant Fair,  
 Phantasmal Dreams

## Treasury of Arogansa

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	88,009	gp/month	30.7%	Farmer	0.9 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	59,916	gp/month	20.9%	Townfolk	4.0 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	50,400	gp/month	17.6%	Household	2.7 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	45,540	gp/month	15.9%	per Capita	2.6 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	42,734	gp/month	14.9%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>286,599</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	12,622	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	50,486	gp/month
Government & Politics	37,865	gp/month
Personal Prestige	25,243	gp/month
Treasury	12,622	gp/month
Military	37,865	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

Common Corruption

### Farming:

Arogansa may export food.

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	1,132	1	Illusionists	43	7
Guards	240	1	Pegataurs	42	8
Heavy Infantry	482	2	Woodrakes	29	4
Shortbowmen	566	1	Velyas	12	12
Longbowmen	241	2			
Mounted Archers	-		Ballista Artillerists	566	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	-		Lt. Catapult Artillerists	284	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	-		Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	284	1
			Trebuchet Artillerists	-	
Light Horsemen	284	1			
Med. Horsemen	145	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	
Heavy Horsemen	66	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	
Camel Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Good	-	
Elephant Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Best	-	
Pegasus Riders	-				
Wyvern Riders	-		Auxiliaries:	368	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	1,461
Mules or Oxen:	2,192
Draft Horses:	258
Tents:	1,190
Camp Followers:	735

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	141
Lt Catapults:	47
Hvy Catapults:	35
Trebuchets:	-

(\*) *Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.*

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	369
Medium Warhorses:	189
Heavy Warhorses:	86
Riding Horses:	738
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	-

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**4,784 HD**

## Naval Forces

Total Fleet Size: 28

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	9	90	540	27	180	1
Large Galley	3	60	540	12	150	2
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	8	80	--	24	200	1
Large Sailing Ship	4	80	--	16	200	2
Troop Transport	2	60	--	10	100	3

Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.

Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.

Total Navy: 1,410 Seamen HD      Seamen on Shore Leave: 247  
 6 Airships, 5 Submersibles, 17 Surface Ships      Average Hull Points: 108

## Posted in Avrads

87% Humans 11% Elves

Total Strength: 2,400 HD

**Infantry:** 213 Lt. Infantry, 90 Hvy. Infantry, 106 Shortbowmen, 45 Longbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 53 Lt. Cavalry, 27 Med. Cavalry, 12 Hvy. Cavalry,

**Special Troops:** 8 Spellcasters, 8 Pegataurs,  
5 Woodrakes, 2 Velyas,

**Siege Weapons:** 212 Artillerists with 27 Ballistae, 9 Lt. Catapults  
7 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 70 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 240 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 90 Sailors, 180 Marines (and 540 rower convicts)

3 Small Galley 1 Large Galley 1 War Galley

**Assigned Ships** 3 Small Sailing Ship 1 Large Sailing Ship

1 Troop Transport

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 279

Mules or Oxen: 419

Draft Horses: 50

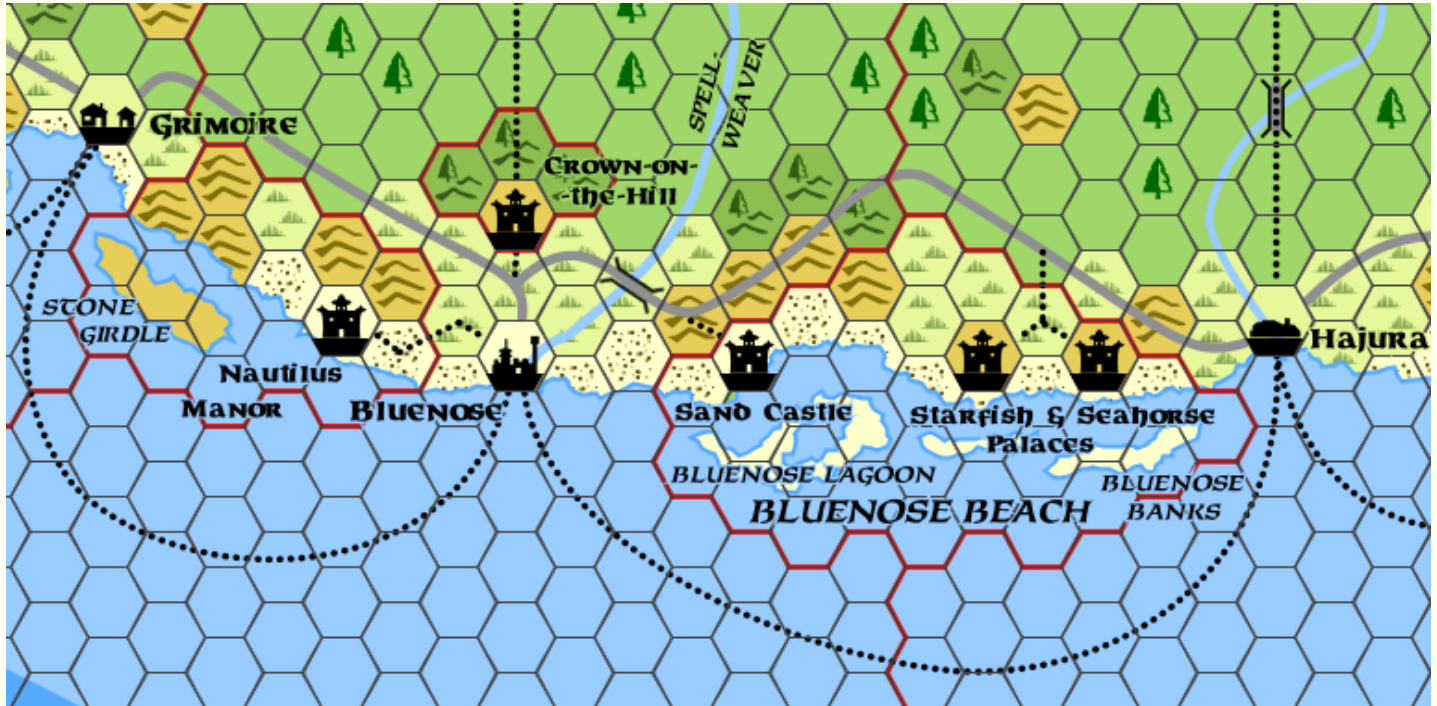
Tents: 227

Camp Followers: 141 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Avrads Militia: 460 People or HD**

# Bluenose - City of Phantasms

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Bluenose Area - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

If Errolyn is the City of Courtly Love, then Bluenose is one of phantasms—including perhaps some you might think of. Anything goes in this part of Alphatia. The main objective in Arogansa's capital is to welcome and cater to wealthy guests, especially wizards and aristocrats. Therefore, luxury guest houses, comfortable inns, and private rooms are readily available, some year-round. In the summer, at the height of the season, the few still for up for grabs fetch obscene prices.

Next come the attractions and they'd better be decent since they mean to entertain some of the most learned and skillful patrons in Mystara. Everyone knows that wizards are interested in one single thing: magic. It's like flies and honey. Whether attractions involve a walk through a haunted house, a suite of phantasmal dreams, a thrill ride through the sky, escaping a spooky dungeon, a fake magic-user's duel, a magical show in a theater, an enchanted merry-go-round, a tavern where one summons exotic and occult fares, or more sordid services somehow magically enhanced, all strive to attract mighty patrons. Cheekily hawking prospects from the establishment across the street is common practice. Some businesses aren't above resorting to charms and other mind-influencing tactics, although these are highly illegal in Arogansa.

If there's any kind of magic involved, even when employed in a frivolous manner, most wizards will most likely fall prey to their own insatiable interests. Knocking off their patrons' enchanted socks is therefore the priority of any House Master, as they are known in Bluenose. Unveiling part of how a show was conjured comes next. Naturally, just enough is shown to strike a spell-weaver's imagination without giving away the house's trade secrets. This is called baiting. Some guests keep returning, hoping to grasp at last that fleeting clue that might satisfy their curiosity. Many just can't resist and any House Master worth his salt will exploit this weakness with uncanny savvy.

As one might suspect, rival houses often employ spies to compromise a competitor's know-how. Behind a garish and magically animated papier-mâché decor more akin to a demented carnival than a serious capital city hides a merciless race for clients and prestige. And competition is deadly. Literally. There is no limit to how crass and unscrupulous a House Master can be when it comes to squeezing secrets from competitors. Forcing them out of business or buying them out soon follows. Visiting wizards may be victims of the silent backstage struggle or its unwitting participants. Some may be hired. Others may be abducted for what they learned and, if lucky, wake up a few days later on an Ochlean trader bound for Davania or the Savage Coast.

Naturally, the Duke of Merlioness takes great pride in his unique city. A significant portion of his ducal revenues are spent lavishly to keep the streets clean and beautify them as much as possible. Cobblestones are sometimes magically varnished. Buildings are whitewashed or painted with the predominant colors in the region—dull red and gold. Merlionese troops, resplendent in their particolored black, blue, and gold uniforms featuring the duke's coat of arms, tirelessly patrol the streets day and night. Their mission is to suppress any disturbance that might threaten visitors or the sacrosanct city business. The shows must go on.



One step beyond the House Masters and the throngs of awed patrons, another struggle takes place. Anyone involved in local politics knows how little the duke cares for the present monarchy. The ducal palace conspicuously occupies the center of the city. The king and his family reside instead nearly twenty miles away at Crown-on-the-Hill, a fortified palace. To those perceptive enough, a palpable discomfort reigns among workers, House Masters, local nobility, and the military when the king must attend the Council of Seven. A parade for the benefit of the clueless visitors takes place as the regal retinue descends upon the city, along with a cautious and jittery Yalastrian guard. Amid blaring trumpets and flapping banners, Llyndemarian horsemen, Cresipherite archers, Scarabellyne pikemen, and boltmen from Talismeroth all proudly decked in the counterchanged colors of their overseers, follow the august procession for good measure. Merlionese men-at-arms look on, defiant to the point of arrogance.

And indeed, the shows do go on. As soon as the parade vanishes into the dark courtyards of the Council of Seven and magical gates slam shut, vacationing mages return to their sightseeing. House Masters resume their bold harangues. Clumps of copiously entertained apprentices and their masters head on to the beach, hoping this time to meet one of those fabled bluenose dolphins. Rumor has it that they are people who once were changed into these sea dwellers, perhaps condemned to entertain those who come to see them. It would explain why so few thieves and other troublemakers seem to exist in Arogansa. The few galleys in the navy certainly could not accommodate all those caught and judged. Another rumor is that those who fail to pay their bills end up working in the *arcanium* mines for a very long, long time. Nasty business. The ore is said to cause amnesia to those who handle it. But soon, these dark concerns vanish when the sun shines brightly and turquoise waves crash softly upon the white, sandy shores of Bluenose Beach.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial assistance.*

# Bluenose City Summary

50,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
500 Troops 15.2 sq. miles

*Buildings often are in good condition, with few ruined or abandoned buildings. Nearly all streets are paved and well maintained. Most streets are magically lit at night.*

	Number	% Random* Encounter	Shops* Number	% Random Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>				
Humblehovels	530	1-2	Alchemists	7
Shoddy Tenements	1,193	3-10	Apothecaries	11
Cozy Cottages	410	11-12	Bakers	142
Laborers' Commons	922	13-19	Barbers	125
Bourgeois Dwelling	152	20	Bathers	26
Manorhouse, Small Palace	69	21-23	Beer-Sellers	35
Large Palace	1	24-25	Blacksmiths	111
			Bleachers	23
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	16
Sordid Hostels	133	26	Booksellers	7
Cheap Taverns	157	27	Buckle Makers	35
Bawdy Houses	39	28	Butchers	100
Reputable Inns	101	29	Cabinet Makers	111
Exclusive Guest Houses	20	30	Carpenters	125
			Chandlers	71
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	125
Large, paved forums (daily markets)	5	31-32	Coachmen, Porters	27
Large guildhouses, stone-built	6	33	Coopers	71
Workshops, Manufactures	12	34-38	Copyists	25
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	4	39	Cutlers	21
Warehouses, Granaries	42	40-72	Fishmongers	125
Very Large Port, with Large Stone Docks	102 acres	73-75	Furriers	121
			Glovmakers	20
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	25
Religious Hospitals	2	76	Hatmakers	52
Chapels & Temples	69	77	Hay Merchants	41
Abbeys & Monasteries	4	78	Healers	29
Cathedrals	2	79	Illuminators	12
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	10
Cemetery	Huge	80	Locksmiths	26
Mausoleums	8	81	Magic-Shops	7
			Masons	100
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	71
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	82	Money-Changers	16
Theaters	3	83	Old-Clothes	125
City Library	-		Painters, Art	33
			Pastrycooks	83
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	35
Basic Learning Centers	13	84	Purse-makers	45
University	-		Roofers	27
School of Magic	-		Ropemakers	26
Military Academy	1	85	Rugmakers	25
Naval Academy	-		Sages	10
			Saddlers	50
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	58
Small Citadel	1	86-88	Sculptors	25
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district			Shoemakers	333
16 miles of stone walls		89-94	Spice Merchants	35
			Tailors	200
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Tanners	25
Large gardens	3	95-96	Watercarriers	125
Imposing, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97	Weavers	83
Imposing, stone-built Court House	1	98	Wine-Sellers	55
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99	Woodcarvers	20
Ruined or abandoned building		100	Woodsellers	20

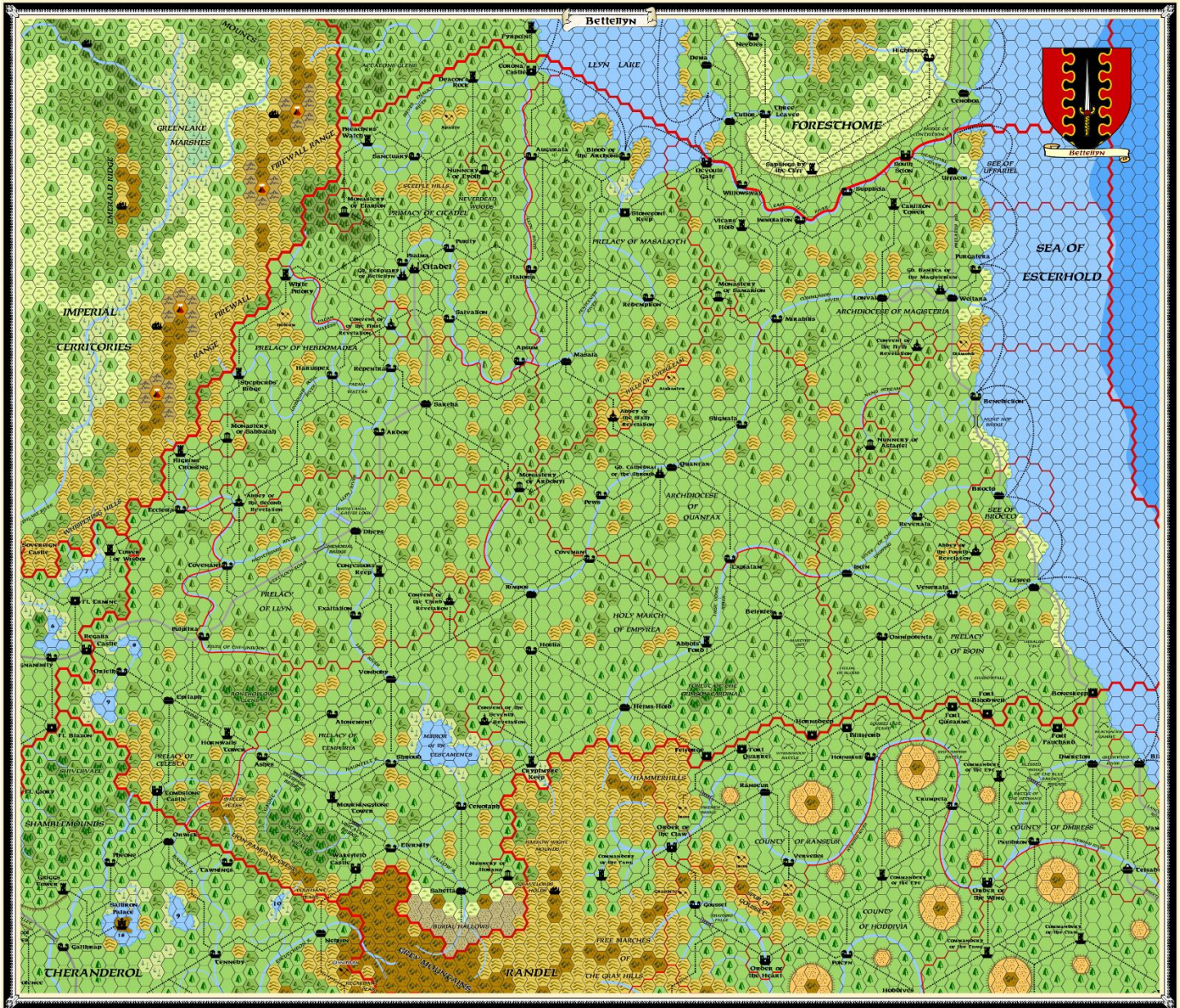
*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*





# The Alphatian Province of Bettellyn

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

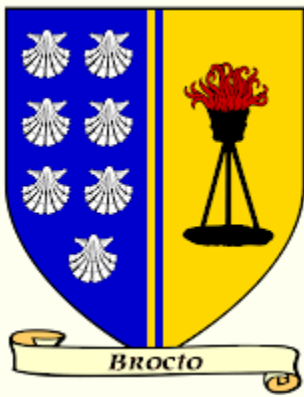


Theocracy of Bettellyn - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

**It is a kingdom of zealots. Mostly.**

Since their arrival on Mystara, a sect of Alphatian devout settled a region along the eastern coast that would later become Bettellyn and established it as a sanctuary for their faith. Indigenous population was swept aside or absorbed, as elsewhere in mainland Alphatia. Prior to the clash that led to the destruction of their former world, *Scions of Llyn* had begun following a new pantheon of immortals, known then as The Three: Eyoth, the leader and patroness of magic; Sabbaiah, embodying war; and Horana, death, honor, and ancestry. By the time the realm of Bettellyn was founded on Mystara, three more beings came forth—Astafiel, life and love; Ardoryl, light and lawful purity; and last, Elarion, huntsman and herald.

Oddly, these other-worldly patrons were archons who'd mysteriously gained immortality. Therein lay a conflict with other Alphasians. Common wisdom inferred that archons were created by the Great Ixion as servants of great power—*mortal servants*. They weren't meant to attain immortality. Furthermore, it wasn't clear under whose auspices they had broken the bonds of mortality. As doubt, suspicion, and bigotry mounted, the self-proclaimed followers of immortal archons were shunned by all. Yet, the mystery of the greater archons' existence drove their followers to a more profound insight. This led to the unveiling of a seventh lord named Samarion who was the pantheon's true Hierarch. Thus was born the faith of The Seven. It was found that the previous six had gained their immortality under Samarion's patronage.



But the mystery persisted. Who had put this greatest of archons on the path to becoming a Hierarch and inviting others to join him? Worse, ecclesiastics of other pantheons came to the conclusion that none of their divine patrons had ever heard of The Seven, nor that they thought they existed at all. Ostracism and persecutions turned grimmer and led Bettelny's faithfuls to arm themselves and learn the arts of war to protect their beliefs. This enduring realm attracted the inquisitive minds of imperial questors seeking to pierce the secrets of Bettelny's faith: how archons earned immortality and why other immortals could not see them. Most of them not only became convinced of the greater archons' existence

but also that a fundamental truth lay behind them, beckoning all to unveil it. None of The Seven would let on any clues. In fact, these sharp, inquisitive minds came to believe that the only way to learn more involved attaining immortality and joining the pantheon. This resulted in an even more exalted and fanatical faith in Bettelny, one profoundly Lawful yet warlike.

## The People of Bettelny

One may wonder about what sort of society a profoundly Lawful people would create. The truth is that not all Bettelnyers are actually Lawful—only the majority. Although true for archons, being Lawful or Chaotic isn't a genetic trait for humans and demi-humans. Ascribing to one or the other ethos, or any shade in between, results from upbringing, life experience, and faith. In Bettelny, one usually becomes Lawful, but not always. Those who do not often leave. It is just too uncomfortable for them to remain. Those who stay behind instead develop a public persona consistent with Lawful expectations, yet their inner-selves (either consciously or not) remain fundamentally Neutral or Chaotic. The latter hide among society, behaving Lawfully yet pursuing dark agendas. The stress of untruth and the mental exertion of constantly play-acting against one's nature eventually take a psychological toll. As a result, Bettelny harbors few, yet some of the worst and hardest-to-unmask serial-murderers and psychopaths in Alphasia. The latter seek relief through secret sin. This shadier side of Bettelny hasn't remained unseen of its leaders but the latter's trust in the goodness of their society leads them to hope the misguided ones will eventually see the light and abandon their corrupt ways. Nonetheless, woe be the sinner if caught. That being said, the vast majority of the population is devoted to The Seven and to the freedom of their realm to be what it is.

Bettelyyn is a theocratic monarchy. It relies on different yardsticks by which it sets expectations for people. One involves citizens or faithfuls living abroad and is most demanding. The other includes visitors, foreign residents, neighboring realms, and all non-believers. The latter are tolerated but generally disliked. An outsider openly acting in a Chaotic fashion will be expelled. Only temples to The Seven may be erected in Bettelyyn. Visitors may practice their faiths but not attempt to spread it within the Holy Realm. Those who try will be expelled. Wizards and clerics often occupy the theocracy's top levels but valorous warriors and other glorious agents of The Seven are treated quite fairly.

Bettelyyners in foreign lands prefer associating with other Lawful beings but understand that many misguided souls dwell there. They merely tolerate them, seeking an opportunity to demonstrate the error of their ways. Followers of The Seven see themselves as missionaries, if not prophets, when away from their homeland. There is something Bettelyyners will not do: it is associating with creatures they see as clear portents of chaos. This includes monsters of any alignment and outer planar entities physically present on Mystara—unless they are agents of the greater archons. This intolerance resulted in irreconcilable diplomatic differences with Randel, due to their open association with, and active protection of dragons. For that matter, Eadrin's Shadow Lords fared little better in the view of Bettelyyn's faithfuls. As another consequence, monsters and non-human beings (other than demi-humans) were driven underground, both literally and figuratively. Ironically, many found solace beneath Citadel, Bettelyyn's capital city.

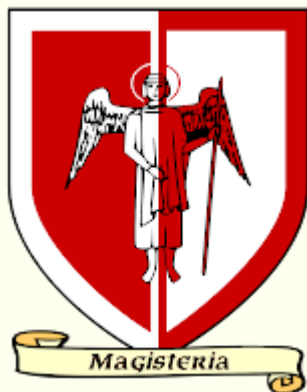


When dealing with a minion of chaos, a Bettelyner will first attempt to convince it to abandon its sinful ways, see the light, and adopt the True Faith. Failing this, anything else becomes fair game. Bettelyyners aren't suicidal though. If a foe cannot be defeated outright, there is no shame in seeking help. It explains how Bettelyyn grew so big in the face of hostile prejudice. However steadfastly loyal to the House of Thera, they earned an honored place among the empire at the point of their swords. West of Bettelyyn lies Vertiloch and, forbidden to all, virgin Imperial Territories. North stands Foresthome, a quiet, unassuming neighbor. South remain Theranderol and a great source of trouble: Randel and its dragons.

## **PANTHEON OF THE SEVEN**

In their preferred appearance, greater archons are large, at least ten feet tall, generally of humanoid morphology, with immense wings and eagle-like lower legs and feet.

**Samarion (Hierarch):** heads the pantheon and is the one who enabled the coming of The Six. He appears as a copper-skinned male archon with the head of a lion. He is the Maker of Laws, the one who brings Order from Chaos, and the patron of oaths, atonement, and redemption. Judges, monarchs, inquisitors, and justiciars are his devout followers.



**Eyoth (Eternal):** is a female archon with light blue skin, black hair, and silver wings with a faint blue shimmer. As all female archons, she possesses two bull heads, dark blue in color with ivory horns. She is the patron of wizards, magic, the moon, and restful darkness.

**Sabbaiah (Empyrean):** a male, red-skinned, with a crimson mane, golden ram horns, and golden wings. He wears a gold chest plate, bracers, and shin guards, and fights with a flaming hammer. Sabbaiah is the patron of justified wars, pain, martyrdom, and holy warriors.

**Astafiel (Celestial):** a female, her skin like mother of pearl, her hair and wings of shimmering green gossamer. Unlike those of her gender, she does not possess the twin bull heads. She embodies love, beauty, water, life, fertility, and healing. Those giving or seeking sanctuary beseech her.

**Ardoryl (Celestial):** a male with golden skin, and the head and wings of a white eagle. Ardoryl is the patron of daylight, lawful purity, heroism, and rebirth, equally honored by Lawful adventurers. He wears a suit of mirror-like golden scales and a sword made of light. Knights, paladins, missionaries, and mystics often honor Ardoryl.

**Elarion (Celestial):** a male with copper-hued mane and skin, black wings, and the antlers of a stag. As messenger of The Seven, he often addresses the lesser ones in the names of his peers. He fights with a mighty bow and owns an enchanted hunting horn. He is the patron of fate, wisdom, philosophers, prophets, bards, hunters (or rangers), and those who seek divine good fortune.

**Horana (Empyrean):** a female with jet-black skin, silver hair and wings. Her two bull heads are black with silver horns. Horana governs divine eternity, remembrance of the dead, the honoring of ancestors, consecrated grounds, the dead, and those who tend to them.

Over the centuries Samarion created a number of lesser archons to serve the pantheon and provide physical manifestations among high level mortal followers. Like their masters, these outer planar servants remain totally undetected by other immortals. Although greater archons appear to relate to the Sphere of Energy as they did originally, this affinity shifted over time. They are of all and of neither of the five spheres, their exaltation reflecting a growing empathy for a power transcending the established spheres. One thing never changed, however. Greater archons are unalterably and profoundly Lawful (read Lawful Good in AD&D terms).



## The Seven Prophecies

Of particular interest to both proponents of The Seven and followers of other immortals are seven holy revelations, one from each of the greater archons. As a whole, they are known as the *Hebdomadea*. The fact that only the first was revealed provoked the highest of concerns among all other faiths. The other six are secrets known only to exclusive circles among agents of The Seven. This reinforces the mistrust surrounding the theocracy.

The First Revelation, made by Elarion, is as follows: ***A mighty chariot of the stars, in darkness forever hidden.*** Virtually no one knows what this refers to, including Elarion's followers. Those who suspect what the revelation alludes to include immortals outside the pantheon of The Seven. And they have made it known that they worry about where the other revelations lead.



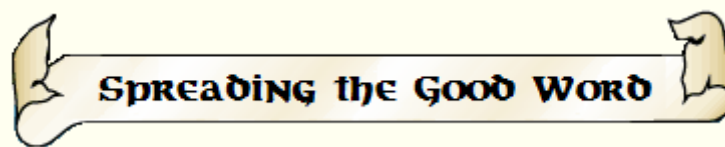
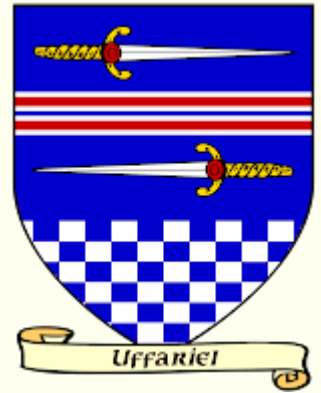
One immortal in particular has communicated to his closest allies his misgivings about The Seven. It is the original maker of the archons: the immortal Ixion. The disappearance of six archons he created more than two thousand years ago remains completely unexplained to this day. When Ixion heard about certain Alphatians building temples to archons, he became exceedingly curious. Curiosity turned into suspicion when he failed to locate or contact the beneficiaries of Bettelyners' faiths. The fact six of them bore the names of his disappeared archons reinforced his misgivings. In time, Ixion investigated world-traveling mystics of The Seven and from them pieced together the other prophecies. Suspicion

turned to alarm. Ixion now opposes The Seven, concerned that they may be pawns of a conspiracy to destroy Alphatia, despite the theocracy's unwavering loyalty to the empire. Who Samarion is, how he earned his immortality, and why any of The Seven can't be reached in any way, all remain nagging mysteries for Ixion.

## COMPANIONS OF BETTELYN

A character template helps illustrate how ultimate faith in The Seven confers special abilities. Prerequisites for the template demand being Lawful (Lawful Good in AD&D terms) and choosing as a faith one of the greater archons. Experience progression, hit points, and any experience bonuses are those of the original character's class. Shadow Lords and mage-knights may not apply. Losing faith or switching alignments revokes the template's benefits until proper atonement is performed and prerequisites are restored. In exchange for the template's benefits, a PC sacrifices 20% of all gained experience. The template is available to any character class, including in some unusual occasions qualifying thieves. The latter are servants of their faiths and use their abilities only to benefit their clerical orders.

Characters with this template are referred to as *Companions of the Exalted Faith*, or *Companions of Samarion*, of *Eyoth*, etc. Each of the seven clerical orders independently sponsors its own Company. A faithful may join a Company very soon after attaining a new experience level. Thus, the least experienced Companion possible is a 2nd level character. The -20% experience penalty begins at this point. A Company's abilities start becoming available at the next experience level when a Companion makes a final oath as a *True and Accepted Adept*. While a new Companion studies the cult, adventuring is permitted in order increase one's experience in life. The final oath is to spread the word and foster Order where Chaos reigns, in exchange for which the Companion gains access to special abilities. A Companion's player must keep track of the number of conversions and the total HD involved.



Proselytism is a difficult and often dangerous task. It requires swaying unbelievers to the right beliefs. There are two steps involved. One is to guide a subject to become Lawful. The next is to convince a subject to adopt the proper faith. Proselytism can only target NPCs and monsters except those with a Morale rating of 12, common or giant-size animals, undead or enchanted beings, magical constructs, non-intelligent, semi-intelligent, or mindless creatures, or those relying on a hive mind or an artificial intelligence, sentient objects like magical swords, the author of this article, etc. Beyond merely preaching, this mystical ability imbues a Companion's with an inspiring sense of marvel and awe. This standard ability is available at all times to all Companions.



**Preaching by Example:** Provided a target remains in presence of a Companion for a lengthy duration (i.e. it isn't hostile), the Companion has an opportunity to inspire the target. Each time the Companion succeeds an action (described below), a Conversion Point is scored against the target. When Conversion Points match its HD (or XP level) the target must save vs. spell. If the save succeeds, the Companion must start the entire process anew for another chance to "convert" the target. The latter earns a cumulative +1 bonus to its saves against each subsequent attempt. If a save fails, the target adopts the Companion's alignment, if different, otherwise the target joins in the Companion's faith. In other

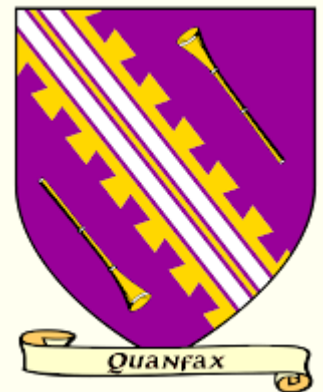
words, a Chaotic being must be converted twice to have it take on the Companion's faith. A Companion may attempt to convert multiples targets at the same time, although each is treated individually.

## Opportunities to Inspire

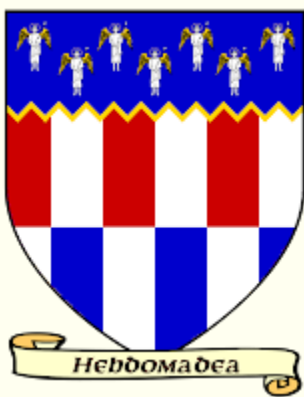
- **Assistance:** help the target with a successful spell directed at the target, or through an action that clearly prevents harm to the target. Help must be declared beforehand (*"I beseech you, Great Lord, to give me the strength and. . ."*) and succeed as intended. The target must not fall unconscious during the encounter.
- **Final Strike:** the Companion scores the battle's final blow toppling a common foe or putting it to flight. The latter, either singly or as a group, must exceed initially the combined XP levels or HD of the Companion's party. An adventure's final clash ought to count, regardless of relative HD involved.
- **Special Feat:** solving a major riddle, being the key factor in avoiding a deadly trap, outstanding roleplay\*, and any other meaningful heroics\*

(\*) Should involve clear risk to the Companion and a tangible benefit for the target and must succeed as intended.

The most likely targets will probably be NPCs, such as retainers in a party or villagers in a place a Companion often visits. The conversion of low-level personalities is acceptable but will become somewhat irrelevant when the Companion earns higher levels. It is also expected that those who defeat a conversion attempt may begin working against the Companion, possibly becoming hostile. This is especially true outside Bettelny, where clerics of another faith or local aristocracy might see this as personal challenges, if not sedition.



**Preaching the Hard Way:** Some beings will be hostile and unwilling to listen to a Companion's words of goodness. Although the Companion should make some effort to parley, a conflict may be inevitable. Beating sense into a misguided head may be the only remaining option. Once a day and at the beginning of a battle, the Companion may invoke his/her immortal patron and solemnly declare that a misguided soul is at stake, which may lead the target to surrender rather than fleeing or dying.



A Morale Check is required when the target sustains at least 75% damage (or a saving throw for the AD&D game if morale mechanics are unavailable). If this check fails, the target surrenders. If it succeeds, the target will never yield to the Companion and gains for the remainder of the battle a +1 bonus to its Morale Checks (or a +1 bonus to its attacks, whichever works best). This tactic works the same way if the target is a group rather than a single being. Morale Checks (or saving throws) apply only to their leader or whichever is the toughest creature when the foes' party suffers 75% casualties.

If the target surrenders, the Companion may commune with it. If the Companion benefited from the help of an allied party, the target has a 60% chance of resisting the Companion's mystical appeal, +1% per HD above the Companion's XP level, or -1% per XP level of above the target's HD. If the Companion had single-handedly defeated the target, then its basic odds of resisting the appeal drop to 30%. If the check fails, the target is considered subdued nonetheless.

Otherwise, the target switches to the Companion's alignment. If the target was a group a creatures, only one appeal is made for the toughest of the group or its leader, all the others falling in line.

Charisma modifiers affect odds of resisting the appeal for both BECMI and AD&D game mechanics, as follows:

### Charisma Scores and Modifiers

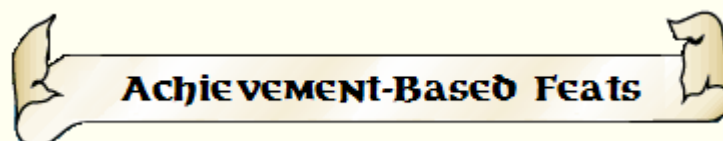
<b>2-3</b>	+6% in favor of the subject
<b>4-5</b>	+4% in favor of the subject
<b>6-8</b>	+2% in favor of the subject
<b>9-12</b>	<i>no Charisma modifier</i>
<b>13-15</b>	-2% in favor of the Companion
<b>16-17</b>	-4% in favor of the Companion
<b>18</b>	-6% in favor of the Companion



A change of alignment or faith on such short notice isn't necessarily permanent. Time is involved to be sure the change is for good. The target is allowed a second check the next day, with a -10% penalty, a third a week later at -15%, a fourth a month later at -20%, and a final check a year later at -25%. In other words, as time passes, it becomes harder for the target to recant. If all these checks fail, the change is permanent, otherwise the creature reverts to its original ethos or faith. For practical reasons, a Companion need not wait this long to find out. The DM performs all checks immediately and gives the Companion's player a sense of whether the conversion truly worked. A successful Wisdom Check reveals how long it will actually last.



**Duties and Penalties:** Once a target is converted, a Companion must make legitimate and meaningful efforts to prevent harm to come to it. Failing to prevent a converted target's death while on the Companion's watch or initiating/provoking a battle against someone without just cause for the purpose of conversion, incurs penalties. One is the forfeiture of all current conversion points. Another is a penalty against HD previously converted, which drop according to the number of HD unjustly challenged. The best tactic is to approach a target and attempt to bring the good word; if the target attacks, then a conversion "the hard way" is fully warranted.



Once a Companion has achieved at least one conversion, some of the abilities listed below become available. They reflect both a Companion's minimum experience level and conversion achievements, which defines Companion Ranks (Adept, Disciple, etc.). Some of these achievements may shift for various reasons, causing earned abilities to become temporarily unavailable. Unless listed otherwise, many are once/day abilities affecting either the Companion



or a willing or prone subject. They typically require physical touch and a complete round to activate.

**Adept:** *Level 2—at least 1 Conversion*

- **Heal:** restores 1d6 hp +1 hp/rank, once per rank (a Prophet can therefore use this ability six times per day).
- **Minor Contrition:** through the act of self-inflicted pain (daily self-flagellation, wearing a girdle of pain) reduces maximum hit points 10%, but temporarily increases the current total of converted HD 20% (round all upward). Provides +2 bonus to saving throws vs. mind-affecting spells or spell-like powers. Duration 1 full day at a time until the practice ends.
- **Protection from Evil:** as the spell. Permanent.

**Disciple:** *Level 4—at least 5 Conversions affecting 15 HD worth*

- **Ardor:** imbues a +2 bonus to hit and damage to creatures that cannot be converted. This bonus increases +1 per additional rank for the remainder of the battle.
- **Cure Affliction:** includes common, non-magical infirmities and diseases (blindness, deafness, feeble-mindedness, or deformity).
- **Exorcism:** Companions may use the Turn Undead chart as clerics to expel from a host a spirit or other mind-controlling power (demon-like being, undead, magic-jarred wizard, etc.). Adjuration lasts 1 Turn per HD exorcised. A "T" result identifies the spirit. A "D" prevents the spirit/power from ever repossessing the host.

**Witness:** *Level 6—at least 10 Conversions affecting 40 HD worth*

- **Cure Greater Affliction:** includes magically incurred infirmities and other magical curses (as a *remove curse* spell—non-reversible).
- **Minor Faith Deed:** these feats are listed separately for each faith (Samarion, Eyoth, etc.).
- **Major Contrition:** through the act of self-inflicted pain (daily self-flagellation, wearing a girdle of pain) reduces maximum hit points 25%, but temporarily increases the current total of converted HD 50% (round all upward). Cannot cumulate with minor contrition. Also provides immunity to mind-affecting spells or spell-like powers. Duration 1 full day at a time until the practice ends.

**Messenger:** *Level 8—at least 20 Conversions affecting 100 HD worth*

- **Cure Minor Magical Disease:** includes most magical diseases up to and including early stages of lycanthropy.
- **Immunity to Poison:** permanently negates all poison effects as the protection from poison spell. Once a day, may also neutralize the effects of poison on someone else.

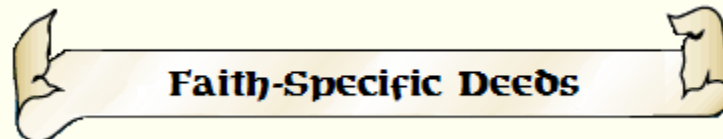
**Herald:** *Level 10—at least 50 Conversions affecting 300 HD worth*

- **Galvanize:** removes fear as the spell and temporarily boosts by a half (round up) the maximum hit points of allies within earshot. When the battle ends, those who incurred more damage than their normal maximum hp drop unconscious.
- **Rally:** bestows a +1 bonus to an army's Morale Rating and forces a new Morale Check if it was retreating. On a dungeon's scale, it forces foes within earshot to perform a Morale

Check with a -2 penalty and inflicts a -2 penalty to all their saving throws until the end of the battle.

**Prophet:** *Level 12—at least 100 Conversions affecting 700 HD worth*

- **Cure Greater Magical Disease:** includes the farthest-reaching diseases such as full-blown lycanthropy and permanent curses such as vampirism, etc. This power may prove fatal to the recipient but will purify its soul so it may rest in peace.
- **Greater Faith Deed:** these feats are listed separately for each faith (see below).



## Faith-Specific Deeds

These abilities can be used once per day. None of their effects are reversible. Granted spell-like abilities are available daily and do not require sleeping or studying to recover. Minor Deeds do require a short prayer (1 round per rank) at the beginning of each day. After using a Major Deed, a Companion must convert another 12 HD-worth of new infidels to regain the ability.



### Companions of Samarion

- **Minor Deed—Samarion's Inquest:** grants the Companion the ability to detect lies for the remainder of an encounter; no save.
- **Greater Deed—Samarion's Bond:** Companion creates a bond when entering into an agreement with another individual, or between two different people. The Companion senses if/when the oath is broken. The violator suffers 1d6 pts of damage per XP level of the Companion (maximum 20d6, no save) and is magically marked on the forehead. Although the mark is invisible, Samarion's followers plainly see it. Permanent.

### Companions of Eyoth

- **Minor Deed—Eyoth's Gift:** either grants the Companion an extra spell slot for each available spell level (for spellcasters) or grants a non-spellcaster a specific first-level magic-user spell each day; once chosen, this spell can never be changed.
- **Greater Deed—Eyoth's Web:** Companion may "capture" 1d4 spells from any attacker during an encounter; no save. The spells must be aimed at or include the Companion in their areas of effect. The ability is triggered with the first qualified spell attack. When they are captured, spells fail to function at all. Captured spells may be cast later at their original experience levels and within the same day regardless of the Companion's character class or level, in addition to any normal spellcasting limits.

### Companions of Sabbaiah

- **Minor Deed—Sabbaiah's Revenge:** if knocked down to 0 hp and revived (or raised from the dead), the Companion bears the ordeal's stigmata. The Companion thereafter senses the attacker's general location and fights this foe at +4 to hit and damage whenever encountered. Stigmata vanish when the foe is destroyed. Multiple vows of revenge can be harbored simultaneously over time with different foes. Permanent; no save.

- **Greater Deed—*Sabbaiah's Sacrifice*:** Companion sacrifices his/her own experience to revive a dead hero (as the *raise dead fully/resurrection* spells), at the rate of 6,000 XP per level revived. Whether a PC or NPC, the recipient is automatically and permanently converted (counting toward the Companion's running total). "Partial raises" are not permitted.

### Companions of Astafiel

- **Minor Deed—*Astafiel's Aura*:** grants the Companion an extra *charm* spell each day regardless of character class or normal spellcasting limits.
- **Greater Deed—*Astafiel's Sanctuary*:** Companion invokes a 20' radius *sanctuary* (as the AD&D spell) protecting allies. Foes within the area of effect when the spell is triggered are forcefully expelled, suffering 3d6 pts of damage, no save. However, a saving throw is still required thereafter for a foe to attack those within. At the Companion's discretion, all damage inflicted this way is reallocated to heal those within. Duration 2 rounds +1 per experience level.

### Companions of Ardoryl

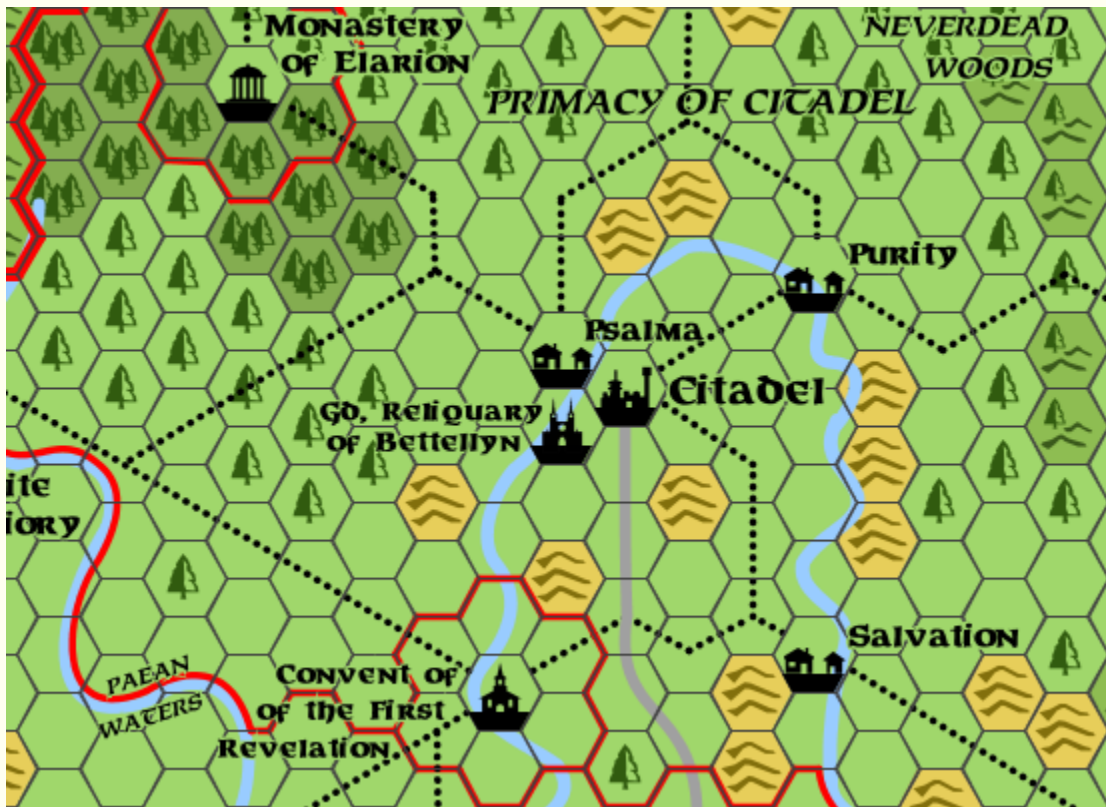
- **Minor Deed—*Ardoryl's Blessing*:** grants the Companion a *bless* spell each day regardless of character class or normal spellcasting limits. The effect is doubled (+2 bonuses).
- **Greater Deed—*Ardoryl's Fortitude*:** confers immunity to age-, level-, and ability-draining attacks. The effect also produces a blinding aura reducing attack rolls of all foes that cannot be converted -1 for every three XP levels of the Companion. Duration: 2d4+3 rounds; no save.

### Companions of Elarion

- **Minor Deed—*Elarion's Good Fortune*:** Companion may call for any single unfavorable d20 score (an attack score, a saving throw, an ability check, etc.) to be rerolled with a modifier +/-1 per rank.
- **Major Deed—*Elarion's Vision*:** Companion generates an effect similar to a *timestop* except that the Companion cannot move or cast spells. Instead, a vision shows as a dream the most likely consequences of pursuing the present course of action for the next 2d4+1 rounds. For this duration, the Companion is granted the ability to *ESP* all those in sight, no save.

### Companions of Horana

- **Minor Deed—*Horana's Peace*:** Companion may Turn Undead as a cleric, using the previous column on the Turning Chart; if already a cleric, the Companion uses the chart's next column (the latter bonus applies to exorcisms—see Disciple rank abilities).
- **Greater Deed—*Horana's Servants*:** Companion summons the spirits of a fallen foe's former victims up to 1 HD per XP level, purifies them, and retains their services against Chaotic foes (or Evil ones in the AD&D game). These ghost-like entities own combat abilities similar to shadows. They and their victims are not undead, cannot be turned, and cannot become undead. Duration: 6 Turns; no save.

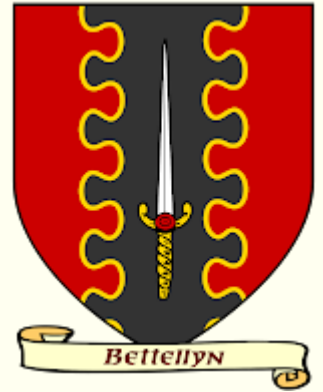


Vicinity of Citadel - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

# Bettelyn: Land of Farmers, Devouts, and Warriors

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

The *Holy Realm* covers an area close to 186,000 square miles (between the sizes of real-world Spain and Sweden). Its capital, Citadel, sits in the Northeast and is home to 325,000 people. Overall, more than 2.1 million Bettelyners live in a land of lush farmland, light forests, and gentle hills. Wide rivers meander eastward across the country, toward the Sea of Esterhold. To the north lies Foresthome; virgin Imperial Territories and Vertiloch form the western border, with Theranderol and Randal locking the south. Many of the old towns derive their names from the original Cypric language.



Temperate weather is ideal to farming which is more than sufficient to satisfy the needs of Bettelyn's population. Spare produce head mostly west to Vertiloch. This merchant traffic goes mostly by land, down the Vertiloch Road and the trail from Quanfax via Vonboby and Epitaph. Snarling traffic jams are frequent at this border, at the level of Regalia Castle, considering Vertiloch's infuriating border controls and peculiar transportation policies. Some of the most colorful language can be heard there, among lines of ox-driven carts, that would normally embarrass the usually prudish and lawfully-minded folks of Bettelyn. Much praying and repenting follows, when access into the Imperial Demesne is finally earned, which reinforces Vertilian opinion of Bettelyners as sanctimonious, hypocritical hot-heads. This is the image initially confronting foreigners, since the majority of visits to the Holy Realm come through this border as well.

When beyond Bettelyn's border, pious citizens of the Theocracy loosen up in the face of relative liberty and unlawfulness. After one too many drinks, some ill-inspired comments, and a few brawls later, the most misguided visitors end up getting kicked out. Naturally, the issue isn't forgotten on the home side as the clergy then copiously admonishes transgressors for their sinful behaviors and the poor image they give of Bettelyn. It is keenly seen as counterproductive to missionary work abroad. Fines, service, fasting, self-flagellation, and much praying help teach rabble-rousers proper manners.

## A WORD ON ECONOMY

The main drivers of Bettelyn's wealth are agriculture and the city of Citadel. By the sheer weight of its population, the capital city generates a disproportionate amount of business, purchasing vast quantities of food and raw materials, and producing finished goods and services. Nearly half of the monarchy's income flows from taxes on businesses and households in Citadel. Tolls from roads and bridges, duties on foreign trade, and port fees collected throughout the realm generate the next big source of revenues, easily exceeding taxes imposed on rural communities.



Mining yields valuable minerals, but otherwise produces a negligible amount of cash. From the point of view of Bettellyners, much of the realm's trade involves producing weapons, armor, and raising war horses.

In the eyes of a visiting foreigner, it seems the greatest part of local business involves the trading of relics, from worthless, obvious fakes sold as cheap souvenirs in curio shops to fabled artifacts imbued with arcane spirits that no one in their right minds would dare tangle with. As might be expected, the lion share of the monarchy's revenues goes to support Bettellyn's armed forces and maintaining castles, roads, bridges, and fortified military ports like the ones in Brocto and Leweo. Another fair share serves to support the clergy and related assets. Monasteries and abbeys are self-sufficient.

## ARISTOCRACY & CLERGY

Bettellyn's unique aristocracy forms the core of the realm's clergy. They are one and the same. Ecclesiastic charges are hereditary, as long as an heir shows evidence of proper faith. Clerical hierarchy does not require being a cleric (as defined in the D&D game). Faith is faith, regardless of methods to accomplish one's duties. Everyone earns their strengths and talents by the will of The Seven.

Although no real difference therefore exists between fighters, wizards, and clerics as regards their places in society, the latter two rise the fastest and highest among ecclesiastic hierarchy. Most of them originate from the old Alphatian upper class, which held all the land, nobility titles, and therefore clerical charges since Bettellyn's formative years. Over time, however, charges do become vacant.

The monarchy concerns itself with temporal matters. Three potentates focus more specifically on matters of faith, orthodoxy at home, and promotion abroad. One of the three is Queen Llynara herself, dubbed the *Defender of the Flame*. The other two reside and otherwise administrate the Archdioceses of Magisteria and Quanfax.

## Twelve Holy Dominions

The most important dominion is the Primacy of Citadel because of its enormous capital city. It represents more than 16% of the realm's entire population and generates nearly half its income. It is the monarchy's political and military heart, and home to Queen Llynara. A sprawling suburb rings the massive, mound-like city, gobbling up the nearby village of Psalma and the community of the



Grand Reliquary of Bettelilyn. The latter is a repository of artifacts. Many of them aren't necessarily magical but they connect with past martyrs and saintly figures of Bettelilyn's history, which makes them priceless. Some are occasionally taken to a battlefield to encourage troops before a clash. One of them is an ancient flag used during the battle at the Fields of Blood, near the border with Randel. Artifacts include fragments of bone or mummified flesh, dried blood, saintly oils, weapons, pieces of armor, manuscripts, symbols of faith, jewelry, simple everyday objects, article of clothing, strange objects of outer planar origins, archon feathers, etc. The reliquary is notorious for being haunted by the original owners.



Another important dominion is the Archdiocese of Magisteria. Although its principal city, Weitara, isn't a very large port, it is crucial because it provides the first stop for sea merchants sailing up the Communion River. One of the local sites of interest is the Grand Basilica of the Magisterium. The magnificent

basilica is a major place of worship, but more importantly, it connects with a center devoted to studying the outer planes and archons in particular. It is rumored that several of fourteen lesser archons who pledged to defend Bettelilyn if it faced a great peril, actually reside on site. Other than the basilica itself, the remainder of the grounds are off limits to the public. Nearby Lonval may strike any visitor as nothing but a military garrison, and its port remains closed to merchant traffic. Next come Mirabilis and Stigmata, two villages typical of Bettelilyn, with houses huddling around a small temple and an open parvis.

The Archdiocese of Quanfax follows. This major trading town is a clearinghouse for magically treated farming produce gathered from the surrounding regions. Part of the crops goes west to Vertiloch or east, by ship, to whatever destination. The more exciting site is the Grand Cathedral of the Shroud, just outside



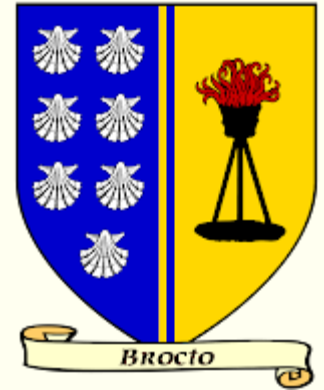
town. Comparable to the Reliquary and the Basilica in its grandeur and beauty, it serves as the repository for the most holy *Shroud of the Unborn*. Murky legends have it that it was brought from a time that hasn't yet come to pass. It is believed to have contained the remains of an avatar of Samarion. Next to the Grand Cathedral shines Archonia's golden dome. It houses the largest library in Bettelilyn. It focuses on general theology of The Seven and serves as an archive not only for the cults but also for ancient genealogy and all historical matters involving the origins of the *Scions of Llyn*, their Journey to Mystara, and the creation of Bettelilyn.

The See of Brocto is notable for its seaport. It concerns itself with fishing, maritime trade, and naval service. A fair portion of Bettelilyn's war fleet hails from this small dominion. The



monarchy pays much of the cost involved with supporting these forces. As with Randel, a significant portion of the fleet is usually off at sea, on a mission for the empire. There is a story behind Brocto's coat of arms. A long time ago, Brocto was little more than a village with a tavern popular for its grilled sea food.

The business flourished and its owner, Brocto the Seared, became quite rich. He earned his moniker as the result of a battle with stray hellhounds during which he used the sign above the tavern's entrance as his shield. He fought gloriously, which earned him further notoriety and a nobility title. The sign on his impromptu shield became the official arms of his house, and later on, those of the Holy See of Brocto. To this day, the tavern remains in business, a fancy stop for bourgeois clientele and visiting dignitaries.



The Prelacy of Isoin is a military march. It is engrossed in its mission to preserve the theocracy's southern border, along with the Holy March of Empyrea. As border provinces, paranoia runs high there. Spies scour the land and the towns' streets, in search of enemy agents. The realm's secret police, known

as the Silver Cord, maintains a major base in Isoin. Locals euphemistically refer to its members as the Cordial Cherubs, a welcoming party devoted to leading the misguided to a heavenly end. The name Silver Cord came from a blessed instrument they use to dispatch enemies of the faith.

The borders with Randel are virtually closed. Traffic between the two realms rely exclusively on foreign ships which are thoroughly searched when crossing through. Leweo, on the coast, is another crucial seaport, competing with Brocto for traffic bound up the First Vows River. All towns and villages on this river are heavily fortified. Along with Abbots' Ford, they are the only useful crossing points. The waterway stretches to Empyrea's Helms-Hold, a bastion-like city and a key defensive element against Randel. Empyrea's sword-makers are renowned across the realm



for the quality of their steel and workmanship. Sword-makers in the town of Rimpos own ancient secret knowledge involving the use of iridium in their blades, giving them a unique iridescent shimmer. It is thought to be the steel that archons use in their weapons, a knowledge given them by Sabbaiah.



# Bettelyn: A Million and One Tombs

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Proceeding westward, the next two dominions are the Prelacies of Temporia and Celesta. The people in these two provinces mostly follow the philosophies of Horana. Their culture centers around the cult of ancestors and their spirits. Of particular interest are the Burial Hallows, a stretch of windswept desert that serves as a gigantic cemetery. It is thought

that over the centuries, more than a million graves were dug there. Legends say that the land weeps with sorrow following the deaths of lesser archons in a mighty battle with dragons, explaining why nothing ever grows there. It is believed that the souls of fallen archons protect the remains of faithfuls, leading all who can afford it to entomb their deceased kin there. The most affluent families of Bettelyn build great mausoleums in the Burial Hallows. These sinister mortuary structures stand eerily amid sprawling mazes of family tombs, patches of rocky desert, and looming boulders. Petrified skeletons of dragons lie here and there, along the eighty miles of the desiccated bulge. These sites are considered cursed and forbidden to all. Companions of Horana often patrol the Burial Hallows, looking for tomb robbers—the vilest of criminals.

Farther north lies the Prelacy of Llyn, which belongs to the Royal House. Traditionally, this apanage is given to the monarch's first sibling, if any. As such, it isn't a hereditary possession. Currently, Queen Llynara's younger brother, Llyndor, stands as the *Pious Prelate of Llyn*. When the queen passes away, her son Llynroth is expected to succeed her, and thus his sister, Llyndara, will take over the prelacy from her uncle.



The House of Llyn bears one of the most ancient Alphatian bloodlines and a notable influence among imperial circles and the Great Council in Vertiloch. It relates to many other Alphatian Houses whose names include Llyn as a suffix or a prefix, such as Llyndemar, Scarabellyn, and Feltelyn (a bitterly hated Randelese offshoot) among others. The town of Dheys grew from a royal village to a town with nearly seven thousand people year-round. Its center is entirely reserved for affluent families connected with the monarchy or with one of the ten vassal houses. Dheys looks like a pricey resort town with wealthy abodes, monuments, and sumptuous gardens, and is in fact the House of Llyn's winter palace. Queen Llynara prefers Dheys to Citadel's immense, drafty halls and the constant threat of monsters crawling from its depths. Every season, the royal retinue, a large portion of Citadel's military garrison, and anyone who's anybody at the capital all suddenly flock to Dheys, more than doubling the population of the otherwise quiet, provincial town and transforming it into a kingly madhouse. In order to ease transportation and sanitation, a great canal connects the town's center to the Llyn River. The Royal Barge sails through this canal in

great fanfare, with a cohort of smaller vessels, escorting galleys, and airships flying overhead. The remainder travel by road.



The Prelacy of Hebdomadea lies awkwardly between Citadel and Llyn. It has always been seen as an inconvenient neighbor from the monarchy's point of view. Its prelates earned the land in most lawful ways and never incurred any risk of losing it as the result of royal disfavor. Hebdomadea's concern lies more with its long western border with

virgin Imperial Territories and monster raids originating from the Firewall Range. By imperial law, punitive expeditions into the region are unthinkable, forcing Hebdomadean troops to adopt defensive tactics that do not solve the problem. A Monastery of Sabbaiah established itself near the foothills. Its companions get plenty of opportunities to earn experience and knowledge about portents of chaos.

The Prelacy of Masalioth gets the least amount of respect from its neighbors and commands little prestige. Masalioth is almost entirely a farming community. Its produce mostly sails upriver to Citadel, downstream toward Llyn Lake and beyond, or is carted south to neighboring Quanfax. Masalioth, despite its rural nature, is a great source of devouts,



raised in the back country where they spend their lives working the land and listening to tales of archons, holy people, and proud warriors. When trouble arises elsewhere in Bettellyn, folks of Masalioth are the first to answer the call. Those who survive usually remain to serve with their units or join the ranks of the clergy and rise from there. Many of them can be found among high-level clerics and among forces guarding the borders, in castles, forts, and towers. As a result, Masalioth wields more influence in Citadel, the two archdioceses, and among the military than any other province. Therein lies its true greatness.



The See of Uffariel is a military march where warriors almost outnumber civilian population. The monarchy largely pays for these troops and the part of the navy anchoring at Uffacos. They are a key part of defenses against Foresthome. No invasion or raid is expected from this quiet neighbor and none has been perpetrated northward for some time.

Nonetheless, Uffariel's sizeable force is there to dispel any misunderstanding on Foresthome's part. There was a time when forest tribes raided southward, especially when Bettellyn grew

from its infancy. This has neither been forgotten nor forgiven. Nowadays, Uffariel is a major springboard for mission work. The cult of Elarion has made excellent progress in northern Foresthome, slowly turning sylvan clans into potential allies of Bettelwyn. There are those in the City of Greenwood who bitterly oppose this dangerous influence. Their agents in Uffacos watch for new missionaries, hoping to intercept them on the other side of the border and put a permanent end to their seditious workings. Similar activity takes place west of Llyn Lake, although troops in the less populated area of Corona Castle have had a much better time spotting Foresthome agents (and vice-versa). Submersibles operating from Devouts' Gate occasionally serve as a way to drop off missionaries and spies on the opposite side of Llyn Lake. As a result of these efforts, tension has increased between the two realms, which in turn justifies Queen Llynara's strategy of maintaining significant troops in Uffariel, and in the border fortresses of Devouts' Gate and Corona Castle.



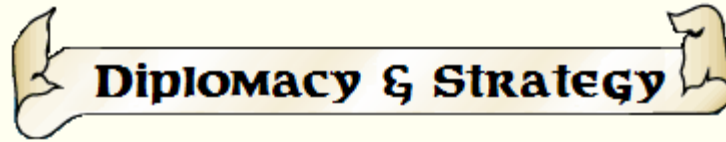
## MONASTERIES

People say that monasteries and shrines are as common in Bettelwyn as trees in a forest, or as Vertilians would put it, as plentiful as fleas in on mangy mutt's backside. The most important ones are monasteries and nunneries devoted to The Seven. These shrines are great sources of Companions of the Faith, trained amid the isolation of the surrounding forests in their arts and in the ways of their immortals. Access to the grounds is restricted, save for passage along a trail. Another seven abbeys and convents concern themselves more specifically to immortal revelations, studying their sources and their meanings. Their mystics travel the world of Mystara, searching for signs to shed more light on the revelations, and tracking those yet to happen. The most important of these monasteries are autonomous as regards the administration of their lands and answer only to one of the three Holy Potentates.



# Bettelyn: Strengths & Foibles

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Bettelyn went from being an enclave of pariahs to a feared realm. Its people's mood often swings from siege-mentality to obnoxious chest-thumping, world-defying arrogance. For centuries, while it grew as a kingdom, local powers allied against Bettelyn and its strange cults. Eventually, they lost that fight and were wholly absorbed by the expanding theocracy. Conquests stopped at the present borders when Bettelyn, economically and demographically drained, accepted to pay homage to the Imperial Throne.

Bettelyn's main strategy today is to spread the faith abroad as a way to maintain peace. Of course, this does not sit well with immediate neighbors who see it as a grass-roots effort to evict local aristocracy and extend the theocracy's boundaries. Randel is the most hostile on many levels and simply slammed their northern border shut. Vertiloch watches its borders with an arcane vigilance, so far thwarting unwanted missionary efforts. Mountains separating Bettelyn from Theranderol eased the latter's task of keeping the problem under control. Bettelyn remains a staunch supporter of the Imperial House and, to avoid jeopardizing this relationship, focused its efforts on Foresthome. Frictions between the two realms have been growing steadily ever since.

Both Eriadna and the Great Council see Bettelyn as a major military asset and one that is more disciplined and controllable than Randel's. As embarrassing as the missionary effort may be, Vertiloch's role is to prevent conflict among client realms. Open war between its vassals bears the risk of the conflict widening. Neither Randel nor Bettelyn have true allies but their opponents could experience trouble with rivals trying to take advantage of a major clash. Revolts are another peril. Lack of stability, loss of income, and forced intervention of imperial troops at home are signals inviting more trouble offshore. Thyatis and Glantri would, without a doubt, rejoice and stir the pot as much as possible. A breakaway of Bellissarian realms would be catastrophic. As a result, the empire will try to prevent wars at all costs.

Since Theranderol relates directly to the House of Thera, it remains wholly aligned with Empress Eriadna. On the other hand, in the face of Randel's ominous presence, sympathies also lie with neighboring Arogansa and mysterious Eadrin as regards a defensive league. Although Eadrin has largely managed to avoid Bettelyn's influence, Arogansa is a different story. Its population of serfs has proven unusually partial to the appeal of The Seven, earning them even more oppression from their overseers. So far, this policy hasn't helped much and proselytism persists amid carnival overtones. People in Haven found the idea of archons as immortal patrons to have a certain charm but in the end, really don't care. Archons don't seem to produce much of beauty, other than their followers' cathedrals and basilicas, but then again, so does Haven. Life goes on.

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	4,460	1	Spellcasters	112	5
Guards	120	1	Archons	14	20
Heavy Infantry	1,115	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Mounted Archers	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	2,230	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	2,230	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	1,115	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	1,115	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	1,115	1
-	-	-	Trebuchet Artillerists	-	-
Light Horsemen	1,115	1	-	-	-
Med. Horsemen	724	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	331	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Wyvern Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	1,303	1

Bettelyn's diplomatic trump card is, of course, its military. From a strategic standpoint, when fully manned, its defensive layout includes 5,000 (troops or HD-worth of troops) in Uffacos in the northeast and about as much in each of Leweo, Isoin, and Helms-Hold in the south. Forts and castles at best house about a thousand troops each. Minor defenses hold the peaceful southwest. Aside from small garrisons in each town and village for civil order and law enforcement, most of the land forces otherwise remain quartered in and around Citadel. Their duties are to head off monster raids from the western ranges, drill, kill whatever crawls out of the depths beneath Citadel, drill, participate in royal pageantry, drill, enforce the Queen's Law, pray, and drill some more. Half of that force moves to the Prelacy of Llyn in the winter to bivouac outside the town of Dheys.

## Naval Forces

Total Fleet Size: 126

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	40	400	2400	120	800	1
Large Galley	12	240	2160	48	600	2
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	50	500	--	150	1250	1
Large Sailing Ship	18	360	--	72	900	2
Troop Transport	4	120	--	20	200	3

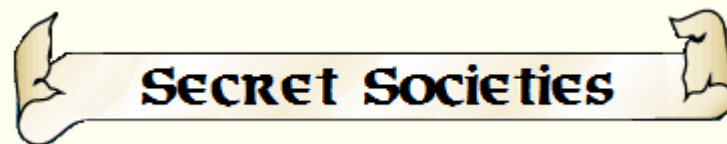
*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.  
Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy: 5,580 Seamen HD**      Seamen on Shore Leave: 26  
**31 Airships, 19 Submersibles, 76 Surface Ships**      **Average Hull Points: 99**

The navy, despite its 126 vessels, is generally scattered about the realm. One half is often at sea, on missions for the empire, typically including all sailing ships and 22 skyships. To be accurate 31 of the small sailing ships are in fact skyships; 19 of the small galleys are submersibles.

Leweo and Brocto are the two main naval bases with Weitara standing as a lesser third. Their responsibility is the integrity of marine coasts and surveying ships sailing to and from Randel in particular. Large galleys and submersibles handle the bulk of this work. Small galleys typically patrol rivers and operate from inland towns. A larger flotilla under the monarchy's direct control patrols the Llyn River from Dheys to Llyn Lake. The two war galleys and some of the subs from Corona Castle and Devouts' Gate patrol Llyn Lake. Galleys hailing from Uffacos keep watch over the East Llyn River.

Finally, nine remaining skyships patrol the western border with virgin Imperial Territories, and the edges of the Grey Mountains and Hammer Hills. The latter are rigged to fight dragons, relying on ballistae fitted with grappling hooks and harpoons to tangle and tear through their wings. Combat bays are located throughout these ships, including their undersides. Masts are collapsed and long spikes cranked outward during battle to dissuade dragons from grabbing on. Spellcasters are always at hand, ready to suppress fire damage.



**Order of the True Blood:** its supporters include a handful of individual members from the oldest Alpathian families. They deplore the presence of non-wizards among upper ranks of Bettelwyn society and other individuals of a lesser pedigree. They believe that it is their own burden to educate the lesser ones in the ways of wizardry. It is the natural order of the universe that those who understand its mysteries lead and protect those who cannot. In this they disagree with the established clergy. They feel they hold the truth since The Seven chose Alpathians—*blue-blooded-wizards*—to protect and promote the faith. Queen Llynara is a member.

**The Obsidian Spear:** thoroughly evil psychopaths, its minions developed the innate ability to pass themselves off as lawful. Although their true inner selves never change, they may "exchange" an aura of lawfulness from someone nearby with their own. They can resort to this subterfuge once a day and for a short duration—long enough to dodge any detection magic that would otherwise reveal their alignment. The ability requires serial sacrifices involving torture, mutilation, and the death of innocents. Their ultimate goal is to set up proponents of lawfulness against one another and destroy Bettelwyn's orderly society from within. These criminals are usually of ancient Cypric origins.

**The Sanctuary:** is a gang whose activities include murder, banditry, and vandalism, usually with some political overtones. It is in fact a secret branch of the Silver Cord—Bettelwyn's secret police. It is set up to attract and expose seditious elements of the population and foreign spies. It is a massive, ongoing sting operation. Their methods are designed to infuriate the population against a common enemy, usually Randel. Nefarious deeds are perpetrated for the "greater good of all" and require from Sanctuary members constant acts of contrition.

**The Will of Sabbaiah:** members of this discreet political clique wish the resumption of full-blown warfare. They resent the political tangle of being a vassal of the empire and sending

valorous warriors abroad at Eriadna's whim. They feel that all portents of chaos should be stricken down once and for all—meaning Randel, at least initially. Nothing short of complete hegemony in mainland Alphatia will satisfy them. The Imperial Throne must belong to faithfuls of The Seven. It is their belief that Sabbaiah will lead them to victory as he always did before. Clerics of Sabbaiah and military leaders form this group's backbone. Cardinal-Prince Llynroth is a member.

**Brotherhood of the Flaming Heart:** it includes a small number of high-level ecclesiastics from the Grand Cathedral of the Shroud. They are convinced, based upon their outer-planar research, that the Shroud of the Unborn did in fact sheathe Samarion's lifeless remains—not an avatar of his or any other mortal manifestation. It is theoretically impossible for an immortal to be destroyed, yet their evidence seems uncontroversial. While they endeavor to unveil and prevent whatever happened (or will happen, to be more accurate) their other concern is to prevent anyone else from learning about this because it could destroy the cults of The Seven. They will try to permanently silence anyone who knows too much. Mystics remain at the brotherhood's service to perform all necessary deeds.

**The Golden Boys (and Girls):** this association of young nobles, upwardly mobile and hip to a fault, regroups a collection of upstarts as debonair as they are successful in business, military prowess, magic-use, faith, politics, and courtship. They've got it all. In truth, key members of this public association are *polymorphed* lawful dragons. The latter all have in common that they hail from other parts of mainland Alphatia or Bellissaria, and that their credentials are magnificent fakes. These phony nobles are thought to have left their native lands to embrace the faith of The Seven and have resettled at Citadel or the main towns ten or fifteen years earlier. Their goal is to infiltrate Bettelyn's society to influence its policies and unveil its clergy's well-kept secrets in hopes to put an end to the deep-seated bitterness prevailing between the theocracy and Randel.

**The Watchers:** this sect of benevolent non-spellcasters believe that Holy Revelations should be shared with the people. In their opinion The Seven did not make these prophecies for just a minority. Their strategy is to spy on globe-trotting mystics. The truth is that this group has fallen prey to Entropic Immortals. Minions of Masauwu possess the leaders in a scheme to unveil the revelations' nature and any new developments—which Ixion had deliberately failed to communicate to Entropic Immortals. Once a group of mystics uncovers something new, watchers report the event. Leaders then quietly seek out the mystics involved, isolate them, and magically torture them to reveal what they know. Occasionally, they may sacrifice their own hosts and possess captured mystics instead. Pawns of Masauwu either are wizards using *magic-jar* spells or powerful monsters. Most rely on *amulets of protection vs. crystal balls and ESP* and various other magical items to hide their alignments and escape notice.



# Bettelyn: Shadows in the Night

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

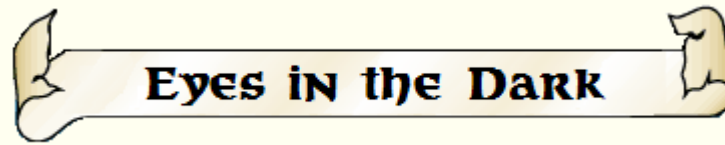


Before entering into any detail about NPCs, one should know about laws of succession in Bettelyn. As far as property is concerned, there is no difference between genders. It is common practice in Alphatia for spouses to retain ownership of their titles and lands regardless of marriage. In a society where high-level wizards and sorceresses form the backbone of land-owning aristocracy, it could hardly be otherwise.

A wife's lands and titles do not generally transfer to a husband, and this is unavoidable in Bettelyn because aristocracy also holds ecclesiastic charges. As a result, spouses from different realms travel often, either together or separately, in order to tend to their separate businesses. *Teleport* spells and airships are the norm for the upper class. Spouses may inherit from each other only with liege approval and if there are no sons or daughters. Swearing loyalty to the former spouse's liege may be possible

but remains subject to approval by the claimant's own liege. If a disagreement occurs, the claimant must relinquish the litigious part of the inheritance in favor of in-laws, cousins, or other kin. These issues concern specifically titled nobility and the allegiance of lands to their original monarchies.

Progeny must inherit either from the father or the mother but not both. This is to avoid conflicts since in the case of Bettelyn, land is inalienable from the realm. For example, the daughter of a prelate and of a Vertilian princess eventually would have to choose between heading the father's prelacy or abandoning any role in Bettelyn's clergy in order to claim the mother's titles in Vertiloch. Generally, the timing of a parent's death determines the oldest beneficiary's inheritance, in which case primogeniture applies. In the example given above, if the prelate dies first, the oldest child inherits the prelacy, the next in line inheriting Vertilian titles. Anyone else in line would have to receive their apanage through an earlier arrangement such as a legal will. If there is only one child, conflicting inheritance usually goes to the closest cousin or related kin. Bettelyners cannot accumulate ecclesiastic charges. If two are inherited, the heir picks one and lets the other go along with associated territories. Common real-estate, commercial assets, and overseas possessions are treated separately and may remain property of a single heir.



## ***Her Royal Holiness, The Most Devout Queen Llynara***

Although listed in the *Poor Wizard's Almanac* as Neutral, she started out with a Lawful alignment. Her change of heart occurred when she survived Alphatia's destruction. She lost her faith in the immortals, concluding they instigated the catastrophe, and thus became Neutral. In AC1010, this detail escaped everyone's observation, fortunately, or she would be forced to abdicate. In-pre cataclysmic Alphatia (AC1000), she most-definitely is Lawful, fitter, more assertive, and a widow. She also belongs to the *Order of the True Blood*. She recently negotiated with King Qissling the marriage of her daughter to a certain wizard-prince, an obscure but dashing Admiral of Ar in the service of Empress Eriadna. Surely, this man of impeccable Alphatian pedigree would prove a valuable source of information and influence among imperial circles. Alas, the beneficiary has been away for a long time and remains uninformed of the matrimonial arrangement.

M25, AC9, hp 33, ML7; AL L. Witness of Samarion. St9, In16, Wi18, Dx10, Co11, Ch13.

**Magical Items:** *ring of human control, staff of commanding.*

## ***His Royal Eminence, The Cardinal-Prince Llynroth***

Although the young prince will not betray his mother, he would however change many of her policies if he were to succeed her. He quietly consorts with the *Will of Sabbaiah*, bidding his time with dreams of conquest and hegemony over the empire. Between interminable ecclesiastic councils to which he is required to participate as a cardinal of the ecclesia, Llynroth maintains a secret correspondence with the Vicar General of the Three Ports. Old friends since their times at the Naval Academy in Brocto, he hopes to convince him of provoking a war against Randel. He is trying to instigate a romantic liaison between his sister, the fiery Llyndara, and his friend as way to obtain even more leverage. Meanwhile, the *Crimson Prince* occasionally joins the military for a hunt in the woods west of Citadel, an ambush against raiding monsters from the Firewall Ranges, or a foray into the depths of Citadel in the name of experience, glory, and faith.

M12, AC7, hp 28, ML9; AL L. Disciple of Sabbaiah. St14, In16, Wi15, Dx13, Co13, Ch14.

**Magical Items:** *Ring of protection +3, wand of fireballs.*

## ***Her Royal Eminence, The Cardinal-Princess Llyndara***

Just as involved as her older brother Llynroth with ecclesiastic demands of her charge, lust, jealousy, and spurned advances lie in her wake. Many consider the tempestuous red head as the fox in the hen house, merely one antic short of a full-blown scandal, the fact of which Queen Llynara remains painfully aware. It explains her mother's scheme to have her married as soon as possible and sent away, *far* away, as on the ship of a daredevil world explorer until she learns

restraint, humility, and respect. Naturally, Llyndara is furious and wants nothing of this arrangement. In fact, she's fallen head-over-heels for a stranger from Weitara, a young noble who'd been at the palace recently. During the course of their fiery, ripping-roaringly passionate encounter, he'd been forced to escape her quarters nearly naked when her brother came banging at her door. Ever since then, Llyndara has been trying to identify and locate her enthralling and mysterious visitor. Meanwhile, she and her brother are like cats and dogs, at each other's throats most of the time.

M11, AC9, hp 27, ML8; AL L. Disciple of Eyoth. St12, In17, Wi14, Dx15, Co12, Ch18. **Magical Items:** *Wand of paralyzation, ring of safety.*

## **The Most Reverend Corybemus, Archbishop of Magisteria**

His Excellency Corybemus administrates the Archdiocese of Magisteria and stands as a leading theologian at the Grand Basilica. In reality, this is an ancient gold dragon, *polymorphed* into a human which he used over the past several decades to infiltrate Bettelyn's clergy. Corybemus, or Farraxillion-the-Gleaming of his true name, was some years ago a popular member of the *Golden Boys*, at least in the eyes of those privy to it. He still is but keeps the fact very quiet now. It recently came to his attention that the Archbishop of Quanfax sought to acquire for reasons unknown a very dangerous artifact, one especially so in the hands of a high level Bettelyn ecclesiastic. The trail led from there to the Royal Palace at Citadel. A far less-conspicuous visitor than Corybemus went in his place to investigate the matter--a younger dragon by the human name of Merraban who was able to confirm that the artifact lay indeed in Queen Llynara's possession, hidden somewhere beneath the Grand Reliquary. Corybemus now focuses on concerns about the presence of this artifact in Bettelyn and whether the Archbishop of Quanfax will obtain it. Under a guise, Corybemus is likely to follow up with several nocturnal forays under the venerable building, looking for the artifact before it changes hands.

HD16+3\*\*\*, AC-4, hp 80, MV 120' (40')/300' (100'), AT#3 + breath weapon, Dmg 6d6+4 bite, 3d4 claw, Save F33, ML10, AL L. **Magical Items:** *Ring of remedies.*

## **Master Merraban, Purveyor of Silk & Other Fine Goods** (Est. AY1989)

Merraban is a member of the *Golden Boys'* inner circle and a youthful, irresistible gemstone dragon (crystal or a silver dragon for the AD&D game). His human persona, a dandy to be sure, belongs among untitled petty nobility common in major towns of the realm. By rights, Merraban could preach at a local chapel but has instead preferred a life of dilettante financed by his successful silk import business. His true name is Robnartnyghan-Tangle tongue, or for those who know, just "*Bob.*" As it were, Bob recently accepted the mission to quietly investigate the location of an artifact at Citadel on behalf of an elder peer, His Excellency Corybemus. Under yet another false name, Robbilant, he managed to earn the amorous attentions of Her Eminence Llyndara. Pillow confessions revealed the presence of the artifact under the Grand Reliquary. Unfortunately, an unforeseen interruption forced him to escape through the window. Members of the Silver Cord trailed him all the way back to Weitara. They never got a good look at Bob but

correctly suspect he hides in the merchant district. Since then, Bob has become much more discreet and avoids those he knows are agents of the secret police.

AC1, HD9\*\*\*, hp 41, MV 120' (40')/300' (100'), AT#3 + breath weapon, Dmg 2d8+4 bite, d6+1 claw, Save F18, ML9, AL L. **Magical Items:** *Ring of quickness.*

## **The Most Reverend Mother Nehephzibeth, Archbishop of Quanfax**

Her Excellency administrates the Archdiocese of Quanfax and the Grand Cathedral of the Shroud. She also leads the *Brotherhood of the Flaming Heart*. Outer planar research has led her to seek an artifact that would help unveil the mystery of the shroud. She suspects that it had come into Queen Llynara's possession some decades earlier. Her first step now is to contact her brother, Monsignor Parvanel, the Royal Chamberlain, for some help in convincing the monarch to transfer the relic to the Grand Cathedral. She cannot reveal to her brother why she seeks this artifact, both for his protection and for the sake of her faith.

C18, AC7, hp 81, ML7; AL L. Prophet of Samarion. St11, In15, Wi17, Dx10, Co11, Ch13.  
**Magical Items:** *Talisman of elemental travel, ring of memory.*

## **Sister Jezabioth, Aide to Her Excellency Nehephzibeth**

Jezabioth was a mystic (a monk in AD&D terms) assigned to the Archbishop of Quanfax. She fell prey to *The Watchers* while on an errand for Nehephzibeth which led a Soul Eater to possess her (see *Creature Catalog*). The entity's mission is to reveal whatever it can about the nature of Nehephzibeth's research on the shroud. The Soul Eater ran across clues about an artifact being sought after. It wants to steal it from the archbishop once she acquires it. It will follow Nehephzibeth to the Royal Palace, either because Jezabioth's presence is requested at the side of the archbishop, or by stealth if need be. If Jezabioth is killed or the soul eater exorcised, it will take on its normal form and seek to kill the exorcist or its attacker.

**Jezabioth:** My4, AC6, hp 17, AT#1 open hand, Dmg d6+1, ML8(12); AL L(N). Disciple of Samarion; unable to use her companion abilities while possessed. St15(18), In13(9), Wi14(9), Dx17, Co14, Ch12. **Magical Items:** *Ring of invisibility, amulet of protection against detection and ESP.*

**Soul Eater:** AC0, HD10\*, MV 180' (60'), AT#2, Dmg d10+Wisdom drain, Save C10, ML12, AL N. Minion of Masauwu.

## **Right Reverend Monsignor Arthanor, Vicar General of the Royal Guard**

He runs military forces in and around Citadel, as well as the Silver Cord. Queen Llynara picked him personally for this function. A staunch ally of hers, he will prove ruthless with anyone plotting or acting in any way against her best interest. In truth, he harbors deep feelings for Llynara but has kept them quiet. This loyalty, however, does not extend to Llynroth or Llyndara. He suspects the *Crimson Prince* of consorting with followers of the *Will of Sabbaiah*, a danger for the realm, but hasn't secured proof to go after him. He is also on the lookout for Llyndara's foolish lover who'd escaped in the night not long ago. He just barely missed the fop after he'd alerted Llynroth of his sister's questionable company. If he catches him, he hopes to hang him by the object of his crime. He would demand the same treatment for Monsignor Azradel, the Vicar General of the Three Ports if he dared emulate his predecessor. Arthanor knows Llyndara to be a liability for the throne. He was the one who suggested her marriage arrangement.

C15, AC1, hp 68, ML11; AL L. Messenger of Samarion. St14, In16, Wi16, Dx10, Co13, Ch13.

**Magical Items:** *Helm of telepathy, mace +2, plate mail +2.*

## **Right Reverend Monsignor Azradel, Vicar General of the Three Ports**

He commands the large galleys and submersibles operating from Leweo, Brocto, and Weitara. Azradel is torn between his love for Llyndara, his friendship with Llynroth, and his loyalty to Queen Llynara. Although the princess enjoys his company, she has skillfully dodged his best efforts to win her over. He is otherwise a brave and able naval commander picked personally by the queen.

F13, AC2, hp 85, ML10; AL L. Disciple of Ardoryl. St16, In13, Wi12, Dx11, Co16, Ch14.

**Magical Items:** *Ring of water walking, chain mail +3, +3 bastard sword of healing.*

## **Master Berengol, Aide-de-Camp to the Vicar General of the Three Ports**

This psychopath is a member of the *Obsidian Spear*. He has worked long and hard, abducting and slaughtering those standing in his way, to become Azradel's *aide-de-camp* and confidant. He dreams of using Azradel as a way to gain access to the palace in Citadel and abduct the *Cardinal-Princess*. The end plan is to frame Azradel for her ritual mutilation and horrid death.

C14, AC4, hp 63, ML12; AL C. Cleric of Thanatos. St15, In12, Wi17, Dx10, Co14, Ch16.

**Magical Items:** *Staff of harming, ring of telekinesis.*

## **The Very Reverend Monsignor Parvanel, *Royal Chamberlain of Citadel***

This dear old man is Queen Llynara's most trusted right hand, part seneschal and part prophet. He'd also been her progeny's tutor since their childhood. He has a knack for foreseeing most things at the palace. He's grown aware of Llynroth's schemes to get his friend in bed with the *Cardinal-Princess*, and her own efforts to locate her latest love interest in Weitara. Parvanel is trying to prevent both these plans from succeeding, using indirect approaches. He has also sensed that the head of the royal guard, Monsignor Arthanor, has developed feelings over the years for the queen. More disturbing is Arthanor spying on the prince and princess. He knows the head of the royal guard enough to realize this doesn't bode well. Parvanel worries that his erstwhile pupils might have gotten themselves in more trouble than appears. Naturally, he tries to protect them and straighten out their messes before anyone else learns of them, least of all the queen who's been disturbed lately with troublesome dreams. He has a hunch her nocturnal visions are connected to her offspring and something else, something ominous and crucial for both Bettelyn and the empire. Parvanel has been spending more time than usual in the lower levels of Citadel's library and at the Archonia in Quanfax, researching these dreams, with the help of his sister, the Archbishop of Quanfax.

C17, AC8, hp 52, ML8; AL L. Herald of Elarion. St12, In17, Wi14, Dx15, Co12, Ch18. **Magical Items:** *Censer of controlling air elementals, staff of dispelling.*

**Other notorious people:** The Vicars General of the South, of the North, and of Outremer.

# Bettelyn: Secrets Forgotten

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*From the words of Al-Zuhbaab-the-Keen:*

*This orb, about the size of a melon, appears to be made of layers of ivory and ebony. Intricate carvings cover its entire surface and feature overlapping archons and demonic creatures. After cautious examination, it should be noted that elements can be rotated across the sphere's surface.*

*The number of times each element is shifted determines which power is triggered. A challenge to one's intelligence is required to identify each combination and related effect.*

**Players' Background:** It isn't known who or what created this object, or when. No one has actually identified all of its powers and penalties. The orb was already found once on Mystara, in the early days of Alphatian Landfall. Its last owner discovered that it could grant a *lore* ability strong enough unveil legends about immortals. Alas, a safeguard on the artifact caused a *gate* to open, enabling horrifying beings to enter. Al-Zuhbaab's servant was able to escape and tell the story. When local authorities rushed to the site, they failed to locate the artifact amid the

dwelling's rubble. Neither was Al-Zuhbaab's body ever recovered. What lore he'd unearthed was forever lost. Subsequent research yielded limited information. Investigators concluded that, because of the orb's design, either lawful creatures or chaotic ones could come in, possibly to retrieve the object and destroy its user. It isn't known if any stayed behind.

**The DM's Point of View:** The *Orb of Eternity* is a Greater Artifact with 455 Power Points, using mechanics described in *Wrath of the Immortals*. It has an *obliterate* power (Attack, 90 PP), an *immortal lore* power (Information, 100 PP), a *travel* power (Movement, 80 PP), a *timestop* power (Transformation, 100 PP), and an *inertial control* power (Defense, 85 PP). It recharges at 120 TP per hour.

The true danger with this artifact lies in its handicap and penalties. As a handicap, each time the artifact's powers are triggered, the owner loses a point of both Strength and Constitution. The loss is negated 120 days later if the artifact has been discarded or abandoned. Penalties involve three different effects. If the orb is damaged 50% or more, it *teleports* itself to safety,



including inside solid material since it cannot be damaged in this manner. Any power other than *immortal lore* has a cumulative 10% chance of provoking *amnesia* to its user (no save) when it is used. It wipes out all memories from the moment the user acquired the orb. Once amnesia is triggered, memory loss keeps occurring every following sunrise. This amnesia cannot be cured unless the owner loses/discards the artifact. The third and last penalty may occur when the *immortal lore* power is invoked. A *gate* may open near the user (30% chance +10 per subsequent use) which can only be shut if the artifact is taken through it. If the user is Lawful, one or more black hags enter through the *gate* or greet the user on the other side. If the user is Neutral or

Chaotic, archons appear instead. HD of either creature types should at least match those of the user and anyone else attending. These creatures' mission is to kill the user and retrieve the artifact, after which they return whence they came and hide the orb in some obscure outer plane, preferably one very unfriendly to the user. Having succeeded in their mission, the affected creatures lose all memory of it and the event (no save). If the *gate* remains open for whatever other reason (the artifact and its owner escaped), beasts keep entering now and then.

Using a *lore* spell or any other divination magic cast by a mortal on this artifact will fail unless the spell is cast during a *timestop*. Unveiling any clues about the orb otherwise requires epic quests. The first few clues, unearthed by mystics at the service of the Archbishop of Quanfax, seem to connect with the *Hebdomadea*. The only way to permanently destroy the artifact is to bring it back to its maker.



# Bettelyn: The Grand Reliquary

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This religious center sits on the banks of the Llyn River, just a few miles upstream from Citadel, the capital city of Bettelyn. Its purpose is to display and protect ancient relics of Bettelyn faith. The reliquary marks the center of a gated community of mystics and clerics whose role is to pray to and meditate about The Seven. Chapels, cloisters, steeples, offices, dormitories, kitchens, refectories, workshops, barns, wells, gardens, statues of archons on pedestals, walled orchards and vegetable patches surround the reliquary. Every hour, bells, gongs, and chimes ring, marking the passage of time. Peaceful chanting echoes from the chapels.

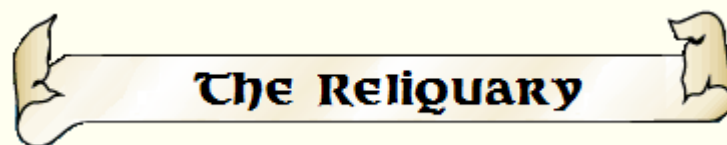
Entrance to the estate is free between dawn and sunset. Daytime passage to chapels, offices, and the reliquary itself is unrestricted. A road leads directly from the main gate to the reliquary. Along the way, faithfuls slowly make their way to the ancient structure, taking three or seven steps, kneeling, and touching the cobblestones with their foreheads before standing up and taking a few more steps. Carved stone bins protected under tiled roofs lie at regular intervals along the road and near chapels, enabling faithfuls to light incense sticks. A thin haze, heavy with the scent of camphor and dragon's blood, floats in the streets at peak time. Faithfuls may take several hours before reaching the reliquary, all under the watchful gaze of mystics assigned to the compound's security. Visitors bearing bulky bags, backpacks, weapons, and armor will be asked to check them at the entrance before proceeding. Any combat equipment must be concealed from sight to get past mystics guarding the entrance.

**Mystics:** My3, AC7, hp 11, MV 140', AT#1 (open hand, baton, or bolas), Dmg d6 or by weapon, ML8; AL L. Adepts of Samarion. St14, In10, Wi13, Dx13, Co12, Ch9.

Six mystic watch the main gate. Twenty more watch the road to the reliquary. Another 74 are spread out in the compound along with a score of clerics of various levels, tending to daily duties. Two out of six mystics carry bolas. The remainder wield white batons equivalent to blackjacks. For every ten mystics involved in a security action, a master will show up. If more than 20 are involved, a cleric will also be present.

**Master Mystic:** My8, AC2, hp 28, MV 190', AT#2 (open hand), Dmg d12+1, ML9; AL L. Witness of Samarion. St15, In12, Wi16, Dx14, Co13, Ch11.

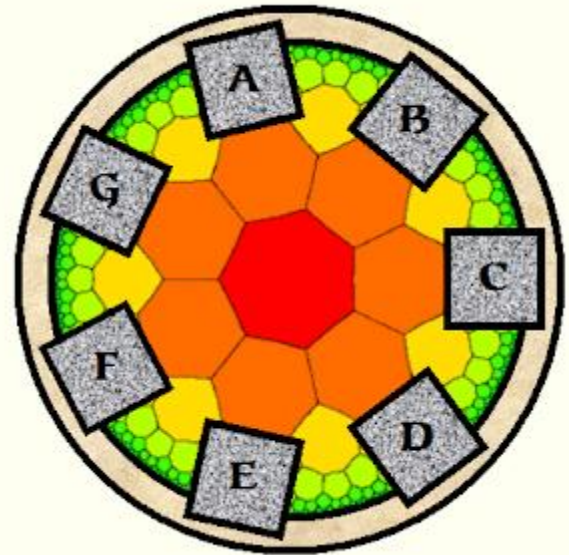
**Cleric Overseer:** C10, AC5, hp 45, MV 120', AT#1 mace +1, Dmg d6+1, ML8; AL L. Messenger of Samarion. St12, In13, Wi17, Dx10, Co11, Ch12. Roll 1d6: *Potion of ESP* (1-2), *Potion of Healing* (3-4), *Potion of Waterbreathing* (5-6).



Seen from the outside, the site features a thirty-foot-tall, gate-less, circular wall and seven, evenly-spaced towers topped with a glass-like structure. During daytime, simply touching the wall will *teleport* Lawful visitors inside, at the center point between the towers (and vice versa

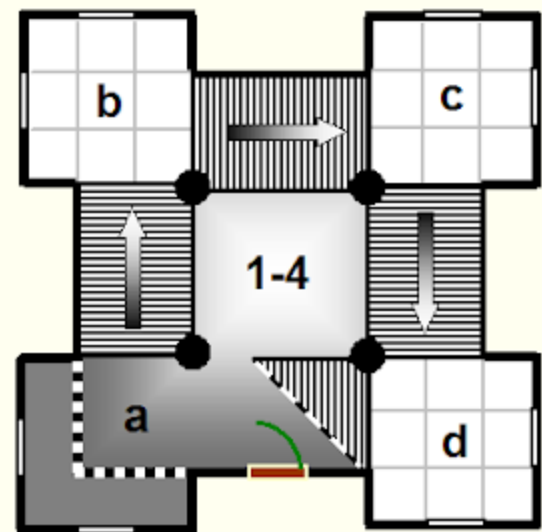
when coming out). Those who aren't of the proper ethos will be *teleported* outside the compound instead, about 3d10 feet above the nearby river. This magical effect is limited after sunset to bearers of a medallion of Samarion. Lower-level mystics or clerics only have a 10% chance of wearing one. All upper ranks do bear medallions.

The open courtyard within the wall is covered with glazed tiles laid out in concentric patterns of heptagons and hexagons. Smooth and featureless white marble coats the towers. Large stained-glass windows appear at each angle, marking the locations of three intermediary floors. A bronze-plated door adorned with archon carvings allows access to each tower's ground floor. At night, the carved archons seem to be holding fast the doors' edges—these portals are *wizard-locked* until sunrise. Although relatively crowded with wide-eyed visitors marveling at the relics inside the towers, the site remains deserted after sunset. Mystics will check the towers at sunset to verify everyone left before locking the doors with a simple command word. A Messenger of Samarion will thereafter disable the wall's daytime *teleport* feature and head to a chapel for the vespers.



## TOWERS OF THE SEVEN

**Scale: 1 square = 10 ft.** These towers are identical: one ground floor with a magical bronze door (Area 1), three intermediary upper floors (Areas 2-4) and one top level enclosed within *walls of force* shaped to resemble an Eiffel-like, glass-and-metal structure (Area 5). Each stairs segment, 30' long by 20' wide, rises about ten feet above the previous, giving the stairs a gentle angle. Area 5 therefore lies about 160 feet above ground. Stone pillars stand at the stairs' four corners. Stained-glass, ogive-shaped windows measure 10' wide by 20' high. The first row sits about 45' above ground, 85' for the next row, and 125' for the last. They are illusions designed to look like windows on both sides, reacting in accord with sunlight or moonlight. As a convention for this adventure, arrows on the map point toward the tops of the stairs. Doors are about three feet wide by six feet tall.



**Tower A:** Elarion; **B:** Ardonyl; **C:** Astafiel; **D:** Horana; **E:** Sabbaiah; **F:** Eyoth; **G:** Samarion.

## Area 1: Archon's Landing

The bronze door displays a representation of the corresponding archon, as described in the original Bettelilyn article. Companions of the Faith should be able to identify immortal archons. Trying to bash down the door incurs 30% chance per round of alerting mystics outside the structure; a Turn later they will mount a concerted action against the transgressors (30 mystics, 3 masters, and a Messenger of Samarion, in addition to all those waiting outside).

At the center of the ground floor stands a bronze statue of the appropriate archon, 16' tall and on top a 6' high plinth. It is a bronze golem which activates when someone breaks through the door or when the tingle of small bells echoes inside the tower (see Areas 2-4). The bronze golem attacks anyone moving. The stone plinth may *levitate*, enabling the golem to quietly reach as far up as Area 4. It may then step off the levitating plinth and pursue transgressors upstairs to the top level (Area 5). It ignores foes who drop to the ground and remain motionless. If all targets are prone, the bronze golem keeps watching until relieved by a Messenger of Samarion (2d4 rounds after the golem begins its vigil or after its destruction).

**Bronze Golem:** AC0, HD 20\*\*\*, hp 90, MV 240' (80'), AT#1 fist, Dmg 3d10 first + 1d10 heat, Save F10, ML12; AL N. **Special Defense:** fiery blood—save vs. death ray or take 2d6 points of damage when scoring a hit with an edged weapon; immune to fire-based attacks. Unless *disintegrated* or *wished* away, the golem regenerates an hour later. If alone at the time, it returns to Area 1 and resumes its watch.

The ground floor features mosaics on the walls and floors representing scenes from the appropriate archon's lore. It is otherwise empty, including its four corner areas.

## Areas 1b-4d: Display Galleries

The seven towers feature four exhibition galleries on each of their intermediary levels. Corner areas (20'x20') can be accessed directly from the stairs. *Forcefields* segregate 10'-wide strips recessed along the external walls, protecting exhibited contents from visitors. Using a *dimension door* spell to get past will fail, resulting in the transgressor appearing instead outside the tower. The sole source of light comes from the illusory windows during daytime or if the moon is up. Small glints should reveal the presence of three dozen small bells imbedded in each *forcefield*. They will drop to the floor if the *forcefield* is *dispelled*, alerting the bronze golem in Area 1 below. *Detect magic* will reveal the presence of *forcefields* but will mask any magical aura within the secured areas. *Forcefields* reset 1 Turn after being *dispelled*, along with bells if still lying around nearby. Naturally, Bettelilyn's ecclesia will be on the lookout for thieves soon after they discover missing items.



After sunset and until sunrise, visitors should sense odd phenomena, as the towers are thoroughly haunted. These should be treated as inoffensive but colorful random encounters (25% chance per viewing area visited; roll d20):

- 01-04** Cold spots, breath condensation (1 Turn, 20' radius)
- 05-08** Unexplained drafts (will snuff out any non-magical light)
- 09-12** Knocks, thumps, footsteps elsewhere in the tower
- 13-14** Area of darkness (1 Turn, 20' radius)
- 15-16** Whispers calling a visitor's name; moving shadows
- 17-18** Hallucinations (1d4 rounds, related to a displayed object)
- 19-20** Random objects surreptitiously taken from their owners and placed alongside displayed items, etc.

Beyond bizarre manifestations, unnatural residents do not materialize unless an object on display is taken to another level of the tower or outside (30% chance). The stolen item determines which entity may be roused (see D&D Rules Cyclopeda). If objects are removed during daytime, these entities may awake after sunset and search for their stolen belongings. Each hour until sunrise, an entity has a base 15% chance of catching up with thieves, +5% per hour. The process resumes the following night (starting over with basic chances), until the entity is destroyed or the object returned to the tower. If an entity can touch its stolen object, they both vanish (the object reappears in the tower).

- Type A:** Apparition
- Type B:** Shade
- Type C:** Poltergeist (shoots bells lying on the floor)
- Type D:** Ghost, Neutral
- Type E:** Ghost, Chaotic
- Type F:** Revenant

**Apparition:** AC0, HD 10\*\*\*, hp 45, MV 180' (60'), AT# 2 claws, Dmg d6+2/d6+2, Save M10, ML10; AL C. **Special Attacks:** *fear, entrancing mist*, attacks at +4 to hit. **Special Defenses:** *ethereal* at first, +1 or better weapon to hit, may save against a "T" result when turned.

**Shade:** AC0, HD 11\*\*\*, hp 50, MV 120' (40'), AT# 1 dagger, Dmg 3d4, Save T11, ML9; AL C. **Special Attacks:** 90% surprise odds, *lethal fear*. **Special Defenses:** *ethereal* at first, +1 or better weapon to hit, may save against a "T" result when turned.

**Poltergeist:** AC-1, HD 12\*\*\*\*, hp 54, MV 60' (20'), AT#2 small bells, Dmg 1 + aging 10 years, Save F12, ML11; AL C. **Special Attacks:** *ectoplasmic net, gaze, aging*. **Special Defense:** +2 or better weapon to hit, may save against a "D" result when turned, immune to all but evil-affecting spells.

**Ghost:** AC-2, HD 14\*\*\*\*, hp 63, MV 90' (30'), AT# 1 touch + 1 gaze, Dmg *paralysis* + aging 1d4x10 years, Save F14, ML10; AL Any. **Special Attacks:** *magic jar, ectoplasmic net, gaze, aging*. **Special Defense:** +2 or better weapon to hit, may save against a "D" result when turned, immune to all but evil-affecting spells.

**Revenant:** AC-3, HD 18\*\*\*\*, hp 81, MV 120' (40'), AT# 2 claws/1 bite, Dmg 2d4/2d4/1d4+2, Save F18, ML10; AL C. **Special Attacks:** 50% surprise odds, all attacks bear lethal poison, *withers consumables, paralyzes plants and insects*, 60' leap + automatic hits on first three attacks. **Special Defense:** +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to spells 1st-3rd level, may save against a "D" result when turned; comes back 1d4 Turns later if turned. **Spells:** *darkness, silence 15' radius, cause disease, animate dead, finger of death* cast as a C16. Can summon 1d4 specters each night.

## Displayed Objects

Two random lists help populate this exhibition. Although magical, none of the items in the primary list are true *artifacts*, as described in the D&D game. They are nonetheless priceless relics having belonged to personalities of Bettelilyn's past. Command words are never listed in the items' descriptions. A secondary list provides other mundane objects also present in the displays. Area 1a in all towers is empty.

### Table 1 -- Featured Objects (d00)

- **01-03 Acorns (type B):** *Capharnaai Forever Acorns*; after these seven acorns are buried, oak trees grow, one foot per hour until mature. The original acorns then fall off.
- **04-05 Antlers headdress (type B):** *Baardur's Ceremonial Headdress*; the item enables the wearer to control woodland beings once per day, as the potion. Over time, transforms the wearer into a stag.
- **06-08 Bear trap (type A):** *Ariocheel's Jaws of Death*; when set, becomes invisible. Anyone trapped in the steel jaws is *paralyzed*. A Strength of 18 or better is needed to pry the jaws open.
- **09 Beating heart (type E):** *Kezioth's Trade*; the heart of the previous person to have handled this magical jar with bare hands lies inside (at present the Vicar General of Outremer). A handler is immune to non-magical damage while its heart lies inside. If someone else handles the jar, hearts are swapped accordingly. If the jar is destroyed, its last handler dies. If the latter somehow perishes, its beating heart withers and vanishes. Kezioth was the jar's creator and its first handler.
- **10 Belt buckle (type C):** *The Warning of Jakkodaiah*; the belt buckle radiates an eerie amber aura within 100' of enchanted creatures or creatures from another plane of existence, which includes all levels of this tower.
- **11-12 Boots, leather (type C):** *Fenezer's Fancy Footwear*; when worn, the boots may leave any footprints that their owner desires, including animal or monstrous, facing forward or backward.
- **13-15 Carpet, Bellissarian (type A):** *Salohirah's Shaggy Concealment*; when unrolled the shaggy rug can be used to completely mask an opening no more than 10'x10'. The rug's patterns take on the appearance of surrounding material to hide a door, a window, a pit, or any other flat section. The rug clings to vertical or inverted surfaces. Touching the carpet will reveal its nature.
- **16 Censor, brass (type C):** *Belnagor's Serene Communion*; when incense is burned inside this fist-sized, ball-shaped incensor, all living beings within 30' radius become incorporeal along with their belongings and are drawn inside the object unless they save

vs. dragon breath. They are released the next time the object is used. A 31' pole is available to keep the censor at a safe distance when using it.

- **17-19 Chalice, silver (type A):** *Naaromit's Fortitude*; any beverage drunk from the chalice restores magically drained strength.
- **20-21 Dice, animated (type A):** *Abbadez's Uncanny Luck*; the display includes a long shelf running along the entire length of the walls. Two dice continually tumble back and forth. Their owner can mentally control their scores, although after each use, a Wisdom Check is needed to avoid being possessed by the vice of gambling.
- **23-24 Dirt, black (type B):** *Abbreviated Interment of Ullathustra*; the dirt sits inside a small sealed jar. When thrown at an undead, the dirt creates a shallow grave that engulfs the undead and closes upon it (no save; single use only). The undead emerges from the grave when someone disturbs the dirt once more. The dirt comes from the hidden tomb of Ullathustra. The jar is magical and needed to collect more dirt.
- **25 Embalming tool set (type B):** *Apharatea's Ablative Apparatus*; their last owner attracts undead until the tools are used to remove viscera and brain matter from a live subject; in particular, mummies will attack the last owner with a +2 to hit bonus.
- **26 Eyes, animated (type E):** *The Eyes of Bethiakaan*; these disembodied eyes float inside a jar of bluish liquid, observing anyone moving by. Staring into these eyes after sunset swaps them with those of the viewer. The latter can see normally through the newly acquired eyes but also through the eyes now in the jar. New eyes in the jar may be swapped again if someone else stares into them. When it is found, the jar contains Bethiakaan's undead eyes. If his ghost is destroyed, his undead eyes melt. If the jar is destroyed, the eyes inside melt as well. If/when Bethiakaan's ghost materializes, it bears dark pools in lieu of eyes. It can only see through its undead eyes.
- **27 Feather, black (type F):** *Shiboroam's Lost Love*; the feather contains the life force of Shiboroam's bride, Demosebah. Its sole power is to allow its owner to sense the location of Demosebah's remains (in a dragon's lair in Randel).
- **28 Flagon, copper (type D):** *Ebbenaim's Last Wish*; the flagon contains a dose of elixir that, if imbibed, replaces one's blood with tree sap. It doubles the drinker's longevity or undoes magical aging damage but requires the latter to grow roots at night to feed. Roots retract at sunrise. Normal food and drink are no longer of use.
- **29-30 Font, carved alabaster (type B):** *The Cleansing of Obbasimous*; this ornate font transforms any liquid poured into it into unsoiled, crystal clear, holy water.
- **31-32 Font, carved malachite (type C):** *Zechabbabel's Fount of Life*; a nymph carved from a red stone stands in the middle, holding a large ruby. If anyone takes it, the gem vanishes, and the desecrator, becomes immune to natural or magical aging. The latter never bleeds from wounds, but a point of damage from the first injury sustained each day never heals. The desecrator's blood instead appears in the font. The ruby returns when the desecrator dies. Zechabbabel was a necromancer.
- **33 Funeral Urn (type E):** *Ashes of Nehami-the-Twisted*; knocks and muffled calls come from the urn. If the urn is opened, ashes soar and spiral up to Area 5 (whence they cannot escape). Meanwhile, the one who opened the urn turns into ashes and is sucked inside (no save). The only way to swap the two is with a "D" result on a Turning attempt upon the ashes, or if Nehami is defeated later in his ghost form.

- **34-36 Gauntlets, grayish leather (type A):** *Calcabbulon's Handy Succor*; these gloves are made of troll hide. When both are worn, they bond with the owner's hands, providing a *regenerative* ability (1 pt per Turn) as long as the owner isn't killed outright. The gauntlets enable lost limbs and other organs to regrow as long as the loss wasn't lethal. Over time, the owner's skin turns gray-green and warty, resulting in a permanent loss of Charisma (-1d4 each time a new level is gained, down to a minimum of 5). Hands must be hacked off to get rid of the gauntlets, short of the owner's death.
- **37-38 Gold dragon scales (type B):** *Zeraphalidor's Peaceful Dream*; this section of gold dragon skin puts someone (up to 20 HD) into a deep, catatonic-like sleep if worn or otherwise used as a cover (no save; mindless or undead creatures are immune).
- **39 Great bow (type D):** *Tyraoth's Truth*; this great bow requires a St18 to string and draw. This bow has twice a long bow's range; a shot at short range inflicts double damage.
- **40 Great helm (type E):** *Danarkon's Ineffable Glory*; this winged helm confers a +2 bonus to AC and the ability to summon and command 1d4 rocs, once per adventure. The wearer is automatically possessed (no save) if Danarkon comes to retrieve it.
- **41 Grimoire, leather (type F):** *Tammeliah's Grimoire and Book of Recipes*; is a repository of potion recipes and common brewing processes. It enables a wizard to make potions as if five levels higher. If not yet roused, Tammeliah may come to retrieve her grimoire each time it is used (25% chance when opened or when its pages are flipped if the book remained open since its last use).
- **42-44 Hammer (type A):** *Ebendalet's Earcrusher*; this +2 magical warhammer will destroy any common, non-enchanted door or gate with one hit. It does however produce a clap of thunder (save vs. paralysis or become permanently deaf).
- **45 Hand, mummified (type C):** *Remains of Tanachmorai*; a rune on its palm enables the one who speaks it to command the undead appendage. An order may only involve an action lasting a Turn or less, after which the hand returns to its master. The hand relies on *levitation* to move and fetch or manipulate small items. AC3, HD 5+1\*\*, hp 30, MV 60' (20'), AT# 1 grasp, Dmg 1d12 + disease, Save F5, ML n/a; AL C. Special Attack: choking grasp + *disease* (roll a Constitution check each round or lose consciousness; the hand lets go and flees if it sustains 20 pts of damage in a single round; rotting disease). Special Defense: *fear*, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells. St 18, In 6, Wi 6, Dx 18, Co n/a, Ch n/a. Can be turned as a mummy. Can only be repaired with reversed *healing* spells.
- **46-48 Harp, ivory and gold (type A):** *Fortunata's Divine Harmony*; if played the harp reveals to all within earshot the presence of invisible or ethereal beings. It also rouses all undead whose possession were disturbed or taken away (such as those from this tower), including Fortunata's own manifestation. The harp also reveals ectoplasmic manifestations causing the noises in the tower and random displacement of objects.
- **49-50 Hookah, golden (type B):** *Shaiphereth's Diffuse Divagation*; if any material is smoked with this hookah, the user's incorporeal consciousness may safely explore the surroundings for 1 Turn before regaining consciousness. Due to residual dizziness, the smoker's AC incurs a -2 penalty for the remainder of the day.
- **51 Horse barding and horseshoes (Type C):** *Gorganna's Zephyreal Trappings*; if fit to a warhorse, enables the mount to fly as a hippogriff when the command word is

spoken. It also confers the mount a +2 bonus to AC. In presence of Gorganna's ghost, the horse becomes a nightmare under her control.

- **52 Hunting horn (type C):** *Dalberron's Great Hunt*; the horn summons 1d6 hellhounds that will obey the owner for one combat encounter before vanishing. If Dalberron is present, the hellhounds will obey the ghost instead.
- **53-55 Inkwell (type A):** *Rakkam-nezar's Dismal Deliberations*; this magical inkwell generates a black ink swirling with shadows and tiny furtive glances. Its vapors form monstrous, deathly faces for a round after opening the inkwell. Only the writer of words inscribed with this ink can decipher their true meaning. To others, the writing seems to be about something of great interest to them at the time, but ultimately false and potentially dangerous. The ink loses its properties if poured out of the inkwell. Scrolls and spellbooks may be written with this ink.
- **56-58 Invisible cord (type A):** *Horem-Hod's Unseen Device*; one can only surmise the presence of this invisible and weightless rope from the shadow it casts. When left alone, one frayed end of the coiled rope behaves like an upright snake. On command, it can shoot forth up to 30' and fasten itself around an object or attack someone. The rope may be used to slow, entangle, or delay non-corporeal creatures as a whip would, except for Horem-Hod's own manifestations which can control the rope.
- **59-60 Lantern, iron (type B):** *Ezhar-Hashai's True Path*; when lit and once per day, the lantern produces a brilliant flash in presence of a powerful evil. The light damages all evil creatures in sight to suffer 6d6 points of damage (save vs. spell for half damage).
- **61 Libram, red leather (type E):** *Lazarath Book of Ancestors*; if a wizard or a cleric reads the book, as little as just a few words, translucent, peaceful souls begin appearing around the reader, at the rate of one per round. If the book is shut, thunder shakes the tower, and the souls turn into angry wraiths. If the book is left open and the "ancestors" are offered gifts (100 gp per soul, immediately consumed) they leave and the book shuts itself.
- **62-64 Medallion (type A):** *The Light of Eziggith*; the medallion protects the owner from physical attacks by undead creatures except for Eziggith's manifestation.
- **65-67 Mirror (type A):** *The Eye of Myrialath*; the true nature of anyone standing before this tall mirror is revealed, including possessing spirits, doppelgangers, polymorphed beings, members of the Obsidian Spear, Watchers of Masauwu, etc. (except for creatures unable to bear a reflection).
- **68-69 Pearl, spinning (type B):** *Ufuzaiyah's Insightful Gift*; a pearl spins continually inside a Ufuzaiyah's old clay cup. If taken from the cup, the pearl imbeds itself in the owner's forehead, imparting *clairvoyance* ability (as the potion). If removed, magically or carved out, the owner remains blind.
- **70-72 Pile of gold (type A):** *Zacchaeus's Plentiful Hoard*; about 1,000 gp sit on Zacchaeus's own desk. The coins spill onto the floor when someone watches them, roll randomly about the secured area before crossing through the *forcefield* and dropping all around the watcher's feet. If picked up and placed in any container other than a *bag of holding*, they *teleport* to the desk 1d4 hours later.
- **73 Prayer book (type C):** *Ichabor's Exalted Words*; when read from this book, the prayers enable a cleric to Turn Undead as if three experience levels higher, save for Ichabor's manifestation.



- **74-76 Quill (type A):** *Drawkcab of Pahath-Aram*; this quill is used to inscribe common or magical writing spelled backward, or an inverted map. When formed on a scroll, sigils or drawings vanish and reappear tattooed on the writer's chest. If read with a mirror, the writing vanishes once more. Up to three spells can be written in this manner, or one elaborate map.
- **77 Ring, carved amethyst (type F):** *Ibsom's Ring of Rings*; once per adventure, this ring may be touched upon another and duplicate the latter's powers. The effect lasts for the remainder of the adventure. The same ring cannot be copied more than once; only one ring may be copied during an adventure. Any time the *Ring of Rings* loses its duplicated enchantment, this power is transferred to a master ring. It is an immaterial band at the hand of Ibsom's manifestation. Ibsom's master ring is limited to +5 bonuses, and only one of its accumulated powers can be invoked in any given combat round after which it vanishes. It is rumored to connect with two other rings.
- **78-79 Robe, dark gray (type B):** *Oziel's Shadowy Feat*; on command and once a day, it enables the owner to become incorporeal and create swirls of darkness whipping around the robe. The swirls inflict 3d6 damage (save for half damage) within 10' radius for 1d4+1 rounds after which the owner regains his/her physical form and blends into any shadows within 30' (as a thief hiding in shadows). While incorporeal, movement is restricted to 90' (30'). Oziel's manifestation is immune to the robe's effects.
- **80-81 Sacred oil (type C):** *Searing Halo of Nehusim*; this glass container is filled with a glowing liquid. If exposed to air, the fine oil inside ignites, inflicting 5d6 damage within 10' radius (save for half). During the next 4 rounds, the blazing puddle expands another 10' radius, inflicting one less die of damage each time, until it extinguishes itself (single use item). Anyone coated with this substance suffers the stated damage each round. The burning oil cannot be extinguished by any means. If the container is thrown in the presence of Nehusim's manifestation, the latter will catch it and leave.
- **82-84 Sandals, silver (type A):** *Kebzaim Brilliant Stride*; once per day, on command, the sandals enable the wearer to produce and aim a beam of light 360' long. The wearer may become incorporeal and travel the beam up to its end point, traversing any intervening surface or opening permeable to light.
- **85 Shield (type D):** *Macchadan's Answer*; each time a physical melee attack against the owner fails while the latter uses the shield, 1 pt of damage is stored within the shield. When stored damage matches the user's experience level, the damage is released as a kinetic blast at a single attacker facing the shield (save for half) or as a half-damage cone 20'x10' (save for one quarter). Macchadan's manifestation is able to drain and release as its own whatever damage is stored in the shield.
- **86 Skull, crystal (type E):** *Galabar's Vacuous Regard*; staring into the skull's empty eye sockets enables the owner to scry, as a crystal ball, up to a century into the past. Each gaze incurs a 10% chance of the user being randomly *teleported* to an undesirable place visited within the past day (from the user's point of view).
- **87 Staff (type C):** *Laamuel's Equitable Share*; once a day, on command, this +1 magical staff tallies all damage sustained by foes and allies within a 60' radius and alters it to an averaged out amount (no save), resulting in some gaining or losing hit points. If used in presence of Laamuel's manifestation, the effect is negated and Laamuel actually heals itself 1d4 hp per foe and at their expense (no save).

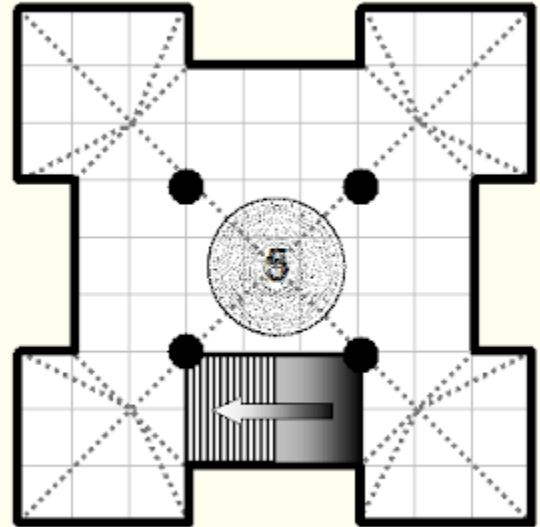
- **88 Steel plate (type E):** *Tubalrah's Second Chance*; this magical +3 armor negates damage from any single attack reducing the wearer's hit points to zero or below. When this power is activated, the armor drains 10% of the wearer's present experience total, and leaves the wearer with a single hp. The effect can only be activated once more after the user regains maximum hit points. If Tubalrah's manifestation is present, negated damage *heals* the undead.
- **89-91 Stuffed stag (type A):** *Last Quarry of Nevrahim the Hunter*; if activated, summons a ghostly stag that can be mounted to travel through woods unseen, unheard, and untracked. If Nevrahim is present, the stag takes the rider to the ethereal plane.
- **92-93 Sword, normal (type B):** *Japhet's Fateful Blade*; half of the damage rolled (rounded down) inflicted by this +2 magical weapon heals its owner's wounds. In the presence of Jahaphet's manifestation, the sword inflicts damage to its owner instead (full score rolled, no save), although delayed 4 rounds later.
- **94 Sword, two-handed (type F):** *Adbeejah's Soul-Splitter*; this +1 magical weapons earns an additional +1 damage bonus with any single attack inflicting 8 points of damage or more (unmodified roll), up to +5. At what would otherwise be +6, the sword drains one experience level or one monster HD (live-blooded beings only; saving throw negates). Earned bonuses last until the end of the combat encounter. Veins grow on the blade as it gains strength. Level drains either heal Adbeejah's manifestation or enable it to earn extra HD until the next sunrise.
- **95 Tent (type C):** *Yashti's Final Resting Place*; the tent drains a point of Strength from its occupants, per hour spent sleeping inside. At zero Strength, occupants die and their lifeforce strengthen Yashti's ghost.
- **96 Trumpet, bronze (type E):** *The Voice of Ramshadim*; the trumpet opens a portal to the plane of The Seven. Its use was forbidden and its owner stricken down for transgressing the law (25% chance of a guardian archon noticing).
- **97 Unicorn horn (type D):** *Horn of Samaphim*; if waived over the remains of an evil beast, the horn raises the creature fully and changes its alignment to Lawful (incorporeal creatures are immune). If Neutral, the revived creature also becomes a Companion of Astafiel. If the creature was Lawful, the body isn't revived, but the soul departs to serve Astafiel, regardless of the manner in which death occurred. Samaphim's manifestation is a Companion of Astafiel and will not allow the same party to use the horn more than once. Samaphim is an extension of Astafiel and cannot be permanently destroyed.
- **98-00 White plume (type A):** *Pasgarath Owned It*; when worn, the plume confers an extra +2 (+10%) bonus to Charisma checks. If the Charisma check fails, however, the wearer suffers instead a temporary -2 Charisma penalty (until the next sunrise, no save)

## **Table 2 – Accompanying Mundane Objects (d00)**

- **01-04** Boar's head, stuffed owlbear, spotted jackalope pelt, lion headdress
- **05-08** Large censor, wood carving of Ardoryl, clay bowl and lump of soap
- **09-12** Bloody bag, smoked meat, hunting knife, hunting traps and snares
- **13-16** Crude wooden altar, wooden bowls, tinder box
- **17-20** Collection of silverware and vermeil plates
- **21-24** Backpack, iron pan, waterskin, bedroll, a coil of rope
- **25-28** Potted rosebush, tree stump, small jars filled with spices, powdered mushrooms, and other crushed roots
- **29-32** Black cloak, feathered hat, snowshoes, and a silk mask
- **33-36** Spyglass, eye patch, a porcelain eye, a bag of beads, a jar of pickled beholder eyestalks, and a magnifier
- **37-39** Wicked-looking dog sled, whip, eight spiked leather collars, burned bones
- **40-43** Leather jerkin, leather gloves, necklace of bear fangs, collection of hunting arrows
- **44-47** Tapestry representing a woman with a blackbird, cradle draped in black veil, rocking horse, golden cage, whistle
- **48-51** False beard, walking stick, assorted set of silver cups, old coat
- **52-55** Collection of manuscript scrolls on the history of people and nations, bust of a past queen, tapestry representing Alphatia's Landfall
- **56-59** Eagle-shaped brooch, unidentifiable clockwork device, crystal cube, necklace of praying beads
- **60-62** Set of twelve miniature warriors, prayer wheel, lump of coal, soiled bandages, war drum
- **63-65** Ebon comb, brush, black lace mantilla, vial of perfume, small music box
- **66-68** Two silver candelabra, wax candles, spectacles fitted with smoked lenses, jar with balm
- **69-71** Pillow, sculpted egg, set of false teeth, leather bag
- **72-74** Doorknob, large iron key, jar of dust, painter's palette
- **75-77** Six black candles, crucible, obsidian box, jar of nail clippings
- **78-81** Old shirt, pair of torn socks, wooden paddle, crystal goblet, porcelain chamber pot, silver pitcher
- **82-85** Blacksmith hammer, tongues, bellows, iron chains, bucket of nails, sack of coal
- **86-88** Clay figurines, crossbow and quarrels, red velvet cloak, wolfsbane
- **89-91** Manual of theology, silver key, cleric pectoral
- **92-94** Locket, makeup, ivory comb
- **95-97** Silk screen, spinning wheel, golden wig
- **98-00** Tibia, ribs, skull, pile of teeth, shroud, fake partridge on a potted pear tree

## Area 5: Top Floor

Stairs lead to from Area 4d to 5. The bronze golem from Area 1 will not follow the party to the top floor. Supported by four pillars near the center, a steel structure holds what looks like glass panes (*walls of force*) enclosing the terrace. A low stone wall, about 4' high, marks the edges of the stairwell, overlooking the stairs. At the center of each corner sections, (which would be areas 5a-5d) stands a mirror-like, featureless humanoid statue on top of a foot-high plinth. A circle with alien writings is engraved in the stone floor between the pillars.



The magical circle is a *teleporter* to area 6. The statues are silveons, modified reflectors (inspired from *AC9 Creature Catalog*). Their role is to prevent intruders from tampering with the magical circle and entering the reliquary's lower levels. Stepping past the stairs without brandishing the appropriate immortal's symbol (at least the lead person for a party), touching the circle, entering it without the proper password, or throwing something inside will activate the four silveons. Appearing in the circle without brandishing the appropriate symbol will also trigger the silveons. Anyone in the circle is *teleported* when the command is spoken. The circle is large enough for a party of adventurers. The command word to activate the *teleporter* is the immortal's name.

The password to enter the circle is based on clues engraved behind the silveons' plinths. Engraved stone slabs radiate magic if detected. The clues include four numbers, one of which is the password. The solution requires adding up the second digit of three numbers to find the fourth. Numbered clues are, however, not listed in any order and change at every sunrise, or when someone gives a wrong answer, or a round after someone enters the circle. Here are examples:

- 15, 17, 22, 14—the password is 14.
- 16, 27, 13, 15—the password is 15.
- 21, 15, 26, 12—the password is 12.
- 15, 18, 23, 16—the password is 16.

**Silveon\*** (4): AC0, HD 3-9\*\*\*\*, hp 14-40, MV 0' (0'), AT# 1 energy bolt, Dmg 12-36, Save F3-9, ML12; AL N. **Special Attacks:** bolt of energy. **Special Defenses:** reflect spells and attacks, regeneration.

Silveons are enchanted statues made of mirror-like material. When they attack a foe, silveons cast through their eyes bolts of energy 5' wide and as long as ten times their HD. Their heads can rotate 360 degrees if needed. Silveons can detect *invisible* creatures using infrared (heat aura).

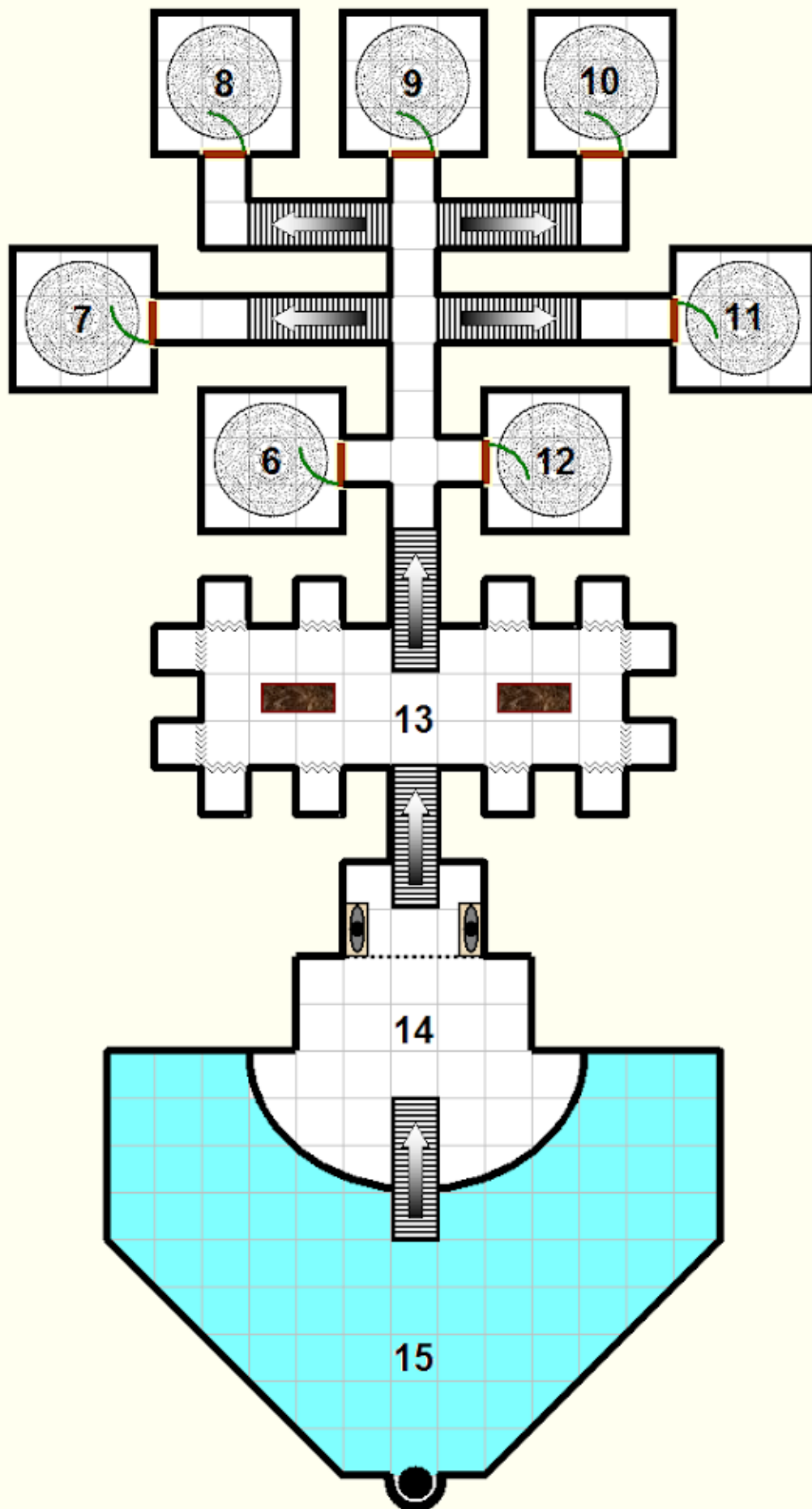
Silveons pick the closest available target and require a hit roll. If an attack succeeds, the energy bolt arcs, hitting another target in the same or adjacent space (if any), and so on until grounding itself in the metal beams above or in the floor when it reaches its maximum range. Arcing may possibly lead a bolt down the stairs and around corners. Damage from a bolt is equal to four times the silveon's HD (save vs. wands for half damage). A bolt will split if two or more targets are equidistant from the previous one in its path; reduce damage 3 points each time a bolt splits (down to a minimum of 3). If an attack misses, it hits a metal beam or a wall of force directly, producing vast amounts of harmless sparks, like a Tesla coil gone haywire.

Silveons automatically turn all spells upon their casters (including attempts to dispel magic), save for a *wish*. All physical damage is automatically reflected upon the attackers, save for magical plusses. Successful attacks provoke visible ripples on a silveon's surface, all traces vanishing within a few rounds. Silveons are, however, subject to suffering damage from their own energy bolts. Since they stand sixty feet from each other, bolts could arc to another silveon if five targets are lined up between them (presuming silveons have at least 6 HD). A mirror can reflect energy bolts, provided the character holds his/her action for the round and rolls a higher score than the silveon when targeted. If successful and roll was good enough for AC0, then the bolt hits the silveon. Dexterity modifiers are allowable. Note that silveons will not target someone with a mirror who stands 20' away or less.

If reduced to zero hit point or less, silveons lose their reflectivity and deactivate. They can otherwise only be destroyed with a blackball or a *wish* spell. Silveon regeneration only begins when a statue is reduced to 0 hit points or less and accrues at the rate of 1 hit point per Turn (6 points per hour). If all of them are knocked out, the statues will not reset until all four are back up to full hit points.

## **Areas 6-12: Underground Terminals**

These 30x30' cells are destination points for the *teleporters* in Area 5 on top of Towers A-G. A globe enchanted with a *continual light* hovers near the ceiling. Magical circles in these cells aren't "password-protected," although they do require a command word (the corresponding immortal's name) to activate. Whichever tower PC's visited last will connect with Area 6. Remaining *teleporters* connect with the other towers, following a clockwork scheme. Scribble the names of the corresponding immortals on the map. White robes from Area 13 will *teleport* back to the chests where they came from if PCs try to leave with them. A simple, unlocked door leads to the hallways beyond. Hallways remain unlit.



Two other NPCs are prowling nearby, avoiding contact at all costs until PCs locate the Orb of Eternity if this was why they came here. They are sister Jezabioth and Corybemus/Farraxillion. Both remain *invisible* (Corybemus has 3-5 spells, levels 1-4, including multiple *invisibility* and *polymorph self* spells), waiting for PCs to unveil what they're looking for. Jezabioth will be first to intervene and try to steal it before PCs can exit the reliquary. Corybemus will be next, possibly attempting to take it away during the PCs' sleep once outside the underground level. He will not take the chance of his draconic nature being associated with his existence as the Archbishop of Magisteria. If he appears, it will be either as another polymorphed creature (a tabi-like winged ape or a large golden eagle, for example) or his dragon form (never as the archbishop). If out of spells, Corybemus, will leave and wait for another time to acquire the artifact. If Jezabioth steals it first, Corybemus will find her and kill her and the soul eater possessing her fairly soon afterward. Any undead tracking the PCs may show up at any time since daylight does not rule the underground.

## Area 13: Changing Rooms

The chamber lies sideways about 90'x30'. A series of bead curtains mask changing rooms from the main chamber. Two large chests sit in the middle of the room, filled with long, white, hooded robes. A faint bluish gleams emanates from the stone floor. When PCs first peer into the room from the stairs, one of the bead curtains clatters as one of the two *invisible* NPCs leaves and quietly heads down toward Area 14.

The changing rooms are 10'x10' and are fitted with a bench and coat hooks on the three walls. A small stone hand facing upward juts out from the middle wall, underneath a coat hook. If anyone leaves anything on the bench or on the hooks, and touches the hand, all items vanish and a golden token appears in the hand. If the token is removed and returned to this hand (or another in any of the changing rooms) the stored items reappear in exchange for the token.

The chests are heavily built and studded with metal fittings. If magic is detected, they will radiate an aura. The chests and the robes have actually been imbued with a permanent *fire resistance* dweomers.

## Area 14: Upper Landing

Stairs from Area 13 lead to a chamber 30'x20'. Two mirror-like statues stand along opposite walls, small flames shooting from their eyes. A shimmer opposite from the stairs' landing may infer the way is blocked (*wall of force*).

The mirror-like statues are somewhat similar to the silveons in Area 6. If anyone attempts to step past the *wall of force* without wearing a white robe, the two statues produce a *fireball* with enough HD to match the highest-level creature in Area 14 or on the stairs to Area 13. Save for half damage. The statues will continue to produce *fireballs* each round until everyone not wearing white robes retreats to Area 13 fully. The *wall of force* regenerates each round if *dispelled*. The white robes enable their owners to walk through the *wall of force*.

The area beyond is a large dock-like, semicircular stone platform, seventy feet across at its widest point. It rises 90' above the platform. It is unlit, save for faint star-like dots on the vault. Steps lead down to a pool. Near the stairs, cabbage-sized stone balls are piled into two small pyramids. These balls feature intricate eye and star carvings. One of the stones is missing from the top of a pyramid. Within 1d4 rounds of reaching that point, the missing ball appears on top of the pile. It is dripping wet.

## Area 15: The Pool

Gazing down into the water should reveal small star-like points gleaming deep below the surface, perhaps reflections from the vault above. Careful observation should unveil two more pieces of information. The water must have been disturbed recently, judging from ripples across its surface. Two dark shadows, one small, the other large, briefly obscure the star-like pattern below.

The small shape is one of the two NPCs swimming deeper into the water. The other is a creature guarding the pool. At the bottom of the pool, about 60' deep, lies a permanent *reverse gravity* effect. There is no solid "bottom" per se—the pool actually continues to an identical upside-down chamber separated from Area 14 with this *reverse gravity* effect preventing the water on the other side from falling. *Dispelling* the *reverse gravity* would create a 20' cube in which gravity isn't altered, which is insufficient to affect the pool in any significant manner.

The creature guarding the pool is an obsidian beholder. This construct is a golem version of the aquatic beholder described in *DMR2 Creature Catalog*. The only difference is that the one in the pool is a construct rather than a living creature. It is imbued with the magical ability to swim and *levitate*. The construct will attack anyone entering the pool without holding on to a stone ball or letting go of the stone ball before reaching the *reverse gravity* limit or attempting to double back from the *reverse gravity* rather than continuing on toward Area 16 (or vice-versa if coming back).

Stone balls are intended to pull down those who hold on to them to reach the *reverse gravity* area rapidly. Descent abruptly stops at this point and the visitor must let go of the stone ball. A few more strokes will then take the visitor past the *reverse gravity* effect, making it possible to swim back up the pool on the other side. When a stone is let go, it *teleports* back to the pile from which it had been taken.

**Obsidian Beholder\*** (1): AC3, HD13\*\*\*\*\*, MV 150' (50') swim/*levitate*, AT 2 claws +1 bite + eyes, Dmg 2d4/2d4 claws, 2d10 bite + special, Save as F13, ML 12, Int 4, AL N. **Special Attacks:** *paralysis, charm person, hold monster, confusion*. **Special Defenses:** immune to *charm, sleep, and hold* spells; immune to gases and poison; +1 or better weapon to hit; self-repairs.

The obsidian beholder only has two eyestalks but features two lobster-like clawed arms and looks like it's been carved out of a large block of obsidian. It is otherwise similar in shape to other beholders. The large eye can produce a blinding flash of light *paralyzing* anyone within 60' for 1d10 rounds (save vs. death ray). One of the eyestalks produces a *charm person* effect,



while other can generate a *hold monster*, both within a 60' range. If the two eyestalks work simultaneously, they alter instead one's ability to determine the direction toward the water's surface. Those swimming below the surface would mistake the *reverse gravity* area as the way to the surface, continually swimming up and down across the *reverse gravity* limit until they drown. The effect is permanent unless the victim is rescued. The only way to save *confused* swimmers is to knock them out and pull them to safety. At zero hit point, a victim below the surface sustains another 1 hp drowning damage per round, unless magical water breathing is available.

The obsidian beholder either fights underwater or about 10' above the surface. If need be, it will pursue trespassers up to the *wall of force* in Area 13, or anywhere it may be on the opposite side of the pool. The large eye can sustain up to 20 hit points of damage, which will deactivate the flash effect. Eyestalks can sustain up to 12 points each. Any damage to the obsidian beholder regenerates after its "destruction" at the rate of 2 hp per Turn. Scattered obsidian pieces will *levitate* toward the self-repairing golem with a Strength of 14 if held on to. The golem actually "awakes" when it regains at least half its original hit points. When inactive (or repairing itself) the golem rests inside an alcove, below the water's surface at the *reverse gravity* limit, across from Area 14. Loose golem pieces will initially *levitate* toward that alcove 1 Turn after the obsidian beholder is destroyed.

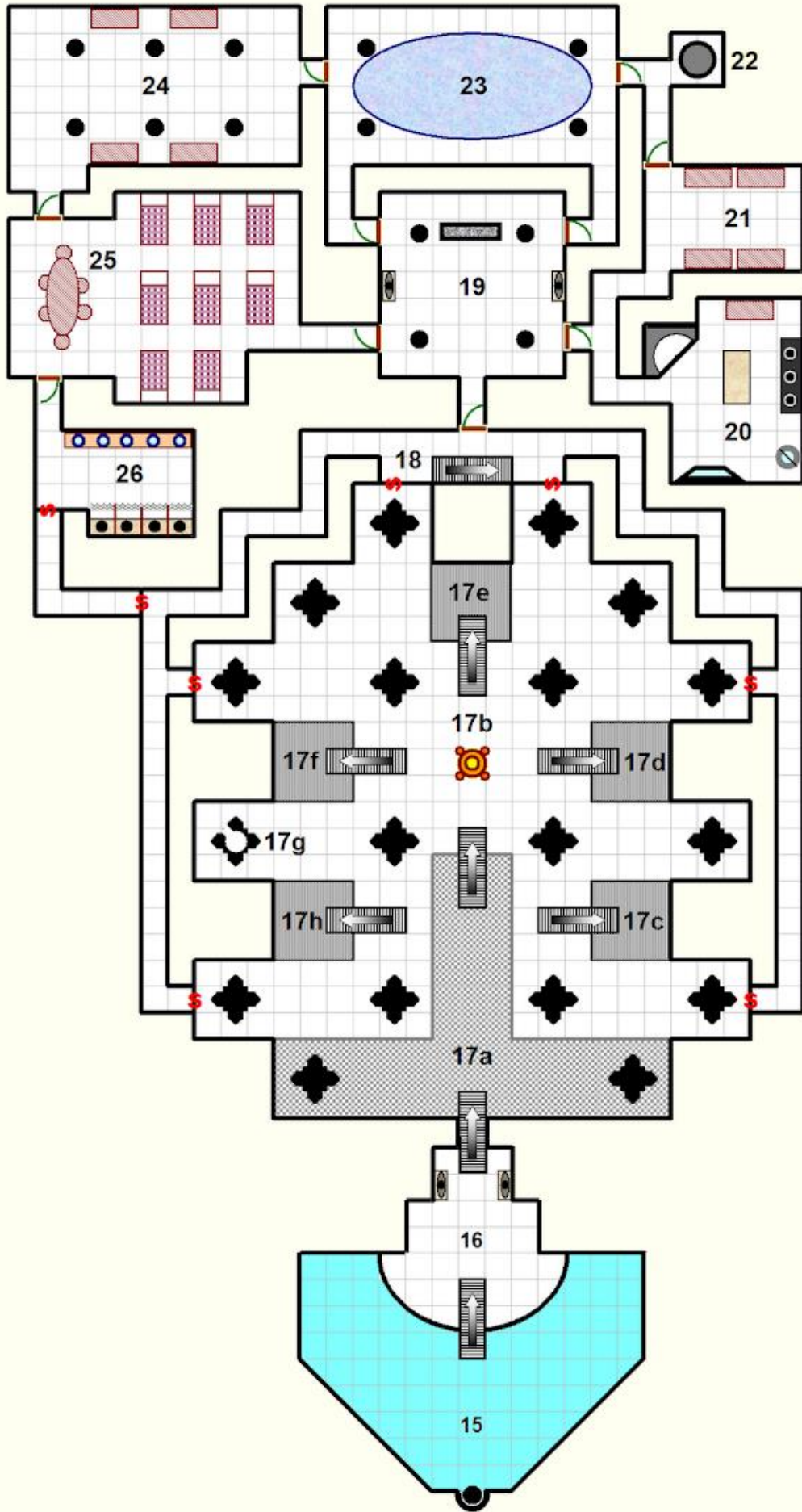
As with all other constructs, the obsidian beholder is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as gases since it doesn't breathe (or arguably to poisons as well since it is a heartless, bloodless beast). It also requires +1 magical weapon or better to hit.

## **Area 16: Pool Lower Landing**

This area appears identical to the Upper Pool Landing. A trail of wet (human) footprints leads toward Area 17. The trail runs dry halfway through Area 17a. Although the two silveons guarding the stairs to Area 17 shoot small flames through their eyes like the one last encountered, they are otherwise inert. There isn't a *wall of force* blocking the way. The statues and the *wall of force* activate if the alarm is sounded (see Area 17b).

## **Area 17: The Grand Reliquary's Sanctum**

This grand, cathedral-like chamber stretches 220' by 150', its Gothic arches reaching more than 180' up. Cruciform pillars support the vault which remains mostly in the dark. The entry area (Narthex, 17a) in the shape of an inverted T lies 15' lower than the main floor (Nave, 17b). Five raised platforms (17c-f, and 17h) stand another 15' higher, and radiate faint halos. The grinning faces of gargoyles, eagles, and other fantastic creatures cover the walls and seem to watch visitors as they come up the stairs. Shadows dance among the sculptures from a main source of light on Area 17b. Most of the chambers from Area 17 on feature air vents in their ceilings (too small to crawl through, but useful if able to adopt a gaseous form).



## Area 17a: Reliquary's Narthex

Smooth red and gold tiles cover the floor. They display hundreds of inlaid symbols that glow when stepped on. (They do not bear any effect on anything, although their significance will be explained later—see Area 28). Walls at the foot of the nave (area 17b) display stone friezes depicting archons fighting dragons. If a dwarf carefully and specifically examines the stairs from Area 16 or to Area 17b, it should be mentioned that they seem like they might shift downward (the same can be said of all stairs in Area 17). There are no visible mechanics that to trigger a shift.

## Area 17b: Reliquary's Nave & Apse

Stairs from the narthex's center aisle lead to a massive bronze brazier, 10' across and nearly as high. Flames shoot sixty feet up from the heavy vessel, providing much of the sanctum's lighting. Five more stairways climb to elevated platforms radiating a faint golden aura. Supporting the vault, six central pillars are regularly spaced in addition to another dozen near the walls and corners. Eight of the latter stand within niches carved into the rock.

The bronze vessel is too heavy to displace (and is solidly fastened to the stone floor, connecting with Area 29 below). The column of fire doesn't appear to produce any heat. Radiating magic, it is equivalent to a *disintegrate* spell. Anyone may presumably climb over the brazier's edge and enter the flames (save vs. death ray or crumble into ashes). Survivors then can drop through the column of fire into Area 29. Secret doors located behind pillars also lead to Area 18, and possibly Area 26. A hollow pillar (17g) leads to Area 28.

## Areas 17c-f & h: Raised Platforms

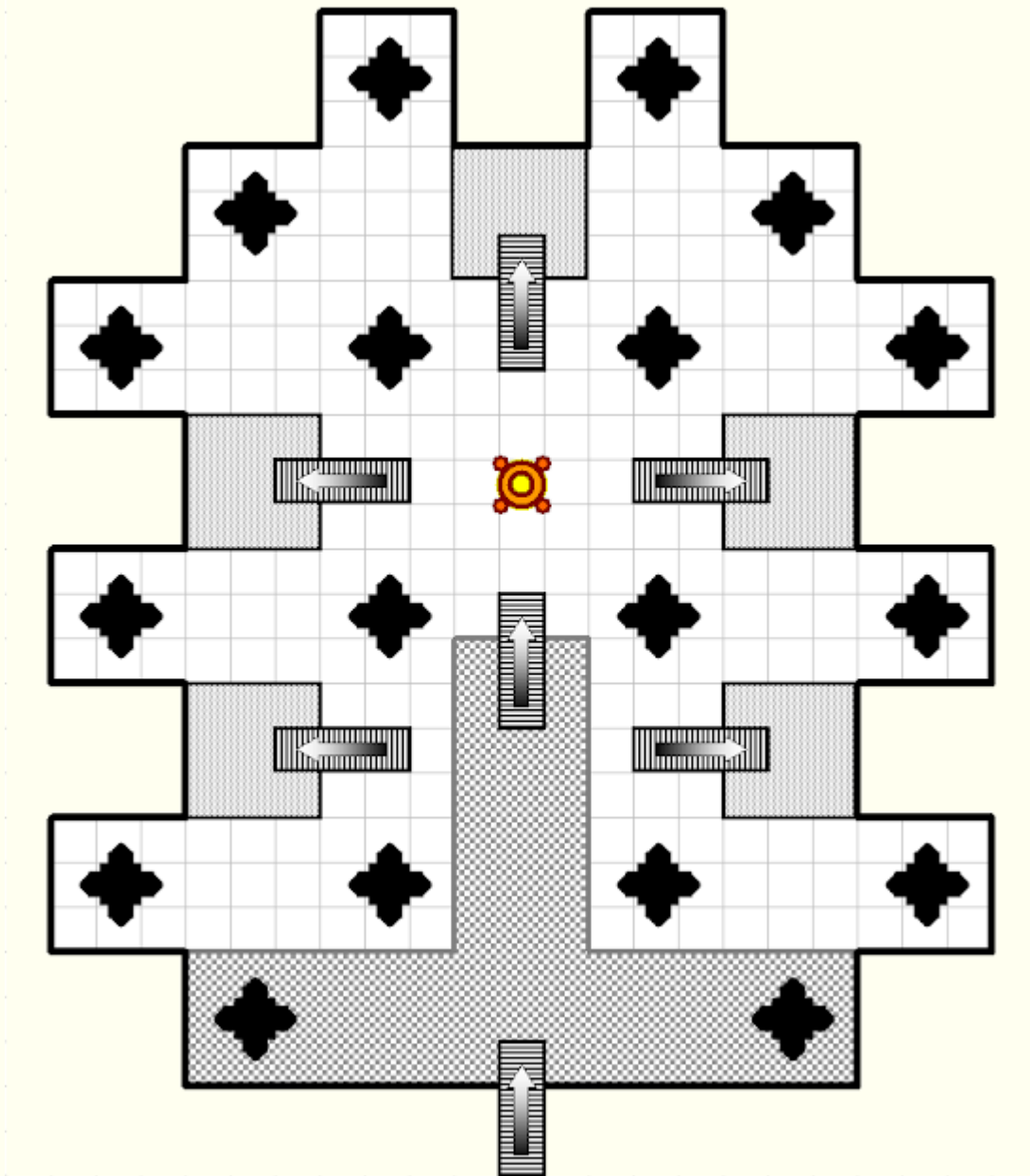
Stairs lead up to five 30'x30' stone platforms. Each features what appears to be an ancient object on top a glowing pedestal or a plinth, as follows:

- c.** a levitating sphere engraved with archons and demonic creatures (one might assume it to be the *Orb of Eternity*)
- d.** a large, tattered, red pennant with a gold edge (lore might identify the object as the *Oriflame of Ardoryl*)
- e.** a cup that seems to be made of mother of pearl (identified as the *Chalice of Astafiel*)
- f.** a golden plume (identified as the *Holy Feather of Sabbaiah*)
- h.** a black robe heavy with silver brocade, folded (identified as the *Robe of Eyoth*)

If detected, strong magic will radiate from these objects. They are illusions. Their nature as immaterial image projections become obvious if touched. If any are disturbed in any way, all stairs in Area 17 drop and become flush with the floor below (stairs reset to their initial positions 5 Turns later). A silent alarm also sounds in the Reliquary's Chapel (Area 19), alerting guardian mystics (monks) inhabiting the Reliquary. Within five rounds from the time the alarm is sounded, a mystic with a crossbow will quietly take place at each of the five embrasures hidden in the walls (Area 27) along with a magic user (Companion of Eyoth). If cornered, the latter will resort to her *Potion of Gaseous Form* to escape. The role of mystics with crossbows is to target

spellcasters or act as bodyguards for the Companion of Eyoth. The remainder of the mystics and their two masters gather behind secret doors at the best locations to ambush intruders. Mystics know their dwelling's layout well enough to be able to move in the dark without penalty.

## Players' Map



**Mystics** (18): My6, AC4, hp 30, MV 170', AT#2 (two open hand, or one bolas, or one crossbow), Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1 or by weapon, ML11; AL L. Disciples of Sabbaiah. St15, In11, Wi14, Dx14, Co13, Ch10.

**Master Mystics** (2): My12, AC-2, hp 60, MV 240', AT#3 (open hand), Dmg 3d8+1/3d8+1/3d8+1 with Fighter Combat Options, ML12; AL L. Messengers of Sabbaiah. St16, In13, Wi17, Dx15, Co14, Ch12. **Special Defense:** *resistance* (1/2 Dmg from spells and breath attacks).

**Aelith, Companion of Eyoth** (1): MU14, AC7, hp 40, MV 120', AT#1 staff or spells, Dmg 2d6, ML8; AL L. Herald of Eyoth. St11, In17, Wi15, Dx13, Co10, Ch13. **Spells Available: Level I**—5\*\* spells (*charm person, magic missile x3, shield*), **II**—5 (*detect invisible, ESP\*, invisibility, web, wizard lock*), **III**—5 (*clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, fly, lightning bolt*), **IV**—5 (*confusion, dimension door, ice storm, wall of fire, wizard eye*), **V**—4 (*cloudkill x2, passwall, teleport*), **VI**—3 (*anti-magic shell, death spell, invisible stalker*). **Special Abilities:** galvanize, as a Herald of Eyoth; (\*\*) Minor Faith Deed: *Eyoth's Gift*. **Equipment:** *Potion of Gaseous Form* (3 doses), *Potion of Clairaudience*, *Ring of Protection +3*, *Staff of Power*, *Displacer Cloak*, white robe from Area 13 (fire resistance).

Corybemus will be hiding behind the pillar southeast from 17d. He's aware of an invisible presence somewhere on the opposite side of the Reliquary's nave. Jezabioth will be near 17g when visitors climb up from the narthex. She's unaware of the dragon's presence. Both are still wearing their white robes.

## Area 17g: Hollow Pillar

About 60' above the floor, an opening leads into a shaft inside the stone pillar. It connects with Area 28. It can only be noticed if standing inside the northwest corner of the stone recess and looking up from there. Elves, dwarves, or thieves are able to spot the opening. Anyone else otherwise needs a stronger source of light since the opening is on the pillar's dark side. The surface of the pillar and the inner shaft is relatively smooth. If the battle goes poorly, the Companion of Eyoth might attempt to hide in Area 28.

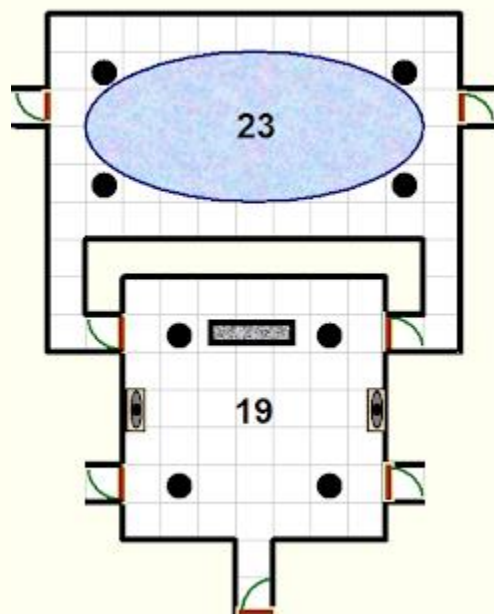
## Area 18: Service Hallway

This area lies at the intersection of the passages surrounding the Reliquary, the door to Area 19, and stairs leading up to Area 27. Muffled sounds of praying filter in from Area 19. The area is unlit save for a sliver of light under the door to Area 19. A smell of incense and cold stone lingers in the air.

## Area 19: Chapel of Sabbaiah

A square chamber, 70'x70', with an altar opposite the entrance and four pillars supporting a domed vault. A silveon stands on the east and west sides of the room between enchanted cressets providing soft lighting. Two more cressets on the wall behind the altar provide additional lighting. A glittering symbol of Sabbaiah hangs between them. Stone friezes on the walls depict the immortal fighting on various battlefields. Four more doors, two each on the east and west walls, lead out of the chapel.

If the alarm has not been raised yet, two mystics will stand near the altar, lighting incense sticks (20% chance one of the two is a master mystic if unaccounted for so far). If intruders



manifest themselves, a mystic will immediately attempt to escape toward Areas 23 and 24 to raise the alarm. The other will remain and do what can be done to delay pursuers (such as luring intruders closer to the altar).

The two silveons activate if anyone comes within 20' of the altar without first bowing. They are identical to the ones in Area 5 although with only 5HD (to avoid hitting each other). Silveons do not target mystics directly but their bolts may arc and hit them nonetheless.

**Silveons\*** (2): AC0, HD 5\*\*\*\*, hp 25, MV 0' (0'), AT# 1 energy bolt, Dmg 12-36, Save F3-9, ML12; AL N. **Special Attacks:** bolt of energy. **Special Defenses:** reflect spells and attacks, regeneration.

If the alarm was raised (from the Reliquary), then a red glow pulsates within the chapel's dome. A recess underneath the altar hides a chalice, two candle-holders, and a symbol of Sabbaiah worth 100 sp each.

## Area 20: Kitchen

This roughly 50'x70' chamber features a large wooden table in the middle, a bronze fire range opposite from the entrance, a free-standing closet on the far left, a stone oven on the left by the entrance, a large stone sink, a well on the far right, and all manners of pots, pans, and kitchen utensils hanging from the walls. Light emanates from a magical globe hanging from the ceiling, and to some degree from fire in the oven and on the range.

Two mystics are preparing meals if the alarm wasn't sounded. If intruder's manifest themselves, the mystics will throw pans and knives before heading into a melee. A few pans of oily, greasy soup boil on the fire range which can be used as weapons of fortune. Parlay is not an option.

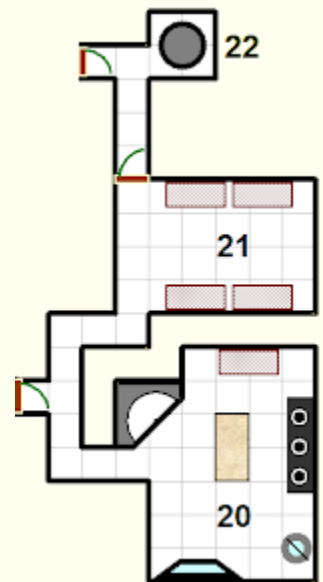
A large round cheese pie with pepperoni is cooking in the oven. The closet contains wooden tableware, a few spices, and other common cooking ingredients (nothing of value). Peeled vegetables lie in the sink under a layer of water.

## Area 21: Food Pantry

This 60'x40' chamber and four wooden closets serve as a reserve of food and cooking ingredients. The room and adjoining hallways are unlit.

## Area 22: Garbage Pit

This small chamber features a round, 15' diameter opening in the stone floor. The stonework seems smudged and greasy. A vague smell of rot exudes from the opening. Sad moans and a bit of steam rise from the bottom.



The room is unlit. The pit is 30' deep. A black pudding resides at the bottom to eat whatever is dumped in. It has been trying to find a way out for very long time, hence the moaning. A hot metal band rings the shaft's midpoint, preventing the creature from slithering up the walls.

**Black Pudding\*** (1): AC6, HD10\*, hp 50, MV 60' (20'), AT 1, Dmg 3d8 corrosion, Save F5, ML 12, AL N. **Special Defenses:** can only be killed by fire; can split into smaller puddings (HD2 + 1d8 Dmg per attack).

## Area 23: Meditation Room

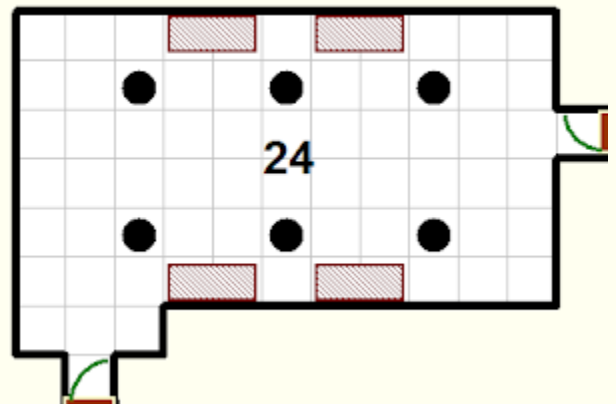
This 110'x60' chamber serves as a contemplation hall. A ball of soft light hovers in the middle of the room. Concentric patterns carved in the walls give an impression of movement when shifting one's gaze. A large carpet covers the floor between four pillars. Cushion-like leather padding covers the door to the west. A dozen small censors hang from chains hooked on the ceiling filling the air with a pleasant, soothing fragrance and a thin haze.

Four mystics are meditating here if the alarm wasn't raised (30% chance one of them is a master if not already accounted for). If Aelith, the Companion of Eyoth, has not yet been encountered, she will be in this room. Mystics are used to this chamber and the effects of its incense. Intruders all have to roll vs. paralysis or fall in a trance-like stupor, gazing at the odd geometric patterns on the walls. If intruders' manifest themselves, two mystics will attack the intruders while the fourth (the magic-user) will attempt to escape and raise the alarm. The door on the west side is padded to suppress noise from Area 25.

The only objects of value in this room include the censors and their contents. A small chest with unused incense lies in a hidden cavity in the northern wall. The incense itself has a resale value outside Bettelilyn of 5,000 gp.

## Area 24: Training Room

This 110'x60' chamber features two rows of three round pillars, a pair of free-standing closets along the north and south walls, racks of combat weapons (bo sticks, nunchaks, wooden flails, throwing stars, bolas, crossbows and quarrels). A practice mat covers the center of the room. A large brass gong stands against the west wall. Glowing brass lamps hang from chains in the ceiling, casting many shadows around the pillars.



If the alarm wasn't raised, four mystics train in this room (60% chance a master is one of them, if not already accounted for). If intruders manifest themselves, all but one of them will attack. The remaining one will attempt to sound the gong. If successful, the sound echoes throughout the entire complex, through walls and door, across the ethereal, and down to the pool in Area 15. This will awaken all remaining mystics and the obsidian beholder. The latter will come and position itself well above the Reliquary's narthex, high enough to hide among shadows. The

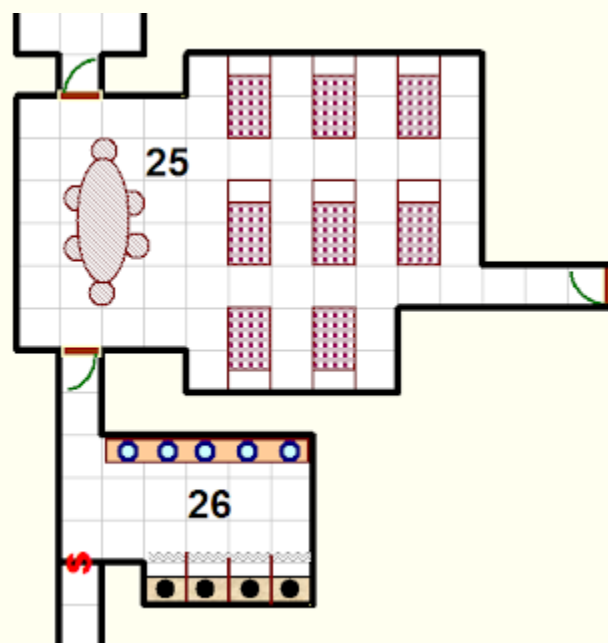
sound also rouses any undead that may have been tracking PCs. They arrive in  $1d4+1$  rounds later. These undead will not attack the mystics but concentrate on recovering objects stolen from their towers. Unless trained to focus like a mystic, the gong's sound affects the inner ear, inflicting upon intruders in this room a -5 point Dexterity penalty for  $1d4+1$  rounds (same roll as above) and nauseating dizziness (-5 penalty to attack rolls). Saving vs. paralysis reduces the penalties to -2. Affected spellcasters cannot cast spells while the gong still resonates, regardless of saving throws.

## Area 25: Sleeping Quarters

This oddly shaped chamber contains six bunk beds, three levels high, and two normal beds in the far south. A long table surrounded with wooden stools occupy a recess in the far west side. The chamber is dark, save for a lone oil lamp on the table.

Six mystics are resting here (30% chance one master will be among them if unaccounted for so far) while two others sit at the table, quietly finishing their dinners. If wakened, six confront the intruders while the remainder attempt to escape to Area 24 (where the gong will be struck).

A total of twenty small chests contain the mystics' personal possessions. Two, under the masters' beds, contain more than a few coins, clothing, prayer books, praying necklaces, etc.—such as: a *Potion of Dreamspeech*, a *Potion of Undead Control*, a *Scroll of Questioning*, a *Jar of Soothing Ointment*, and an *Egg of Wonder*, aside from two pouches with 500 gp in gems. Every chest also contains a white robe (from Area 13).



## Area 26: Latrines

This 30'x60' area can be identified by its prevailing smell. It is unlit. On the left, a long wooden storage bin features a series of enamel basins, cakes of soap, and several water jugs. The bins underneath contain dry towels. On the opposite side, bead curtains separate the chamber from individual stalls. Pipes connect the stalls of an underground river far below.

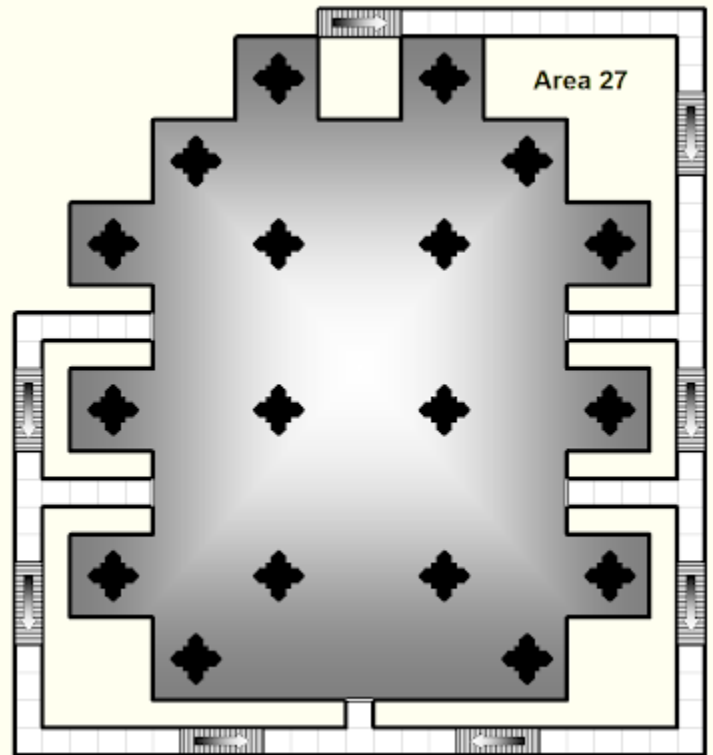
If the alarm wasn't sounded, one mystic occupies the far stall. If not discovered, he will wait until intruders go by to come out and try to sound the alarm. Mystics know of the nearby secret passage. If not disabled before opening the secret door to Area 26, the red light in Area 19 switches on. The Companion of Eyoth is the only resident aware of the existence of Area 29.



## Area 27: Observation Gallery

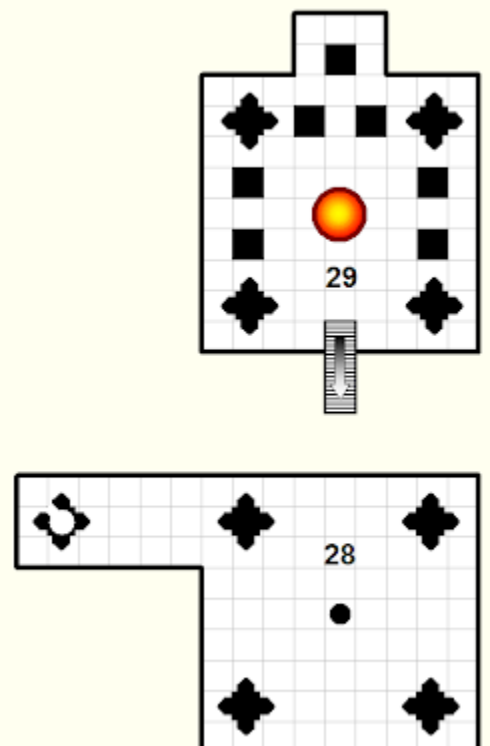
Stairs lead up from Area 18 along an unlit corridor to embrasures carved through the walls. The openings blend in with the stone faces carved on the opposite sides, letting in some light from the Reliquary's Nave (Area 17b). These slits enable missile weapons and spells to be cast at various sections of the Reliquary. Their fields of vision are limited to arcs stretching at best 45 degrees left and right, and at least 60 degrees up and down. Aelith, the Companion of Eyoth, will pick the embrasure giving the best view of the intruders. If there isn't a good spot, she will stand at the southern embrasure, 90 feet above the narthex (Area 17a). Mystics behind embrasures are considered 90% behind cover if spotted. Because of the Reliquary's ambient light, infravision will not reveal someone's presence behind a slit.

Spells requiring the target to be seen have a 90% chance of missing the mark. Missile weapon attacks against mystics incur a -6 to hit penalty.



## Area 28: Reticle Room

The hollow pillar (17g) leads up to this chamber. A huge stone cylinder fitted exactly to the shaft's diameter hangs right above the shaft. It will drop when someone reaches the shaft's middle point unless a trap was searched for and neutralized at the bottom entrance. Area 28 lies 175' above the nave's floor. The entrance to the shaft sits 60' up the pillar. The vertical shaft therefore measures 115' long. If the cylinder drops, the sound of heavy chains unrolling above and the rumble of the falling stone should alert those climbing of their fast-approaching doom. If they let go and jump, a Dexterity check ought to determine whether they can scramble out through the entrance. The air pressure quickly increasing in the shaft from the action of the cylinder acting as a piston ought to eject those succeeding their Dexterity checks, causing them to collide with the opposite wall and tumble another 60' to the base of the pillar. If anyone fails a check, everyone following piles on top of one another, along with the massive stone—save vs. death ray or die horribly. Those whose saving throws



succeeded still incur 10d6 points of crushing damage in addition to falling down the shaft and being blown out through its entrance along with rock debris and dust. Rubble now blocks the passage. The sound of the falling stone and its final impact at the base of the shaft rumbles like an earthquake throughout the entire Reliquary complex. As a result of the tremor, the hollow pillar has a 30% chance of shattering, causing further debris to come down, including a portion of the floor from Area 28's antechamber.

If anyone makes it to the top of the shaft, a wide, unlit, antechamber leads to a larger room. A permanent *darkness* affects the 90'x90' space. Four large pillars continuing from the Reliquary beneath the stone floor rise another 30' to support the vault. In the middle of the chamber lies a fist-size opening in the floor with an iron tripod standing above it. The tripod holds a brass tube about two feet long and elbowed in its middle so that one half remains level with the floor and the other points down through the hole. The device radiates magic.

If Aelith was forced to flee earlier, she may be hiding here, behind the northeastern pillar. If she still has a dose of her *Potion of Gaseous Form*, she may resort to using it once more to escape through the hole.

The device above the hole is the Reliquary's Revealing Reticule. Looking through the inverted periscope-like device enables the observer to see a specific set of tiles, about five feet from the bottom of the stairs leading from 17a to 17b. These tiles are aligned exactly within the axis of the stairs on the immediate left and right of the nave. Symbols on four of the tiles start flashing in a specific sequence, pause, and resume until the viewer pulls away from the tube.

### **Revisiting the Narthex**

The flashing tiles shown by the reticle in Area 28 allude to the secret entrance to Area 29. One must return to the Reliquary's narthex, and step on these four tiles following the right sequence. If so, a number of other tiles slowly light up, prompting one to step upon them as well, as if dancing. The first four tiles can easily be matched. The next sequence requires a Dexterity check to complete correctly. New and different sequences follow, a bit longer, faster, and harder to match, requiring combination steps and new Dexterity check with cumulative -1 penalties (and so on). The dancer moves about the narthex randomly, one space per round, as nearby tiles keep flashing.

Each time a sequence is completed, the stairs leading to Area 17b shift 5' downward. At the 3rd sequence, the steps are flush with the floor in the narthex (assuming the alarm was never sounded or the stairs have not yet reset themselves). At the 4th, a 5' gap reveals the presence of Area 29. If all six sequences are completed without fail, stairs shift down completely and lock in place, revealing the entrance to Area 29. Those witnessing the dance may crawl through a partial opening of the stairs at any time if they wish.

Any interrupted or failed sequence resets the stairs to their full upward position (leading to Area 17b), requiring the process to be started over. The first failed check also releases a gargoyle from the Reliquary's dark vault, swooping down to attack the "dancer." The second failed check releases two gargoyles, three at the third, etc. The gargoyles do not interfere with the obsidian

beholder if it happens to be present in the shadows above the narthex. The “sequence of errors” resets itself if no further dancing attempt takes place for at least 5 Turns.

**Gargoyles\*** (1-??): AC5, HD 4\*\*, MV 90' (30')/150' (50') flying, AT 2 claws/1 bite/1 horn, Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4, Save F8, Int 5, AL N while Aelith is alive, C thereafter. **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, requires +1 or better magical weapon to hit.

## Area 29: Crypt of the Relics

This 90'x90' chamber is located exactly underneath the bronze brazier. Stairs to Area 17b initially conceal the entrance until made to shift downward (see *Revisiting the Narthex* listed above). A column of magical flames towers upward through the ceiling and the brazier on the next floor. Four large cruciform pillars at each corner support the vault and continue above through the Reliquary. Three pairs of plinths stand between the east, west, and north pillars, with a seventh in a recess, opposite from the stairs. The artifacts described earlier rest upon these stone platforms, plus another two. Artifacts and their plinths all radiate magic. The names of immortals are listed on each plinth, with Samarion's showing on the one in the northern recess. The latter bears the *Orb of Eternity*.

If anyone entered the flames earlier on and was *disintegrated*, ashes will lay on the floor, all around the flames. If anyone entered through the flames and survived, the stairs to Area 17b still block the exit and cannot be opened from inside, save for a *wish*. Those who crawled inside while the dance took place in the narthex may find themselves stranded as well if the dancer eventually fails to lock the stairs in place. The only escape routes then include attempting to climb or fly through the *disintegrating* flames, a magical *stone-shaping* ability, a *passwall*, *dimension door*, *teleport*, or comparable spell. The stonework or the stairs otherwise require 250 points of damage to blast through. There is no air vent to his chamber, precluding the reliance on an escape in *gaseous form*.

If any of the artifacts is touched, the other six *teleport* to another safe location. Unless a *dispel magic* succeeded against the remaining artifact's plinth, the *disintegrating* flames start expanding 5' per round until they fill the chamber, possibly *disintegrating* all within (unless a save vs. death ray succeeds). Sections of the ceiling collapse while the brazier crashes through and bounces in a random direction crushing anything in its path. If three or more pillars are *disintegrated*, the Reliquary's nave and apse collapse catastrophically, destroying much of the complex, *dispelling* its entire *reverse gravity* enchantment, and possibly taking down some or all of the towers out on the surface. The latter consequence will release all the undead bound to the towers, enabling them to escape with their treasured possessions to whatever end. In an ultimate and futile gesture, seven bronze golems wander away, wreaking havoc through towns and countryside alike, trying vainly to pursue the escaped undead.

### Escaping the Crypt

A *wish* or an immediate *teleportation* to the surface, away from the towers, will enable survival from the collapsing Reliquary. With some time, Bettelwyn's religious powers will identify the cause of the collapse and hunt down the ones responsible for the disaster. Aelith, if alive at that time, will *teleport* out to safety if she can, and report what she knows straight away. If not, she

might be able to reach her quarters instead and ride out the Reliquary's destruction until the next day. If still alive at the time Jezabiath dies in the cave-in (although the soul eater might survive under the rubble). Corybemus *teleports* out and continues to track the stolen artifact.

## Alternate Ending

If the *Orb of Eternity* is successfully retrieved (without a catastrophic cave-in) and any of the other NPCs are still alive, they will be waiting in ambush outside or on the way out. Jezabiath is the first to intervene and try to steal the coveted artifact. If Jezabiath fails or was defeated earlier, Aelith intervenes next. If she fails or was defeated earlier, then Corybemus gets involved. He will demand the artifact in his gold dragon persona. Refusal will result in yet another epic battle.

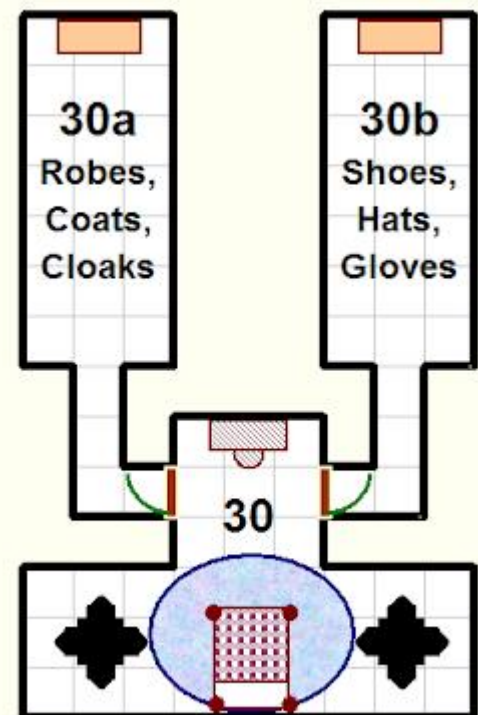
**Corybemus/Farraxillion (Gold Dragon):** AC-4, HD16+3\*\*\*, hp 80, MV 120' (40')/300' (100'), AT#3 + breath weapon, Dmg 6d6+4 bite, 3d4 claw, Save F33, ML10, AL L. *Ring of remedies*. **Spell Available:** **Level I**—5 spells (*Charm Person* x2, *Detect Magic* x2, *Ventriloquism*), **II**—5 (*ESP\**, *Invisibility* x3, *Phantasmal Force*), **III**—5 (*Clairvoyance*, *Dispell Magic* x2, *Hold Person* x2), **IV**—4 (*Confusion*, *Hallucinatory Terrain*, *Polymorph Self* x2), **V**—3 (*Telekinesis*, *Teleport* x2)

**Jezabiath:** My4, AC6, hp 17, AT#1 open hand, Dmg d6+1, ML8(12); AL L(N). Disciple of Samarion; unable to use her companion abilities while possessed. St15(18), In13(9), Wi14(9), Dx17, Co14, Ch12. *Ring of invisibility*, *amulet of protection against detection and ESP*. **Soul Eater:** AC0, HD10\*, MV 180' (60'), AT#2, Dmg d10+Wisdom drain, Save C10, ML12, AL N. Minion of Masauwu.

## Area 30: Aelith's Secret Quarters

Aelith resides in a chamber just north of Area 29, under the two central pillars of the apse. It can only be reached through a *passwall*, *dimension door*, or *teleport* spell, of in *gaseous form* via a vent. The room includes the basic amenities of a lady's bedchamber and a chest. Soft lighting comes from two enchanted cressets near the bed and a *levitating* aura above the dresser, all of which may be switched off with a snap of the fingers.

Objects of value include: (under the bed) 5,493 gp in coins and gems, twenty pieces of jewelry of random value; her spell book lies in a hidden compartment of the dresser; an extensive wardrobe contains 899 robes with assorted coats and cloaks worth well over approximately 89,900 gp (Area 30a); in neatly stacked in boxes, a collection of 899 pairs of shoes, hats, and gloves matching the aforementioned outfits worth about as much together; scores of plumes, baubles, and trinkets are worth another 2,277 gp (Area 30b), plus a lead-coated



container in which she keeps a huptzeen (*AC9 Creature Catalog*), a construct in the form of an ornate women's golden bracelet (in a secret compartment inside the west pillar). The huptzeen will change its allegiance to another wizard level 10 or higher if Aelith is deceased, which it can sense.

**Huptzeen** (1): AC 3, HD 7\*\*\*, MV 30' (10') flying, AT 1 spell, Save MU7, ML 12, Int 11, AL N. **Special Abilities:** spells as a MU7, *shapechange*. **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; sustains half damage against non-magical weapons; explodes if destroyed, causing 2 points of damage per unused spell within 5' radius (save vs. dragon breath for half damage). **Daily Spells: Level I**—3 spells (*analyze*, *detect magic*, *magic missiles*), **II**—2 (*ESP\**, *locate object*), **III**—2 (*clairvoyance*, *create air*), **IV**—1 (*dimension door*). Spell abilities cannot be altered.

*This chapter was a combination of work from six different blog posts. For reference, here is a listing of links for those posts:*

[Grand Reliquary Part I](#)

[Grand Reliquary Part II](#)

[Grand Reliquary Part III](#)

[Grand Reliquary Part IV](#)

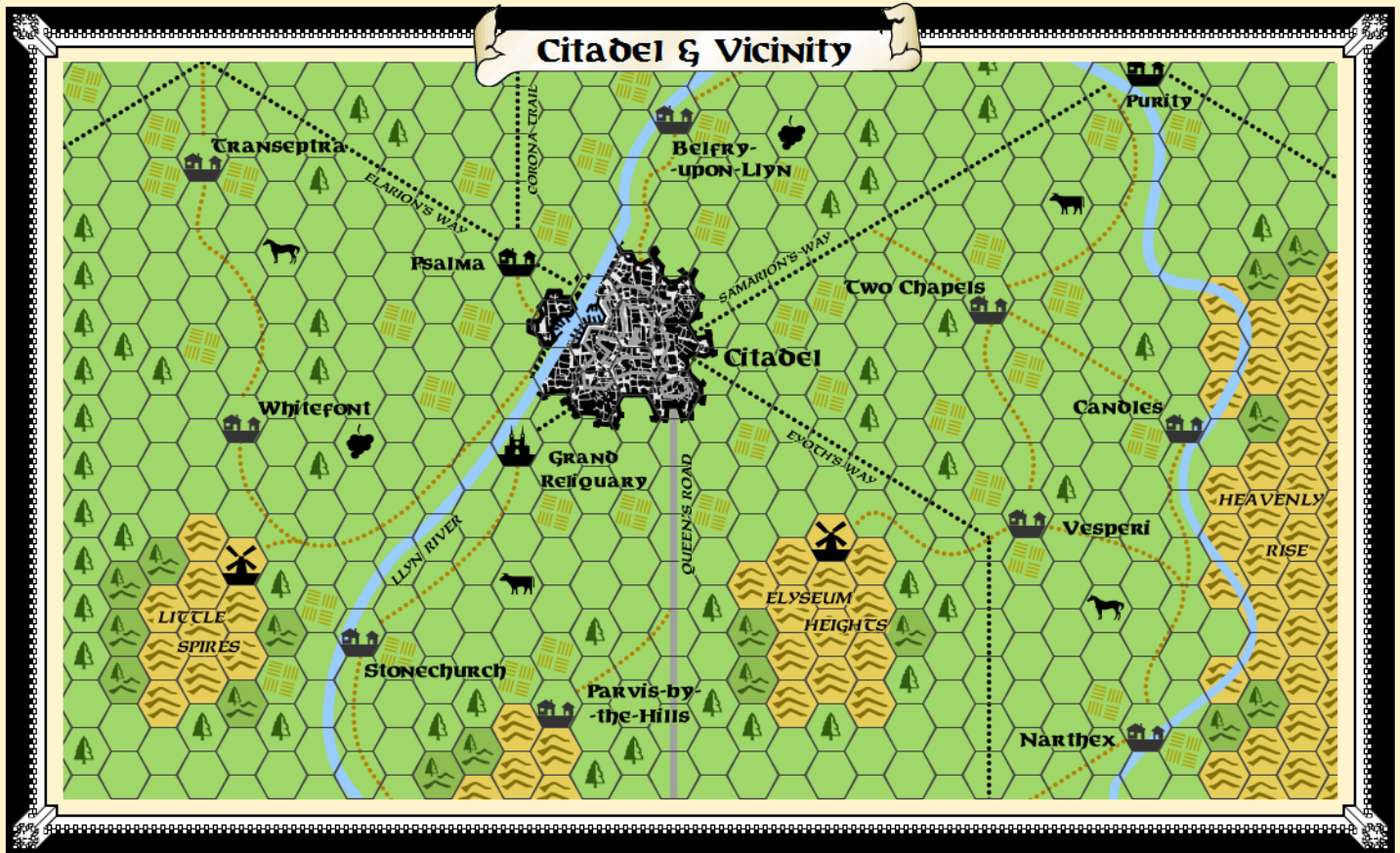
[Grand Reliquary Part V](#)

[Grand Reliquary Part VI](#)



# Citadel: City of Dungeons

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Citadel & Vicinity - Scale: 2 miles per hex**

Aside from its sheer size, this city of 325,000 inhabitants enjoys the uniqueness of being built on a huge mound. Some 38 square miles and about eight miles across as the bird flies. Citadel rises 9,600 feet in its middle with many streets commonly exceeding 22° inclines. Most of the small passages are in fact stairs. As a result of the exhaustion the slopes inflict upon people and beasts of burden—not to mention numerous accidents with failing cart brakes and the not-so-occasional winter ice storms—a royal decree was issued fifty years ago for the creation of a mechanical device to help people and goods travel up and down the city.

Since streets were extremely crowded, the project went underground, physically. Citadel owes its shape to centuries of older buildings on top of which newer structures were erected. Over time, deeper levels were abandoned and, provided they didn't collapse under the city's enormous weight, sociopaths, criminals, and monstrous wildlife claimed their dark streets as their own. Naturally, digging large tunnels, boarding stations, and access stairwells through notoriously hostile dungeons lairs proved a major challenge. And so, fifty years later and piles of gold to hire the best engineers and workforce Stoutfellow could offer, the project still goes on, digging new branches, rebuilding others that collapsed, pacifying rebellious sections, unblocking barricaded tunnels, or upgrading ever more comfortable vehicles with greater, stronger, monster-proof armor.

The network relies on a proprietary form of artificial ley lines that channel telekinetic forces through stone grooves carved in the tunnels' floors. Vehicles travel on dwarven-forged steel tracks straddling these telekinetic grooves. Each vehicle's drivers use levers to hook onto or release ley lines. Brakes allow the vehicles to stop entirely when reaching a station. Relay houses buried along the tracks generate or support the telekinetic power grid. Over the past decades, revenue from the Ley Coaches network has helped finance the endeavor.

Parties of pest removal expert are always in demand to clear infested segments of the network so drivers can meet their schedules. Payment is reasonable. It includes room and board for the duration of employment, as well as speedy transportation straight to the dungeons. Retrieved treasures are subject to inspection upon return so that property stolen during the past 11 years, 11 days, 11 hours, and 11 minutes may be returned to their owners or related kin. Anything else incurs a 10% municipal fee, half of which to reimburse Her Royal Holiness's Treasury for the project's massive loans, and the remainder to help cover cost of operations. It has been said that the location of treasure motivated the present layout of the network but this was never proven.

Four Ley Lines exist today. The **Ruby Line** connects the *Eastern Gates District* to the *Merchant Quarter*. The **Topaz Line** links *Lower West Bastion* with the *Religious Quarter*, via a tunnel under the river. The **Sapphire Line** runs from *Two Markets* all the way down to the *Grand Reliquary* south of Citadel (the last two segments run on the surface). During religious holidays, the entire Sapphire Line operates at full capacity. Finally, the **Emerald Line** services *North Port*, the *Mid-Ring Borough*, and the *Stone Knob Ward*. Frequencies on most segments can reach one car every 6-8 minutes each way. Three lines provide ample service to *Top-of-the-Hill*. Four stations allow passengers to switch lines.



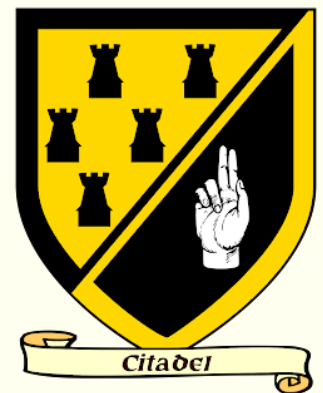


As the name implies, the *Citadel of Citadels* (1) stands on *Top-of-the-Hill*, the royal district. Generally windy and much colder than the rest of the capital city, it harbors the residence of Queen Llynara and her royal guard. The remainder of the district includes government and municipal facilities, including the *High Cathedral of Samarion* (2), the *House of Lords* (3), and residences of prominent aristocrats.

The remainder of the city includes two more concentric districts: the *Mid-Ring Borough*, perched between 3,000' and 6,000' from the river's surface, and the *Town-at-the-Bottom*, stretching from the river up to 3,000'. Cliff-like fortifications of *High Wall* (4) surround *Top-of-the-Hill*, while *Middle Wall* (5) guards the *Mid-Ring Borough*, largely the city's middle-class and bourgeois population. The western and southern sides feature the more desirable residences, those with a view on the river or on the Grand Reliquary, a little over two miles past *South Gate*.

*Town-at-the-Bottom* includes a seedy area at the northern edge, euphemistically referred to as *The Pits*, the market district (6), granaries, warehouses and *North Port's* embankment (7), the *Royal Port* (8), *Lower West Bastion* across the river (9), the *Merchant Quarter* (10), the university and entertainment quarter otherwise known as the *Owl-and-Donkey* (11), *Stone Knob* (12) which is a rocky promontory nearly 2,000' high serving as military quarters, *Queen's Gate* a stone's throw away to the south, the *Eastern Gates District* at the Ruby Line's oriental terminus, and finally the *Religious District* in the northeast corner.

Naturally, weather always is a concern in Citadel as several thousand feet of altitude difference do bear an impact. It isn't uncommon to enjoy cold but sunny weather on *Top-of-the-Hill*, while dreary, soggy conditions prevail over *Town-at-the-Bottom*, *Mid-Ring Borough* remaining lost in the fog. Much of the rainwater either cascades through streets or public stairways before flooding the lower dungeons. Spring and fall are particularly bad times for dungeoneering unless one enjoys mucking about in deadly, slippery quagmires awash with soiled waters. As one might have surmised, Citadel remains entirely devoid of a sewer system. Collapsing buildings and sinkholes are the next concern, especially the sort spewing darker residents from the world below upon the fair streets of Citadel.



## Citadel's GARRISON

Ten thousand HD-worth of troops defend the capital city. This includes more than 2,000 infantry units backed by about 500 cavalry. In addition another 26 clerics and magic-users averaging 5 HD provide medical and arcane support. Of note, 3 archons have made themselves available should the capital find itself under attack. They do not actually reside in Citadel but often visit the *High Cathedral*. The Royal Guard accounts for roughly a third of this force, housed on *Top-of-the-Hill*. The remainder handle common law enforcement in the city's two lower tiers. Command posts cover the major wards, accounting for 500 troops of various types. Another 800-900 occupy watch towers and gatehouses of *Middle* and *Outer Wall*, *Stone Knob*, and *Lower*

*West Bastion*. Cavalry units are housed mostly in the latter two districts. Light cavalry is responsible for patrolling the city's surrounding region.

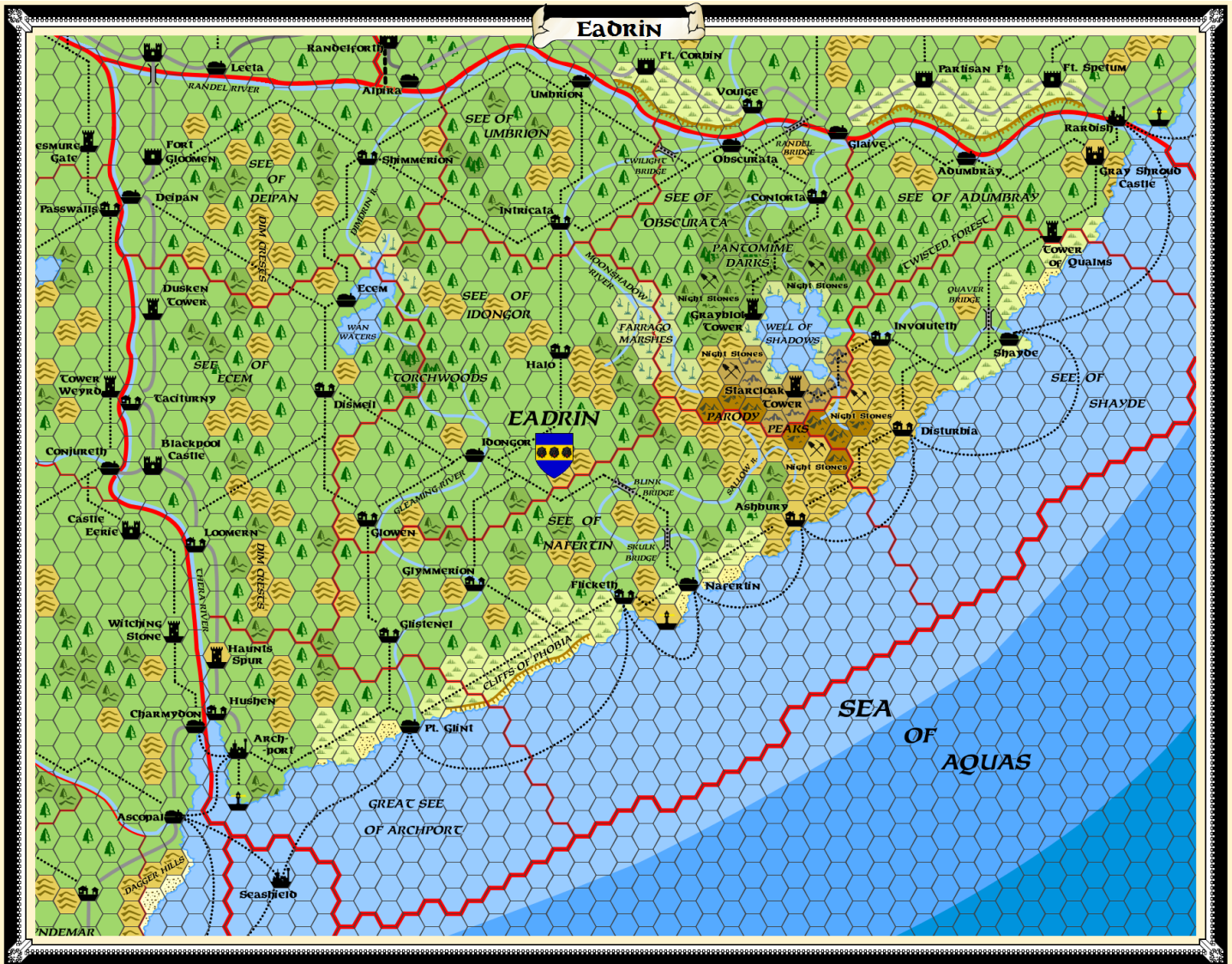
<b>Posted in Citadel</b>		84% Human 8% Elves
<b>Total Strength:</b>	10,000 HD	4% Halflings 3% Dwarves
<b>Infantry:</b>	1018 Lt. Infantry, 255 Hvy. Infantry, 509 Lt. Crossbowmen, 255 Hvy Crossbowmen,	
<b>Cavalry:</b>	255 Lt. Cavalry, 165 Med. Cavalry, 76 Hvy. Cavalry,	
<b>Special Troops:</b>	26 Spellcasters, 3 Archons,	
<b>Siege Weapons:</b>	1019 Artillerists with 128 Ballistae, 43 Lt. Catapults 32 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets	
<b>War Machines:</b>		
<b>Auxiliaries:</b>	300 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers	
<b>Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:</b>	1000 soldiers and seamen	
<b>At Port or at Sea:</b>	100 Sailors, 170 Marines (+720 convict rowers)	
<b>Assigned Ships</b>	6 Small Galleys, 1 Large Galley, the Royal Barge	

Very little of the powerful Bettelwyn navy hails from the capital city. A small flotilla patrols long stretches of the Llyn River as far south as Vonboby and the village of Covenant, and as far north as Corona Castle and Stonefont Keep. During the Days of Royal Ceremony, the Citadel Flotilla is present and expected to escort the Royal Barge. Airships or submersibles only visit the capital on rare occasions, usually as the result of a special mission, either one requiring speed or complete discretion. A ship of the Bettelwyn Navy is referred to as Her Royal Holiness's *Nave* (HRHN). As it were, common naval terminology describes a ship's prow as an "apse" and its stern as a "narthex".

- **Small Galleys (6):** HRHNs *Faith, Hope, Compassion, Serenity, Exaltation, and Devotion*
- **Large Galley (1):** HRHN *Archons' Will*
- **Royal Barge (1):** HRHN *Golden Ark*

# The Alphatian Province of Eadrin

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



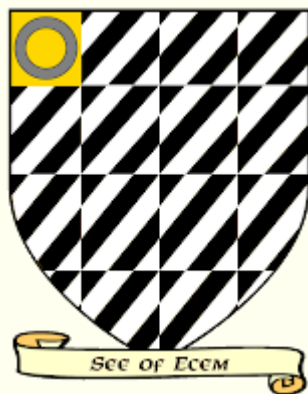
**Kingdom of Eadrin - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Welcome to Eadrin, a realm yearning to compete with Arogansa's flashy demeanor and yet shining by the eerie darkness of its unusual masters. Many an observer has wondered about this modest kingdom tucked at the corner of Arogansa, Theranderol, and war-like Randel. It basks behind the Thera and Randel Rivers, seemingly undefended and supremely confident.



Eadriners strive to present the image of a friendly nation to attract the wealthy visitors gracing the beaches of Arogansa. They succeed, to some degree, but Eadrin is no Arogansa. Its beaches are nice and peaceful but Eadrin's tradition and experience in the business remains no match. The greatest benefit for visiting the Corner Kingdom is its lower prices and more discreet environment. This is true of the shores of Eadrin, along the Sea of Alphas and its rivers. Its hinterland is another matter entirely.

What seems to intimidate both visitors and common Eadriners themselves are the leaders of the nation, including Queen Eadra XIII, dubbed the Queen of Dusk. Eadra is a gorgeous elven lady, were it not for her stone-gray skin and opalescent eyes, like those of her ancestors. In much earlier times, when the Eadriner dynasty was still young, its kin had hailed from the Shye-Lawr, fair-skinned and silver-haired. They'd explored the region and discovered a strange lake, which they quickly named *The Well of Shadows*, for dark beasts emerged from its depths during moonless nights. Cracks in the surrounding hills led to twisted passages converging toward a chasm far beneath the lake. There, a realm of shadows grew progressively more impenetrable, rebellious to the most powerful enchantments to shed light and enable normal vision. A mysterious new magic imbued the abyssal rocks themselves. It challenged the curiosity of visitors, elven or human, to proceed deeper. Over the centuries a few went on, blindly seeking to unveil the mysteries beyond. Rare were those among them who ever returned. Of these, all displayed various symptoms of dementia, mild for the more fortunate, or ravingly insane.

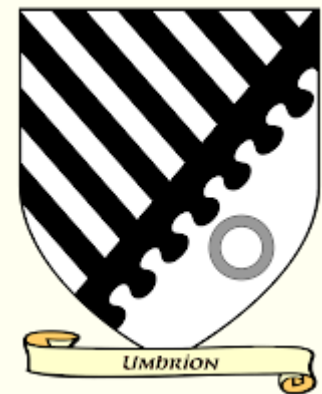
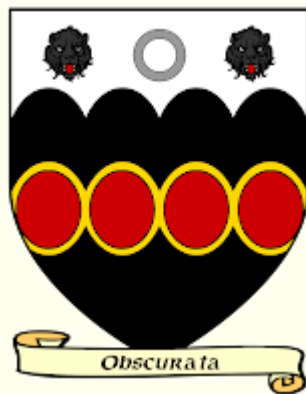


Elders of the early Eadriner dynasty were among those who came back. Aside from their mental afflictions, their physical appearances had changed. Their skins turned ashen and their moods gloomier and ominous. Queen Eadra is of this bloodline. From artifacts brought back and what could be pieced together over time, it was understood that the dark, twisted passages led to the Vortex Dimension. Discoveries unveiled the existence of Old Ones, fragments of what Immortals knew about them, and most importantly, rudiments of Shadow Magic. Since then, the most powerful aristocrats of this realm have become students of the Twilight Arts. They are known as the *Shadow Lords*.

Eadrin's leadership forms a cadre of alumni who seek to pierce the Secrets of the Deep and protect them from outsiders. Or perhaps it is the other way around—protecting outsiders from their own imprudent curiosity. The rulers of the Sees of Eadrin are the most experienced in Shadow Magic and mentors to the best students in the realm. In turn, the latter provide guidance to those wizards who seek to join their exclusive brood, the Gray Circle. As part of their apprenticeship, aspiring Shadow Lords must venture alone into the inky gloom beneath the

Well of Shadows to awaken their talents. All alumni remain under oath to protect their knowledge and keep it from outsiders.

It is the Shadow Lords who intimidate common folks and neighboring realms. They are strange people, with disturbing powers, unnatural looks, and bizarre manners. Hooded to obscure their faces, they rarely come out in full daylight, preferring a hazy dusk or dawn. A chill often runs down one's spine when first meeting an adept of the Twilight Arts, often prompting a fearful glance over one's shoulder. The Gray Ones are notorious for their ability to hold their keeps despite unfavorable odds. Past military forays from Randel never fared well. Most of their warriors died. Those who returned remained shaken and not quite the same since. Nowadays, such rash behavior never involves Eadrin borders.



The twisted passages near the Well of Shadow have become entrances to major mines. Eadrin collects Night Stones. The properties of these minerals enable them to absorb light, natural or magical. In the presence of darkness, Night Stones radiate a faint aura producing twilight-like conditions that cannot be altered by any means, natural or magical. Likewise, bright lights are instantly dimmed in the presence of Night Stones. Shadow Lords, as a result of their craft, seek these stones and place them within their abodes. Aristocrats may afford a great many of these rocks, coating enough of their palaces to alter light within a few miles' radius. Lesser members usually own a few, which are placed at various points inside their dwellings. It is fortunate that these local twilight conditions seem not to affect wildlife or the growth of plants, although the sun or the moon can only be seen as vague glows in the dimmed sky.

Oddly enough, these gloomy conditions provide more of an attraction to visiting wizards than Eadrin's beaches ever did. Towns, cities, towers, and castles in the Nine Sees of Eadrin lie partially or entirely within their masters' twilight, depending on how much of their walls are made of Night Stones. It is for this reason that Archport is also known as the City of Twilight. Night or day never prevails there. Light sources are extremely localized, allowing someone to bring forth the glow of a candle to read a book, but not to illuminate a room. It takes a lot of getting used to. A few miles away lies a peaceful countryside, with rolling hills, rich meadows, and a few sunny beaches. Residents both fear and revere their strange masters, for Eadrin remains at peace with its neighbors, its laws are fair, and life is decent despite the lack of bright light here and there. The only places off limits are the approaches to the mines and to the *Well of Shadows*. The Shadow Lords own them and they do not welcome outsiders.

# The Shadow Lords

They are specialist wizards who dabble with a unique sort of magic based on shadows and arcane principles prevailing at the very edge of light and darkness. What lies there is neither entirely real nor fully illusory yet remains quite tangible in the view of those who fear it. This world at the rim of worlds responds to the subconscious of the unlearned and to manipulations woven by wizards. Those trained in the Twilight Arts know how to bring shadows more fully into reality. They're not necromancers and bear no connection to the undead (or any link with the X11 module *Saga of the Shadow Lord*, although its villain could be cast as an obscure Eadrin alumnus).

## The Status of Light

There are three conditions with which Shadow Lords must contend, including:

**Daylight:** (or any brightly lit environment within a *light\** spell radius). Shadow Lords may not use *special abilities* other than spells, noted as SA later, and suffer the following penalties: *Partial Blindness*--temporary -2 penalty to their Dex scores and hit rolls; *Pain*--temporary -1 hp per experience level. Hit points lost due to *Pain* are immediately regained in Twilight conditions.

**Darkness:** (complete darkness). Shadow Lords may not use special abilities (SA) other than spells. In this environment, they save vs. light-based attacks or spell effects generating light with a -2 penalty. If the effect causes damage, increase damage 25% times 1d4 (25%-100%).

**Twilight:** (dusk/dawn, moonlight, starlight, areas lit with torches, etc.) Shadow Lords may use all their abilities and suffer no penalties.

## Other Penalties

Since Shadow Lords must study their craft in addition to basic wizardry, earned experience incurs a permanent -20% penalty.

## Training

A wizard may begin training as a Shadow Lord when reaching any level (not necessarily while going through initial apprenticeship). Shadow Lord levels (SL) must be tracked separately, although only one XP total applies for basic and shadow wizardry. They're not split, as with AD&D Game multi-classes. Both abilities progress at the same pace.

**For example:** upon reaching third level, a magic-user decides to begin training as a Shadow Lord. The -20% experience penalty applies from this point on. First level shadow magic and remaining Shadow Lord penalties come into play when the magic-user reaches the next experience level in basic wizardry, noted as MU 4th/SL 1st.

By definition, the weakest Shadow Lord would be a MU 2nd/SL 1st. Training may be abandoned later on. If/when this decision is made, all shadow abilities and related spells are immediately and irremediably lost.



Although the -20% experience penalty ceases right away, all other penalties end a year later for each level of experience attained as a Shadow Lord. Lost experience resulting from the earlier penalty is never recovered. Training as a Shadow Lord can never be resumed (the character is seen at best as a failure among Shadow Lords, at worst as a renegade). Shadow Lord training is available to BECFMI elves and Mystaran nosferatu. Multi-classed characters (First or Second Edition AD&D Game) only incur the -20% penalty to experience earned as magic-users.

### **Prerequisites**

As the magic-user class, except as noted below.

**Prime Requisites:** Int and Dex (*and* Str for Elves). Shadow magic requires a minimum Dex score of 13.

**Experience Bonus:** +5% Int 13-15 (*and* Str 13 or better for elves). +10% Int 16-18 (*and* Str 13 or better for elves). Any experience bonuses directly offset the Shadow Lord's basic -20% penalty.

## **Shadow Lord Special Abilities (SA)**

Upon reaching certain experience levels, a Shadow Lord becomes able to *Open Locks*, *Move Silently*, *Hide in Shadows*, and *Hear Noise* as a Thief of the same level, with some additional effects. If the Shadow Lord is an AD&D Game multi-classed Thief, add a flat +10% bonus to these scores, regardless of SL levels. A multiclassed Thief does benefit from additional Shadow Lord effects.

### **SL Level 1**

*Hide in Shadows*: if successful, it is impervious to enhanced perception (infravision, dark vision, and other magically altered vision short of *True Sight*; sense of smell, danger detection, *detect evil/good*, etc.) The effect ends immediately in bright light or total darkness. Can be used with *Move Silently*.

*Clear Sight*: allows a Shadow Lord to see through dimly lit areas as clearly as other people can see in broad daylight. *Clear Sight* also enables the Shadow Lord to see through natural or magical fog or smoke at the rate of 10'/SL level.

### **SL Level 3**

*Move Silently*: in addition to the standard Thief ability, the Shadow Lord earns a special move. If *Hiding in Shadows* at the beginning of the round, the Shadow Lord may *dimension door* from the present location to another shadowy spot within 60' (+2'/SL level). Whether moving on foot or with a *dimension door*, a check is needed to determine whether the Shadow Lord remains silent. Likewise, a separate check is also required to keep *Hiding in Shadows*.

### **SL Level 5**

*Hear Noise*: in addition to the normal Thief ability, a successful *Hear Noise* also enables a Shadow Lord to detect danger (60' radius +2'/SL level, for one round). The general

direction of a danger source (the closest if more than one) can be sensed as well. *Hear Noise* takes a full round and does not permit half-moves or any other action.

### **SL Level 7**

*Open Locks*: if successful, this ability is equivalent to a silent *knock* spell as regards its effects and range. The lock or portal *knocked* open will remain silent when the ability is triggered. Only one attempt may succeed against the same lock or portal.

### **SL Level 9**

*Gray Carcer*: enables the capture of a common, natural shadow up to 30' +2'/SL level, once per day. This special ability is instantaneous. Saving throws do not apply, however, the ability has a 50% chance of success. Odds increase +5% bonus per SL level above the victim's, or the opposite if the Shadow Lord is of a lower level. Chances decrease another -5% for each degree of alignment difference for AD&D Game mechanics, or -10% for BECMI rules. In the former case, LG to CE would incur a -20% penalty. For this reason, many Shadow Lords favor Neutral alignment(s).

A captor can store within his/her own self one stolen shadow for every three SL levels (3rd, 6th, 9th, etc.) Although believed irrelevant and inoffensive by most, in truth a natural shadow contains a fraction of one's soul. Capturing a shadow bears consequences for both owner and captor.

The victim immediately loses an experience level (or 1 HD) in addition to the ability to cast any shadow or reflection of any kind. This loss is permanent until the captor is killed or releases the shadow. A Shadow Lord may not capture a shadow if this would result in the immediate death of its owner. Both the victim and the Shadow Lord can sense each other's general direction and approximate distance (+ 0-3 miles). A natural shadow can never be destroyed but may be stolen by (or gifted to) another Shadow Lord who becomes the captor, provided the latter meets or exceeds the former captor's experience. Shadow Lords may substitute captured shadows for their own when a *Gray Carcer* is used against them.

Holding a natural shadow captive creates a telepathic link between victim and captor. As a result, the latter gains each day one free *ESP* spell effect and one *suggestion* spell effect (1st or 2nd Edition AD&D Game) usable on the shadow's owner without range limitation. All appropriate saving throws apply. If previously unable to cast a shadow or a reflection (such as a vampire or nosferatu), the captor gains the ability to do so, as long as at least one shadow remains captive. A captor may experience difficulties controlling a shadow in this manner if initial success odds were less than 50% (the shadow doesn't exactly match its captor's movements or silhouette).

If the victim is of a higher experience level than the Shadow Lord's, the latter gains +2 hp as long as the shadow is retained captive (Con bonus does not apply). All abilities from captured shadows are lost if their owners are killed. Victims typically seek to kill or punish severely those who stole their shadows. The ability to withhold a captured shadow does not go away when the captor is exposed to adverse conditions (broad daylight or full darkness), although benefits are negated until twilight resumes.



## Shadow Lord Spells

Shadow Lords learn and cast spells just like normal magic-users do. Shadow magic spells are woven at the level attained as a Shadow Lord and require twilight conditions at the time they are cast. No additional spellcasting slots are gained. For example, a MU 3rd/SL 1st can cast each day no more than two first level spells + one second level spell, only one of which being a shadow magic spell.

### Spell Level 1

*Twilight*: is similar to a *light*\* spell except that it changes ambient light or total darkness to twilight conditions within 60' radius +2'/SL level. Torchlight is somewhat dimmed and casts an unusual number of shadows. If outdoors, the area of effect changes to yards rather than feet. Duration lasts 5 Turns +1/SL level, and the spell effect moves with the caster.

The spell is critical in that it enables a Shadow Lord to retain special abilities despite adverse conditions. Shadow Lords automatically learn this spell when earning their first level. When cast against any magical *light* or *darkness* effect, the spell has a 5% chance of failure for each experience level (or HD) of the Shadow Lord below that of the original spell's caster—see *dispel magic* mechanics for more details. If successful, it supersedes existing *light* or *darkness* effects.

The area of effect comes off as spooky to any creature half the Shadow Lord's experience level (rounded down) or with half as many HD—provided they have at least animal Intelligence. Bug-like creatures, slimes, the undead, creatures resistant to fear, and companions of a Shadow Lord are immune. Higher level beings are allowed a saving throw vs. spell to negate the effect. Affected creatures become nervous and jumpy and suffer a -2 penalty to hit rolls and Morale checks.

*Shadow Touch*: allows a Shadow Lord to render friends or foes more susceptible to shadow magic for 1 Turn. A hit roll is required to affect an unwilling target (against natural AC with magic and Dex bonuses only). As many friends as the Shadow Lord can touch within the casting round are affected. Foes suffer a -2 saving throw and AC penalty against subsequent shadow magic. Friends may otherwise benefit from other spells affecting only the Shadow Lord (see *blade of gloom*, *Stygian pit*, and *shadow play* later).

### Spell Level 2

*Fake Shadows*: the caster may create up to 1d4+1 silhouettes per SL level (of any shape and size, given enough room), and make them move across a surface. The spell's range is 60' +2'/SL level. The effect is intended to infer that people or creatures, including mounts and carts, move in that direction, carrying bags of loot or brandishing weapons. The spell lasts up to 1 Turn per SL level, or until dispelled. *Fake shadows* are mindless illusions that will keep moving in the initial direction. Once cast, the spell does not require the Shadow Lord to keep concentrating. Some care must be taken to cast the spell in such a way that the illusion remains believable. For example, *fake shadows* cast upon a castle's wall will keep progressing around the wall until the spell ends.

Minor Pantomime: creates a two-dimensional silhouette of the caster against a physical surface, which the Shadow Lord can send off to explore and spy. A *pantomime* has no mind of its own and remains fully under its creator's control. While the spell is in effect, the Shadow Lord cannot cast either a shadow or a reflection of his/her own. A *pantomime* moves as fast as its creator indiscriminately across walls, floors, ceilings, or any other surfaces as long as normal shadows can be cast upon them. It cannot enter areas of bright light or total darkness, nor can it physically affect anything (such as opening doors, triggering traps, making sounds, attacking people, or stealing objects). A crack under a door allows a *pantomime* through, while a hermetically sealed one does not. The spell lasts 6 Turns during which the caster can see and hear everything within normal sight/earshot. Although a *pantomime* and its creator cannot be physically harmed in the process, the former is visible and automatically dispelled with a *light*, a *darkness*, or a *dispel magic*. Also see the *inquest* spell for more information.

### Spell Level 3

Blade of Gloom: summons a sword of swirling darkness. It is equivalent to a magical +4 sword (longsword) enabling the Shadow Lord to attempt a *Backstab* as a Thief of the same level. The blade *levitates* up to 40' from the caster, progressing horizontally or vertically 20'/Round. Other than attempting a *Backstab*, it may only parry attacks. The blade lasts 1d4+1 Rounds after being spotted or vanishes after the Shadow Lord succeeds a *Backstab*. If the attack succeeds, a surviving victim must roll a saving throw vs. spells or be displaced by *dimension door* to a shadowy spot within 60' (+2'/SL level of the caster). This spell does not betray the presence of a Shadow Lord *hiding in shadows*.

Shadow Guardian: the caster invokes a special protection lasting 1 Day or until triggered. When the caster is about to suffer physical damage, the *shadow guardian* appears as the silhouette of a warrior with a shield and absorbs the damage. If the attack is a spell allowing a saving throw for half damage like a *fireball*, the *guardian* absorbs half of that resulting damage. The guardian vanishes upon completing its purpose. No more than one such spell for every 3 SL levels may be cast at one time, each appearing after the previous one was triggered. *Shadow guardians* do not readily protect *pantomimes* or *shadow play* but can be "programmed" to do so or to react to specific spells with a *contingency* spell.

### Spell Level 4

Minor Shadow Play: allows a Shadow Lord and all recipients of an earlier *shadow touch* within a 60' radius to become their own shadows, including all that they can carry (see *minor pantomime* earlier). The spell cannot affect creatures unable to cast a shadow or a reflection, such as vampires and nosferatu. Unwilling targets are allowed a saving throw vs. spells. The caster may opt to affect only unwilling creatures or vice-versa. All those affected physically vanish, save for their *minor pantomime* forms. The effect lasts for 6 Turns or until *dispelled*, at which point the spell's recipients physically reappear at the spot where the *pantomimes* vanished.

*Stygian Pit*: creates an invisible, 30' deep by 10' diameter pit within 60' +2/SL level of the caster. The surface appears normal and solid. Those who step onto the affected area must save vs. spell or be sucked inside, appearing as if they faded into shadows. It may affect a number of creatures equal to or less than the caster's level, provided they can physically fit inside. The pit is magically *silenced* and *dark*, and its inner surfaces as slick as glass. To those trapped inside, other occupants feel alien to the touch, creepy and ominously monstrous (no save). The spell is permanent until someone falls into it, after which it lasts one more Turn. All occupants reappear where they vanished when the spell ends.

## Spell Level 5

*Greater Pantomime*: similar to the *minor pantomime*, except the latter can speak and benefits from a *telekinesis* effect (as the 5<sup>th</sup> level magic-user spell).

The *greater pantomime* also enables the caster to take the place of someone else's normal, human-like shadow at any time during the spell's duration (no save). The impersonated shadow will match the owner's silhouette in all ways. The spell, however, isn't perfect, and the caster must mimic as best as possible the movements of the shadow's owner not to be noticed. If the owner makes an unexpected gesture, the Shadow Lord must succeed a Dex check to perpetrate the ruse. If it fails, the impersonator's own shadow replaces that of the owner. If two or more natural shadows come into contact, the caster may switch to someone else's, restoring the previous owner's. In all cases, switching shadows remains completely surreptitious and allows the caster to revert to the new owner's silhouette. The Shadow Lord may run away at any time while the spell is in effect, leaving the owner without a shadow for the duration of the spell.

*Solid Umbra*: is similar to *stoneform*, with the following differences. It creates up to 1,000 cubic feet of shadow material. The structure does not require support and can *levitate* if desired (although, once created, the shape does not actually move) as long as the caster can physically touch the material when the spell is cast. At this time, the Shadow Lord has the option of making the material solid only to him/herself (and to recipients of an earlier *shadow touch*) or solid to others only. The magical umbra lasts 1 Day/SL level or until dispelled by the caster. The structure cannot be dispelled by other spellcasters short of *disintegrate* or more powerful spells.

## Spell Level 6

*Shadow Monsters*: summons a number of HD of monsters equal to or less than half the Shadow Lord's experience level. In most respects the spell is similar to *create normal monsters*. They appear as jet black versions radiating a faint aura. In addition to their own, these creatures benefit from all special abilities (SA) available to the caster, as long as they remain within an area of twilight. If exposed to daylight or complete darkness, summoned creatures incur the same penalties as their caster. They are automatically considered recipients of the caster's *shadow touch*.

*Inquest*: allows a Shadow Lord to capture a rival's *pantomime*. Its owner is allowed a saving throw vs. spells to escape. The *inquest's* range is 60' +2'/SL level, and duration is instantaneous. If a *pantomime* is captured, it is paralyzed (its owner may no longer dispel it).

The caster has two options: 1. The owner's identity and general location (direction and distance) are revealed before the *pantomime* is dispelled. 2. The *pantomime* is permanently trapped within a receptacle of the caster's choice, rendering the owner unable to cast any sort of shadow or reflection, let alone any new *pantomime* or *shadow play* spells. The owner must find and defeat his shadow's captor to regain lost abilities. If the receptacle is non-magical, any *dispel magic* effect will release its contents.

If a *pantomime* resulted from *shadow play*, the affected owner either appears before the caster when the *pantomime* is dispelled or is trapped with no hope of escape. The caster cannot readily tell whether a *pantomime* was issued from someone else's *shadow play*.

### **Spell Level 7**

*Obscuration*: renders the caster incorporeal. During this time, the caster "becomes" the prevailing dimness. The area of effect is a circle and overhead dome with a radius 5'/SL level. The spell lasts 1 Round/SL level during which the twilight within cannot be dispelled without first forcing the Shadow Lord to materialize. No one can leave the affected area, magically or physically, which appears to be surrounded with billowing shadows. Those who attempt to walk out simply reappear on the opposite side. Anyone left outside may always enter but likewise cannot exit. Meanwhile, the Shadow Lord can see and hear all that happens inside but not take any physical action other than casting spells from any direction. The caster must beware of self-inflicted damage from area-of-effect spells like *fireballs* or *lightning bolts*. The Shadow Lord is forced to reappear in person if enough damage is inflicted to the shadowy confines with spells or magical weapons. The billowing edge is AC -10 to hit and sustains at best half damage from area-of-effect spells. If the total damage inflicted matches the caster's hit points, the Shadow Lord reappears in person, with half of his/her hit points left. The caster may choose to end the spell at any time.

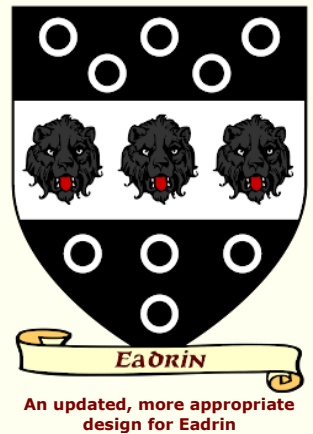
**Gray Ring of the Alumni**: the name refers to a simple silver ring set with a small Night Stone that bears an etching of the Gray Circle's badge design. This sort of magical ring enables its wearer to cast a *twilight* once per day as a 9th level Shadow Lord. It is often used to hold trapped *pantomimes*. Each captive enables an extra *twilight* spell to be cast, or an additional level of ability to the initial spell.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her patience and editorial assistance.*

# Dominion Stats - Eadrin

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

At first sight, the most striking feature of Eadrin is the sheer size of Archport, its capital. With 190,000 inhabitants, it accounts for nearly 20% of the realm's population. Much of local economics are based on maritime trade funneling through Archport and up the Thera River. As a result of the generally denser population in this relatively small realm, Eadrin actually stands as a net importer of food and timber. The agricultural deficit remains minor compared to Vertiloch, and timber is needed to supplement wood harvested locally for ship-building in Archport. Although busy, this port isn't as popular and crowded as Aasla's. Foreign crews often see Archport's permanent twilight conditions as odd and unnatural. Yet, for those sailing from Bellissaria, Archport's facilities are the best choice when shipping merchandise to the imperial capital.



Statistically, Eadrin's wilderness only claims 56% of the realm's lands, compared to neighboring Arogansa's 70%. As a result of its higher degree of urbanization, Eadrin actually enjoys more revenues than its larger neighbor; about 334,000 vs. 287,000 gp/month, even though Eadrin has less population than its neighbor. Since Randel isn't a most trustworthy neighbor, Eadrin retains a sizable defense force. Shadow Lords and their mysterious constructs also provide significant deterrents to invasions. The latter are curious beasties built by their masters to form part of the realm's army. More about them and their connection with the Gray Circle will be covered in the upcoming post on Archport. Naturally, since militaristic Randel hasn't been detailed to date, there can be no comparisons of relative army sizes--yet. Meanwhile, Arogansa and Eadrin aren't likely to clash anytime soon. Arogansa is more interested in running its flourishing tourism industry and safeguarding its borders, which suits Eadrin just fine. On the other hand, both view Randel with suspicion.

For now, let's compare Eadrin's forces with Arogansa's. The Shadow Lords enjoy land-based forces up to 7,178 HD-worth of military, compared with Arogansa's 4,884. Eadrin's navy fares equally with 38 vessels including 9 airships and 6 subs vs. Arogansa's 28 vessels (6 airships and 5 subs). The Shadow Lords do need a strong navy not only to safeguard the coastline and approaches to Archport but because the banks of the Thera and Randel Rivers mark the realm's other two borders. From a practical standpoint, ships navigating these rivers are assessed port tolls by one realm or the other depending on which harbors they pick. Neither Arogansa, nor Eadrin, nor Randel permit nightly navigation along the rivers. All ships are required to stop either at Archport, Charmydon, or Rardish for inspection (and tolls).

Eadrin's galleys patrol the Thera and Randel Rivers. The so-called Randel Bridge between Eadrin and Randel, Castle Bridge to Theranderol, Blackpool and Charmydon Bridges to Arogansa are fitted with a spans that can be drawn up to allow large ships to pass. All of them are lowered at night, blocking navigation. Eadrin's sail ships patrol the coast and shipping lines to Bellissaria. Much of that fleet otherwise anchors in Archport.

## The Land and People of Eadrin

Rural Population: 686,688 farmers 71.1% **34,334** armed peasants and **13,003**  
 Urban Population: 260,051 townfolk 26.9% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 19,063 warriors (HD) 2.0% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 965,802 Eadriners** the seas, the air, and the underworld.

**Total Land Area: 47,455 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 20.35 people per Sq. Mile  
 54% Wilderness Price of Bread: 15 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 29% Borderlands Price Inflation: High  
 17% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 8.7 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Archport	190,000	9,688
Deipan	9,750	500
Nafertin	8,500	500
Ecem	7,250	500
Idongor	6,876	500
Shayde	4,810	500
Pt. Glint	3,900	200
Adumbray	2,990	500
Obscurata	2,080	500
Umbrion	1,095	500
Villages (15)	7,500	75
-	-	-
Gray Shroud Castle	6,000	2,000
Blackpool Castle	6,000	2,000
Ft. Gloomen	3,000	1,000
Towers (5)	300	100
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

### Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 5**  
 1800 Convicts or Slaves  
 39 Administrators  
 180 Guards  
 876 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**2895 Total Mining Population**

### Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Furs, Leather Goods, Livestock, Timber, Tanneries, Hostelries

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Ivory, Medicinal Goods, Shipbuilding, Textiles, Luxury Guest Houses

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Books, Merchant Fair, Magic, Nighstone Commerce

## Treasury of Eadrin

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	67,390	gp/month	20.2%	Farmer	1.0 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	132,205	gp/month	39.6%	Townfolk	5.1 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	27,000	gp/month	8.1%	Household	4.2 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	33,280	gp/month	10.0%	per Capita	3.5 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	74,082	gp/month	22.2%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>333,957</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	60,112	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	45,084	gp/month
Government & Politics	45,084	gp/month
Personal Prestige	60,112	gp/month
Treasury	30,056	gp/month
Military	60,112	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

Occasional Venality

### Farming:

Eadrin will need to import food.

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	1,830	1	Shadow Lord Alumni	56	6
Guards	180	1	Shadow Constructs	167	5
Heavy Infantry	598	2	Greater Constructs	13	8
Shortbowmen	915	1	-	-	-
Longbowmen	299	2	-	-	-
Mounted Archers	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	915	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	457	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	-	-	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	457	1
-	-	-	Trebuchet Artillerists	-	-
Light Horsemen	457	1	-	-	-
Med. Horsemen	179	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	82	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Wyvern Riders	13	6	Auxiliaries:	560	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	2,338
Mules or Oxen:	3,507
Draft Horses:	418
Tents:	1,757
Camp Followers:	1,120

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	228
Lt Catapults:	76
Hvy Catapults:	57
Trebuchets:	-

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	594
Medium Warhorses:	233
Heavy Warhorses:	107
Riding Horses:	1,066
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	13

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**7,178 HD**

(\* *Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.*)

## Naval Forces

**Total Fleet Size: 38**

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	8	80	480	24	160	1
Large Galley	4	80	720	16	200	2
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	4
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	14	140	--	42	350	1
Large Sailing Ship	7	140	--	28	350	2
Troop Transport	3	90	--	15	150	4

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.*

*Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy: 2,085 Seamen**      Seamen on Shore Leave: 349 HD  
**9 Airships, 6 Submersibles, 23 Surface Ships**      **Average Hull Points: 109**

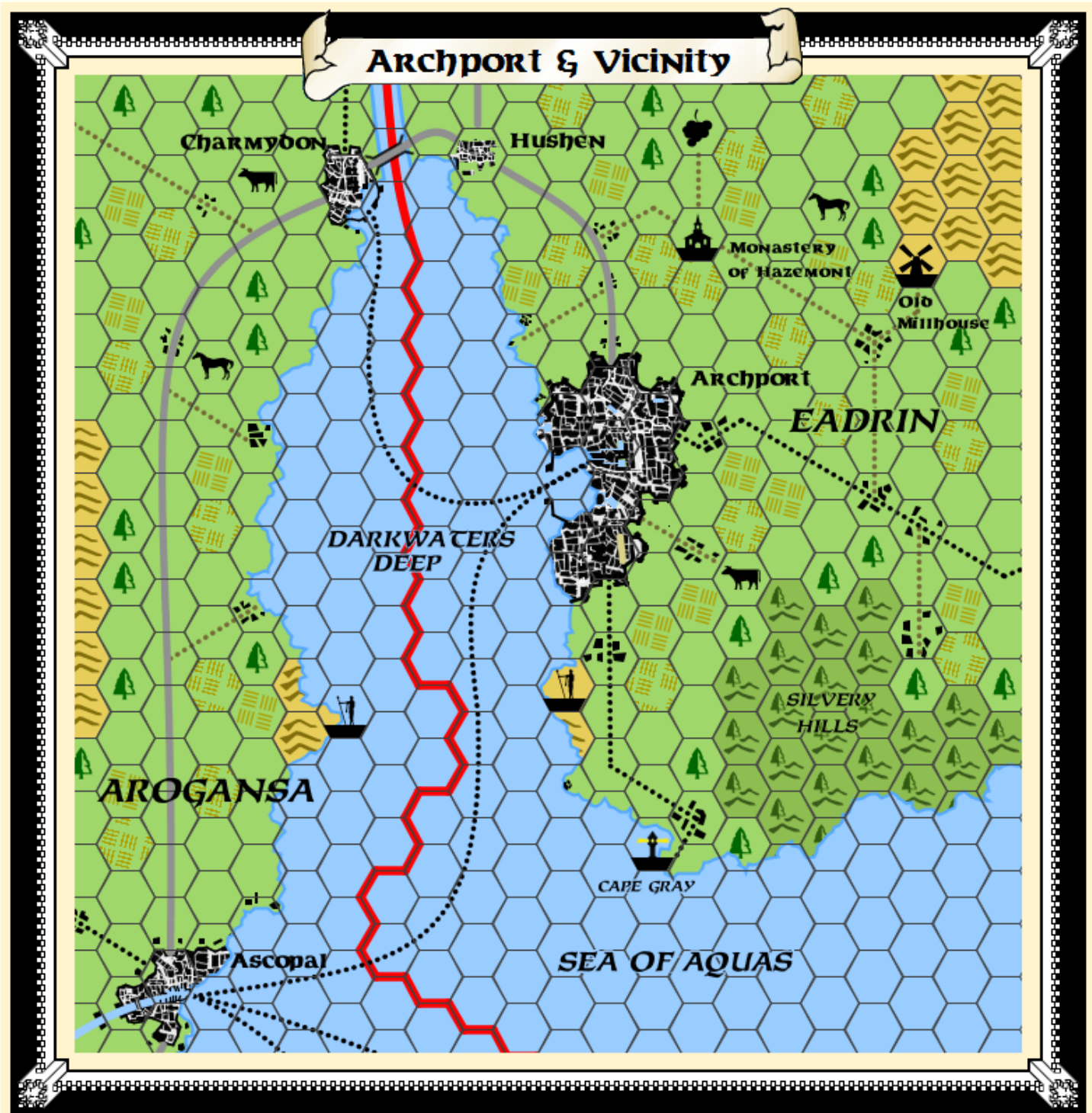
*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her patience and editorial assistance.*





# Archport - City of Eternal Twilight

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Closeup of the Archport Area - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex**

*Twilight reigns in Archport.* Sailing up Darkwaters Deep in broad daylight, one should notice an immense dome masking the thirty square-mile city within which sunrays fade, as if one gazed through tinted spectacles. Stranger yet at night, an eerie glow prevails all about the city despite the absence of moonlight. Ships sailing in and out bear navigation lamps, their red and green halos reflecting faintly upon the water.

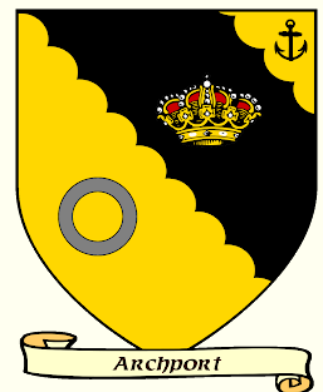
The name, "Darkwaters Deep," describes the part closest to Archport more than the entire bay. The rule of night and day prevails beyond Archport's immaterial twilight cloak. For some navigators, the oddity of it all, or the crew's ill-informed superstition prove too much, and they make for the more expensive and crowded ports of Ascopal and Charmydon across the bay. These harbors cannot truly compete with Eadrin's capital city. Local topography does not permit further expansion. There, only the fees grow, as visiting ships continually compete for docking space.

Those who know better head to Archport. Its immense facilities provide all that sea princes might desire and at competitive prices. In the absence of true night or day, the port and its businesses are always awake and at work. Locals have adapted well to the dim lighting. They always seem surprised or perplexed at the mention of Archport's twilight. Many do not leave the city. None among the poorest ever do and they have no concept of natural daylight. Citizens would most certainly not leave town without a pair or two of dark-tinted spectacles to protect their eyes from the injury of bright light. That, their sickly pallor, and the city's prevailing fashion commanding black clothing, hooded cloaks, and other headgear are dead giveaways in the view of rural Eadriners. The constant twilight attracts sun-shy creatures, flocking to Archport like moths on a lamp. Among them stand denizens of faraway Boldavia, who've taken great precautions to conceal their Glantrian origins, and who've learned to mask their accented speech.

To outsiders, the city appears as a timeless microcosm. The sun and the moon, vague glows arching across in the sky, can be used nonetheless to account for time. Most Archiportenes (called "Archies" by the provincials) rely instead on mechanical clocks or other magical devices that are far more accurate and colorful in the way they alert their owners about the time of the day or expected appointments. The sound of a bell's deep toll, the scream of a maiden, or the call of a crow in a wizard's pocket startles many a first-timer in Archport.

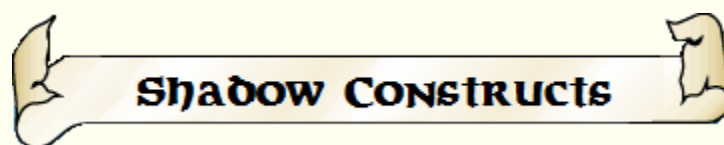
## City Layout

The northern and southern edges lie on higher ground with a steep incline leading to a rocky shore. Archport's center occupies the low ground and is the hearth and bellows of Eadrin's merchant industry. Where the port ends and where the city center begins is never clear since some of the streets form canals leading to private docks and warehouses. The northern district is home to the middle class, the military, and the poor. The city's south district houses municipal quarters, the Shadow Queen's palace, and much of the aristocracy. Temples can be found throughout. Dark walls and tall towers surround the city which many suspect have been studded with *nightstones*. The city's four gates are carefully monitored. Beyond lies a land of many hamlets, fields, and pastures. A wealthy monastery owns an extensive domain several miles north. Aside from farming, its monks are notorious for studying psychic damage from shadow-induced dreams, and relations between shadows and divine immortality. It also offers asylum to those who lost their minds.



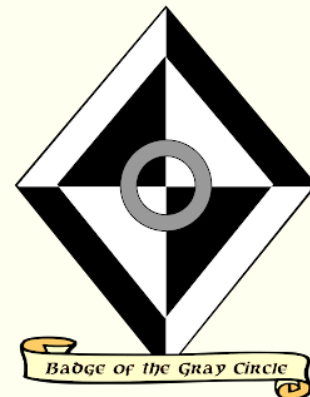
The palace and the courthouse are adjoining structures. At the behest of Shadow Lords, the rule of law is strictly enforced in Eadrin and overseen directly by the Shadow Lords. Although the legal system isn't unfair or harsh, mercy is rarely given to those found guilty. There is a compelling reason behind this. The royal palace houses the Gray Circle's inner sanctum. At its heart lies a vast chamber fitted with a magical circle built of *nightstones*, tall pillars, and a high vault. It is where the top nine Shadow Lords confer. When not in session, criminals from all around the realms are brought here to be stripped of their natural shadows, which are then trapped within the circle. Victims of 1HD or less do not suffer the associated level loss but do instead lose a 2-5 points (total) of Intelligence and Wisdom (see the updated post on Shadow Lords).

Until they are summoned for other uses, trapped shadows swirl silently amid the circle, from floor to ceiling. Their owners, partly under a mind-numbing effect generated by the circle, are returned to the Sees in which they had been convicted to serve their sentences. The latter include incarceration, serving in the Queen's navy as captive rowers, hard labor in the dangerous *nightstone* mines of northeastern Eadrin, and indentured service for the Shadow Lords or their alumni. There is no death penalty in Eadrin which, in the view of Shadow Lords, would be a pointless waste of a good resource. The worst fate is therefore reclusion in perpetuity.



## Shadow Constructs

Shadow Lords do have uses for the swirls of shadows ripped from hapless criminals. In times of need, the former can be fashioned into constructs and commanded to stand among the Queen's army or local forces under the Shadow Lords' control. Some can fly. Others can swim or dive beneath the surface. All reflect abilities and weaknesses of Shadow Lords and, as a result, are rarely used beyond the limits of twilight. Looking closely, one may perceive the tormented and obscure faces of those whose shadows make up a beast. They twist and squirm as the construct moves about. Lamentations of the damned echo when it roars.



When these beasts are killed, individual shadows bound to them are released and return to their owners. If so, the latter's sentences are commuted and their time considered served. If a construct is no longer needed, it is brought back through underground passages to the Gray Circle where it disintegrates. Its shadows remain trapped in the circle and their owners to continue serving their sentences. A *Keeper of Time* is responsible for releasing shadows from the circle when their owners have served their legal sentences. A *Master Crafter* oversees the fashioning of shadow constructs, based upon an enormous grimoire compiled by the Shadow Lords. When convicted criminals die, their shadows vanish from the circle, which explains why Shadow Lords are reluctant to execute anyone. Shadow Lord alumni often work as bounty-hunters for their masters. They are empowered to collect from the Gray Circle the shadows of escaped inmates which enables them to sense the fugitives' whereabouts. Some of the more recalcitrant, hard-headed (higher level) prisoners can occasionally overcome the circle's will-bending powers.

Former criminals retain dreamlike and frightening memories of their captivities, the fates of their shadows, or the demise of the constructs to which they had been bound. The feeling is ominous enough for many to never stray from the law again, and a certain affinity survives between freed criminals whose shadows were part of the same beast. In a cynical twist of fate, the brighter ones among these silent fellowships often become wizards who study the world of shadows, or ecclesiastics residing at the Hazemont Monastery. Former convicts suffer from what is referred to in modern terms as a *post-traumatic syndrome disorder*. As a consequence of this cycle, some Shadow Lords prove far less sociable than others, while the monks may appear reclusive, odd, and sinister.



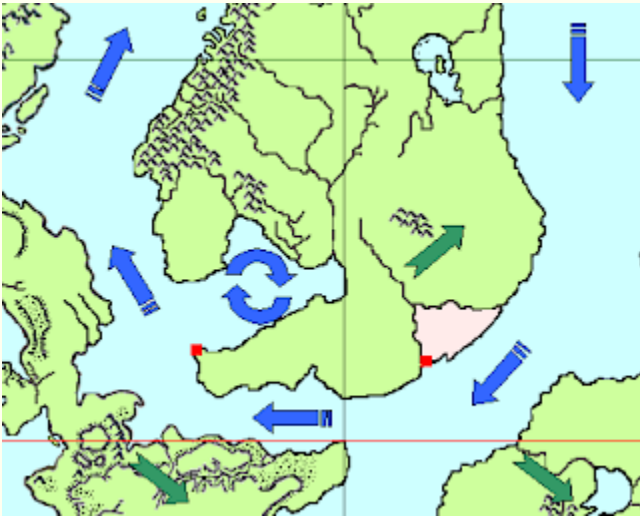
## ARCHPORT'S GARRISON

<b>Posted in Archport</b>		82% Human 10% Elven
<b>Total Strength:</b>	9,688 HD	4% Halfling 2% Dwarven
<b>Infantry:</b>	952 Lt. Infantry, 311 Hvy. Infantry, 476 Shortbowmen, 156 Longbowmen,	
<b>Cavalry:</b>	238 Lt. Cavalry, 93 Med. Cavalry, 43 Hvy. Cavalry, 7 Wyvern Riders,	
<b>Special Troops:</b>	29 Spellcasters, 87 Shadow Constructs, 7 Greater Constructs,	
<b>Siege Weapons:</b>	952 Artillerists with 119 Ballistae, 40 Lt. Catapults 30 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets	
<b>War Machines:</b>		
<b>Auxiliaries:</b> 285 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers		
<b>Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:</b> 968.8 soldiers and seamen		
<b>At Port or at Sea:</b> 261 Sailors, 522 Marines (and 1566 rower convicts)		
6 Small Galley 3 Large Galley 2 War Galley		
<b>Assigned Ships</b>	11 Small Sailing Ship 5 Large Sailing Ship 2 Troop Transport	
<b>Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison</b>		
	Wagons: 1189	
	Mules or Oxen: 1783	<b>Archport Militia: 9,500 People or HD</b>
	Draft Horses: 213	
	Tents: 893	
	Camp Followers: 570 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)	

Nearly half of Eadrin's military means garrison Archport. Shadow Lord alumni often act as commanders or at least as advisers to non-magically-skilled officers. Land-based military enforce the law and the will of the Shadow Lords. Local wyvern riders are responsible for watching the suburban-like sprawl of hamlets and farmsteads. Unless a war is brewing, few shadow constructs are summoned into existence. A handful serve among Eadrin's galleys and subs to watch convict rowers. They aren't otherwise deployed among the public without compelling reasons. As can be expected, Archport is a major naval base, with 29 warships of various types. These include 17 surface vessels, 7 airships (small sailing ships with 90 HP each) and 5 subs (small galleys with 100 HP each).

- **Airships:** *HMV\* Moon Shadow, Storm Rider, Silver Cloud, Gray Squall, Twilight Ark, Veil of Souls, Star Shade*
- **Submersibles:** *HMV Lanternfish, Abyssal Flashglow, Dread Anglerfish, Gray Bristlemouth, Viperfish*
- **Sm. Galleys:** *HMV Spirit of Nafertin, of Shayde, of Adumbray, of Obscurata, of Umbrion, of Ecem*
- **Lg. Galleys:** *HMV Spirit of Archport, of Idongor, of Deipan*
- **War Galleys:** *HMV Well of Shadows, Gray Circle*
- **Sm. Sailing Ships:** *HMV Glint, Glymmerion, Glistenel, Flicketh, Taciturny, Intricata, Shimmerion, Contorta, Disturbia, Halo, Hushen*
- **Lg. Sailing Ships:** *HMV Blackstone, Iron Rose, Twelfth of Cyprimir, Queen's Will, Immortal Dusk*
- **Troops Transports:** *HMV Gray Shroud, Blackpool*

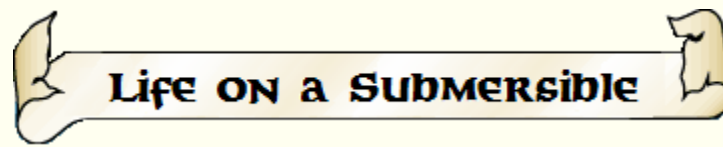
(\*) HMV stands for *Her Majesty's Vessel*.



The subs' main missions are to guard the entrance to Darkwaters Deep and the submarine border with Aquas. Underwater beasts seek to use the bay's fertile sediment as a reproduction site. Raids along the coast and inland along riverbanks will occur if these aquatic marauders go unchallenged. Airships often provide transport to visiting dignitaries and Shadow Lords traveling the realm. Airships otherwise patrol, sometimes for weeks at a time, the lesser populated regions of Eadrin and in particular, Pantomime Darks, Parody Peaks, and the Well of Shadows. Uncontrolled shadow monsters and the few escapees from the mines are the main

concern. The area is legally off limits and airships will also be looking for intruders lurking about. The remainder of Archport's fleet concerns itself with river and coastal patrols. Sailing vessels occasionally patrol shipping lines to Bellissaria. Prevailing winds blow from the southwest while the sea current flows from the northeast. Surface current is weak as a result of contrary winds but grows stronger at depth. Sea storms are common in these parts.

Shadow Lords have been working on means to cloak ships from sight while navigating in twilight conditions. They haven't been entirely successful yet but are making slow progress. Part of the research takes place beneath the Monastery of Hazemont in a specialized workshop available to select Shadow Lords. With the help of the monks, the latter's research has centered on the creation of secondary containers that could be fitted on ships, and into which shadows of convicted criminals could be transferred. The idea is to summon these shadows to weave such a cloak but the result has proven unstable so far. From an enchanter's point of view, technical and costly limitations have yet to be overcome in that some or all shadows break free when a ship uncloaks, resulting in a wave of undesirable amnesties back home. Attempts to replace captive shadows with undead counterparts have all failed with catastrophic consequences and henceforth, remain banned by royal decree.



## Life ON a Submersible

As one may imagine, it takes a very special brand of mariners to crew a submersible. These vessels come in a variety of shapes and are fully enclosed. Hulls and decks are made of various woods like oak, teak, cedar, and pine, reinforced with metal, usually magically-shaped and -riveted bronze or copper. Eadrin's subs feature two main decks. The top level and conning tower house the crew and their officers. Aside from a carpenter, a healing cleric, a few servants, and a handful of officers, the crew is essentially responsible for handling levers and pulleys controlling the sub's maneuvers. They otherwise concern themselves with launching large harpoons fitted within a boat's prow. Launch tubes are fitted with one-way energy fields preventing water from rushing in. Tubes can be physically sealed from the inside. A small opening into the Elemental Plane of Air provides a breathable atmosphere.

A few portholes allow sight through the hull (the officer's mess, the captain's quarter, the chart room) and from the conning tower. Shadow Lord alumni typically command subs, since their *Clear Sight* abilities enable them to defeat the near-total darkness prevailing at depth and, to some degree, the aquatic blur. Although subdued, light aboard is permanent and magical. During combat, it dims further and switches to green, blue, amber, or red depending on the vessel's make. A few small cargo bays provide necessary supplies for the mission or can be used as a brig.

Submersibles generally fall within the category of galleys. This is where the lower deck comes into use. It holds the condemned rowers, known as *galerians*. Rather than heaving on traditional oars, their chore is to turn metal cranks connected to the boat's propeller. Spectral chains bind their wrists to massive crenelated shafts, and their bare feet to the deck. At the stern sits a large shadow construct requiring neither air, nor sustenance, nor sleep. It makes ample use of a ghostly whip which grows out of its shimmering monstrous hide. At the fore, an *invisible servant* marks the beat on a large drum, as ordered through the flared brass tube connected with the conn. Hatches to the upper deck are *wizard locked*.

The worst criminals are assigned to subs, those serving life sentences. For most, their numbed-out minds allow them to survive the squalor, fatigue, and despair reigning on the lower deck. The ghastly sensation of the shadow beast occasionally peering into their minds to ferret out those seeking to rebel would otherwise be enough to render a normal person insane. Although unwillingly given, death is the only escape from Eadrin's submersibles. The latter sentence is the official line and reflects the vast majority of cases.

It may happen that a galerian's shadow is released, possibly as the result of a construct's demise elsewhere in Eadrin. It should become evident at some point that the former convict regained its ability to cast a shadow. By law, the galerian must therefore be released. In the limited confines of a submersible, however, the unusual event is likely to result in the individual being roughly thrown into the brig. An opportunity will come along to cast out the former galerian, be it a port, some other vessel sailing by, or a deserted island, whichever comes first. For the likes of these survivors, Hazemont Monastery is their only solace.

# Archport City Summary

190,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
9,688 Troop HD 30.6 sq. miles

*Buildings often are inadequately maintained, still some ruined or abandoned buildings. Most important streets are paved. A permanent Twilight reigns in Archport.*

		% Random*		% Random
Dwellings	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number
				Encounter
Humble Hovels	2,470	1.4	Alchemists	27
Shoddy Tenements	5,558	5-22	Apothecaries	42
Cozy Cottages	1,126	23-24	Bakers	542
Laborers' Commons	2,534	25-33	Barbers	475
Bourgeois Dwelling	489	34-35	Bathers	100
Manorhouse, Small Palace	260	36-39	Beer-Sellers	135
Large Palace	1	40	Blacksmiths	422
			Bleachers	90
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	63
Sordid Hostels	618	41-42	Booksellers	30
Cheap Taverns	600	43-44	Buckle Makers	135
Bawdy Houses	150	45	Butchers	380
Reputable Inns	280	46	Cabinet Makers	422
Exclusive Guest Houses	4	47	Carpenters	475
			Chandlers	271
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	475
Huge paved forums w/fountains, monuments, & Imposing marble guildhouses, finely	6 10	48 49	Coachmen, Porters	105
Workshops, Manufactures	13	50-51	Coopers	271
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	7	52	Copyists	95
Warehouses, Granaries	70	53-76	Cutlers	82
Huge Port, with Very Large Stone Docks	309 acres	77-80	Fishmongers	475
			Furriers	463
			Glovemakers	79
			Harness-Makers	95
			Hatmakers	200
			Hay Merchants	158
			Healers	111
			Illuminators	48
			Jewelers	38
			Locksmiths	100
			Magic-Shops	27
			Masons	380
			Mercers	271
			Money-Changers	63
			Old-Clothes	475
			Painters, Art	126
			Pastrycooks	316
			Plasterers	135
			Pursemakers	172
			Roofers	105
			Ropemakers	100
			Rugmakers	95
			Sages	39
			Saddlers	190
			Scabbardmakers	223
			Sculptors	95
			Shoemakers	1,266
			Spice Merchants	135
			Tailors	760
			Tanners	95
			Watercarriers	475
			Weavers	316
			Wine-Sellers	211
			Woodcarvers	79
			Woodsellers	79
				100
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>			
Religious Hospitals	5	81		
Chapels & Temples	40	82		
Abbeys & Monasteries	4	83		
Cathedrals	2	84		
Catacombs	None			
Cemetery	Huge	85		
Mausoleums	5	86		
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>			
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	87		
Theaters	7	88		
City Library	-			
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>			
Basic Learning Centers	47	89		
University	-			
School of Magic	-			
Military Academy	1	90		
Naval Academy	-			
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>			
Large Citadel	1	91		
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district				
22 miles of stone walls		92-95		
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>			
Small gardens	7	96		
Imposing, marble-covered town hall with belfry	1	97		
Imposing, marble-built Court House	1	98		
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99		
Ruined or abandoned building		100		

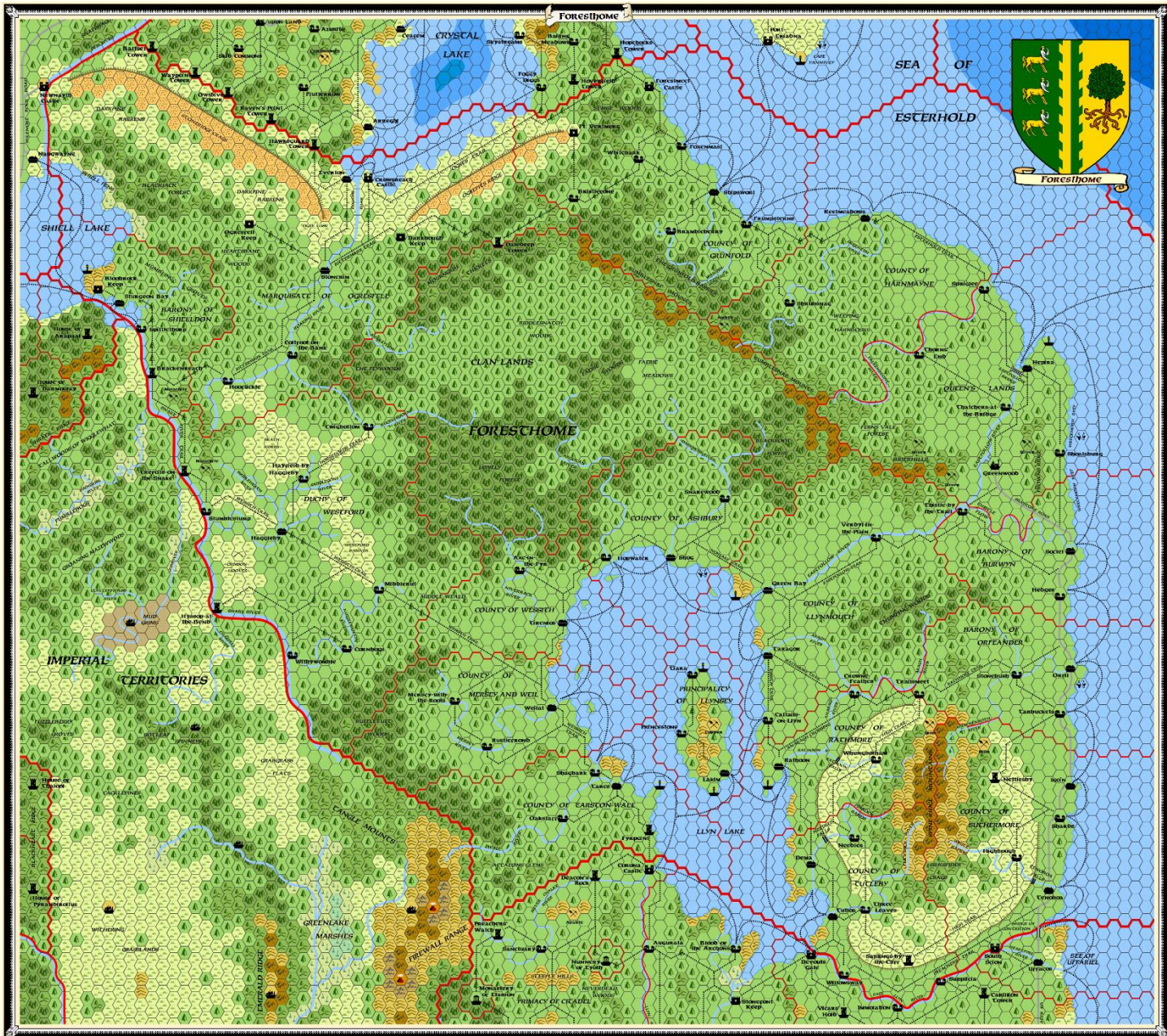
*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*





# Eyes in the Woods: Foresthorne

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**United Kingdom of Foresthorne - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

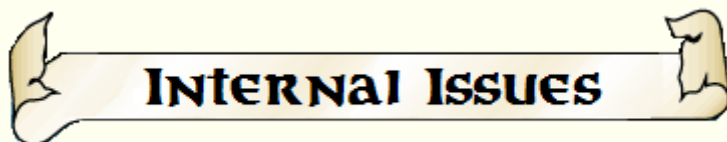


It is perhaps the largest realm of Alphatia. One might think it a single block of similar people but that would be incorrect. Although under the authority of Queen Aberria, Foresthorne's eighteen provinces form an association of woodland beings concerned with protecting their natural habitat—at least initially. Being subjects of a monarchy residing more than 500 miles away for some, stems more from a need to pool the resources of many than from natural loyalty to a single leader.

Over the centuries, royal authority of Queen Aberria's dynasty came to be recognized and respected, however it still remains subject to an oath to protect the realm's old ways—the well-being of the forests and the relative autonomy of their inhabitants. The original concern found its roots amid successive waves of incursions, mostly from humans or certain demi-humans who proved even more destructive—dwarves, orcs, goblins, ogres, and other humanoid races. Alphasians did not fare better in the view of Foresthome citizens, clear-cutting entire forests in the remainder of the island-continent in order to fuel economic development. Clashes were frequent and bloody for all involved.

Relative peace flourished when clans overcame their distrust of each other and chose a common leader who founded the current royal dynasty. With its means combined, Foresthome imposed a bargain upon the Imperial House of Thera, accepting allegiance to Vertiloch but in return receiving a guarantee that the Forest Realm would be accepted and honored as a sovereign nation. . . *in the person of its monarch*. It is a very fine distinction in the eyes of both Vertiloch and the people of Foresthome. Townsfolk inevitably link royal power with safety, order, and wealth. Seen from the forests, the matter isn't quite so clear.

Since the realm's foundation, conflicts subsided before stability and prosperity prevailed. Royal Laws severely limit the cutting of trees and the encroachment of population in wooded areas to protect all involved. It is a fragile arrangement. Although woodland population remains balanced and in proportion with forested expanses, human—or in a more general sense, urban—population keeps growing. Ever increasing demand for space and resources challenges the very basis of monarchy. The greatest concentration of population, urban and farming, naturally occurs along the coasts (the Sea of Esterhold and Lake Llyn) but also along main travel paths (the East-Follow River, the Rathmore Trail, and to a lesser degree the Wessith Trail to Haggley and Stonerim). Therein lies the seed of Foresthome's possible demise.



## INTERNAL ISSUES

More recently, Foresthome's delicate ecological and political balance have been further challenged with the incursion of Bettelwyn missionaries. The cult of Elarion in particular began spreading among forest folk. Its followers question the royal status quo and compare it to the benefits of a religion that may more solidly tie the clans together and bring them divine protection. Some even think the cult should earn them added status and sympathy from their southern neighbor. Although Bettelwyn's arrogant, bellicose ways are very much disliked (and feared), there remains nonetheless a certain envy of the strength and authority, and therefore respect, that their apparent unity commands. Faith is a powerful medicine.

Alas, the philosophical movement is a direct threat to the monarchy and the existence of the realm as such. Although the cult of Elarion slowly succeeds among forest folk, it has failed entirely to attract support from farming communities and, more importantly, urban centers. From a demographic point of view, the latter two far outnumber the former despite Queen Aberria's hard work to try to balance out everything. Over the years, tension has grown

between forest folk and outsiders, mirror-imaging the chasm separating Foresthome's monarchy and Bettelilyn. The cult of Elarion has not grown from a void. Tradition has always lead forest folk to be tolerant of each other's beliefs. It explains to some degree the relative success of Elarion missionary work. More recently though, older faiths have begun pushing back, leading to frictions among clans. Druidical influence is becoming not only more tangible, but downright brutal in some cases. At odds are tenets of Elarion's faith firmly entrenched amid the hierarchy of Bettelilyn's Pantheon of Archons, and druidical beliefs that spirits of the land may one day reclaim their vast realm, grinding into dirt the injuries and insults embodied by the outsiders' cities.



In the face of so much uncertainty, the military at least remains loyal to the queen, due to her thoughtful strategy of appointing reliable and experienced commanders to control her disparate armed forces. As a result of Foresthome's vastness and its endless borders, the Queen's Army is spread out. Some of it concentrates along the southern border but few of its commanders really believe those defenses would stop a determined Bettelilyn assault. It is thought that Foresthome could perhaps hang on to its woods, *if forest folk remained loyal*, but coastal lands would probably fall in short order. All eyes converge toward the queen and her ability to avert the worst.

## Diplomacy

So far, relations with Ar have been very good and fruitful. There had been clashes in centuries past as Alphatians there started expanding southward but borders settled and, so far, Ar's wizardly aristocrats have demonstrated no desire to push further. Instead, they've become bent on increasing their real-estate holdings "upward" with the creation of floating islands. From a woodsy point of view, when the elite of Ar and Ambur keep their patrician noses firmly aimed at clouds and stars, sylvan matters escape their notice altogether. "Let us not distract them!" is the prevailing wisdom. Yet, there has been discreet evidence of late that Ar and its immediate neighbor, Ambur, are growing concerned with Bettelilyn's proselytism, and that in this respect, they support the efforts of Foresthome's monarchy to keep it at bay.

Trade with Ar has been reasonably good down the Esterhold Coast and the Roaring River. On the far western border lie Imperial Territories, a constant source of trouble with monster incursions. Imperial law forbids anyone from trespassing, making it impossible to put an end to raids across the Snake River. A good portion of Foresthome's troops remains therefore occupied with patrolling the eastern riverbank and intercepting raiders. These forays have become bolder and more frequent in the past decade. Some meager trade filters in from Frisland, across from Lake Shiell, transiting through the remote Barony of Shiellon. Frisland has remained entirely neutral and unconcerned with Foresthome.

Farther west lies the Realm of Blackheart which has always kept to itself. The two nations share a very short segment of borders near Shiell Lake which has been closed for as long as Alphatians occupied that region. The state showing the greatest sympathy toward the Forest Realm is the Shiye Lawr. The elves politically support Queen Aberria as regards her standing before Vertiloch since they share a common cause. Alas, Imperial Territories prevent meaningful economic or military cooperation between the two realms. Both Foresthome and the Shiye Lawr detest the existence of these forbidden territories and have been arguing vehemently with Empress Eriadna about the need to permit at least passage between the two realms. The imperial answer, cryptic and ominous, has always alluded to certain things lying there that would be best left undisturbed.

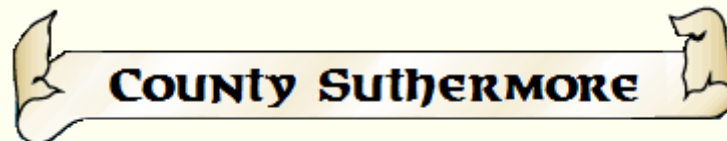
Another supporter, by force of things, has been Randel. Not that they particularly like each other (in its demeanor, Randel looks very much like Bettelwyn), Foresthome's monarchy shares with Randel a common and more pressing concern—Bettelwyn. Both have indirectly alluded to a tacit agreement to attack Bettelwyn if the latter mounts a serious invasion into the other's realm. Randel's military circles are exceedingly pleased with the situation, almost wishing for such an aggression to put it to the test. On the other hand, Foresthome's commanders view the agreement with mounting anxiety. They hope the agreement merely stands as a way to dissuade Bettelwyn from any rash behavior without ever having to actually execute it. Whether the agreement is substantial remains to be proven.

Following the diplomatic alignment, Eadrin and therefore Theranderol and Arogansa tend to support Bettelwyn essentially as a counterweight to Randel and maintain relatively frosty relations with Foresthome. Empress Eriadna is well aware of these diplomatic tensions. She tries to arbitrate disputes where possible and, failing that mission, enforces imperial authority. It is a delicate balance because imperial power relies on the loyalty of its realms—and of course, peace and prosperity among all. Without them, there can be no empire.

# Foresthorne: Suthermore & Tutleby

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

The United Kingdom of Foresthorne encompasses a total of eighteen dominions, including the Queen's Lands. The nation stretches more than 900 miles from its southeastern edge to the Fris River in the northwest. Provinces defined their borders from a combination of natural barriers, non-human clan demographics, and spheres of political influence radiating from key cities. Original aristocracy grew from close friends and war leaders who'd sworn loyalty to the very first monarch and taken the same oath. Forested areas, although sparsely populated, almost invariably relate to non-human clans who gave their allegiances to counts and barons in order to better fit among the kingdom's governing structure. This system of allegiances involves a balance between local aristocratic authority and Clan Houses whose role is to defend non-human interests, usually related to the protection of forests as well as the rights and autonomy of their inhabitants. Imposed upon each dominion, this political structure reflects royal edicts issued when the monarchy was established. The exception to this system is the dominion known as the Clan Lands, which occupies the largest stretch of forest at the center of the kingdom, including the Lonely Forest, the Feywoods, the Riddlesnatch Woods, and the Faerie Woods. A largely autonomous tribal council governs this region.



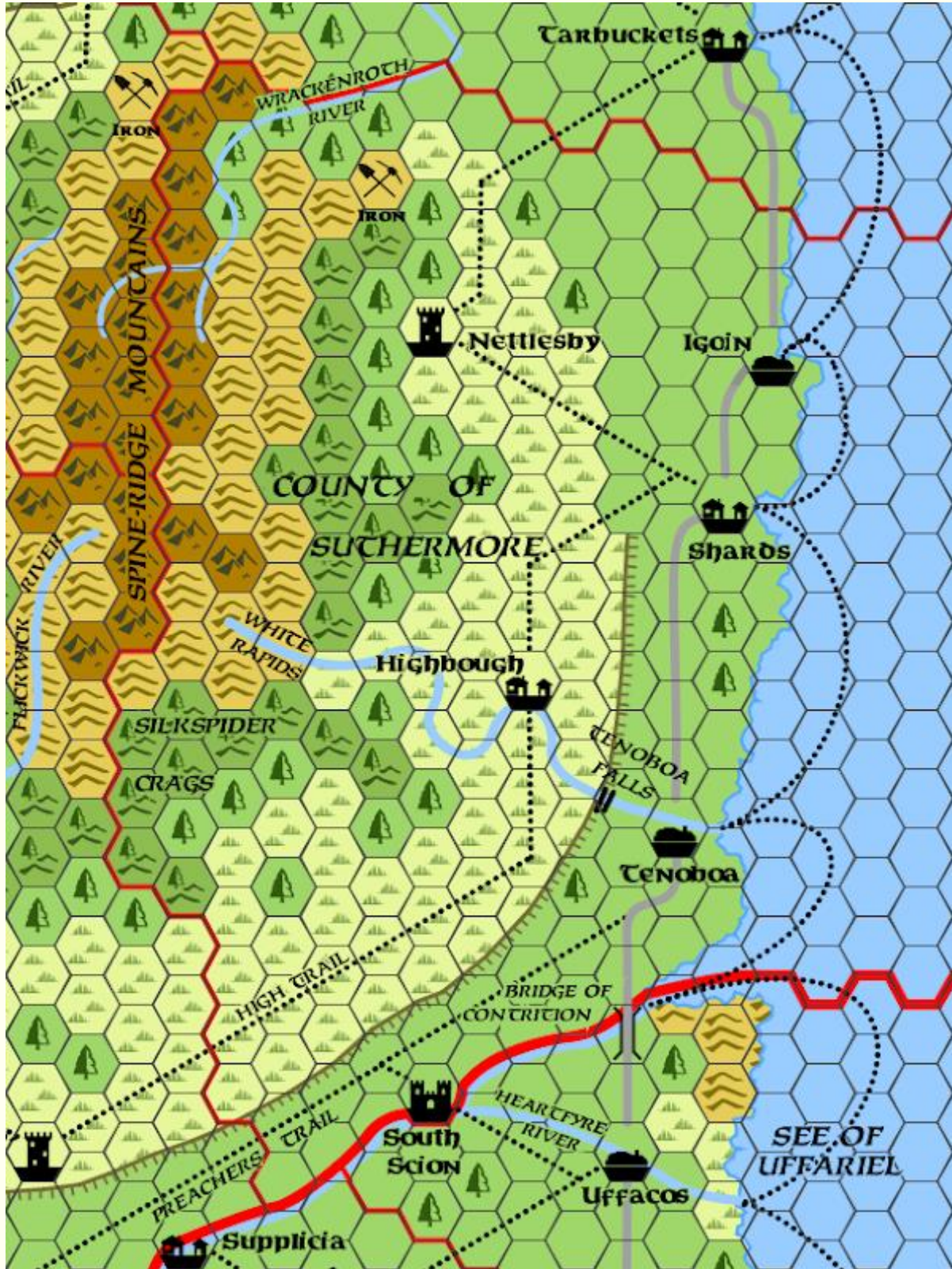
This dominion occupies the realm's southeastern corner bordering with Bettelilyn. It breaks down into three physical regions: lowlands, highlands, and mountains.

Lowlands are the wealthiest and most populous, featuring a majority of human population. The count's court resides in the Town of Igoin (pronounced *AY-gon*). Much of the local business involves trade with Bettelilyn merchants. Farming involves essentially wheat and pig farms. Law enforcement, a significant portion of which operates from Tenoboa and the fortress of South Scion, concerns itself mostly with watching the border and catching Elarion missionaries on their way north. Those caught are branded and expelled, a practice causing as much grief in Bettelilyn as the latter's deliberate policy inflicts up north. Diplomatically, the deadlock contributes to mounting tempers on both sides of the border. Common police duties in lowland towns and villages are performed by hired watchmen, typically "colonials" from northern Bellissaria.



The fortified Town of Tenoboa (pronounced *TEN-oboë*) harbors a concentration of the Queen's Army, as opposed to local county troops. This town provides the only suitable way across the White Rapids which runs briskly through the lowlands. During spring, the river swells dangerously and occasionally floods its banks. Parts may freeze in the dead of winter but the crust remains thin and treacherous. Only the length from sea to town permits navigation. Tenoboa's bridges are fortified and feature spans that can be drawn up. Getting past the city

would probably require a naval strategy which explains why Tenoboa also happens to be one of the three main military ports in the kingdom.



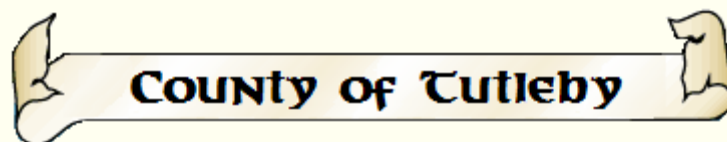
County of Suthermore – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Highlands refer to the stretch of windswept grasslands along the plateau's edge. Other than the village of Highhough along the Upper White Rapids, population there remains fairly low. It is the domain of horse and cattle herders, humans for the most part. The plateau forms a rocky cliff rising from the lowlands to nearly 1,000' on the far south. The formation provides a crucial

component of Foresthome's southern defense, preventing a major assault away from the coastal areas. Although light infantry might be able to scale the cliffs, cavalry and siege weaponry would never follow, and supply-lines would be very hard to maintain. This allows Foresthome troops to concentrate on lowland bottlenecks in Suthermore and neighboring Tutleby, possibly withdrawing entirely from the kingdom's first line of defense—the East Llyn River—the moment it appears to be breached.

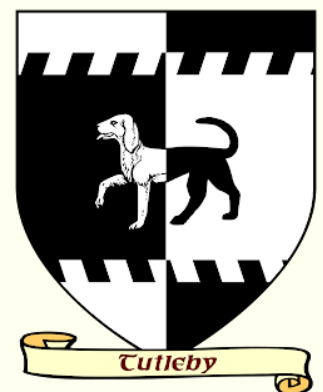
Spine-Ridge Mountains remain the domain of hill and mountain giants. The former were largely pacified and no longer raid settled lands, on the other hand, it is safest not to venture into the hills without good cause. Mountain giants have proven a considerate and thoughtful bunch because they are better organized and far more powerful than their poorer cousins. There is little that they fear and thus may afford courtesy and magnanimity. Representatives of the giantkind occasionally attend Clan House meetings in Igoi, but for most of the run-of-the-mill business there, they rely on trusted human rangers. Their influence on the count's decisions is significant. If summoned, giants will send some of their best warriors to help defend the county. As can be expected, their presence in Foresthome constitutes another reason for disagreements with Bettelilyn's faithfuls who see them as dastardly spawns of chaos.

Part of the hills known as the Silkspider Craggs belong to giant spiders. They do not answer to anyone's authority and the count has not deemed it productive to risk troops against such dangerous creatures. Several costly attempts were recorded in the county's annals but spiders always seem to reclaim the area within months, inferring nests may exist below the surface. It is sometimes possible to purchase natural silk strands from the beasts which can be used in the making of magical vestments and ropes.



Tutleby is located on the eastern bank of Llyn Lake, on the border with Bettelilyn. As its eastern neighbor, this county features three distinct parts: the lowlands, the highlands, and the mountains. As such it remains in many other ways similar to Suthermore, although smaller and not quite as wealthy.

Lowlands feature a political center in Dema and a military stronghold in Tutlos. The latter had been the ancestral seat of the Counts of Tutleby but after it was burned to the ground as the result of Bettelilyn reprisals in a past century, it was deemed safer to relocate the count's palace to the smaller town of Dema. Trade takes place mostly with the other eight counties around the lake, under the auspices of the League of Eight. It is a merchant guild that enjoys a quasi-monopoly on trade across the lake. In some ways, it instigates the growth of business but its influence at the royal court and privileges dating back to the kingdom's formative years enable the guild to inflate prices and retain much of its profits despite efforts to the contrary on the part of local counts. The risk of sabotage looms high for non-guild merchant ships venturing in the



area. The guild controls many people working at the ports, from county officials to humble dock workers, if not a band of cutthroats. Local county soldiers handle law enforcement with the help of private hired-hands, an apparatus performing with varying degrees of success. One source of income for the county includes tolls collected along the *Essith Trail* (running from Tutlos to Green Bay), the *High Trail* at Needles and Saplings-by-the-Cliff, and *Preachers' Trail* at Willowsway (pronounced *Willows' Way*).



**County of Tutleby - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Since its last destruction, Tutlos was rebuilt mostly at the expense of the Royal Treasury, and heavily fortified to take advantage of the Flickwick River. A good number of royal troops garrison its walls. Bridges are fortified but a chink in the defense remains with the presence of a gap between Tutlos and the edge of the southern plateau. An invading army could bypass the fortified town and target instead the village of Three Leaves. The count was ordered to build a trench and a wall to close the gap but the project goes poorly and has yet to be completed due to graft, corruption, and sabotage. For various reasons, Queen Aberria chose Lakim in the neighboring Principality of Llynsey as the region's main military port, which somewhat reduces Tutlos's strategic value. Local counts (and strategists south of the border) have seen this



decision as a certain lack of confidence in Lord Tutleby. Nonetheless, the loss of Tutlos would be tragic since it would open the way to the highlands northward and eastward.

Grasslands and forested areas of Tutleby's highlands are home to several clans of strange creatures called wemics. They are believed to have migrated from the Imperial Territories for reasons still unclear. These centaur-like beings possess leonine bodies with human torsos and heads. This fierce and ever-so-unruly bunch largely bears responsibility for Bettelilyn erecting a major fortress across the East Llyn River (Devouts' Gate). Their past raids, highly destructive and virtually impossible to intercept, eventually prompted the punitive expedition ending with the historical sacking of Tutlos. In the opinion of the counts and the monarchy, wemics are both a blessing and a curse, as much a liability within the realm as a thorny military threat to an invader, so great is their fierceness and craving for combat. They remain so profoundly hated across the border that Bettelilyn offers substantial rewards for any wemic warrior killed, double that for females. On the positive side, no Elarion missionary has ever been known to survive a foray into wemic-land. Naturally, the issue remains another bleeding abscess in the diplomatic relations between Foresthome and Bettelilyn. Wemics have been troublesome to cattle and horse herders in neighboring Suthermore as well. In the view of Dema's townsfolk, there is nothing more irritating than a haughty, puffed-up wemic clan leader parading down main street to attend a Clan House meeting and demand a prerogative or two just after having laid waste to an equal number of farmsteads in the highlands. The only residents who seem to get along well with them are the giants living in the Spine-Ridge Mountains.

As a result of the county's various challenges, Count Tutleby's authority remains a tad shaky. The dominion is financially cash-strapped, internal rivalries have yet to be settled, the League of Eight continually exploits the county's foibles, while corruption and civil dissatisfaction add several more layers of confusion and waste. Wemic antics and ill-will from Bettelilyn make matters even worse.

**Wemics:** AC 6 (5\*), MV 120' (40'), HD 5+8, AT 2 claws + 1 short sword or club, Dmg 1-4/1-4 + weapon, Int 10, AL N. **Special Attacks:** leap 10' up or 30' forward, females gain a +2 bonus to hit if cubs are threatened. **Special Defenses:** (\*) shield, only surprised on a 1. Clan leaders can have as many as 9 HD (AC3, d8/d8/weapon +2 dmg bonus) while shamans and wokans can attain C7 or MU4 abilities respectively.





# Foresthorne: Burwyn, Orfeander, & Rathmore

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



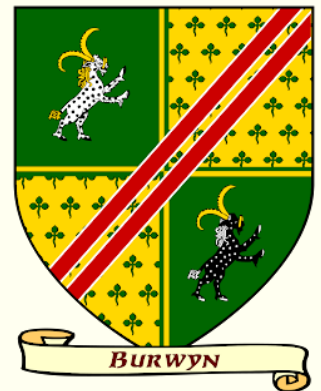
Baronies of Burwyn & Orfeander – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

## BURWYN & ORFEANDER



These two dominions should have been a single county but families to whom land had been promised could not be accommodated. The early monarchy established instead two big baronies. To this day, these petty provinces remain bitter rivals in a way that could best be described as the story of the Hatfields and McCoys in American history. It all started out with a stolen pig. The rest got lost in the midst of accusations, revenge, and escalation. A detachment of the Queen's Army still patrols the border between the two, enforcing a royal order that no one crosses through except at a check point on Silkstone Road. Local residents are not permitted past this point. Members of baronial courts may only get by aboard vessels clearly showing their barony's colors. All such ships have a royal observer aboard to verify the directive is followed. Naturally, no vessel from one barony will be allowed on the other's shores. More hassles crop up as the two families find ways to get around obstructions and jab at each other, such as flying by night, teleporting, or entering through a different border for example.

From an economic standpoint, trade still gets by without much trouble, generating reasonable income for the two dominions. Both also control crucial passages out west, the East Follow Trail for Orfeander and the Rathmore Trail for Burwyn. Despite this fortunate disposition of borders, the two barons still argue over who got the better deal. Baroness Orfeander remains bitter about her rival's lands being closer to the capital than her own and thus receiving preferential treatment. Baron Burwyn's contention is that his hated neighbor inherited more land than his forebears did and an extra village. As it were, their rivers can only accommodate the smallest vessels upstream due to their shallow depths, leaving the bulk of riverine traffic to funnel through the Eastfollow River. The latest dispute was about obtaining royal funds to help dredge silt from the Thistle Flow as opposed to using the expenditures for an expansion of the seaport at Orfil—a prickly topic to be sure. Soon afterward, a cousin of the Burwyns was found dead after he'd ingested spoiled thistle soup. Meanwhile, an Orfeander kin was pulled from the port's waters at Orfil, apparently gagged to death with muck and pebbles. However suspicious the matter, no culprits were apprehended. The barons are still investigating the mishaps. After their frequent visits at the royal palace, often immediately after one another, Queen Aberria invariably consults her court physician to soothe the resulting headaches.



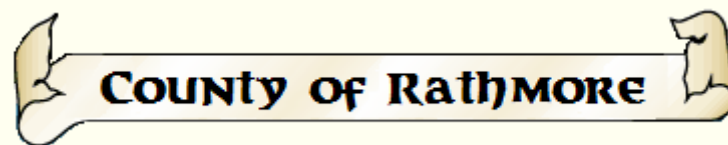
Baronial troops handle law-enforcement rather approximately since their expertise in legal matters varies on when and where. As can be expected, they remain on the lookout for intruders from the other barony and on the safety of the barons. Elarion missionaries often use Orfil and Socktel as bridgeheads into Foresthome, sailing in from Bettelwyn aboard foreign ships. If in trouble with baronial laws, it is customary for anyone with money to make sure a royal

appointee presides among magistrates in a court of law. Though pricey, a few trustworthy representatives from reputable Greenspur offices specialize in Foresthome law can also be found at the nearby capital.

Besides bitterness and rampant paranoia, the baronies also share one more thing in common: the eastern edge of the Thumping Woods stretching halfway through Burwyn and down to the foothills of the Spine-Ridge Mountains. It is the realm of bushmen. These curious individuals look like haggard, disheveled elves with a gray-brown skin and a mess of dried out twigs in lieu of hair. Despite their bizarre appearances, bushmen are quite smart and well aware of the nature of the people surrounding them. They dislike the two baronial families and their utter selfishness. Rumors allude to bushmen originally setting up the rival families in a scheme to provoke their failure as feudal vassals and their eventual removal.

**Bushmen:** AC5, HD 5+1\*\*\*, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 elven weapon, Dmg by weapon, Save F5, ML9; Int 13, AL N. **Special Attacks:** *plant control* (as the potion) once per day. **Special Defenses:** camouflage in bushes or woods (80% surprise odds), immune to *entangle* attacks or similar plant-based effects. Leaders are druidical shamans with as many as 10+2 HD and commensurate spellcasting skills. Bushmen otherwise have all the abilities of common elves.

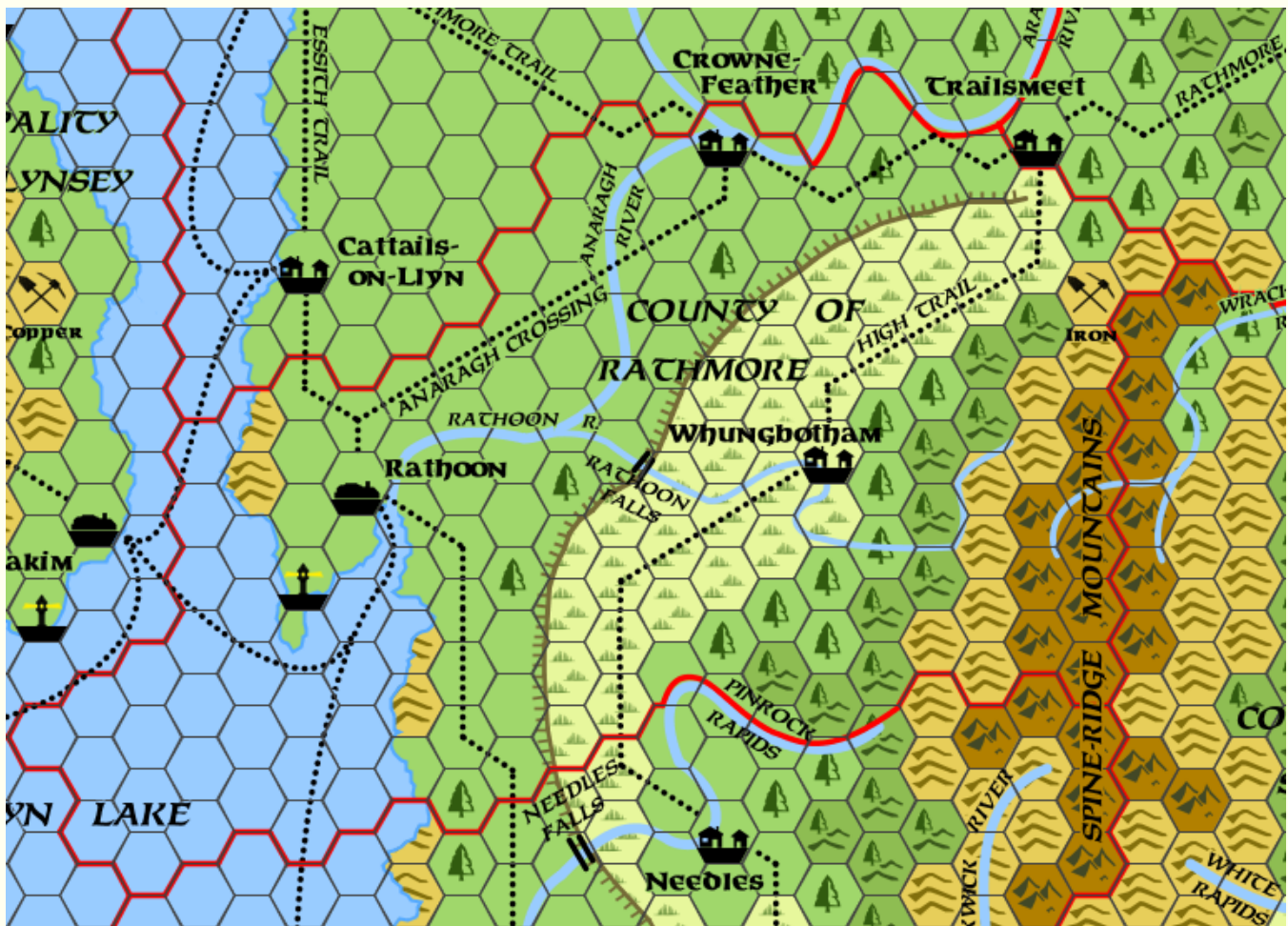
Their ability to control plants enable bushmen to cause vegetation to grow much more quickly than they should normally, adding one or more mature trees in a 30'x30' area in a matter of a few weeks if they work at it every day. Royal Laws does not permit them to use this ability outside the limits of the Thumping Woods. Oddly, bushmen also proved quite skilled at raising pigs.



The Rathmores are one of the oldest families connected with the royal dynasty, originally through a war commander. Theirs is a difficult piece of land to manage due to the location of the highlands that can only be reached through a detour round its northern edge. Nonetheless, the counts have been popular with the people and able administrators.

Much of the day-to-day business consists in monitoring traffic along the main travel paths—High Trail on the highlands and the so-called Rathmore Trail connecting with the Barony of Orfeander. Tolls are collected at the villages of Crowne-Feather and Whungbotham. The Rathmores are allies of the Orfeanders. Their relationship with the County of Llynmouth up north remains polite and neutral, given that the neighbors are business partners with the Burwyns. Fortunately, there are family ties between the counts of Llynmouth and Rathmore which balance out matters. Further business takes place at Rathoon with the involvement of the League of Eight. The Rathmores have come down hard on the merchant guild, especially on the matter of price-gouging. Some nasty shenanigans followed when an attempt on the count's life failed. The assassin was captured but died without apparent cause soon afterward. Further attempts to revive the individual proved fruitless. Dastardly magic had been used to block *raise dead* and *speak with the dead* spells. The day after, a ship fully loaded with merchandise caught fire

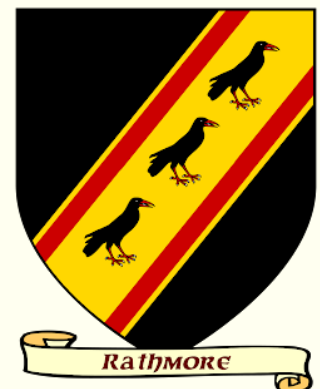
inexplicably. While the guild will not drop its trading post in Rathoon, the counts remain unlikely as well to kick them out as they would stand to lose more than they would gain. The test of wills goes on.



**County of Rathmore – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

As to the Rathoon River, it is navigable but only up to its branch with the Anaragh River, which makes it irrelevant as a trade line. Only the smallest vessels may continue beyond. Halfway up the Anaragh River, a wide spot is very shallow, up to two feet deep, allowing horses and carts across. Rathmore also operates an iron mine in the hills, with a special permission from the native clans living in the area (see below).

As with other counties, Rathmore wouldn't have existed as such without the presence of ancient native clans. They occupy forests and hills along the Spine-Ridge Mountains. They are the Ravensfolk. Humanoid, lightly built, of jet-black skin and with the heads of ravens, they bear large bird-like wings protruding from the back of their robes. Though peaceful, Ravensfolk are very exclusive and rarely invite outsiders amongst them unless they believe some ominous event is about to happen. Ravensfolk are a society of soothsayers, seers, and tellers of portents who speak in riddles. It is rumored they hide an oracle in a temple, somewhere in the hills. These dark beings did in fact enable the count to avoid the recent attempt upon his life and set up a trap. In past history, it is said that they helped a war commander outfox his enemies, revealing their moves in advance. They have a knack for



locating someone whose future presents interest enough that they'd offer a bargain. They always demand something in return for unveiling a part of one's fate, be it a valuable significant to their secret workings or a later service. Woe be he who fails to honor a bargain, as fate always seems to turn against oathbreakers not long afterward. It remains unclear in what ways the Rathmores are indebted to the Ravensfolk. As a side note, wemics from Tutleby have learned long ago not to intrude upon their feathered neighbors.

**Ravensfolk:** AC9, HD 3+1\*\*\*\*\*, MV 90' (30')/180' (60') flying, AT 1 beak, short sword, or light crossbow, Dmg 1d4+1 or by weapon, Save MU3, ML8; Int 15, AL N. **Special Attacks:** *ESP*, *clairvoyance*, *clairaudience* (once a day for each), plus *polymorph self*, *contact outer planes*, *lore*, and *scry* (once per moon cycle for each). Special Defenses: hide in shadows as a T10; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and mind-control effects.

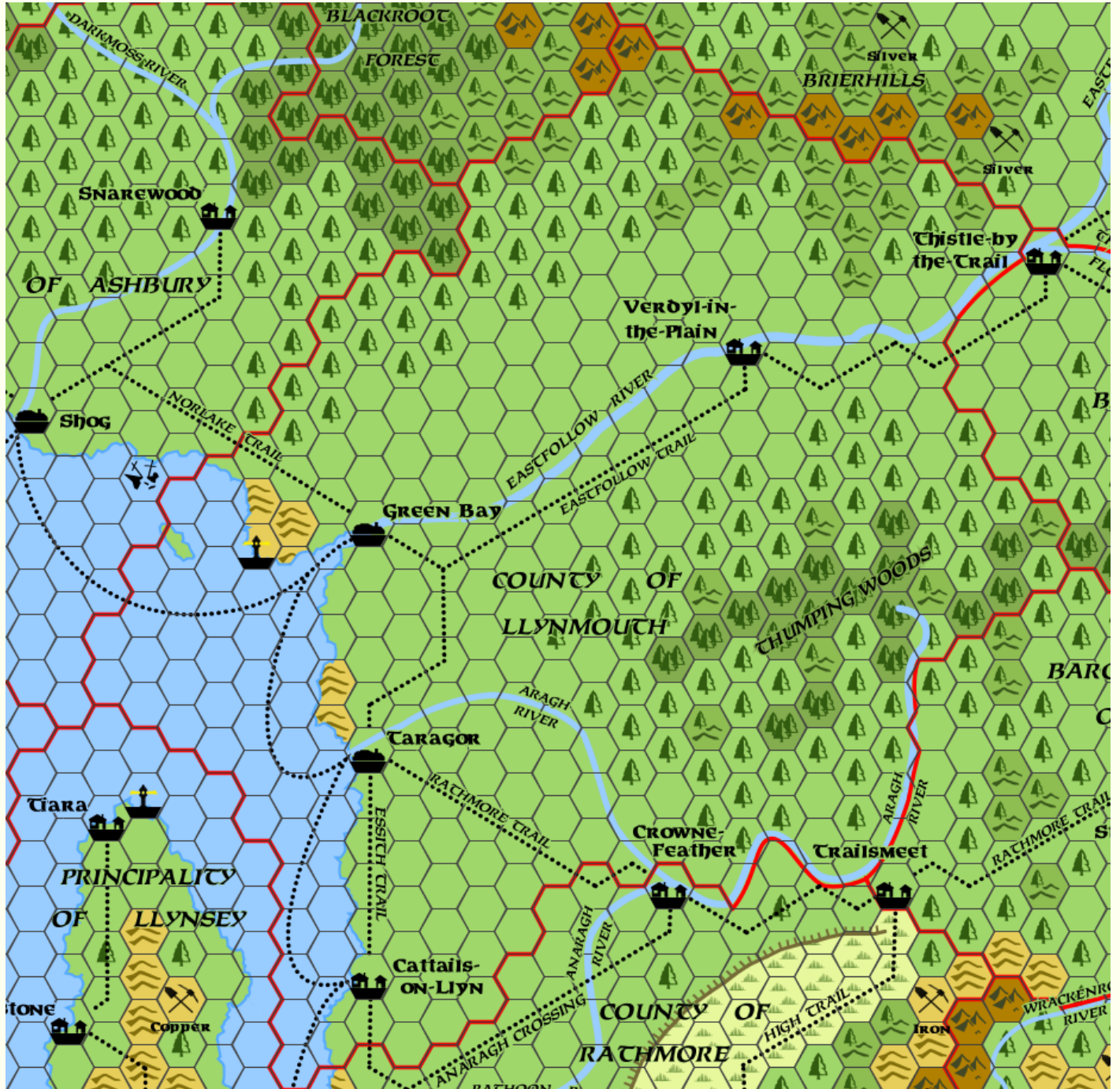
Clan leaders can have as many as 12HD and cast spells as a MU12. Other than frequency, their scrying ability is comparable to a *crystal ball with ESP*. It requires the reflection of a full moon upon a pool of still water. The *polymorph* ability is limited to transforming into a common raven.



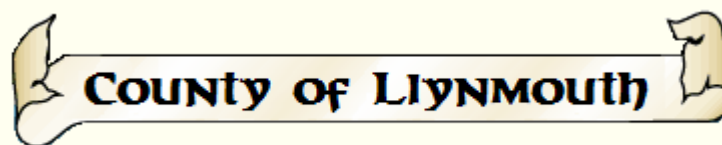


# Foresthorne: Llynmouth & the Queen's Lands

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



County of Llynmouth – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



The county at the mouth of the Eastfollow River stands as one of the most powerful dominions in the kingdom. Its present lord, Count Llynmouth, has been petitioning the queen for its elevation to a duchy, a quest he may yet succeed. As a note in passing, many counts bear the names of

their dominions, which isn't customary in Alphatia. The tradition comes from Cypric customs relying upon kin or family names in addition to one's personal name. Since Alphatians favor individual names, Foresthorne counts often change theirs to that of dominions, appending them with numerals to connote their proper places in the land's annals. It is so that Fallwick of his original name took on the pseudonym Count Llynmouth, Thirty-Eighth Lord of the Line. Should the county be elevated to a duchy, the beneficiary would change his name to Duke Llynmouth, First Lord of the Line. Naturally, this could cause some confusion in the annals of the land, and thus names of proper pedigree are recorded with the appropriate coronet or crown symbol drawn above them, wherever they appear in the text. Should one be touched, a brief ghostly vision lights up, depicting the lord in question turning toward the reader and uttering a historical quote, motto, or epitaph. Leave it to Alphatians to come up with animated annals.

Two rivers cross the land, the Eastfollow River flowing from Llyn Lake and the Aragh flowing into it. The former is a major river, allowing navigation by the largest ships. Small vessels may navigate the Aragh up to Crowne-Feather. Much of Llynmouth's wealth comes from merchant traffic on the Eastfollow and its nearby trail. It is a point of contention with the League of Eight. Because the merchant guild's charter does not include the Eastfollow, the counts have made it a point to forbid league ships from sailing beyond Green Bay's port. Naturally, representatives of the count and of the guild often aim at each other with bitter comments and dark looks. Llynmouth is the county with the most leverage on the league. Merchandise arriving in Green Bay must be unloaded at the port and picked up by another ship to continue from there, which gives the counts a great opportunity to inspect and collect duties. Generally, the starboard side of a dock is reserved for lake bound ships while the opposite side accommodates river bound vessels. This is intended to facilitate ship-to-ship transfer of merchandise. Major warehouses and granaries store the remainder.



**Note from the Author:** *the trail names probably should be edited on the map. The Rathmore Trail should continue across the Anaragh toward Rathoon (instead of Anaragh Crossing), while the one connecting Taragor (to Crowne-Feather) should be renamed accordingly.*

Law in Llynmouth is definitely a notch above the nearby baronies or Tuttleby. The county prefers natives of the Yannivey Islands as the mainstay for hired hands in charge of common police duties. They are well trained for the job and particularly reliable (at least from the point of view of the counts), often communicating amongst themselves in their native vernacular. They're a rough bunch who aren't easily intimidated which explains why the League of Eight has so far avoided direct confrontation with the counts. County troops often patrol the trails and otherwise concern themselves with the protection of the counts.

Llynmouth, due to its size, has to contend with commensurate challenges. Although farming and urban population remains obedient and homogenous, essentially human with a halfling minority, several forests surround most of the county, including the Thumping Woods, the southern half of the Brierhills, and fringes of the Blackroot Forest. The latter is the realm of a darker species of treants that can feed on the blood of the living. For better or worse, "blackroots" are nonetheless denizens of the forests and have earned recognition as such among the kingdom.

They never leave the somber confines of their domain, relying on trusted druids as their representatives at the county's Clan House. Brierhills are home to other clans of bushmen, such as those inhabiting the nearby baronies. Finally, the Thumping Woods harbor a unique race of creatures simply called woodsmen. The name is meant literally, as these ogre-sized beings seem to be made of bendable wood and covered with smooth birch-like bark. Woodsmen and bushmen are ancestral allies and sworn enemies of the blackroots.

**Blackroot:** AC2, HD 8\*\*\*, MV 60' (20'), AT 2 branches + blood drain, Dmg 2d6/2d6 + special, Save F8, ML9; Int 12, AL C. **Special Attacks:** blood drain (-1 Strength; victims rise as forest wights). **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep*, *charm*, mind- and plant-control effects. Blackroots sometimes imprison their victims, keeping them alive for regular blood drains. Greater Blackroots lead their clans, 16HD creatures with corresponding magic-user abilities heavily weighted toward necromantics. Although treant-like beings, the latter possess statistics and abilities similar to odic spirits. Blackroots can be Turned by clerics as vampires and odics.

**Forest Wight\*:** AC5, HD 3\*\*, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 touch, Dmg energy drain, Save F3, ML12; Int 5, AL C. **Special Attacks:** as per conventional wights. **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep*, *charm*, mind- and plant-control effects (such as *entangle* spells); can operate during daylight. Forest wights look entirely like bushmen although unable to speak or control plants around them. They never leave the confines of their woods. They normally stay dormant during the day, buried amid the forest ground until summoned or disturbed. In the latter case, they rise from their natural graves and surprise the unwary (80% chance). Their victims become forest wights within 1d4 days. At sunrise, they sink back into the ground, leaving no trace of their existence, and feed upon the blood oozing from their blackroot overseers.

**Woodsmen:** AC3, HD 4+1\*\*, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 large club, Dmg 2d4+2, Save F4, ML10; Int 10, AL L. **Special Attacks:** Smash maneuver (see Fighter Combat Options) + possible *knockout*, *stun*, or *delay* effect (save vs. paralysis; Delay if saving throw failed by 1-2, Stun by 3-4, Knockout by 5+). **Special Defenses:** immune to *sleep*, *charm*, mind- and plant-control effects (such as *entangle* spells); *mimicry* which renders them invisible when standing still among trees. Greater Treants act as clan leaders, 16 HD creatures with corresponding druidical spell abilities (despite their Lawful alignment).

Legends say that woodsmen are an offshoot of ancient treants, who grew human-like legs and arms. They sprout roots at night while they sleep, drawing nutrients from the ground, and retract them at dawn. They are also known to eat fallen leaves, nuts, and acorns, or drink water, if not fermented berry juices during celebrations. Because of this, woodsmen are perfectly capable of venturing away from their forests into far less hospitable places, such as human towns or dungeons. In a cold environment, they either go dormant or suffer a -2 penalty to Initiative. They build villages from the remains of fallen trees, mud bricks, and grass, sometimes using great rocks as part of their structures.

Aside from their abilities, woodsmen live very long lives, perhaps as long as those of treants. In the course of their breed's existence, elves were encountered and befriended. They fought a battle against a powerful invader from the north during which many fell. It was tradition among woodsmen to share their sap, as blood-brothers would, and so, they offered to do the same with

their elven allies. It was a fateful gesture, as blood mixed with sap sometimes led to unexpected consequences. Some of the woodsmen turned mad, twisted, and evil, and fled to the woods now known as the Blackroots Forest. Some of the elves were altered differently, progressively becoming bushmen. Since then, remaining elves moved on to pursue other aims and vanished from the annals of the land. Woodsman clans hit their great clubs against hollow tree trunks to communicate with each other at a distance, causing the familiar thumping heard in this forest. The sound is intended not only as communication, but also as a way to unnerve and disorient an enemy as to where an attack may come, in addition to rousing any sleeping treants in the area.



The Queen's Lands – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

## The Queen's Lands

This crucial corner of Foresthome marks the starting point of the monarchy. During the long years of struggles between forest clans and successive waves of outsiders encroaching upon their territories, one newcomer managed a lasting toehold. Alphatians with a certain taste for nature and things of the wilderness established an outpost at the mouth of the Eastfollow River. Relations with native clans were at first more than frosty. Over the years, these eccentric newcomers eventually took the party of the clans against abuses perpetrated by other Alphatians from the north and the south. What are now Imperial Territories already constituted a dangerous, monster infested wilderness that these renegade Alphatians were able to address to some degree. Whether they harbored an ulterior motive or acted out of genuine unselfishness remains unclear to date. Nonetheless, relations with nearby clans thawed and a dialog ensued. At first, bushmen established trade rights which became a de-facto alliance. Naturally, woodsmen followed, and from there, word got around by way of much thumping across the forest and lengthy treant mumbles passing from rustling crest to burrowing root and back through limb and acorn across valleys and over the hills until other clans learned of the new and auspicious happening.

Choices were made. Bargains were struck. Quarrels were settled. Bows and wands were lowered. Oaths were taken. Treaties were signed. And a crown was woven of gold and forever leaves at last to be placed upon the head of the one who'd pledged to defend them all. Thus was born the United Kingdom of Foresthome, under the guidance and protection of an Alphatian monarch.

It was agreed that humans would inevitably come to settle in the area. Rather than fighting continually against unending waves of a swelling sea, wisdom prevailed that its flow ought not be stopped but instead channeled around the forests, preserving them against the tide. An Alphatian monarch would be better able to sway Alphatian people, as long as the Oath of Preservation was respected. Open lands were conceded to enable the flow of human settlers and laws were written to keep everyone in their proper places. Such an immense kingdom demanded administrators to govern locally in the name of the king. They were chosen among those closest to the throne and land enfeoffed in the order of family statuses. These vassals were Alphatians, like their monarch, for the same reasons and with the same duties.



The transition wasn't that simple. Not all clans fully trusted the human monarchy and its promises. As a sign of good faith, it was agreed to allow the largest forest at the heart of the kingdom to govern itself while still remaining faithful to the crown. Amendments were spelled out to balance the power of counts with those of the clans. The last to join the realm were warrior tribes of the western grasslands and what are known today as the Marches of Ogresfell conquered at sword point to stem the horrors living deep below the crags. While this took

place, neighboring Alpathian powers grew as well, in particular Ar and Bettelilyn. Foresthome's monarchy was seen then as a renegade state. During the formative years of the empire, many clashes took place as an attempt to strike down the sylvan power and seize its lands. Alpathians who'd already settled there fought alongside the clans to defend their right and their property. It sealed the people into a coherent nation and the kingdom survived. At last, the empire stabilized and recognized Foresthome as a legitimate state. It wasn't so long afterward that the sylvan realm was welcomed as a respected member of the empire.

Much of the original monarchy's wealth came from the deepwater port of Hepira, the old capital, and large silver mines in the Brierhills and the Frownsridge that are still active today. Their shafts and tunnels reach far beneath the surface. At first, the Alpathian outpost included the area surrounding Hepira, which later expanded southward along the Eastfollow River. At its greatest extent before the unification, it included lands presently devoid of woods. It incorporated bushmen woods when the new kingdom was founded, adopting its present size and shape.

Ever since the counties were established around Llyn Lake, trade has been booming along the river, at Hepira and Greenwood, the present capital. The royal court moved there as a way to foster closer ties with bushman allies. Duties and tolls are very low in the Queen's Lands precisely to attract business and growth. Trade around Llyn Lake was sluggish at first, as the towns were growing and lands were developing. To accelerate the process, an early monarch founded the League of Eight. In exchange for substantial infrastructure investments and shipbuilding on the part of financial backers, the monarch agreed to a permanent charter allowing the new guild many prerogatives, such as paying very low taxes to the royal treasury and virtual immunity from county laws. Since the monarch in question was one of the financial backers, it didn't seem like a problem at the time. It quickly became and still is a very profitable operation. However, the charter has been a growing embarrassment ever since but given that the crown still owns a significant share of the business, nothing has changed. In view of the threats looming at Foresthome's doorstep, cash is very much an issue. In past conflicts, the League of Eight has been useful as a source of loans and ships. It helps explain why the successive monarchies tolerated the guild's rather muscular business habits. A point of contention remains in the decision of Llynmouth counts to block League ships from accessing the Eastfollow River, this being one of the reasons why the county's status wasn't elevated to that of a duchy.

Law enforcement in the Queen Lands remains the direct responsibility of the Queen's Army, although the Royal Guard reserves for itself the duty to ensure the security of the queen and investigates any matter relevant to the palace, the court, or the monarchy. The latter includes a small network of spies. The Royal Guard, the Queen's Army, and the Her Royal Majesty's Navy answer to different commanders who take their orders from the queen herself. Law in the forest is relevant to bushmen. It is subject to their own customs, although the queen's laws are enforced whenever possible. The monarchy also relies on a Fellowship of Rangers who are warriors familiar with woodlands and who enjoy some druidical abilities. Their mission is to assist the clans and act as their representatives in Clan House meetings, if requested, or as the crown's representatives among clan lands. Part-hunters, diplomats, and wisemen, these warriors wield a tremendous amount of trust, usually spending years learning a clan's ways

before gaining their confidence. Many identify with their assigned clans, although their allegiance remains to the crown. Theirs is a thankless task when confronted with a conflict of interest. Occasionally, some “go native” entirely and are stricken from the fellowship’s records, though they may still act as their clan’s representative. Rangers are also responsible for monitoring the respect of laws regulating encroachment upon the woodlands or an unwarranted expansion of wooden areas. They also watch borders in wilderness areas, usually looking for monstrous activity.



Foresthme Ranger are fighters or elves with special skills including tracking, awareness, clan lore, druidical spells, and clan powers. Their alignments must match their associated clans (in other words, they can be Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic). Naturally, the fellowship knows what rangers to assign which clans for best results. If rangers are allowed as player characters, a -20% penalty applies to all to earned experience. Prime-requisites are Strength and Wisdom.

**Tracking:** the base chance to follow a set of footsteps is 65%. Five factors can be rated from easiest to hardest, which then modify chances of success.

Tracking Modifiers -- base chance = 65%						
Terrain	Num.	Size	Time	Precip.	Difficulty Rating	
A	10+	VL.			Easiest	+30
	5-9					+25
B	3-4	L.				+20
	2					+10
C	1	M.	1			n/a
			2			-10
D		S.	3-4	2		-20
			5-6			-25
E		VS.	7+	4+	Hardest	-30

- **Terrain:** A. soft soil; B. grass and bushes, C. hard-packed dirt or dusty stone; D. stone surface or swampland; E. through a secret passage.
- **Num.:** the number of individuals tracked.
- **Size:** refers to the size of the creature(s) tracked, from very large to very small.
- **Time:** the number of days or partial days that have elapsed since tracks were left.
- **Precip.:** the number of hours rainfall or snowfall lasted, if any (or wind in a sandy desert).

Tally bonuses and penalties listed in the last column (Difficulty Rating) for each of the five factors and apply them to the base 65% chance. If the ranger’s percentile roll scores equal or less than the modified chances, the tracking attempt succeeds. The target score cannot be any higher than 99% or lower than 1% regardless of modifiers.

**Awareness:** Rangers are only surprised with a 1 on a d6.

**Clan Lore:** is a Wisdom-based skill that enables a ranger to know customs, traditions, and the historical background of the chosen/assigned clan. If warriors of the clan have a bonus to their attacks against a hated foe, the ranger benefits from it as well (no skill roll needed).

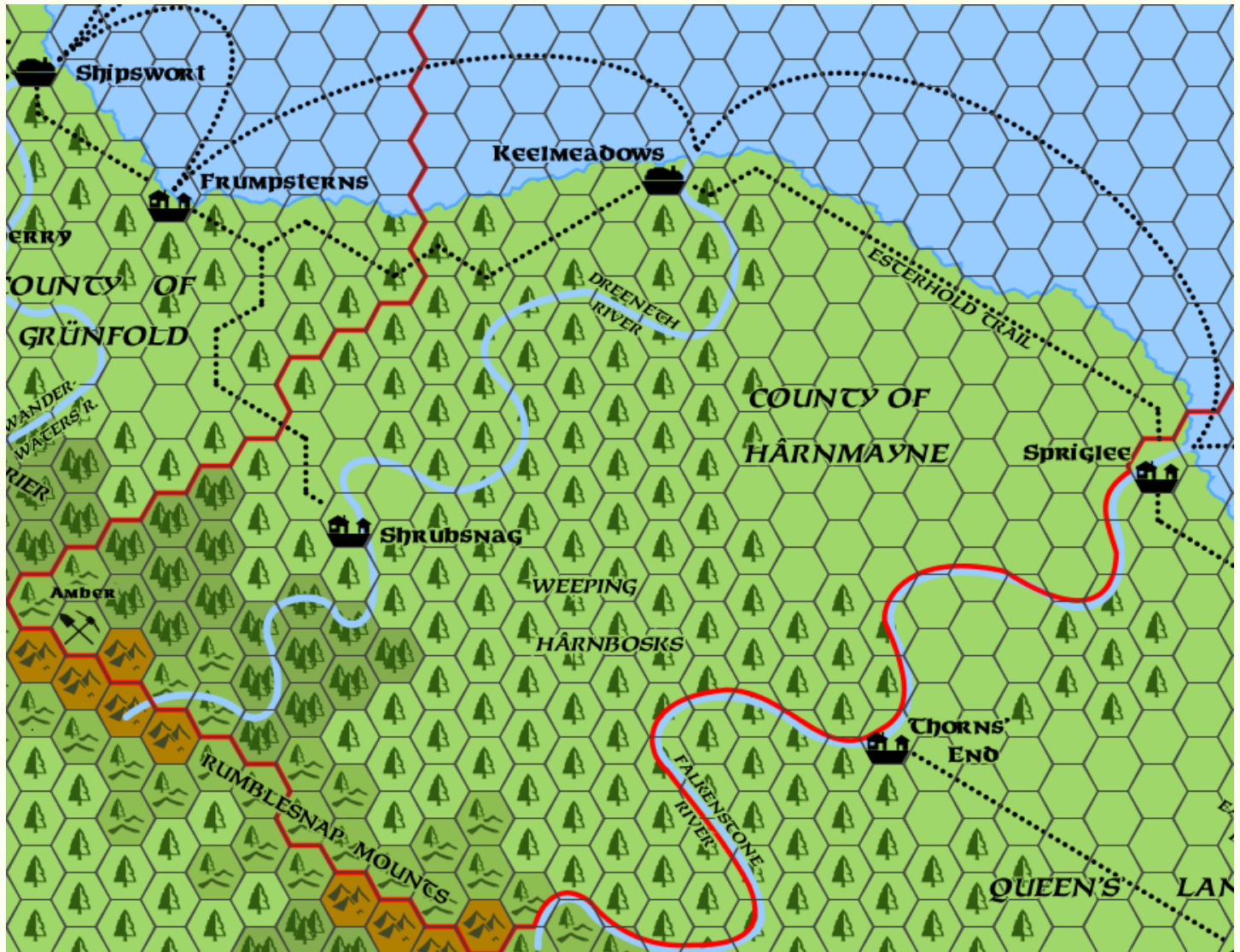
**Druidical Spells:** rangers can cast druidical spells as clerics one third their experience levels (i.e. level 1 spells at their third experience level, etc.) regardless of their actual alignments.

**Clan Powers:** subject to DM moderation, a 10th level ranger may learn one special defense available to clan members, if any. One more may be learned for each additional 5 experience levels. Special attack can only be learned if all defensive abilities have already been mastered.

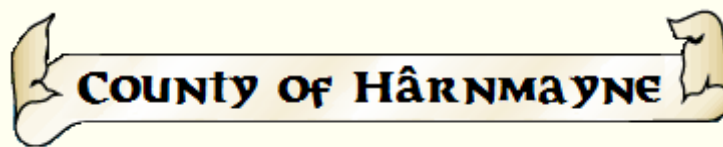


# Foresthme: Hârnmayne & Grünfold

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



County of Hârnmayne – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



The Land of Hârn to this day retains a fairly low population, at least outside its forests. For the longest time, the Gulon Clans remained rebellious to any outside influence, including neighboring woodlands beings. Gulons are remnants of an ancient race afflicted with the curse of lycanthropy. Half-men and half-wolverines, these gulons were notorious for a ferociousness and gluttony far beyond that of the fiercest of werewolves. They live in the large forest known as the Weeping Hârnbosks, named after the many intruders who've lost their lives there, and in the foothills of the Rumblesnap Mounes. Although adjacent to the Queen's Lands, Hârnmayne was the very last dominion to join the kingdom. It existed as a lawless borderland well into Foresthme's annals until Maretha-the-Furrier, a daring and clever sorceress, discovered a way

to alter the curse. At long last, the fear and horror ceased, and common people began settling the newly-established county.

Today's gulons are no longer thought as "wereverines" but as the Gulon Clans. These muscular man-like beings have light-to-medium-brown fur covering their heads, the back of their necks, hands, and feet, their shoulders, and their back. They feature short bushy tails, very strong lower jaws, thick eyebrows, and dense fur drooping from their sideburns. Beard, which many shorten to stubble length, gives the lower faces of males a dark shading akin to a wolverine's muzzle. Their hands and feet are clawed. As can be expected, gulons are voracious eaters, leaving little on their plates but the hardest of bones. As to romance, an outsider bold enough to seduce one had better have a solid constitution to survive the night. Cautiousness ought to behoove the more adventurous, as gulons mate for life. Although naturally jovial and boisterous, angering one is a bad idea. Angering an entire clans is a disaster. When challenged or threatened, Gulons shape-change into giant wolverines, a sequel to their former lycanthropic affliction. When in anger, gulons must succeed Wisdom checks to resist the change or to change back. When calm, however, they may voluntarily change back and forth if it would be of benefit.

**Gulons:** as normal men (min. St 13, min. Co. 17, max. Wi 14; two claw attacks/round, 1d4 dmg each, or one weapon attack), ML 11, AL any, with shape-changing ability. Gulons can speak to all weasel-type creatures, including normal wolverines. They often use normal wolverines as familiars, despite not being wizards. Insults, wounds, and willful attempts to harm a friend or a kin are enough to trigger anger. Gulons no longer infect their victims with lycanthropy.

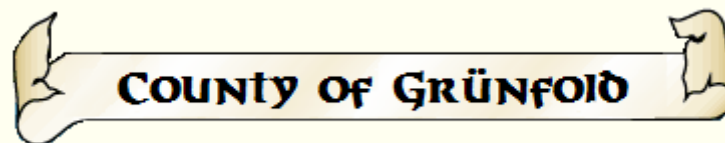
If permitted as a player characters (fighters or clerics), gulons incur a -10% penalty to all experience gains. Since a player character left the clan to go on a life of adventuring with outsiders, the shape-change ability when angered is no longer automatic. Intentional shape-change may be attempted only once per day and lasts for one battle or 1 round per experience level, whichever is longest. Base chances of success are 10% +7% for every additional experience level, up to 73%. From level 11 onward, the percentage score increases +1% per additional level. The odds of an unintentional shape change are half as much, rounded up (only when angered; rolled by the DM). Gulons do not wear armor other than shields as it would restrict their shape-changing ability and destroy their armor. For that matter, they wear loose-fitting garments that can be discarded when switching forms. When changing, all equipment drops to the floor around them. Using these mechanics, a higher-level fighter (level 10-15) may lead a clan. Gulons can become Foresthorne rangers (see previous chapter) connected with a gulon clan with an additional -15% experience penalty (total -25%).



**Giant Wolverine\*:** AC2, HD 6\*, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 claws/1 bite, Dmg 2d4/2d4/2d8, Save F6, ML12; Int 10, AL N (regardless of the original gulon alignment). **Special Defenses:** half-damage from non-silver or non-magical weapons, half-damage from cold-based attacks, relative Constitution is 19; can move at full speed in deep snow. Giant wolverines do not infect their victims with lycanthropy. If all enemies have fallen or fled while a giant wolverine is still in battle rage, it may attack an ally (15% chance), usually the closest. When switching shapes,

previously accumulated damage remains proportional to the previous form's maximum hit points.

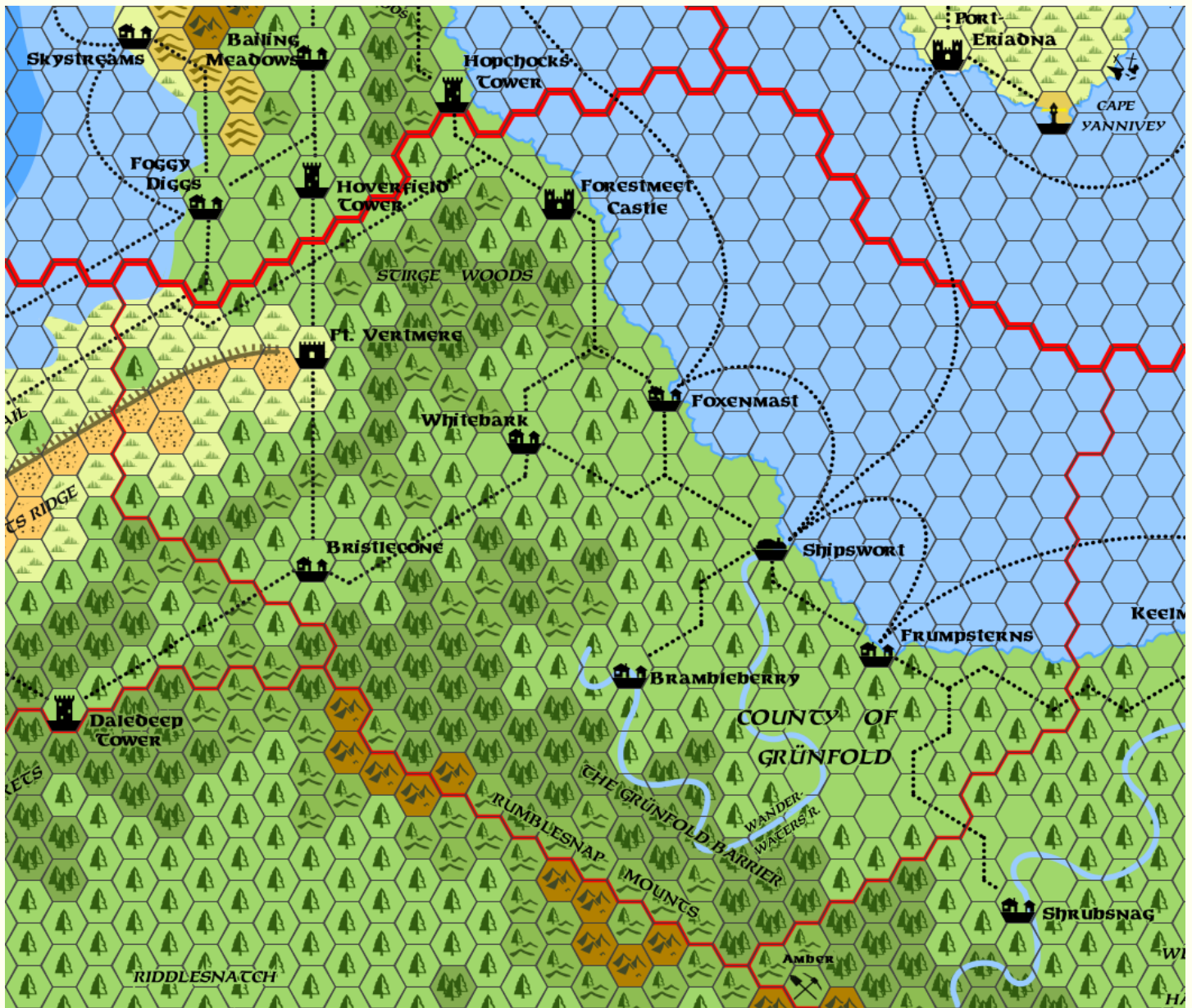
Since the pacification of the gulons, normal life began in the region. Aside from the seat of the county in Keelmeadows, only one village was founded, upstream on the Dreeneth River. Other settlements include hamlets with about 50-100 inhabitants each, mostly farmers and fishermen. The town was originally a fishing port. After some initial successes, the community failed to expand in any meaningful way as it came under regular attack by the gulons. The proportion of forested land in Hårnmayne clearly shows the extent of gulon clan territories and illustrates their political influence in the count's administration. It also explains why the paved Silkstone Road was never extended past the Queen's Lands. Gulons naturally object to developments aimed at facilitating outsider settlement of open areas. Nonetheless, the Esterhold Trail came into use, connecting the Queen's Lands with the Kingdom of Ar. Farming communities are slowly growing along the trail, the coast, and the Falkenstone River. Beyond Keelmeadows, the Dreeneth waterway is navigable only by smaller vessels (Norse-style longships or smaller) up to Shrubsnag. By law, outsiders may freely travel the river but not leave its banks while in gulon territory. The clans operate an amber mine as full partners and on behalf of the count—the other partner. The mine is dangerous due to seismic activity under the mountain range. The name "Rumblesnap" comes from the noise rocks often make and the sudden snapping sound when a crack opens.



This northern dominion is another heavily forested land, although it fared infinitely better than its southern neighbor as regards its present population. Its history ties into the Realm of Ar more than that of Foresthome. Much of the outsider population there grew from runaway serfs and renegades escaped from Ar. Early on, sasquatches living in the woods, recognized the value of having allies to keep the wizards of Ar off their land. The truth is that much of the sasquatches' sympathy for outsider settlements originated from vast amounts of vegetables, fruit, and ale generously purveyed by their newfound allies. Unlike Hårnmayne, the inhabitants of Grünfold, whether clansfolk or outsider, could not wait to swear allegiance to the new king. Initially, their decision engendered a rash response from Ar, in the form of air raids and fiery attacks upon their woods and farmsteads, wreaking desolation upon wide swaths of land. The behavior ended progressively as royal troops sailed in and reinforced the new dominion's defenses. Joining the empire definitely put an end any open conflict with Ar.



**Sasquatch:** AC6, HD 5\*, MV 150' (50'), AT 2 claws or 1 boulder, Dmg 2d4/2d4 or 1d8, Save F5, ML 6 (11 in lair), Int 6, AL N. Shamans with 8 HD exist in the clans.



**County of Grünfold – Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Another war took place some years later. Without a clear reason, masses of ogres and other horrors emerged from the depths beneath the crags, the region south of Crystal Lake and mainland Ar. At first, their onslaught seemed directed at Foresthome, chopping down trees wherever possible, enslaving or slaying all in their paths. Several historians surmised that some malevolent wizard from Ar, in an act of selfish wanton spite, might have aroused these ogres and channeled their wrath toward the sylvan realm. It seemed to have worked for some time until the ogres turned upon the tantalizing northern lands, richer, easier to penetrate for their lack of woods, and oh so packed with defenseless, juicy farmers altogether ready for slavery in the Pits of Sorrow. The war went on for decades, laying waste to all that fell to the ogres, until combined operations from both Foresthome and Ar finally sent them reeling back to their somber domain. Although raids still occur on either side of the crags, a mass ogrish invasion has never taken place again since the last battle, where ogres fell in such numbers that one could not see the ground for miles. The event served to bring the two realms closer.

Since then, a fort and a castle remain to watch the northern Grünfold border. Bristlecone, Whitebark, and Foxenmast are still fortified. The Town of Shipswort houses the county's seat and features reasonably good port installations. In the absence of conflict, trade has grown with the northern neighbor, on land and at sea. There was a time when sasquatch clans had to contend with gulons in the forests along the southern border. They held their own, developing tactics to discourage their raids, mostly relying on nasty traps and drugged foods abandoned in their paths. Over time, the gulons avoided the Grünfold Barrier and concentrated on southern outsider settlements instead. The pacification of gulons came as a great relief and enabled the expansion of outsider farmsteads in the southern meadows.

Shipswort is the traditional jumping point from mainland Alphonatia to the southern tip of the Yannivey Islands. It is one of the few gates through which immigrants from the insular dominion reach the mainland. Unwelcome in Ar, many head straight for neighboring Hårnmayne. Some continue on to faraway Westford to find employment with horse and cattle farms. Poor, filthy, barely able to speak the local vernacular, they are often abused and unjustly treated among outsiders. From the point of view of the clans, they are just another wave flowing by. Following the wisdom that today's meek might be tomorrow's lords, the clans remain more neutral toward them.

The Wander Waters River is a very shallow waterway. Even longships, favored vessels in these northern climes, travel upstream with great difficulty. As the name suggests, its riverbed shifts its path randomly from one month to the next. The reason has yet to be discovered, although locals speak of elemental creatures haunting the waters. So far, the indication remains to be confirmed. The fact forest breweries dump their sludge into the river might have something to do with its odd behavior. One beer-maker, however, has found that the dregs of production can be compressed, salted, mixed with butter, and sold as tasty snacks to the sasquatches who seem to get high on the stuff. To outsiders, the substance merely tastes like salty, rancid dirt pies. New laws are being debated at the Clan House in Shipswort to restrict the evil concoction before the problem gets out of hand. And yes, Grünfold beer is a thick, dark, and potent beverage, due to unique molds growing there. It is one of the county's main exports.

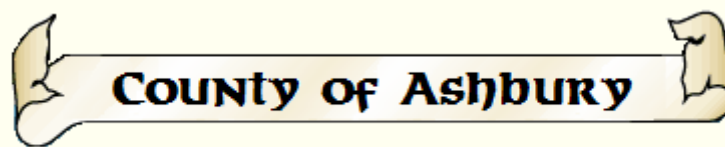


# Foresthorne: Ashbury & The Clan Lands

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



County of Ashbury - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



This piece of land was key in the new kingdom's western expansion. Clans just north in their vast forest hesitated a long time before joining, leaving Ashbury as the sole gateway around Lake Lynn. At first very quiet and somewhat remote, it grew rapidly when outsiders began transiting from east to west. It was the farthest north one could sail, other than the Eastfollow River. Since the northeast was either well-spoken for or at risk with the Gulons, remaining options were to settle here or travel west along the aptly-named Northlake Trail, from Green Bay to the junction with the Wessith Trail. Yannifey immigrants commonly follow that route as well as merchants who seek to avoid the League of Eight.

In its distant history, Ashbury bore a very different name given by an ancient race that had settled the region. Eventually, these people retreated as a result of the clans' resilience to foreign occupation and the successive waves of outsiders moving in. One town remains that still

bears an old-style name—Shog. Some say it describes the way the old invader was “shoggen” (as in shoved out), others use it as an expression of awe and dismay which find its root in the terror that primeval occupants and their alien sorcery inspired. *Shogg!* But in truth, it refers to a darker place deep within the souls of Shog-born residents, so terrifying that no one ever looks there for fear of what they might find staring back at them. Ill-inspired introspection aside, what lies in the dungeons beneath Shog is anyone’s guess. In a century past, the town was burned to the ground to exorcise its primordial evils. But fire doesn’t reach below ground. Perhaps this has something to do with the latent darkness of the native psyche. Time will tell.

Countess Ashbury is of the original dynasty that had received this land from the first monarch. The family coat of arms displays a phoenix rising from its ashes, referring to the Town of Shog reborn from its destruction. The latest and very young countess is among those who feel the reviled presence somewhere within. Druids tend to her health and education, advising her on affairs of state and training her to focus her mind upon her work as a way to placate emanations of chaos troubling her. A faint voice calls her in the night, beckoning her deep below the city and disturbing her sleep. She may only find rest with herbal medicines and the care of her druids. The head of the countess’s guard, her lover, has been arguing the need to mount an expedition to put an end to the trouble (and to loosen the grip druids maintain upon the young aristocrat). Palace druids object to the expedition, primarily because they worry about what it may unleash. There is talk instead of making sacrifices, precious items of amber or silver that can be obtained from Hårnmayne and the Queen’s Lands.



Elsewhere in the county, the Darkmoss and Argolan Rivers are fairly shallow. Only the former permits navigation by small galleys or longships up to Snarewood. This village marks the northern limit of outsider farmsteads. A ferry barge is available to cross over to the village of Hopwater. Woods cover a large proportion of Ashbury. It belongs to forest giants. These peaceful beings have been recognized as a force of nature, connecting with trees in ways that only treants and dryads fully understand. Their territory extends from the western fringes of Blackroot Forest to the Lonely Forest, some twenty miles past the Argolan. What is known about them is that they survive by preying upon a curious sort of moss that creeps in the shadows of the woods and attacks the unwary. Forest giants are known to be able to appear or disappear from sight without any explanation. Although some have spellcasting abilities among their clans, most do not, and the mystery remains. Although occasionally giants show up for meetings at the local Clan House, they more commonly rely on rangers as their representatives.

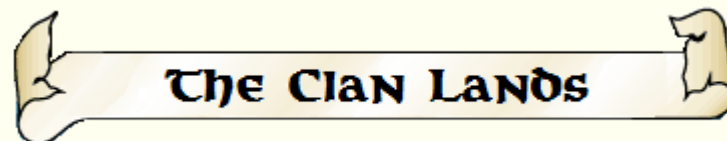
**Forest Giant:** AC3, HD12\*\*, MV 120’ (40’), AT 1 + boulder, Dmg 7d6, Save F12, ML 10, Int 15, AL L. **Special Attacks:** throws boulders (ranges 80’/160’/300’). **Special Defenses:** *pass-plant* (as the druid fifth level spell, three times a day), eye-seeds (see description below, once a day). Shamans and wokani exist with druidical spellcasting ability up to C7 or MU7.

**Creeping Moss:** AC can always be hit, HD 2\*, MV 3’ (1’), AT 1 constriction, Dmg 1d6, Save F1, ML 7, Int 0, AL N. **Special Attack:** drops on a prey (hits automatically and causes 1d6 dmg per round). **Special Defenses:** indistinguishable from normal moss; a defeated foe’s flesh, bones,



and any other organic matter are digested at the rate of 1 hp per Turn. The moss remains in place, covering any leftover treasure. Another may slowly creep above, on a tree trunk or beneath an overhanging branch. Creeping moss goes dormant when temperatures are near freezing or below.

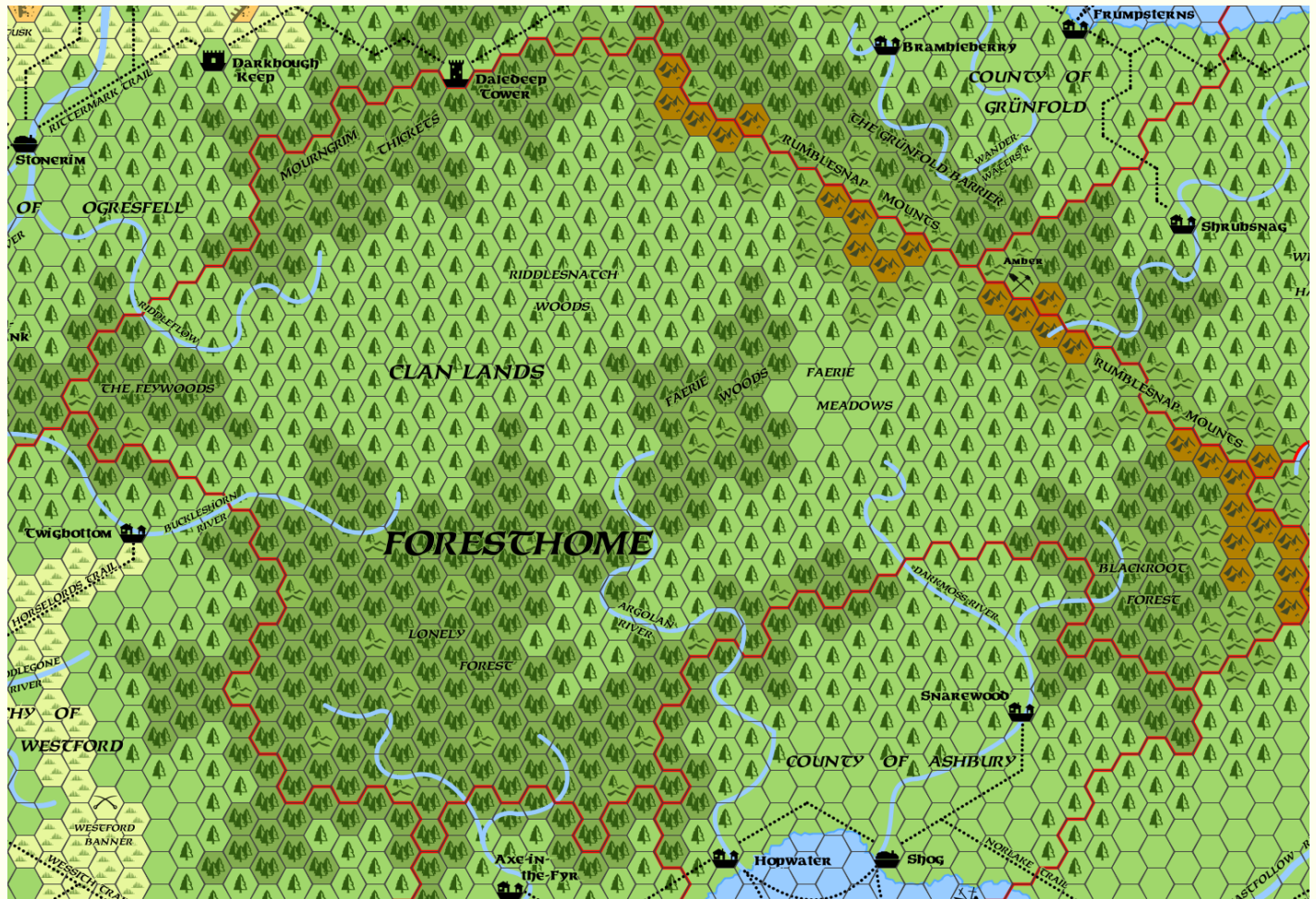
Forest giants stand about 30' tall. They look gnarled like old trees, with skin ranging from brown to birch-like gray, and hair from dark green to black. Enjoying a deep bond with nature, they may heal normal trees and treantkind (6d6 hp) alike with a single touch. They and the neighboring blackroot respect each other despite their opposing alignments, and do not intrude upon each other's territories. Forest giants are immune to forest wight attacks. They also maintain very good relations with other woodland beings. On a dry day, a giant may release a cloud of dandelion-like seeds. The giant breathes upon them to give them a direction in which to float, at the rate of 7' per round. Anyone caught within should sense an odd draft defying any other breeze that had prevailed earlier. A forest giant can see and hear anything within the cone of "eye-seeds," which can reach up to 12 miles in length and 4 miles in width. The entire process lasts a little over 12 hours. When they sleep, forest giants meld with tree groves until sunrise. If killed, their vital force is released, affecting nature within a 600' radius: vegetation doubles in size, dead or dying trees are revived, bushes and brambles thicken and expand wildly, spores and pollens fill the air regardless of season, and creeping moss breeds wherever possible, generating at the minimum 3d4+3 creatures. Any life form such as treantkind are instantly healed and may permanently gain one or more HD. Blackroots and most undead, however, would be slain immediately. Treants will often move over-sized trees resulting from the death of a giant and relocate them deeper in the Lonely Forest where they may survive many centuries.



## The Clan Lands

Theirs is a vast forest. Late-comers in the sylvan kingdom, the Great Clans as they dubbed themselves, took a long time to ponder the options. For some, this palaver came as a preposterous waste of time taking far longer than it ever should have, especially in the view of the faerie folk who were the most resistant to the concept. For treants in the southwest, it felt like a rushed decision, although the clincher was the protection of the woods and its people. Forest giants concurred, although it took them nearly as much time as the treants to make up their minds. The fey, at the western edge of the Clan Lands, remained more neutral, although the idea of bringing together all the other clans, even if under an Alphatian monarchy, won them over. In the Mourngrim Thickets prevails an overgrown darkness that has become home to creatures humans call decapus (plur. *decapi* or *decapusses*). They and their mysterious mistress, the Green Queen, hostile to all and highly aggressive, weren't asked. At the center stand the shargugh clans who didn't seem to care one way or the other, and promptly went back to their woodsy endeavors. At last the blackroots, in a stunningly-swift decision, supported the motion. Since the woodsmen and their twig-headed elven allies had already embraced the sylvan kingdom, they couldn't take the risk of their sworn enemy turning their newfound allies against Blackroot Forest. Conclusion: yea—four, nay—one, abstained or not asked—two. The

issue was clear, and at long last the council of Great Clans negotiated their autonomous membership among the great Kingdom of Foresthome.



**Autonomous Clan Lands - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

**The Lonely Forest:** The focus among the treant clans is to recover giant trees stemming from the death of forest giants. These trees are sentient and harbor a part of the life force and knowledge of fallen giants. These special trees are moved to the center of the Lonely Forest where they can be protected and cared for. Once in a century, a giant tree may produce a nut that will engender a treant or, more rarely, a gakarak (*Creature Catalog*). There are males and females among treantkind, but the grand creatures have since a long time ago forgotten why. They usually doze off when debating the issue, so convoluted the matter seems to be. There is one thing that will spark an instant reaction from any treant, male or female: threatening a treant sapling or a giant tree. It is believed that this forest is one of the very few, if not the only remaining place on Mystara where treants are born. It is called the Lonely Forest because no other sentient creature is permitted there besides those favored by treantkind, and common wildlife. Treants distrust their blackroot cousins but will not deliberately harm them unless attacked.

**The Faerie Woods:** They are home to pixies. These small creatures build their villages high up in the trees and have the ability to render them completely invisible to intruders. The latter is somewhat of a shame, as these dwellings are wonderful pieces of art, with delicate carvings, magical lights, and graceful wooden architecture akin to that of ancient forest elves—it has never

been established who copied whom. Despite their fragile appearances, these tiny villages are able to weather the worst of winter and ice storms, perhaps another manifestation of faerie magic. Although not hostile, pixies dislike visits from outsiders, whom they mistrust. Those who did earn their confidence, usually elven rangers, may be invited as honored guests. This involves magic reducing the visitors' sizes to the scale of the faerie world. It is possible they may never allow visitors to leave, ever, let alone regain their original sizes. The annals of the land have recorded, however, several instances of adventurers regaining their freedom after taking on a quest on behalf of the faerie folk. Almost invariably, this involves romance between a visitor and a faerie person, since they are quite beautiful and charming. Such stories may also end in one being able to willingly take on the shape and nature of a faerie when needed, or vice-versa. Beware, however, as there seems to be no end to magical shenanigans when it comes to love among pixies. Aerial faeries also dwell in the skies above the forest. They are considered a part of this region. Other woodland beings inhabit these woods, including mostly satyrs, dryads, unicorns, flitterlings\* and coltpixies\*—(\*) *Creature Catalog*.

**The Feywoods:** The Fey is the name that generally refers to all fairy folk. However, it also designates the inhabitants of this region, who would be better described as wood nymphs. They look like elven women of awesome beauty. Their kind isn't unheard of elsewhere in Alphatia, but those are aquatic cousins dwelling in rivers and lakes. Nymphs of the Feywoods are bound to trees and the land that feeds them. Although highly magical, they are spirits of nature whose appearance, abilities, and alignments change with seasons. They are closely allied to treantkind, except for blackroots whom they see as undead abominations. When they turn chaotic in wintertime, they aren't "evil," but merely unpredictable and colder, because such is nature during this harsh season—it is the time when the weak must be tested.

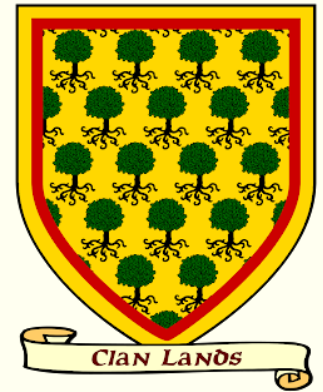
**Wood Nymph:** AC9, HD 3-18\*\*\*, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 spell, Dmg per spell, Save E3-E18, ML 7, Int 16+, AL L in summer, N in spring and fall, and C in winter. **Special Attacks:** may cast Druidic spells as a cleric half their HD (rounded up), and magical spells as a magic-user one third their HD (rounded down). **Special Defenses:** *dimension door* (once per day), blindness, death, anti-magic 50%.

Blindness may occur when a nymph is first seen (save vs. paralysis neg.). Death may occur instead if the nymph is naked at the time of the first glimpse (save vs. death ray neg.). Wood nymphs may befriend a visitor of the corresponding alignment if they see that visitor first (10% chance + 14% per point of Charisma above 12). Friendship only remains true for the current season and each time that same season returns. Seasonal abilities are described below. Each ability is available once a day and, wherever possible, affects a 15' radius.

- **Spring:** may awaken dormant creatures, remove magical paralysis, return petrified beings to life, and cause plants to burgeon and bloom.
- **Summer:** may radiate natural sunlight or moonlight (1 Turn per HD); may cast an aura of life inflicting 1d6 per HD against undead creatures (save for half damage).
- **Autumn:** may render dormant living creatures (save vs. paralysis neg.)—the effect is permanent until the nymph reawakens the victims in spring, or if negated with a *remove curse* spell.

- **Winter:** immunity to ice and cold-based attacks, may turn open water to ice, may create and shape ice as the magic-user's *woodform* spell.

**The Riddlesnatch Woods:** Three feet tall, with wild, matted hair, tangled beards, and ragged, brown-and-green garb, shargugh claimed this region so long ago no one remembers exactly when or how. They get along fairly well with their neighbors, usually disappearing altogether when they disagree with someone. Unless they need to expand their territory, even the decapi leave them alone perhaps because they smell and taste so bad. Shargugh (pronounced in various ways depending on the local accent) often benefit from increased ranger attention, mostly to monitor decapus activity. More than once do rangers clear out decapus hunting parties encroaching upon the Riddlesnatch Woods, taking those captured back to Greenwood for examination. The name "Riddlesnatch" comes from a game shargugh like to play either on each other or even more on visitors. Hidden in the bushes, they greet outsiders with a riddle. If the answer is correct, the visitor may pass unmolested. If not, shargugh will sneak up to the visitors and "snatch" something from them—a pouch, a bag, a weapon, a helmet, etc.—before disappearing into the woods. Shargugh, although the dominant race there, share this part of the forest with a few clans of phanatons (Creature Catalog), living higher up in the trees.



**Shargugh:** AC7, HD3\*, MV 150' (50'), AT 1 bite or weapon, Dmg 1d4 or by weapon, Save E6, ML 7, Int 10, AL N. **Special Attacks:** pick pocket 85% chance, move silently 85% chance. **Special Defenses:** hide in woods 90% chance, transport through trees 600 yards (5 times a day). Shargugh live in symbiosis with their woods, the health of either depending upon the well-being of the other.

**The Mourngrim Thickets:** A sinister place indeed, for it harbors a concentration of decapi, arboreal beasts with ten tentacles, covered with brown hair, and featuring a very large mouth filled with sharp yellow teeth. The writhing, coiling, green-drooling, foul-smelling denizens of the dark weald were first discovered there about the time the Town of Shog was burned down. Since then, they took over these parts. It is widely believed by the fey and forest giants that something escaped from the ravaged town, something that was meant to remain in its dungeons. And it reproduced. Some time afterward, news of a Green Queen emerged. For some, her name came through dreams—nay—nightmares from which one awakes screaming. For others, whispers in the fronds told of her existence, a mysterious being, ageless yet mortal, a wicked force that harkened back to even more distant times. Rarely does she communicate with clan leaders, perhaps remaining dormant until disturbed. When she does, trouble soon follows when her minions spread out, pushing the limits of her kingdom a few hundred yards here, a mile there. Druids suspect she may be a queen in the sense of a hive, bearing and bringing decapi to life according to an alien cycle. Those who attempted to pierce the mystery were never heard of again or went insane, their faces and limbs partially melted. The last to intrude upon this somber realm was an ogrish horde. None survived, and the decapi suddenly multiplied, pushing their borders out once more.

**Decapus/Hupadgh'fhalma:** AC5, HD 4, MV 90' (30') in trees or 3' (1') on the ground, AT 9-10 tentacles, Dmg 1d6 each, Save F2, ML 9, Int 11, AL C. **Special Attacks:** none. **Special Defenses:** telepathic link with the Green Queen. Decapi usually hang from a branch with one tentacle, and attack with the other nine. On the ground, they can only manage six attacks.

**Green Queen/Queen Mother/Hafh'drn'fhalma\*:** AC -5, HD 33\*, hp 260, MV 0 or *teleport*, AT 10 bundles of ten tentacles/swallow whole or acid breath weapon, Dmg 10d6 + *paralysis* per bundle/20d6 acid breath (300'x10' line), Save F33, ML 11, Int 19, AL C. **Special Attacks:** *telepathy/ESP\**, madness (save vs. spell neg.), *causes fear* to characters levels 1-4 (no save), casts 2 spells/round as a MU33 + 1 spell/round as a C33 (reversible spells are reversed). **Special Defenses:** immune to spells level 1-5, anti-magic 50%, +3 or better magical weapon to hit, *detect magic*, *see invisible* (60').

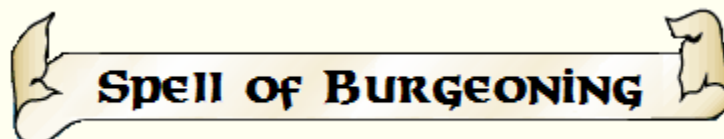
The Queen Mother looks vaguely like a giant decapus, about 60' tall and with a hundred tentacles, about 100' in length and organized into ten bundles around her body. Three large eyestalks sit on top of the fat lump that serves as her body, above a single wide mouth. Smaller tendrils, about 6' long, wriggle around the acid-oozing lips, awaiting to pull someone inside. Her fur ranges from lime green to crimson red, rippling with strange eddies as she constantly coils and uncoils her tentacles.

- **Tentacles:** Tentacle bundles will initially hit for damage, whipping or slamming into foes. With a natural roll of 20 on a bundle's hit roll, a foe must save vs. death ray or be ripped in half. If not ripped in half, or with a natural score of 18-19 on a bundle's hit roll, a foe is *entangled* in the bundle. Inflicting 20 points of damage to the bundle will knock a trapped victim free, otherwise, the victim is thrown into the Queen Mother's mouth at the end of the following round. If another victim is already being sucked into her mouth during that round, any other entangled victims are thrown preferably into a lava pit, off a cliff, or to some other deadly spot nearby. Those hit or entangled must save vs. paralysis or be *paralyzed* (one check per bundle attack—lasts 1 Turn).
- **Mouth:** those dropped into the mouth are pulled inside the Queen Mother's body by series of concentric tendrils, down to a huge sack of acid (20d6 acid damage/round) by the end of the round. Three times per battle, she may otherwise breathe an acid line—if anyone is trapped inside, their remains are regurgitated and spit out as well.
- **Eyestalks:** the three large eyestalks on top of the beast provide her with her spellcasting abilities. One is the clerical eye, the other two cast magic-user spells. Attacking eyestalks directly requires a hit good enough for AC -10 and at least 20 points of cumulative damage singly or 60 points of damage with an area spell. The Queen Mother can regrow eyestalks and damaged tentacles in a day.

What remains a mystery is who came first, the Green Queen or the decapi. The Queen Mother can bring into existence one decapus per round, if the planetary alignment is correct or if a massive amount of live food is brought to her. Her progeny grows at first like an over-sized wart and bursts out amid a glop of pus, before rolling off the Queen Mother's side. She can *telepathically* call any decapus in the neighborhood to her side. At other times, decapi hunting parties set up ambushes for the purpose of capturing prey to feed the Queen Mother. Without them, she is nearly helpless, as she cannot move (other than *teleporting*) and thus isn't suited

for hunting. She remains unable to use other movement-related spells (*dimension door, fly, travel, etc.*) A few mad rangers have taken her side and may be used as a way to communicate with the Green Queen, should she decide to address the Clan Lands council. It is unknown what powers they may have gained in the process.

**Blackroot Forest:** See County of Llynmouth for details.

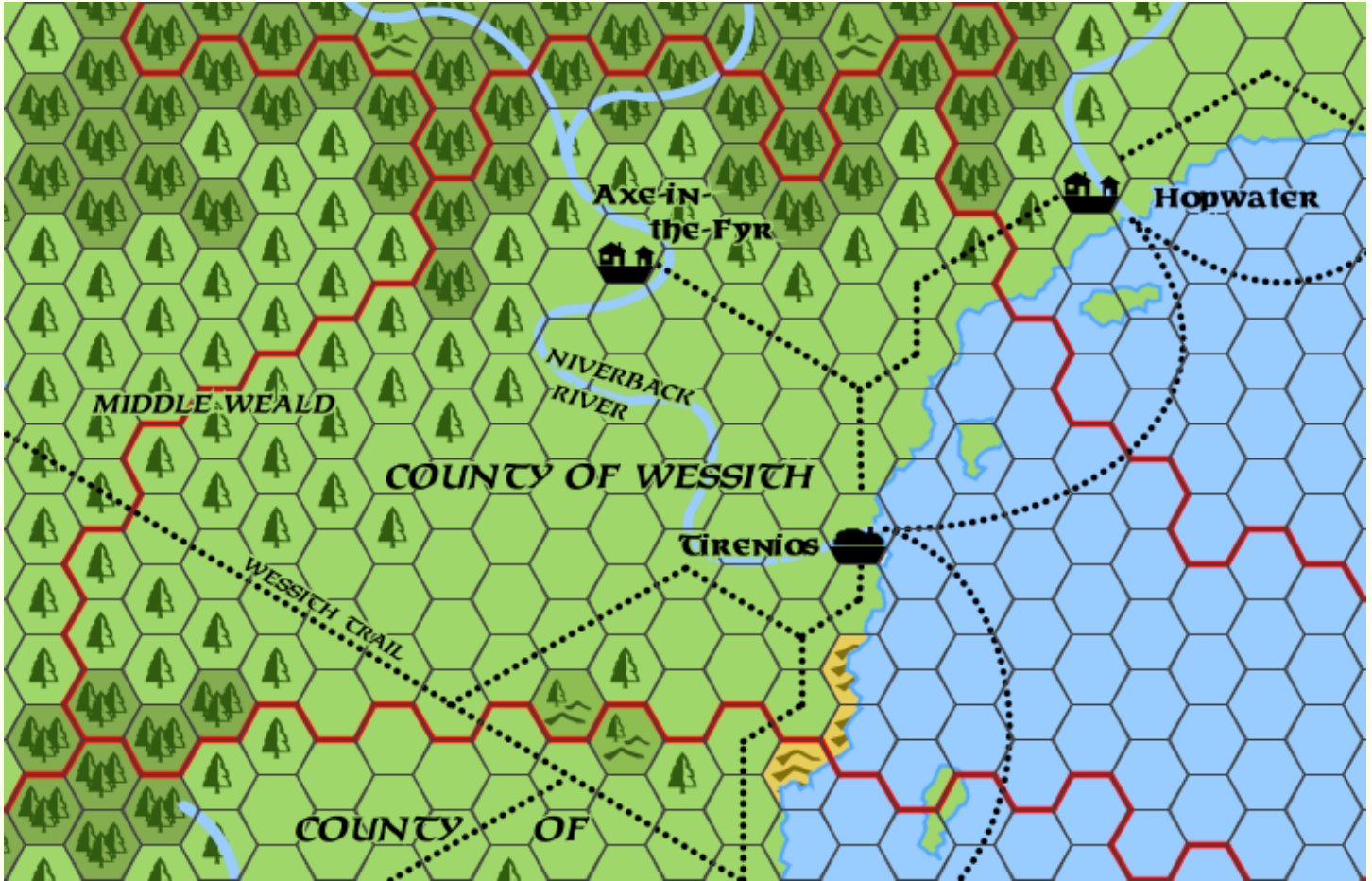


## Spell of BURGEONING

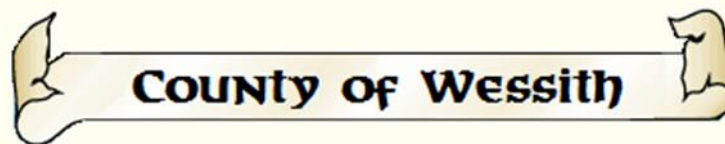
A greater purpose exists in the vast woods of the Great Clans. A primeval spell was devised in eons past that would return the land to its original sylvan state. If ever unleashed, it would provoke the uncontrollable and monstrous growth of all that relies on roots to survive within all of mainland Alphatia. It would tear apart town, bridge, road, monument, and fortress alike in a matter of hours, eradicating the empire. As a result of the spell, it is understood that many outsiders would perish in the cataclysm. It isn't known who or what created the spell, as neither druid, nor cleric, nor sage, nor all-knowing seer ever connected its language to any immortal. It is believed not even they would be able to stop it once triggered. The spell was devised in such a way that the mightiest of leaders from the seven Great Clans would have to speak the enchantment's words together, including the Green Queen. The latter's inclusion in the spell's design remains another unnerving mystery. The spell's outlandish wording can be made to appear or disappear when uttering command words. It will materialize as an engraving on a nearby stone or within the flesh of a mature tree opening itself as if to reveal its heart. Clan leaders gazing simultaneously upon these mind-disturbing writings are *telepathically* connected, no matter how far apart from each other. As a final note, forest giants have believed as far back as they can remember (and that is a long, long, very long time ago) that the obliteration of so much life would engender guilt enough for all who bear it to turn them evil. This warning failed to impress the Green Queen or the denizens of Blackroot Forest.

# Foresthorne: Wessith with Mersey & Weil

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



County of Wessith - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



It is best known as the place one stops before traveling west. Many of those sailing round the lake by its north route disembark at Shog to save on the fares the League of Eight extorts from passengers. Shog being somewhat sinister, travelers head to Tirenios on foot—a far more pleasant place despite being a boom town. Those sailing from the south are far more likely to disembark at Weilat. The two towns connect with the Wessith Trail. The part of this trail stretching from Weilat is known as Wessith-by-the-South. The other running from Tirenios is called Wessith-by-the-Niverback.

The Niverback River marked for a time the westernmost border of the new kingdom, well before the Duchy of Westford was established. It was where rangers crossed to head west or south. Most of them left for extended periods, prompting locals to say in their strongly accented vernacular: "*Nee'vah back, he be. Nee'vah back, says'ah.*" The river itself is a minor one, slow and caked with muddy banks. Longships can manage their way up but no farther than Axe-in-the-Fyr. This village's name came from a renegade woodcutter who got into an argument with

an angry treant. His axe got stuck in the creature's trunk. "*Eevah the lath 'aing he dun, 'ath was.*" It was a mighty axe indeed, and so deep it sank that no one could pull it from the treant's trunk. There it remained for as long as the treant lived. It is rumored that the famous creature returned to the Lonely Forest, there to live its final decades before turning into an elder tree. Its mind and soul slowly bled out through its roots until *Ol'grayun-witha-n'Axe* was no more. The blade still exists, somewhere in the Lonely Forest. Some say it has become haunted with the late treant's spirit.

Wessith was once considered the last of the kingdom's warrior marches. Beyond lay the domain of monstrous tribes migrating past the Snake River. They pushed on toward Wessith, seeking more land to settle, slaves to torment, treasure to plunder, or food. The county then was a royal bastion filled with hardened troops. The number of battles fought west of the Niverback was forgotten amid the fog of war. The assailants burned or felled a wide swath of forest, building siege machines on the way. However inventive and ferocious, they never broke through, and their misbegotten bones littered the bottom of the Niverback. In time, outsiders struck back, and the heroic westward push resumed once more to the beat of drums and the bellows of great horns.



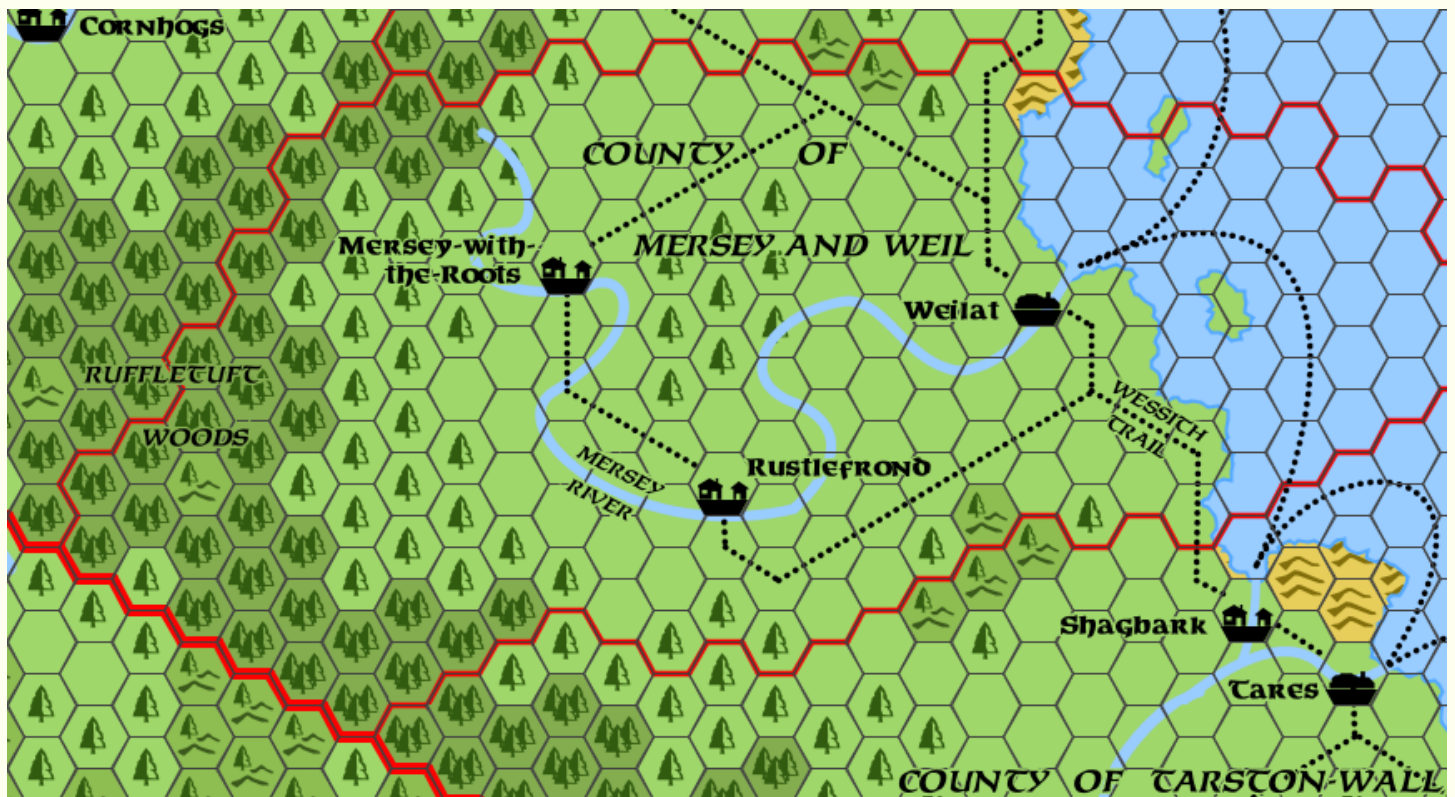
*Nee'vah back. Nee'vah back.*

Ravaged by war, Middle Weald never quite recovered after its greatest residents had been slain or turned into lumber or kindling. Wessith eventually grew enough to reach what survived of these woods. It happened when the neighboring Duchy of Westford was proclaimed. Borders were traced upon a piece of parchment, rough, bearded faces nodded, and hands were shaken with the spittle of agreement. In the absence of clans, druids moved in, grave and silver-headed with age and wisdom. Theirs became the task of healing the forest. A short-lived clash flared before it was also agreed that, by law, no traveler should wander into the forest away from the Wessith Trail. Royal rangers came to ensure everyone stood by the agreement, and life at last took on the normalcy of civilization. Though peace prevailed, a lingering conflict among druids simmered in shadowy confines of the crippled woods. They had uncovered the existence of the *Spell of Burgeoning*. Most agreed it was an odious abomination, a travesty of nature. For them, wilderness should stem from seed, nut, and spore. Yet, a few hard souls disagreed. They believed that returning the land to its rightful sylvan state, magically if need be, was imperative in the face of growing outsider pressure. They veiled their feelings and quietly formed the *Green Circle*. During the following decades, this secret sect devoted itself to the study of the spell and its origins, and the implementation of a strategy to convince or coerce the great clan leaders to release it. There is no telling in recent times how they fared, who or where they are, and what dark webs of intrigue they've spun.

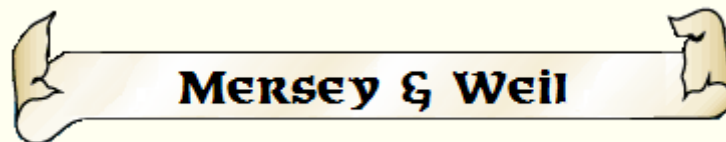
Today, Wessith is better known for its vast apple tree orchards and production of the kingdom's best cider. Chestnuts are another local crop used in many different ways--flours, candied sweets, dense breads, fruitcake-like pastries, rare and expensive liquors, druidical saps and oils, perfumes, medicinal syrups, and a unique beverage made from ground and thoroughly roasted grits through which one pours boiling water to produce a bitter concoction. Some say that it can



be made strong enough to wake up old bones in the Niverback. Better yet, a secret process enables an elven merchant to manufacture bars of concentrated chestnut meal, *cackleroot*, and honey with very high nutritional value, most favored by campaigning warriors and rangers. A single bar not more than five inches long is enough to feed a man for a day. There are many copycats, some connected with the League of Eight. Wessith is now a merchants' concern, with goods to acquire and transport, travelers to shuttle and house, and westward caravans to sponsor. Along the way came taverns, bawdy houses, theaters, and all the trappings of a fast-growing community. Law followed, a few steps behind as always. The biggest headaches now come from smugglers, thieves, and crimes quietly perpetrated by the League of Eight.



County of Mersey & Weil - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



Once Wessith had succeeded in repelling the monstrous hordes, a wave of settlers moved down the coast. Early on, few came from the south as the area still was a dangerous wilderness. A fortified trading post was founded on the coast becoming the Town of Weilat. The name derives from local speak. When one asked, "Where 'bouts ye be ath?" the other would respond, "Weil'ath." And thus came the name, spelled in the manner of the learned ones from the east.

With relative peace, the population of outsiders grew, mostly at the expense of nearby woods whose inhabitants struggled to defend their land. They were wood imps, nasty little creatures riding giant spiders. Druids from Wessith came and attempted to separate the protagonists, with mixed results. Armed with a royal warrant, rangers intervened later and brokered a halt to the fight. Wood imps reluctantly accepted to become part of a new county for their own

protection. Aristocrats from Greenwood were dispatched to settle the matter, and thus was born the County of Mersey and Weil, illustrating the river and the town as they were known then. Wood imps enjoyed their relative autonomy and, with the help of druids and assigned rangers, put an end to any further outsider encroachment upon their land.

Wood imps now delight in riding the oldest, biggest, fattest spiders they can muster when visiting Weilat to attend Clan House meetings. They trot through the streets, puffed-up and arrogant, making the most of their natural creepiness. The good people of Weilat scamper from the streets, locking themselves behind sturdy doors and shutters, trembling with horror until the visitors leave town. Wood imps take great pleasure in any other shenanigans they can think of, under the disapproving gazes of their druidical chaperons. From the point of view of the counts, these imps are malingering, manipulative, lying, cheating, thieving, mischievous little creeps. The ruling aristocracy must often bite their tongues to avoid giving in to the imps' odious little games, cultivating virtues of patience, abnegation, and persistence to carry the day. It doesn't do well to come out openly against the imps, for they are woodland beings, and belittling them would be denigrating the whole of the sylvan kingdom's clans—a most unwise approach.

**Wood Imp:** AC6, HP  $\frac{3}{4}$ \*, hp 1d6, MV 90 (30'), AT 1 bite or 1 bow, Dmg 1d3 or 1d6 + poison, Save NM, ML 9 (7), Int 10, AL C. **Special defenses:** ride upside-down spiders and attack at no penalty. **Special attacks:** spend one round to coat an arrow with wood spider poison; the arrow must be shot during the following round; poison inflicts an extra 1d8 dmg (save vs. poison neg.) plus sluggishness (-2 penalty to initiative, move at  $\frac{1}{2}$  speed for 2d4+2 rounds; not cumulative). Wood imps can use miniature two-handed swords in melee (1d6 dmg). A war party leader has a full HD; if a leader is slain in combat, wood imp ML drops to 7. Clan leaders and wokani can have as many as 6 HD.

**Huge Wood Spider:** AC 6, HD 1+3\*, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 bite, Dmg 1d6 + poison, Save F1, ML 8, Int 2, AL N. **Special defenses:** camouflage (surprise with 1-4 on 1d6). **Special attacks:** poison (see wood imp), can cling to vertical or upside-down surfaces, and leap down to attack.

These small evil humanoids live in the woods stretching from the border with Wessith to the border with Tarston-Wall—a dark forest known as the Ruffletuft Woods. These clan lands straddle the border with Imperial Territories. Wood imps (*Creature Catalog*) thumb their warty little noses at imperial law, the queen's law, and the count's authority whenever rangers aren't looking. Of all the clans, they prefer the blackroots, whom they occasionally visit as honored guests. Their dark green skin and wood-brown hair makes them hard to distinguish in their natural environment. Their spiders are green with brown stripes and just as hard to notice. In combat, wood imps favor hidden pits, snares, and ambush tactics, using bows and poison arrows. They almost never pick a fight in the open (if so, it would be a nocturnal encounter).



Druids often act as their guides. These druids are most likely members of the *Green Circle* (see Wessith for details). A number of them have quietly moved to Imperial Territories, with wood imps as their scouts and companions. Their activities there, illicit to be sure, are unknown,

although rangers recognized druids thought dead long ago crossing the Snake River, much farther north between Westford and Shiellodon, and vanishing into nearby hills. Despite their best efforts, rangers remained unable to track them down.

Mersey and Weil is known nowadays mostly for its livestock. Local farming specializes in raising hogs and producing the best cured hams in the kingdom. When herds of the snorting, grunting, squealing quadrupeds are driven to Weilat from all over the county, the smell overtakes the whole town. Not that it is much better on other days, but on Pig Day woe be those crossing a muddy street without wearing boots. The streets' sticky black muck finds its way into all homes, dragged in under soles or bare feet alike. It is said that it spares not even the count's palace. There's no escaping it. By the end of Pig Day, herds are sold at the fair and thankfully taken aboard merchant ships traveling to whatever ends. The stench remains.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her creative and editorial contributions.*



# Foresthorne: Tarston-Wall & Llynsey

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



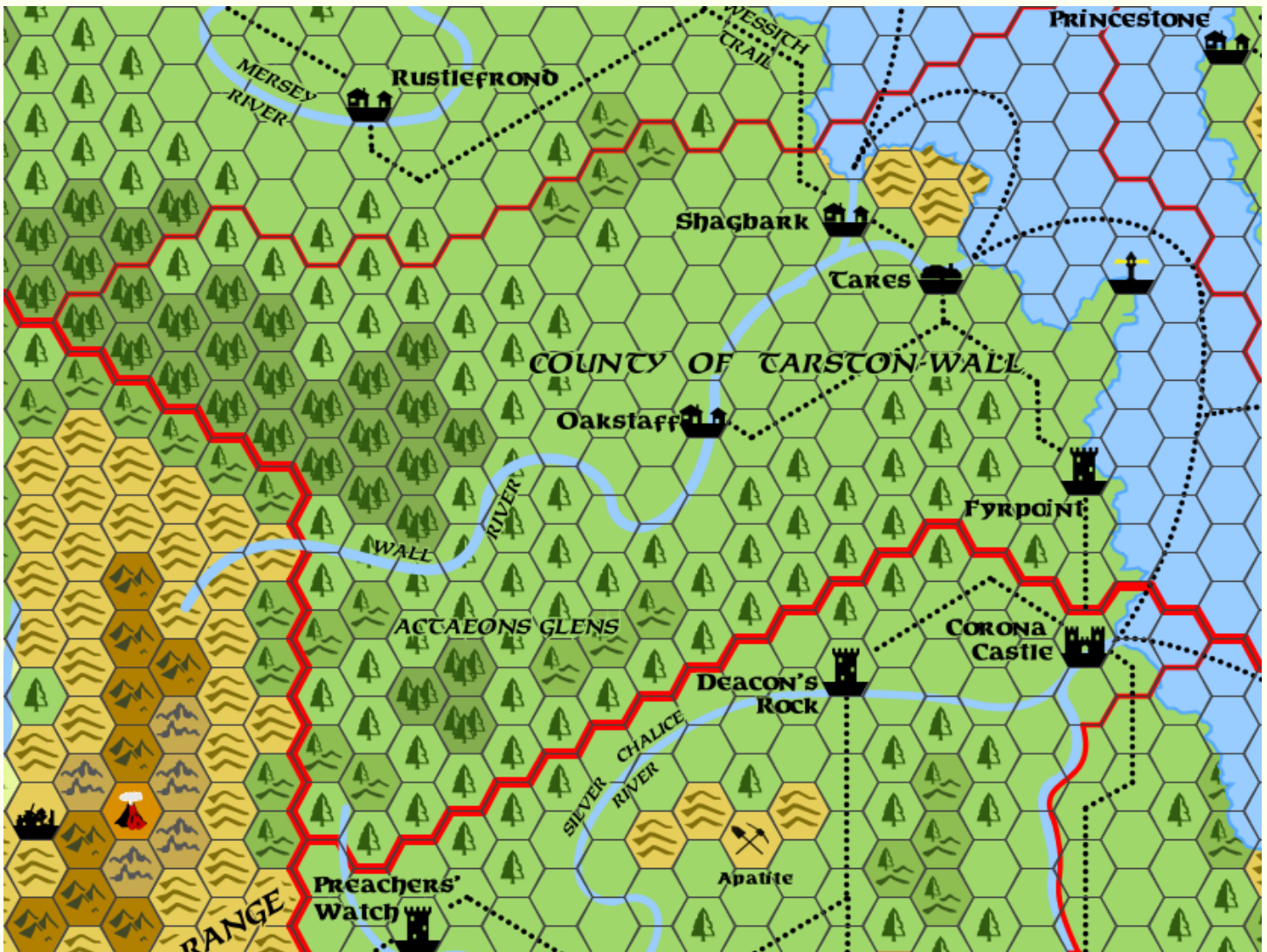
As they ventured south, Foresthorne settlers from Tirenios and Weilat ran afoul of Bettelilyn troops pushing north. The theocracy had monitored the expansion of the sylvan realm with mounting annoyance. Wessith's ability to defeat the onslaught of monstrous tribes was a wake-up call for the theocracy. Even more so, the multiplication of trading posts on the west bank and the growth of settlements convinced Bettelilyn this wasn't a fluke. The theocracy mustered companies of pioneers and sent them across the woods beyond Deacon's Rock. Problems started almost immediately. Pioneers ran afoul of the woodland clans inhabiting the nearby forest. However skillful at surviving in the wilderness, these pioneers weren't a match for angry actaeons. After sustaining significant casualties, pioneers stumbled out the forest's north side where they regrouped and built a series of small wooden forts, torching any farmsteads they found. Tarston-Wall at the time was a borderland that hadn't yet joined the sylvan kingdom—or from Bettelilyn's point of view, a virgin, lawless, heathen expanse at risk of being "conquered" by the Greenwood renegades.



After a number of skirmishes with pioneers, local settlers began organizing their fight. These people had some experience dealing with forest clans since most already came from settled areas of Foresthorne. It wasn't long before they established good relations with actaeons because they fought the same fight. Repeated attempts from Bettelilyn missionaries to sway actaeons only served to push them closer to the settlers' side. A merchant guild chimed in as well to protect its trading posts, loaning cash, supplies, and arms to settlers, and blockading with its own fleet the narrow gap between the lake's western bank and the Principality of Llynsey. They also faked a murder attempt upon a visiting Randel dignitary to incriminate a Bettelilyn spy they'd recently captured. Immediate reprisals across Bettelilyn's southern border turned the fight in the north into a minor issue from the theocracy's point of view. Meanwhile, the guild negotiated the use of royal rangers as combat advisors for the forest folk and for mercenaries it had hired privately. One by one, pioneer forts surrendered and control of the river fell back to the settlers.

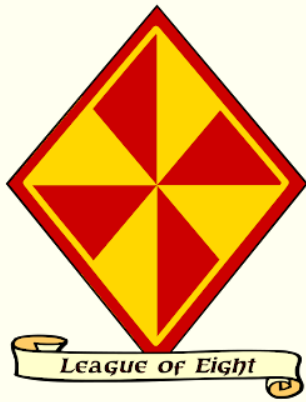
After several more years of sporadic fighting, Bettelilyn gave up. There wasn't enough wealth there worth fighting for. The region became peaceful once more and settlers enjoyed a good relationship with nearby woodland clans. Alas, returning outsiders had become heavily indebted to the merchant guild. Their situation was bad enough they became known as "debtters." Most lost whatever land they'd fought for, becoming serfs serving the guild. To guarantee these gains against Bettelilyn aggression, the guild convinced the Greenwood monarchy to claim the land and establish it as a new county—a bulwark against Bettelilyn to cover its southern flank while pushing westward to the Snake River. To help in this endeavor, the guild financed the

development of its main trading post in the area, which grew to become the Town of Tares (pronounced *TAH-ress*). It strengthened the guild's stranglehold on the region. With the founding of Tares, the merchants adopted a new name for their enterprise, known henceforth as the League of Eight.



**County of Tarston-Wall - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The monarchy named a count, settled official borders with Mersey & Weil, and enfeoffed remaining lands from there to Bettelwyn. Royal troops sailed in from Lakim and reinforced the town's fortifications. The count and his family showed up when all seemed safe, only to be handed a bill by a league representative. And a stiff bill it was. Since much of the land had become property of the league, the count had to compensate the "investors." Part of the reimbursement came from the count's own wealth. Loans from Greenwood, including the monarchy, helped cover another part. The count obtained from the merchants mortgages on rural lands while the league retained ownership of the port and many buildings in Tares, all at a profit for the league. Merchants used these assets to house their local businesses, or collected rent and port fees, locking out any competition. To this day, the count's descendants still pay interest on loans and mortgages, having failed so far to eliminate the principal. In other words, league merchants are free to impose their wishes upon the county authority.



At the present, the League of Eight uses Tares as its headquarters. Mercenaries from the county's formative years became full-time troops serving the league, nowadays mostly Yannifey immigrants. Tares also houses a fair amount of royal troops, the county's household banners, and the town's own militia. The old pioneer forts have long since rotted away and small stone fortifications replaced them along the river's northern bank. Rangers use them as rallying points. It's how the river earned its name. The whole county is seen as a southern bastion facing Bettelyn, at least on Foresthome's western half. Should an invasion take place, and there are clues alluding to such an eventuality, woodland clans form the

first line of defense. If need be, rangers have arranged for them to withdraw north of the Wall and fight alongside settlers there. The Tower of Fyrpoint stands as a forward vigil should an invasion come from Corona Castle. Tares and Oakstaff are both fortified and sit on the river's northern bank. Both feature ferry barges (no bridges). From Tares upstream, small galleys and longships can navigate up to the edge of the woods west of Oakstaff. From this point on, the river flows through a rocky ravine ideal to hold off an army.

**Actaeon:** AC3, HD 11\*\*, MV 150' (50'), AT 2 spears/1 antler or breath, Dmg 1d6+6/1d6+6/2d8, Save C11, ML 10, Int 12, AL N. **Special defenses:** camouflage (as if *invisible*), surprise (1-5 on a d6). **Special attacks:** breath weapon once/day (cloud 10x10x10), save vs. dragon breath or be *polymorphed* into a random forest animal; if the save was successful, transformation only lasts 24 hours; can summon 1d6 creatures arriving 1d4 Turns later (1. Boar, 2. Bear, 3. Centaur, 4. Griffon, 5. Chameleon, 6. Treant). Magical abilities of spellcasting actaeons are equivalent to 8 HD druids or wokani.

Actaeon population in the woods is actually somewhat limited, considering their sizes and the land area they need. They share the forest with blink dogs, crones of chaos (*Creature Catalog*), and small, slender, flower-like humanoids known as florians. While actaeons distrust crones and neighboring wood imps from Mersey & Weil, they act as protectors and representatives for wildlife and all forest clans.

**Florian:** AC9, MD ½\*, MV 90' (30'), AT sword, bow, or pollen, Dmg 1d2 or special; Save NM, ML 6, Int 10, AL varies. **Special defenses:** look like large wildflowers when bunched in a shrub. **Special attacks:** pollen (effect varies with individual florian colors); cloud size 1' radius per flower of the same color.

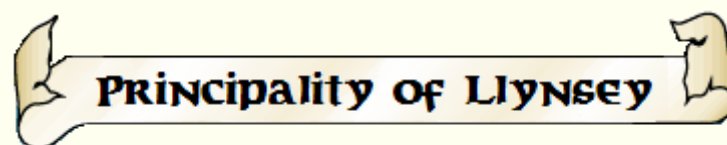
Twin-legged, florians stand about a foot tall. They can conceal their facial traits located at the center of their flowers, between their petals. A florian's face becomes visible if someone leans to smell the "bloom," at which point the florian open its eyes and blows a small cloud of pollen into the victim's face. Clans of florians harbor a multitude of breeds with different colors and shapes. When threatened, florians bunch up in a tight group and can hide their weapons under their leaf-like limbs. They could easily be mistaken for shrubs. Like roses, they also feature sharp thorns causing 1d2 pts of damage if picked up or fallen into. They're usually found in groups of 10-12 individuals. When secure or sleeping, florians grow roots so they may feed and repair any damage sustained during the day. Florians are dormant during winter, hiding their stem-like bodies amid brambles or dense bushes (petals fall off in late fall and regrow in spring). Florians

are thought to be the result of magical experiments conducted in Shraek some century past. Neutral and Chaotic florians often decorate the cottages of crones who nurture and protect them.

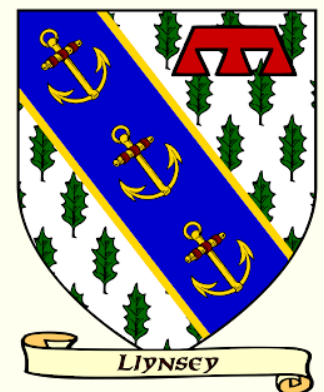
### Florian Colors & Effects

- **White:** AL L; *sleep* (as the spell)
- **Pink:** AL L; *charm* (as the spell)
- **Yellow/Gold:** AL N; *dispel magic* (as the spell)
- **Red:** AL N; victim falls in love with the next creature of opposing gender encountered (other than a florian). The victim must leave immediately in search of a "lover" if none is immediately available (the last one seen being the primary target); permanent until *dispelled*.
- **Blue:** AL N; allergy—save vs. petrification neg. If the saving throw fails, the victim is disabled while sneezing uncontrollably. Sneezing inflicts 1d2 pts of damage per round, for a number of rounds equal 20 minus the victim's Constitution score + 1d4.
- **Purple:** AL C; *hold person, animal, or monster* (as the spell)
- **Black:** AL C; poison—generates an intense sensation of pleasure while inflicting 1d6+1 pts of damage per Turn for the next 2d12 hours. Once initial saving throw vs. poison negates the effect—no other saves afterward. While in a poison-induced dream state, a victim also suffers from addiction, seeking to breathe more of the pollen every morning until the poison is *neutralized*.

Although one save per victim is sufficient to overcome one type of effect, the number of flowers of the same color determine the area of effect (generally one victim per flower, except as described by the spell). Rare double- or triple-color hybrids exist and are spellcasters equivalent in ability to level 4 druids or wokani.

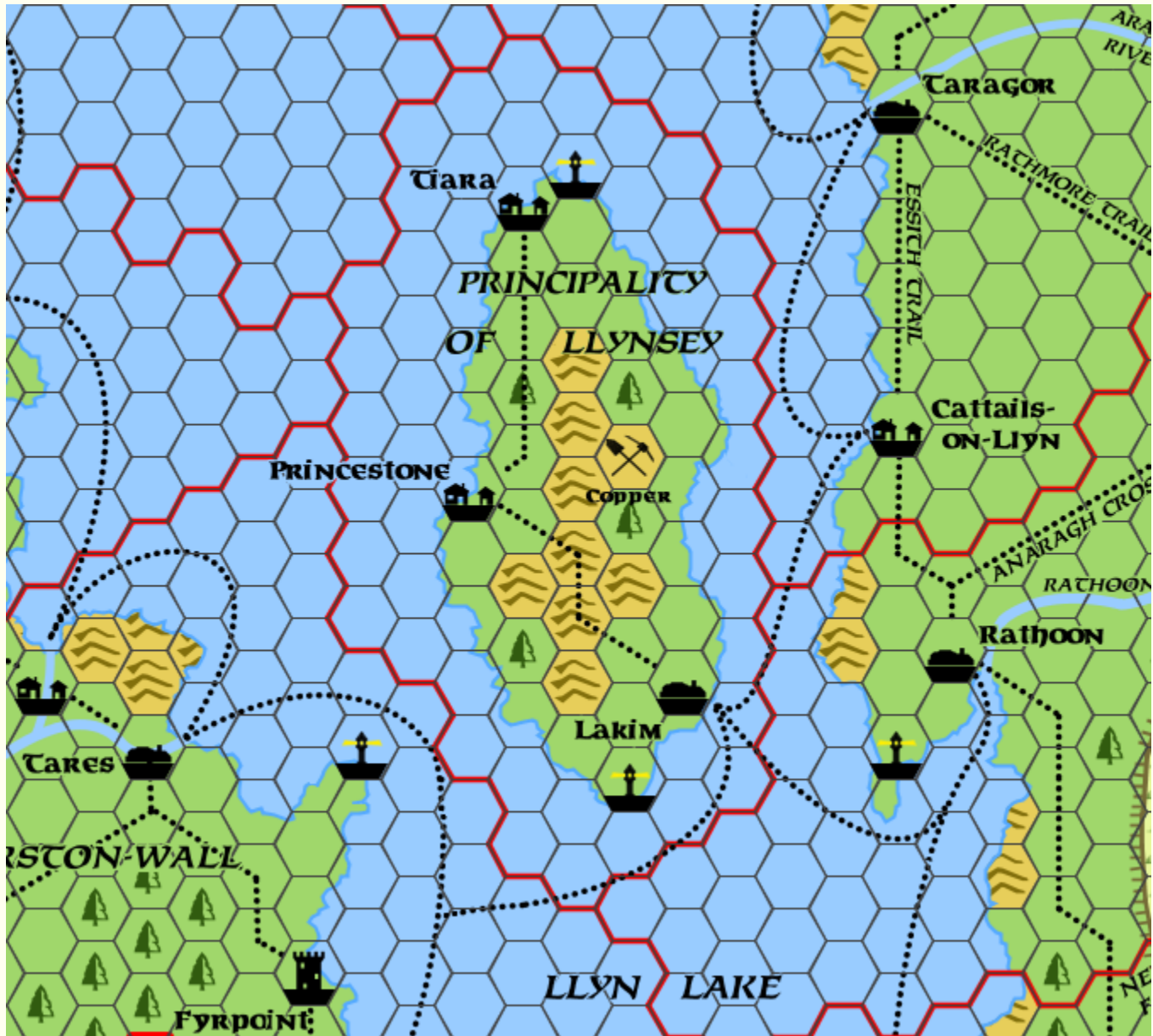


Soon after east bank counties were established, permanent settlements cropped up on the nearby island. Its previous occupants had departed a long time before as earlier realms fell, leaving nothing but wilderness. Forests were few and very light, with high grass, reeds, and marshy banks ringing the shores. As they had done earlier, the merchants guild of Llyn Lake (the future League of Eight) invested in port facilities and a trading post at the site of the future Town of Lakim (pronounced *Lah-KEEM*), attracting more settlers. Seeing the island's strategic value, the monarchy claimed it and established it as the personal domain of the direct heir to the throne, thus making it a principality. It was intended as a naval base where royal troops could be safely garrisoned and easily dispatched to any theater around the lake (nearby Tutleby in particular). There was also a wish to entrust to heirs a land that they could learn to rule, as a preparation for their royal duties later. It was a convenient solution since apparently there were no local clans with which to contend. The royal garrison



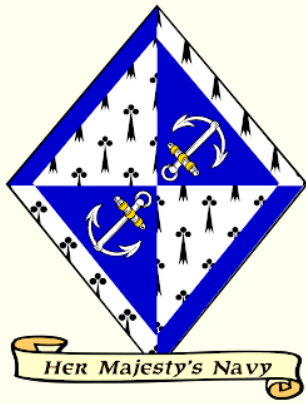


would also provide ample security to the ruling heir. If none was available, or the heir was too young, a steward would rule in the heir's place as regent.



**Principality of Llynsey - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Placing an heir on the faraway island was also a measure ensuring the monarchy did not keep all its "eggs" in the same basket. Although palace intrigues in Greenwood (see the Queen's Lands) weren't deemed auspicious to princely youth, it wasn't long before cohorts of ne'er-do-well aristocrats would flock on the island and turn it into an expensive resort area. The relatively warm waters of the lake, rich in healing minerals, were another attraction. Steam and mud baths are now all the rage there. Tiara and Princestone are examples of "jewel-villages," with varnished cobblestones, gilded streetlights, and white-marbled villas. Colored pebbles were shipped in and dumped on local shores to cover the marshy beaches. Quaint and small though luxurious, these properties huddle together and overlook the idyllic lakescape. They were built on the ruins of older settlements. Commoners live on the outskirts, in hamlets dotting lowlands surrounding the hills. The eastern side is the poorer area where workers depend upon employment in the copper mine recently excavated there.



The truth is that non-human clans did actually live in the area. In particular, a race of frog-like people had claimed the thick, marsh-like reeds lining the eastern shores. They return to the reeds when it is time to release their spawn into shallow pools. Known as *broggas*, these odd people look like five-foot-tall humanoids, with webbed hands and feet, and facial features reminiscent of batrachians (wide mouth, bulgy eyes, small nose, small ears, etc.). Perfectly amphibious, they maintain villages near the shore, just below the lake's surface. When they were discovered, a ruling princess offered a bargain, granting them parts of the coast they had used to raise their progeny in exchange for accepting the

protection and authority of the princes. The attractive offer was readily accepted, considering the broggas' issues with a colony of kopru (*Creature Catalog*) dwelling deep under Lake Llyn roughly northwest of Tiara, near hot water springs. At first eminently proud of herself for her first act of statesmanship very much in the spirit of Foresthome's monarchy, the princess later realized she had gotten embroiled in a fight with kopru. Water-breathing wizards were dispatched and indeed helped the friendly broggas but their ancestral enemy responded with raids and abductions along Llynsey's coast. Since then, the shores and villages are carefully watched, while royal vessels patrol nearby waters. Before winter, broggas leave their watery realm and burrow under the shore where they go dormant. Entrances into these lairs are carefully concealed with mud and silt held together with gooey saliva. Part of the lake may freeze, especially near the banks. The kopru live at a greater depth, where the water is warmest, and they do not hibernate.

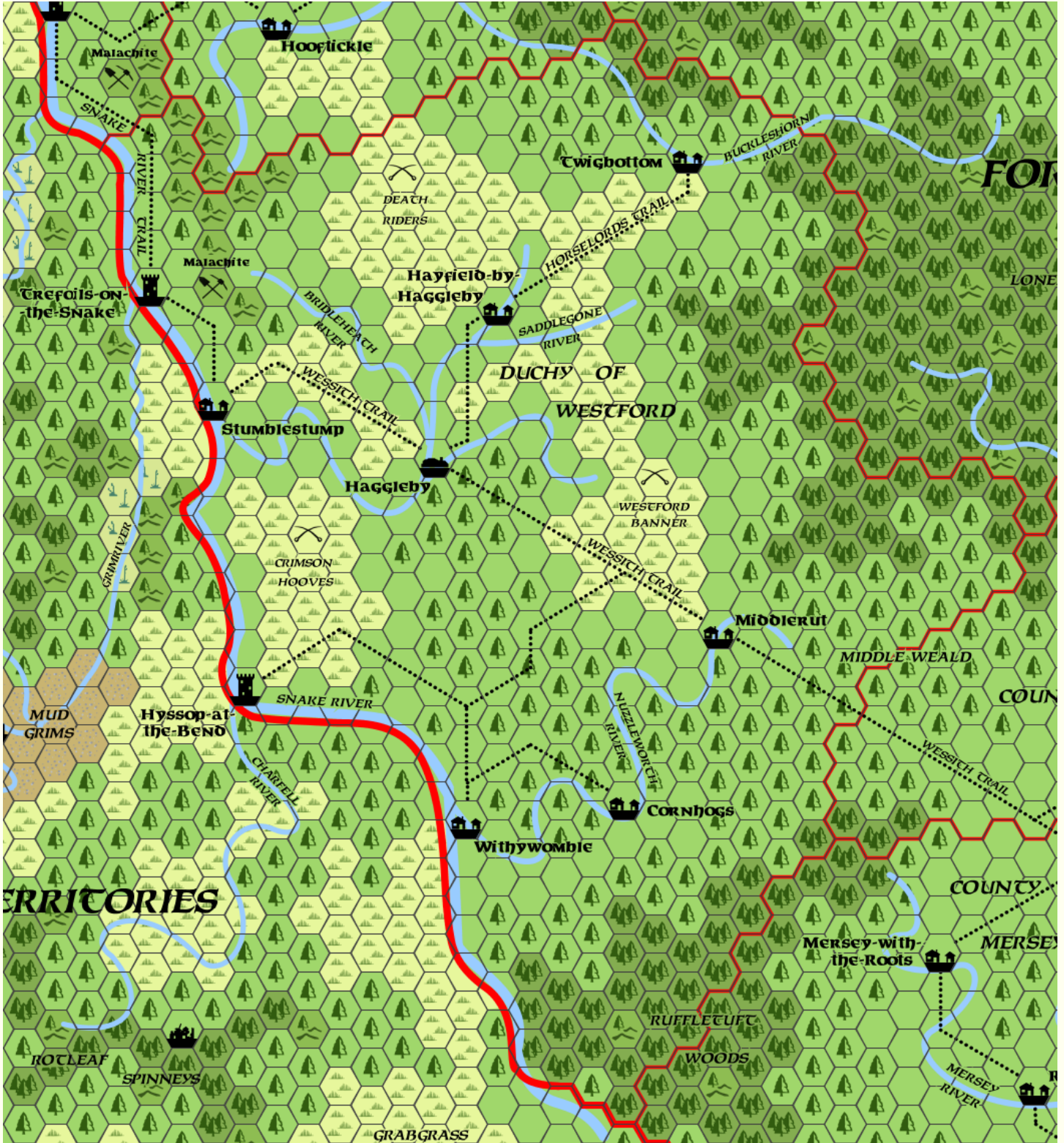
**Brogga:** AC 5, HD 3+1\*, MV 90' (30')/120' (40') swimming, AT 1 tongue or spear, Dmg 1d4 + glue or by weapon, Save F3, ML 7, Int 9, AL any (usually N). **Special defenses:** *water-breathing*; underwater can blend among algae or silt (1-4 surprise on a d6); above water can leap 15' vertically or 40' horizontally once every other round. **Special attacks:** tongue can reach 10' away and capture small prey or snatch small objects (25% chance targets are caught off guard and something taken right out of their hands); +2 to hit when leaping over a foe. Clan leaders can have as many as 6+2 HD. Spellcasters are equivalent to 6HD druidic shamans or 4HD wokani.

**Kopru:** AC 3, HD 8+4\*, MV 30' (10')/150' (50') swimming, AT 1 bite/1 tail or charm, Dmg 1d4/3d6, Save F9, ML 9, Int 10, AL C. **Special defenses:** +2 bonus on saving throws vs magical attacks. **Special attacks:** *charm* (once per day; 30' range; lasts until *dispelled*); a victim obeys its kopru's mental commands (a kopru knows all that its victim is thinking or can remember); only one kopru can *charm* the same victim; with a successful saving throw vs. death ray, a target becomes immune to all further *charm* attempts from a party of kopru. Spellcasting kopru are equivalent to 8 HD shamans or wokani.

During midsummer nights, kopru may visit their blackroot allies, swimming up the Darkmoss River and its tributary. Muddy lairs under the surface allow kopru to take shelter during the day. Some actually connect with unnaturally warm, steamy dungeon levels beneath Shog (see County of Ashbury).

# Foresthorne: The Duchy of Westford

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Duchy Palatinate of Westford - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

## Duchy of Westford

On the far side of Middle Weald lies a very large dominion and the old clan lands of *centaurkind*. The past realm responsible for establishing towns like Shog (see County of Ashbury) relied on monsters and humanoid tribes inhabiting the territories west of the Snake River to help capture this region. As a result, centaur clans were reduced to struggling enclaves or fled eastward into heavier forests. The birth of Foresthome, a clan-friendly realm, sparked a "reconquest." An immense effort was made to expel the monsters and secure these western lands. Nearly all of the forests that once covered the region had been felled and replaced with swaying grasslands. It was a catastrophe for woodland beings but centaurs accommodated themselves of the open plains so well that they became experts in cavalry tactics, something that the sylvan kingdom had lacked thus far. There were many attacks and counter-attacks from both sides, their borders changing substantially over the years. Scars remain with old battle sites like *Crimson Hooves*, *Westford Banner*, and *Death Riders*, bloody clashes heavy with magic cast in anger. They are still haunted today and spirits of the dead can often be seen there, forever fighting those battles. Bones and implements of war survive in the grass, petrified by some unknown curse. With a regular supply of troops from the County of Wessith, the fate of the hordes was sealed and they were finally beaten back across the river.

Negotiation with centaurkind, the dominating clans in the area, demanded that the entire Hagleby River basin be preserved as a single entity. A mere county among a dozen others wouldn't do. A war leader who'd emerged from the decades of campaigning became the best candidate, one that centaurs and humans could accept. Thus was born the Duchy of Westford. The duke and his heirs proved eminently capable of holding the new dominion against further incursions, forming a buffer state protecting the counties bordering Lake Llyn. In time, Westford was elevated to the status of a Duchy *Palatinate*, meaning that its duke could name his own barons and entrust part of his own lands to them. This is otherwise a privilege exclusive to the Greenwood monarchy. It is how the neighboring Barony of Shieldon was created—implying this barony is a direct vassal of the duke. There is talk about creating another, south of the Nuzzleworth River, one whose purpose is to focus on problematic relations with wood imps inhabiting the Ruffletuft Woods (see Mersey & Weil for details).

The town of Hagleby became the center of the duchy and a magnet attracting new population from the east. At first, Alpathian settlers arrived from other Foresthome counties, followed by waves of immigrants from the Yannivey Islands. Alpathian newcomers spread out, founding hamlets and farmsteads to develop the vast dominion. The Yannifey joined instead the duke's infantry or found work as laborers in Hagleby and other villages. They were never quite trusted by the settlers, especially when some banded together, forming transient communities of circus people, beast handlers, soothsayers. . . and thieves. Wherever their small caravans passed, something was bound to vanish from someone's home, including unattended children. Nothing was ever proven and the caravans go



on to this day, roaming the land from Weilat and Tirenios to Everton, 600 miles away in the Ogresfell.

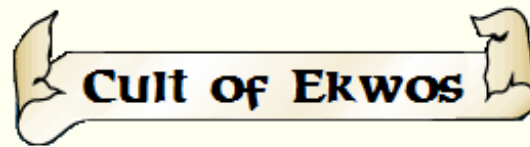
Clans exist but they remain solely a matter of kinship. Centaurs no longer have exclusive clan territories. They mix with the local population and yet, from a political point of view, they answer to Haggleby's Clan House first before answering to the duke. This helps them retain their autonomy and a sense of unity that would have otherwise vanished when their forests died out. The first thing one notices in Haggleby is that all facilities are designed to accommodate humans, demi-humans, and centaurkind. Contrary to popular belief, equine latrines are readily available and the streets are far cleaner than one might assume. The smell of horse and stable remains exactly that, for chevalls and centaurs do not bear those scents. These four-legged citizens are referred to as *Greater Equines* or centaurkind, as opposed to horses which are common animals. The latter are to Greater Equines what chimps are to humans. Common horses are nonetheless treated royally in these parts—woe be he who incurs the wrath of chevalls (*Creature Catalog*) for mistreating a mount. It is an act of villainy and a breach of local laws.

Although officially there are no social castes in Westford, invisible barriers exist nonetheless. At the top of the social hierarchy stand spellcasters, elves, and centaurkind, and above them, aristocrats and clan leaders. An unspoken pecking order ranks the remainder, with Foresthome natives coming first, followed in decreasing order by other mainland Alphatians, Alphatian *levantines* (Bellissarians), Alphatian islanders, other mainland ethnics, foreigners, and last, the Yannifey. Wizards visiting from foreign (off-shore) kingdoms would fit at the bottom of the first category except for Thyatians and their allies who just don't fit—period. Although Alphatians always seem to get the better of everything wherever they settle, especially spellcasters, centaurkind managed to hold on well to their place in society, owning businesses, holding commissions among the duke's cavalry, and handling law-enforcement. There are three main clans of mixed centaur and chevall kins that predate the duchy. Originally they hailed from lands roughly north, east, and west of Haggleby. Druids cater to the woods of Middle Weald, treants live in the sylvan rises overlapping the eastern border, and wood nymphs occupy the forest north and west of Twiggbottom. There are many urban elves in Westford. They came in significant numbers from the Marches of Ogresfell after the Greenwood monarchy was able to claim this territory as a marquisate.

Early on, the League of Eight made a foray into the duchy but was quickly rebuffed. Out of their element, these merchants backed off. Instead, a group of centaurs and entrepreneurial Alphatians obtained a charter from the duke and set up a trade guild of their own, known as the Company of Haggleby. Its goal is to develop land-based or riverine trade with Greenwood and the main towns in the Kingdom of Ar and Frisland. For this purpose, they've acquired a small fleet of longships to sail the Snake River, Shiell Lake, the Fris River and the northern coast of Ar. They maintain an important presence in the City of Shiell in Frisland, and as far away as Gowola and Mage Landings. Longships can easily sail up to



Haggleby from the Snake River. The Buckleshorn River isn't suitable for navigation, being filled with sharp rocks. The Nuzzleworth is a small waterway, suitable for rowboats. Relations between the two guilds can be described as vitriolic.



A particular philosophy drives the culture and psychology of Westford's subjects. It centers around the cult of Ekwos, a facet of Zirchev—the immortal patron of woodland beings. The cult predates the duchy's creation and flourished well before monstrous races invaded the domain of greater equines. It is now the dominant faith in both Westford and the Ogresfell. Ekwos's avatar appears as a tall white horse during the night or a black one during the day. At the heart of the cult is the belief that horse spirits come to take those who perish to the magical realm of Ekwos. Depending on the nature of the departed, they either become a horse spirit or a spirit-rider. Kindred spirits bond and forever roam the hills and valleys of Ekwos's realm.

Another tenet of the cult infers that one day these spirits will return to the world of the living and reclaim lands lost in ancient times. This includes a huge portion of Imperial Territories known as the Withering Grasslands. It is also believed that on occasion a horse spirit and its rider may come to help faithfuls in distress, especially those on a quest to destroy the evil that claimed their ancestral grounds. There have been portents heralding the return of better times. Pegasi were once very common among the realm of greater equines. Most fled to the Kerothar Mountains when the monsters came. Since those times, some have begun returning to Westford. It is widely seen as a good omen. Unicorns have been much slower to return, most remaining in the deeper confines of the Great Clans' forest. Pegasi and unicorns are seen as companions of Ekwos and must never be molested in any way—*upon pain of death*. Although very rare, pegataurs (*Creature Catalog*) do exist in Westford, as protectors of the pegasi. Some may seek employment with the duke as scouts, at least for a time. Pegataurs are seen as blessed beings, inheritors of pegasus and elven spirits.

**Centaur:** AC5, HD 4, MV 180' (60'), AT 2 hooves/1 weapon, Dmg 1d6/1d6/by weapon, Save F4, ML 8, Int 10, AL N. **Special defense:** nil. **Special attacks:** charge with a lance (20 yards outdoors or 20' indoors + double damage). Spellcasters may reach eighth level druidical or wokani spellcasting ability.

**War Centaurs:** AC0 (ironwood barding), HD 8, MV 150' (50'), AT 2 hooves/1 weapon, Dmg 1d6/1d6/by weapon +3, Save F8, ML 11, Int 10, AL N. **Special defense:** nil. **Special attacks:** charge; shock—if a charge attack succeeds against a smaller opponent, the victim is knocked to the ground and loses initiative on the following round (no save); any other war centaur charging over a prone victim during the same round automatically inflicts trample damage—2d6 damage. War centaurs either use lances or two-handed swords, no shields or bows, and are much larger than common centaurs.

War centaurs are enormously muscled, massive creatures reminiscent of Shire draft horses, about 21 hands (7') at the base of the centaur's human torso. They are equivalent to human knights, as regards their place in society. Most are *Knights of the Shrine* (of Ekwos). The best of them are the closest thing centaurs have to paladins—at least from the point of view of a devout follower of Ekwos. The differences are: replace *detect evil* with *detect goblinoid & giantkind* (orcs, hobgoblins, ogres, trolls, etc.), spells are druidical, replace Turn Undead with a +2 bonus to hit goblinoid/giantkind.

**Pegataur:** AC 5 to -1, HD 5\*-14\*\*\*, MV 180' (60')/360' (120'), AT 2 hooves /1 weapon or spell, Dmg 1d6/1d6/by weapon or spell, Save E1-10 or F5-14, ML8, Int 10, AL N. **Special defenses:** spells; armor (for every point of AC bonus below 5, decrease flight speed -15' (360', 345', 330', etc. to a min. 270')). **Special attacks:** cast spells as elves four levels lower than their HD. Typical equipment may include bows and arrows, swords, but no shields. Pegataurs look like winged centaur, actually part elven and pegasus.

**Chevall\*:** AC2, HD 7\*, MV 270' (90'), AT 2 hooves/1 bite, Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d8, Save F7, ML 11 (9), Int 12, AL N. **Special defenses:** hit only with silver or magical weapon. **Special attacks:** as per centaurs. A chevall in its natural form looks like a horse, however, it may *shapechange* at will into a centaur. It may summon 1d4 war horses arriving in 1d4 rounds. In centaur form, use common centaur statistics, except the chevall retains its 7 HD and ML rating of 9. Chevalls of Westford sometimes use coltpixies (*Creature Catalog*) as scouts or familiars. The latter are more Neutral than the companions of fairy folk.

Chevalls are rare beings and do not mix with non-equines without a compelling reason. Spellcasting chevalls cast spells as C7 priests of Ekwos. Chevall-priests may invoke Ekwos for help, no more than once per expedition. The situation must involve a fight against hatred denizens of the Imperial Territories. Odds of success are calculated as follows: **[total HD of the monsters party] divided by [total HD of the priest's party] times [1%]**. The number of spirit riders received is commensurate with odds of success: 1% = 1 (at least 1 if successful), 100% = 100 spirits (but never more than the total number of monster HD involved).



**Spirit Rider\*:** AC2, HD 6\*\*\*\*, MV 270' (90') on the ground or flying, AT 2 hooves/1 weapon, Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d8 + *paralysis*, Save F6, ML 12, Int 12, AL N. **Special defenses:** hit only with magical +1 or better weapon. **Special attacks:** charge; *dimension door* (three times per battle); victim must save vs. paralysis when hit by the spirit rider's weapon; immune to plant-based attacks, poison, fire- or cold-based attacks, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, or any mind-affecting spells. May be Turned by hostile clerics as specters. If successfully summoned, spirit riders never stay beyond the duration of a battle. Spirit riders use various weapons (1d6): 1-2 Lance, 3-4 Sword, 5-6 Bow & arrows (no limit to the number of arrows). Mount and rider are considered a single creature that vanishes when defeated.



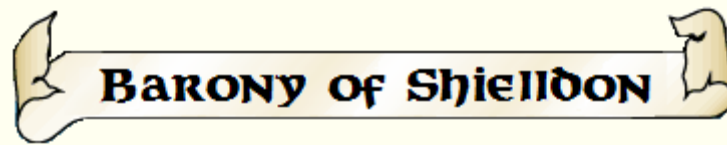


# Foresthorne: The Barony of Shiellon

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Barony of Shiellon - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex



## BARONY OF SHIELLDON

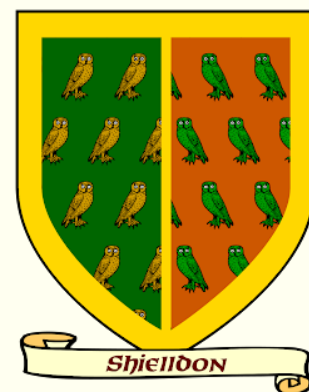
When Westford was elevated to the status of Duchy Palatinate, its duke took the opportunity to put in place a barony in its far northwestern possessions. There were several reasons for the decision, the first being the existence of dominant clans of Hsiao rather than centaurkind. Its main town, more than 200 miles from Haggley, controlled a heavily-wooded region connecting with the remainder of the duchy through a vulnerable 20-mile-wide bottleneck along the Snake River. Furthermore, with its location at the doorsteps of two foreign realms, Frisland and Blackheart—neither being genuinely friendly—Shielldon required strong local leadership that would be able to better focus on the area's challenges and implement the duke's authority. The Hsiao agreed so a cousin of the duke earned the title, duties, and responsibilities of baron.

This didn't quite address all the duke's concerns. Although generally good natured, Hsiao (pronounced *sh'HOW*) aren't the easiest creatures to govern. Part of the problem is that missionaries of Elarion have done well among them and as a result have become more able to influence their followers. A cult of archons, avian-like Lawful immortals of whom one advocates woodland beings, has been very appealing to Hsiao. In general, northern clans of Foresthome (including the *fey-in-the-summer*, phanatons, flitterlings, and sasquatches) have become somewhat partial to the Elarion aspect of Bettelwyn's philosophy. Southern dominions have fared differently in this regard since they resent Bettelwyn's pressure and have fought against their neighbor on multiple occasions. Consequently, southerners distrust anything from Bettelwyn, especially undercover preachers. When not disembarking at Orfil or Soctel, missionaries slip into the northern country from Frisland and Ar into Grünfold and Shielldon respectively. Meanwhile, Alphatian aristocracy grit their teeth at what they see as blatant sedition.

The duke recently warned the baron to be on the lookout for anyone crossing the Snake River. Historically, invasions occurred farther south in the duchy, across the banks stretching from Trefoils-on-the-Snake to Withywomble. The small territory tucked between the Ogresfell, Lake Shiel, and Blackheart was, thankfully, spared the worst of the conflicts that devastated the south. The duke's concern isn't the occasional monstrous foray into Shielldon. Clearly, the baron and Hsiao can handle them. The real issue is the illicit entry of humans, without a doubt renegades up to no good, crossing the river into the duchy or the barony. These individuals quickly head eastward into the nearby hills, often skirting the border between the two dominions. Although royal rangers have been on the lookout for them, the intruders have proven very skillful at avoiding ambushes and covering their tracks. They are suspected of being druids. Unfortunately, the baron was unable to resolve the situation, being far too involved hunting down Elarion missionaries. The question the duke and the baron have been debating focuses on why druids would want to breach imperial law by dwelling in forbidden lands, and even more troubling, why they would risk being caught crossing back and forth. The two aristocrats would pay dearly for any information on what lies at either end of the mysterious druids' journeys.

What the baron effectively controls is a narrow fringe from the lighthouse to Brackenreach Tower. Wooded areas stretching down to the level of Brackenreach are home to the Hsiao, a race of giant owl-like *know-it-alls*. These creatures form closed circles of philosophers, writers, historians, sages, and theologians of immortal affairs. They do not share their knowledge easily, and if they do, they make sure that it is not repeated elsewhere. Although they rely on clerical magic, Hsiao have the means to ensure the loyalty and discretion of those with whom they share their wisdom. For reasons of their own, they profoundly dislike native Frislanders, a feeling that dates back to an ancient era. The Mumbling Woods earned their name from very old treants living in the area. These ancient beings have grown so old that they've become dormant, muttering softly and almost continually in their ageless slumber. Hsiao have grown accustomed to the soothing, dreamy mumbles, which helps them meditate. Outsiders suspect the forest's avian folk understand the treants' whispery, muddled speak, possibly revealing of deep sylvan secrets. It is believed that something in the forest's soil helps the treants survive longer than others do elsewhere in Foresthome.

North of their roosting domain lie the Heartsbane Woods. Over the centuries, horrors from the depths beneath Stoneridge Crags have claimed these parts. Hsiao watch them carefully, ensuring none of those unwanted denizens ever threaten the sleeping treants. Along Shiellidon's coast, however, live clans of nixies and other water fairies. They flocked to this side of Shiell Lake and the narrows at Sturgeon Bay when the area became a part of Foresthome. They dislike Frisland and unwelcoming Blackheart even more. Nixies are part of the reason why few unkind souls cross into the barony, down to and including Brackenreach. Royal rangers represent them at the Clan House in Sturgeon Bay, the barony's main town. Much of the outsiders' food comes from fishing, which the nixies don't mind since they've learned a long time ago to avoid fishing nets. They sometimes play among the oars of merchant ships. Tales abound of doomed crews able to reach the shore when their ships sank during a storm, thanks to well-intentioned nixies. In exchange for their help, some of the better-looking sailors vanished, pursuing their existence below the surface as mates of the water sprites. Those never return to the outside world.

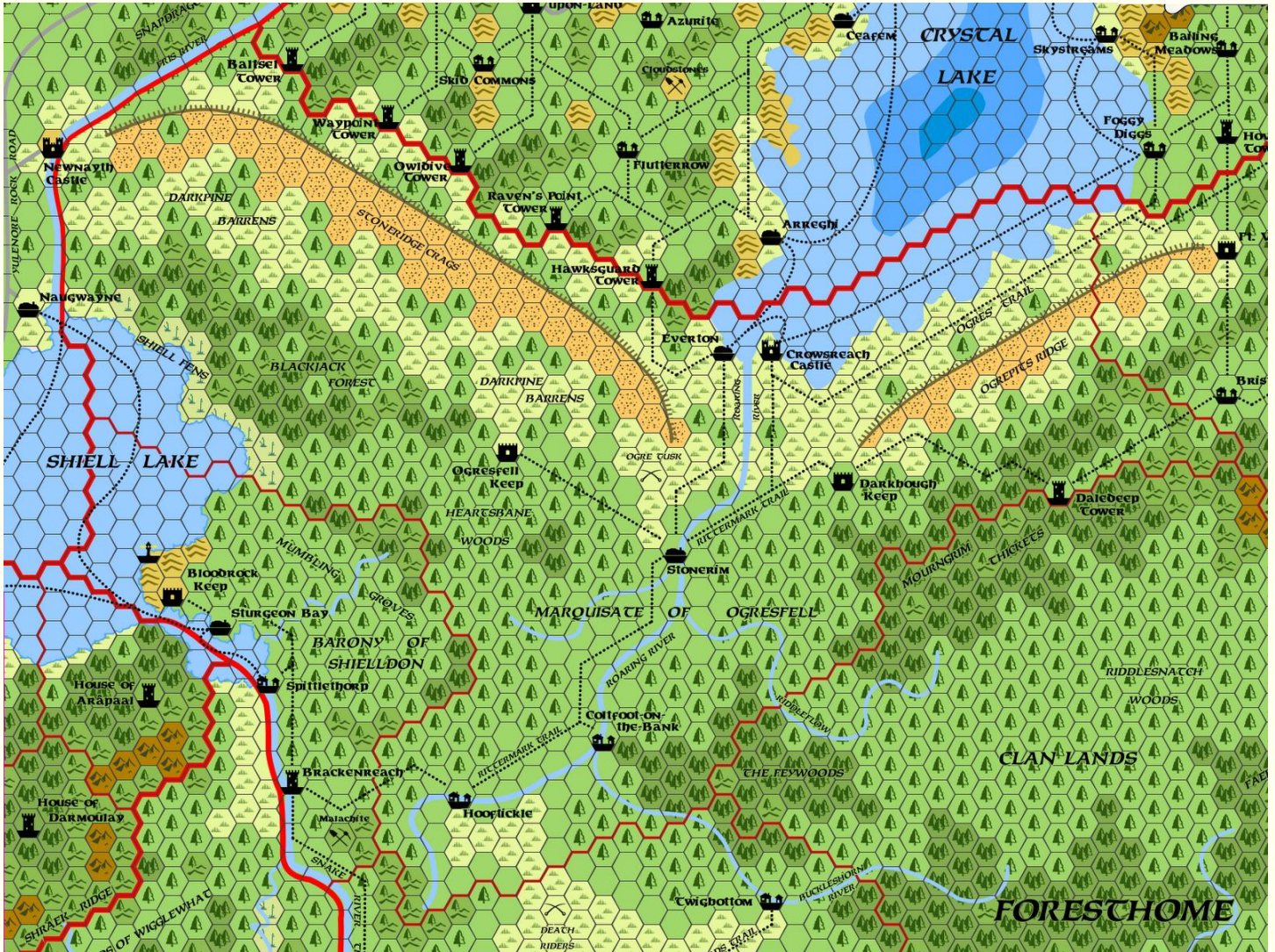


The Company of Haggleyby maintains an important trading house in Sturgeon Bay. All of its vessels stop there before heading out onto the lake or down the Snake River. This merchant guild has been an important factor in attracting population to the town and generating income for the baron. The shores of Blackheart remain absolutely off limits but the ports of Frisland have been a boon for the merchants as a source of merchandise generally unavailable in western Foresthome, and a market for all things relating to horses, including equine medicine, centaurkind literature, leather gear, helmets with horsehair crests, woodcarvings, etc.



# Foresthorne: The Marches of Ogresfell

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



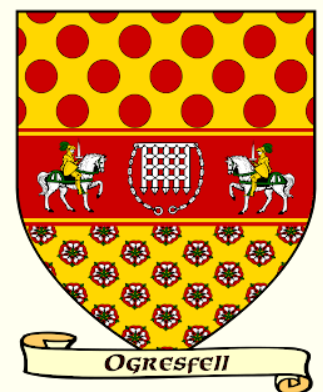
**Marches of Ogresfell - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

## MARCHES OF OGRESFELL

For the longest time, this region between the Great Clans' forest and the Realms of Ar and Frisland remained a dangerous wilderness claimed only by ogrish hordes living beneath the crags. They once dwelled on the surface well before the founding of Ar and Foresthome. In the face of Alpathian supremacy, the hordes retreated underground and reinforced vast networks of fortified lairs. From there, they raided the land above until the jaws of Ar and Foresthome locked upon the last of the ogres' ancestral lands. Famine threatening, the hordes came out in vast numbers until their final defeat at the battle of Ogre Tusk. The end of the ogrish peril came when Ar and Foresthome set aside their disputes and agreed to coordinate their efforts. Ar held its ground and sent airships to rain a storm of magic upon their foes, while Foresthome's warriors marched and struck the beasts like a hammer on an anvil. Clans of every sort fought at the side of humans, combining their skills to decimate the hordes so thoroughly that the few survivors had no chance but to retreat once more to their caves.

During these troubled times, a large clan of elves came to the area. Pale-skinned and with silver-hair, the "Gray Ones" hailed from the Shiye Lawr centuries earlier. They'd developed an affinity for rocks and stonework, as opposed to forests and woodwork more common in these parts. Their ways no longer sat well among the Shiye Lawr so they departed in search of a separate domain. They dwelled for a time in the Kerothar Mountains but the dwarves appreciated them even less. The Gray Ones' wanderings took them to what is now Frisland, a cold realm that proved just as unwelcoming. In their search for better lands, these elves became familiar with the Darkpine Barrens. The sudden conflict flaring with the ogres drew their keen attention. Sensing an opportunity, they joined the fight on the side of Foresthome. The great victory at Ogre Tusk was in part due to the elves' unexpected arrival behind enemy lines at a time when the famous victory might instead have been the ogres'. The clan leader of the Gray Ones, Lord Daeron, sought the ogrish queen and slew her, provoking a domino-effect that doomed the beasts.

Ar was content to keep to its rich lands in the north while the clans headed back to their forests. The remainder of Foresthome's forces made a glorious return to Westford, Tarston-Wall, Tutleby, or Suthermore. The elves stayed behind, alone amid the devastated wilderness. Few outsiders in Westford or the Grünfold considered moving into the ogres' former domain. The Mourngrim Thickets, Blackjack Forest, and the Heartsbane were notorious for their dangerous denizens. So were the crags. In the wake of the great ogre war, the Gray Ones settled the Roaring River basin. At first they founded the Town of Stonerim. Over time, the elves pacified the open range and anchored its northern fringe with the Town of Everton, from which trade reached out to the Kingdoms of Ar and Ambur. They developed close ties to Westford, whose horse culture appealed to them. Aside from their natural fondness for stone architecture and great fortresses, the Gray Ones learned nonetheless to enjoy the ability to roam the open land on horseback, fast and free.



The Cult of Ekwos took hold among the elves and is chiefly responsible for their favoring mounted warfare. Their affinity with horses, greater equines, and most woodland beings was well appreciated in the neighboring duchy. The Gray Ones soon forged a natural alliance with Westford. Their ties were military, political, commercial, and cultural. The duchy later sponsored the elves' entry into the Sylvan Kingdom. The benefit of their presence at the threshold of the ogres' lairs was obvious to the monarchy. It shielded Westford's northern limits and guarded the new trade routes to Ar and Ambur. The Company of Haggley soon established itself in Everton to handle business growing there. The Gray Ones accepted the Greenwood monarchy as their liege and opened their borders to Foresthome settlers. The immense territory the elves claimed in the name of the Sylvan Realm stretched more than 300 miles east to west, mostly dangerous wilderness. It therefore was made into a military march, with Lord Daeron as its marquess. He still rules to this day. It was one of the very last territories enfeoffed by the Sylvan Realm. As the result of the cult of Ekwos's dominance the marches, Elarion missionaries haven't enjoyed the same success with the elves as elsewhere in Foresthome.

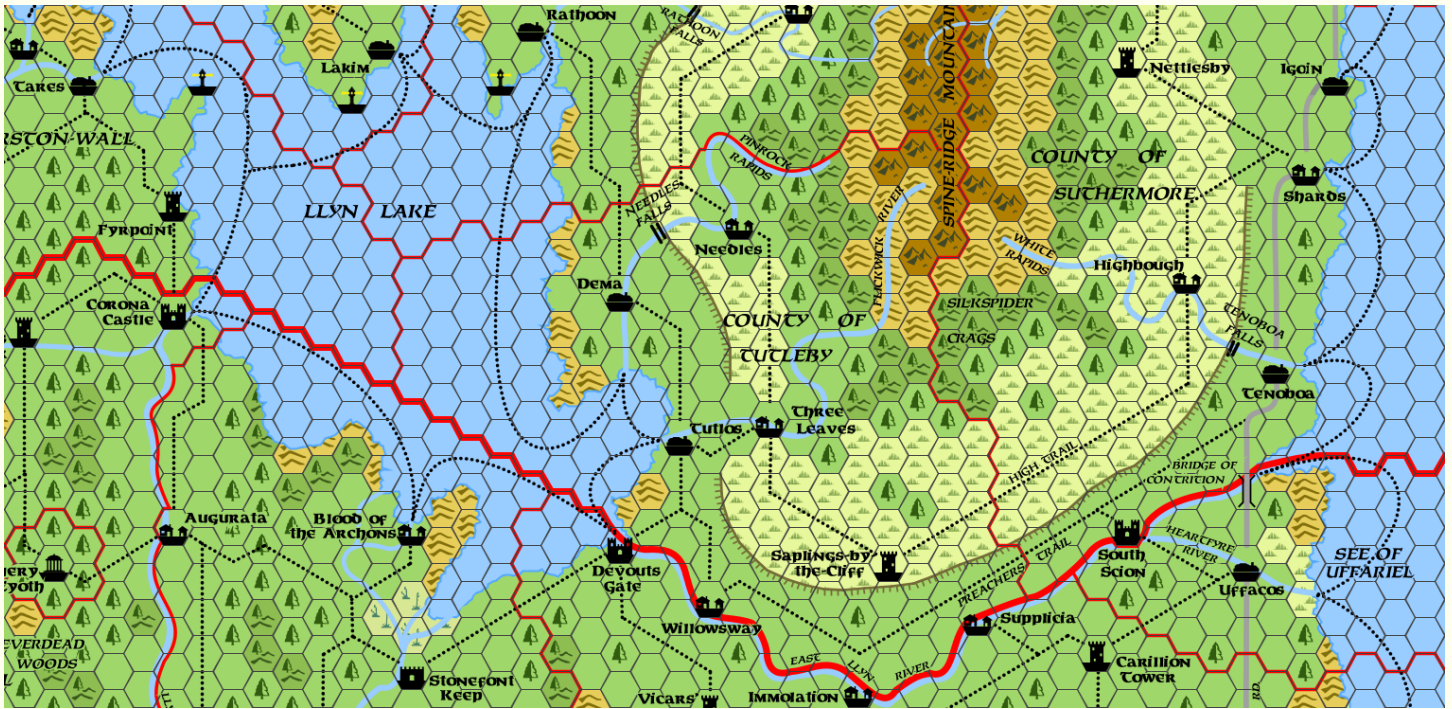
Aside from normal administrative duties, Daeron's mission is to pacify wild lands and free them of monsters while keeping an eye on the crags. Mounted patrols roam the Darkpine Barrens, the OGREPITS Ridge, and the Ogres' Trail. Royal rangers watch the woods. Forests are spared from the axe, for other clans of woodland beings might move there later. Daeron would therefore earn the same responsibilities toward them as other landed aristocrats in Foresthome. The Roaring River basin, however, remains open to farmers, elven, human, and equine alike. Much of the present pacification effort targets the Heartsbane. On the eastern side, a trail was carved through the woods to connect with the Grünfold. Although patrolled regularly, few travelers or merchants use it unless escorted, due to the dangers lurking in the Mourngrim Thickets. Rangers and elven patrols have been on the lookout for renegade druids skirting borders with the Duchy of Westford and the Feywoods. Wood imps were spotted accompanying the renegades, spoiling ambushes set for them. So far none have been captured.





# Foresthorne: The Big Picture

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Southern Foresthorne Border Area - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

All things considered, I couldn't resist going back to numbers defining Foresthorne and its most meaningful neighbors, Floating Ar, Bettelwyn, and to a certain extent, Randel. Based on the survey posted on my blog, there is interest in the politics of nations. However, the latter can't really be assessed without understanding relative economics and military capabilities. So, let's look at a few numbers:

## Population

1. Bettelwyn: 2,116,776 (2.0% in armed forces)
2. Randel: 2,049,777 (2.3% in armed forces)
3. Foresthorne: 1,794,868 (1.2% in armed forces)
4. Floating Ar: 913,640 (1.2% in armed forces)

## Gross Incomes

1. Bettelwyn: 557,174 (2.6 sp per capita)
2. Randel: 490,353 (2.4 sp per capita)
3. Foresthorne: 235,113 (1.3 sp per capita)
4. Floating Ar: 131,601 (1.4 sp per capita)

## Land Forces

1. Randel: 37,317 warriors (incl. 26 level 7 spellcasters, 211 level 6 mage knights, 646 level 3 dragoons)
2. Bettelwyn: 34,691 warriors (incl. 112 level 5 spellcasters, 14 HD20 archons)
3. Foresthorne: 21,142 warriors (incl. 37 level 5 spellcasters, 10 HD14 forest giants, 45 HD8 treants; 9% of regular troops include fairy folk when in homeland forests)

4. Floating Ar: 8,817 warriors (*incl. 22 level 7 spellcasters, 13 HD7 griffins, 4 HD15 storm giants*)

## **Navy**

1. Bettelwyn: 126 ships (*incl. 31 skyships, 19 subs, 99 HP average*)
2. Randel: 86 ships (*incl. 10 skyships, 8 subs, 113 HP average*)
3. Foresthome: 43 ships (*incl. 6 skyships, no subs, 101 HP average*)
4. Floating Ar: 32 ships (*incl. 29 skyships, no subs; 94 HP average*)

Bettelwyn is a powerful realm and a threat to both Randel and Foresthome. On the other hand, the latter two are likely allied as a measure of self-defense, in which case they outnumber Bettelwyn. Floating Ar is the weakest of the bunch and, although they sympathize with Foresthome, they're unlikely to commit themselves to a major conflict. Foresthome faces one major challenge: protecting its western and northern lands against monstrous raids. Nearly a third of Foresthome's land forces must garrison this region. Reducing forces there would almost inevitably invite attacks across the Snake River or from the Stone Crags. The same can be said of Floating Ar's concerns with the ogres. Likewise, Randel would be reluctant to leave their capital undefended, right on the border with hated Eadrin. News of a Bettelwyn invasion into Foresthome's south would also be a clear signal for monstrous hordes to launch attacks across the Snake River. An invasion is an opportunity for members of the Green Circle to eliminate opposing druids. They may very well be the instigators of a monstrous invasion precisely for this reason. Because they need to hold back troops and ships to protect their borders, joint Randel-Foresthome forces involved in a conflict would likely look like this:

**Foresthome & Randel: 29,000 troops + 70 ships    vs.    Bettelwyn: 34,000 troops + 126 ships**

Using the general axiom that an invader ought to field at least twice a defender's numbers, Bettelwyn stands safe from attack. Bettelwyn, however, would have to fight a two-front war if it invaded Foresthome. Randel is almost guaranteed to intervene against Bettelwyn in this case. On the other hand, the same may not be true of Foresthome if Randel were attacked. Therefore, if war were the order of the day, a savvy Bettelwyn ruler would first invade Randel to knock it out before turning on Foresthome, negotiating all the while to placate Vertiloch. Eadrin, on Randel's southern side, would be unlikely to commit itself to any major conflict but could ramp up sabotage efforts and intrigue behind Randel's lines. The balance of strengths and the tension between realms on Alphatia's oriental side create a political powder keg that a foreign power might be keen to ignite. The risks for confrontation would be greatest if either or both rival fleets returned from imperial campaigns to Randel and/or Bettelwyn.

This topic brings up an issue I had meant to examine earlier. Hit Dice figures of troops given throughout all these articles and the mechanics generating them aren't ideal. The issue is that the number of troops generated from population figures is meant as HD and not individuals. So, 29,000 warriors really means 29,000 HD—since a number of warriors have more than 1 HD, the actual number of individuals could become much less than 29,000. If a budget's top end is exceeded (which can easily happen), then the total HD figure may drop as well. The process is

confusing and impractical. It stemmed from my attempt at retrofitting a system that did not account for HD at all.

I'm now in the process of reworking the military sheet to preserve original troop numbers and rely on budget figures to determine how many HD a realm can actually afford. This also introduces the concept that armies could be underpaid or earn above-average pay, affecting their morale in combat. Some could be slave forces (either very low morale, or elite troops like real world Mamluks), or unpaid tribal hordes seeking booty. There will always be a minimum cost factor for non-regular troops, allowing for example a dirt-poor orcish tribe to wage war without too many problems (yet not freely). This development is likely to take time because of the testing needed, and its retrofit to existing blog entries. I most-definitely plan to complete it. The good news is that it shouldn't affect the total number of troops stated in earlier articles. HD values on the other hand are likely to be very different.

**Land Area** (*in square miles*)

1. Foresthome: 253,576 (6% settled)
2. Bettelwyn: 185,724 (8% settled)
3. Randel: 187,535 (9% settled)
4. Floating Ar: 43,637 (18% settled)

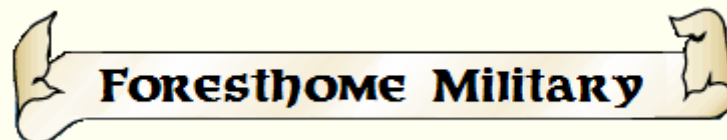
**Population Density** (*inhabitants per sq. mile*)

1. Floating Ar: 21 (7% urban)
2. Bettelwyn: 11 (23% urban)
3. Randel: 11 (13% urban)
4. Foresthome: 7 (9% urban)

Relative economics of the four realms become much clearer. Floating Ar is the smallest and most densely populated state, with a small elite governing masses of farmers, and an undersized army (1.2% of the population). Ar loathes the idea of training their peasants in the arts of war and arming them, for fear the latter might turn against the aristocracy and demand concessions.

Bettelwyn and Randel fit in the middle, although Bettelwyn scores the highest rate of urbanization. The truth is that the City of Citadel single-handedly accounts for much of this figure and remains absolutely vital to Bettelwyn's economic superiority (2.6 sp per capita monthly state income). Bettelwyn could also easily increase by 25% the size of their military. Both Randel and Bettelwyn rely on determined, well-trained professional military.

As can be expected, Foresthome is the largest and "wildest" of the four realms, with vast amounts of forested land and a fairly low rate of urbanization. Foresthome and Floating Ar both draw low monthly state incomes (respectively 1.3 and 1.4 sp per capita). Foresthome's armed forces are at best a motley bunch with diverging views and relations, paling in comparison with Bettelwyn's monolithic juggernaut.



Another challenge for Foresthome's troops is that a portion will most likely not fight outside forests, much less outside Foresthome's borders. The realm's population demographics are as follows:

Humans: 83.3%  
 Fairykind: 9.3%  
 Elves: 3.1%  
 Greater Equines: 1.5%  
 Halflings: 0.8%

Bushmen: 0.6%  
 Gulons: 0.5%  
 Sasquatches: 0.3%  
 Other Woodland: 0.3%  
 Dwarves: 0.3%

Urban Areas and Military Centers		
	Civilians	Military
Greenwood	16,000	400
Hepira	9,850	250
Green Bay	9,410	250
Tirenios	8,970	250
Tenoboa	8,540	2,500
Haggleby	8,100	2,500
Stonerim	7,660	2,250
Tutlos	7,220	2,250
Rathoon	6,780	200
Weilat	6,350	200
Tares	5,900	2,250
Dema	5,470	100
Shog	5,030	100
Taragor	4,590	100
Soctel	4,160	100
Orfil	3,720	100
Igoin	3,280	100
Shipswort	2,840	1,000
Keelmeadows	2,400	100
Everton	1,970	1,000
Sturgeon Bay	1,530	1,000
Lakim	1,090	1,582
Villages: 42	21,000	420
Fortifications	6,420	2,140

Applying these figures to armed forces, this means out of 100 troops, 83 are human, and the rest remain either in the woods or in the Duchy of Westford (greater equines). So if Foresthome fielded 10,000 troops, some 1,700 would not advance past the realm's borders. Furthermore, 22% of resident halflings and all of the dwarves are actually foreigners, presumably from Stoutfellow. Among humans, more than 10% are immigrant Yannifey who may or may not prove reliable under duress. In general, Foresthome's military wages are likely below average. Compared to the more affluent and near-fanatical warriors of Bettelwyn, the picture does get substantially grimmer. The chart on the left shows the location of land forces.

In the south, 6,500 naval and land troops face Bettelwyn in Tenoboa, Tutlos, and Tares, with Lakim's garrison available as reinforcement. Tenoboa is a major military seaport. Lakim is Foresthome's main naval base on Lake Llyn.

In the northwest, another 7,700 watch for monstrous incursions, including garrisons at Haggleby, Stonerim, Everton, Sturgeon Bay, and local fortifications. These are mostly land forces including the majority of Foresthome elves and greater equines.

The remainder, about 7,000 personnel, handles local law enforcement, sea, and royal ranger duties from another 15 towns, including Foresthome's sprawling wilderness and its capital city. Fortunately, Greenwood lies nowhere near any region at risk. If need be, ships anchored at Shipswort and Lakim could be summoned for help.

Naval Forces							Total Fleet Size: 43
Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level	
Small Galley	10	100	600	30	200	1	
Large Galley	3	60	540	12	150	2	
War Galley	1	30	300	5	75	3	
Longship	8	--	--	16	600	2	
Small Sailing Ship	12	120	--	36	300	1	
Large Sailing Ship	6	120	--	24	300	2	
Troop Transport	3	90	--	15	150	3	

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.  
 Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy: 2,295 Seamen HD**      Seamen on Shore Leave: 10  
**6 Airships, No Submersibles, 37 Surface Ships**      **Average Hull Points: 101**

Sail ships, including Foresthome's 6 skyships, are based mainly in Tenoboa and Shipswort (in the northeast). Galleys and three troop transports remain at the ready in Lakim on Lake Lynn. Six longships hail from Sturgeon Bay, with another two in Everton. Although sail ships and galleys could meet via the East Follow River, longships would have to sail a very long way and through foreign lands to do the same (via the Fris or Ambur Rivers, up north). Odds of foreign warships being granted passage, short of an imperial warrant, are practically nil. Nonetheless, Foresthome lines up considerable forces on Lake Llyn. The League of Eight might very well also be hired, as well as an amphibious Brogga warband from the Principality of Llynsey. Facing this, Bettelyn must rely on ships based at Corona Castle, Devouts' Gate, and in faraway Citadel, amounting to about ten small galleys, two war galleys, and a few submersibles. A handful of large galleys may also be able to supplement that force from Uffacos, provided they can get past Foresthome's South Scion fortress.

## Adventure Idea

Lord Bosmeer is a military commander connected with Queen Aberria's network of spies, presently in Haggley and in the service of the Duke of Westford. During a previous adventure at the DM's option, he should be able to help the party from a very sticky encounter to gain their confidence (an encounter he'd possibly orchestrated in the first place). Later on, he quietly resumes contact with the adventurers and hires them to scout the Imperial territories—a black ops mission, Foresthome-style. Since these are forbidden lands, Lord Bosmeer will deny any involvement should the party be captured, which he makes amply clear to the party. The adventurers' objective is to follow the trail of retreating raiders, locate their camp, assess their numbers, find out who's leading them, and return with the information.



**Groaning Mazewoods Area - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The trail takes the party to the Groaning Mazewoods\*. The raiders' leader is a member of the Green Circle, a wicked druidess, part human and praying mantis, bent on eliminating opposing druids in Westford. During Daevoria's recent raid in Westford she kidnapped and tortured a local druid. Brúnean now stands tied at a stake, exhausted and half-mad from cursed wounds, soon

to be finished off by the tribe. Soon after the party identifies her, Daevoria leaves a monstrous consort in charge of the clan and heads north into the wilderness with an escort of forest imps

(\* *Which I managed to nicely misspell on the map!*)

Adventurers have the option to rescue the druid or pursue Daevoria. Whenever they return to Westford, imperial agents or royal rangers may intercept and imprison them (or some of them). Torture may ensue to force them to reveal their paymaster's identity. Some of the jail guards were bribed by a Bettelyn spy. If Brúnean survived the ordeal and was incarcerated as well, he should die at their hands while members of the party are being interrogated. Brúnean happened to have seen the spy's face when he pursued him with the help of wemics, years earlier. He does not know his present name nor his activities. Aware of that fact, the spy instructed the bribed guards to discreetly eliminate Brúnean with a poisoned "healing" salve. The bribed guards then help the party escape. If questioned about the druid's death, they incriminate a poor sap whom they conned into administering the salve in their place (probably already dead or dying from the poison).

The Bettelyn spy is none other than Lord Bosmeer. He will pretend to have used loyal men of his to spring the party from jail when he meets the adventurers again. He hires them once more, although by then a bounty has been posted for their capture. This time, he sends the party north, past the Death Riders' battle site, at least partly for their own safety. Ultimately, his role is to unveil as much as possible of what troubles the Duke of Westford, so it may be exploited to the fullest when the time right. Lord Bosmeer' is a ranger, a follower of Elarion who was granted a hunting falcon as a magical familiar.



**Westford Northern Borders - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

The adventurers are to capture the renegade druidess alive, whom Lord Bosmeer suspects may be going that way. If they can't capture her, they are to track Daevoria down, identify whom she seeks, and return to report. Naturally, the party will have to deal with decapus ambushes and renegade rangers bent on feeding them to their nightmarish liege, Queen Hafh'drn'fhalma.

Upon their return, Lord Bosmeer and a group of hired hands posing as Westford cavalry quietly meet the party at the border, preferably in a secluded spot. There, he requests the party reports

what they found out. If he's satisfied or unmasked, his hired hands attempt to kill off the party while he leaves. The Bettelwyn spy isn't an evil man but he remains nonetheless trapped within the necessities of his mission and his duty to state and temple. Atonement is a daily burden for him. If he took delivery of Daevoria, he will take her along to question her. She will not survive much longer.

Lord Bosmeer will learn at once if the party survives, with the help of his falcon familiar. He is the only one who can prove the party's innocence (all things being relative), or he could be used as a bargaining chip. They can clear themselves of the pending charges if they can bring him to justice either in Haggley (very risky), Greenwood (slightly less risky), Tares (where the League of Eight would be delighted to use him to blackmail someone in Greenwood), or Tutlos (where a certain clan of wemics still remember his face, having already chased him while he escorted Bettelwyn missionaries).

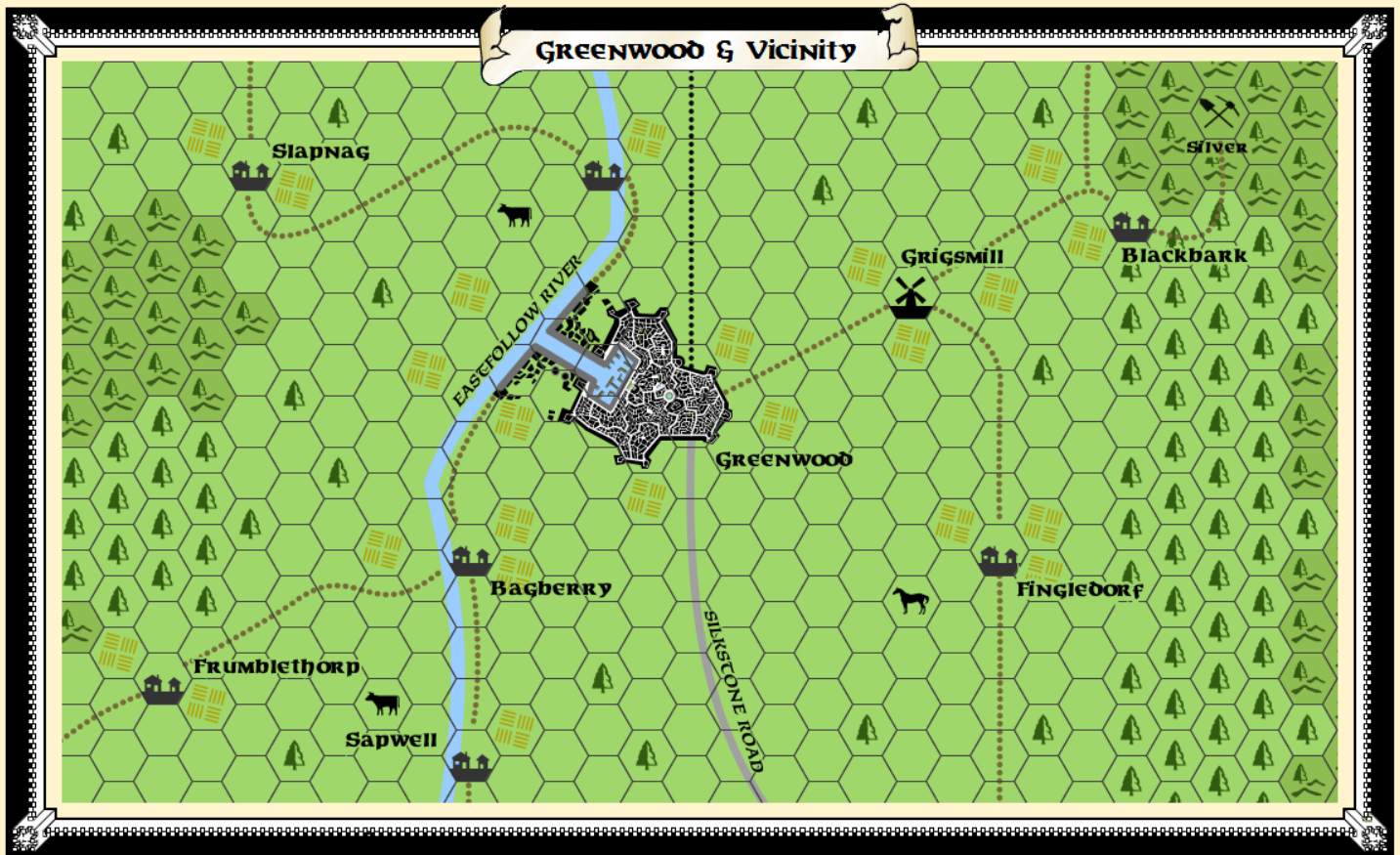
If the party unmasks him at any time during the adventure, Lord Bosmeer flees to Stonerim with the intent to hire a vessel from the Company of Haggley, and sail to any of the Floating Ar's coastal towns, wherefrom he'd board a skyship bound for Citadel (and so on. . .)





# Greenwood: City of Fairy Magic

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Greenwood & Vicinity - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex**

What is most striking about Greenwood is the city's overall appearance. From a distance, it seems more like a tall forest girdled by stone walls and stout bastions than a wizard-queen's capital. A few miles closer, light shining from windows betrays the presence of man-made structures within the woods. In truth, entire city blocks support concentric glens topped with forests. The largest buildings lie at the foot of immense trees, some almost 300 feet high. Older trees stand at the center, with rows of shorter, younger growth surrounding them. Altogether, Greenwood looks like a forested hillock.

These amazing trees result from the joint efforts of fairy folk, treants, forest giants, and Alphantian wizards wishing the capital city to feel as natural as possible. Hollows in the walls and pillars supporting stone structures enable roots of the largest trees to reach the soil beneath Greenwood. By the same token, water flows upward at night, distributing moisture to the endless stretches of suspended gardens adorning the city's roofs. Over time, when the trees reach maturity, segments of walls and pillars are removed or reshaped, leaving natural wood growth in their place. As a result, much of the city features a blend of fancy stonework carved to look like organic material and enormous living roots.

Fairy folk dwell in this lofty realm, ensuring that the layers of soil remain healthy and bursting with nutrients and life. Bridges at roof level connect most buildings, allowing visitors and citizens of this urban woodland to go as they please. Above it all, an immense sylvan canopy

arches over Greenwood, permanently shading its streets. This semi-obscurity requires magical lights to shine permanently so townsfolk can go about their businesses down below despite the lack of sunlight. Most streets in Greenwood are very narrow and flanked with buildings ranging three to five floors. Balconies and overhangs are common, adding to the somewhat oppressive feeling in the darker passageways. Water reservoirs lie beneath the city and, below them, a network of sewers. The latter connects with the Eastfollow River through two underground gates. An enchantment allows a relatively clean water supply upstream, and soiled discharge downstream from the canal. Muck-thriving beasts need to be removed on occasion, especially in the summer when refuse emanates greater scents.

## City Layout



Greenwood Street Map & Districts

**Royal District (1):** the Queen's palace, the Wizards' Parliament, the Great Clan House, and all things royal lie in this area, centered around the Golden Pond. City laborers work hardest here, especially in the fall when clearing cobblestone streets of giant fallen leaves and pine needles. Some foliage is large enough to flop over heads and shoulders of unsuspecting passersby, to the amusement of observing children and pixies. More than one clumsy merchant has slipped and fallen while attempting to tread too briskly upon pine needles as long as one's arm. Melon-sized nuts and acorns may come tumbling down as well, a peril that hasn't quite yet been successfully addressed. A royal edict was drafted decades ago, levying a special tax to keep the streets clean of leafy rotting piles or humus clogging sewer grates.

**Middle Class Quarter (2):** this area borders the south and east sides of the Royal District. It is mostly residential with many shops and inns welcoming travelers entering Greenwood's Silkstone Gate. Despite the prevailing dimness, large patches of moss, and creeping ivy carpeting the walls, it remains a lively, cosmopolitan, colorful area.

**Red Light District (3):** it is the seedier side of Greenwood. Although not normally dangerous during the day, it should behoove visitors not to come alone or unarmed at night. Streets aren't quite as clean or well-paved as in the rest of the city. Alleys are often muddy and strewn with refuse. Cheap thrills come easiest here, between houses of ill-repute and sleazy cabarets with scantily-clad human, elven, and pixie dancers. Performers of a far less human-like nature, fermented saps, enchanted resins, and forbidden narcotics aren't rare if the price is right.

**Artisans' Quarter (4):** most of the buildings here house workshops operated by the city guilds. Leather goods, wood carvings, carts and wheels, barrels, furniture, stained glass, slate tiles, pottery, basket weaving, wool and cloth textiles, tin bottles and flatware, weapons, armor, tapestries, and porcelain wares are produced here. Sprites have a hold on the messaging profession, darting from all corners of this quarter to the merchant district on the opposite side of the port, ferrying orders and messages. An elf by the odd name of Tanglesnark operates such a messaging enterprise to purvey, for a fee, well wishes, birthday greetings, and such humorous tidings throughout the city. During holidays, choirs of giddy sprites sometimes drive neighborhoods to the brink of rage with their cloying performances, usually when beneficiaries least expect them.

**Port Area (5):** This deep water pool is an artificial structure built long ago and enlarged over time. Wooden piers enable visiting vessels to dock. Although many warehouses and granaries surround the port, additional facilities are found outside Greenwood, along the banks of the Eastfollow River, about two miles away. Port laborers under druidical supervision, as in many other areas of Greenwood, are mainly concerned with organic material falling from the trees into the port's waters. Except during winter months, dredging silt and rotting leafy remains are constant activities, often disturbing whatever wildlife thrives beneath the surface.

**Eastfollow Canal (6):** this artificial waterway connects the river with Greenwood. The capital, in its early years, was a village on a branch of this river. Since then, the riverbed shifted, leaving the village dry. At first, a small canal was built to bring water to the growing town. When it became Foresthome's capital city, muddy banks were shored up, the port enlarged, and the canal widened. Future expansion is likely to follow the canal up to the riverbanks. Very little

of the traffic along the river fails to make a stop here, for demand is great and wealth plentiful in the city.

**Municipal Quarter (7):** this section of Greenwood overlooks the port's center. It includes City Hall, the courthouse, the prison, and all official buildings controlling construction, repair, sanitation, and in particular the wellbeing of giant trees. It is said that the prison was designed to be suitable for the incarceration of woodland beings, should any transgress royal laws. Its chambers are as diverse as the natures of enchanted forest dwellers. The Royal Horticultural Institute stands near City Hall, where all that is known about the care of forests is taught under the purview of druids. The school's reputation is such that students and sages from faraway Shiye Lawr and Alfheim attend.



**Merchant & Upper Class District (8):** manors and private palaces dominate the streets on the north side, just past a row of warehouses. The rich and wizardly dwell here. Care must be taken not to disturb those who demand peace and quiet. Banks and guild houses stand closest to the port. This part of town also includes the Merchants' Council, where guild leaders discuss affairs and events affecting their businesses, place grievances, and resolve disputes. Several landing platforms built on top of stone columns allow private airships a shorter flight between giant branches before reaching the open sky. Magically powered lifts enable travelers to reach the buildings below. Military airships land on the bastions surrounding the city, often on the larger one in the southwest corner.

**Theater Row (9):** if Greenwood features a more wholesome entertainment quarter, it centers in this part of town. Theaters, posh gambling houses, operas, libraries, museums, luxury guest houses, a jousting field, and, curiously, several minor universities (as a result of the local libraries) are most common here. An inventor, a mage by the name of Narlindrath, invented a printing press capable of producing an unending scroll that continually reports the news. The document rolls off the press which Narlindrath's workers slice into large page-sized documents to be sold in the streets. It was quickly dubbed the Greenwood Gazette, complete with stylish headers and animated pictures. The druids do demand, however, that pages be returned to the Narlindrath House, to be pulped and reformed into new scrolls. The "news-mage" also produces spell-book-quality grimoires and inks suitable for enchantments. Largely as the result of Narlindrath's work, many other wizardly shops have opened their doors in this quarter, conveniently close to the upper class district.

**Little Sylvania (10):** woodland beings residing in Greenwood favor this corner of town. Opened to anyone who wishes to visit, it can easily be recognized from a sort of natural bark covering all structures, grasses and bushes growing in the corners, and roots bulging from the walls. Visiting fairies often stay in this quarter, preferring its wholly woodsy feel. Some of the dwellings are sized appropriately, such as housing for pixies and other miniature creatures. Rare forest giants and treants that happen to be in Greenwood usually remain on the roofs. Sylvan magic is very strong in this spot, which explains the curious look of its streets. It led to a dispute between wizards and fairy folk a century past when both wanted to keep it to themselves. In the end, it was made available to both but the caretaking was left to woodland

beings and druids. Normal law enforcement holds no jurisdiction in this district so peace keeping is entrusted wholly to royal rangers. Magic in this area causes residing woodland creatures to gain a temporary HD so long as they remain within the district. The benefit also extends to spellcasters and other people who enjoy a strong bond with nature, such as druids, certain mages and clerics, rangers, etc. The memories of woodland beings who died in this area are collected within the oldest trees and can be accessed by those with the right magic. Outsiders who die here are reincarnated within a fortnight as a woodland being with the appropriate HD. With magical help, they may remember their former existences, save for fallen evil beings whose former psyches are irremediably erased.

Space in Greenwood comes at a premium since battlements prevent easy and safe expansion. Furthermore, city ordinances demand that structures be strong enough to support substantial hanging gardens and trees, making the cost of new buildings nearly prohibitive, let alone hiring the services of wizards and woodland beings to ensure proper growth conditions. The military also objects to having trees grown outside their walls, obstructing sight. Thus, as population grows, inhabitants make use of space sparingly until new battlements are erected, allowing new housing.



# Greenwood's Folio of Faces

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

A note about Greenwood's political topography is needed before one can understand where each player fits. There are three official centers of power in the capital city. The first is the monarchy. The next two are relatively balanced as regards their abilities to influence the monarchy: the Great Clan House and the Wizards parliament.



**Royal District: 1. Queen's Palace, 2. Wizards Parliament, 3. Great Clan House, 4. Golden Pond, 5. Royal Rangers Barracks**

**The Great Clan House:** it acts as a sort of supreme court for woodland beings and the place where Clan House representatives from different dominions can address each other in an official capacity. The Speaker of the Clans represents all clans, a venerable old actaeon named Lord Cervidal. When a motion is put to the assembly, each of the 18 clan houses gets one vote, except for the representative of the autonomous Clan Lands, which commands five. The total number of votes is therefore 22. A strict majority is needed to resolve any issue, with the speaker acting as the tie breaker. A session at the Great Clan House can be an amazing sight to behold, with a bewildering crowd of woodland races present, each representative usually commanding half a dozen native aids, aside from druid and ranger facilitators. Languages are as varied as morphologies and sizes, from sprite to forest giant. Specially adapted carriages drawn by horses, oxen, or other creatures, allow attending personalities to travel from parvis of the Great Clan House to guesthouses in Little Sylvania.

Present discussions involve a request from Queen Aberria to formalize measures to establish expeditionary forces among woodland beings in the event they may be needed to defend Foresthorne's borders. It is a hotly debated topic which never yielded anything concrete in the

past. Considering the plethora of divergent views and interests, the Speaker hasn't yet put the motion to a vote, being far too vague as is. Based on responses, the Speaker will submit another proposal to the queen. The Prince of Llynsey and the Queen (known as the "Royals") hold honorary seats and may address the assembly but may not vote.

Wemics, actaeons, and greater equines are the most outspoken in favor of the request but claim they couldn't possibly be called away since they view themselves as guarantors of Foresthome's security. Gulons, itching for a good fight, don't mind being called upon, although an appeal was made for a monument to be erected in Greenwood's Golden Pond to honor their fallen comrades. Sasquatches agree as well but only if good ale is guaranteed. Wood imps, to everyone's surprise, agreed as long as they're being asked politely and showered with royal gifts (though their reliability and true motivations remain anyone's guess). Woodsmen do not object, except in winter. Bushmen will only go if woodsmen do. Blackroots will definitely not go if bushmen do, which echoes the general feeling among Clan Lands tribes (treants, forest giants, fairykind, phanatons, etc.). Their representative therefore disagrees entirely with the queen's request, seeing this as another encroachment upon their autonomy.

Ravenfolk will not go either but will provide intelligence on the enemy. The brogga are ready to pledge an amphibious strike force, provided Queen Aberria offers her niece, Kikania, as a bride to the brogga prince, a tradition among brogga families seeking alliances. Lady Kikania made it known through her friends she'd never kiss a "frog person" based on widespread superstition that doing so would transform her into a fine-looking brogga. Meanwhile, the Decapus Queen deigned not to respond to the Great Clan House invitation, thankfully.

**The Wizards' Parliament:** it is the venue of choice of wizardly politicians to discuss affairs of state and provide a counterweight to the influence the Great Clan House may exert upon the monarchy. Although mages make up the vast majority of members, clerics, elves, and warrior types find acceptance among their ranks. The assembly includes 15 barons, counts, and dukes ruling dominions, as well as 78 other members. The latter are elected officials representing various outsider cantons throughout Foresthome. Cantons generally center around towns, villages, towers, and other strongholds. "Front row" seats are reserved for dominion rulers; these confer 5 Parliament Votes each to their owners. "Back row" canton seats confer a single Parliament Vote each. As with the Great Clan House, the "Royals" hold honorary seats, and may address the assembly, but may not vote. The Speaker of the Parliament, Lord Rathmore, presides over sessions and has authority to bring order to the chamber when matters get out of hand, as they often do. In order for a motion to be accepted or rejected, one party must have more votes than the other, and a minimum of 60 total out of a maximum 153.

Following the king's recent abdication, Queen Aberria entrusted the parliament with the task of making a decision whether to expand the League of Eight's commercial charter beyond Lake Llyn. Six "front row seaters" oppose the motion (including Mersey & Weil, Wessith, Ashbury, Tutleby, Burwyn, and Llynmouth as their most vocal leader). Four in the front row quietly support the motion (Orfeander, Hårnmayne, Grünfold, and Suthermore). Five others remain neutral (Rathmore, Tarston, Westford, Shielldon, and Ogresfell). Among "back row seaters," 28 oppose the motion, 39 support it (League investors or debtors), and 11 remain neutral.



**Yea: 59 votes**

**Nay: 58 votes**

**Abstained: 36 votes**

Neither party has accrued enough votes yet to win the day. The measure was therefore put on hold for a year, pending another vote to accept or reject the motion. The League of Eight and their opponents are likely to seek additional support behind closed doors, with possible clashes along the way.

## **Lord Talthion, His Royal Highness**

This crippled man is Queen Aberria's husband, the former King of Foresthome. Prior to abdication resulting from his infirmities, Talthion had an animated discussion with Master Grebbledin, a key man in the League of Eight. Grebbledin requested the guild's commercial charter be appended to include the Eastfollow River, Foresthome's sea coasts, and foreign destinations. Although an investor himself, Talthion refused, fearing the guild's growing influence over the kingdom. Turning the League loose could very well threaten the monarchy. A few weeks after this crucial meeting, Talthion was stricken with an unexplainable affliction that left him unable to speak, write, or communicate effectively. No magic in the kingdom could alleviate his worsening condition.

**Description:** in his 50's, Lord Talthion has a shoulder-length mane of salt and pepper hair, and cheekbones, a nose, and a chin like miniature cliffs. His eyes are hazel and they change color with his moods: they can appear intense blue, very green, cloudy, or stormy gray within instants. Occasionally they gleam deep gold, like those of a wild animal. Once a tall man employing thoughtful words and gestures, his head now thrusts forward and cocks slightly to one side from raised tense shoulders, as if he's trying to communicate better by getting closer to his audience. His eyes are sometimes eloquent, and at other times lost in what seems feral regard. He often forgets what's happened a few minutes ago.

M25 (disabled), AC7, hp 37, MV 90' (30'), AT none, Dmg none, Save M12 due to feebleness, ML6, AL N. St6, In6, Wi6, Dx6, Co6, Ch8. **Magical Items:** *ring of protection +3, medallion of contingency (teleports him to a hidden chamber in the palace if harmed or if anyone else touches the medallion).*

**Queen Aberria, Her Royal Majesty:** she acceded to the throne of Foresthome when her husband, Lord Talthion, abdicated for reasons of health. Master Grebbledin requested an audience with the queen soon after the king's demise, to bring up their earlier discussion regarding the commercial charter. Sensing danger, Aberria eventually disposed of the problem by submitting it to the Parliament of Wizards. She correctly assessed that the issue would be stalled. She hopes to use the lull to curb the League's power and find a cure for her husband. Lord Allaran, Captain of Her Majesty's Royal Guard, quietly informed the queen of his suspicions that the League of Eight may be consorting with Bettelilyn through third party investors. Aberria hopes to uncover the treacherous deeds as a way to regain control over the sprawling guild. There is great danger in this endeavor because of the large number of investors and their key

positions in Foresthome society. It could be the end of the monarchy if mishandled. Meanwhile, aside from a queen's daily chores, much of her attention concerns diplomacy with Vertiloch, Randel, and Bettelilyn, the adjudication of clashes between the Parliament of Wizards and the Great Clan House generally about land control and growing troubles among druids in the west. She loves her husband Talthion and is very worried about his health. Because she can't rely on her husband or his failing memory, she has learned to trust Lord Allaran for information. She maintains a public persona, and seldom shows her private side.

**Description:** Queen Aberria is a woman of medium stature in her late 40's, with a copper-toned skin and luxuriant long strawberry-blonde hair. Her eyes are an unusual lapis blue with golden flecks. She must work to control her crescents of reddish brows lest they betray her emotions.

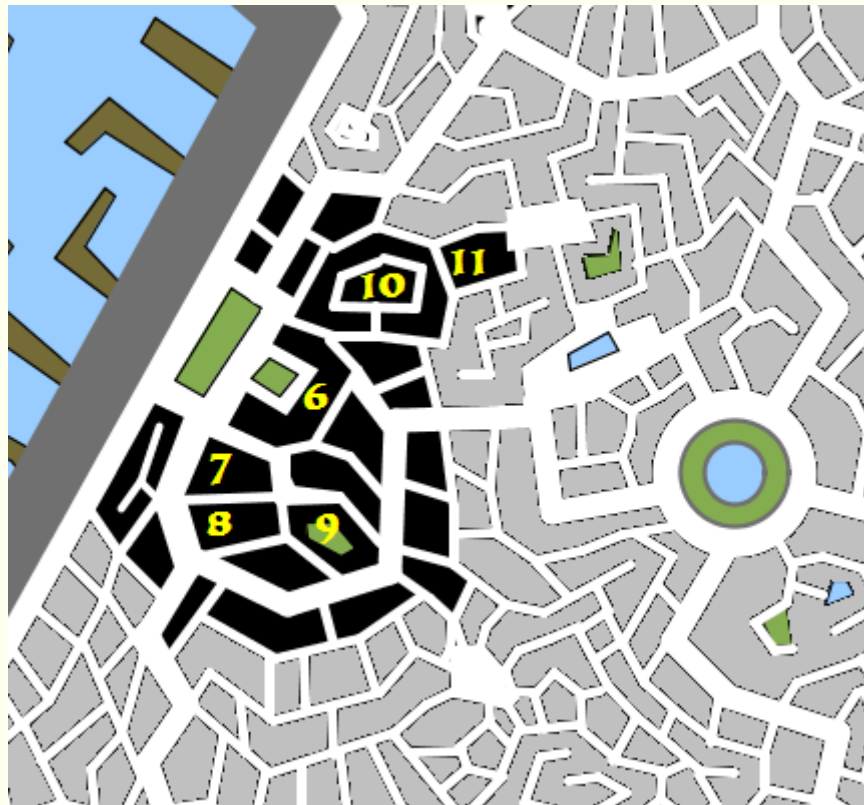
M21, AC7, hp 37, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 spectral claw or spell, Dmg d6+2 + paralysis or by spell, Save M21, ML8, AL L. St9, In17, Wi15, Dx14, Co11, Ch16. **Magical Items:** *earrings of protection +3*, *"slave" bracelet* (multiple strings of small diamonds stretching from her middle finger to her wrist, with a floral design on the back of her hand—on command allows spectral claws to grow from her fingers; +2 to hit/Dmg + *paralysis* as a ghoul), *tiara of leadership* (see *crown of leadership*, AC4 *Book of Marvelous Magic*).

## **Lord Allaran, Captain of Her Majesty's Royal Guard**

His responsibility is security at the royal palace, for which purpose he relies on his wits and the services of a hundred men-at-arms, all veterans of the western conflicts, and a score of spies. Allaran hasn't forgiven himself for failing to prevent the king's abdication. His focus of late has been to investigate the affair. The obvious suspect was one Master Trellyne, a banker who was last seen in company of the king. It appeared that Trellyne went missing immediately after his audience with Talthion. Signs of a scuffle at the banker's residence suggested foul play. Ledgers showed evidence of large sums received from obscure merchants in Frisland, who were later seen visiting the Bettelilyn Embassy in the City of Shiell. Most of these funds were paid to a single but fake beneficiary. Since Trellyne was associated with the League of Eight, Allaran now suspects the funds were paid to the guild, therefore connecting it to Bettelilyn.

**Description:** Lord Allaran is in his early 40's. He has a pleasantly rectangular face with coppery-red weathered skin, corrugated across his forehead. His calculating gray-green eyes sit deep beneath bristling eyebrows. Dark sandy collar-length hair fringes his strong jawline in a short beard. Allaran is not tall and does not appear overtly muscular but gives the impression of steadfast strength and determination. His response during a fight is quick and sure. His troops trust his abilities implicitly.

F23, AC2, hp 115, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg d8+2, Save F23, ML8, AL L. St17, In14, Wi13, Dx13, Co16, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *short sword +3 "stonefoot"* (when first hit, save vs. petrification or the opponent's feet remain steadfastly stuck to the ground/floor—effect lasts 2d4+2 rounds or until dispelled), *chainmail +3 of grounding* (confers immunity to electrical attacks), *elven cloak*.



**Municipal District: 6. City Hall, 7. Court House, 8. Lord Mayor's Palace, 9. Institute of Horticulture, 10. Prison & City Militia Barracks, 11. Armory**

## **Master Trellayne, Sleazy Banker**

He was a Greenwood banker who handled local transactions for the League of Eight. He had the habit of skimming funds and cooking the books. The League got wind of his game and threatened to eliminate him unless he obtained an audience with the king. He was eliminated shortly after receiving confirmation that the audience was granted. He now lies at the bottom of Lake Llyn, his feet tied to a stone ball. The individual who met with the king under Trellayne's name does not match the banker's description. Since Lord Allaran never met the original Master Trellayne, the discrepancy with the banker's appearance hasn't yet come up, leaving the captain unaware of the deception.

**Description:** The banker was a square-bodied man with a paunch that entered a room first. He had straight brown hair in constant disarray because he ran pudgy fingers through it. Ink stains marked his right hand and also above his right cheekbone where he rested his quill above his winglike ear. Trellayne's nose was long and hooked at the end which engendered stories about his liking to stick it in everybody's business for his own gain. Those who knew him well might mention he owned a *ring of accounting* (on command, records the owner's appointments, memos, agreements, and transactions).

## **Master Osworth, Lord Mayor and Member of Parliament, Canton Greenwood**

A man with distant elven heritage and a former royal ranger, Osworth is popular with both outsiders and woodland residents of Greenwood. The League of Eight financed his election, in exchange for which he agreed to protect their interests at the Wizards' Parliament. In truth, Osworth entertains a love affair with a renegade elf named Angwen. Together, they plot the demise of the League, using Osworth's links with the guild to obtain insider knowledge of their operation. Through these connections, Osworth learned that another member of parliament, Lord Quillary, was quietly funneling large sums of money into the League—more than his wealth ought to permit. He passed this information along to Angwen during a secret meeting and is waiting now to hear back from her. Osworth is also aware of Tassoon's existence, Gribbeldin's shadowy crony.

**Description:** in his late 40's, Osworth has vaguely elvish features and thin ivory hair long enough to pull into a tail behind his neck. His eyes are dark amber, a startling contrast to his pale skin. He is tall and lean with a normally pleasant expression that can change to disgust or hate in moments. He is very quiet on his feet and often startles others with his catlike entrances.

M16, AC2, hp 30, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger or spell, Dmg d4+2 + misdirection or by spell, Save M16, ML8, AL L. St14, In17, Wi13, Dx18, Co11, Ch16. **Magical Items:** +2 *dagger of misdirection* (save vs. spell or be *confused* for 1d4 Turns or until *dispelled*), AC5 *robe of smoke* (negates the first successful physical or magical attack and releases a thick cloud of smoke filling an area 30' radius), *elven boots*. As a "demi-elf" has infravision (30'), may detect hidden doors and secret passage as an elf, and saves at +2 vs. ghoul *paralysis*.

## **Angwen, Madwoman of the Forest:**

During her existence in Foresthome, she witnessed the abuses of League of Eight. She turned into a Robin Hood of sorts, robbing the guild and destroying its property wherever possible, and giving the booty back to its victims. She was unmasked during one of the raids and became a renegade under royal law. The League has posted a large bounty for her capture, dead or alive. She generally hides in forests, the local clans choosing to look elsewhere--they know her as an honorable elven maiden despite what the law says. Angwen sent her brother Dellenderyl to investigate Lord Quillary. He disappeared inexplicably. She now searches for him and fears the worst may have happened.

**Description:** Angwen's appears to be a woman in her early 40's. She has copper skin, hickory-brown eyes that absorb every detail, and long snarly dark hair with goldish-red streaks. Her ability to assume the character of a crone, a flighty young maid, or a disdainful woman of means makes her difficult to catch, and even harder to recognize. She distrusts anyone not long in her acquaintance. Outsiders who have glimpsed Angwen on her forays call her the Madwoman of the Forest.

E10 Rank I, AC3, hp 41, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 arrows, or 2 sword, or one spell, Dmg d6+2, or d8+2, or by spell, Save F20, ML10, AL L. St14, In16, Wi11, Dx17, Co13, Ch17. **Magical Items:** *ring of freedom* (once per day as the potion, automatic), +2 *leather armor of recovery* (regenerates 1 hp per Turn up to 10 hp daily), *sword +1 of recall* (*teleports* to its scabbard on command), *long bow* +2.

## **Dellenderyl, Dismissed Ranger**

He was drummed out of the Royal Rangers' service because of his family ties with a wanted renegade. His Royal Ranger badge was shattered and one half symbolically given back to him. He could claim the other when the matter dishonoring his sister was resolved. Dellenderyl then quietly joined Angwen in her fight against the League of Eight. He took on the task of watching Lord Quillary. He followed him into the woods above Little Sylvania where Lord Quillary met with suspicious individuals, all wearing hoods. Inching closer to eavesdrop on their conversation, he made out Frisland accents. Just then, a flock of sprite messengers showed up behind him and started singing Happy Birthday. A few fireballs later, Dellenderyl perished, along with the jocular sprites. Their spirits and memories were absorbed into an elder tree standing nearby. The tree still bears scorch marks. Dellenderyl was similar to his sister Angwen, having coiled-spring energy, dark hair, and excellent woodcraft.

## **Lady Vertamellian, Headmistress at the Greenwood Institute of Horticulture**

This elderly elven academic noticed scorch marks on an elder tree, above Little Sylvania. She ushered her students away from the site, sensing something wrong had happened there. Returning later, she healed the elder tree and attempted a mind meld. Without knowing specifically whose memories to look for, there were far too many of them jumbled together for her to unveil what had happened. Worried about the dangers of meddling in the affairs of wizards using deadly force (not to mention spells forbidden by law in the woods, such as fireballs), she remained quiet about her discovery. She is keen on news of missing people listed in the Greenwood Gazette. She'd read about the strange disappearance of Master Trellayne but has been able to establish his memories weren't hosted in the elder tree. Her search goes on.

**Description:** Lady Vertamellian's apparent age is somewhere in her 60's. She has a mournful pale oval face and a vague green gaze that sharpens when she homes in on something or someone. Habitually bending forward allows her brown graying hair to escape the shell combs she replaces regularly. Her gestures, especially stabbing the air with crooked fingers to accent her points, are traits her students enjoy emulating.

Druid-12, AC5, hp 46, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sickle or spell, Dmg d4+1 or by spell, Save C12, ML8, AL N. St11, In15, Wi17, Dx12, Co13, Ch14. **Magical Items:** *acorn of mind-melding* (allows her to access specific memories stored in elder trees), *AC5 robe of blending* (once a day as the

potion, on command), *bangle of the fairies* (shrink to the size of a chosen fairykind and detect invisible, once per day—lasts until midnight or until dismissed), *earrings of the sickle* (on command, summons a small magical *sickle* +1—lasts until dismissed).

## **Lord Quillary, Member of Parliament, Canton Orfil**

As a younger man, he was charmed by an attractive Bettelilyn spy. While under her spell, he was exposed to the teachings of Eyoth. Although the spell eventually wore off, a seed had been planted in his mind that led him to become an adept. As he grew into an experienced mage, he was elected as representative for Canton Orfil, and earned a “back row” seat at the Wizards’ Parliament. The League of Eight approached him with an investment opportunity and an understanding regarding his votes at the parliament, a bargain which he readily accepted. Bettelilyn spies watching him chose this time to activate their “sleeper agent.” These followers of Eyoth used Quillary’s links to funnel cash into the League. Their goal is to gain control of the guild so that it may not use its ships in a potential conflict between Foresthorne and Bettelilyn, or to create a scandal that would destroy the League altogether. Lord Quillary was meeting with his Bettelilyn handlers who impersonated Frisland merchants when he discovered the elf Dellenderyl hiding nearby. Quillary had taken the precaution (under a fake identity) of hiring sprites to wish a happy birthday to anyone following him into the woods. The trick worked. Quillary and the “Frislanders” all turned and cast spells at the hapless ranger, killing him and the sprites. Quillary picked up the royal ranger’s broken symbol from Dellenderyl’s body. Unsure of its owner’s identity, he hired a bounty hunter to find out and eliminate those who’d sent the elf. Soon after, he had the charred bodies buried beneath a wild tangle of bushes. This adept of Eyoth now owns a significant portion of the League of Eight which, together with interests held by others like him, is coming close to gaining effective control of the merchant guild.

**Description:** Lord Quillary is in his late 30’s. He is of medium height and owns a businesslike mien set off by well-cut but conservative clothing. His hair is buff-colored, wavy, and shoulder-length, framing a square face ending in a spadelike chin. Shrewd blue eyes bulge slightly. Quillary considers every option and plans accordingly before making a move. As a faithful adept of Eyoth, Quillary has become a pawn of Bettelilyn.

M19, AC3, hp 33, MV 120’ (40’), AT 1 staff or spell, Dmg d6 or by spell, Save M19, ML9, AL L\*. St13, In18, Wi11, Dx16, Co12, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *staff of striking* (10 charges), *AC 5 robe of eavesdropping* (confers the ability to tune in to any conversation within 60’ regardless of background noise, once per day on command; targets must be visible—lasts 2d4+2 rounds during which the owner may skip through different conversations), *small safety pouch* (100cn—turn pouch’s *invisibility* on/off on command), *cape of disguise* (AC4 *Book of Marvelous Magic*).

(\*) An Adept of Eyoth must perform a Minor Act of Contrition whenever duties lead to a conflict of Alignment. Quillary may only stray once per day from the path of Lawfulness. Although he did convert an apprentice to the faith of Eyoth, he refrains from proselytizing for the safety of his mission. The apprentice remains at the Quillary Tower, in the Town of Orfil.

## **Manglethrax, Bounty Hunter**

This gulon warrior works for Lord Quillary, who hired him under a fake identity. He belongs to a clan whose profession has been bounty-hunting for as long as the Kingdom of Foresthorne existed. Manglethrax obtained Dellenderyl's broken badge, which he correctly identified as belonging to someone dismissed from the Royal Rangers. He eventually learned of Dellenderyl's dishonorable discharge and began hunting for the "renegade" Angwen. A hired sprite usually comes to pick up a message from him at specific times, which it drops off at another place where Quillary can retrieve it. This reverses for Manglethrax to "find" payments left behind by his shadowy employer. He is fully aware of the large bounty on Angwen's head and wants to collect it as well. He's been trailing her off and on, trying to find out who else is connected with her.

**Description:** Manglethrax is in his early 20's. He is a muscular gulon in his prime whom members of most races prefer to give plenty of room. His arms, shoulders, back, head, and short tail are covered with coarse wolverine-like russet fur. Along his jawline, it extends into a ruff. Steady golden eyes and ritual body scars mark him as a grizzled hunter and stalker par excellence. His ears catch even the slightest sounds. Large hands end in claws meant for rending. He appears to be ready to leap into battle instantly.

Gulon—F9, AC4, hp 67, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 claws or 1 weapon, Dmg d4+3/d4+3 or d6+5, Save F8, ML11, AL N. St18, In13, Wi9, Dx15, Co18, Ch13. **Magical Items:** *flying carpet*, *AC5 robe of shadows* (confers the ability to hide in shadows as a thief with a +10% bonus), +2 *net of returning*, +2 *staff of the bounty hunters* (when a target is hit, the capture pole releases a chain that wraps around a small or normal sized victim's neck—those so captured fight at -2 to hit and lose consciousness 1d4 rounds after entrapment +1 per Constitution bonus; the chain or the staff require a hit against AC0 to snap loose; requires gulon-taught weapon proficiency). May shape change into a giant wolverine.

## **Master Gribbledin, Chairman of the League**

Until recently, he was the man wholly in charge of the League of Eight. He'd approached the former King Talthion to expand the League's commercial charter beyond Lake Llyn. Against his expectations, the king refused. Gribbledin had no choice but to address his investors and inform them of the setback. It was made known to him that he should take "appropriate measures" to redress the situation. This fateful moment made him realize that several key investors were in collusion (including Lord Quillary) and were likely plotting to replace him. The sudden disappearance of a shareholder a few months earlier and the decision of another to sell out appeared even more ominous now. Seeking a quick solution to his predicament, Gribbledin obtained a magical substance from Kelbardene, a druid he'd known for some time. The substance was intended to help control the king's mind and obtain a favorable response. The guild's chairman sent Tassoon, his trusted lieutenant, to eliminate and impersonate Master Trellayne, a banker who was embezzling guild funds. Tassoon met with Talthion and discreetly laced his drink with the substance but the king's resistance to the magic was too strong. Rather

than giving in, Talthion suffered a seizure that crippled his abilities to communicate and damaged his short-term memory. The queen's decision to submit the League's expansion request to the Wizards' Parliament was yet another setback. Since then, Gribbeldin's authority among the League has gradually waned while he remains unaware of Bettelny's takeover conspiracy.

**Description:** the former chairman is in his early 50's, having a fringe of short iron-gray hair with a few long strings left on a shiny pate. His brows look like a couple of moths landed above his eyes, which are chestnut brown and flicker from one thing to another as if he refuses to miss anything. He is convinced of his own importance and can't imagine an existence beyond leading the League. His body and extremities are thick: Gribbeldin's beringed fingers habitually stroke anything while he's listening or thinking, giving the impression of energy or irritation barely held in check.

T23, AC1, hp 83, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg d6+3, Save T23, ML7, AL C. St12, In16, Wi9, Dx17, Co14, Ch14. **Magical Items:** +3 short sword of speeding, +3 leather armor of gaseous form, plate of counterfeiting (AC4 Book of Marvelous Magic—can be used to replicate any official seal).



**Upper Class District: 12. League of Eight branch office, 13. Master Gribbeldin Residence, 14. Rathmore House, 15. Quillery House, 16. Llynmouth House, 17. Westford House**



## **Kelbardene, *Deranged Druid***

Although the substance he gave Gribbledin was indeed intended to gain control of someone's mind, it was never meant to confer such powers to its buyer. The substance is attuned to its maker, Kelbardene himself. The druid relied on charmed animals to spy on the Chairman of the League and knew full well to whom Gribbledin planned to administer the substance. This elder druid is a member of the Green Circle. He consorts with the Decapus Queen and is a devout follower of her alien faith. As such, he is an evil spawn of chaos with druidical abilities. Despite the king's seizure, the substance Kelbardene concocted is still working. It is in fact slowly twisting the former monarch into something wholly monstrous and inhabited by a feral mind. When the transformation is complete, what once was Lord Talthion will be a shape-changing predator whose role is to devour the queen, her family, and Alphatian wizards, one by one, late at night when no one watches. Kelbardene's goal is to wipe out Foresthorne's center of authority and eradicate the influence of outsiders from forest lands and neighboring areas.

**Description:** Kelbardene is in his late 50's and has thin blond-gray hair. A wisp of braided beard droops from his pointed chin. He stands at medium height and has an average body. Kelbardene appears to be quite an innocuous druid, until one looks into his brown-black eyes and realizes the depth of madness in moil there. He will do anything for his alien liege. Because of his shrewd planning and the ability to distract most people from his true pursuits, it's anyone's guess how far he will go to achieve the Decapus Queen's sovereignty.

Druid—18, AC2, hp 59, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff or spell, Dmg d6+4 or by spell, Save C18, ML11, AL C. St15, In16, Wi17, Dx12, Co14, Ch9. **Magical Items:** +3 *staff of the druids*, ring of *human control*, +2 *leather armor of ethereality*, +3 *bracers of protection*. As a psychopath, he is immune to charms and mind-control magic.

## **Tassoon, *Janitor of the League***

He usually handles the more sensitive tasks for his master, Gribbledin, especially if it involves eliminating a troublemaker or cleaning up after a botched operation. Tassoon executed the banker Trellayne on Gribbledin's behalf. He filched Trellayne's ring of accounting but was unable to secure its command word; he now keeps it in a small pouch hanging around his neck. Trellayne recorded in this ring incriminating verbal notes, such as Tassoon chasing him to slit his throat (quite true, until the point he choked on his own blood), notes about transactions involving Bettelilyn investors posing as Frisland financiers (true), Lord Quillary's involvement with them (also true), a veiled clue to himself about the hidden location of the money he embezzled from the League (true), the willful treachery of Gribbledin consorting with Bettelilyn (a lie), and the connection between the Lord Mayor and Gribbledin (true).

**Description:** Tassoon is a wiry, nervous character with a slight twitch pulling at the edge of his mouth when he faces a challenge. Bushy brows, deep set dark brown eyes, a straight nose, bony cheeks, a scar on his chin, pale skin, and long, stringy black hair complete his generally

creepy demeanor. Tassoon will never betray his boss regardless of threats or pain inflicted upon him. Only magic could force him to betray Gribbledin or the League in general.

T14, AC2, hp 56, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg d6+4/+6, Save T14, ML11, AL C. St16, In13, Wi9, Dx18, Co15, Ch8. **Magical Items:** *ring of spell turning, amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP, +1 dagger of silencing, +2 short sword/+4 vs. spellcasters*, one poisonous steel stinging fitting on his right index finger (narcotic, single use, Dmg 1, no save), *potion of the ultimate solvent* (3 doses—each can dissolve up to 10 cubic feet of organic material within 3d6+2 rounds; vapors are extremely pungent; ingesting it will dissolve the drinker entirely, no save), *displacer cloak, +2 leather armor*.

## Prince Valladren, His Royal Highness

The prince is a child of twelve years old and the direct heir to the throne. Valladren is a spoiled brat who will do all he can think of to command everyone's attention. He is cared for by Queen Aberria's sister, Lady Ellusidane at the palace in Lakim, in the Principality of Llynsey. Lord Resolimar, her husband, is the Steward of Llynsey acting as the administrative regent for the young prince's apanage and the military commander for the queen's forces based in Lakim. They are both loyal to the queen. Should trouble arise with Bettelilyn, the Lord Steward has arranged for one of his ships to secretly transport his wife and the prince to Green Bay, where the Count of Llynmouth will hide them. Kopru are aware of Valladren's presence on the island. They are scheming to abduct him and force Queen Aberria to betray her brogga allies in exchange for his life. The latter suspect as much and may intervene to thwart the kopru's dastardly plot.

**Description:** Prince Valladren is a healthy, well-coordinated child with an open, inquiring expression that hides the very devil. His eyes are a clear medium blue encircled by a ring of midnight. His hair is curly, blond with reddish highlights, and hangs past his shoulders. The prince has an energy level difficult to keep up with and his constant pranks affect everyone at the palace.

M3, AC3, hp 33, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 staff or spell, Dmg d6 or by spell, Save M19, ML9, AL N. St8, In14, Wi7, Dx17, Co9, Ch13. **Magical Items:** *ring of invisibility, wand of illusions, key of opening* (6 charges—AC4 *Book of Marvelous Magic*), *AC5 lederhosen of protection* (actually enables Lady Ellusidane to sense the unsuspecting prince's location).

## Lady Kikania

This 15 year old is the queen's niece on Talthion's side. Her mother passed away shortly after Kikania's birth. Having fulfilled her destiny, her soul refused to return when priests attempted to raise her from the dead. Kikania's father is presumed to have died while attacking an ogrish camp somewhere in the Heartsbane Woods. His body was never recovered. Kikania lived for

some time with her audacious forebear, acquiring his rough and tumble ways and adventurous demeanor. She is now a good-looking tomboy. Kikania came to be cared for by her aunt before Aberria became queen. She's now being educated as a proper lady, which the tomboy finds atrociously boring. Events at the palace have, however, changed that. The queen is now too busy to be with her. Kikania finds ways to thwart the company of her preceptors and her dreaded old chaperon. While visiting Lord Talthion, she noticed surreptitious changes in his demeanor. She worries that there may be something more to his infirmities, something tainting his mind aside from his intermittent amnesia, which is growing worse. She told Lord Allaran, the Captain of her Majesty's Royal Guard, about this. He, however, was unable to observe anything unusual. She actually did see Tassoon enter Talthion's private chambers when he impersonated Trelayne. Neither she nor the king at the time new about the deception. Kikania entertains the mother of all crushes on Allaran, who pretends to ignore her feelings, avoiding a new problem.

**Description:** Kikania is a honey blonde with wide green eyes and copper skin, increasingly at odds with her growing femininity. Very lean, she prefers leather tunics and trousers to skirts and bodices.

M5, AC6, hp 13, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 dagger or spell, 1d4+2 or by spell, Save M5, ML8, AL N. St12, In17, Wi13, Dx16, Co12, Ch14. **Magical Items:** *ring of protection +2*, *dagger +2*, *buckle of concealment* (contains a miniature spellbook), *cat's eye marble*, and *pouch of traveling* (the latter two are from *AC4—Book of Marvelous Magic*).

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her design and editorial contribution.*



# The Alphatian Province of Frisland

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*This kingdom at the northwestern tip of the Wizards' Empire stands amongst the largest in mainland Alphatia and bears a most tumultuous history. Despite its harsh climate and inhospitable land, Frisland became a battleground for races, cultures, and faiths. A legacy of horror and of ancient evils still imbues the region which to this day survives Alphatia's efforts to scour the province of its troublesome heritage.*



**Kingdom of Greater Frisland (AC 1000) - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

**Frisland's Origins:** In its very distant past, Frisland became a refuge for three races, all of them fleeing greater scourges. The Yanifey came first, a copper-skinned race of ancient Neathar stock more prevalent in the island-continent's east and south. Reeling from the advance of Alphatian forces after their recent landfall on Mystara, the original Yan folk mixed with fey people before retreating into the cold northwestern reaches, on the oriental side of the Kerothar Mountains. The Ogam, slaves of an evil race now extinct, escaped from the Isle of Dawn and reached the shores of Frisland before finding solace in hidden valleys, deep amid the Kerothar

Mountains. At about the same time, Antalians from Brun fled before King Loark's onslaught, abandoning their ancestral lands to the goblin hordes. These Antalians, a people of fair complexion, sailed from the west, settling the island of Qeodhar first and Frisland's western shores thereafter.

The Ogam, of rather small and swarthy Nithian origins, brought with them an ancient faith that no one in their right minds would ever adopt. But in the face of desperation, the Ogam put their trust in outer world beings, inhuman creatures with powers far beyond those of Mystara's immortals, thoroughly alien and evil. For a time, these tribes of goat and shepherders expanded eastward from the Kerothar Mountains. They relied on their dark magic against the advancing Alphatians but it backfired. As a result, Frisland's central plains were impoverished—cursed, in truth. The Ogam once again retreated into their hidden valleys while the Alphatians defeated the Yanifey. During the following centuries, Alphatia resumed its march westward along the northern shores and around the edge of the Frislandic Range. There, they clashed with Antalian jarldoms, and eventually reduced them to slavery.

**The Kingdom of Argonath:** Defying imperial authority, Alphatian newcomers established a new realm stretching from sea to sea across northern Alphatia. But over time, Argonath too failed, falling prey to internal rivalries, new wars with their southern neighbors, and sea raids from Qeodim Antalians. Imperial forces stepped in, crushed the breakaway kingdom, and split the land among noble houses that would eventually establish the three imperial provinces of Ambur, Ar, and Frisland. By then, the population had dwindled in these lawless and war-ravaged areas. Frisland suffered the most. In addition to the effects of centuries of conflict, a difficult climate, and the forgotten Ogam curse still afflicting its soil, the lands east of the Kerothar Mountains remained deeply impoverished. The western shores fared better, although its people had become slaves of Alphatia.

From the ashes of western Argonath, several new Alphatian kingdoms later came to light. The most powerful, the Kingdom of Frisland, (which eventually gave its name to the entire region) occupied the western bank of Lake Shiell. Just north in the central plains lay the Kingdom of Orzafeth. Along the coast, from the Fris River to the town of Ydroyas, stretched the Kingdom of Wyllareth. A small realm was nestled around the town of Bogotus. A few others clung to the western coast on the opposite side of the Kerothar Mountains. Although they all maintained their imperial allegiance to Sundsvall, these were struggling, rival kingdoms. Among them, the worst off was Orzafeth with the lowest population and poorest land.

**The Roots of Conflict:** It so happened that an obscure Ogam tribe chose that time to emerge from its hidden valley in the Kerothar Mountains. They appeared in the hills north of the Beatha River which at the time belonged to Orzafeth. Hoping they would bolster his failing population and, by the same token, his meager army, King Alandar of Orzafeth welcomed these strange people. In a replay of what had happened in the distant past, the Ogam once again migrated into the central plains. Once this first tribe was invited, many more followed. While these mountain folk proved better able to raise crops from Orzafeth's impoverished soil, their odious faiths also began to grow deeper roots among the unsuspecting population.

**The Rise of Orzafeth:** Concerned with Orzafeth's sudden gain in power, the Kingdoms of Frisland and Wyllareth forged a secret pact to crush the middle realm. A protracted sixty-year-long conflict ensued during which the Ogam once more resorted to their dark magic. By the end of that era, the mountain folk had thoroughly mixed with the local population, altering its racial makeup. In this area of Frisland, people were mostly of pale complexion, dark haired Alphatian stock, or of coppery-skinned Cypric and Yanifey origins. With the Ogam influx, the later Orzafethians earned a much darker tone and no longer resembled their neighbors. A magical barrier was raised which repelled divination magic and transportation spells cast from the other side. Horrors were summoned to keep invaders at bay. Bizarre and ghastly, they roamed Orzafeth and strayed into the neighboring realms. Deadly alien plants spread out causing havoc among farms and villages. A dimness in the sky grew past Orzafeth's borders provoking crop failures and livestock born with frightening deformities. All prisoners of Orzafeth were sacrificed to the Outer Beings during maddening rituals. In the end, the two neighboring realms and the Kingdom of Bogotus agreed to launch an all-out crusade.

Ill-equipped to deal with such wickedness, the alliance foundered. Its troops fled in horror before monstrous hordes and their campaign turned into a rout. Orzafeth captured great stretches of land in Frisland and Wyllareth. The extent of the catastrophe at last came to the attention of Emperor Alphas III who intervened immediately. Massive forces poured into Frisland and marched on Orzafeth. Imperial wizards were barely able to keep the hideous hordes at bay but one by one, they destroyed Ogam temples from which these shambling terrors were summoned. Within six months, the forces of Emperor Alphas tightened their noose around the evil capital.

**The Fall of Orzafeth:** Fearing utter destruction, Orzafethian priests began a desperate ritual. Imperial wizards braced for new horrors to come. Instead, the darkness overhead formed into a funnel and descended into the city. An eerie light spread along the streets and into the houses like the fingers of a giant spectral hand. Soul-chilling clamors rose from the last bastion of Orzafeth as the deathly glow claimed its final bounty. Less than an hour later, the mysterious light, the funnel, and the gloom in the sky faded.

Upon investigation, it was found that not one Orzafethian had survived. Shadows of terrified victims seemed imprinted upon the walls. Stone structures and furniture were oddly twisted or partially melted. Those who returned from their observation seemed aged by what they'd just seen and died before day's end. The emperor ordered a wall erected around the capital's vicinity and declared the area off limits to everyone. Guards were assigned to keep watch and destroy anything attempting to come in or out. By imperial decree, a skyship maintained a permanent presence well above the cursed city with similar orders.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for the histories of Argonath and Orzafeth which I summarized in this blog entry. [Click here](#) for his original work on the subject which is far more detailed than my treatment.*

**The Aftermath:** During the following decades, most traces of the Ogam and their evil ways were erased from the surrounding land. Remains of Orzafethian temples were obliterated and their knowledge made illegal under imperial law. Known records of the Kingdom of Orzafeth as

a political entity were erased from imperial archives in an effort to eliminate any temptation to research their links with outer world beings and their dark magic. Surviving horrors were systematically hunted down across the plains, save for the Kerothar Mountains' wilderness which, although claimed, remained largely uncontrolled.

In the wake of the Orzafethian disaster, Emperor Alphas banished the original dynasties from Frisland and Wyllareth for their failures to alert Sundsvall with time enough to avoid the worst. It was found that both had bribed key personalities in Sundsvall for years to keep the emperor in the dark, as they had hoped to split Orzafeth amongst themselves. Alphas then founded the Greater Kingdom of Frisland, with the City of Shiell as its capital, and installed a new royal dynasty. The old Frisland became the Grand Duchy of Frisia and the apanage of Frislandic kings to come. The other realms of the region became duchies, counties, and marches owing fealty to Shiell and Sundsvall. All of them are now required to maintain imperial ambassadors and their retinues at their capitals.



Greater Frisland incorporates six dominions: the Grand Duchy of Frisia, the neighboring Counties of Orzafeth and Hosseta, the Duchy of Wyllareth on the northern coast, the County of Västheim on the Frislandic Peninsula, and the Marches of Azafeth which hold the western coast along the Alphatian Sea. Greater Frisland remains sparsely populated with vast stretches of its lands qualifying as wilderness. Population huddles in the vicinity of towns and villages, spreading up to 40 miles in either direction along rivers and trails. Settled lands gradually turn into borderlands and wilderness. The Kerothar Mountains separate the old Antalian colonies from the rest of Greater Frisland. The Azafeth Ridge, the Västmark Shield, the Frislandic Range, the Baalbethine Mounts, and the Beatha Spur are all part of the massive Kerothar system.

**Population:** The Grand Duchy is home to slightly more than 377,000 Frisians, overwhelmingly squeezed along the bank of Lake Shiell within the area between Naugwayne, Sanaz, and Castle Perzaht. This represents about a third of the entire kingdom's population. Save for Witival's vicinity, the rest of this royal apanage remains a vast and lawless wilderness, fraught with many dangers.

By dint of its own sheer size, the Duchy of Wyllareth comes next with 291,000 Wyllarethians. The Counties of Västheim and Azafeth arguably come next, together with more than 306,000 people of mixed Antalian and Alphatian ancestries. Orzafeth tallies about 159,000 Neo-Orzafethians, most of whose forebears were deported here from Bellissaria and Esterhold by imperial decree to shore up the deserted region. Finally, the County of Hosseta accounts for nearly 85,000 people. Hossetan, Wyllarethian, and Frisian commoners are of mixed Alphatian and Yanifey stock. The upper class throughout Greater Frisland is invariably of direct Alphatian descent.

Altogether, the population of Greater Frisland adds up to slightly more than 1.2 million people, which translates into a paltry 8 inhabitants per square mile (one more than Foresthome—so far



the most under-populated, probably on a par with Blackheart and the Shiye-Lawr). Compared to this, Ar boasts nearly 21 inhabitants per square mile, Ambur 41, and Stonewall a whopping 61. As a whole, Greater Frisland stretches more than 670 miles at its widest and more than 500 miles north-south. The land supports scattered light evergreen woods. Its soil remains poor despite a goodly number of rivers. Harsh climate and the Ogam's ancient curse prevent farming to the extent of what is accomplished in neighboring Ar and Ambur. As a result, the vast amount of space available for farmland remains barely able to sustain Greater Frisland's population. The old Antalian colonies have fared better in this regard since their maritime tradition remains strong and allows for fishing and whale-hunting. Decent population and economic growth have taken place there recently from Ybod to Vykstaht. Västheim now exceeds 12 inhabitants per square mile, clearly the most densely populated dominion in the kingdom. Azafeth still lags well beneath the kingdom's average due to the large proportion of uninhabited mountains in the old Marklands. The largest urban centers are Shiell (21,000), Witival (9,100), Mafertat (8,800), Bogotus (8,500), and fast-growing Ybod (8,200).

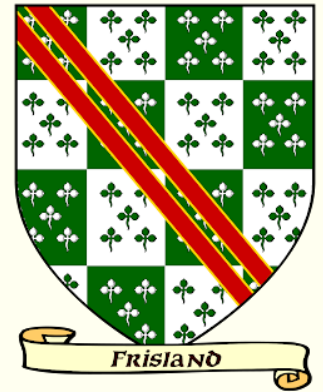
**Climate:** The windswept west coast experiences a wet and stormy maritime climate, similar to the real-world Aleutian Islands. Wind, fog, and rain prevail with muddy ground conditions. Average temperature ranges during the summer 45 to 57°F (7 to 14°C) and during the winter 27 to 37°F (-3 to 3°C). Temperatures drop quickly when heading inland into the mountains. The Kerothar system blocks much of the moisture from the Sea of Alphatia, commonly generating snowstorms at altitude.

The Shiell area is much colder than the west coast with what is called a humid continental climate prevailing east of the Kerothar mountains. Though drier than the west, it experiences unpredictable weather and a large seasonal temperature variance. Shiell comes closest to real-world Edmonton, Canada, with temperatures ranging from 16°F/-9°C to 64°F/18°C including extremes well beyond these numbers. During the coldest months, part or all of Lake Shiell and the Fris River may freeze. The northern coastal stretch is a bit more forgiving than Shiell, featuring a climate comparable to real-world Stockholm, Sweden, as a result of its position along the Strait of Qeodhar. Averages run from 17°F/-8°C to 66°F/19°C with more precipitation than the capital city area.

**Economy:** In the east, much of the wealth comes from livestock, especially woolly goats and sheep breeds that have accommodated themselves to the harsh climate. They are an Ogam heritage that survived the bad times. Bovines are rarer and considered a luxury, horses even more so. Where iron mines are available, weapons and armor are manufactured. Frisland is a notorious source of captured monsters, usually sold to Blackheart mages. It is also known for the trafficking of forbidden substances obtained from toxic vegetation still infesting much of Greater Frisland's open plains. Although authorities try to locate and destroy smugglers, the sheer size of the kingdom's wilderness makes the effort nearly impossible. Law enforcement therefore focuses on urban areas. Along with crime and violence, this trafficking nonetheless generates local wealth and a substantial amount of indirect revenues to the counties. Timber in southern Frisia, smelting near mining areas, and ceramics are other sources of wealth. On the west coast, fishing, whaling, the crafting and commerce of ivory objects (Ybod), oil making, as well as shipbuilding (Nasta and vicinity) are the main activities. Agriculture supports the basic needs of the kingdom but does not yield enough produce for exports. General trade and

banking are rudimentary as well as advanced magical education. Fine young nobles are sent to neighboring realms for their instruction or to establishments in Haven or Theranderol to perfect their culture.

**Armed Forces:** The military caste exceeds 14,000 for the whole of the kingdom which amounts of 1.2% of the population. It is largely garrisoned in border towns and around the ruins of old Orzafeth. The largest garrisons are in Shiell (about 2,000), Mafertat (1,000), Bogotus (900), Imaroth, Gowola, Ybod, and Igdor (roughly 800 each). Castles typically house 400 troops, forts 200, towers 20. Of Greater Frisland's three large fortresses, two stand alongside the Fris River and the third locks the southern pass through the Marches of Azafeth. The generals also maintain under retainer 37 seventh level spellcasters and ten tamed beasts of various sorts of about 10HD each. All urban centers in Greater Frisland, from humble hamlets to the capital city, are fortified to some degree, varying from simple wooden palisades with ditches and watch towers to imposing stonework. Defenses of the central and eastern plains are more extensive, Shiell and Bogotus owning the most elaborate. Those in Wyllareth were destroyed during the conflict with Orzafeth. Although later rebuilt, they aren't comparable with present Hossetan and Frisian defenses.



Greater Frisland's navy counts 39 vessels, including 8 submersibles, 5 large galleys, 3 war galleys, 6 longships, 8 skyships, 1 small sail ship, 5 large sail ships, and 3 troop transports. Shiell and Ybod are the two main military ports housing nine to ten ships each. All longships hail from the west coast. Two skyships each operate from Shiell and Bogotus, largely for the observation of borders with Foresthome and the vicinity of old Orzafeth ruins. The other four skyships are spread out along west coast ports, mostly for the observation of Kerothar valleys. The hidden presence of unsubdued tribes, possibly Ogam, is of concern there. Two submersibles are based in Shiell, three in Gowola, and three more in faraway Zuldaa, essentially for border surveillance. Shiell's remaining fleet also patrols the Fris River while vessels in Ybod concern themselves with the Strait of Qeodhar and occasional Qeodhim piracy. In times of war, all towns can seize privately-owned vessels for military use such as those used by trade guilds or local aristocracy. Compensation for loss is nominal.

**Frislandic Diplomacy:** Relations with neighboring realms and with Sundsvall range from cautious to frosty. Ar, in particular, shuns all that hails from Frisland for fear that its wicked heritage—the one from old Orzafeth—might spill over into their *oh-so-perfect* world. One does not cross easily from Frisland into Ar. Such passage is made at Dovefall Bridge, the one single bridge spanning the Fris River. Though both sides patrol the riverbanks, Ar is most concerned and remains wary for signs of foreign plants or creatures encroaching upon their lands. Crossing the Fris in any direction always demands explanations and substantial proof of business. One is better off seeking passage on a ship sailing through the Strait of Qeodhar, although punctilious control in Ar's few ports can be just as tedious. All skyships, carts, wagons, merchandise, crews, and passengers coming from Frisland must be fumigated for pest and toxic vegetation. Sniffer dogs are used for the detection of forbidden substances. Native Frislandic monsters are absolutely illegal in Ar and will be summarily put to death if discovered. Needless to point out,

this process discourages most trade between the two realms, hurting Frisland the most. In other words, Frisland suffers from a very bad reputation.

Attitudes from Ambur and Foresthome are marginally better, although some trade does take place with the Sylvan Realm across Lake Shiell. Much of that business is handled under the auspices of the Company of Haggley, headquartered in the Duchy of Westford. This trade house maintains an important presence in the City of Shiell and specializes in riverine commerce along the Snake River, Lake Shiell, and the Fris River.

Blackheart, on the other hand, enjoys much better relations with its northern neighbor. Essentially, they leave each other alone, except for the rather booming trade in captured monsters and other strange organisms, toxic plants, and any old Orzafethian artifact Blackheart mages can get their eager hands on. The latter "goods" and forbidden substances are totally against both the king's laws and imperial edicts which doesn't seem to discourage the southern mages in the least. In fact, these laws simply serve to remove competition for the wicked artifacts, price being no object. Occasionally, a few "things" escape north across the Rainbow River only to be massacred or resold to their original owners. All in all, business is doing just fine here.

Stoutfellow and Limn maintain a distant and muted relationship with Frisland, mostly because of the forbidding terrain separating them from their northern neighbor. Sundsvall, on the other hand, is still smarting from events leading to the Orzafethian debacle. The forced presence of imperial ambassadors in each of Frisland's dominions isn't appreciated by the local aristocracies. They are glorified, expensive spies entirely maintained at the expense of their hosts. Being assigned to these posts is largely seen in Sundsvall as a punishment for misbehaving Vertilian aristocrats. In Empress Eriadna's view today (2000 AY), establishing new dynasties to run Frisland in no way addressed the issue of their long-term loyalties to the empire. Somehow, this land has always had a troublesome propensity for inciting its people to twist things around and manipulate each other. Corruption runs high in Frisland. Eriadna knows of the general issues that led to the fall of Orzafeth without specific details which were expunged from imperial records. Among her myriad other responsibilities, she maintains a wary vigil over the northern province.

## **Unresolved Issues**

Most obvious is the frustrating conundrum of forbidden substances vs. law enforcement vs. local wealth vs. affliction and crime. The illicit use of substances from toxic plants related to the Orzafeth curse remains a serious issue. Effects are as varied as the outlandish plants that flare up here and there in Frisland's wilderness, depending on unfathomably arcane factors. For example, some engender euphoria, greater mental acuity, or massive muscle development; others reduce or eliminate pain, regenerate damaged flesh, cure the symptoms of certain diseases, increase fertility or sexual arousal, etc. The real trouble with all of these miracle remedies is that they are addictive and will eventually result in psychotic disorders. In the wrong hands, the combination of certain substances enables control over the minds of victims, forces them to reveal information, melts their bones, turns their flesh into a mass of gibbering, sucking, creeping gelatin, etc. Curiously, substance abuse never kills. Instead, users gain a

spiritual connection with the Ogam's outer world patrons who created these plants. They are meant as seedlings of the Ogam faith, although this part was never identified through wizardly analysis. It is only suspected among certain circles of Alphatian clerics who studied the phenomenon.

Although old Orzafeth was obliterated, the effects of Ogam summonings survive to this day. The old barrier that prevented teleportation and scrying from outside Orzafeth borders still exists, although it has weakened. It now only lingers around an area 12 miles in radius from the ruins of the old capital city, which is now referred as the Tainted Lands. One cannot use instantaneous transportation spells or divination magic through that barrier without incurring dangerous secondary effects. Spellcasting is also altered in various ways. Fauna and flora are toxic and bear odd deformities. This area's evil magic imbued both wildlife and vegetation with a feral cunning and a craving to devour all that enters their domain. Water is equally poisonous, and any fluids brought in become unfit for consumption within a day. The city's ruins are even worse, with twisting streets, shifting buildings, an overwhelming feeling of oppression, lingering evil spirits, and a few monstrous beings which seem to come to life inexplicably. The Outer Beings' dark magic lies at the source of the Tainted Lands and remains beyond the ability of Mystaran wizards, clerics, and their immortal patrons to remove. Time is the best remedy provided nothing rouses Orzafeth's sleeping horrors along the way.

The Ogam themselves are still an issue as well. Scattered tribes hide in secluded valleys of the Kerothar Mountains. They live in caves but switch dwellings from season to season to elude skyship observation. The Ogam had built a few strongholds in the mountains during the darkest age of Orzafeth but these were later reduced to rubble from the air on the orders of Emperor Alphas III. The ruins have been abandoned since then, save for spirits and other alien beasts still lingering there. Skyships watch for the Ogam and dispatch them whenever they can. The unforeseen result of this strategy was to drive the Ogam deeper below ground. This put them in contact with the so-called *shadow dwarves* of Morkhula who dwell beneath the northern Kerothar Mountains. Like-minded, the two races remain on relatively good terms. The Ogam see them as potential followers of their outer world faith. The shadow dwarves consider their upstairs neighbors as allies against Stoutfellow. Exchanges have already taken place with wicked weapons and armor handed to the Ogam in exchange for a few shambling horrors to be turned loose in Stoutfellow mines.

As some dwarves would say: "Osh Shreith!" (not translated here out of respect to younger readers).

## ILLUSTRIOUS FRISLANDERS

### **Master Jarrel, Haggley Guild Representative**

This middle-aged man is no more than an unscrupulous opportunist. As a representative for the Company of Haggley, he commands a crucial branch of his trade house in the City of Shiell where he generates a lot of business opportunities for his Foresthorne paymasters. The King of Frisland knows Master Jarrel well and considers him an economic asset for the development of Frisia. More than once has the guildmaster acted as a banker for local aristocracy and a facilitator for expanding trade between Foresthorne and the Grand Duchy. As such, he stands as an influential personality in the region.



Master Jarrel is well aware of what troubles Greater Frisland. He could not fail to become aware of the existence of the forbidden substances, considering the persistent inspections of his vessels by armed men acting under order of the Captain of the Port, prior to setting sail from Shiell. Because of his extensive relations among the upper class, he learned of various mishaps and afflictions among their families, and their illicit desires to acquire forbidden substances. It wasn't long before he crossed paths with some shady types seeking well-paid outlets for their ill-gotten goods. For a substantial share of the transactions, Master Jarrel now quietly arranges for his sinister associates to meet with individuals paid by needy aristocrats of the guildmaster's acquaintance.

The Haggley representative is also well acquainted with a few ruling wizards in Blackheart who are interested in live plant specimens. Master Jarrel is generally welcome at the feudal Houses of Arâpaal and Rippenschoff. Magically hidden compartments in some of his vessels enables toxic plants to be transported without much chance the Captain of the Port's inspectors would ever find them. The guildmaster is, however, unaware of the plants' intended nature, as seedlings of Ogam faith, or of the psychic connections to Outer Beings resulting from substance abuse. He does know about addictive effects and their detrimental consequences in the long run. As a result, he takes precautions not to touch live toxic plants without gloves and will not willingly consume forbidden substances. There is another fact of which Master Jarrel remains utterly unconscious—his shady associates have managed to slip him tiny doses of the stuff. Their goal is to gain control over the guildmaster's mind to make sure he never challenges their fruitful association.

The Company of Haggley does not condone this type of business and would in fact reprove it because of its liability to their branch in Shiell. Being expelled from Frisland would be a commercial disaster for the trade house. If the heads of the company ever found out, they would seek to quietly eliminate Master Jarrel and replace him with another guildmaster. Naturally, their representative in Shiell is a cautious man who rarely ventures out without someone watching his back, let alone his shadowy associates and their eager desire to protect their asset.

**Appearance:** Master Jarrel originally comes from Foresthome. He has pale skin and medium brown hair, longer in back than at the sides and graying at the temples. His face is oblong, wide at his rounded cheekbones and narrower beneath his hair and at the chin. A deep vertical furrow sits above his fleshy nose. As an astute businessman, Jarrel has tremendous energy, and is often found in his office burning the midnight oil. Medium blue eyes with a permanent squint constantly evaluate the people and the probabilities of future usefulness to him and his company. In the midst of such assessments, Master Jarrel tilts his head to the left. A prodigious memory makes notes and files regarding people and business arrangements unnecessary. He is not the most popular character but others tolerate him because of his business acumen. Jarrel typically wears combinations of grays and greens; his belted tunic has a knee-length split skirt revealing pants and boots.

T16, AC1, hp38, MV 120' (40'), AT dagger (2), Dmg 1d4+3, Save T16\*, ML7, AL N; St13, In15, Wi10, Dx17, Co 14, Ch16. **Magical Items:** *leather jerkin +1, brooch of dimension door* (12 charges), *boots and cloak of elven kind, periapt of safety* (5 charges), *dagger of speed, ring of freedom* (as the potion of the same name), *hat of the merchant princes*, and *potion of ethereality*.

**Periapt of Safety:** each charge enables a failed saving throw to be reversed. The item is not rechargeable.

**Dagger of Speed:** this magical dagger +2 enables its owner to gain initiative when wielding this weapon. It also provides an additional attack each round, over and above the number of attacks normally available to the owner's class.

**Hat of the Merchant Princes:** this elegant fur-lined hat with a high crown provides its owner a magical +4 bonus to Armor Class, and the ability to correctly assess the commercial value of objects within arm's length. The latter ability requires 1 round of concentration but does not reveal the reason behind an object's value or its nature. The hat also identifies likely clients for each of the assessed objects when the owner of the hat happens to meet them, a process involving a casual conversation or a handshake. Again, the reasons for a client's interest aren't unveiled.

## **"Black Hand" Draghaal, *Shadowy Ringleader***

Draghaal runs a cell of a secret brotherhood whose activities center on the covert distribution of forbidden substances and toxic plants in Shiell. Named the "Fellowship of Ancients," this loose association regroups exclusively ethnic Yanifey across Greater Frisland. They all have in common a visceral hatred of those whose forebears stole their lands so long ago. They target Alphatians in particular, ethnic Antalians, demi-humans, and all those of mixed Yanifey ancestry whom they see as the scions of traitors. In other words, they despise just about everyone in Frisland. Their intolerance extends to the occasional Ogam they uncover, despite the brotherhood's main weapon originating from Ogam tradition. In the view of the Ancients, these small, swarthy types are just as bad as the Alphatians.

The fellowship's goal is purely destructive. Few of its followers believe they will ever regain their lost lands. The general idea is that if the Yanifey can't regain their lost domain, then they will ensure that all those who dwell on it will suffer. The so-called Ancients became very knowledgeable of the toxic plants and forbidden substances. They are masters at producing the odious stuff and using it to gain control of key people who could facilitate its distribution. There are many other circles of bandits purely motivated by greed, who compete with the Ancients for the traffic of illicit substances in Greater Frisland. They have territories, which they defend jealously, but the Ancients know how to infiltrate and eventually massacre their rivals. The fellowship controls the City of Shiell which is their stronghold. Bloody street wars are known to take place when a new gang attempts to muscle in. The local guard sometimes discover horribly mutilated corpses (or worse things done to them), left behind as warning to rival gangs.



Draghaal schemed for some of his pawns to connect with Master Jarrel. The ringleader orchestrates many such associations across the city. His present goal is to target specifically fine young nobles who are to be sent away to perfect their education; preferably those planning to attend a university in Vertiloch or, better yet, in Sundsvall. Draghaal seeks to spread his rot to the heart of the empire and provoke its decadence. Since smuggling anything into Vertiloch is so hard, considering the magical defenses in place there—especially in regards visiting commoners, let alone anyone of Yanifey ancestry—Draghaal seeks “surrogate” carriers of impeccable pedigree able to circumvent Vertilian vigilance. Sooner or later, these fine young nobles will share their habits with their comrades and become their suppliers.

The ringleader earned his “Black Hand” moniker after accidentally coming in contact with a toxic plant. The poison turned his flesh black, halfway up his left forearm. Since the day of this incident, he earned the ability to sense Outer Being emanations, such as an Ogam shaman casting a spell, the flaring of toxic plants in his area, or the presence of some Orzafeth artifact. This ability, however, also shook the man's own sanity. Draghaal has become a psychopath: cunning, remorseless, and sadistic. He will sacrifice anything and anyone in order to satisfy of his pathological hatred. His followers fear him enough never to betray him. The ringleader is aware of the link between substance abuse and the Outer Beings. In fact, he knows a great deal about Orzafeth lore. It is clear in his twisted mind that his actions might lead to the destruction of his ancestral land and people. But he doesn't care. He merely relishes the pain and destruction of his foes, regardless of his own fate in the end.

**Appearance:** Even though he is of medium height, the intensity in Draghaal's dark brown eyes and the palpable energy radiating around him makes him seem larger than life. The power in his eyes provides him with his 18 score in Charisma (a successful Wisdom check with a -2 penalty will reveal Draghaal's actual score). When he walks abroad on the street, his presence commands low lives to duck into an alley or cross to the other side. His dark tightly curled hair and coppery-hued skin give him a dusky look. Heavy eyebrows do little to shadow Draghaal's imperious gaze. His voice, normally low and gravelly-dark, expands to an impressive wall-shaking bellow if ever needed. A well-fitted sable colored glove hides the damage to his left hand. Draghaal favors wearing neutral browns in a wide-sleeved shirt, belted pants, and boots.

Along with his glove, he prefers a dark brown laced leather vest stamped with swirling patterns. Draghaal appreciates what he's become and the power it gives him however long it lasts.

F23, AC-3, hp86, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 sword, Dmg 1d8+3/+6, Save F23, ML11, AL C; St17, In16, Wi10, Dx14, Co 15, Ch7(18). **Magical Items:** *cloak of invisibility*, *talisman of poison resistance* (3 charges), *spectral armor*, *Orzafethian sword*, and hidden vials containing forbidden substance of various types; Draghaal relies on a blowgun and small darts to deliver the contents of his pouches. Effects include *paralysis*, *confusion* (as the spell), *fear*, *charm*, or a debilitating disease. Each pouch contains doses for three darts.

**Spectral Armor:** this magical item consists in fact of a pair of silver bracers that generate an invisible, immaterial armor. The latter is equivalent to a suit of armor +2 and enables magical flight twice a day. The armor is impervious spectres and other immaterial beings.

**Orzafethian Sword:** this ancient sword was retrieved from a forgotten tomb dating back to Frisland's darkest ages. Wounds that it inflicts can never be *healed*, save through the use of forbidden substances. If magically *analyzed*, it will only come off as a +1 sword. In reality, it is a +1/+4 blade vs. pure-blood Alphasians, +1/+2 vs. those of mixed Alphasian ancestry, including ethnic Cypric. The sword's bonuses, however, do not apply to Ogam followers of the Outer Beings. When this sword is used to inflict death, its wielder must make a saving throw vs. spell or receive a psychic connection to the Outer Beings and a random insanity trait. Draghaal is immune to this effect because of his own madness and intense hatred.

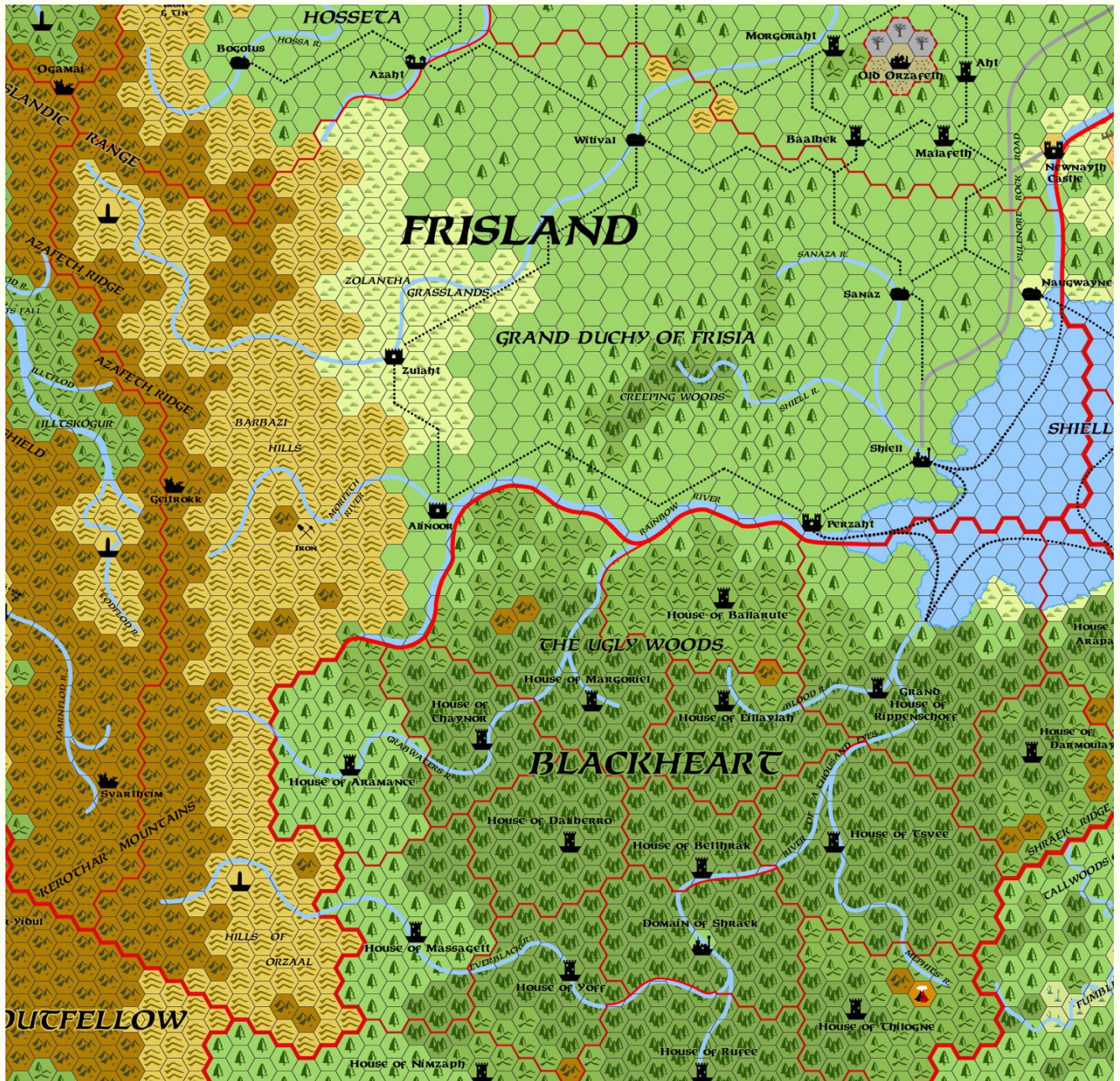
*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his participation to this article and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*



# Frisland: The Grand Duchy of Frisia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*Political center of Greater Frisland and an island of population largely cut off from the rest of the kingdom, the grand duchy embodies Frislandic paradigms. Edjer the Twisted, King and Grand Duke by Imperial Right, rules the troublesome realm in a game that carefully balances the mission imposed upon him by Sundsvall and his own perfidious schemes to enrich himself while maintaining control over his vassals.*



Grand Duchy of Frisia - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

This grand duchy includes the plains stretching westward from Lake Shiell. More than 300 miles of foothills at the edge of the Kerothar Mountains mark the opposite border. The province skirts the dark realm of Blackheart, with mutual borders more than 500 miles long lying mostly along the turbid, monster-infested Rainbow River. Two other major rivers cross the dominion: the Baalti, flowing northward into Orzafeth, and the Shiell River. Roads and waterways, as dangerous as they are, channel population growth. Frisian immigration sees Neo-Orzafethians and Wyllarethians moving from the north along the Baalti, especially in the Witival area. These include people of Yanifey, Bellissarian, and Esterhold ancestry. Ethnic Alphatians generally sail in across Lake Shiell from Foresthome. Between these two groups of people lie the *Creeping Woods*, a large forest at the center of the open plains which marks the limit of settled areas spreading from Lake Shiell's western bank. Farther west stand the strongholds of Zulaht, in the vast *Zolantha Grasslands*, and Alinoor on the Rainbow River. These two outposts are tasked with the challenging mission to patrol the foothills and watch for Ogam encroachment, especially the *Barbazi Hills*. At the extreme south lie the Hills of Orzaal, which are claimed "on paper" by the kingdom but remain largely uncontrolled.

A paved highway, the *Yulenore Rock Road*, runs from the City of Shiell to Imaroth, and is used essentially by merchants. It had been built at the time of the Old Kingdom (locals still refer to it as the Argonath Road). The stretch nearest the *Tainted Lands* was not as well maintained as the remainder and now features potholes and weeds growing through the pavement's many cracks.

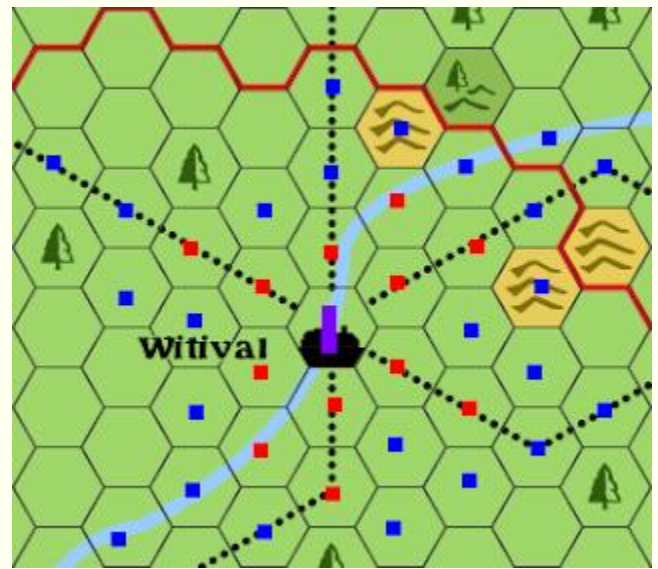


**Population Diagram - Shiell Area**

The diagram on the left shows the extent of ethnic Alphatian population in the Lake Shiell area. Purple blocks indicate "suburban" areas, which support many hamlets and closely knit farming communities around walled urban centers, with more than 100 inhabitants per square mile in addition to intramural townsfolk. Red blocks mark settled lands, mostly farms with a few hamlets, scoring a little over 50 inhabitants per square mile. Blue blocks indicate borderlands, with about 16 inhabitants per square mile. Unmarked areas outside borderlands are essentially wilderness with less than one inhabitant per square mile. The City of Shiell houses more than 23,000 townsfolk, including the grand duke's

military garrison (about 2,000 strong). The next smallest cities include Witival (9,100 people, plus 500 troops), Sanaz (6,700 people, plus 500 troops), and Naugwayne (4,500 people, plus 500 troops). The Witival area is shown below.

Castle Perzaht's 400 troops guard the mouth of the Rainbow River while the strongholds of Zulaht and Alinoor command another 200 troops each. The location of ships is outlined in the previous chapter but summarized here specifically for the grand duchy: 2 submersibles, 2 large galleys, 1 war galley, 2 skyships, 1 large sailing ship, and 1 troop transport. All of these vessels hail from the City of Shiell except for one large galley based in Naugwayne. One skyship patrols the Darkpine Barrens to the east while another remains above the ruins of Old Orzafeth. Submersibles and sailing ships usually patrol Lake Shiell waters bordering Blackheart and Foresthorne. Galleys watch the Fris and Rainbow Rivers from Dovefell Bridge to Alinoor spanning more than 400 miles end-to-end.



**Population Diagram - Witival Area**

**Creeping Woods:** [by GG] The Creeping Woods were once part of what are now the Ugly Woods of Blackheart but they somewhat lack the infamous reputation of their southern neighbor. The stands of spruce and pine, mixed with the occasional birch, are densest in the hills from which the Shiell River flows, but even on the fringes the Creeping Woods have a definite unpleasant aura about them. The temperature is always a couple of degrees cooler (even in full sunlight), the morning mists never fully dissipate, and paths seem to shift from day to day.



**Outpost Population**

Many people assume that the sinister aspect of the Woods is somehow related to the malevolent nature of the Tainted Lands but this is incorrect. The Creeping Woods have been a dumping ground for some of the less successful magical experiments created in the northern strongholds of Blackheart. Some of these creatures were magically modified plants which have since cross-bred with the indigenous greenery to create a vaguely unpleasant forest. Although most of the plants do not, in fact, pose a direct threat to passers-by, they do move about slowly and forest paths can (and do) change overnight. It is not uncommon for a poor soul to lose its way, starve to death, and end up being absorbed by the roots of the surrounding trees.

**Zolantha Grasslands:** [by GG.] This region is all that remains of the Yanifey kingdom that bore the same name, which was but a dim memory when Argonath was in its prime. Before the unleashing of unwholesome magics that rendered much of northwestern Alphatia a barren land, Zolantha was a fertile, forested kingdom that boasted six magical lakes of unsurpassed clarity—thanks to a powerful community of nymphs, with whom the royal house of Zolantha had forged ties (first political, then marital).

Prior to that union, the local Yan clans fought often with their neighbors. Unknown to them, the local nymphs were in conflict with the unsavory mountain-folk, who had foul designs on their pristine lakes. In a desperate bid the Queen of the Nymphs assumed human form and enticed the strongest Yan chieftain to fall in love with her. On their wedding night she assumed her true form and invoked their marriage vows (knowing that the Yan placed immense value on oaths) to convince him to aid her people against the Ogam. He did so—reluctantly at first—and defeated the Ogam so soundly that they did not dare approach the region for more than a generation. As a reward, the nymphs shared their magical secrets with the Yan and recognized their queen's husband as King of the Lakes. Thus the Kingdom of Zolantha (which is Yan for "Lake Country") was formed.

For decades, the Zolanthans distanced themselves from the conflicts of their neighbors and enjoyed the bounty of their lakes. Thanks to the infusion of nymph blood, the Zolanthans also became attuned to water magic. Knowing the lake folk would never let their guard down against them, the Ogam stoked the fires of jealousy elsewhere. These actions bore fruit and before long Zolantha was under frequent attack. The Ogam seized this opportunity and descended from the mountains. The king, knowing that the Ogam would grow even more powerful if they could claim the magic of the lakes for themselves, used his inherited talents to tap the tarns' life energy, absorb it into himself, and discharge it in one destructive blast. Thousands of Ogam were incinerated, and the lakes utterly vanished. The land itself began to wither and within a year nothing remained but deserted grasslands. Of the king there was no sign.

Although the story of Zolantha's fall lives on in folktales, most people believe it to be a legend. However, travelers have reported seeing ghostly meres at certain times of the year that vanish when approached. A handful claim to have met a lone man stalking among the grasses, seeking something.

**Barbarzi Hills:** [by GG] The Barbarzi Hills are a windswept land whose soils barely support grass and shrubs. The earliest records of the region, which date from the time of Argonath, report that the land was little different then, save for cryptic references to a "dark stronghold" in the mountains. This stronghold, now known as the ruins of Geitrokk (a bastardized Antalian translation of the original, and now-lost, Ogam name), was once the domain of a powerful shaman who claimed the eastern foothills of the Azafeth Ridge for himself.

Although the Argonathians did manage to drive the Ogam out of the stronghold, they lacked the resources to eliminate them entirely. Thus, the tribes retreated into the mountains as Argonath fell and bided their time while Frisland, Orzafeth, and the other northern realms arose. Most of the Ogam in this region migrated to Orzafeth; after that kingdom's destruction, very few returned. The region retained its unsavory reputation which was not helped by the discovery of the monolith (now known as the **Needle of Glass**) and the horrific effect it had on a band of Alphatian soldiers attempting to topple it.

Garrisons of Zulaht and Alinoor make regular forays into the hills, responding to reported monster sightings. Most of these are false alarms (unlike the incidents reported in the Hills of Orzaal, further south) but Frislandic history has shown that one cannot take chances.

**Hills of Orzaal:** [by GG] They are probably the most fertile region at the eastern foothills of the Kerothar Mountains. Grasses here are relatively lush (but still meager compared to similar lands further south) and wildflowers lend rare color to the region in spring. These hills would be pleasant were it not for the presence of the Ogam who prowl the mountains and regularly descend to the hills with their goats.

Frisland has not been able to spare resources for a permanent garrison in the region and must make do with sending troops from Alinoor on months-long excursions. Given the unsettling aspects of the monolith called the Misty Spire, this entire region is under surveillance. Despite regular troop presence, the Ogam occasionally stage attacks, but to the Alphasians' dismay their foes are somehow able to tap the power of the Misty Spire to cover their retreat even when they are miles away.

**The Frisian Conundrum:** Aside from general lawlessness and highway banditry in the wilderness, the grand duchy's plight relates to the fall of old Orzafeth. The Ogam, so far, have not recently manifested themselves in these parts, although some say this may be the calm preceding a storm. The Kerothar foothills are so remote that unveiling tribal activity there remains an enormous challenge. Ogam activities have been more prevalent on the other side of the Kerothar Mountains. The matter of the Tainted Lands and old Orzafeth artifacts is unwisely believed to be the neighboring county's problem, although forbidden objects are occasionally smuggled through Frisia and into Blackheart.



The grand duchy's current preoccupation is the traffic and use of toxic substances extracted from plants connected with Orzafeth's ancient curse. The full extent of the problem is not well understood by the public. Imperial edicts restricting the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to Orzafeth interferes with the fight against smugglers. Usage of these drugs and problems associated with abuse aren't new either. They've become a part of Frislandic society ever since the fall of old Orzafeth.

In exchange for becoming the ruling dynasty, King Edjer's forebears were entrusted with an *Imperial Mission*. Aside from ruling Greater Frisland, the responsibility of the new royal house was to eradicate all evidence of old Orzafeth, be it flora, fauna, artifacts, forbidden faiths, or the study of all things Orzafethian. Over time, this mission lost much of its meaning. During King Edjer's reign, key objectives were casually delegated to the Marquisate of Azafeth and the County of Orzafeth. The grand duchy now concerns itself more with the destruction of toxic plants and the search for smugglers. It is fortunate that this alien vegetation cannot grow in settled areas for reasons that remain unclear. Ideally, if the entire region could be properly settled, one might assume the problem solved. But Frisian wilderness is dangerous and offers poor crop yields, thus the lack of natural desire to push forth.

The fight against banditry in Frisland suffered from the monarchy's lackluster determination and the mission's original intent was largely forgotten. The king's household troops are primarily in charge of law enforcement within the grand duchy. Their challenge lies in their own corruption and relative lack of competence about toxic plants and the hunt for smugglers. Furthermore,

smugglers operate well-armed bands of thugs. If they dodge fights in the open against veteran troops, they will seek revenge against military leaders and their families once they return home. Nobody is safe. Therefore, Frisian troops show poor motivation and low morale. All in all, the impact of household forces on smuggling remains mediocre at best.



## The Librarians' Gambit

Imperial ambassadors have long been aware of the troublesome situation affecting Greater Frisland as a whole. A few who didn't mind dealing with red tape and unwanted attention discreetly communicated their concerns to Empress Eriadna. Two decades ago, the empress founded a secret cadre of seekers known by its members as *The Library*. Breaking imperial law and in total defiance of the Council of Wizards, she quietly gathered what forbidden Orzafeth lore she could and entrusted it to the leaders of her shadowy organization. To enable "plausible deniability," imperial seekers ply their craft outside the law, beyond the confines of Sundsvall's sprawling bureaucracy, and do not report to Eriadna for fear of implicating the empress. All members of the cadre are subject to permanent enchantments and psychological indoctrination to ensure complete loyalty.

### **Six Rules define their mission:**

1. Seek knowledge of Ogam/Orzafeth lore
  2. Report all acquired lore to their leaders
  3. Eradicate all Ogam/Orzafeth evidence\*
  4. Identify smuggling networks
  5. Terminate ringleaders, high-placed accomplices, and clients
  6. Identify and eliminate high-placed addicts
- (\* ) *Provided the measure isn't obviously suicidal*

**The Library:** Imperial seekers own a secret lair in the Kerothar Mountains, on the border between Stoutfellow and Greater Frisland, at the edge of the Marquisate of Azafeth and the Grand Duchy of Frisia. It is concealed from sight and can only be reached by air or with transportation magic such as *teleport* spells. The location was chosen because it is concealed amid utter wilderness yet near their primary area of concern. The lair acts as a warriors' barracks, an assassins' den, a training facility, a retirement home and healing center, a repository of forbidden lore, and an insane asylum.

**Logistics:** Despite the lair's remoteness, imperial seekers have expanded their presence throughout the empire, including Vertiloch and Sundsvall. Problems related to old Orzafeth have in fact been identified in many places. The organization owns several small skyships fitted with *invisibility* devices to deliver supplies to the lair and drop off seekers where needed. Enchanted scrolls enable seekers to report to their leaders, wherever they may be. A ride back home requires a specific coded phrase inscribed on these scrolls. Communication relies on specific memorized phrases. For example, "All Hail Empress Eriadna the Wise," means the seeker is in distress and requires immediate reinforcement, usually when an outbreak has been discovered.

**Funding:** Conveniently, the lair happens to sit on top of a diamond mine which generates the funds needed for the organization to function. Elder members who are no longer fit for the dangerous life of seeker are responsible for selling the gems in various regions of the empire, as far as Bellissaria. The lair's diamond shaft runs deep but so far, no contact has been made with shadow dwarves living far below.

**Recruitment:** The Library recruits new seekers from two sources. One consists of ethnic Alphatians of notable skills who got on the wrong side of imperial law. These are people on the run, awaiting execution, or banished. If they agree to serve, new identities and appearances are granted, followed by enchantments and ideological indoctrination to seal their loyalty. If they refuse, death comes swiftly. The second source targets children of high-placed aristocrats who were eliminated as a result of addiction to forbidden substances, specifically progeny who'd inherited the Taint of Orzafeth before birth. Since conventional wizardry often fails to affect Outer Being emanations, the idea prevailed that the best weapon against them is Orzafeth magic itself. It is a perilous craft and those best suited to dabble in it bear the Taint of Orzafeth. These *Tainted Ones* undergo extensive training and indoctrination throughout their youth, much like real-world Mamluks of medieval Egypt. Furthermore, the mystical senses of Ogam shamans only reveal these seekers as tribal kinsmen. As can be surmised, their mission is to infiltrate Ogam ranks, spy on their tribes, and slay their shamans. Thanks to them, the link between Ogam and shadow dwarves has come to light.

**Indoctrination:** Magical safeguards prevent seekers from deliberately failing to follow the Six Rules of their mission when presented with a reasonable opportunity or knowingly choosing a course of action that would lead to breaking one of the rules. Except for self-defense, arcane conditioning forbids them from knowingly harming an innocent party (as defined by the Six Rules) or deliberately choosing a course of action that would result in harm coming to an innocent party. For the sake of general playability, evil monsters never qualify as an "innocent party."

To be specific, a seeker cannot perform a physical action that would break the rules. *Failing* to follow an appropriate course of action results in 1d8 points of damage per Turn until the seeker addresses the issue. If the problem can no longer be reversed (an innocent died as the result of the seeker's deliberate decision), damage is inflicted until the seeker passes away.

Psychological indoctrination governs much of the behavior of seekers, resulting in fanatical loyalty. This process confers immunity to all types of fear, mental control, and ESP. Seekers cannot reveal any information pertaining to their sect under duress—using magic to force them to speak causes seizures and death. Because of the nature of their work, seekers cannot be of a Lawful alignment using BECMI mechanics (with AD&D Game rules, imperial seekers are either Lawful Neutral or Lawful Evil).

**Training:** All seekers are proficient in Orzafeth Lore. This skill confers a basic 25% chance of correctly identifying artifacts, fauna, flora, toxic substances, and general Orzafeth emanations. For example, examining wounds on a corpse or observing footprints may enable a seeker to identify their origins. This score increases +1% per experience level, and +3% per point of Intelligence bonus *or* Wisdom bonus (an 18 Intelligence score would confer a +9% bonus). A

seeker can always decipher old Orzafeth writing, or for that matter, converse in this forbidden language. Untainted wizards of the Library may use Orzafeth magic as spellcasters 1/3 their experience levels (rounded down). See below for details.

**Orzafeth Magic:** For simplicity, it is the same as common magic, except it affects Ogam/Orzafeth targets as intended. Bizarre new spells should also be par for the course. This type of magic causes psychological damage to its users, requiring a Wisdom check with a -1 penalty to Wisdom per spell level; Tainted Ones start with a +2 bonus to Wisdom (a 20 always fails). Failing this check confers a random psychological disorder to the seeker and may provoke the appearance of one or more Outer Being creatures. The odds of the latter happening are 5% per point of failure—for example: if the ability check fails by 2 points, the odds of an Outer Being manifestation are 10%. The creatures' combined HD are roughly equal to that of the seeker's party.

**Tainted Ones:** Regardless of their actual character classes, they have access to Orzafeth magic as wizards half their experience levels (rounded up). As a result of their condition, Tainted Ones CANNOT become clerics of Mystaran Immortals, or druids. They can, however, sense within a 30' radius the presence of others of their ilk, ethnic Ogam tribesmen, and any creature or object connected with Orzafeth. These special seekers always bear the stigma of their condition in the form of a random affliction or deformity. Rather than being purely cosmetic, this stigma must be significant enough to affect game play and cannot be *healed* (and neither can any psychological disorder contracted as the result of a failed Wisdom check). As a source of inspiration, [click here](#) for a list of random afflictions. Tainted Ones also receive a -2 penalty to Charisma as a result of the strange, disturbing feeling they exude among untainted folk.

Tainted Ones are aberrations and wholly against imperial law. If publicly identified as such, they would be hunted down and killed without due process. Tainted Ones always operate alone, whereas untainted seekers often work in teams of two or three.

**Death Among Seekers:** There are such things as common and arcane deaths. Common death is subject to *raise dead* spells and necromantic magic. Arcane death is not. The latter usually results from a *mortal sequester* spell or similar magic, which permanently severs the link between a soul and its former mortal vessel. It prevents a soul from ever rejoining its original body and blocks necromantic magic. This negates spells affecting the dead and the undead specifically, including *speak with dead*, but not *healing* magic for example. All seekers are subject to *mortal sequester* as part of their magical conditioning. Therefore, a killed imperial seeker can never be brought back to life. This may seem harsh but it is in fact a good thing. In the business of fighting emanations of the Outer Beings, a guarantee that one's soul cannot be harvested by the *Odious Ones* offers peace of mind. Seekers also wield at least one magical weapon bound to them. These types of weapons bear a permanent *mortal sequester* enchantment which only the owning seeker can activate. Anyone killed with this weapon while its magic is activated suffers arcane death. This too is seen as a deliverance from the tyranny of





the Old Ones as it prevents tainted souls from being harvested. Likewise, those slain in this manner could never return as undead or as any other creature.

### **Mortal Sequester**

Level: 7 wizardry, 6 clerical

Range: touch

Duration: permanent

Effect: blocks necromantic magic

This spell prevents all forms of *raise dead* spells and any magic involving the dead, such as *speak with the dead*, from affecting the recipient. When touched, an unwilling victim may save vs. spells to negate its effects. If the spell is successful, death (whenever it happens) will be complete and permanent. The effect cannot be *dispelled*, short of a post-mortem Immortal's *wish*. There can be no more than 1 Turn between the moment the spell is cast and moment when the caster touches a victim. A weapon may receive a permanent *mortal sequester* enchantment. It only affects a victim slain with this weapon; however, the victim does not receive a saving throw. *Mortal sequester* is generally associated with slayers guilds whose members wish to permanently eliminate a high-level personality (one whose allies would have access to *raise dead* magic). Imperial law in Alphatia considers the spell illegal when used against an unwilling target but, ironically, will resort to this form of magic against those condemned to death.

**Seeker Specialists:** This character class concerns those who've abandoned their original profession to specialize in seeker craft, or more likely Tainted Ones trained from childhood. As a D&D Game class, specialists use a fighter's combat abilities, saving throws, and experience table with d6 base hit points (d8 if using AD&D Game rules). The prime requisite is Dexterity. Equipment and skill limitations are generally those of a thief, except for equipment listed in the next two sections. Specialists perform all thieving abilities as a thief half their experience levels (rounded up), as well as detect hidden and secret passages as an elf. For every six experience levels, specialists also receive a +1 to hit creatures related to the Outer Beings (starting at level one, thus at levels 1, 7, 13, 19, etc. up, to a +5 maximum bonus), which enables them to attack Orzafethian creatures requiring magical weapons. This bonus comes in addition to Strength, Dexterity, and weapon enchantments. Specialists have a tracking ability akin to a hunter (or an AD&D Game ranger). When rolling an unmodified hit score of 20 on a backstab attempt, the blow has a chance of slaying the victim outright. The % score to kill is equal to 36 plus the specialist's experience level minus the victim's level or HD (a 01 score always succeeds).

**Seeker Equipment:** Seeker specialists own handy devices to fight monsters and get past obstacles. These spring-loaded gadgets propel an array of projectiles, such as a net, a vial of repellent gas, bolas, a miniature harpoon or a hook fitted to a tether, single-use darts enchanted with level 1-3 spells, etc.

One of the most notorious weapons in their arsenal is the repeating action "*dartalest*". It consists of a wooden stock with a series of parallel brass tubes spinning around a barrel and a metal container with 24 darts. A magical gem imbedded in the barrel enables the tubes to spin when the shooter presses on the weapons' trigger, which rearms the spring-loaded mechanism catapulting each dart. Up to six darts per combat round can be released in quick succession.

Because of the number of darts being shot, the initial hit roll receives a +3 bonus. Although only one single hit roll is ever rolled, the odds of actually hitting a target go down by -1 for each subsequent dart. In other words, the first dart has a good chance of hitting, but odds are much less that all six will. An unmodified hit score of "20" will cause all released darts to hit the intended target.

It is possible to release the entire clip's contents in one attack, but the *dartalest* may jam after six consecutive shots (+4% cumulative per additional dart) and combat penalties will eventually drop to a maximum -6 to hit (reached with the tenth consecutive dart). Such an action must be declared before releasing a volley of darts and rolling the die. Reloading the *dartalest* and removing a jammed dart take 1 Turn each. (*Okay, the author is having some fun here!*)

The weapon, which weighs as much as a heavy crossbow, is only provided to a seeker when conditions demand, possibly with *blessed* silver darts harmful to most Outer Being minions. Darts inflict 1d3 points of damage each (range: 40'/80'/120'). The silver model inflicts double damage, *non-regenerable*, against Outer Being minions. Headmen may carry enchanted *dartalests* with additional secondary powers. All normal missile weapon bonuses and penalties apply.

**Clue #1:** *do NOT shoot this thing at a melee involving adventuring buddies unless you're feeling lucky.*

**Clue #2:** *for sheer amusement, shoot at a target standing before a door and count the number of darts stuck in the wood, outlining the target's silhouette.*

**Traitors:** The problem with Tainted Ones is that they bear the stigma of the Outer Beings and as such they may become corrupt. The unthinkable may happen after being captured alive by a powerful Ogam shaman. Tribal magic may weaken their foes' psychological indoctrination but not their magical conditioning. Though untainted seekers succumb to this infernal ordeal, Tainted Ones instead become psychopaths still subject to the Six Rules, but little more. The Six Rules were never meant to protect Tainted Ones—in fact, they define them more as potential targets (being living, tangible evidence of Orzafeth). Mental indoctrination is what prevents seekers from killing Tainted Ones recruited by their sect. Without it, corrupt seekers can harm Tainted Ones without breaking the Six Rules. In their own amoral and callous logic, Ogam shamans don't mind these psychopaths still possibly coming after them. They consider this a small price to pay compared to the benefit of a psychotic seeker returning to the sect's lair and quietly killing Tainted Ones there, especially young apprentices. The Ogam scheme involves rendering a psychopath unconscious, inflicting a nasty *unhealable* wound, and dumping their victim far away. This is nearly guaranteed to result in the psychopath's return to the sect's lair. They rarely survive after being unmasked.

**Retirement:** Elder seekers usually work in various ancillary, administrative, or leadership functions. In the course of their service, those who suffer mental afflictions are committed to the lair's asylum (including captured psychopaths), so they may no longer present a danger to others. If they wish, untainted elderly may be granted a generous sum in gold and released from service. Tainted Ones are, however, never released.

**Administration and Integrity:** The Library was built to resist infiltration. It is militaristic in nature with a solid hierarchy. Field units have specific territorial jurisdictions. These units do not know or communicate with each other. Within a single jurisdiction, teams of two to three seekers form independent cells of about ten to twelve, reporting to local headmen. Tainted Ones operate almost exclusively in Ogam territory and without backup.

Headmen report through magical scrolls to a Master of Scrolls cognizant of all headmen in his/her jurisdiction, based at the Library. In turn, Masters of Scrolls report to one of seven Head Librarians. The latter form a council overseeing the Library's general strategy. One Head Librarian is responsible for Greater Frisland, another runs missions in Vertiloch alone, and four more split the rest of the empire (the mainland's northeast, southeast, west, and overseas territories). Finally, a seventh Librarian controls internal security. Under his authority stands the Curator, who oversees the Repository of Forbidden Lore.

The seventh Librarian's responsibility is to look for compromised elements within the lair and in the field. Among each cell, a seeker actually works for the seventh Librarian, unbeknownst to headman or master concerned. This seeker's mission is to quietly evaluate the loyalty and mental reliability of members. If any cell seems to have been compromised, its Master of Scrolls will be ordered to have it eliminated. This process is crucial because the Grand Council suspects the existence of the Library. "Accidental" deaths among high-placed councilmen fool no one there since victims cannot be brought back to life or questioned through necromantic magic. Therefore, deaths had to be malicious. Spies working for the Grand Council or official imperial circles have been playing cat and mouse games with each other and with seeker cells. Empress Eriadna feigns passing interest in these matters and does not get involved.

The Library also benefits from high-placed informants, former seekers who went undercover at least a decade earlier to reinsert themselves in society. Their appearance may be altered to prevent identification. Usually, these can be found among the ranks of the Grand Council, secretaries of states, military commanders, ambassadors (especially in Greater Frisland), as well as rival spy rings. These individuals report directly to specific Librarians, usually through magical scrolls.

## Illustrious Frisians

### Edjer The Twisted, King of Greater Frisland

A better epithet to describe this monarch is “The Teflon King.” He is about as devious and corrupt as it gets but always finds a way to blame someone else. He is a master at weaving side plots to mask his own schemes. Edjer, ultimately, is a vain and greedy fellow. If he could, he would legalize the use of illicit substances and collect hefty taxes from sellers. Since this is clearly not possible under imperial law, he sends his household forces on wild goose chases, occasionally blaming officers for failing their missions. He quietly extorts funds from those he suspects are benefiting from the forbidden trade. Highly publicized raids actually do target smugglers, but amazingly just after a large sum of gold was collected—*imagine that!* He has no real interest in curbing crime and seeks to profit fully from it, while entrapping others to look good.

King Edjer has a general understanding of toxic plants, their effects on people, and how smugglers operate in his dominion. He does not use illicit substances or any Orzafeth-related assets and does not condone their use at the ducal palace in Shiell. He will take every opportunity to personally prosecute anyone caught doing so in order to promote himself as the champion of imperial law while seizing the financial assets of those brought to justice. On the other hand, this monarch assumes that the Orzafeth curse is a thing of the past, largely blown out of proportion by imperial propaganda and popular lore. This has led him to delegate the responsibility of watching the ruins of old Orzafeth to the neighboring county up north. He hardly pays attention to this issue, and if something goes wrong, someone there will certainly be blamed. Likewise, he believes the Ogam are no more than vilified goat-herding savages squatting his mountains. To remain on the safe side with Sundsvall’s ambassador (whom he sincerely distrusts), he regularly takes credit for the Marquisate of Azafeth’s efforts to “pacify” the tribes. There once was an incident with Ogam transients captured off the western outskirts of the Zolantha Grasslands. The goats were appropriated and their owners brought to Shiell with great fanfare. King Edjer had them crucified along the old Argonath Road just for show—a cheap but effective tool of royal propaganda.



Indubitably, the *Imperial Mission* lies in good hands.

**Appearance:** Edjer, who appears to be around 45 years of age but is actually much older, is an energetic man. He is extraordinarily thin, bald, and stands about 5’ 9”. His nickname “the Twisted” comes not from physical deformity, but from his love of infighting and intrigue: if an interesting situation is not available, he will start one. A broad forehead tapers to a narrow-upturned chin, which makes the end of his trimmed beard stick straight out like an odd sensing device. White skin does little to hide the bumps of his skeleton: cheekbones flare prominently above a heavy mandible, with shadowed convex areas between. A white mustache reaches his

beard along the corners of his thin wide mouth. Black eyes constantly rove to all sides, making Edjer a difficult man to talk with. A few strokes of pallid ink define the white of his eyebrows while blue-gray shadows sag beneath his odd gaze. His bony hands show the red pattern of blood vessels beneath. Edjer constantly wears a red-gold coronet carefully fitted to his peculiar head, which is longer along the sides and narrower in back than in front. It is a four-inch circle of solid metal, decorated with swirls of intricate granulation, and surmounted by three small shields at the temples and middle front showing Edjer's House arms in exquisite detail. Each is topped by a faceted pigeon's blood ruby. He wears a scarlet tunic made of fabric that seems in constant swirl except around his armorial badge; darker red trousers and boots complete his normal dress.

M21, AC9, hp54, MV 120' (40'), AT spell, Dmg by spell, Save M21, ML6, AL N; St11, In18, Wi14, Dx9, Co 16, Ch11. **Magical Items:** *staff of wizardry, medallion of ESP 30' range, ring of human control, and tunic of the scarlet vortex.*

**Tunic of the Scarlet Vortex:** Weapons coming in contact with this garment go right through the owner without harm. Metal-tipped projectiles that should hit the owner are reflected in random directions and pursue the remainder of their courses from there. Hand-held metallic weapons are yanked from the hands of attackers and *dimension door* in a random direction, up to 360' away. Attackers may attempt to hold on to their weapons. With successful saving throws vs. spells, attackers *dimension door* as well with their weapons. Potentially, the robe could transport a charging paladin, his lance, and his warhorse. Use mechanics below to determine the direction.

**Direction: 1d8:**

1. south
2. southwest
3. west
4. northwest
5. north
6. northeast
7. east
8. southeast

Distance: 300' plus 6d10

Altitude: 360' minus distance

## **Her Excellency Zarrathamma, Imperial Ambadress**

This young but determined envoy was sent by Eriadna the Wise to hone her diplomatic skills at the court of King Edjer. Rumor has it that her forebears and older siblings had been slain by unidentified killers for reasons unknown when she was very young. She had disappeared for nearly 18 years until she was discovered in a Jennite slave market, in faraway Esterhold, by a friend of the family who recognized her facial traits. Magical means available in Sundsvall easily corroborated her identity. Within a few short years, she was able to make great strides in her education and magical training. Likewise her Alphantian mien shone through, a tribute to her

ancestral bloodline. By imperial edict, her ancestral assets in Vertiloch were restored along with all honors and privileges due her House.

In truth, Lady Zarrathamma is an informer for the Library, and a Tainted One. She'd been trained as a seeker specialist since childhood and sold to Jennite slavers. Soon afterward, seekers contrived to have a friend of the family visit the slave market, leading to her discovery and return to Vertiloch. She bears the stigma of Orzafeth: a row of eyestalks along each side of her spine, and a strange ability causing plants to wilt and living flesh to develop sores when she touches them for more than a round. As a result, she always wears long silk gloves masking her hands and forearms, as well as ample, all-covering robes. She shuns intimacy with those who come close to her. Her long, thick hair hides eyestalks accidentally peering past her garment's collar.



Though she originally reported to the Head Librarian in charge of overseas territories, the one who'd run the Jennite mission, she now reports to the Head Librarian for Greater Frisland. The latter instructed her not to travel that kingdom or leave the palace in Shiell, as other seeker cells operating in the area aren't aware of her true identity. For them, she would be evidence of Orzafeth emanation and subject to elimination if ever detected. Fortunately, the vast majority of tainted seekers prowl the northern Kerothar Mountains but a risk always remains. Her mission is to identify any evidence of Orzafeth among the king's immediate circles, as well as monitor failures to enforce the old Imperial Mission. She would report the latter directly to Empress Eriadna. So far, Her Excellency the Imperial Ambassadors has systematically thwarted King Edjer's *ring of human control* and his *medallion of ESP*.

**Appearance:** Zarrathamma stands about 5'7". Although she is not tall, this thirty-or-so cultivates a regal bearing that seemingly adds to her height. She is known to twitch occasionally, and often re-settles her loose hair with her hands to cover her neckline. Her white skin has a definite bluish undercast. This young ambassadress has intelligent wide dark brown eyes, framed by long wings of blue-black hair parted in the middle. Her gold braided coronet holds her tresses in place. She is knowledgeable, smart, and dedicated to learning and research. It takes all of her estimable diplomatic talents to divorce herself from Edjer's constant machinations. So far, she's done well. Zarrathamma wears wide cuffed sleeves, and her dresses always have a high collar extending forward to her clavicles. Her features are gently molded and attractive, which, along with her gloves, make her a popular subject of court romantic gossip.

S12, AC0, hp44, MV 120' (40'), AT sword or spell, Dmg 1d8+1 or by spell, Save F12, ML11, AL N; St13, In16, Wi15, Dx17, Co 14, Ch12(10). **Magical Items:** *two wrist-mounted stingers +2 to hit, ring bracelet of spectral armor, head circlet of invisibility detection, scroll of communication, and sword of arcane death.* **Special Abilities:** Orzafeth spellcasting as a level 6 magic user (last resort only); thieving abilities as a level 6 thief; detect secret passages as an elf; can track fugitives as a skilled hunter; uses fighter combat table, optional maneuvers, and saving throws; detects Orzafeth emanations 30' radius; +2 bonus to hit Outer Being minions; immune to fear, mental control, and ESP; subject to *mortal sequester*. If her back is exposed,

her dorsal eyes cause *confusion* as the level 4 wizard spell (when failing a saving throw vs. spells) or, at the very least, utter disgust (her Charisma drops to 5).

**Stingers:** these small weapons are strapped under the forearms and hidden inside one's sleeves (atop the ambassadress's silk gloves). Two quick wrist motions are enough to release a sting (1pt of damage, range: 10'/20'/30'). The stings are coated with a dry substance which may put a victim to sleep. A saving throw vs. poison negates the effect. If the saving throw fails by 1 or 2, the victim is slowed and suffers a -2 penalty to hit and to saving throws for 2d4 rounds. Failing by 3-4, the victim collapses for 2d4 rounds. Failing for 5 or more, the victim remains unconscious for 2d4 Turns. Unless used in plain view, a victim failing to save isn't normally aware of the attack. Each sting requires a separate saving throw. The ambassadress is well trained with stingers, being able to shoot both once per combat round, although she incurs a -2 penalty to hit with her left hand. Stingers hold up to three stings, self-reloading after each shot. The ambassadress hides a jar of the substance enough for a dozen stings (including those already in the stinger). The substance is only available from the Library's Apothecary.

**Ring Bracelet:** This elegant gold bracelet extends from the wrist to the middle finger and features small ornamental stones. It covers her left-hand glove and provides the ambassadress with a basic AC of 2, modified by Dexterity and other magical bonuses.

**Head Circlet:** This piece of jewelry consists of braided gold strands. It enables the ambassadress to detect any invisible object or creature, or those concealed in some way within a 30' radius. It also provides the ability to sense one's environment within range while in total darkness.

**Scroll of Communication:** It enables messages to be written, which subsequently appear on her commander's registry, or receive responses the same way. Messages must be chosen from a series of coded phrases taught to the ambassadress during her original training at the Library. Any other phrase written on her scroll will alert her Head Librarian that she's been compromised. As a result, another seeker might be sent to assess the situation or eliminate the compromised ambassadress.

**Sword of Arcane Death:** The ambassadress's weapon is a finely wrought and engraved silver blade fitted with a permanent *blessing*. On command it shrinks to the size of a common dagger or back to its normal sword size. It is enchanted with a *mortal sequester* and causes double damage to any Outer Being minion.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his participation in this article, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*

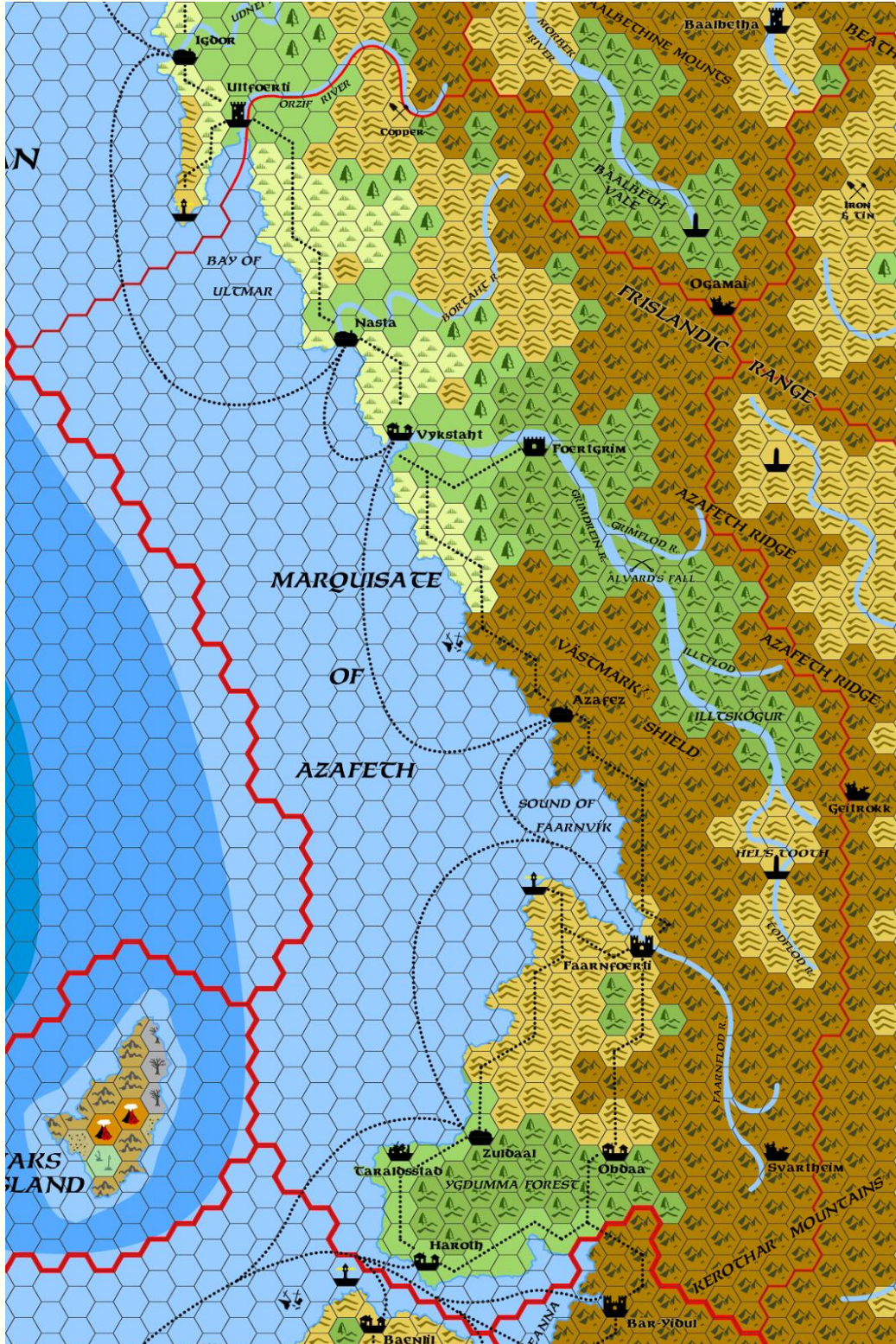




# Frisland: The Marquisate of Azafeth

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*This strip of land squeezed between the Sea of Alphatia and the Kerothar Mountains is home to descendants of ancient Antaliens, their Alphatian overseers, and the sinister Ogam. Behind the orderly façade of imperial law rages a secret fight for survival.*



Marquisate of Azafeth - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

This Frislandic dominion is one of the hardest to administrate because of its narrow, nearly-370-miles-long shape and forbidding terrain intersecting its mid-point. In fact, locals perceive three distinct regions. Northern Azafeth centers around the boomtown of Nasta. The southern region, anchored around Zuuldal, includes the Hills of Ygdumma. The midsection lies within the Västmark Shield, a rocky spur of jagged ridges and narrow valleys. Coastal residents don't think of the hills and mountains in the east as part of the marquissate, for the Ogam dwell there. Townsfolk see the short, swarthy goat herders as little more than beastmen who would enslave and sacrifice them all to their evil gods if given the chance—a belief that isn't remotely preposterous. Climate along the coast is similar to the one prevailing in real world Glasgow, U.K.—cool and rainy. Winds generally blow from the west and a mild sea current flows from the south. Temperatures drop rapidly in the mountains.



**Northern Azafeth - Population Density Diagram**

**Northern Azafethians** are scions of ancient Antalian culture, legendary seafarers, and warriors. They build great wooden dwellings, gathering halls, and temples that look like overturned longships. Dragon head motifs decorate throughout, as part of the walls surrounding towns and villages, on the roofs edges, carved on boulders, and of course at the prow of their fearsome-looking drakkars. To travelers, these symbols seem to mark the extent of old Antalian colonies from previous centuries. Settlers of yore were typically tall, blond, blue-eyed warriors—a stark difference with the neighboring Ogam. At present, the local population has intermixed with Alphantian commoners yielding a greater proportion of darker-haired Azafethians. Elves and dwarves have lived in the area since before the Antalian migrations from Northern Brun.

Nasta (or Lindsborg as its founders once called it) is best known as a fishing and ship-building center, especially for sleek, sea-going vessels designed for speed. With 8,100 inhabitants, it stands as the marquisate's main economic center. Towns and hamlets feature fortifications with controlled entry at their gates. Woods east of Vykstaht provide the main source of lumber for shipbuilding. The population clings to the coast, rivers, and roads, not extending more than 30 miles from an urban area or a fortification. Beyond lies a wilderness best known to Ogam nomads dwelling there. Although Alphatian is the official language (i.e. the *common tongue*), it is only used for official communication in courthouses, at the marquis's court, in the army, in schools, among aristocrats and foreign merchants, etc. Most of the locals speak a dialect derived from ancient Antalian, although it isn't officially taught anywhere. Sadly, many commoners feign not to understand Alphatian when it suits them—which is usually the case when dealing with outsiders. Among those whose Antalian ancestry is strongest, pure-blood Alphatians are considered a plague and yet the lesser of two evils, their eastern neighbors being

worst. Dwarves and elves are welcome. Nasta features temples honoring such immortals as Odin, Thor, Freyja, Loki, and others associated with Antalian culture.

### **Southern Azafethians**

are a different bunch. This area once stood as the original Antalian Markland with the town of Taraldsstad as its capital. When imperial authorities reformed Greater Frisland, the Markland was annexed to the new Marquisate of Azafeth. It is a border district that has seen significant influx from neighboring Limn. As a result, Southern Azafethians are further removed from their old Antalian origins. Humans of uncertain ancestry might trace their bloodlines to humanoid clans, yielding such ethnics as demi-orcs, demi-ogres, and others less obvious. Culturally, they're an odd mix of Antalian, Alphatian,

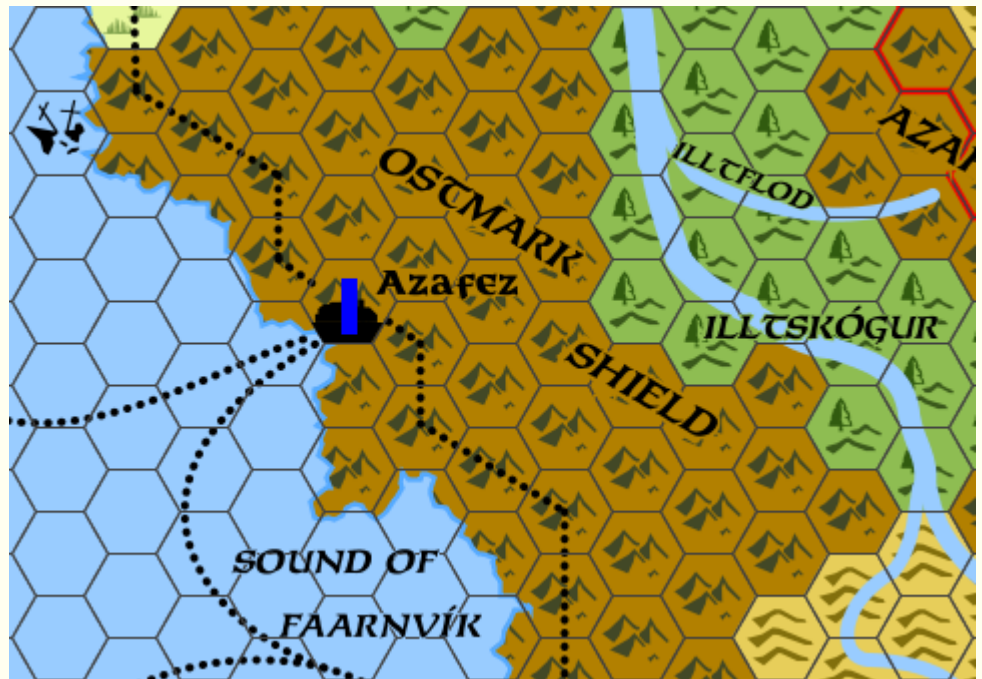


**Southern Azafeth - Population Density Diagram**

and Limnian. The local dialect is heavily accented and sounds harsher than the original vernacular, with words and expressions borrowed from common Limnian culture. Dwarves and elves are far less common here than up north. Somewhat cruder and ruder, Southern Azafethians aren't as talented in seafaring as natives of Nasta but they make up for their shortcomings with boldness and hardiness. They became notorious as mercenaries or front-rank footmen in the marquess's forces. Northerners tend to see these rough and tumble folk as ruffians and thieves, if not murderers. Southerners consider their northern neighbors pretentious kinsmen.

Nowadays, Taraldsstad is a ruin. It was destroyed long ago during a battle between Antaliens and Alphatians. Nearby Zuuldal became the region's main urban center and is home to 4,160 residents. Its main task is to filter visitors traveling from Limn and to keep the true riffraff from proceeding farther north. Naturally, in the minds of local residents, anything from Limn lies one big notch lower than themselves. Mind you, there is a difference between *skins*, *bloods*, and *bones*. A "skin" is a human with one grandparent of humanoid ancestry out of four—Limnian ancestry is therefore skin deep. "Bloods" stand somewhere between humanoid and human—the seed of their lineage therefore flowing through their veins. "Bones" are those whose humanoid pedigree is more pronounced and are generally unwelcome in Southern Azafeth—it's in their bones, meaning the strain of Limnian darkness dwells deepest within.

**Azafez District** features jagged crests, mountain torrents, vertiginous waterfalls, misty valleys, and sudden storms. It is essentially unpopulated, save for the marquess's eagle's nest, a heavily fortified town perched on a stony ridge flanked by thousand-foot-high cliffs on its north and south sides. A narrow path winds along the crest to reach the fortress, connecting the marquessate's northern and southern districts. Two massive gates



**Central Azafez - Population Density Diagram**

enable passage through the town, in addition to an elevator connecting with Azafez-upon-Sea, a village below. The latter is located in a small fjord-like cove and its port provides shelter to passing vessels. The elevator's shaft was carved through the mountain and can be reached from the port through a well-defended tunnel. The fortress and its port area number no more than 6,000 inhabitants altogether.

High-Azafez looks very much like an Alphatian stronghold, with high walls, slender towers, imposing stone buildings embellished with stained glass windows, soaring pillars, and graceful arches. A motley collection of inhuman statues and sleek black slate define the high-peaked

roofs while somber monuments adorn main intersections. Defensive walls are notable for animated bas-reliefs, which creep along the outside, looking for anything or anyone attempting to climb. Monstrous appendages with claws or talons may form from the walls' stonework and attack intruders. An invisible hemispherical force field covers the top of the town. Living beings, objects, and spells may cross through from the inside but not from the outside. The town departs from Nasta and Zuuldal in that it isn't a seaman's town. Streets are paved, buildings are made of stone, and the marquess's soldiers frequently patrol the streets, walls, and gatehouses. Since it can never rain within the protective dome, fountains fitted with permanent water-generating devices stand at various points of the town. Excess water flushes sewage down middle troughs in the streets and out through heavy grates in the northern walls. Warehouses, prisons, and other secretive facilities have been carved out of the rock beneath the buildings. Temples in High-Azafez honor exclusively Alphatian immortals. None of the quaint and cozy Antalian culture prevailing in Azafez-upon-Sea survives here. Overall, the upper town comes off as dark and sinister, not only from its stonework's gray and black tones, but also from the dour character of its architecture and townsfolk. The domain of circling and ever-watchful ravens, skies often remain overcast and brooding.

The present marquess dynasty dates back to Greater Frisland's reformation. They were put in place as the result of imperial machinations rather than royal elevation by Frislandic monarchs. Their mission is to prevent incursions from the south, but also to forbid anything suspicious from leaving their shores—such as agents of the hated Ogam. Therein lies Azafeth's challenge. Since the establishment of the marquisate, the Ogam have proven a tough and resilient foe. They always seem to be able to reach those who oppose them in unexpected ways, usually with terrifying results. Over the years of their reign, the marquesses have become paranoid which led them to build and fortify High-Azafez. To them, it is the headquarters from which they wage their unending war against the Ogam with little or no help from Shiell. This mountain stronghold is perhaps one of the best-guarded and most-secure spots in Greater Frisland.

The people of High-Azafez are a mix of northerners and southerners, dwarves who were instrumental in building the fortress, and elves who oversaw architectural details. Strong Alphatian ancestry is common here, especially at the marquess's court. Southerners are more prevalent in the armed forces, while northerners run businesses. Aristocrats deliberately, yet very carefully, sponsor rival factions among the townsfolk, not so much to foster chaos but to ensure everyone watches each other. The common fear here is someone acting on behalf of the Ogam. The resulting atmosphere is one of mistrust and oppression. Everyone knows and loathes the fact that the swarthy goat herders occupy the Illtskógur Valley between the Västmark Shield and the Azafeth Ridge, just past the eastern bank of the Grimdrein River.



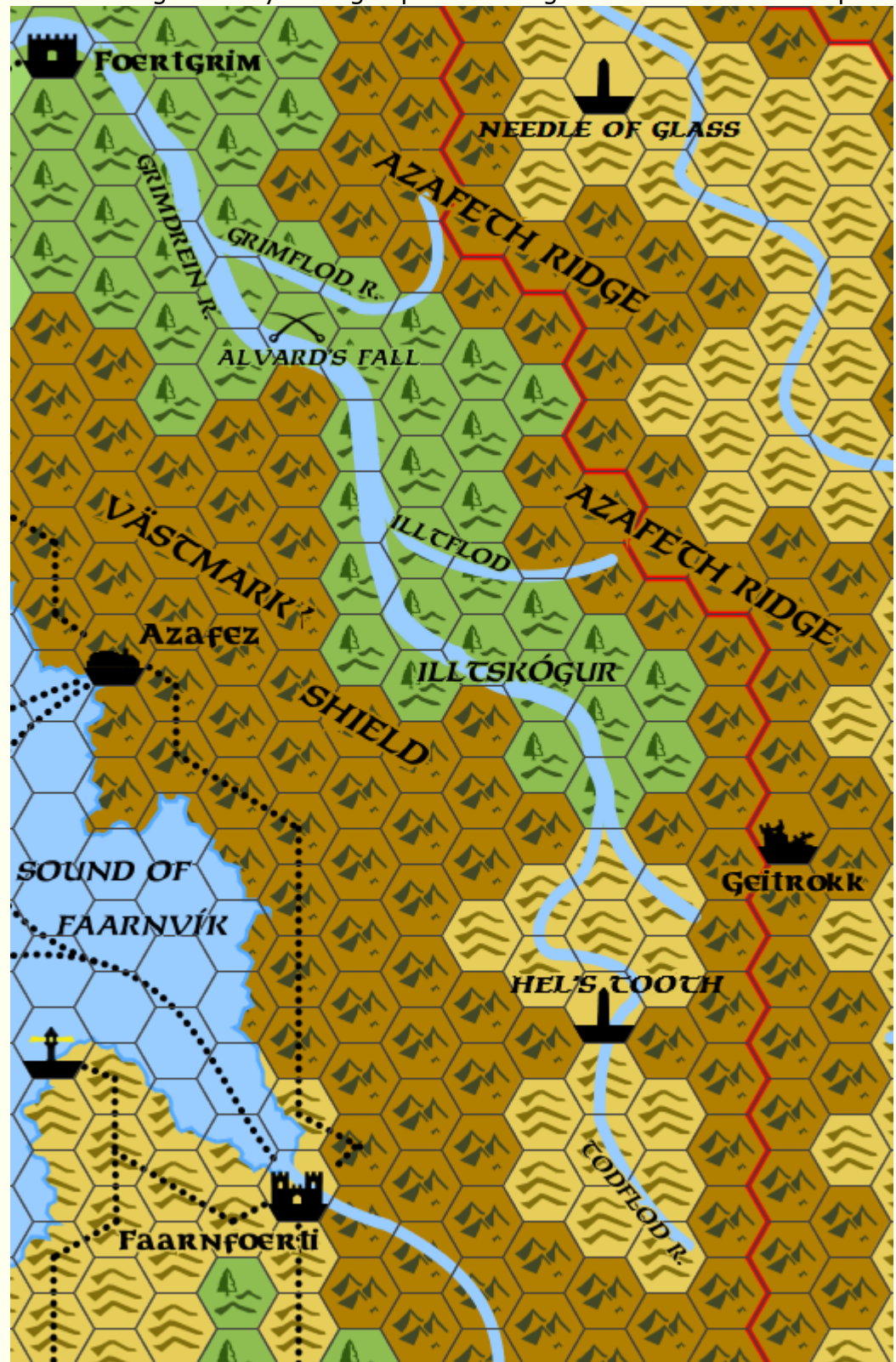
**Armed Forces of Azafeth:** Overall, this dominion relies on 1,500 professional warriors, including its navy. About 400 each are garrisoned in Nasta and the fortress of Faarnfoerti, 260 in Zuuldal, 200 each in Azafez and the stronghold of Foertgrim, for a total population of about 129,000. Naval forces include two longships, two skyships, one large galley, and three

submersibles. The latter patrol the sea near Limn. Skyships operate from Nasta and High-Azafez, essentially to watch the Illtskógur Valley. Longships can navigate rivers of Azafeth up to the edge of the hills. Faarnfoerti controls access to the road leading through the Västmark Shield and watches for anything sneaking down from the upper Illtskógur Valley. Foertgrim marks the limit of Azafethian population. Its mission is to bar access to and from the lower Illtskógur Valley and patrol the southern bank of the Grimdrein River. A flotilla of privately-owned sail ships has been contracted to supplement the marquess's fleet and watch Azafeth's coastal waters.

### **Illtskógur Valley:**

This region stretches along the Todflod and Grimdrein Rivers, down to the junction with the Grimflod tributary, some 30 miles from Foertgrim. Forces from the stronghold patrol the southern banks of the lower Illtskógur, but no farther than *Alvard's Fall* for the hills beyond remain in Ogam hands.

The tribe in the lower valley is one faithful to *Yurrg-Thai the Decaying*, dwelling near the banks of the Illtflod River. The woods there are twisted and evil. Another clan holds the upper valley, a cold and desolate land in the hands of a tribe faithful to *Akh'All the Unmentionable*, centered around a mysterious monolith.



**Illtskógur Valley - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

**Alvard's Fall:** [by GG.] *Alvard Ragnarsson*, a minor jarl of Østheim, once repelled an Ogam incursion there. Although both groups were numerically equal, the Ogam employed magic to create vile clouds, killing anything they touched. Alvard, who was a master tactician in his own right, led his force out of harm's way and massacred the Ogam—including their lead shaman. Although Alvard won the battle with minimal casualties, the shaman uttered a death curse that caused his foe to age and die within an hour. Alvard's men erected a cairn for him near the river, which still stands to this day. Although the land has recovered from the desolation wrought by the Ogam magics, Alvard's spirit can often be seen prowling about the battlefield, always keeping a watchful eye towards the southeast.

**The Obelisk of Akh'All:** [by GG.] Hel's Tooth (the Ogam call it *Yamathiss*—from the Carnifex "Yath-Mwathliss", or "Pillar of Glory"). Hel's Tooth is located in the upper Illtskógur Valley. Antalians farmers and trappers who lived downriver had long been aware of the obelisk but regarded it as little more than a curiosity. That changed when shamans of the local Ogam clans read in the stars that if they could procure many sacrifices for their masters, the Outer Beings, the way might be cleared for them to return in triumph to the Prime Plane. This spurred a bloody campaign that took the Antalians by surprise. Much of the Grimdrein River watershed was depopulated which spurred a wave of panic.

The king of the old Østheim realm at that time, *Håvard Audunson*, ordered his jarls into battle and sent messengers to Grønborg (Torpes) and Markland for additional aid. Neither realm sent more than a token force. King Håvard led his troops into battle personally and checked the Ogam advance where Foertgrim stands today. The Ogam retreated swiftly, but one of their chieftains staged a counterattack, which was ultimately blunted by a minor jarl named *Alvard Ragnarsson*.

Although defeated, the Ogam did carry out one final act of revenge to dissuade Antalians from pursuing them to their mountain strongholds. The shamans tapped enough of the energy gained from the sacrifices to poison the area around the obelisk. Within hours, all of the trees and grasses were reduced to dust, and the river itself had become poisonous, which the Østheimers discovered the hard way. The Antalians avoided the region afterwards and renamed the river and obelisk accordingly.

**Svartheim:** [by GG.] Although the Antalians peoples of the northwestern coast of Alphatia historically opposed the Ogam and their machinations—and in fact many continued their conflict against that unsavory people long after the Alphatians seized control over the region—not all of the old clans were so resolute. At various times, before and after the Alphatian conquest of the region, emissaries of the Outer Beings swayed a number of clan heads and jarls to switch their allegiance. Many such turncoats and their followers were quickly ferreted out and destroyed. However, some were crafty enough to avoid detection.

Despite these Antalians' common cause with the Ogam, centuries of bad blood made them unwelcome among the degenerate mountain folk. The Outer Beings, perhaps uncharacteristically, noticed the predicament of these Antalians and sent an emissary to guide them to a better land. The Antalians moved south to a remote valley near the source of the Faarnflod River where they built a remote citadel that they called Svartheim due to the

prevalence of black stone (basalt and obsidian) in that portion of the Kerothar Range. Years passed and a handful of other Antalians trickled south while the Outer Beings turned their attention to other things. Although the Antalians eked out a living, they did not thrive until a band of Ogam arrived to teach them how to adapt to mountain life. Despite historical animosities, some intermarriage took place between the two peoples, although most of the Svartheimers more closely resembled their Antalian forebears.

While the Ogam continued to wreak havoc further north, Svartheim priests interpreted their relative isolation as a sign from the Outer Beings that they were not meant to do battle with their foes. One day, a meteor fell from the sky and blasted a large hole in the nearby mountainside. Priests of Akh'All declared this to be a sign from their patron Himself and organized an expedition to explore the crater. They discovered deposits of marh vhol—clearly a sign of Akh'All's favour—and the impact had revealed a preexisting tunnel that extended deep inside the mountain. The tunnel led to an outlying settlement of Shadow Dwarves.

The Shadow Dwarves already had relations with the Ogam but found the Svartheimers slightly less odious. The presentation of a sizable quantity of marh vhol eased their first contact. The Shadow Dwarves had never seen this metal before. They used it to make a number of weapons for their own use. Svartheim became a trading post where the Shadow Dwarves exchanged their goods for more of the otherworldly metal. The people of Svartheim exhausted the readily available stock of marh vhol from the crater and then turned to sacrifices in order to secure more of it from their masters. Armed with Shadow Dwarven weapons, they raided settlements around the Ygdumma Forest. By this time, however, Alphatian-led Azafeth had already been established. It's present marquess managed to find the source of the raids and assaulted Svartheim with a handful of skyships. Although the citadel was destroyed, the victory was a costly one—all but two skyships were destroyed by Shadow Dwarven siege weapons. Surviving Svartheimers fled into caverns and laid low for decades. The Shadow Dwarves sealed the entrance to their tunnels but maintained a watch on the ruins, hoping their partners might one day return and make more metal. The ruins held the *Receptacle of the Black Vault* until the marquess's men took it as a prize.

**Receptacle of the Black Vault:** This is an altar designed to send soul energy to the Outer Beings while receiving the dark essence that materializes as marh vhol on the Prime Plane. It is a blocky obsidian altar measuring seven feet long by two feet wide, with a man-shaped impression in the middle, and ringed with inlaid marh vhol. When a victim is sacrificed on this altar, a worm-like pillar of black smoke coalesces and sucks the dying person's soul out through the forehead, before ascending rapidly into nothingness (and traveling to the Outer Beings' world). The body then disintegrates and its ashes glow darkly for an instant before melting and reforming into a quantity of dark metal lumps—raw marh vhol. The quantity acquired is dependent on the power (i.e., level) of the person being sacrificed. The average normal man or woman, if sacrificed, would yield about two pounds of marh vhol. Every experience level of the victim adds another pound, and every spell level would add yet another pound beyond that.





## The Ogam Peril

In the face of racial hatred, fear, paranoia, and imperial edicts calling for their eradication, the tribes survive and continue to threaten all that surrounds them. Part of their resilience lies in their ability to dodge their enemies. These nomads live in hills and mountains, mostly forested, which makes it easy to avert detection, ambush the unwary, and then escape to safety. These goat herders are masters in the art of guerilla and camouflage. Many of their seasonal hideouts rely on caves, preventing patrolling skyships from spotting them. One might wonder how they so easily defy the magical might of Alphatia: at the heart of their success lies their faith in alien creatures—the Outer Beings—and the leadership of powerful shamans. Several circles of apprentices assist the ruling shamans in fostering a deeply rooted, fanatical faith among the tribes.

At the core of their beliefs dwells the notion that the Ogam are one with the Outer Beings, their mortal flesh and blood on Mystara. Should the faithful be stricken down or their lives forfeited by their cosmic patrons, their souls would return to the spiritual wombs of their masters to be cleansed of outside influences and reborn stronger yet. This belief isn't as far-fetched as one might assume and, in the minds of the Ogam, justifies what otherwise remain inhuman, thoroughly evil, and terrifying cults. Each tribe honors a specific Outer Being and is utterly devoted to doing its bidding, however obscure and repugnant. No Ogam ever questions the mysterious ways of Outer Beings or their shamans. Among the tribes, one merely obeys and accepts whatever fate follows.

**Rebirth:** In truth, only the most relevant Ogam individuals are ever reborn, or about 1% of the souls Outer Beings harvest as food. This fact isn't common knowledge among the masses of faithful. The vast majority of them tend to live short lives, less than fifty years. Life expectancy of human commoners in the empire comes close to sixty, while wizards and aristocrats survive much longer due to the availability of magic—well over a hundred. Ogam faithful are made to believe that their souls return in the bodies of newborn. Those who do return to Mystara after their deaths are usually shamans, their servants, or individuals who demonstrated a fierce belief in the Outer Beings. Over the years, as the reincarnated grow from infancy, memory of their previous existences returns along with special powers and physical mutations akin to those of Tainted Ones. Unlike the latter, however, they are devoid of mental afflictions—all things being relative since willingly worshipping Outer Beings can be seen as a form of madness in itself. Spells to revive the dead do not work among followers of the Outer Beings—these are jealous, vengeful entities who neither willingly release enslaved souls (aside from rebirth), nor could they at all after having consumed them as fuel. In other words, mortality remains arcane for most of the Ogam.

**Shamans:** Aside from spells common to shamans, the latter benefit from special powers related to the specific Outer Being they worship. The extent of these powers grows with the number of reincarnations (*a treatment of Outer Beings in a later chapter will give some idea of the shaman's powers—BH*). Shamans also perform tribal rituals which require the active

participation of the entire tribe, give or take a few individuals. These incantations usually require hours to effect, during which participants remain in a trance. One of these rituals led to the legendary annihilation of Orzafeth. The most powerful rites are used only as a last resort, precisely because of the risk of the entire tribe being harvested in the process. Lesser rituals typically affect a large area, perhaps with a radius extending dozens of miles. They can alter the nature of the land, bring about the doom of approaching enemies, or summon servants of the Outer Beings—horrid beasts as alien and bloodthirsty as those who made them. Rituals are sometimes used to defeat the mental conditioning of tainted seekers and cause them to betray their companions. Sacrifices are another key part of Ogam faith. They are important because each HD-worth consumed in the offering slightly extends life expectancy among the tribe. The souls of those sacrificed become food for the Outer Beings. Such hallowed immolation also provides shamans who perform them with additional short-term powers—the greater the offering, the greater the godly favor, usually in the form of one-time spells. Sacrifices can be selected from the ranks of the Ogam themselves; however, outsiders are evidently more preferable and yield far better results. One last detail about shamans: there is no such thing as atonement among them—betraying Outer Being patrons or failing them in some significant manner promptly results in a horrible, agonizing death without hope of rebirth.

**Harvesters:** These most feared servants of the shamans are bodyguards as well as executors of their masters' dirty work, and above all they harvest those designated as sacrifices. Like their shaman overseers, they undergo the rebirth process and bear as a result physical mutations similar to those affecting tainted seekers. These fighters have the innate ability to control beasts summoned during the shamans' rituals, to assist them in accomplishing their missions. Harvesters may control 1 monster HD for every 5 of their own hit points rounded down (6 hp if using AD&D Game rules)—no save. As regards this ability, hit points are modified only by Wisdom bonuses instead of Constitution bonuses. HD plusses are ignored. Several harvesters may combine their hit points to command a large beast. Control, while it lasts, is absolute and does *not* require concentration. Communication is maintained by way of ESP, up to 120'.

As an option, minimum required hit points can be modified depending on the toughness of the beast. The requirement listed in the previous paragraph is intended for monsters rated at an average 40 XP or less per Hit Die (using BECMI XP ratings). For example, lowly orcs rate as 10 XP per HD while a 36 HD lich fetches nearly 1,000 XP per HD. It would be trivial for three high-level harvesters to dominate 36 creatures equivalent to orcs, while the same would clearly not be true for a beast comparable to a single 36 HD lich. To reflect this, use the following adjustments:

**XP/HD 40 or less:** 5 harvester hit points per controlled HD

**41-100:** 6 hp per HD

**101-200:** 8 hp per HD

**201-400:** 12 hp per HD

**401-700:** 20 hp per HD

**701+:** 36 hp per HD

*In other words, trying to control a beast equivalent to a 36 HD lich would require more than 20 tenth-level harvesters with +2 Wisdom bonuses combining their abilities—more than what a*

*single tribe could field. On the other hand, a single harvester could handle a beast comparable to a 7 HD hellhound or a 10-headed hydra.*

A harvester can dismiss a controlled beast, which constitutes a spell-like action requiring a Wisdom Check. If the check fails, the harvester is allowed other tries during the following rounds, until the beast is dismissed (and returns to its dimension), control is lost, or the beast is killed. When multiple handlers combine their abilities, only the one with the highest Wisdom score (and hit points, if tied) may attempt to dismiss a creature. Once domination is broken (see below), a beast can no longer be dismissed.

If a controlling harvester sustains wounds, the ability to dominate a beast is reduced accordingly. Should total combined hit points fall beneath the minimum needed to handle a beast, the creature will immediately attack the harvesters, starting with the lowest Wisdom scores. If it succeeds in killing its handlers, a beast will then seek to eliminate shamans and acolytes who summoned it, after which it attacks anyone else it encounters, including the Ogam themselves.

Although they don't normally wear armor beyond leather cuirasses and light shields (goat hides and such), they are permitted any low-tech weapon available to fighters. This rules out crossbows and gadgets seekers often carry. Harvesters are skilled at abducting people, and therefore must learn the use of blowguns, nets, and bolas. Darts coated with sleeping or hallucinogenic substances are part of their normal equipment (about 7-12 such darts each). Ogam/Orzafeth-tainted weapons are to be expected among mid- to upper-level harvesters. As shepherds, they also have the ability to *charm* sheep and goats once a day (no save) and speak with them at will. Giant versions of these animals and other closely related monsters do get a saving throw vs. spells against this *charm* ability. Harvesters are immune to fear or mind-affecting auras radiating from Outer Being creatures.

**Floral Maiden of Akh'All:** AC6, HD 3+2\*\*\* (M), MV 60' (20'), AT 1 kiss or 1d4 cystic missiles, Dmg 2d6 + paralysis or 1d4 each + stun, # App. 1-4 (1d10+10 in lair), Save C5, ML 7, TT V, Int 10, AL Chaotic, XP 125—*planar monster, enchanted*; HR\* 4. **Special Abilities:** paralysis, ranged attacks, limited regeneration, semi-translucence, levitation, seeps through cracks and holes.

(\*) **HR—Horror Rating:** *is an optional d20 check devised by Geoff Gander to determine whether the sight of the monster inflicts the viewer a random mental disease.*

In short, this is an other-worldly breed of gelatinous cube. Bred in the *Gibbering Vats of Akh'All*, this drone toils to cleanse its master of festering impurities oozing through its skin. Roughly conical in shape and with rounded edges, this semi-translucent viscous life form jiggles and slithers across floors, walls, and ceilings, or levitates at the same speed. In a poorly lit chamber, its body blends in with surrounding shadows, save for its internal organs. The latter look like marine anemone emitting a slight phosphorescence, with delicate tendrils which slowly wriggle within the maiden's inner eddies, suddenly retracting and turning dark if the creature senses danger. The floral maiden only communicates through ESP and cannot speak. It senses its surroundings within 120' radius through ESP, taste, smell, and relative temperatures—it does

not radiate body heat itself. It can also detect the presence of Outer Being taint within the same distance. Intervening stonework may reduce this range to no less than 60'.

In combat, the creature can shoot no more than four cystic missiles up to 60' in any direction. The maiden may release these attacks while it flees its attackers. These projectiles consist of small sacks of semi-fluidic gelatin secreted inside its body, which, when they hit a target, inflict 1d4 points of damage. Victims must save vs. spell or become stunned. When engaged in melee, the maiden reverts to a main attack form which consists in colliding with an attacker, causing 2d6 points of damage plus a paralysis lasting 2d4 Turns or until magically cured (save vs. paralysis negates). This "kiss" attack, when it succeeds, heals half as many points of damage to the creature. The maiden is absolutely silent when it moves, and can crawl through tiny openings, such as underneath a door, through a keyhole, or up a pipe; regaining its shape takes 1d4+1 rounds during which it cannot attack. Occasionally, various non-digestible items may remain within its gelatinous body until processed and dropped on the ground. Floral maidens do not need to breathe air to survive.

**Finality of the Ogam Cause:** These were people of distant Nithian origins, bred specifically as slaves to reptilian wizards, known as the Carnifex. The overseers' civilization vanished, leaving their slaves as the last followers of the Outer Beings. Ogam lore predicts a new age coming, when the Ogam will no longer stand as scions of slaves, but as masters of all. This belief drove them to maintain their faith in the Outer Beings. The prophecy is, alas, only partially true and fraught with perils. The Ogam are no more than a tool for their godly masters to enslave the whole of Mystara, humans and all other races, as soul-food for the Outer Beings. As long as they succeed, the Ogam will thrive. If they fail, and some tribes have spectacularly, they will suffer the very fate they intended for others. Though vengeful and profoundly amoral, Outer Beings do not discriminate. They accept anyone as their servants and will obliterate traitors, regardless of past services and achievements.

Ogam shamans occasionally capture infants from other races and raise them as their own, in their odious faith. When grown up, these provide agents whose role is to infiltrate neighboring cultures and spread the evil word. Illicit substances are key to this effort, administered willingly, through trickery, or forcefully as the situation dictates. Those who oppose the Ogam, especially if they are important and powerful individuals, are often marked as targets for future sacrifices. Ogam rituals also work to impoverish and corrupt neighboring lands, both to weaken their foes and promote the encroachment of tainted flora, from which forbidden substances may be concocted. This strategy has proven successful in parts of the Grand Duchy of Frisia as well as the Counties of Hosseta and Wyllareth. The same scheme centuries earlier provoked the conflict between old Orzafeth and neighboring realms. It resulted in the destruction of that kingdom.

**Secret Wars:** Two foes of the Ogam are largely aware of the Outer Beings' ploy—Alphatia's Librarians and the Fey. The former is described in the previous chapter. The Fey include especially magical woodland beings, most of whom now dwell in Foresthome. They resent the corruption of nature and will oppose the Ogam wherever they can. By design, Librarians cannot cooperate with an outside force but they are aware of the Fey and tacitly avoid interfering with them. As a result, seekers in Foresthome act only within the confines of urban areas and along

main roads. The Fey, however, are mostly unaware of the Librarians, save for vague rumors gleaned from the Council of Wizards in Sundsvall.

During the Orzafeth Crusade and the resulting chaos, a handful of survivors bearing the Outer Beings' taint fled well south of Frisland, into what today stands as Imperial Territories. There is a reason why these lands still remain to this day forbidden to all. They were originally thought of as an estate owned directly by the empire from which dominions could be infeoded. In truth, successive emperors have suspected Orzafeth influences there. Imperial rangers reported creatures in the area showing bestial vestiges of the Outer Beings. Rangers were ordered to hunt and destroy them at all costs. This effort yielded more troublesome reports of a lair in which a gargantuan larva lay dormant, one which clearly bore the stench of the Outer Beings. Unfortunately, those few who reported the fact all died soon afterward or disappeared before they could betray the lair's location. This hideout remains beyond reach of Alphatian magic to unveil. Empress Eriadna maintained the ban on these lands as a result of this. Tainted Ones among the Librarians also operate in these parts, avoiding imperial rangers whenever possible. Aside from pursuing their own agendas, they will eliminate anyone else they find there. Some among imperial rangers came from the ranks of seekers, informing their lieges of the corps' dispositions and activities.

The Great Larva is a half-formed, semi-conscious Outer Being avatar. The sacrifice of Orzafeth's citizens at the end of the old crusade was only part of the loathsome ritual to bring the Great Larva to Mystara. Orzafeth survivors who'd hidden it in the Imperial Territories have all perished since then, becoming soul-food for the growing beast. Those who approach it share the same fate. The few who merely glimpsed it have gone mad and began worshiping the avatar's parent Outer Being. They now defend the lair, looking for sacrifices to feed the starving beast and nurture it to full strength. It is the prelude to a disaster of global proportions on Mystara. The Great Larva is the holy grail of Librarians but it remains anyone's guess whether their conditioning can defeat the avatar's unholy aura long enough for them to destroy the beast. Should events described in *Wrath of the Immortals* take place, the lair would sink beneath the surface of the sea, but the Great Larva—which is immune to Mystaran immortal powers—would remain unharmed and thoroughly unaffected by the seawater. Aquatic creatures would soon replace Alphatians relegated to the Hollow World.

Finally, the issue of the Shadow Dwarves connecting with the Ogam compounds the danger Alphatia faces. In the short term, the quiet conflict spills over into Lower Stoutfellow. It is a facet of the secret wars which Librarians are aware of but have not been able to address. Their biggest problem is the recruitment of suitable seeker candidates among the dwarves. These fellows are surprisingly resistant to the seekers' magical and mental conditioning. It is a technical failing, yet perhaps an unforeseen solution to the Ogam peril itself. Dwarvenkind is particularly resilient to mind-affecting Outer Being influences and to the effects of illicit substances key to the Ogam's nefarious expansion plans. Until the matter can be fully understood and exploited, the Librarians will do all that they can to discreetly help Stoutfellow in its growing struggle against the Shadow Dwarves.

## Illustrious Azafethians

### Lord Azapheram, *Seventh Marquess of Azafeth*

Like all his forebears, this distant, insensitive, and often hostile aristocrat suffers from paranoia—he assumes everyone bears hidden motives and seeks to exploit him or his House for evil ends. His ancestral condition finds its roots in an existence continually fraught with ghastly perils and a complicated web of intrigue defining the House of Azapheram. When he founded the new Kingdom of Greater Frisland in the wake of the disastrous Orzafeth Crusade, Emperor Alphas established the House of Edjer as its new royal dynasty. The Council of Wizards in Sundsvall, which didn't approve of the House of Edjer, wanted to play their own pawn on the Greater Frisland chessboard. It came with their success in forcing Alphas to approve the House of Azapheram as the recipient for the title to the old Antaliam Markland. Thus was born the Marquisate of Azafeth. Henceforth, successive marquesses had to contend with a lasting dislike from the House of Edjer, increasingly estranged relations with imperial circles, the constant machinations of the Great Council, subjects who mostly resent Alphantian hegemony, as well as the bone-chilling conflict with the sinister and devious Ogam. Moral and political isolation of the marquisate, embodied by its mountain stronghold, is as extreme as it looks.



The Houses of Azapheram and Rathmore are distant cousins. At some point during their rule, the marquesses also became connected with the Ravensfolk. A bargain was struck between the embattled house and the strange soothsayers, binding them all through the following centuries. A secret prophecy was made that directly ties the marquesses' bloodline to the outcome of the wider struggle against the Outer Beings. The Ravensfolk have provided insights that prevented the worst of fates befalling the marquisate, a service costing the beneficiaries dearly. One sign of the Ravensfolk connection lies in the cloud of ever-watchful ravens circling above the stronghold. They inform the ruling marquess and the Ravensfolk of a lot of things happening in Azafez. These mysterious seers are in fact kin of the ancient Fey and thus remain bitter opponents of the Ogam. Nonetheless, little sympathy prevails between their circles and Alphantian authority. When all is said and done, the Fey are no friends of Alphantia.

In his struggle against the Ogam, Lord Azapheram secretly acquired the *Receptacle of the Black Vault*, an ancient artifact. It proved a costly endeavor, as all those who'd come in contact with it either went mad and had to be put down or were executed on suspicion of treason (at least to keep them silent). This included the entire crew of a skyship that had briefly gone rogue. The artifact, which reeks of the Outer Being taint, is locked away deep beneath High Azafez, and protected with many layers of magic. The marquess knows that it may help him defeat the Ogam, if only he could get past the artifact's corrupting aura. His present goal is to research enchantments to gain safe access to the mysterious object. Harboring this artifact comes at a

high price, the least of which are persistent nightmares for the marquess, stemming from his knowledge of the relic and his own sense of guilt. News of events surrounding the seizure of the artifact and the ensuing bloody purge were suppressed at the marquess's behest. Brutal and swift, this measure mostly succeeded, leaving only vague rumors amongst Eriadna's Librarians and Azapheram's lieges—a select few in the Council of Wizards. Naturally, both the Ravensfolk and the Ogam know all the details but they aren't sharing them with anyone else. A seeker squad in Azafeth is presently trying to unveil clues to confirm the rumor, as is the Imperial Ambassador at the marquess's court—a council loyalist. A handful of military commanders resent the gruesome purge that led to executions of kinsmen, fostering a yearning for revenge as yet unspoken. Meanwhile, the Ogam seek to infiltrate the mountain fortress and recover their stolen artifact.

**Appearance:** [by JDP] The marquess stands just above short. Azapheram's apparent age is early to middle 50s; only those close to him know for certain. His tone is typically Alpathian, with dark stringy shoulder-length hair parted in the middle, pale skin, and eyes a combination between turquoise and sapphire, the whites of which are thoroughly bloodshot. Azapheram, doesn't sleep much: his eyelids are marred by puffy purplish gray splotches. Beneath his ever-restless eyes hang wide semi-circular sagging bruises. He tries to hide this with a sparse, wiry beard, but it only calls attention to the area. An occasional white hair mars his locks, and his eyebrows are already salt and pepper. Muscular twitches flit across his features, wrecking an otherwise pleasantly mild appearance and leaving tortured wrinkles in their wake. Only his closest servants and a few advisors who have been with Azapheram for a length of time can ignore these unsightly movements, as well as the constant twisting of his head. When the marquess can't sleep, he walks his citadel, looking for suspicious characters or doings. Those he suspects of betraying him and his house (and they are many) are subjected to questioning and beatings or thrown in the dungeon and forgotten. It is said of Azapheram that he has even arrested rats, and a few hapless dogs and cats, on suspicion of treason. Their bodies molder somewhere he's long forgotten. Azapheram wears a long-sleeved simply cut robe of densest black that has subtle patterns of feathers appearing and disappearing in any light.

MU19, AC3, hp42, MV 120' (40'), AT staff or spell, Dmg 2d6 or by spell, Save MU19, ML7, AL C; St11, In18, Wi14, Dx15, Co13, Ch10. **Magical Items:** *robe of the raven, staff of power, ring of safety, bone of Archibalzam*. **Special Abilities:** 25% anti-magic, immune to physical diseases and poison, *fly at will, telekinesis* 2,400cn, can negate 1d4 failed saving throws.

**Robe of the Raven:** This black robe confers an AC of 4 as well as the abilities to fly at will, to see/hear using the senses of any raven within a 1,000 yard radius and speak with any nearby raven. Ravensfolk provided this garment to the marquesses who may retain it as long as they do not betray their association with the seers. Unbeknownst to its owner, the robe also enables the Ravensfolk to spy on the marquess.

**Bone of Archibalzam:** This is a bone fragment from the remains of a legendary wizard, called Archibalzam, a distant ancestor of the House of Azapheram. The relic produces a 25% anti-magic benefit to its owner (5' radius) as well as immunity to physical diseases and poison. The Seventh Marquess presently studies the ancient object as it seems partially able to withstand the

corrupting effects of the Ogam artifact. Wearing the bone provokes facial and neck twitches for its owner.

## **Deerakh'all, Hetman of the Illtskógur Harvesters**

This warrior is a champion of the Ogam tribe occupying the upper Illtskógur Valley. Her sworn enemy is the Seventh Marquess of Azafeth who stole a hallowed relic from the ruins of Svartheim. The tribal shaman, a follower of *Akh'All the Unmentionable*, tasked Deerakh'all with recovering the artifact and bringing the marquess to the tribe so he may be sacrificed. Deerakh'all, who is of prevailing Antalian stock, thereafter spent years living in the marquisate where she's now known as *Úlfdís Alfansdóttir*. She managed to join Azafeth's armed forces and slowly rose through their ranks. While she was posted at Foertgrim, the hetman gained her superiors' confidence in a series of patrols along the Grimdrein River during which she relied on her secret knowledge of the Ogam to hunt them down. She was transferred since to High-Azafez to join the marquess's garrison.



Well-acquainted with the town's layout, its defenses and weaknesses, Deerakh'all used some furlough time to sneak back to her tribe and report. The old shaman performed a ritual and summoned beasts that would help the hetman complete her quest. Deerakh'all used a *ring of merging* to pull within her own body the beasts she was given to control. Along with her outlandish guests so intimately concealed, she returned to the mountain fortress to resume her duties. Other harvesters under her orders, harboring their own beasts, remain hidden in the mountains north of High-Azafez, awaiting the time their hetman finds a way to let them in. Meanwhile when possible, Deerakh'all releases one or more beasts at night to explore the fortress's inner reaches for a path to the artifact and the marquess's bedchamber. Before dawn, her beasts return and once again blend within Deerakh'all's body.

The hetman is an alluring female warrior with a fair share of admirers among the marquess's garrison. She manipulates them as she sees fit to further her goals. She's become aware that Lord Azapheram isn't immune to her looks and stalwart reputation, although the marquess's paranoia forbids him to approach her. Sensing an opportunity, Deerakh'all staged a heroic fight with one of her beasts, which she sacrificed in the process, suggesting she saved the lives of her lord and his family. This increased His Lordship's attraction to her but earned his wife's suspicion—call it female intuition—and budding jealousy. The lady of the citadel now relies on her own faction among the guards to keep an eye on Deerakh'all, one of whom happens to be a Librarians' seeker.

*While in Azafeth, the hetman does not carry the sort of weapons common to harvesters, such as blowguns, darts, nets, or bolas. Deerakh'all does not bear the taint of the Outer Beings since she has not undergone the rebirth process.*

**Appearance:** [by JDP] In her early thirties, Deerakh'all is tall, muscular, attractive, and exudes a wolf-like ruthlessness. Her long flaxen hair stays braided and knotted close to her head. Ice-



blue eyes fringed by pale brown lashes dominate her face. High cheekbones give her a slightly haughty appearance, of which she makes full use when giving orders. A finely drawn nose balances her full lips, both of which are in perfect proportions. Her typical expression of reserve belies what goes on behind Deerakh'all's martial façade. Thoughtful, yet assertive, she reviles the twitching marquess's admiring glances, keeping her wits to play him despite his paranoia. Deerakh'all typically wears dark red leather boots, leggings, and a jerkin studded front and back. Her sword never leaves her side.

F21, AC6, hp57, MV 120' (40'), AT sword, Dmg 1d6+4, Save F17, ML11, AL C; St17, In11, Wi16, Dx13, Co12, Ch15. **Magical Items:** *ring of merging*, *potion of dreamspeech* (3 doses, as per RC description pg. 233), *medallion of misleading*, and *+2 sword of influence*. **Special Abilities:** monster domination up to 15 HD (lowest XP rating) or no more than 3 floral maidens of Akh'all.

**Ring of Merging:** This magical item is similar to a *potion of blending* (RC pg. 233). It enables the hetman to merge within her body up to seven companions with their equipment, as if they were incorporeal. Those merged cannot speak, cast spells, or attack without stepping out. Damage to the hetman does not affect merged beasts but will reduce her ability to dominate them (if so, Deerakh'all picks which ones she retains). Uncontrolled beasts will step out and attack her right away. The hetman's death would release all those still within. ring is made of carved goat bone.

**Medallion of Misleading:** Bearing Deerakh'all's totem she-wolf symbol, the object prevents divination spells from ruining her subterfuge, such as in particular *true sight* or *detect evil*. Whether or not she hosts Outer Being beasts within herself, her alignment comes off as Neutral. She keeps the medallion hidden under her shirt. Someone with an Orzafeth Lore skill might recognize it as an Ogam totem symbol.

**Sword of Influence:** it appears as a simple sword with a +2 enchantment. In truth, it is a Shadow Dwarven weapon with peculiar powers. Once a day, it either confers the hetman with a +2 bonus to a Charisma check when interacting with someone, or it fosters a -2 penalty to Charisma checks for everyone else within a 30' radius during 1 Turn. Its intent is to divide people and set them against one another. When in combat, however, its blade instills upon those it wounds a sense of despair. Each wound requires a separate saving throw vs. spells to negate. Failure to save results in cumulative -2 penalties to hit the hetman (and to morale checks for NPCs). Upon close examination, an experienced Stoutfellow swordsmith might be able to identify the blade's nefarious origin. Charisma-based modifiers do not affect those who are immune to mind-affecting magic; despair does not include foes immune to fear.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his participation in this article and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*



# Frisland: The County of Västheim

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*At the tip of the northwestern corner of Alphatia lies the land of a conquered people yearning to regain their freedom. But what can an isolated culture truly hope to gain in the face of the mighty Alphatian Empire?*



Just short of 200 miles north to south and about as wide, Västheim occupies the peninsula along the Strait of Qeodhar. Cold, wet, and wind-beaten, its soggy grasslands and hills surround the northwestern edge of the Kerothar Mountains. Climate along Alphatia's northern west coast is similar to the one prevailing in real world Anchorage, Alaska—temperatures average between 50° and 65° F in the summer (from 10° to 18° C), and 11° to 23° F in the winter (from -11° to

-5° C). Though winters tend to be mostly cloudy and snowy, weather remains unpredictable; while one year may see several feet of snow accumulation on the ground, another could experience frequent thaws and ice buildup during the nights. Winds generally blow across the Sea of Alphatia. A mild sea current flows from the south before turning eastward around the northernmost cape and becomes colder in the Strait of Qeodhar. Temperatures drop rapidly in the mountains. In the vicinity of Widzif, daylight hours in the summer exceed those in the winter due to the region's latitude.

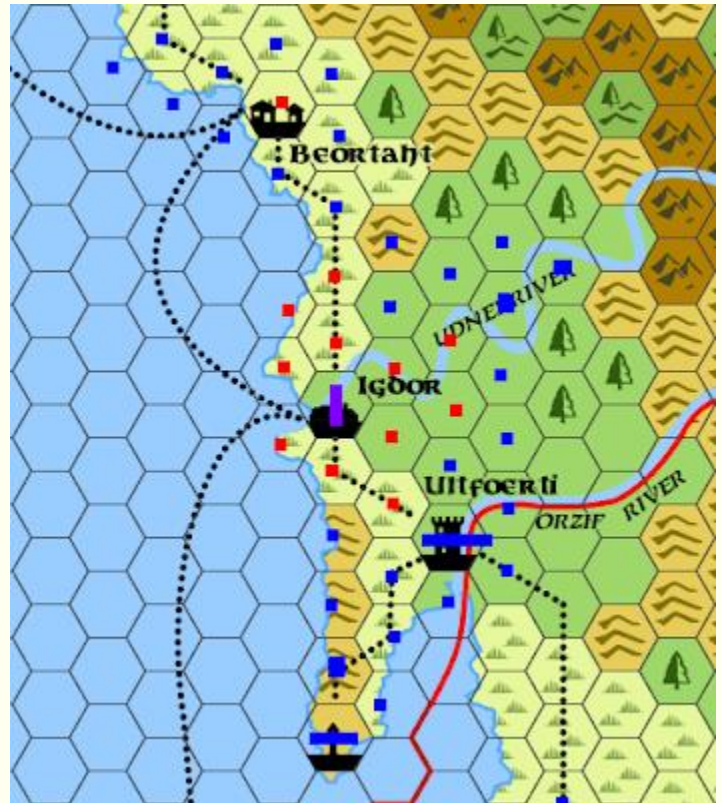


Original settlers were Antalian, fearless navigators and warriors who'd sailed eastward from faraway Brun. They'd named this land *Østhheim* centuries ago, although it later became known as Västheim (pronounced *VEST-high'm*), the Kingdom of the West, reflecting an Alphatian point of view. It is only one of many changes imposed by the wizardly conquerors. The present county dates back to the establishment of Greater Frisland as a subject kingdom of the Alphatian Empire, centuries after the fall of the old Antalian kingdoms. Since then, the inhabitants have become somewhat more mixed in their cultural and racial heritage. Dark-haired and pale skinned Alphatians as well as copper skinned Cypric have mixed with local Antalian, showing Yanifey influences as well. In Västheim, the Ogam seem like a distant peril, an ugly and shameful disease that struck their southern cousins which, thankfully, has been averted here. In the minds of the locals, it instilled a concept that their land is therefore unsoiled, somehow holier, and more righteous than their neighbors' lands. Västheim's relative economic strength, at least from a Frislandic point of view, only helps reinforce this strong parochial mentality.

Coastal areas from Foertahl around the peninsula and all the way down to the border with Azafeth are almost entirely settled. Population is relatively homogenous, including a majority of fair complexioned people. Among commoners, the main group strongly identifies with their Antalian ancestry. A minority of mixed-Alphatian or Yanifey origins remains relatively neutral and discreet. The latter is the prevailing ethnic in and around the village of Azareth and along the border with the Duchy of Wyllareth. Dwarves and elves are welcome and present throughout the county. Aristocracy is exclusively and unmistakably Alphatian, priding itself in its lineage to Houses dating back to the Age of Landfall. As in most nations of Alphatia, little love is lost between nobles and commoners, regardless of their actual ancestries. Temples honoring such immortals as Odin, Thor, Loki, and others associated with Antalian culture are most common in Västheim.



Västheim's urban centers include Ybod (9,000 people), Widzif (7,400 people), Igdor (5,300 people), and the villages of Azareth and Beortaht, for a total population of more than 176,000 Västheimers. Much of the business in this county relies on fishing all along the coast, and shipbuilding, especially in Igdor (pronounced *EEG-dohr*). Original forests have been largely depleted in the area, causing a demand for Azafethian lumber. The seat of the county, Ybod (pronounced *YEE-bohd*), is a trading center and a major source of income. The count's palatial tower stands on a rocky spur at the town's center, overlooking the port area as a symbol of Alphatian authority. It is rumored to contain fully grown trees of various breeds within its walls. None among common folk know why. Beortaht is notorious as a source of tame bears and ursine pelts popular among the county's wealthy. All these places commonly feature Antalian architecture and style. Due to lack of wood, stone dwellings are more common than in Azafeth, with grass growing on the roofs. A goat or two grazing on top of one's residence is a common sight in the region. Native livestock is stout and shaggy. Blasé and scornful Alphatians often jest about native females' legs fitting the same description while the latter think of noble folk as effeminate fops.



Four large towers stand at key points of the trails connecting Västheim's urban centers, both to keep an eye on who goes by and to collect tolls. All towns and villages are fortified, usually a wood palisade with a ditch and few watchtowers for villages, and a more elaborate mix of wooden and stone structures for towns. The main reason for these defenses lies in the fear of Qeodim raiders, which easily exceeds risks of an Ogam attack or potential wars with neighboring dominions. Though nearby Qeodhar is yet another province of Alphatia, piracy remains the primary danger in these parts. Sea monsters aren't rare either. From King Edjer's point of view, Västheim is the kingdom's cash cow. He uses all means available to extort as much gold as possible while holding the count directly responsible for handling the Qeodim nuisance on the seas.

**Armed Forces of Västheim:** They amount to nearly 2,200 troops including army and navy. The bulk of these forces hold the three towns. The county's fleet includes a war galley, two large galleys, four longships, two skyships, in addition to one small sail ship, one large sail ship, and one troop transport. The majority of these vessels hail from Ybod; one skyship operates from Widzif and the other from Igdor. Aside from monitoring a coastline more than 500 miles long, the navy's main mission is to patrol the Strait of Qeodhar, especially in the vicinity of Cape Noordzif. The skyship based in Igdor, the *Viggen*, spends half its mission time near the forty-mile-mountain-stretch bordering the northern Baalbeth Valley, to reduce chances of Ogam

infiltration in these parts. An aging skyship at Widzif, the *Draken*, hunts for sea raiders. There has been talk of a special tax to raise funds for the construction of a third and more powerful skyship, the *Grippen*. The decision has yet to be made as the move has proven wildly unpopular among the common population.



Based on the dominion's population makeup, it is a foreign region under occupation. Unlike other dependencies of the empire, Greater Frisland has had problems attracting enough people from the south to absorb local culture. Poor lands, bad climate, and an appalling reputation have done much to accomplish this. Nowhere in Alphatia is this situation more relevant than with Västheim. Under these circumstances, it was a foregone conclusion that natives here would seek better conditions for themselves, at least from a political standpoint. This struggle led to the genesis of the *Scions of Antalia*, a secret sect of ethnic Antalians seeking greater autonomy from the empire. It stands as a key divisive force in Greater Frisland and Alphatia as a whole.

The Scions' goal is to force the empire to negotiate for the removal of ethnic Alphatian aristocracy from Västheim in favor of a council-led leadership chosen by a system representing the people, the military, and the clergy. Although intended as an ally of the empire in the matters of foreign policy and commerce, this new political entity would be autonomous and sovereign under old Antalian laws. At this point in time (AC 1000), Sundsvall would never agree to any such scheme. The concept of allowing a subject kingdom, or a part of one, to become autonomous stands as an invitation for others to request the same. If it weren't a death sentence for the empire, it would come dangerously close to it.



As a result of this impasse, early proponents of Antalian autonomy were hunted down and executed for sedition, forcing survivors to go underground and adopt extremist attitudes. Thus came into play with the Scions of Antalia. Their sect survived all suppression attempts thanks to tacit popular support. Since Sundsvall, let alone Shiell and Alphatian aristocracy in Västheim, will not willingly negotiate, then force must be used to bring them to the table. The Scions' strategy involves assassinations, machinations aimed at weakening the empire, targeting imperial interests abroad, sedition at home, and most dangerously, *colluding with the Ogam*. In exchange for the absence of Ogam depredations in Västheim, the Scions of Antalia pay the northern tribes with various goods of value to them especially including Alphatian abductees and tactical information about neighboring Wyllareth, Osseta, and Frisia. Northern Ogam tribes have been interested particularly in details about an order of Wyllarethian paladins who have been a thorn in their flank for a long time.

One might think this strategy of collusion to be self-defeating, except that the Scions have an ulterior motive. As they secretly trade with the Ogam, they collect a good amount of intelligence against them, which may provide a crucial bargaining chip when negotiations with the empire

become possible. Oddly, the Ogam have indeed lowered their guard as they grew accustomed to dealing with these subversives. Information handed to the Ogam could just as easily be used to set up an elaborate, large-scale trap, and strike a blow that could strip the north of the hated goat herders.

Librarian seekers have become aware of links between the Ogam and the Scions but exposing the latter's leadership remains a challenge for local teams. Qeodim and Thyatian spies have infiltrated the sect, to help drive it into their masters' arms. Scions of Anatalia are aware of this and manipulate these spies to disinform their respective leaders and exploit beneficial opportunities. Scion activists operate in Qeodhar for the purpose of removing Alphatian hegemony from the island as well, and in northern Azafeth for the same reason. The plan is to establish a state stretching from Farend to Wykstaht, if not to the border with Limn. Crones and other soothsayers unwittingly serving Odin, Thor, Frey, or Freyja largely influence the Scion movement. They also lie at the heart of factions within the sect. Followers of Loki might seek to expose the Scions' scheme for the purpose of fostering chaos and conflict—such traitors present in fact the greatest liability for the sect, though it was the one which initially suggested the double strategy of collusion and sedition. All said, Scions of Antalia are opportunistic, brutal, ruthless, and prejudiced extremists who stop at nothing to reach their aims.



## **Lord Sidharram, Count of Västheim**

The House of Sidharram stands among the oldest Alphatian families. Yet, it does not dwell in Vertiloch among its peers, nor has it been seeking to do so. Though Alphatian nobles in Frisland, and even more so in Västheim, pride themselves on their ancient wizardly pedigrees, they often bear some flaw in the eyes of their compatriots. As a result, their forebears were granted Frislandic domains to keep them away from Sundsvall, or simply decided to live in these unpopular parts to pursue a discreet existence, away from the empire's immediate scrutiny. Such is the case for the House of Sidharram.



It so happened that a distant ancestor had crossed paths with a Fey while exploring the clan lands of Foresthome. Their union yielded a magical and unique bloodline. The House's original name, Martharram, therefore changed to Sidharram (pronounced *SHEE-tharam*). Its descendants could be described as "half-elves," neither quite as graceful as elves, nor as tall as humans, yet with Alphatian fair skin and black hair. The magical nature of this bloodline only manifests itself when a family heir inherits the House's title and assets. Faerie genes are recessive among those who aren't fully Fey, except for the rightful head of this House. Descendants of the family in other branches eventually revert to their Alphatian form, though the Fey's arcane sap forever flows in their veins. In the event the current family failed to yield

an heir, the progeny of the next in line would be born as a half-elf with the Fey's magical legacy waiting to rouse once more.

Another peculiarity concerns the matter of death and revival. A Sidharram who perishes can always be raised from the dead and returned to life, as is common among well-to-do Alphatian aristocracy. However, while a rightful heir is alive, a forebear's death becomes final whenever it should happen. At that time, the body disintegrates, and powerful roots take hold, no matter the terrain. Soon, a regal tree grows in the place of the fallen and exudes a vital force bringing about a carpet of grass, moss, and ferns a good ten feet out. It explains why trees have grown inside the seigneurial tower, sometimes in terribly awkward places. When this happens, surrounding architecture is modified to accommodate the parents' final resting places, giving the count's abode a strange, twisted appearance. It is said that family ghosts awake from their funeral trees on the anniversary of their deaths though a nearby disturbance might provoke the same.

These family oddities earned the House of Sidharram lands granted in faraway Västheim, as a way to keep its *un-Alphatian* character from further soiling the more ancient bloodlines of Vertiloch. On the other hand, this curious twist of nature generated a strong and secret bond between Sidharram and the Fey of Foresthome—sworn enemies of the Ogam. The count fiercely opposes the Scions of Antalia, as he knows for a fact that they deal with the Ogam and betray his Alphatian kinsmen. The abduction of wizards and their subsequent sacrifices at the hands of the odious shamans provoke the count's bitterest sentiments. Yet more painful remains his inability to strike down the hated sect. The present count, in his mid-twenties (a youngster in Fey terms), isn't married and hasn't produced as of yet a rightful heir to his House. His natural allure easily earns him the opposite gender's eager attentions. His wildly changing moods, however, can be hard to manage, and many an idyll has foundered as a consequence. It's in his nature.

The count's magical bloodline causes his alignment to vary from Lawful in summer, to Neutral in spring and fall, and Chaotic in winter (family ghosts retain the alignments corresponding to the time of their deaths). The count also receives a 25% anti-magic resistance and the ability to *speak with plants* once per day, as the spell. Preferred clothing generally reflects seasonal colors (gold and dark green in summer, rust and brown in the fall, white, blue, and silver in winter, and pale green in the spring). The count remains immune to the innate powers of wood nymphs (blindness and death). Using D&D game rules, treat the count as an elf.

**Appearance:** Sidharram stands about five feet eight inches and has the typical blue-black hair and pale skin of the Alphatian side of his heritage. His eyes' color changes with the seasons, and hence with his moods: in spring, they appear almost light green with a bluish cast; in summer, bright amber; in fall, deep sorrel; and icy blue in winter. His wide forehead tapers to a stubborn chin. Clenching his teeth, which makes his cheeks appear hollow, is a sure sign of displeasure. So is the bluish vein that pulses in his left temples when his ire rouses. Spring brings Sidharram a boost of extroverted energy, as if he needed to clean house and make certain everything is in order for the rest of the year. During summer, he is magnanimous and regal. Fall gives the count a deep introverted nostalgia and he looks upon his world with a fatalistic *mein*. Winter finds him crusty and argumentative, ready to pick a fight over the



slightest infraction. Women in love with Sidharram's Lawful or Neutral sides find themselves at odds with his change to the fatalistic or Chaotic. Despite these seasonable transformations, the count has proven an able diplomat.

E12, AC0, hp44, MV 120' (40'), AT 2 sword or 1 spell, Dmg 1d6+2/1d6+2 or by spell, Save E10+2, ML10, AL varies; St14, In17, Wi12, Dx15, Co13, Ch16. **Magical Items:** *sword of seasons, chainmail of the Fey, ring of protection*+2. **Special Abilities:** fighter combat options; 25% anti-magic; *speak with plants* once per day; other abilities as per the elven class description.

**Sword of Seasons:** a +1 magical blade of fine elven workmanship emulates seasonal abilities of the Fey. Summer: once a day radiates an aura of natural sunlight or moonlight (30' radius) inflicting 6d6 points of damage against undead creatures (save for half damage); Fall: once per day, the blade inflicts paralysis similar to *hold person* spell (saving throw vs. paralysis negates); Winter: +2 bonus to attacks and damage vs. ice or polar creatures, and +2 bonus to saving throws vs. cold-based attacks; Spring: once per day may remove paralysis and heal wounds as a *cure serious wounds* spell. The latter effect occurs immediately if the owner is paralyzed or falls beneath 10 hit point.

**Chainmail of the Fey:** this +2 armor is light enough to remain no more encumbering than leather armor. Once per day, it confers its owner and his possessions the ability to merge for any length of time with a tree or giant mushroom, be it of ordinary vegetal or sentient nature. The owner may reappear out of any other tree within 150'. While merged, the owner is undetectable save through a *truesight* spell or comparable magical device and can see and hear normally as if standing outside. Spells cannot be cast while merged. Normal rest while merged can take place, during which healing occurs at the rate of 1d4 hit point per hour. If a hosting tree is damaged, the occupant sustains as much damage (and is expelled if the tree is destroyed).

## Lady Hermiath, the loving courtesan

This young woman is the daughter of the commander at Ultfoerti, one Lord Hermiarram. A few generations earlier, it so happened that a determined Scion of Antalia was able to pass himself off as the heir to this petty Alphatian House. Dark-haired, pale-skinned, and an average wizard, this adventurer's audacious subterfuge succeeded. Subsequent weddings involving obscure local nobility of paltry worth struggling to marry off their daughters helped sustain the ruse for decades, and now gives a credible Alphatian character to this House. Though spouses remained unaware of the family secret, sons and daughters always knew the truth and became Scions of Antalia. Such is the case of Lady Hermiath (pronounced *her-MY-ath*). She's a secret follower of Freyja: a shadow warrior from her immortal patron's point of view.



With much of her father's gold, the young and highly attractive woman was dispatched to the count's court in Ybod, there to hone her skills as a feudal courtesan. Her mission was to gain information from nobles surrounding the count and pass it along to her father. Her looks soon attracted Lord Sidharram's interest. The opportunity was too good to pass but Lady Hermiath eventually succumbed to the count's natural charms and now finds herself torn between love and duty. Although she continues to betray those who surround the count, she deliberately suppresses or alters any personal information about him.

**Court Intrigue, Part 1:** Their relation is discreet and cautious for several reasons. The count is already engaged to the Duchess of Wyllareth's daughter, an affair of the state rather than the heart. He does not want to jeopardize this arrangement and therefore hides from his entourage his attraction to Hermiath. She neither desires her father to know of her true feelings for her liege, nor to compete openly with other ladies at the court for the count's affection. The latter would invite jealousies and unwanted attention to herself and make her a tempting target for more affluent Houses—not to mention the Duchess of Wyllareth. Hermiath's predicament also includes the fact that nearly no one among the Scions knows that she is one of them. She could just as easily become their victim.

**Court Intrigue, Part 2:** Further dangers remain. A companion of the count (his seneschal, the captain of the guard, or a rival courtesan who sensed Hermiath's game) suspects something unusual about her. A quiet investigation goes on, unbeknownst to the count, for the purpose of discrediting him. His disgrace for consorting with an agent of the Scions would open the door for a rival House coveting the count's title and assets. Another party, a Seeker of the Librarians who infiltrated the count's court, prefers keeping the affair quiet and facilitating the relation for the purpose of identifying the link between Hermiath and the Scions of Antalia. Blackmail may therefore become the method to force the young lady to betray her sect in exchange for the count's safety. A quiet and deadly fight therefore takes place in the shadows, opposing the actors of this twisted drama.

**Appearance:** Though Lady Hermiath is but nineteen years old, she wields palace intrigue and courtship with wicked talent. Thick blue-black hair hangs below her waist, contrasting with her delicate white skin. She typically wears it in small braids whorled into knots and spirals, pinned in place by glinting sapphires perfectly matched to her wide blue eyes. Of medium stature, she proudly stands five feet five inches tall. Hermiath's face is the pinnacle of Alphatian beauty: her unlined brow arches toward gently hollowed cheeks and a fine chin, accented by a pretty nose and lovely lips. Her appearance and unselfconscious presence beckon male heads to turn her way whenever she enters a room. Languishing swains desirous of her attentions flood her path with moderate to bad poetry on a regular basis. As keen as she may be, she remains, however, completely smitten with Count Sidharram: she loves his seasonal changes and different personalities. Unlike every other woman at court, she enjoys going on boar hunts to ease her tension, and even carries her own boar spear despite her father's caution against showing her skill at a sport largely seen as borrowed from Antalian tradition.

MU6, AC6, hp21, MV 120' (40'), AT 1 hairpin or spell, Dmg 1d2+2 or by spell, Save MU6+2, ML8, AL N; St12, In17, Wi11, Dx14, Co13, Ch16. **Magical Items:** +2 *earrings of ESP and clairaudience*, *hairpin of the courtesan*, *vial of pheromones oil*, *potion of super healing*. **Special Abilities:** *silver tongue* (the ability to think on her feet, persuade others, and lie convincingly, a skill well worth a +2 bonus to her Charisma checks).

**Earrings of ESP and Clairaudience:** this golden jewelry enables the owner to use *ESP* at will and, once a day, *clairaudience* (as the potion of the same name). It provides a +2 bonus to AC and saving throws.

**Hairpin of the Courtesan:** on command, this hairpin can turn into a stabbing +2 stiletto blade. Those hit must save vs. paralysis or be held (as the *hold person* spell).

**Vial of Pheromone Oil:** the small crystal vial contains three doses of the magical oil. It is used as perfume affecting members of the opposite sex (essentially human-like recipients). When worn, the very next potential victim coming within 10' of the courtesan must save at -4 vs. poison or become *charmed* (as the spell). The oil otherwise loses its magical potency within 2d6+2 rounds after application. While active, this oil reduces by half (rounded down) the user's Charisma score when approaching others of the same gender.

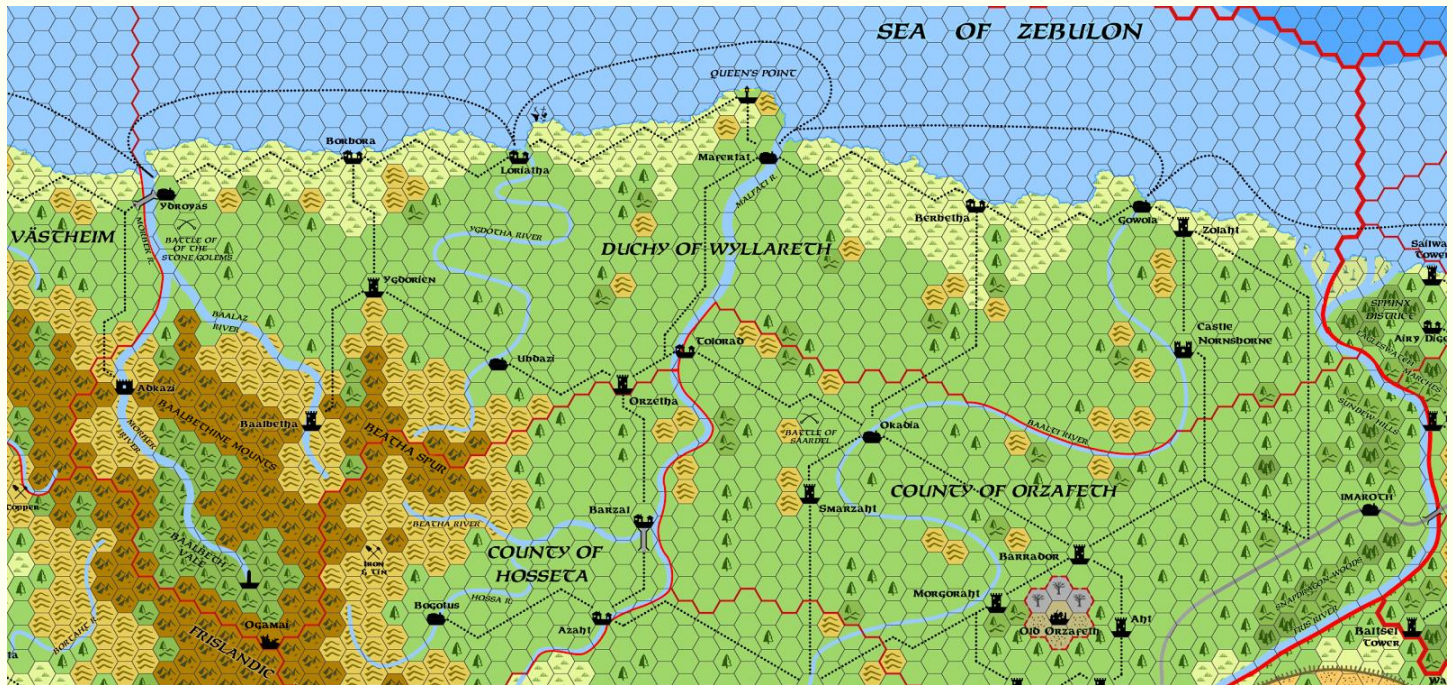
*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his gracious permission to use his work on the Ogam and Outer Beings, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*



# Frisland: The Duchy of Wyllareth

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*Once ravaged during the fateful Crusade on Ancient Orzafeth, an easy mark thereafter for those dastardly Qeodim raiders, Wyllareth struggled to rebuild itself. After its rebirth as a duchy, its ruler played a new card to solve her predicament. . . or did she?*



**Duchy of Wyllareth - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

This oblong province runs nearly 400 miles east to west and 168 miles north to south at its widest spot. Save for the Baalbeth Vale, Wyllareth is as hilly as a flounder stuck under Thor's hammer. . . and about as joyful. It is a sinister land, overcast, cold, windy, devoid of much population, and marked with scars of war still visible to this day. Wrecked towns and strongholds altogether fail to qualify as ruins but more as ruins of ruins, following the vicious de-Orzafething campaign to eradicate all things harking of Outer Beings. What Alphatian inquisitors did not raze had already been desecrated, crushed, and desecrated once more by the fiends of Orzafeth. What little was left was hastily buried or scattered.

Wyllareth offers little or no natural defenses. Rivers are shallow and muddy except for the Fris River marking the eastern border with Ar. The latter forms a wide delta, an unfreezing quagmire cursed and forbidden to visitors from both sides. Of late, unseen events have stirred souls haunting the swamp. These are the brooding remnants of a massacre that took place during the Age of the Yanifey. Those in the know have observed that unrest seems to be on the rise when Ogam shamans celebrate religious rituals in their faraway hills. The reason for the undead's turmoil remains unclear, for they seem divided along opposing factions with varying attitudes toward the living—from dire at best to horrific. The departed resent being put to rest, for they have unfinished business among themselves.

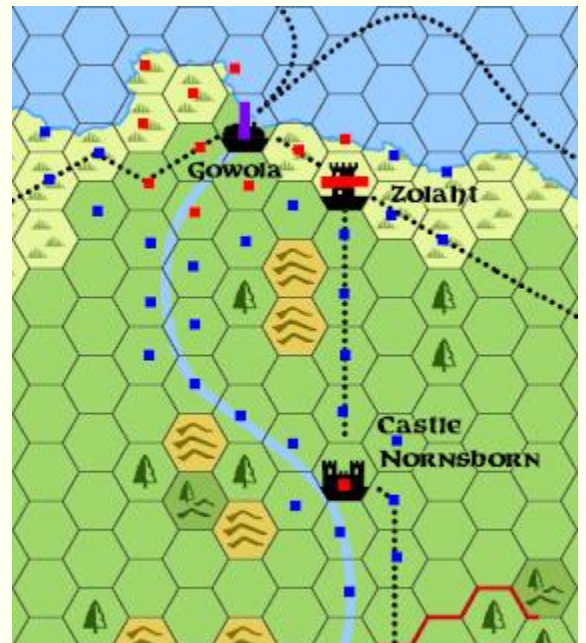
The Baalbeth Vale extends southward from the western edge of the duchy. Lying between the Frislandic Range and the Baalbethine Mounts, the so-called valley is a hilly area, mostly forested,

which runs along the Morbek River. It is Ogam territory, although Wyllareth officially claims it as a part of the duchy. The stronghold of Adkazi (pronounced *ad-KAH-dzee*) locks the pass leading to the great plain of Wyllareth. The hated nomads dwell in caves which often connect with each other through a network of tunnels. Some descend deep beneath the surface leading to ancient horrors left there to bide their time until roused to war and chaos.



Weather conditions around Mafertat are similar to those prevailing in real world Stockholm, Sweden—temperatures average between 19°C./66°F. in the summer to -8°C./17°F. in the winter. It qualifies as humid continental. Conditions tend to remain cloudy, especially during the warmer months. Average temperatures drop farther east along the coast as the result of an increasingly cold sea current. Sea storms are frequent. Prevailing winds blow from the west but northeasterly polar winds aren't uncommon in winter, driving down temperatures well past averages, and provoking massive snowstorms along the coast.

**Population:** The majority of a population of 291,000 lives along the coast, save for the inland Ubdazi area near the border with the County of Hosseta. Wyllarethian commoners are of mixed Antalian, Alphantian, and Yanifey ancestry, the latter being strongest in the eastern half of the duchy. As with neighboring provinces, aristocracy remains exclusively Alphantian. Elves and dwarves are few in this land and halflings rarer yet. The main town, with 9,300 inhabitants, is Mafertat and home to the duchy's ruler, Her Highness Elyasatham. Other urban centers include the old kingdom's fallen capital, Ydroyas (pronounced *yee-DROY-as*), with 7,700 townfolk, Gowola (about 6,200 people), and Ubdazi (pronounced *oob-DAH-dzee*), home to 5,100 inhabitants. Rural Wyllarethians are essentially cattle-herders. Harvesting crabs in the fall, fishing, and whale-hunting in spring and summer are also major activities. Farming yields mostly barley and oats to feed livestock. Shipbuilding, however, remains at a minimum due to the lack of an adequate source of lumber. As a result, most structures are made of stone, often recovered from the scattered remains of ancient ruins. Quarries are otherwise active in the foothills of the Beatha Spur and Baalbethine Mounts.



**Challenges:** Wyllareth suffers from the same troubles as the Grand Duchy of Frisia, namely banditry and the proliferation of toxic plants. Another gnawing and nagging problem lies in remains all-too-hastily-buried centuries earlier, now unearthed by fits of inclement weather. Tainted bones emerge that ought to have been purified and taken away long ago. Other things

that should never have been forgotten find a way into the hands of innocent and wicked alike, furthering the causes of the Outer Beings well after the demise of Orzafeth. As in Frisia, the Fellowship of the Ancients is active in Wyllareth and supports ancient Yanifey cults. It stands behind many a mercenary company having turned to banditry, either as the result of greed or the effects of illicit substances.



**Battle of the Stone Golems:** [by G.G.] This desolate field outside the former capital (which once lay inside the old walls of Ydroyas—the city having been much larger in earlier times) is littered with what appears to be cracked, moss-covered fragments of once-magnificent marble and granite statuary. Some of the larger pieces are still recognizable as fragments of arms, legs, and torsos, all magnificently sculpted to resemble athletic men and women. To most locals, the site is a convenient place to grab a nice piece of stone to patch a wall or fence, while some educated artists have been known to travel from as far away as Haven in search of “stone with a story.” But it is only when one visits the *Mound of Faces*, a 20-foot-tall pile of half-smashed golem heads rising from the middle of the

old battlefield, that it is possible to appreciate the scale, and desperation, of the battle that was fought here.

During the dark kingdom of Orzafeth’s ascendancy, a horde of Ogam warriors laid waste to the old kingdom of Wyllareth. The queen, Drydythya, valiantly tried to save as many of her subjects as possible by opening the gates of Ydroyas to all who could reach them but her act of goodwill created a crisis. The beleaguered port city’s population swelled from 16,000 to 32,000 people within a matter of weeks, bringing starvation, disease, and frequent riots. Drydythya begged the emperor for aid but unbeknownst to her the Imperial Court had recognized that Ydroyas, and by extension Wyllareth, could not be relieved in time. In his response, the emperor saluted the queen for her courage and sent 50 stone golems. Drydythya ordered all of the remaining ships to carry away as many people as possible and marched with the golems against the encroaching Ogam. The ensuing battle lasted six hours, during which the golems smashed hundreds of Ogam warriors and dozens of loathsome servitors of the Outer Beings, while the queen, avenging her dying realm, unleashed volleys of deadly magic.

Ultimately the golems fell during the assault and Drydythya’s magic was exhausted. No one today knows for sure what happened to her but the most commonly told tale is that she was sacrificed atop a pile of golem heads erected by the victorious Ogam. Regardless of what really happened, none of the locals will set foot near the Mound, and those sensitive to magic (divine or arcane) often claim to feel a pall of sadness descend on them if they draw near. The long-dead queen does in fact haunt the hill—either lost in sad reveries or writhing in fury over her loss. If a reasonably powerful people of Lawful Alignment were to approach, she might urge

them to take up her cause and destroy the Ogam once and for all. If they pledged to do so, she would reveal the location of her most prized possession: the *Royal Crown of Wyllareth*.



**Population Diagram: Purple = Suburban, Red = Settled, Blue = Borderland**

**Royal Crown of Wyllareth:** [by G.G.] This simple crown, the symbol of the monarchs of Wyllareth, is a one-inch-wide silver band inset with twenty thumbnail-sized moonstones, plus one more, palm-sized, and star-shaped, mounted above the brow. When worn, the crown radiates an aura of calm (all *fear* spells are neutralized within 20'; the otherworldly effects of the Outer Beings are nullified within 5'). Each of the twenty small moonstones acts similarly to a *ring of spell storing* and can hold one spell of up to third level. The wearer will instantly know what spells are stored in the crown. The main stone, however, will absorb up to fifty levels' worth of magic directed against the wearer (absorption is automatic unless the wearer wills it otherwise). Each level of absorbed magical energy may be discharged as a *magic missile* if the wearer desires. This counts as an attack, although the wearer may discharge as many *magic missiles* as desired in one round. The crown may be used by any character class. No creature of Chaotic Alignment may touch the crown without suffering considerable pain (1d6 damage per round of contact).

**Baalbeth Monolith:** [by G.G.] Also known as the "Dusk Spire" (a rough Alpathian translation of the Ogam name for the landmark), it is a hundred-foot-tall green obelisk, whose sides are covered with strange runes (a debased form of the old Carnifex runes) made of inset obsidian. The Dusk Spire is always cold to the touch. It is surrounded by a brownish fog that dims all light within a 20' radius, so it seems to be late evening near the monument during daylight hours. The obelisk stands in the midst of a small, spring-fed marsh that forms part of the source of the Morbek River. Alpathian wizards have been studying the Dusk Spire (and other monoliths) ever since the realm of Orzafeth was defeated. After centuries of intermittent research, however, the only things known for certain are that the obelisks are designed to store magical energy that is not native to the Prime Plane, they were fashioned of stone that is not native to Alpathia or the Known World, and that they pre-date the Ogam themselves by hundreds or thousands of years.

**Ruins of Ogamai:** [by G.G.] Although marked as ruins on the map, this site is a hundred-foot-wide blast crater fringed with broken shards of superheated glass. It is the remnant of an Ogam fortress blown to oblivion roughly thirty years ago by a skyship "loaned" to the Librarians



under the authority of Empress Eriadna—the crew thought they were simply testing new magical weaponry. The fortress itself had been little more than a collection of squared-off boulders piled in a rough pyramid, but the Librarians knew it concealed the entrance to a warren of tunnels that crisscrossed the mountains and served as a meeting place for several Ogam clans. Destroying it during a known Ogam festival, they reasoned, would sow chaos among the degenerate hill tribes, sever lines of communication, and likely kill several of their more influential leaders. While the fortress was indeed destroyed (along with several dozen warriors and a couple of chieftains), the attack simply spurred the Ogam to dig deeper into the mountains. This forced the Librarians to send agents into the tunnels themselves, a much more perilous and uncertain endeavor.

**Recent Events:** Both Antalian and Alphatian temples are present in Wyllareth, competing for supremacy. They're not alone. Obscure faiths dating back to the original Yanifey natives still exist, despite efforts from established temples to root them out. Since the Orzafeth Crusade, another pantheon has also made its appearance in the duchy: the Archons of Bettelwyn. Since before the old kingdom's catastrophic debacle, Wyllareth has had difficulties attracting settlers from the south. Mercenaries were paid to hold the land but most eventually turned to blackmail and banditry. Bettelwyn troops were subsequently sought to enforce peace and order once and for all. They succeeded. It became an honored tradition for certain Bettelwyn military, paladins and fighting clerics in particular, to serve "up north" for a number of years. These zealots beg for assignments at the stronghold of Adkazi at the Baalbethine Pass, for they hope to drench their *Ineffable Glaives of Faith* in Ogam blood. As the result of this military caste's lasting presence, temples to *The Seven* have been erected in many places in Wyllareth, which compete strongly with the older cults. People trust paladins because these knights get the job done. *And they all look really good too.* Locals in search of worthy spouses fall on top of one another to gain the favors of a knight. Many have married and are raising children, adding a growing layer to the duchy's ethnic, religious, and political mix. Ubdazi hosts the largest concentration of Bettelwyn troops which attracted population to that region but also altered its original character. Save for the Adkazi stronghold further west, this local town is a traditional starting point for major expeditions into the Beatha Spur and the Baalbeth Vale, via Baalbetha Tower.

**Armies of Wyllareth:** The duchy's army and navy count 3,500 troops, mostly holding towns—1,000 in Ydroyas, 770 in Gowola, and 500 each in Mafertat and Ubdazi. Land forces own a limited number of giant bears mounted by one or more riders on saddles or in leather-lined nacelles like those strapped to war elephants elsewhere. These fierce and treacherous beasts do reasonably well in hilly terrain while conventional cavalry works best in the open plains of Wyllareth. The latter explains why Wyllareth prioritized their *equine-opportunity* business: the duchy is a major supplier of warhorses to Bettelwyn. Making up about a third of land forces, Bettelwyners aren't fluent in the local patois. They rely on standard Alphatian to communicate. Wyllareth's love of cavalry resulted in only a tiny household fleet—three submersibles and a large sail ship, all based in Gowola. Known respectively as the *Haileabó*, *Tuinnín*, *Ochtapas*, and *Míolmór*, they patrol the coastline in search of Qeodim raiders. The duchess also commonly hires private vessels to assist her ships in their mission.



**Diplomacy:** Wyllareth's present military situation determines much of the duchy's politics. Being largely unpopulated and subject to internal banditry and Qeodim raids, the military is the province's greatest expenditure. Still smarting from the region's historic devastation, the successive dukes have paid a substantial part of their seigneurial budgets for household forces, mercenaries (now Bettelilyn knights, their retinues, and auxiliaries), as well as new stone fortifications protecting the main towns. Relations with Wyllareth's liege, King Edjer, are as cold as can be as a result of the duchy's refusal to dismiss its Bettelilyn banners. The king sees the knights as a threat to his authority, as they swore to serve the duchess alone. It was an affront he never forgave. With good reason, he remains uncertain of defeating them should he decide to launch a punitive raid into the defiant duchy. Instead, King Edjer uses blackmail to turn his other dominions against Wyllareth. As astute observers might have expected, the king strongly opposes the betrothal of the duchess's daughter to the Count of Västheim. Likewise, Queen Aberria of Foresthome has been a staunch critic of the duchy, as have Ambur, Floating Ar, and Randel. Azafeth officially opposes the presence of Bettelilyn knights, being a pawn of the Great Council, but secretly remains envious of such a formidable cohort—the marquess's paranoia against foreigners would probably spoil it all, however. The situation in Wyllareth fits perfectly with Bettelilyn's long term goals and, therefore, the two states are tacit allies at the expense of King Edjer. On the diplomatic side, Bettelilyn claims that these troops are *not* part of its army—technically, these are independent mercenaries who went to Wyllareth on their own accord and at the duchess's behest. The Great Council in Vertiloch finds Bettelilyn's thinly-veiled ingerence in the duchy's domestic affairs entirely regrettable, but Empress Eriadna—knowing what's really at stake—has declined to take action. When all is said and done, it's really just another day in Merry Old Alphatia.



This order of knights was created when the duchess began looking for mercenaries outside Frisland. A successful missionary from the Temple of Ardoryl—a consummate opportunist—saw the prospect for a private war against evil and its many benefits. He'd found evidence alluding to the existence of the Ogam and their Outer Being patrons written in ancient scrolls hidden at the Grand Basilica of the Magisterium. This prompted him to organize a company of knights and make an offer to the duchess that she couldn't possibly refuse. All with impeccable service records, these elite troops had spent a significant portion of their careers in Bettelilyn's armed forces, yet they required minimum payment. The Temple of Ardoryl quietly bankrolled their equipment, additional horses, and sea expeditions to faraway Wyllareth. A fair bit of medieval marketing painted an aura of sanctity over the mission, which struck a chord among *Companions of Ardoryl*—mostly paladins, war-clerics, and proselytizers. Since the order was established, it has become today a mark of distinction for young paladins and clerics to "do their bit" in the name of their patron immortal. A tour of duty lasts ten years when volunteers sign up. Before they leave, entire banners receive blessings at the *Grand Cathedral of the Shroud* in the Archdiocese of Quanfax, during a glorious ceremony performed in honor of their devotion and sacrifice.

With the permission of the Duchess of Wyllareth, the Right Reverend Monsignor Azrathalem, *Vicar General of the Order of the Light*—the knights' Grand Master—established his headquarters in Ubdazi soon after his first few banners arrived there. Individual lances (tactical groups of three to six knights and their retinues) were dispatched where needed to take over required law-enforcement responsibilities, in accord with the agreement between Azrathalem and the duchess. The remainder, the best of the best, was split between Ubdazi and Adkazi. As years went by, the order erected a cathedral to Ardoryl in Ubdazi and a citadel in which to settle for the long term. Thus began the *Second Crusade* against the minions of the Outer Beings.



Though rank and file warriors are unaware of the existence of the Scions of Antalia, suspicions are growing in the wake of the disappearances of some of their comrades in arms. Upper echelons, however, have not only identified but clearly linked the Scions to abductions in Wyllareth; Bettelyn equipment bearing personal marks of those taken, if not the latter's mutilated and desecrated remains, turned up in Ogam territory, inferring a connection between the goat herders and the dissident Västheimers. Officially, the Order considers the Scions dangerous spawns of chaos and rabble-rousing traitors to the empire who will be summarily executed if captured (after some predictably lengthy scorching of their anatomical extremities).

Top leaders of the Scions, however, adopted an exceedingly ambiguous attitude toward the Order. In a more immediate sense, the knights are Alphatians and therefore fair game as regards the ongoing bargain with the Ogam. When the final phase of the Scions' plan kicks in, however, the Scions will support the Order instead, at least indirectly. They view the knights as key pawns in their insidious game, setting up circumstances leading the Order to score critical victories against the Ogam—yet claiming credit for the crusaders' achievements. The Grand Master of the Order, whoever this may be at the time, may reluctantly become partial to this change of heart, but not the rank and file (should they ever discover the extent of the Scions' crimes against the Order). Everyone knows that harming a brother is tantamount to a personal challenge to the entire brotherhood, a gesture that will never be forgiven and will sooner than later be avenged. As a final word on this topic, it dawned on Scions that capturing a Paladin of Ardoryl is no idle business, for where a brother stands one or two more lurk nearby, watching each other's backs. This sort of endeavor has become more dangerous of late, as knights have been forewarned and sometimes set up ambushes.

**The Ark of Ardoryl:** In truth, the knights came to Wyllareth with a bit more than their swords and their faiths. Along with them arrived a holy artifact, obtained from the deeper vaults of the *Grand Reliquary of Bettelyn* just outside Citadel. The ark is carried to a battlefield only when confronting the greatest of evils. It comes in the form of a large chest about 10' long, 5' wide, and slightly higher, containing seven six-foot-long feathers of Ardoryl. An intricate pattern of overlapping eagles carved in silver and gold adorns the artifact. Large wings hold a circular mirror on the top, and sturdy poles extend on both sides to enable a worthy dozen paladins to carry it forth. All knights and clerics chant a battle hymn to summon the artifact's powers. A part of their own vitality is sacrificed in the process (in game terms, a tenth of their hit points, *rounded up*). A blinding light then shines, defeating any darkness, natural or wicked, followed

by bolts of divine fire striking all that is evil within 300 yards. The overall damage inflicted upon the opposing army is equal to five times the knights' sacrificed hit points. For example, a hundred Level 4 warriors could inflict:

$$100 \times 5 \times 4 / 10 = 200 \text{ hp (sacrificed by the knights)}$$

$$200 \times 5 = 1,000 \text{ hp (inflicted upon the enemy force)}$$

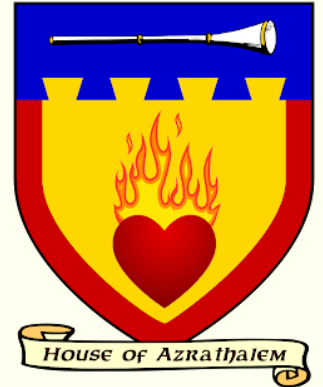
The damage is then divided equally among opposing troops and their monsters (no save). On an individual basis, however, any foe sustaining at least 50% damage must save vs. Death Ray or be *disintegrated* on the spot. Foes who aren't evil (taken here in a general sense) are stunned instead of being *disintegrated*. The chanting requires one Turn to affect the relic's holy powers. The blinding light lasts during the final 1d4+2 rounds of the incantation and illuminates all within a 300' radius. At night, foes incur a -2 penalty to hit, to their Armor Classes, and to their saving throws while blinded. Damage is otherwise instantaneous. The relic can only be used this way once per year. Therefore the knights aren't likely to squander its power on a skirmish or take the risk of carrying it into hostile territory without good cause.

The artifact also inflicts 3d10 passive damage per round (no save) to anyone coming within 30' if they aren't faithful to Ardoryl, except for horses and other four-legged companions associated with the knights. Animals, unless accustomed to the ark, do not willingly approach as they can sense its aura of power. Anyone of Chaotic Alignment or who is intrinsically evil must save vs. spell each round; their eyes melt if they fail. The lid of the ark can only be removed with the proper prayer. Paladins carrying the artifact are chosen from among the most pious and valorous (seventh level minimum) and are tasked with protecting the holy relic with their lives. If *detect magic* or *dispel magic* spells are cast upon the ark, spellcasters must save vs. spell with a -4 penalty or fall on their backs; footwear and socks are also knocked off and flung 3d10 feet away. The ark does have one weakness: it does not affect the undead at all.

## Illustrious Wyllarethians

### **Monsignor Azrathalem, Vicar General of the Order of the Light**

This Bettellyner is first and foremost a missionary cleric for the Temple of Ardoryl. He bears no ill feelings toward anyone, as long as they eventually adopt his faith. His grand project—the Order of the Light—merely is a tool to achieve his goal: the complete conversion of Wyllarethians to the Cult of the Seven, and the establishment of the duchy as the point from which to further spread of the faith into Ar and the rest of Greater Frisland. It can be said that Monsignor Azrathalem does *not* wish an end to the mission against the Ogam, for it would invalidate much of the reasons for the Order's presence up north. Therefore, a complete military victory remains undesirable. For the sake of the *Greater Good*, he will quietly scuttle any scheme by Scions of Antalia to facilitate a military triumph on the field, should he become aware of their game.



As the conflict with the Ogam developed, the Vicar General became disappointed with the goat herders' impermeability to the benefits of honoring Ardoryl. How people could possibly prefer the Outer Beings to his patron remains entirely beyond his comprehension. Yet, he hasn't given up on swaying to his views whatever pitiful Ogam his knights drag back to his citadel at Ubdazi. Captives are taken to the dungeons, locked up, and healed for the purpose of undergoing extensive experiments in proselytism. All avenues are explored, from torture to psychological warfare, re-education/indoctrination, drugs, alcohol, demonstrations of Ardoryl's magical prowess, carrot-and-stick tactics, alternating periods of magical charms, medieval brain-washing, and the use of whores of either genders. Hired help was quietly secured to study methods used at the *Lighthouse Penitentiary* in Ar's Upper Harpy District. Monsignor Azrathalem promptly discarded the idea when he discovered the technique implied using harpies, a concept entirely sickening to Bettellyners worth their holy salt, even for the sake of the *Greater Good*.

Meanwhile, the Vicar General has forged a lasting relationship with the duchess. He's taken every conceivable step to be of service to her, knowing that his mission is fully predicated upon her decision to welcome his order of knights—against her own liege's demands. The duchess is therefore the weakest link in his plan, and he worries about this day and night. Slowly and skillfully, Monsignor Azrathalem has begun the task of swaying her to the Cult of Ardoryl. A talented prelate and his ecclesiastical retinue have been dispatched to Mafertat, officially as a liaison between the duchess and the Right Reverend, but mostly to gradually expose her to the benefits of honoring Ardoryl. In his opinion, only when she becomes a true faithful will the holy mission be guaranteed to continue. Her conversion to the Cult of The Seven would be a momentous event in the duchy, one requiring a solemn and very public ceremony at the Cathedral of Ardoryl in Ubdazi. It would be a decisive political statement. This also is the reason why the Vicar General issued a statement to his troops that adopting Wyllarethian

spouses is an honorable and praiseworthy pursuit, as well as a duty to the Temple of Ardoryl. Cash is dispensed for newlyweds, which further attracts candidates among the local population. If enough of her subjects adopt Bettelyn's faith, then the duchess would greatly enhance her popularity by doing the same. Alas, such a decision may very well provoke a civil war in Greater Frisland, which is guaranteed to escalate into a larger conflict (a possibility that hasn't escaped the keen minds of Ogam shamans).

**Appearance:** [by J.D.P.] The Right Reverend Monsignor is tall, stately, magnetic, and in his mid-to-late 40s. He has typical white Alphatian skin, and startling bright blue eyes that appear to see to the foundations of one's very soul. As with all knights of his order, he keeps his head shaved except for a round swatch of black hair on the back tied into a short ponytail. Azrathalem's features are regular and very handsome. His short, manicured beard begins under his ears and ends beneath the cleft in his chin: it shows a few silver hairs amid the black. The Grand Master's baritone voice owns the facility for bellowing battlefield orders, then softening moments later to comfort a frightened child. It is whispered that he requires only three sentences to convert unbelievers to Ardoryl. The diplomatic talents he employs are exceptional, and Azrathalem makes certain every individual he speaks to receives the full force of the dynamic personality behind that puncturing blue gaze. He wears the colors of white, gold, and deep purple. Azrathalem is highly religious and devoted to his immortal benefactor. Yet, he fights an internal conflict between what his heart tells him about goodness and the needs of his functions as the leader of a military order. Between where the *Greater Good* ends and where evil starts sometimes lies a fine, tenuous line.

C21, AC-3, hp44, MV 90' (30'), AT 1 sword or spell, Dmg 1d8+3 or by spell, Save C21+5, ML11, AL L; St13, In15, Wi17, Dx10, Co12, Ch16. **Magical Items:** +2 *plate armor of holiness*, +1 *shield of grounding*, +2 *chaos slayer*, and +2 *medallion of incorruptibility*, and *ring of Equus*. **Special Abilities:** Turning Undead as a cleric; as a Companion of Ardoryl: Adept—*heal, minor contrition, protection from evil*; Disciple—*ardor, cure affliction, exorcism*; Witness—*cure greater affliction, Ardoryl's blessing, major contrition*; Messenger—*cure minor magical disease, immunity to poison*; Herald—*galvanize, rally*; Prophet—*cure greater magical disease, Ardoryl's fortitude*.

**Note:** Clerics of Ardoryl may wield swords only against foes known to be inherently evil or of the Chaotic persuasion. They are otherwise required to use a mace (Azrathalem's is a +1 magical weapon).

**Armor of Holiness:** This suit of plate armor generates a 30' aura that bestows any inherently evil or chaotic foe within range a -2 penalty to hit and to saving throws. Open hand contact by these same foes also inflicts upon them 1d4+2 damage per round (no save).

**Chaos Slayer:** If wielded against an inherently evil or chaotic foe and an unmodified score of 18 or better is scored, this sword causes the inflicted wound to ignite. Flames cannot be extinguished with anything less than a *dispel magic*, and last 1d4+1 rounds during which they inflict 1d6 points of additional damage per round (no save). The burn wound may bear lasting consequences (10% per round the fire burned). Its location is determined as follows (d%): 01-10 *sword-bearing arm*, 11-26 *opposite arm*, 27-58 *torso/abdomen*, 59-74 *left leg*, 75-90 *right leg*, 91-00 *head*. Adjust/reroll as appropriate for non-human creatures or as common-sense

dictates. Multiple hits to the same spot extend the duration of the burn. A burned arm or leg is permanently withered (–1 penalty to Dexterity and Strength). A withered arm cannot be used in combat; if the sword-bearing arm is withered, the victim must gain the proficiency to fight with the opposite arm or suffer an additional –2 penalty to hit. A leg injury reduces speed and results in a pronounced limp. With an injury to the torso or abdomen, the victim incurs a –2 penalty to Constitution and a permanent loss of an additional 1d6 hit points. With a head injury, the victim suffers a –2 Charisma penalty. A *cureall* or *wish* is needed to restore injured parts to their former glory.

**Shield of Grounding:** This magical device diverts energy from electrical attacks, such as a lightning bolt, a blue dragon's breath weapon, and similar powers. The electrical energy is entirely absorbed, including its area of effect, and harmlessly dispersed. The shield only needs to lie within the attack's area of effect to function.

**Medallion of Incorruptibility:** This magical device provides a +2 bonus to Armor Class and saving throws, and blocks mind-controlling effects including *charm* spells, *fear*, and innate mind-bending abilities of Outer Being minions. Whosoever wears this medallion shall be stricken by a fiery bolt (20d6 damage; save for half) if knowingly transgressing expectations of Lawful behavior, although allowances can be made for the sake of the *Greater Good*. Once it is worn, this medallion cannot be removed from a living person short of a *wish* spell. An *analysis* spell only has a 10% chance of revealing the part of the enchantment about behavioral requirements and the need for a *wish* spell to remove the medallion. A *detect good* spell will evidence an aura of utter Lawfulness beaming from the device.

**Ring of Equus:** This magical ring is carved from hoof material. On command, it summons a warhorse from the Ethereal Plane. In bright sunlight, it appears white. In dim conditions, the horse glows slightly and seems somewhat translucent. In the Prime Plane, the creature is equivalent to a warhorse of good value, although it can only be hit with +1 or better magical weapons. Twice a day, it can be made to ride into the Ethereal Plane, where it may fly at twice the speed of a normal warhorse or return to the Prime Plane. When dismounted, the steed vanishes and its essence returns to the ring. If the creature is destroyed in combat, the ring disintegrates. This mount does not ever tire, require food, leave hoofprints, or produce a clattering sound like a normal horse, as it glides just a hair above the surface upon which it treads. It does, however, nicker, chuff, and snort like a living horse. If damaged, the steed can only heal when returned to the ring; it does so at the rate of 1 hit point per hour during which it cannot be summoned.

## Her Highness Elyasatham, *Duchess of Wyllareth*

It so happens that the illustrious duchess and those of her House bear a dark secret. A distant forebearer was made the object of a powerful curse for spurning the feelings of a ruthless sorceress. He died in the process, and the remainder of this line was left to suffer the consequence: every first born in his blood line comes to this world as an incubus or a succubus, as the case may be. Terrible creatures these, for they can quite easily conceal their true nature from divination magic and show themselves for what they are not—neither would they wish to, being perfectly content with their fates and the games they play with unsuspecting humans.



Lady Elyasatham is the first born of her generation. There was no other issue, somewhat unsurprisingly. She succeeded her parents to the ducal throne when they inexplicably abdicated and retired from public life to somewhere in the Kingdom of Blackheart where they held property. Soon afterward, she married the Count of Hosseta's younger brother. She became pregnant during their honeymoon at *Nautilus Manor* in beautiful Arogansa but suffered an accident a few months afterward amid circumstances that to this day remain unclear. Her unborn son was, alas, lost. She had a daughter the following year, thus her first born. Her husband disappeared less than a fortnight later, the evidence pointing at his abduction during a bungled military raid in the Baalbeth Vale. Jewelry that had belonged to the late duke was subsequently recovered from a captured goat-herder. Again, circumstances surrounding the duke's abduction remain confusing, a fact compounded by the premature execution of all those more or less responsible. The Count of Hosseta, suspicious about his younger brother's death, made thinly veiled accusations, but wasn't able to prove anything. Relations between the two neighboring dominions have suffered appallingly since this incident took place.

In the wake of this event, Her Highness Elyasatham obtained from an undisclosed source a scroll inscribed with a powerful curse. She unleashed its magic against the Ogam as a gesture demonstrating her grief and anger at the hated goat-herders. The public reading of the spell was done at the seigneurial palace in Mafertat, amply advertised among Wyllarethian aristocracy. It provided the closing for a masked ball of epic proportions, which no member of local Alphatian society wanted to miss. The recitation from the strange scroll, fashionably entertaining to watch, invoked deliciously wicked language and ominous shadows that thoroughly thrilled the wizardly guests. Its magic did cause an enormous amount of anguish among the targeted shamans and their people hundreds of miles away. It killed every first born among their livestock, of which they own plenty, for it is currency among these nomads.

From an Ogam point of view, this "goat magic" was a very "naughty" thing. First born goatlings and lambs are sacred animals that are offered to Outer Being patrons. Tribal shamans promptly held a parlay, at the end of which they issued a decree calling for revenge against the duchess and *her* first born. The Ogam mounted a series of attacks against Adkazi and Ubdazi, and raids deep into the duchy. The ducal army nearly collapsed and civil unrest raged. Mercenary companies rebelled and took advantage of the lawlessness to turn to banditry, making it even



easier for Ogam raiders to get through. A few attacks on the palace almost succeeded, were it not for the duchess's skill in holding her own keep.

Lady Elyasatham knew full well what she was doing when she cast her spell against the Ogam. It was all part of an elaborate scheme. Her first move was to entertain her daughter's betrothal to the Count of Västheim, because the neighboring county seemed to have the uncanny ability to prevent Ogam incursions into its lands. It was the safe place to be and the duchess quickly sent her daughter there. It also was shrewd business on her part, for a marriage would seal an alliance with a worthwhile party, *one with the money she lacked*. By then, Her Highness was already negotiating with a Bettelyn prelate for a reliable mercenary force. She henceforth welcomed to her lands the new *Order of the Light* and its so-called Vicar General. It was the second step of her plan: by openly associating with these knights, she clearly aligned herself politically with Bettelyn—another ally, *one with the army she lacked*. A phalanx of paladins sworn to protect her with their lives also came off as an irresistibly arousing prospect.

Having achieved her two preliminary goals, it is now a matter of time before events escalate into civil war. The duchess understood that her royal liege, King Edjer, would never accept her deliberately defiant attitude toward him. She now expects him to attack the duchy and confront her knights. Considering the king's fiscal abuses of Västheim's wealth, she's nearly certain the count would join her in opposing their liege. Bettelyn, all too eager to protect their presence in Wyllareth, would inevitably intervene, widening the conflict to Randel, Foresthome, and finally Vertiloch. *And the price for peace?* Surely the restoration of Wyllareth to its pre-Orzafeth royal status could be negotiated in the face of the Ogam attempting to exploit the ensuing chaos. The duchess had long ago foreseen that the Scions of Antalia would play their "secret" card in her high-stakes gamble, unlocking the diplomatic impasse of a full-blown war in Alphatia—her grandfather, an incubus, had seen to it that an obscure follower of Loki suggested such an idea. If so, then all forces involved would suddenly turn on the unsuspecting Ogam. Empress Eriadna would ill afford to ignore such an opportunity, should word of its possibility reach her at the right time. This master plot had prompted the duchess's unfortunate injury earlier in her married life because she needed a daughter as her first born to secure an alliance with the House of Sidharram. As to the ultimate fate of cults in Wyllareth, Lady Elyasatham couldn't care less. She has no interest whatsoever in immortals, and Lawful victims are sweetest of all—thus, all the better for her troubles!

As a side note, the duchess has been seeking for years the legendary *Crown of Wyllareth*. Alas, her efforts have failed so far. Somehow, the spirit of Queen Drydythya trusted neither her distant successor, nor those in her service, regardless of their Alignments. Their failure to yield clues from the *Mound of Faces* puzzled many a paladin of her personal guard. The duchess feels her victory would not be complete without this symbol of authority and legitimacy.

**Appearance:** [by J.D.P.] Duchess Elyasatham is a gorgeous voluptuous woman with long, wavy, midnight black hair and sparkling deep green eyes that give no hint of her dual nature. She maintains a healthy, vivacious appearance centered around 45 years of age. Her white skin contrasts most effectively with black and dark red clothing; she wears her hair fastened with red jeweled clips. Delicate features call attention to her seductive full mouth. Elyasatham's reputation as a tragically bereaved mother and spouse brings her sympathy from some and

helps cover the Machiavellian side that continuously plots and plans. The duchess has, so far, been able to pull the wool over the eyes of a powerful prelate and his paladins; at the same time, she has also made a mockery of an entire theocracy. It's anyone's guess what she'll do as war approaches: but wise bets should be placed on Elyasatham to come out of any debacle relatively unscathed.

HD18, AC0, hp70, MV 120' (40')/240' (80') flying, AT 2 claws or 1 sting or spell effect, Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1 or 1d6+poison or by spell, Save F18, ML9, AL special; St14, In19, Wi13, Dx16, Co n/a, Ch17. **Magical Items:** +2 *dagger of ethereality*, *scarab of protection*, *ring of invisibility detection*, *talisman of the abyss*. **Special Abilities:** as a magic-user level 18; else, see below.

Succubi and incubi are malicious spirits born in the bodies of humans or elves of great Charisma. They gain experience levels in a character class as a normal character would. Succubi, used here as a general term, can adopt any character class during their youth but cannot change after making a choice (only an inherently evil or Chaotic patron can be honored as a cleric, ruling out druidism). They have the ability to completely mask their true Alignment if divination magic is cast upon them, displaying instead an ethos of their choice. Likewise, once they reach maturity, their bodies cease to age, although they can give themselves the appearance of aging. At puberty, succubi learn to access their true form, which includes red skin, a pair of large batwings, a forked tongue, a tail with a sting, wicked claws, and twisted horns.

In addition to normal class abilities, once per day succubi in either form may send dreams to known victims during their sleep to influence their feelings. A successful Wisdom check or immunity to *charms* and mind control negate such dreams and block any further attempts. If the check fails, another dream may be sent the following night. As long as the checks fail, the dreams' influence builds up, each time adding a cumulative penalty to the roll. If a victim meets the succubus in person while influenced, a final Wisdom check is made with a penalty equal to the number of dreams. If this check fails again, the victim will seek a romantic liaison.

Succubi in either form can cast a special *charm* during physical intercourse with a partner. This *charm* is powerful enough that it does not permit a saving throw. If the victim happens to be immune to such abilities at that time (such as wearing a magical protection, for example), the victim suffers an arcane death instead. Children born to incubus fathers or succubus mothers will remain permanently *charmed* by the malevolent spirits. Nothing short of a *wish* will undo this type of spell. During physical intercourse, succubi can also peruse at will the minds of their victims as they would open books and implant false memories. If the *charm* is broken, a *cureall* is still required to restore original memories. A successful *exorcism* will expel a spirit from its host who then retains all memories of past events and class skills; Alignment on the other hand is likely to be the spirit's opposite—undeniably Lawful.

Though ancient succubi have plenty of skills related to their chosen classes, they cannot implant into someone's mind a skill they do not possess or a skill conflicting with the subject's class limitations. Once a skill is implanted, it will be remembered after an exorcism. Suppressed skills always return after an exorcism.

Although succubi in any form can only be hit with +1 or better magical weapons, they remain able to get past a *protection from evil* spell. Their innate powers in any form also include: at will—*ESP, infravision, clairvoyance, clairaudience* (as the potion); and twice a day—*hold person, wall of fire, and teleport object*. Succubi are immune to *charm*, poison, fire, or lack of air. Poison from their stings is of the paralyzation type (as a ghoul's). Succubi cannot heal naturally or with magic. However, while in their wicked form, they have the option of draining a level of experience from a victim during physical intercourse (one per round of exposure). Each drained level heals 1d8+1 points of prior damage to a succubus. Worn armor and magical protections do not modify a succubus's defenses unless they exceed natural Armor Class when combined.

**Dagger of Ethereality:** On command, this finely wrought dagger enables the owner to shift back and forth to or from the ethereal plane, or cause someone wounded by the blade to be sent there (saving throw negates).

**Talisman of the Abyss:** This device looks like small black sphere which the owner can conceal in a pouch. If thrown on the floor, the device shatters and creates a gate to a negative plane. Within 1d4+1 rounds, an appropriate number of 10HD screaming fiends come out and attack anyone they find. The gate closes when the last visitor is killed or escapes back to its home plane.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his gracious permission to use his work on the Ogam and Outer Beings, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances and her editorial contributions.*



# Frisland: Maegryn of Searock

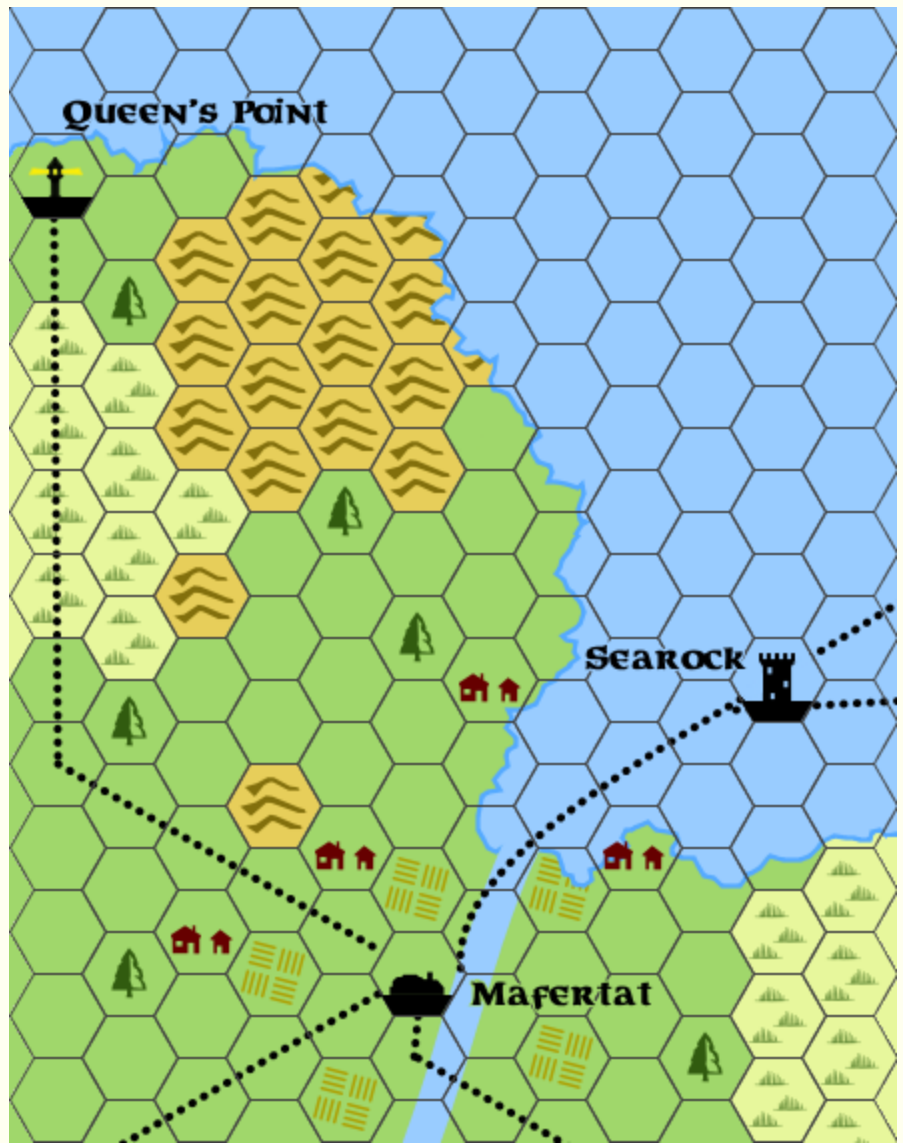
by **Geoff Gander** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*When Geoff Gander and I chatted about the previous article, he mentioned he was curious about the story behind the Duchess of Wyllareth's ancestor—the one who brought the curse upon their House. The previous chapter having exceeded 7,500 words, I decided to punt the idea for a later day. Catching the ball in midflight, Geoff wrote this precious nugget:*

Maegryn is a reclusive spellcaster who made her home on the island known in Wyllareth as Searock, near Mafertat, more than a century ago. Calling the damp, salt-encrusted, gull-infested rock an island is at best charitable, as her equally damp and salt-encrusted tower occupies almost every square inch of it. Wyllarethians who are aware of Maegryn believed her to be long dead, but whenever storms lash the shores around Mafertat, the superstitious are prone to recall the legendary rage and spitefulness of the sea-witch.

**History:** In truth, Maegryn, in whose veins runs the blood of generations of Antalian sea-witches and Alphatian mages, is the last in her line. She is potent combination which, combined with her passionate nature, produced a powerful, temperamental spellcaster whose mood could affect the very weather around her. Her family was initially well connected to the ducal house of Wyllareth, and Maegryn spent part of her youth as a courtier in Mafertat, where she became known for her forceful, but joyful, personality. Her high spirits caught the eye of the duke's eldest son, Dorelion, and the two enjoyed a romantic liaison.

The time soon came for Dorelion to spend a season at the imperial court in Sundsvall to complete his education and he left her his ring as a promise. He soon forgot Maegryn amid the parties and trysts with girls who had more distinguished bloodlines. In the meantime Maegryn waited in Mafertat and obsessed over her promise ring while planning her marriage. Her closest friends, who had connections in Sundsvall



**Searock Island - 2 Miles per Hex**

and had learned what Dorelion was doing, advised her to forget the future duke and find her own happiness. She would have none of it. Dorelion returned months later, with a young bride. Devastated, Maegryn withdrew for weeks while Mafertat suffered the worst weather ever recorded.

Suspecting the truth and eager to respond to demands from the citizenry to do something about the bad weather, Dorelion's father commanded his son to reason with Maegryn, or at least to formally request the return of the ring as honor and tradition demanded. Dorelion had other ideas and instead assured Maegryn that his feelings for her were sincere and that his marriage was a political arrangement. He managed to string her along for several months as his mistress until he inherited his father's title and announced the impending birth of his own heir. He accorded Maegryn no status at court and instructed her to return to Searock.

Maegryn withdrew under a cloud (literally) and it was only later, when the full extent of how she had been used crystallized in her mind, that she sought revenge. She consulted the texts of her maternal ancestors, and from those discovered dark practices in which she invoked the tempests to curse the ducal family. Dorelion died in agony, but the true impact of the curse, which has persisted to the present day, would not be known until the following generation came of age.

Although most people who are aware of Maegryn today believe she is dead, Lady Elyasatham is under no such illusion. Currently, the succubus-duchess is content to ignore Maegryn so long as she keeps to herself. In fact, Elyasatham is more than a little grateful to the reclusive woman, without whose bitterness she would not have existed in her current form.

**Description:** At first glance Maegryn is a tall, striking woman of "pure" Alphantian extraction but her ice-blue eyes originate more from her Antalian ancestry. Not that anyone would notice, as she has not been seen in Frisland for generations and is presumed dead by most people. Unlucky looters have discovered the hard way that Maegryn is very much alive.

Because she receives few visitors, she has long since stopped bothering with her appearance. Her long, wavy black hair is unruly and often bears several forgotten writing implements (shoved there during one of her fits of research), while her once-fine gowns have grown threadbare and food-stained. She frequently mumbles to herself as she wanders about her domain, and anyone taking the time to listen notices that almost half of what she says is invective against Dorelion and his descendants. However, while Maegryn often relives the more unfortunate episodes of her life, she is still very much aware of her surroundings and is constantly in tune with the beacon stone of her tower, which alerts her of any intruders.

**Personality:** Maegryn's centuries of isolation have done little for her social graces. She dispenses with pleasantries and is prone to changing the subject of a discussion if it no longer interests her. She feels no shame in walking out on a person, even in mid-conversation, if she decides they are not useful. She is equally rude to aristocrats and commoners; although if the person she is speaking to has an interest in sea magics she can become quite animated. Vocal opponents of Elyasatham will receive almost cordial treatment—until she tires of them and shows them the door.

The sad truth is that Maegryn has spent so long in self-imposed exile, wallowing in bitterness, that she has almost forgotten the other facets of her personality, including the ones that charmed Dorelion in the first place. If she were presented with a reason to rouse herself and devote her still-considerable energies to a cause, she might begin to come out of her shell and regain part of her old self.

## Searock Island

Searock Island juts out of the sea roughly twelve miles northeast of Mafertat. Nothing significant happened here throughout much of recorded history, except for a few instances of Antalian sailors dropping anchor to smoke their herring catches when there was room enough to do so. Even when the Kingdom of Wyllareth was at its peak, Searock was considered to be little more than a navigational hazard during rough storms. All that changed when Maegryn's ancestor, a young Alphatian mage named Alzoreth, bought the island on the advice of his Antalian bride, Hildrun, who had been a sea witch in what is now Västheim.

Alzoreth had initially ventured north with the emperor's blessing to study the magical secrets of the relatively recently conquered Antalian peoples, as the imperial court hoped that such knowledge might give them an edge against their chief rival, Thyatis. While Alzoreth did indeed learn many secrets once he had gained the trust of eldest women—in most Antalian communities, sea magic was considered a womanly art—he also fell in love with the daughter of the sea witch of the village in which he was staying. He soon married Hildrun and their children proved to be proficient in the magical arts.



Not long afterward, land became available in the newly re-established Duchy of Wyllareth, which was still recovering from the campaign against Orzafeth. Hildrun, who was a proficient sea witch in her own right, sensed that Searock was an especially potent place because it lay at the confluence of a number of prevailing storm fronts. Although the initial residence was modest, successive generations built it up until it became the rambling dwelling it is today, dominated by a tall tower. Even the untrained eye can perceive the clash of different architectural styles of various sections of the abode. Maegryn's contribution was to install a beacon stone at its topmost level, which shines so brightly at night that its glow can be seen up to eight miles away in clear weather.

As Maegryn lives alone, more than half of the estate is now unused. Many rooms on the lower levels are filled with decaying furniture and other detritus or have been locked up for so long that their contents are now forgotten. Maegryn's chambers are on the two topmost levels, which are high enough that she has a commanding view of the sea. She is served by stone golems and a handful of water and air elementals (which contribute to the overall mustiness of the place). She is able to magically create enough food and water to make it unnecessary for her to ever leave.

## Dark Secrets

What few people know is that Antalian sea witchcraft came about more than a thousand years ago as a result of a blood pact made between a handful of clans and a declining community of spellcasting sea hags. The pact, which would be in effect so long any woman descended from one of those Antalian clans practiced sea magic, stipulated that one in five practitioners would eventually become a sea hag herself. Although the details of the original pact have largely been forgotten, the close-knit community of sea-witches is all too aware of this prediction and has been known to take drastic measures when one of their number shows signs of transforming.

Maegryn has begun to turn into a sea hag but is unaware of what is happening because she has no dealings with the Antalian sea-witches. The slow transformation will stop if she lifts the curse on Elyasatham's family; it will reverse entirely if she either abandons the use of sea witchcraft or slays (or has someone slay in her name) the sole surviving sea hag with whom her ancestors forged the blood pact. Although Maegryn has not yet begun to transform physically, she can use some of the sea hag abilities.

**Maegryn of Seawatch:** MU16, AC6, hp 38, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 weapon or 1 drain or 1 spell or special, Dmg 2d4+2 or by spell or special, Save MU16, ML8, AL C; St9, In15, Wi13, Dx16, Co14, Cha7. **Magical Items:** *dagger +2 of returning* (Expert-level weapon mastery), *Dorelion's ring*, and *beacon shard*. **Special Abilities:** *cause fear* (anyone within 10' of her must save vs. Spells with a -6 penalty or flee in fear for 1d20+5 rounds, once per day); *energy drain* (by touch, currently usable three times per day).

**Dorelion's Ring:** this ring is a simple gold band inset with a star-shaped emerald. Dorelion gave these rings to all of his girlfriends but Maegryn's is unique in that it is actually magical (the randy noble smartened up once he realized what he had done). The object functions as a *ring of protection +1*. It was attuned to him so that its bearer would always know if he was alive and roughly where he was. The unexpected side effect of this enchantment is that it is actually attuned to all of Dorelion's line which essentially means that Maegryn always knows where Elyasatham is (up to 100 miles, plus or minus 100 feet) and her state of health. The duchess does not know this ring exists but would love to obtain it if she knew about it.

**The Beacon Stone:** a six-foot-tall, hexagonal pillar of quartz inscribed with runes related to the sun, it is one of Maegryn's greatest achievements. Initially based on the magical light from a regular Alphantian lighthouse, Maegryn mixed in the traditional magics of the Antalian sea-witch. Although it functions as a lighthouse, the beacon stone also creates a permanent magical field with an eight-mile radius. It detects any man-sized object or creature approaching (at sea, below the surface, or in the air). The information is sent through a shard of the beacon stone which Maegryn always keeps on her person. The beacon stone also shields her tower from scrying. Spells directed at its owner have a 20% chance of failure as long as she stands within 100 feet of the stone.

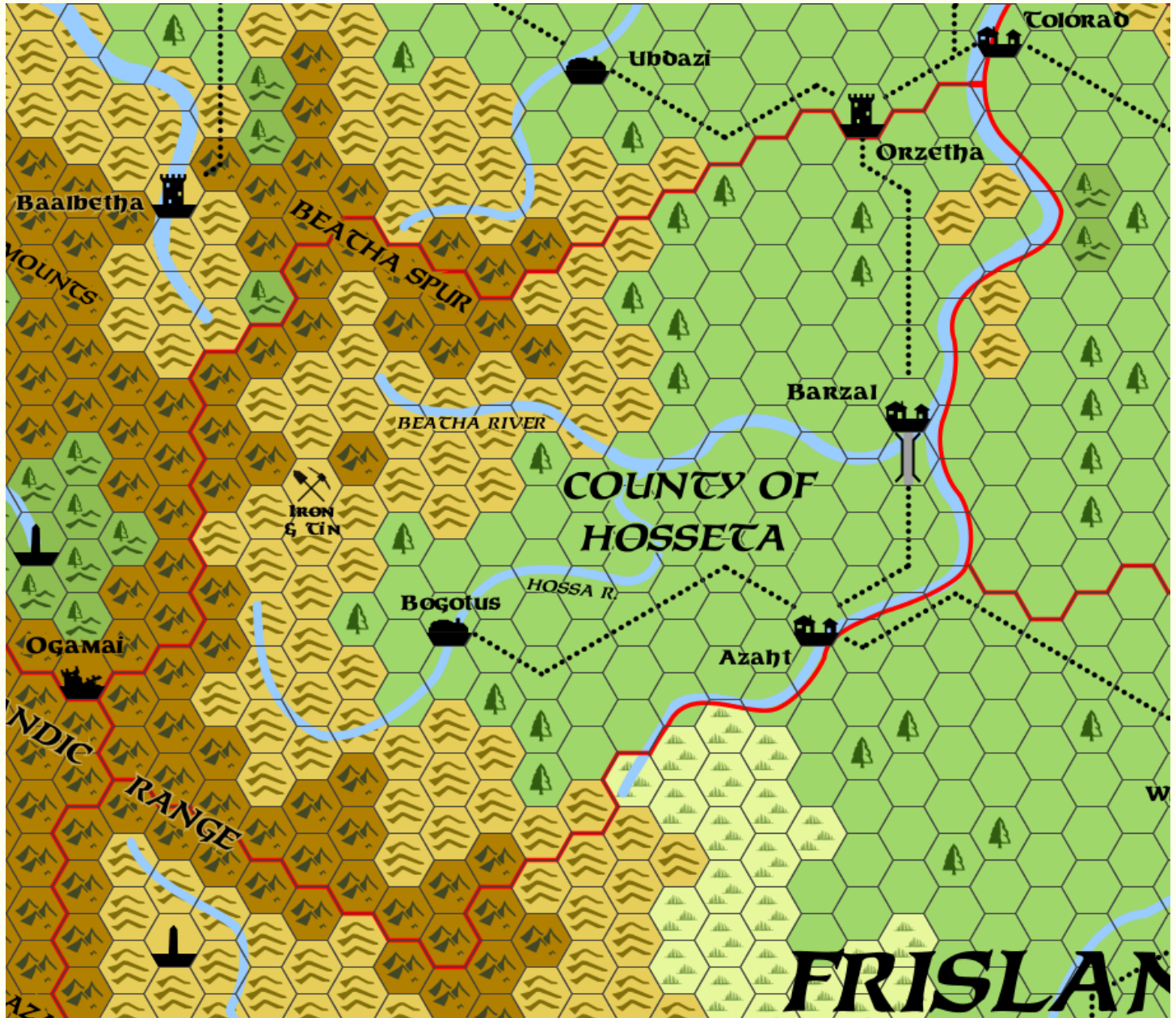
*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for this article and to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial contributions.*



# Frisland: The County of Hosseta

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*Bulwark of Freedom, Inheritors of the Glorious Banner, Shining Heart of Frisland and Greatest County of them all. . . Not everyone agrees, but Hossetan inflated pride is easily pardoned thanks to their popular beers and fine chocolates.*

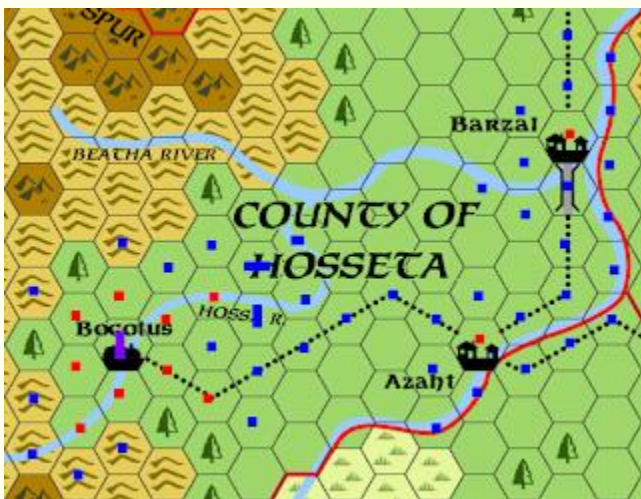


**County of Hosseta - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

Hosseta is the smallest of Frislandic dominions. Its origins go back to a small Alpathian kingdom carved out of the wilderness before the time of Old Argonath. Tucked between the Malfati River and the northern Kerothar Range, it survived the unkindness of time and war. After the ill-fated Orzafeth crusade had foundered, its old dynasty was replaced as the result of its duplicity in the plot to misinform imperial circles. When the Kingdom of Greater Frisland was reestablished, the small realm returned in the form of a county subject to royal authority in Shiell with imperial supervision from Sundsvall.

About 130 miles north to south and 120 miles east to west, Hosseta's plains rise westward from the Malfati River to the Kerothar foothills, culminating with the Beatha Spur in the north and the Frilandic Range in the west. The Beatha and Hossa Rivers bisect the county, ensuring well irrigated farmland. Aside from cattle-raising in settled areas, mining is the mainstay of the Hossetan economy, producing mostly iron and tin. Other specialties include clockmaking, banking, and chocolate confection. Climate is similar to Shiell's though much drier as the result of mountains in the west blocking moisture.

**Population:** A population of nearly 85,000 inhabitants stretches mostly along the rivers, from the seat of the county at Bogotus to Barzal and Azah't. Bogotus boasts 8,500 people, or one tenth of the county's entire population. Three-quarters of Hosseta's lands, however, remain wilderness. Local faith mostly centers around cults of Alpathian immortals, ancient Yanifey beliefs being relegated to the county's underworld. The map below illustrates the location and density of population (**Purple** = suburban, **Red** = settled, **Blue** = borderland).



Common Hossetans are a mix of Alpathian and Yanifey with very little Antalian. The latter are generally seen as undesirable heirs to a race of bloodthirsty raiders. As in the rest of Greater Friland, local aristocracy is of pure Alpathian ancestry. Dwarves are welcome and actively sought after as miners and fine brewers. These are a hardy bunch, headstrong, disinclined to entertain obscure religious debates, and who will defend their excavations against Ogam intrusions. The count has pursued efforts to attract dwarves to this region because of this. Gnomes are also welcome, as they've proven their talents in gem-cutting, accounting, and banking. Halflings are tolerated because they're usually quiet and observant of local culture, as well as talented chocolate makers. They import cocoa beans directly from Davania, through private sources. Elves, on the other hand, aren't so appreciated. They are seen as uppity and unmanly—no doubt the result of dwarven influence in the region. Repression against anything suspected of bearing ties to the Ogam remains brutal at best. Visitors of dark complexion, such as Isle of Dawn Nithians, are carefully watched when not turned away at the borders. To sum it up, neither the very fair nor the swarthy are appreciated in this place.

**Challenges:** Hosseta has had to cope with two very real threats throughout its history. Ogam raids from the Baalbeth Vale and the Ogamai area stand as clear and present threats. The town of Bogotus is therefore heavily fortified and vigilance remains high in the neighboring hills. The presence of three neighboring states, each much larger and more powerful, fostered a wholly defensive mentality in Bogotus. The only time a past monarch agreed to sending an expeditionary force—during the Orzafeth Crusade—it was lost entirely, leaving the kingdom dangerously exposed. This mentality created a cultural idea among Hossetans that they are an island amid a sea of hostility and barbarism. Somehow they believe themselves above all who

surround them, thriving in the face of their “larger” neighbors’ arrogance (Hossetans would never say “greater”).

In local opinion, the county is the *Bulwark of Freedom*, single-handedly protecting the whole of eastern Frisland from the nefarious Ogam, a sentiment no one else shares. Inhabitants see themselves as the best thing after Stoutfellow popped corn because they are united, obedient, and determined to defend what’s theirs—which is true. More than anywhere else in Greater Frisland, this population identifies with its leaders. This mindset led people to be observant of the dos and don’ts of their society, verbally aggressing those who dare defy their well-ordered habits. Following the general sentiment that life ought to be nice, clean, and orderly, people are likely to get riled at the sight of littering, disturbing the peace, jumping lines in a shop, and generally acting in a contradictory manner. Alas, it does fuel an already rampant xenophobia among common folk.

A third challenge has developed in more recent times. Neighboring Wyllareth harbors a large force of Bettelwyn knights, just outside Hosseta’s northern border. This bellicose brotherhood is seen as a bully and indeed a danger for the county, not to mention missionaries infiltrating to spread their faiths at the expense of those already established. Although the two dominions are part of the same kingdom, royal authority isn’t very strong and Sundsvall seems very far away. The recent affair that led to the suspicious death of the count’s younger brother did not improve relations between the two dominions. The count’s response was to seek support from Randel. He resorted to the same stratagem as Duchess Elyasatham, labeling Randelese troops as independent mercenaries. The very low cost of these so-called warriors-for-hire, which merely amounts to garrisoning them in Bogotus, implies they are in fact an expeditionary force under the control of King Salmain III in the faraway City of Rardish, the sworn enemy of Bettelwyn. King Edjer wasn’t exactly amused by this development but this time did not object, seeing the Randelese expeditionary force as necessary to eventually expel the Bettelwyn knighthood from his kingdom. These troops were able to reach Hosseta from Foresthome, which tacitly tolerated their passage. King Edjer did likewise, as they began disembarking in small groups on the banks of Lake Shiell.

Truth be told, *there be dragons* in the nearby mountains, which provided an ulterior motive for Randelese mage-knights to show up. Their concern was the protection of these ancient creatures, fearing that they may succumb to the Ogam’s dastardly plots and unholy magic. Some have been swayed by the call of the shamans and a previously unknown struggle was uncovered among dragonkind. Aghast, local mage-knights have begun recruiting local warriors into their ranks and training others under the count’s authority in a most unorthodox manner. The latter form the *Wyvern Brigade*, trained in the capture, breeding, and care of wyverns for war purposes. Only eggs or babies are ever taken, as older creatures cannot be safely tamed.

**Armed Forces of Hosseta:** year-round household troops amount to a little under 1,000 warriors, nearly all in the county’s capital. Plans have been drafted to construct a fortress at Barzal Bridge but funding hasn’t materialized. The dominion relies on two skyships, the *Bulwark of Freedom* and the *Spirit of Hosseta*, to patrol the hills and the border with Baalbeth Vale. Both vessels employ a resident mage-knight aboard. Among the troops in Bogotus, thirty ride trained wyverns to assist the skyships in their mission or, more ostensibly, as a force of dissuasion for

the Bettelwyn cohorts waiting just beyond the northern border. The idea is that the *Order of the Light's* heavy cavalry is tough to match on open ground, which includes all of the relevant lands in Hosseta. Therefore, if they can't be matched on the ground, then they will be opposed from the air while remaining out of reach. Furthermore, mature wyverns are strong enough to carry an extra warrior, either crossbowmen or individuals to be dropped behind enemy lines, such as spies, thieves, and spellcasters. A handful of *charmed* doppelgangers are also ready for the latter mission. Hossetan doctrine rests upon these two main tactics.



The count spends much of his wealth on expanding and maintaining his Wyvern Brigade. Donations are accepted for this purpose, in exchange for which the unit often hosts *show-and-tell* sessions for children and students, offers free rides, and conducts air shows for the masses during which it performs acrobatics and demonstrations of military prowess. There is also a romantic perception of these magnificent warriors and their flying beasts which the brigade smartly cultivates. As further promotion, the count also funds occasional air races across Alphatia during which private participants from other realms may compete against the brigade's best and brightest. Commoners and wealthy folk eagerly contribute, reassured that this force will be their salvation should trouble arise. The names of backers are engraved on the walls of the brigade's compound.

**Diplomacy:** Hosseta is the dominion most closely aligned with the Grand Duchy of Frisia and its royal authority. It's not that the successive counts really enjoy this state of affairs, but since their domain is the smallest in Frisland, they rely on the protection of their king in case of big trouble—a hostile Wyllareth with Bettelwyn support on their doorstep qualifies as such. The fear in Hosseta centers on an-almost-guaranteed Ogam invasion taking place during a civil war. Outside the kingdom, relations between the count and Floating Ar remain frosty as the result of the present policy of raising wyverns for military uses. Foresthome and Randel are friendly, while Bettelwyn is hostile, even more now that Hosseta willingly harbors beasts of chaos. Sundsvall is concerned about these recent developments but observes with keen interest growing Hossetan skills with militarizing wyverns. Relations are cordial with Stoutfellow, while those with Shiye-Lawr remain distant. Because of Hosseta's favorable ties with Foresthome, however, Ambur tends to ignore the count. The dominion's association to Randel has also sparked shenanigans from shadowy Eadriners seeking to provoke a fight between the Bettelwyners and the Randelese expeditionary force. As for the remainder of the southern kingdoms, Theranderol in particular, they just like Hosseta's fine chocolates, which they import at great cost (it's the extent of what most people down south know of this obscure northern county).

## The Wyvern Brigade

**Joining the League:** Although they aren't considered knights with an Immortal connection, *Wyvern Riders of Hosseta* form a league of their own. To become a candidate one must benefit from personal vouching by a military commander in good standing or a member of the count's family, as well as undergo evaluation by a mage-knight. Any class may apply although a candidate, preferably of slim or athletic build, must stand between 5'6" and 6'2" tall and have a Strength and Wisdom of no less than 13. Having successfully fulfilled these requirements, a magical oath of loyalty to the count must be sworn, as well as the vow to treat wyverns in a humane manner. There is an unspoken duty to uphold truth and honor among wyvern riders, as well as to behave in a way becoming a respectable Hossetan. This implies the order is only open to Lawful and Neutral members. If a skill system is used, the candidate should allocate available choices to animal husbandry and wyvern riding.

**Inherent Dangers:** Mounts selected for service undergo rigorous conditioning to curb their Chaotic nature. As a result, they are Neutral. Even then, they can be a treacherous lot. Anytime they sustain a wound, there is a 1% chance per point of damage sustained minus the experience level of its rider that the beast strikes its own master with its poisonous sting. The stabbing isn't willful but merely a reaction to pain; it requires a successful attack roll with a +2 modifier to hit (save vs. poison or die).

**Rules of Engagement:** A new member is given a 1 HD wyvern to care for. At this age, a wyvern is too small to carry a rider. At levels 2 and 3, riders are considered apprentices and never sent into combat, though they may serve as scouts, messengers, and squires for more senior riders. Wyverns with 2-3 HD can only carry one lightly armored rider. Riders and mounts between 4-5 HD are often used on patrols with rules of engagement limiting their involvement; if either rider or mount are wounded, they must withdraw. Until their wyverns reach their maximum HD, riders sustain a -50% penalty on earned experience, which enables their mounts to gain new HD at the same rate their handlers reach new levels. As they do, a bond forms between rider and beast, enabling them to communicate telepathically up to a mile per experience level. The wyvern loses half its HD and returns to wilderness if its rider dies. On the other hand, the rider loses half as many HD as the wyvern had (rounded up), should the mount be killed. There is perceived dishonor in allowing one's steed to perish or following a course of action resulting in the same outcome. Depending on circumstances, that rider could be banned from the brigade. Posses will be sent to eliminate traitors and deserters.



Because of their small size and weight, halflings and gnomes are often sought after as backseat auxiliaries able to shoot light crossbows or cast spells while in flight. Although they bear no

personal connections with wyverns like riders do, they are trained to remain in the saddle during sudden maneuvers. Some attempts have been made to harness chariots designed for dwarven warriors but so far, a worthwhile solution remains to be found.

**Wyvern Abilities:** As the result of the mind link between beast and rider, mounts learn new abilities from their masters. Abilities depend on the character classes and levels of the riders. Elves and clerics can select either the first or the second categories listed below. Once the choice is made, it cannot be changed.

- **Fighters, Elves, Clerics, Mystics:** Their wyverns' hit points are 1d6+3 per HD and they benefit from the same saving throws as their masters'. Fighting wyverns are trained to enable riders to attack with lances; they also can wear plate barding providing a +2 AC bonus (chest and neck—see the effect of weight on the *Flying Mounts Table*). The mounts of mystics have the special abilities *awareness*, *heal self*, and *speak with animal* when those become available to their riders but they aren't trained to wear armor; these special abilities come in addition to the riders' (they both are *aware* and both can *heal self*). Fighting wyverns have a functional Intelligence of 4.
- **Spellcasters:** These wyverns make their saving throws as their riders and can cast 1/3 of the spells available to their masters, *rounded up*. For example: a level 15 cleric has 6 first level spells and 5 each of the second and third level spells; the wyvern can therefore cast up to two each of the cleric's spell levels. A wyvern cannot cast spells higher than level three. These spells are those memorized by the riders (they are *not* additional spells). Rider and mount can cast these spells simultaneously. A wyvern releases magic generally at the behest of its rider. Spontaneous spellcasting requires an Intelligence check—these wyverns have an Intelligence of 8 and can read if taught. Although they do not comprehend the true nature of wizardly or clerical magic, they do understand the basic casting of spells. These mounts cannot be trained to carry any armor.
- **Thieves:** wyverns of thieves, spies, and other rogue-type riders have the same saving throws as their masters' and comparable abilities to *hear noise*, *hide in shadows* and "*fly*" *silently*. They may wear leather barding, giving their AC rating a +1 bonus, and have the skill to perform aerial acrobatics based on their riders' Dexterity scores. When they do, their *Maneuvering Factor* temporarily increases to 5, but during the following round their MF drops to 1. Roguish wyverns have a functional Intelligence of 6, and their top flying speed is 10'/round faster (MV 90' (30')/270' (90')).

**New Wyvern Breeds:** the most common mounts are brown, red, or rust-red. Rarer breeds do exist; however, they only reach 6HD at maturity. They include black, pale blue, green, and undead wyverns. These require a special expedition to find and must be acquired before they hatch, except for the undead wyvern, which will find its own rider.

- **Black:** the "black widow" has the ability to *dimension door* up to three times during night hours, when no more than starlight or the glow of the moon pervades its surroundings. This ability affects its riders and all carried equipment. Nocturnal, black widows fight with a -1 penalty to hit, to their AC, and to their saving throws during daylight hours. They can be trained to wear barding if it's entirely black. They only accept female riders.

- **Blue:** these mounts have an iridescent quality making them invisible in flight during daylight hours. This invisibility is relevant only to those observing from the sides or below and it extends to their riders if they wear blue outfits. The top skin on their wings and back is dark blue, conferring 50% concealment from above when flying over the sea. They do not accept barding of any kind. These only bond with male riders and show a more marine-oriented nature than other wyverns. They favor large fish as the mainstay of their diets. Blues can dive into water like kingfishers, slither beneath the surface for 1d6+3 rounds to catch prey, and then sally upward to the surface from where they resume flight.
- **Green:** these are sylvan natives of the Shiye-Lawr with an affinity for elvenkind and druids when properly conditioned. They are of a dark green color with lighter colored "tiger-stripes" conferring 90% concealment when in woods or when observed from above as they fly over a forest. This concealment applies to their riders as well if they wear a green outfit. Such steeds have a 15% anti-magic property but cannot be trained to accept barding of any kind.
- **Undead:** zombie-like in appearance, undead wyverns only favor the most chaotic riders, such as avengers, vampires, greater mummies, black hags, or liches. They require a +1 or better weapon to hit, radiate *fear* within a 15' radius, can travel the ethereal, can breathe hot smoke during combat (-2 penalty to hit and damage to its foes), and are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *paralyzation*, and *poison*. When they kill with their sting attacks, undead wyverns regenerate 1d4 hp per HD slain. They can wear barding only if they had been trained to do so during their living years. Clerics can Turn them as spectres (or as their undead riders, if more powerful than the mounts).

**BECMI Wyvern:** AC 3, HD7\*\*, MV 90' (30')/240' (80'), #AT 1 bite/1 sting, Dmg 2d8/1d6 + poison, Save F4, ML9, TT E, Int 3, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** poison sting (save vs. poison or die). Terrain: mountains or woods. Load: 3,500cn at full speed, 7,000cn at half speed. Armor costs triple the price of horse barding.

**First Ed. Wyvern:** AC3, HD 7+7, MV 6"/24", TT E, #AT 1 bite/1 sting, Dmg 2d8/1d6 + poison, Int low, AL NE, Size L (35' long). **Special Abilities:** as above.

**Flying Mounts Table**

Age	Air Speed	MF & Takeoff	HD	Cost (gp)	Monthly Upkeep	Gear & Armor	Capacity (cn)*
<b>Baby</b>	60'	MF 5 (b)	1	2,150	30 gp	n/a	1,250
<b>Young</b>	70'	MF 3 (b)	2-3	--	50 gp	x2	2,500
<b>Tweener</b>	80'	MF 3 (b)	4-5	--	70 gp	x2	3,000
<b>Mature</b>	80'	MF 3 (b)	6-7	--	90 gp	x3	3,500

(\* ) An average rider and gear weigh 2,000cn. A wyvern may carry twice its rated capacity at half speed, and its maneuverability drops to MF 1 (c). Statistics and game mechanics are explained in the *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set.



## Lord Gautharam, *Count of Hosseta*

Not only is Gautharam the county's lord, he also commands the Wyvern Brigade. This alleviated a political impasse with his liege, King Edjer, who is now satisfied he has some measure of control over the newly formed league even though foreign instructors are part of its makeup. This departs fundamentally from Wyllareth's use of Bettellyn paladins sworn to serve the duchess and the duchess alone. Gautharam's made sure that the top leadership of the wyvern riders remained permanently in the hands of Hossetan counts, as part of the league's charter. It is his intention to honorably dismiss Randel's forces and mage-knight instructors as soon as he feels safe to do so.



Count Gautharam's present desire is to get back at the Duchess of Wyllareth for what he believes was the murder of his younger brother. He cannot do this personally without causing a war. For this purpose, he has earned the services of a peculiar wyvern rider, Hetman Aethwyrna-Dark-Hand, a talented scout and spy. His plan is to abduct the duchess, kill her, and have Bettellyn paladins framed for her death. He suspects her of being evil and does not understand why Bettellyners have associated with her. Gautharam therefore gave Aethwyrna carte-blanche to operate within Wyllareth, investigate the duchess, and execute his plan when a good opportunity presents itself.

**Appearance:** Gautharam is typically Alphantian, having blue-black hair which he pulls back and knots, very pale skin, and vivid dark blue eyes. His irises reveal a few golden specks to one who looks closely. The count's hairline ends in a widow's peak above a wide brow. Between his eyes is a peculiar omega-shaped pucker. Rounded cheekbones enhance his rectangular face and his strong chin is hidden by a short thick black beard. Gautharam is approximately 6 feet in height: the legendary rod he carries, however, makes him appear taller. His attitude is that of a natural commander and he uses his deep tenor to snap orders to his lackeys and his troop. He is proud of being the leader of the famous Wyvern Brigade. His unusual floor-length, long-sleeved riding coat is made of several layers of his own mount's shed skin. It has a wide collar, a box pleat in back from nape to waist, and a split skirt for ease of riding. The few craftspeople who own the talent to produce such garments are highly regarded and kept sequestered by the count's orders lest enemies steal their precious secrets. The coat is deep red and shows all the typical eccentric textures of wyvern skin.

MU15, AC3, hp29, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 rod, Dmg 1d8+2 or by spell, Save MU15+3, ML10, AL Neutral; St13, In17, Wi14, Dx11, Co10, Ch12. **Magical Items:** *rod of Bogotus*, *ring of protection +3*, *robe of the wyvern*, *dagger +1*. **Special Abilities:** as a magic-user level 15. Rides a dark red wyvern (*Vulcana*: AC3, 50 hp).



**Rod of Bogotus:** this family heirloom, the symbol of seigneurial authority in Hosseta, is a three-foot-long white rod embedded with golden laurel leaves. In the hands of a usurper, it inflicts its owner 1d6pts of electrical damage per round when held. In the hands of its rightful owner, it holds 10 charges conferring the following powers: *lightning bolt* (cost: 1 charge) *commune* (as the cleric spell, cost: 2 charges), and *holy word* (as the clerical spell, cost: 4 charges). This rod differs from others in that it bears charges but they replenish themselves during each full moon. The last two powers require the owner to be a follower of Tarastia, patroness of justice and revenge. The rod inflicts 1d8 points of damage when used in melee combat and qualifies as a +1 magical weapon.

**Robe of the Wyvern:** it is a dark red leathery garment generating a basic AC of 6 to its owner. Additional enchantments generate a permanent *protection from evil 15' radius*, as well as full immunity to poison.

## Hetman Aethwyrna-Dark-Hand, Wyvern Rider

A Hetman in the Wyvern Brigade, she commands a swarm—three wyvern riders including her own mount. Her swarm is what would be called in modern terminology a “special ops” unit, trained to fly behind enemy lines, gather intelligence, and cause mayhem of all sorts, such as burning supplies, torching villages, harassing reinforcements, and ambushing leaders. They generally act under the cover of night and hide the day.

Aethwyrna rides a black widow. Her two companions, like her, are rogues, but their mounts are dark brown females called *seraphas*. Over time, the hetman tracked down the duchess’s origins, and ran across an ancient legend connecting her with the Lady of Searock. Bettelilyn paladins have come to notice Aethwyrna’s suspiciously nosy behavior while she mingled with the population in Mafertat and a small posse was dispatched to capture and interrogate her. They haven’t succeeded yet.

The “dark hand of fate,” as some call her, bears a burden of her own. Taking to heart her Randelese-influenced mindset and the bond with her black widow, she’s developed an affinity for black dragons. On her free time, Aethwyrna has taken upon herself to care for a community of *draconum noctis* dwelling in the hills. Her dark hobby has grown ever so challenging as some have become partial to Ogam influence. She now faces a conflict between protecting these creatures and her loyalty to the count and her peers.

**Appearance:** Her features are severe and imposing, with a high, wide forehead, intense brown eyes, jutting cheekbones, and a forward-pointing chin. She has just a hint of *café au lait* to her skin, unnoticeable to casual observers. Her hair is dark brown and chopped short to stay out of her way during while fighting or flying. She stands five foot seven inches, just tall enough to qualify her as a wyvern rider. Her hands are callused from wielding her sword, which she does with considerable ability. All in black, the hetman wears a form-fitting leather suit, covered by a shin-length cloak with a shadowy deep hood. Boots covering her knees and gauntlets protect her from cold air while in flight.



T13, AC2/4, hp36, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1, Dmg 1d6+3 + special, Save T13, ML9, AL Neutral; St13, In12, Wi13, Dx17, Co10, Ch11. **Magical Items:** *wyvern cuirass, sword of the wyrm, boots of levitation, Amburian spyglass.* **Special Abilities:** as a thief level 13. Rides a black widow (Soot: AC2, 30 hp; fly silently 70%, hide in shadows 58%, hear noise 87%, dimension door x3 per night).

**Wyvern Cuirass:** this black leather armor was enchanted with a permanent *shield* effect (as the wizard spell). It is designed to conceal a thief's picks and tools and hold a sword in a sheath on the back and several daggers.

**Sword of the Wurm:** this +2 blade bears a slight greenish reflection under normal lighting. Whenever it strikes a foe with an unmodified attack roll of 19+ (15+ with a backstab), the sword oozes a paralyzing venom (save vs. poison negates). Paralysis lasts 1d4+3 turns (minus Constitution bonus if any).

**Boot of Levitation:** these fine black leather boots enable their owner to stand in mid-air or walk an inch above a surface, enabling quiet movement and the ability to get past certain weight-triggered traps.

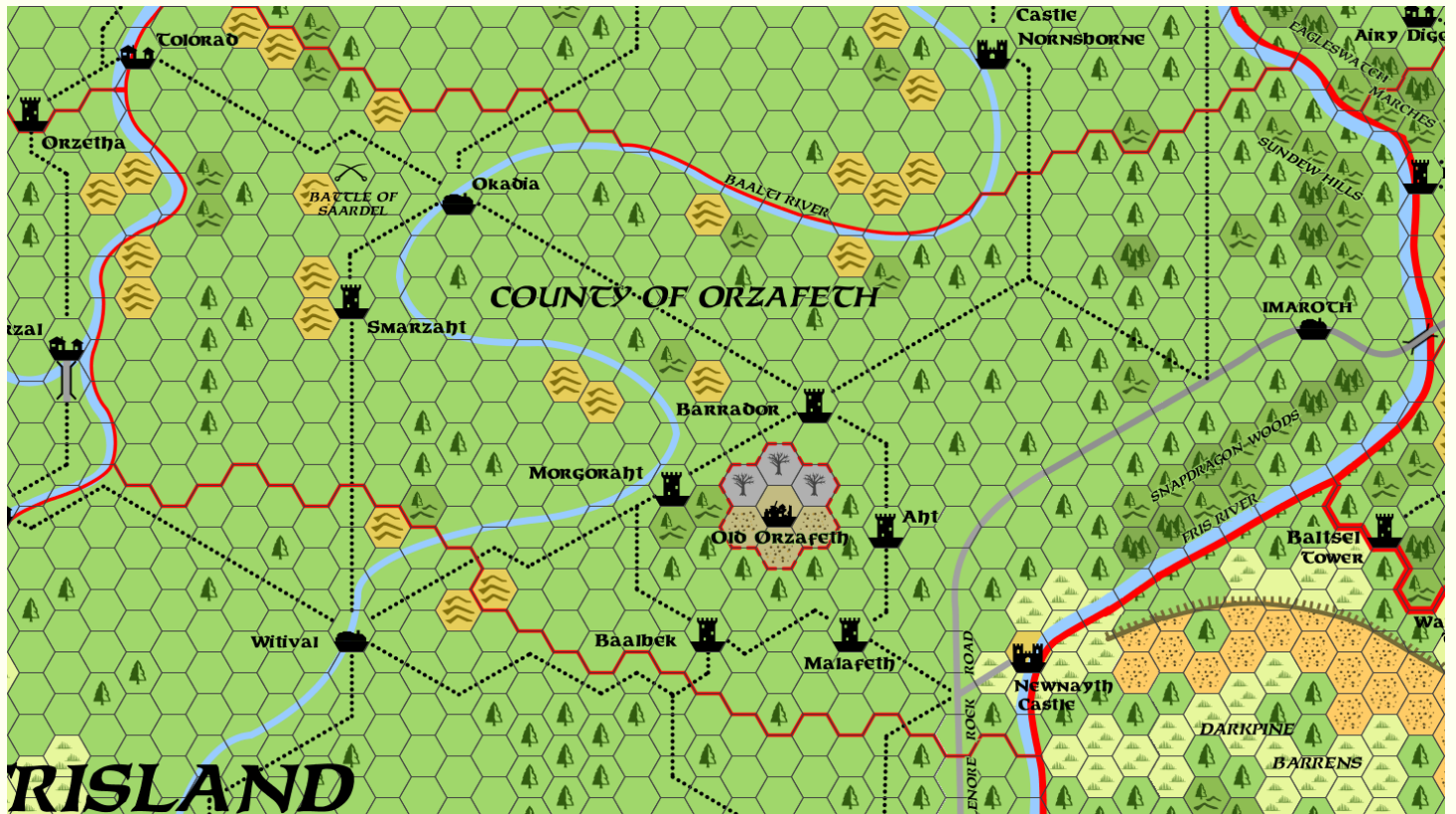
**Amburian Spyglass:** a layer of fine black leather protects much of the silver tube. It is fitted with a *Luxoflex-Mini* lense and an all-weather imagery adapter acquired illegally from an unregistered Luxoflex Anonymous Dweomercraft merchant.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his gracious permission to use his work on the Ogam and Outer Beings, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances as well as her editorial and research contributions.*

# Frisland: The County of Orzafeth

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

*Bone-eaters, jack-o-lanterns, scarecrows, mandragora. . . Orzafeth is a land of many mysteries and dangers. There, risen from ancient times, two sinister willpowers fight to revive their realms. Though supremely deadly, neither are what they seem to be.*



County of Orzafeth - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

**History:** The County of Orzafeth once was a kingdom allied with the Ogam. The original monarchy had accepted mountain tribes and their shamans in its realm in a bid to improve land fertility. It succeeded but it also led the population to become followers of the Outer Beings. Emanations of chaos engulfed the old kingdom and spilled over into the neighboring realms, prompting them to go on a crusade. Horrors summoned by the shamans defeated the crusaders, which compelled Emperor Alphas III to intervene. The Outer Being worshipers were defeated at great cost. Besieged in their capital city, the last Orzafethians self-destructed during a lurid ritual, their souls departing to feed their outer world patrons. Since then, the capital city's twisted ruins have remained cursed and prone to permanent emanations of chaos. The old monarchy having vanished during the self-immolation, Sundsvall appointed a family to administrate the new county, now a dominion of the Kingdom of Greater Frisland. Save for the mountains themselves, Orzafeth is the next most dangerous place in the realm, with unexplained phenomena, poisonous flora cropping up unexpectedly, and bestial incursions spawning from unseen gates. Despite a high military presence and repressive laws, Orzafeth remains a treacherous place to live.

**Lay of the Land:** The county spreads east to west between the Fris and Malfati Rivers. The shallow and muddy Baalti slowly meanders across its mid-section. Except for monster-infested

hills along the Fris River, Orzafeth is essentially a great plain stretching about 100 miles north-south and 230 miles east-west. An ancient, paved highway known by some as the Old Argonath Road runs from the only entry point into Ar to the kingdom's capital, Shiell, passing through the eastern town of Imaroth. The seat of the county rests in Okadia, near the border with Wyllareth. Although several trails crisscross the county, the only two that are regularly traveled run from Imaroth to Tolorad, and from Okadia to Witival. The others see some rare traffic and armed protection is advised there. Most of this dominion is a wilderness starting as little as sixteen miles outside villages (80% of Orzafeth's total surface). A ring of walls and towers surrounds the old capital city's ruins, locking an area 12 miles radius known as the Tainted Lands. A garrison exists here, its mission to prevent anyone or anything coming in or out. Climate is similar to Wyllareth's, except that conditions are overcast most of the time, with either snow in winter or fog in summer. The particularly gloomy character of Orzafeth's weather is thought to stem from the curse still afflicting the old ruins.

**Population:** Out of 155,000 inhabitants, just under 11% live in towns and villages. Another 1,800 serve in Orzafeth's military or barely more than 1% of the total population. The two main towns are Okadia and Imaroth, with 8,800 and 6,900 people respectively. Population density is less than 7 inhabitants per square mile, not counting monstrous life forms.

Current day Orzafethians are quite different from the county's original folk and from typical Frislandic stock. Though Yanifey and Antalian ancestry survives in the area, the remainder is a motley crowd of immigrants and indentured workers. Due to the dominion's abysmal reputation and harsh living conditions, maintaining or growing its population has been a thorny challenge, as the above numbers suggest.



The successive counts and local nobility long ago adopted a policy to attract population from other regions of Alphatia. Part of the strategy relies on providing farmland and cash to would-be immigrants in exchange for them effectively becoming serfs for a period of ten to fifteen years. During that term, settling families are not permitted to leave lands rented to them. Orzafethian aristocracy also "purchases" convicted criminals from other imperial provinces for the same purpose, either to work the land or to provide labor in urban areas. Realms such as Arogansa, Haven, Theranderol, and the Imperial District of Vertiloch, as well as Bellissarian kingdoms, are happy to stay executions and collect instead small cash payments

from Orzafeth. Extradited criminals are then *teleported* to Okadia for whatever purpose, in perpetuity. The newcomers are *geased* and immediately put to good use.

Life expectancy is the lowest in Greater Frisland, not only as the result of the inherent dangers lurking in the county, but also because of the indentured or convicted status of what is fast becoming the majority of the population. Added to inclement weather and marginal farmland, the poorest folk typically pass away while in their thirties (humans at least). Infant mortality exceeds 50%. As everywhere else in Orzafeth, aristocracy remains exclusively Alphatian. Demi-humans, although welcome, are very rare in this part of Greater Frisland.



**Economy:** It is mostly an agrarian society which, despite adverse climatic conditions, produces enough food to survive. Livestock consists largely of sheep and goats, many of which had been brought by the Ogam of ancient Orzafeth. Local farmers also grow tubers. These fat, brown root-like vegetables are notorious for their twisted shapes reminding one of various creatures, but once peeled and properly cooked, they provide good nourishment. Mandragora is not rare and makes the object of lucrative businesses. Much of that crop is traded in the southern provinces as well as Sundsvall.



This land is also notorious for its pumpkins. Although untainted, these vegetables acquired unusual properties during the time of the Ogam presence in Orzafeth. Most bear some random magical properties, mostly of use to wizards. A few can become sentient and capable of uprooting themselves—they're called *Jack-o-Lanterns*. They sometimes cause mischief in their territories, such as animating their common vegetable cousins and going on a rampage. Scarecrows are another concern—not the sort one sticks on a field to frighten the birds. These troublesome creatures are leafy leftovers from crops which tangle together and

take a vaguely human-like form. They're another nuisance of the same nature as animated pumpkins and sometimes work with *Jack-o-Lanterns*. Common folks occasionally come to terms with these creatures, offering them a live sacrifice during the mid-fall's hallows when they are strongest, in exchange for which they protect the farmers' fields. A magical *geas* will achieve the same result. One or more of these creatures often guard mandragora plantations or harvest the arcane roots. Scarecrows and jack-o-lanterns serving on a farm or a plantation are usually dressed in old rags. Farming products sold in markets must be checked for poison and other unwanted effects. Like neighboring Frisia, toxic plants do grow in the area and can contaminate normal foods. Trafficking in forbidden substances is as much a problem in Orzafeth as it has been in the neighboring Grand Duchy.

**Animated Pumpkins:** AC 8, HD1\*, MV 60' (20'), #AT 1-3 roots, Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4, Save F1, ML12, Int 1, AL Neutral. **Special Abilities:** a root can *entangle* (as the spell) a victim with an attack roll of 18 or better; *entangled* victims sustain 1d4 automatic damage per round until freed.

**Jack-o-Lantern:** AC 3, HD6\*\*, MV 150' (50'), #AT 1 bite, Dmg 1d8, Save F5, ML9, Int 6, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** 30% chance of animating 1d4 pumpkins per round; controls up to 12 animated pumpkins (two per undamaged HD) within a 100-yard radius; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, *hold*, and *entangle* spells; electrical attacks heal jack-o-lanterns, and any HD of electrical damage above 6 are actually gained by the creature; jack-o-lanterns must save against cold-based attacks or go dormant for 1 game Turn.

**Scarecrow:** AC 5, HD6\*, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 billhook (farmer's flail or pitchfork), Dmg 1d6, Save F6, ML7, Int 4, AL Neutral. **Special Abilities:** *causes fear* (as the spell) within a 30' radius; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells; immune to cold-based attacks; sustains double-damage from fire-based attacks; if near a source of hay or in a wheat- or cornfield, regenerates 1d6 points of damage per round.



Another and more sinister crop consists of bones dug from the ground. They belong to all those who'd fallen during the crusades, ancient denizens of Argonath, the mysterious Yanifey of old, as well as countless monsters from this world and beyond. Something in the Orzafeth's soil prevents bones from decaying, and it takes a long time for flesh to rot away. Most bodies become mummified despite the region's generally humid conditions. Some of these remains are tainted and must be destroyed by law—when they unearth such bones, most people hide them in hopes of selling them to adventurous wizards and alchemists. Though

highly profitable, it is treacherous business, and many a family has perished in unspeakable ways as a result of their greed. A local tradition is to carve bones into flutes and other instruments, which are reputed to tell the stories of their previous owners when played. The Okadian Opera features bone-concerts, retelling the great battles of the crusades. These *symphonies-macabres* range from the hauntingly divine to the ineffably chilling, enough to attract throngs of wealthy southerners in search of strong emotions. Many among the audience swear being able to see in their minds the stories evoked by such masterpieces.

Other uses for bones come in the form of powders for spell components and alchemical ingredients. *Bone Lore* is a peculiar skill in the region, which enables one to determine the nature of bones, whether they are tainted, and the manner in which their owners perished. In fact, many sages in search of knowledge about the dead come to Orzafeth to seek the assistance of expert *ossuarians*. These experts rely on their wisdom and a natural affinity for the dead, which manifests itself among those closest to this afflicted land, such as the progeny of indentured farmers. It isn't uncommon for a family harboring an expert to be able to repurchase

their freedom. They generally remain in the region, not far from a place of desolation such as the site of a past massacre. The most talented *ossuarians* can unveil the identities and circumstances surrounding the original owners. Some work as cemetery guardians. Their services are often well paid.

**The Tainted Lands:** *[reprinted here from the lead article]* Although old Orzafeth was obliterated, the effects of Ogam summonings survive to this day. The old barrier that prevented *teleportation* and *screying* from outside Orzafeth borders still exists, although it has weakened. It now only lingers around an area 12 miles in radius from the ruins of the old capital city, which is now referred as the Tainted Lands. One cannot use instantaneous transportation spells or divination magic through that barrier without incurring dangerous secondary effects. Spellcasting is also altered in various ways. Fauna and flora are toxic and bear odd deformities. This area's evil magic imbued both wildlife and vegetation with a feral cunning and a craving to devour all that enters their domain. Water is equally poisonous, and any fluids brought in become unfit for consumption within a day. The city's ruins are even worse, with twisting streets, shifting buildings, an overwhelming feeling of oppression, lingering evil spirits, and a few monstrous beings which seem to come to life inexplicably. The Outer Beings' dark magic lies at the source of the Tainted Lands, and remains beyond the ability of Mystaran wizards, clerics, and their immortal patrons to remove. Time is the best remedy, provided nothing rouses Orzafeth's sleeping horrors along the way.

**Encounters in Orzafeth:** *[by G.G.]* The County of Orzafeth is a land marked by the Taint of the Outer Beings and their servants, of which the Ogam are only the best-known. However, the mark of other-dimensional horror is strongest and deepest in the Tainted Lands. Although the authorities have done what they can to cordon off the cursed site, creatures can, and do, manage to get through. The following table provides the DM with ideas of what kinds of creatures adventurers may encounter. It is suggested that a d6 roll be made once per day during regular overland travel in the County of Orzafeth, and every six hours when journeying in the Tainted Lands themselves. A roll of 1-2 indicates that the party has encountered something. New monsters are described after the table or linked to the original design posted on Pandius.

<b>d20 Roll</b>	<b>Encounter</b>
<b>1-4</b>	1d8 Tainted Dead
<b>5-8</b>	1d4 Tainted Fauna
<b>9-11</b>	1d6 Tainted Plants
<b>12-13</b>	1d6 <b><u>Blessed Ones</u></b> (Roll 1d6: <b>1-2: Armored</b> , <b>3-4: Tentacled</b> , <b>5-6: Infested</b> )
<b>14-15</b>	1d4 <b><u>Minions of Rasthz</u></b> the Many-Mouthed
<b>16-17</b>	1d2 <b><u>Lesser Servitors</u></b> of Yurrgh-Thal
<b>18</b>	1d4 <b><u>Soul Renders</u></b>
<b>19</b>	<b><u>Greater Servitor</u></b> of Yurrgh-Thal (50% chance of being accompanied by 1d4 lesser servitors of Yurrgh-Thal)
<b>20</b>	Emissary of the One

**Tainted Dead:** These are the remains of people who have died inside the Tainted Lands. Their corpses have become animated by the malevolent energies leaking through the dimensional rifts created by the destruction of Old Orzafeth. They resemble blackened skeletons, with sharp, bony tumors projecting from many locations. At night, ten-foot-radius sickly green halos shine around the tainted undead. If the optional insanity rules are being used, tainted dead have a Horror Rating of 4.

**Tainted Dead:** AC 4, HD1-4\*, MV 60' (20'), #AT 2 claws, Dmg 1d4/1d4 + special, Save F1-4, ML12, Int 2, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** *cause fear* (as the spell) within a 30' radius; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells. The touch of a tainted dead will cause a festering rash to erupt where the victim was touched, which reduces Strength and Charisma by 1 each. This effect is cumulative, and anyone whose Strength is reduced to 0 will become immobile and die in 24 hours unless treated with a *cure disease* spell. Anyone killed by the tainted dead will rot quickly and rise in 3 days.

**Tainted Fauna:** Generations of wildlife have lived in the Tainted Lands and have become affected by the unwholesome magical effects over the centuries. While most fauna seem no different than specimens found in unaffected regions, they are far more cunning than would normally be expected. What is more, they are all poisonous—anyone foolish enough to eat whatever they catch here must save vs. Poison at -4 or suffer an agonizing death in 1d6 turns. Animals that live close to the ruins of Old Orzafeth are visibly different from their untainted cousins; many possess large tumors and half-formed additional appendages or eyes in odd places. Particularly vile specimens have a Horror Rating of 5.

**Note:** Due to the wide range of wildlife that may be encountered, rough statistics have been provided. The DM should look up the original animal and modify accordingly.

**Tainted Fauna:** AC, MV, #AT, Save unchanged; +1 to HD and Dmg; ML10, Int 10, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** *cause fear* (as the spell), immunity to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells.

**Tainted Plants:** In addition to being poisonous, the plant life that surrounds Old Orzafeth has also grown actively malevolent to the point where it will try to trap and kill trespassers. As with animal life, plants become increasingly corrupted looking as one draws near the ruins, complete with odd growths and strange, foul-smelling fruits. The combat statistics given below are for specimens that grow near the ruins themselves, which are capable of uprooting themselves and moving.

**Tainted Plants:** AC 5, HD 1-4, MV 30' (10'), #AT 1 bash or special, Dmg 1d6, Save F1-4, ML10, Int 5, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** specimens possessing thorns are capable of shooting them (treat as a normal area attack covering as cone 5' wide at the point, 20' wide at the base, and 10' long); those possessing vines can whip opponents (any victim hit must save vs. Death Ray or be *entangled*, as the spell).

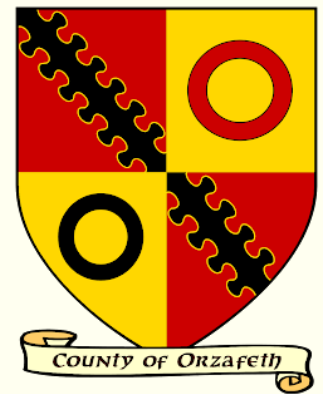
**Emissary of The One:** Although He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Seen prefers to make His mark on Mystara through His fanatically combative worshippers, He does have personal servants. Emissaries of The One are His eyes, ears, and "hands" on the Prime Plane. In their natural state, they are black protoplasmic blobs, measuring 10' to 20' across, from which various



appendages, eyes, and mouths periodically emerge and retract. Because of their plastic nature, emissaries can assume any shape they wish, and can give themselves any number of appendages or sensory organs they desire (although they can only attack six times per round). Being intelligent creatures, emissaries are capable of speech and are often sent by The One as messengers, and occasionally to lead His followers into battle. Emissaries have a Horror Rating of 13.

**Emissary of The One:** AC 5, HD15\*, MV 90' (30'), #AT 6 strikes or 1 envelop, Dmg 2d6 or 3d4/round, Save F15, ML10, Int 16, AL Chaotic. **Special Abilities:** emissaries produce a 40'-wide aura of *fear* (treat as spell), are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells, and can only be hit by +1 weapons or better. Once per round, an emissary may opt to envelop a foe; should a hit be successful the victim is absorbed and takes 3d4 damage per round. The victim can escape by inflicting at least 20 points of damage in one blow (attack against AC 9); otherwise the victim's companions can force the emissary to relinquish its prize by inflicting at least 40 points of cumulative damage or by negotiating (depending on the circumstances).

**Armed Forces of Orzafeth:** Being landlocked, Orzafeth neither possesses a navy, riverine or airborne, nor can it afford one. However, the Grand Duchy of Frisia maintains at its own cost one skyship above the Tainted Lands. Another patrols the border with Foresthome, which includes the Newnayth area as well. A large galley hailing from Naugwayne commonly plies the Fris River up to Dovefell Bridge, east of Imaroth. A handful of other galleys from Shiell may also show up.



The county's entire army consists of 1,819 troops, 430 of whom control Okadia, 850 holding Imaroth and patrolling the eastern border. The balance largely garrisons Newnayth and the fortifications around the Tainted Lands. The other borders are essentially unguarded, following the long-established inkling that no one really wants to invade Orzafeth, which is seen as a liability by everyone else. New developments in Hosseta and Wyllareth, however, are challenging this dogma—especially the growing presence of the Order of the Light at Ubdazi. A conflict with Wyllareth would probably involve Ogam raids from the mountains which Orzafeth would be desperate to hold off at the river. Some troops may be shifted from Imaroth to Okadia or to reinforce the banks of the Malfati, but this implies setting up outdoor camps since Tolorad has little or no long-term troop facilities. Orzafeth does not have the financial means for the construction of a new castle in the area.

To make up for the general weakness of Orzafeth's military, Okadia employs private town guards, paid by the guilds to secure the streets from smugglers, thieves, and other unsavory characters, and look for signs of the Taint. They also watch the markets and fairs for corrupted goods. The military concern themselves more with securing the count's palace, patrolling the trails, and dispatching monsters wandering into the borderlands or drifting down the Baalti River. It isn't rare when something escapes from the Tainted Lands and swims downstream, seeking to enter Okadia. A heavy iron gate filters out the largest creatures dwelling in the muddy waters, but smaller ones occasionally get through and can cause havoc at night. Due to the common lack of moonlight, hunting these beasts requires a town-wide effort. The only

bridge across the Baalti in Orzafeth lies at Okadia—no one in the county ever dares wading through these treacherous waters, armed or not.

**Orzafethian Diplomacy:** It is the poor parent of Greater Frisland, somewhat ostracized by the other dominions, seen as one afflicted with a disgraceful disease and treated with utmost suspicion. Orzafeth strenuously objects to the growing Bettelyn presence in Wyllareth, and as a result is most likely to remain on the side of its royal liege. Relations with outside realms aren't any better. Passage across the Fris River is only permitted on Dovefell Bridge where it is heavily controlled and generally discouraged by Aran authorities. Orzafeth relies on the protection of the imperial powers and of its royal liege. The best way into Orzafeth is from Frisia. A few private skyships provide service between Shiell and Okadia. The majority of connections between Orzafeth's aristocracy and outside realms concerns the traffic of convicted criminals.



It would stand to reason that some *ossuarians* are better than others. This elite is known as *bone-eaters*. It's what they're called but fear not—they don't actually gnaw at anyone's tibias, though they do consume ancient bones in an arcane fashion to unveil their secrets. As time goes by, some can be seen traveling the land in search of new osseous trophies, carrying their precious troves in a sack. . . or re-burying them for future use. Those deeply involved in their trade are seen as courting death itself, perhaps necromancy as well. The latter isn't necessarily true. Bone-eaters aren't always evil, despite their sinister passion. Many are sages, the investigators of skeletons and skulls who relish with ghoulish delight the carrion of history lain to rest and forgotten in the dimness of time. Some, however, belong to cohorts of undead hunters. A few do give in to the darkest of arts.

**Apprenticeship:** Any hero native of Orzafeth and with a Wisdom score of at least 13 may become a bone-eater. It requires a master skilled in the profession willing to teach the first two aptitudes. As general skill slots become available (or right from the start when the hero is nothing but the most inexperienced of apprentices), they can be spent on bone-eater abilities. They must be learned in the order they are listed.

**Skill Checks:** All such skills are Wisdom-based and require a die roll. If a bone's previous owner had more HD than the bone-eater, the Wisdom check incurs a -1 penalty per HD of difference. If a Wisdom check fails, it cannot be tried again on the same bone or any others from the same skeleton. The first two skills can otherwise be used as many times in a day as there are qualifying bones available. The bone-eating profession is not without its risks. Any skill check resulting in an unmodified roll of 20 incurs a 10% chance the undead spirit of a bone's owner will appear and confront the bone-eater. The undead will be a wraith or a specter with a number of HD at least equal to the original owner's.

**Bone-Eating:** *Bone lore* and subsequent abilities involve "consuming" a part of a bone as part of the skill check. The bone must be at least 1/12th the previous owner's actual size—*fragments*

*won't do.* A section is cut off and crushed in a mortar, mixed with incense, and ignited. The bone-eater must then breathe the fumes for 1 round, thereby "eating" the bone. The remainder becomes useless since it no longer is whole. Bone powder can be prepared in advance. As obviously implied, a number of creatures remain entirely out of the bone-eaters' scope of activity since they do not possess bones (gelatinous cubes, oozes, puddings, slimes, incorporeal beasts, slugs, bugs, elemental beings, most constructs, plant-like creatures, etc.)

**Slot #1: Ossuary Apprenticeship:** A neophyte can tell the nature of a bone's previous owner. This includes the race of a man-like creatures (human, elf, halfling, orc, goblin, etc.), age, gender, and general ethnic background if the bone eater knows about it (realm, main tribe, etc.) If the bone belonged to a monster or an animal, the apprentice can unveil its race (basilisk, red dragon, white dragon, archon, fiend, etc.) If the apprentice isn't likely to know about an animal breed or a type of monster, an Intelligence check with a -2 penalty should be enough to get a general idea. If the latter check fails, the apprentice should at least be able to tell what a bone is not. Major life diseases and bone-marking accidents can also be detected. **Cost:** 2 skill slots.

**Note:** An apprentice can *always* sense the Orzafeth Taint in a bone on sight, within a three-foot range. This requires no skill check.

**Slot #2: Bone Lore:** A *bone lore* attempt requires a successful *ossuary apprenticeship* check beforehand. It enables a bone-eater to sense the previous owner's identity, function in society, and cause of death. Such bones can be carved and fashioned into musical instruments. When played, they tell the story of the owners and what led to their demises. This requires the bone-eater to have basic-musical skill in the chosen instrument. These bones can be sold in Okadia at a market price of 10gp per original HD times the number of asterisks (as described in monster statistics). Tainted bones can be sold on the black market for ten times more. Handling/dabbling with tainted bones requires a horror check (HR2). **Cost:** 2 skill slots.

**Affinity Skills:** One of three *affinity* skills can be chosen next—*arcane*, *body*, or *combat*. Once a path is chosen, skills from the other two are no longer available. *Affinity* skill checks only require one previously successful *bone lore* check on bones from the same skeleton. Each of these special skills can only be attempted once per day.

**Slot #3A: Arcane Affinity:** This skill enables a bone-eater to memorize one random magic-user spell level 1-2 available to the previous owner at the time death occurred. The bone-eater may cast a gained spell any time after it was memorized, regardless of the bone-eater's actual character class, although relative experience level must be adequate to cast a gained spell. Experience level is the maximum number of combined spell levels that can be accumulated through "bone-eating" at any given time. If the bone-eater is a spellcaster, gained spells come in addition to those available through normal meditation or studying. A gained spell cannot be recopied to a spellbook or duplicated in any other way. Once cast, it is entirely erased/forgotten from the bone-eater's mind. **Cost:** 2 skill slots.

**Slot #4A: Arcane Affinity II:** As above except that it enables bone-eaters to memorize spell levels 3-4. Skill checks must be performed from lower spell levels upward. Slots 5A-7A enable the memorization of higher-level spells (5-6, 7-8, and 9). Successive skill checks on bones from

the same skeleton cannot yield more spells than those available to its previous owner at the time of death. **Cost:** 1 skill slot each.

**Slot #3B: Body Affinity:** This skill enables a bone eater to temporarily gain one natural ability available to the previous owner at the time of death. The gained ability must be one of the following, as described on page 154 of the Rules Cyclopeda: *blindness, charm, disease, paralysis, petrification, poison*, or any single immunity (to normal weapons, spells, poison, etc.) Simple spell-like abilities are generally acceptable (such as *fly, invisibility*, etc.) Breath weapons are only available to bone-eaters with as many or more HD as the bones' previous owner. Level-draining and special abilities exclusively related to the undead are not available to bone-eaters. If multiple special abilities are available from a previous owner, one is chosen randomly. Gained abilities (such as forms of attack) last one combat encounter when triggered. Immunities and other effects (such as *invisibility, fly, levitate, water-breathing*, etc.) last 1d6 game Turns after completing the skill check. Bones from a single skeleton cannot confer the same ability more than once. **Cost:** 2 skill slots.

**Slot #4B: Body Affinity II:** As above, except subsequent *body affinity* skills enable additional *affinity* checks during the same day. In other words, *body affinity II* allows a second check, *body affinity III* a third, and so on. One gained ability can be combined with another for each five experience levels of the bone-eater. **Cost:** 1 skill slot each.

**Slot #3C: Combat Affinity:** This skill enables bone-eaters to randomly gain an extra 1-3 Hit Dice. Bones collected from the same skeleton cannot confer more Hit Dice than its previous owner ever had—for example: a bone-eater collects a dozen bones from an ogre's skeleton (HD4+1); on Day-1, the bone-eater gains 2 HD after consuming one of the bones; on Day-2 another 2 are gained; Day-3 could only yield +1 hp since the ogre only had 4+1 Hit Dice to give (all remaining bones from that ogre's skeleton are now worthless). Such gains only affect the bone-eaters' hit points, saving throws, and attack scores, as appropriate to their own character classes. Gains only last for 1d6 game Turn after the skill check was made. Combat damage is subtracted first from extra hit points while they last. **Cost:** 2 skill slots.

**Slot #4C: Combat Affinity II:** As above, except subsequent *combat affinity* skills enable additional checks during the same day. In other words, *combat affinity II* allows a second check, *combat affinity III* a third, and so on. Experience level is the maximum number of combined extra Hit Dice that can be accumulated through bone-eating at any given time. **Cost:** 1 skill slot each.

**Bone Mastery:** When reaching *affinity IV* expertise, a bone-eater must decide on a personal philosophy of death. One leads to Undead Hunting (Lawful or Neutral), the other to a form of Necromancy (Neutral or Chaotic). Once made, the choice cannot be changed.

**Undead Slayers:** These are bounty hunters paid to destroy undead creatures and, to a certain degree, tainted ones. Undead hunters benefit from a permanent *protection from evil* and can turn undead monsters like clerics half their experience levels, rounded up. They can also turn skeletons, bone golems, and all bone constructs as undead of the same HD (usually as spectres); they do so like full-strength clerics, turning twice the normal numbers per attempt.

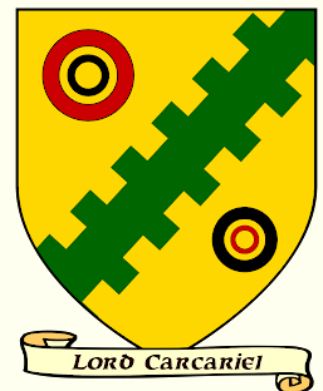
Slayers can construct a seal capable of preventing an undead or a tainted creature from escaping an enclosed area (such as a tomb, a mausoleum, a crypt, etc.) The undead cannot touch the seal directly or indirectly, tamper with it magically, or order pawns to do so. The seal requires 1 day per HD to construct and its potency is only limited by the slayer's own experience level (a tenth-level slayer can construct a seal powerful enough to restrain a 10HD undead and its pawns). The slayer must know the true name of the undead concerned by the seal. The area secured by this seal must be no more than a three-foot-large cube per level of the slayer (at tenth level therefore 30'x30'x30' or any combination thereof).

**Bone Necromancers:** These ossuarians use the undead to benefit themselves or as a tool in their endeavor to learn more about the Orzafethian Taint. They can control undead like Lieges half their Hit Dice, rounded up (see Undead Lieges and Pawns, *Rules Cyclopedia* page 217). They can also control skeletons and bone golems as undead of equal HD; they do so like full-strength Lieges. These necromancers also have the ability to construct bone golems (not more than they can control) at the rate of 1 HD per workday. True necromancy remains the realm of chaotic clerics and wizards with the appropriate background.



## **Lord Carcariel, Seventh Count of Orzafeth**

Carcariel's line harks back to the District of Vertiloch. A bit too influential, his forefather had become a source of discomfort to rivals at the Grand Council. He was eventually "rewarded" with the County of Orzafeth, a truly rotten gift to be sure. Since Emperor Alphas III endorsed the motion, the early Carcariel could not refuse. The other reason for the endorsement was his skill at hunting monsters. As with all nobility forced upon the dominions of Greater Frisland, his mission was to eradicate all signs of ancient Orzafeth and its hated taint.



The seventh count of the name is no different than his predecessors. He has been successful in prosecuting his seigneurial obligations and became somewhat of a popular figure among lesser aristocracy and freemen, mostly Neo-Orzafethian bourgeoisie. He often attends concerts at the Okadian Opera, occasionally leading the orchestra or performing solo parts as a talented musician. A bone-eater himself, he earned his affinity when his mother gave birth to him during a monster-slaying campaign. He came to this world in a camp at the center of an ancient battle site, known as Saardel. His mother and many of her guards died soon afterward while fighting tainted wraiths. The child, however, was unharmed. Yet, to this day, he still remembers their bone-chilling whispers calling him.

This early experience led him to become an Undead Slayer with *combat affinity*. In his endeavor to learn more about the horrors of Orzafeth, he unveiled an unusual font lined with mother-of-pearl. When gazing into its crystalline water, he discovered he could send his consciousness to

visit faraway places in the county, at little or no danger to himself. It led him to defeat a great many foes. But it was too much of a good thing when Carcariel unwisely decided to explore the depths beneath the twisted ruins of Orzafeth. There, he found a magical jade carving. Though incorporeal, he came in contact with the object's magical aura. Its power was such that it imprisoned his consciousness, thereby releasing another dwelling inside the jade, sending it back to Carcariel's physical body.

The soul of Gorgothion the Undying, an Orzafethian priest of Rasthz, now possesses the count's flesh and bones. This tainted soul dates back to the time preceding the fall of Orzafeth. He now quietly seeks to replace the count's closest followers with others exposed to his faith, in hopes of freeing all that dwells inside the Tainted Lands and reviving ancient Orzafeth. Soon after reaching Okadia, Gorgothion sensed a mysterious presence deep in the catacombs beneath the streets, a tainted willpower of great strength which will not yield to his commands.

**Appearance:** [by J.D.P.] Lord Carcariel is a brawler with wizardly talents, and never gives up on running down his quarry. He stands at medium height and his physique is quite muscular. Carcariel's Alpathian ancestry shows in extremely pale skin, black hair worn short, and dark blue eyes. Square and clean-shaven, his face is lined with scars from former battles on his right temple and a jagged one running most of the way down his left jaw onto his neck. The lobe of his ear on that side is missing. His hands also show multiple scars. The count's brow is furrowed by a perpetual frown that easily turns into a scowl when he's thinking or perplexed. His retainers do not want to see that frown change into a snarl which brings forward the qualities of the savage and uncompromising hunter he is. Carcariel's voice is raspy and curt. He walks with unusual determination and is often short-tempered when distracted. Lately, the count has begun to show a disturbing propensity for gluttony.

**Carcariel/Gorgothion:** C23, AC0, hp55, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 rod, Dmg 1d8+5 or by spell, Save C23, ML8, AL Chaotic; St14, In15, Wi17, Dx12, Co13, Ch16. **Magical Items:** *rod of the wyrm (blue dragon), robe of the dragonkin, ring of spell turning.* **Special Abilities:** as a faithful priest of Rasthz (see Outer Being listing at the end of this article)—*rite of renewal* and *feast of plenty*; senses tainted beings within 300'; can ESP tainted beings within 100'.

**Robe of Dragonkin:** This loose-fitting outfit is made of fine leather strips taken from a blue dragon's hide. It is enchanted and provides a basic AC of 0 as well as immunity to electrical attacks.

**Font of Azaalzam:** It is the lower half of a giant seashell that can be filled with water. Aside from being a scrying device, it enables one's consciousness to be projected to the area observed. If so, the visitor can hear sounds and cast magic (one spell per visit, which ends the session). The font, however, bears a 15% chance of the user permanently losing a point of Wisdom anytime consciousness is broadcast to a remote location. The loss is not obvious to the user (hence a DM might conceal the fact from a player until consequences to the character become obvious). This is one of the exceedingly rare magical items capable of penetrating the Tainted Lands' barrier. Doing so requires a horror check (HR7) and incurs a 3% chance per Turn spent there of unrecoverable death within 1d6 hours after returning.

## Gorgothion the Undying

The flesh which Gorgothion had once inhabited now bears the soul of Alandar I, the former king of ancient Orzafeth murdered in AY1429, shortly before the Ogam overtook his realm. By a twist of fate, he actually survived his assassination. It so happened that his death triggered a magical protection which caused his soul to *magic jar* into a jade carving hidden beneath the royal palace. Gorgothion discovered the mysterious item a few weeks before the destruction of the capital city in AY1506, causing the two souls to trade places. The consciousness of Gorgothion the Priest remained in the jade carving, until Lord Carcariel so unwisely freed it five centuries later. Surviving in the priest's body, Alandar left the item in its hiding place. The former king was unable to alter the course of events unfolding in Orzafeth. At the sight of the priesthood manipulating his hopelessly corrupted successor, Alandar left.



Thus began his centuries-spanning ordeal. Gorgothion's body bore the Taint of Orzafeth—oozing sphincters on his chest and back, and mouths in the palms of his hands. The priest's body was also unable to perish from lack of food, water, or air, thus his *Undying* epithet. Radiating evil despite his true alignment, Alandar fled the surface world and its ruthless persecutions. He dwelled in the catacombs, deep beneath Okadia and among countless corpses resting in darkness. There, he cultivated his hatred for the Ogam and all who favored the Outer Beings. He hunted tainted ones hiding from the Alphantian wizards' onslaught, using his own connection to their kind to avenge a thousand and one times the fall of his realm.

Alandar is an abomination from anyone's point of view, including the Ogam. They know of the "one-who-stole-from-Rasthz," but haven't been able to find him. During half a millenium of seething anger and thirst for revenge, the former king augmented the unnatural powers that came with Gorgothion's body. He also learned to read the bones, unveiling the knowledge of the dead to further his aims. Aside from becoming a bone necromancer, he endeavored to rid his land of the ancient taint. Although no longer quite human or humane in the way he reasons, his goal remains nonetheless the greater good, often using the living as bait to defeat evil. In more recent times, he began prowling the streets of Okadia at night, pursuing the wicked ones who dwell there and coming ever closer to the count's palace.

**Appearance:** [by J.D.P.] Gorgothion is a tall, skeletal being with ash-gray skin that appears so dry as to flake away. Dark purplish-slate smudges ring his eyes and pool beneath his cheekbones, making those seem exceptionally hollow. Gorgothion's eyes are scarlet with white veins. His voice sounds like sandpaper rubbed together. His earlobes touch his shoulders and wobble as he moves. His hands appear end in claws, with clearly defined joints and bones, and a mouth with sharp teeth resembling a lamprey's in each palm. When outside the catacombs, Gorgothion hides his hideous appearance with a long dark gray hooded robe and leather gauntlets. His stride is very long, with an unnatural looseness at the hips and knees.

**Gorgothion/Alandar:** HD18, AC-1, hp108, MV 120' (40'), #AT 2 hands, Dmg 1d6+2/1d6+2 plus level drain or by spell, Save MU18, ML10, AL Neutral; St16, In20, Wi15,

Dx13, Co14, Ch4. **Magical Items:** *dagger of Yurrgh-Thal*, *ring of telekinesis*, *wand of secret door detection*. **Special Abilities:** casts spells as a level 18 magic-user; attained *body affinity V* as a bone necromancer; his hands drain levels as a wraith; crawls along walls and ceilings at MV 60' (20'); hides in shadows 90% chance; +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells as well as cold-based attacks; requires neither sleep, air, food, nor water to survive; senses tainted beings within 300'; can ESP tainted beings within 100'; fights at +2 to hit and damage vs. tainted beings.

**Jade of Life Protection:** This carving, about the size of a large grapefruit, represents a snake coiling into a skull's mouth and out through an eye socket. It presently contains the life force and mind of Lord Carcariel, Seventh Count of Orzafeth. Anyone touching it must save vs. spells or trade place with its occupant, *magic jar* style. Killing a possessed victim causes the possessing soul to return to the jade, destroying its former occupant. An exorcism performed on a possessed body or on the jade will switch the two souls back. If the item is exorcised after a victim's death, its occupant is destroyed; the next person touching the jade receives the benefit of the item's protection (soul trapped inside at the time of death—and so on). The jade lies underneath the ruins of Orzafeth. It has borne the taint since the destruction of the old capital city. Any soul stored within this item automatically contracts one mental disease; alignment also switches from Good to Neutral, or from Neutral to Chaotic.

**Dagger of Yurrgh-Thal:** In addition to its +2 enchantment, this black-bladed weapon bears a 10% chance per successful attack of inflicting upon a victim a rotting disease (as a mummy's—no save). When hit with an unmodified attack score of 20, the victim must save vs. death ray or be killed instantly. If this happens, the dagger disintegrates.

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his contribution and gracious permission to use his work on the Ogam and Outer Beings, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for character appearances as well as her editorial and research work.*



# A Cosmology of the Known Outer Beings

by **Geoff Gander**

*“If we see Them, do They exist? If we believe in Them, will They come?”* (anon.)

*“...it is folly to conceive of the True Lords, the Ones Beyond All Things. Whosoever has seen them has failed to see them – for what eyes could take in even a shadow of a shadow of the Greatness That Passes Understanding? Man has made himself the measure of all things, but where man cannot tread all such twisting and dissection of creation’s mystery ends...”* (from *The Precepts of Akh’All*)

Mystaran theologians “in the know” have been discussing the Outer Beings discreetly for centuries, almost always looking for ways to ensure the unmentionable can never break free. Their goal is to secretly communicate this knowledge to those in a position to do something about it in order to avert widespread panic. Given the otherworldly nature of the Outer Beings and their effect on people, this information remains sketchy and inconsistent. Nevertheless, covert groups of scholars across Mystara pieced together a rough cosmology of these beings.

Although existing sources often describe the Outer Beings as a single group, detailed study has revealed that they are a loose collective of entities working together out of a common interest to free themselves from their prisons. Some Outer Beings take a more active interest in Mystaran affairs than others but all of them, to some degree, share a seemingly dispassionate attitude towards the cosmos as a whole—that is, they seem to view creation, and everything in it, as something to be used (and discarded if necessary) to achieve an as-yet-unknown goal. The fate of a single being is inconsequential to them but an empire or a race may occupy their attention for a time. If they lose their usefulness (as Mystaran history has shown) nations, too, are swept aside or devoured.

*...the Outer Beings are the circle drawn that leaves no remainder beyond the periphery; they are the transparent eye that moves and sees through rock and flesh. They cannot be living, for they cannot be dead; they cannot be evil, for they cannot conceive good; they cannot be here, for they cannot be kept there—they cannot even be they, for it is only the reflexive self-protective obscuration of sanity that divides the waters from the waters in the unfathomable deep, grasping for the mystical “seven” where none and all are one. . .*  
(from *The Precepts of Akh’All*)

## **Akh’All** (a.k.a. *the Unmentionable, the Festering Infamy, the Black Source*)

*“Bone for the Black Source, the Unmentionable, for It that Is. Being within being and body within body, you whose inscrutable blackness lies within and beyond all things, IT THAT AM, we honor thee.”* (fragment from a ritual)

*“He is not seen, felt, heard, smelled, or tasted. He is not perceived by the mind. He is the seventh sense, which is no sense. He is, yet He is not. He is beyond all perception and knowledge.”* (anon.)

**Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)

**Symbol:** A black circle split vertically (symbolizing the destruction of reality)

**Interests:** Consumption of creation, propagation of chaos, the Zhochal.

**Locations:** Alphatia, Davania, Minaea, the Known World, Zhochal strongholds.

**Appearance:** The only known description portrays Him as a mass of writhing tentacles or tubes radiating from a vaguely planet-sized spherical body, from which thought-waves are constantly emitted. As the Zhochal measurement system still eludes accurate translation, Akh'All could be smaller. Or larger.



**History:** According to the shunned *Precepts of Akh'All*, the Outer Beings "were, are, and shall be". More reasoned texts on the subject go as far as to speculate that the Outer Beings may be in some way a counterbalance to reality—such that nothing can exist without Them working to destroy it. Akh'All is credited as being the first Outer Being to make a bid to devour all of creation. Much of the more intelligible literature on the subject accords Him a kind of fatherly status among the "pantheon" of Outer Beings.

**Personality:** The more readable sources state that Akh'All has very little interest in Mystaran affairs—or the Prime Plane in general—beyond devouring it all. His interactions with the other Outer Beings are not described in any text and the few recorded messages from Him to His faithful are notably dispassionate. He does not urge His followers to strike down their enemies, nor does He urge them to proselytize. His refrain—"Await my coming"—is repeated by many as a mantra. In truth, Akh'All has little use for His worshippers beyond the psychic energy they provide Him and He feels no compulsion to give them anything in return. Despite His apathy towards the Prime Plane, many Outer Being cults pay homage to Akh'All out of respect for His perceived seniority.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Followers of Akh'All may spend proficiency slots in any weapon of their choosing (He really doesn't care).

**Clerics' Abilities:** Because of Akh'All's profound indifference, His clerics have only a 50% chance of success when casting a spell. If the check fails, a completely random effect of the DM's choosing results; however, the effect never benefits the cleric's enemies. Suggested effects include: a random spell of the DM's choice; a magical discharge inflicting 1d6 damage to the target per level of the desired spell; temporary invulnerability of the cleric to all physical attacks; or spontaneous restoration to full hit points.

Clerics of Akh'All are instantly recognizable to all of His servitor races and where possible they will provide aid up to and including attacking any enemies. Highly intelligent servitors may decide not to render aid but they will feel a compulsion to do so.

## Rasthz (a.k.a. the Many-Mouthed, the Devourer, the Beast)

*“Blood for the Beast, the Many-Mouthed Devourer, for It that Understands. Being that feeds all, body that feeds all, you who embody the truth of the ritual we do here, you who take within yourself and tear asunder the part and the part to mix and make whole in you once more, all content, all possibility, all form, IT THAT KNOWS, we honor thee.”* (fragment from a ritual)

*“It is He that devours all that ye shall praise, for He is the ultimate end of all things. Does not the deer fall to the wolf? Do we not slaughter the lamb and nourish ourselves thereby? In life there is death, and death must occur for life to arise anew. So, too, must all creation be devoured, and from the destruction shall come rebirth!”* (anon.)

- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** A red vertical mouth on a black background, bracketing a blue dot symbolizing the main orifice of Rasthz devouring the world.
- **Interests:** Destruction and renewal.
- **Locations:** Alphatia, the Jungle Coast, Minaea, the Steppes of Jen, the Midlands, the Savage Coast, Cestia, the Known World.

**Appearance:** Most depictions of Rasthz show a misshapen spherical being covered with mouths of various sizes and shapes. One mouth is much larger than the rest and opens vertically. The texts wildly disagree as to His size and there is no record of anyone having seen Him in a dream or drug-induced vision—at least, no one who has lived to talk about it afterwards.

**History:** As with the other Outer Beings, there is much speculation as to how Rasthz originated. He is described as the embodiment of destruction as a means of creation, and thus is thought to have always existed.

**Personality:** Rasthz is described in many texts as “the Beast.” Unsurprisingly, He is described as being the most animalistic of the Outer Beings—if such a quality could ever be attributed to them. Wherever He is described, He is shown to be working actively towards the destruction of all creation, in the most violent and dramatic manner possible. At first glance, His tactics seem to be at odds with those of the other Outer Beings (who are portrayed as wanting to corrupt or destroy the universe for the purposes of reshaping it in their own image). His followers see Him as the process of destruction and renewal personified: therefore, He does not need any motivation beyond obliterating away the old order. In being swept up in the destruction and thereby being consumed by their master, followers of Rasthz believe that their very bodies and souls will become the structure of the new universe that shall eventually come to be and in the process, they will become immortal.

Unsurprisingly, followers of Rasthz are known to be more chaotic, more violent, and generally more savage than what passes for the norm—being captured by them almost never ends well (see below). Rasthz encourages His faithful to conduct mass sacrifices. He seldom



communicates with His followers but when He does His messages come in violent dreams that drive His followers into even greater frenzies.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Followers of Rasthz are encouraged to use any bladed weapon. Cultists can also become proficient in the morning star or flail: basically, if the weapon is guaranteed to maim opponents or spill a lot of blood, Rasthz approves of it.

**Clerics' Abilities:** At 3rd level, cultists of Rasthz may conduct the *rite of renewal*—a euphemism for ritualized cannibalism. Any flesh from a sentient creature consumed within an hour after the prayer is uttered will heal any injuries sustained by the cultist (at a rate of 2 hit points restored for every hit point of flesh consumed: thus, a typical normal human with 1d4 hit points would restore up to 8 hit points). Only flesh from a creature killed by a worshipper of Rasthz will confer this benefit. As can be expected, cultists of Rasthz tend to be on the large side and are prone to gluttony.

At 5th level, followers of Rasthz acquire a mutation where mouths develop in the palms of their hands. Although these mouths are intended to aid in ceremonial feasting, they can be used in combat. Cultists can make two attacks per round with these mouths and a successful hit inflicts 1d6 damage. At 10th level, a bite from these hands also inflicts an energy drain, as per an attack from a wraith.

Also at 10th level, cultists of Rasthz can partake of the *feast of plenty*, a cannibalistic frenzy that confers additional hit points beyond the normal maximum, for a limited time. So long as one cultist continually utters the prayer, every hit point of flesh consumed will confer an additional hit point. The task of praying cannot be passed on to another. Since the feast lasts as long as someone intones the prayer, devotees of Rasthz can literally spend days gorging on flesh, until the person praying collapses from exhaustion and is eaten, in turn. At that point, additional hit points are lost at a rate of one per hour. All damage sustained by a cultist is taken from these additional hit points first.

There is theoretically no limit to the number of additional hit points a cultist of Rasthz could gain in this way but as a practical guideline the prayer can be intoned safely for one hour per Constitution point, after which the cultist must make a Constitution check every hour (with a cumulative penalty of -1). Should this check fail, the cultist collapses from exhaustion and dies. Participants in the feast of plenty acquire 3d4 additional hit points per hour of feasting. They stop gaining hit points in this way if the feast is interrupted or when the cultist intoning the ritual finally dies, as above. For simplicity's sake it is assumed that cultists of Rasthz are conditioned to consume far in excess of what a normal person might be capable of doing but if greater realism is desired, the DM may wish to rule that a participant can feast for a number of hours equal to half of his or her Constitution score, rounded down.

# Yurrgh-Thal (a.k.a. Yuranos, He Who Changes, Lord of the Worm, the Corruptor)

*“Tongue for the Corruptor, the Worm Lord, for It that Speaks. Being that voices all and body that voices all, you who sing and whisper to illuminate for us the words and ways of darkest rapture and burning exultation, IT THAT UTTERS, we honor thee.”* (fragment of a ritual)

*“Oh thou Deceiver, thou Honeyed-Tongue, thou Giver of Gifts That Are Not! We are deaf to thy entreaties and are blind to thy visage. Thou shalt not tempt us!”* (obscure invocation against Yurrgh-Thal, c. 2nd century AC)

- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** Worshippers of Yurrgh-Thal use a circle of red flames symbolizing the gift of fire, said to have been given by Him in primordial times as a means of leading primitive men down His path. The Cult of Yuranos uses a simple white face as a device, half of which smiles, and the other half frowns.
- **Interests:** Propagation of the faith, the subtle perversion of living things.
- **Locations:** Alphatia, Hule, the Savage Coast, Cestia, the Known World (especially Thyatis).

**Appearance:** Yurrgh-Thal is most commonly depicted as having a perfectly-formed male physique from the neck down, while from the jawline upwards is a gaping, ragged maw from which vaguely fern-like tentacles erupt. A less common representation is a vast pillar resembling a tree stump, riven with cracks through which thousands of eyes or mouths on stalks protrude. All existing accounts of Yurrgh-Thal’s voice, whether heard in a dream or from what later turned out to be his temporary avatar on the Prime Plane, describe it as being so melodious and soothing that listeners are moved to joy. In his guise as Yuranos, Yurrgh-Thal is depicted as a physically flawless bald man wearing a simple golden crown.



**History:** As with the other Outer Beings, Yurrgh-Thal is assumed to have always existed. He embodies corruption and decay (both physical and moral) and thus He is thought to have come into being at the dawn of Time itself. Since before the time of the first Carnifex empire, Yurrgh-Thal has taken an active interest in the affairs of mortals and has intervened many times in cultures that He has found interesting or useful.

Since the Great Rain of Fire, Yurrgh-Thal has occasionally manifested a fraction of His essence on the Prime Plane as the false Immortal known as Yuranos—first among the Traldar peoples, and subsequently in the Milenian Empire and Thyatis. Yuranos acts with its own free will, although it behaves as its creator would. The spells it grants come directly from its master. Yurrgh-Thal is able to accomplish this feat by consuming enough of His worshippers’ psychic energies (often through sacrifice) to bore a small, temporary hole into the Prime Plane, rather than try to break free of His prison entirely. Because of this, the portion of His essence he sends into the Prime Plane is too small to attract the attention of the Immortals and the manifestation is brief enough that they often do not notice. In the meantime, Yuranos advances Yurrgh-Thal’s aims through sporadic visits to the faithful. The Cult of Yuranos exists today in some of the more remote

corners of the Malpoggi Swamp, in the city of Athenos, as well as in Thyatis, where it operates openly as the semi-mystical "Fraternal Order of Yuranos".

**Personality:** Unlike the other Outer Beings, Yurrgh-Thal finds the fragile, ephemeral, easily-manipulated mortals fascinating, especially because their ambition is often what leads them to discover and contact Him despite the barriers put in place against Him and His kind. He delights in subtly guiding selected individuals to make incremental changes that ultimately corrupt entire nations to serve His interests. That such insignificant creatures have the potential to become immortal, and thereby possibly be in a position to sow the seeds of corruption even wider, makes His victories all the sweeter.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Yurrgh-Thal acts subtly and prefers His followers to do the same. Cultists may only use weapons that can be concealed (basically anything equal to a short sword or smaller). Poisons are condoned. The exception are pistols: though concealable, they lack subtlety.

**Clerics' Abilities:** Cultists of Yurrgh-Thal automatically gain the *charm person* spell as an ability, which they can use a number of times per day equal to their level.

At 3rd level, cultists of Yurrgh-Thal gain the *glamour* ability three times per day. When used, a pale golden-green glow momentarily surrounds the cultist and his/her Charisma score increases to 18 for one hour per level. While *glamour* is in effect, any sentient being within 50' must save vs. Spells or be awestruck. Awestruck victims will think that the priest is the most beautiful (or handsome) person they have ever met and that everything they say is perfectly logical. They will violently disagree with anyone who says otherwise. The cultist may also command victims to do his or her bidding as per the *geas* spell. Victims with an Intelligence of 12 or higher can make another saving throw to overcome the effects every 12 hours. The *glamour* lasts for one day for creatures with an Intelligence of 12 or less after which they may make a saving throw every 24 hours to overcome the effects.

At 6th level, priests of Yurrgh-Thal gain the ability to *corrupt* any living thing they touch. Doing so constitutes an attack and the cultist must choose whether to inflict physical or moral corruption. In either case, the victim must save vs. Death Ray to avoid the effect. Physical corruption rots flesh (1d10 damage, -1 Charisma if the affected area is visible) and has a 10% chance of inflicting mummy rot. Moral corruption leaves the body unscathed but the cultist can shift the victim's alignment from Lawful to Neutral or from Neutral to Chaotic. This form of attack warps the victim's sanity, such that a Horror Check is required against a Horror Rating of 7. Failure could result in insanity.

At 10th level, cultists of Yurrgh-Thal, through the *warp reality* ability, become able to alter their listeners' realities. This effect is much stronger than the *hallucinatory terrain* or *phantasmal force* spells; sensory perceptions are so real that any damage inflicted is actually sustained, up

to and including death. Anyone within 30' must save vs. Spells at -2 (Wisdom modifiers can apply) or fall under the priest's influence. While influenced, victims are susceptible to the cultist's description of their reality: anything he or she describes becomes real. Devotees do not have to speak in full sentences for this effect to occur. The effect lasts for twenty rounds, minus one round per point of victims' Intelligence.

## He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Seen (a.k.a. the One, the Renewer)

*“Eye for the One, the Renewer, for It that Sees without Being Seen. Being that views all and body that views all, you who see all things and will make the end of all things, IT THAT STARES, we honor thee.”* (fragment of a ritual)

*“He is the beginning and end! He is life and death! He is all and nothing! He brings all to an end and ushers in the new era! Behold Him in His glory, as your last vision!”* (fragment of a chant overheard in the sewers of Darokin City)

- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** None.
- **Interests:** Shattering the current multiverse and ushering in the one to come.
- **Locations:** Alphatia, Hule, the Savage Coast, Cestia, Norwold, the Sea of Dread, the Known World.

**Appearance:** Unlike the other Outer Beings, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Seen has only been depicted in the *Book of the End*. It presents Him as a collection of black spheres or bubbles barely concealing a vague man-shaped black form. It is believed that any mortal seeing Him clearly would be stricken dead.

**History:** As with the other Outer Beings, The One is thought to have always existed. He has been described as being inactive for much of recorded history, for His true purpose only concerns the end of Time itself.

As the Renewer, He will awaken from His prison (said to be within Mystara itself) when all has been laid to waste, and sing the *Final Song*, at which time all shall cease to be. Only when there is absolute nothingness will He sing the *First Song* and create the new universe.

**Personality:** If the Outer Beings can be said to be impatient, The One exemplifies this most clearly. His sole purpose, that of destroying the current universe and creating the next one, is contingent on the others of his kind being freed and completing their own appointed tasks. Thus, He communicates often with His minions in dreams, exhorting them to perform quests that at first seem illogical but which often involve great sacrifice that feeds His otherworldly peers and hastens the time of their eventual release. As such, His followers are likely to serve the Outer Beings as a whole and can be found wherever cultists gather. As chief strategist among his kind, the One also devises most of the longer-term plots against the Immortals.



Because of this, The One makes no attempt to treat His followers as anything but pawns. The glory His followers gain from being at the forefront of conflict against the Immortals and the personal power they can gain thereby, more than offsets this hard fact.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** The One's only desire is for His followers to sacrifice themselves (and others) for His benefit. Accordingly, his faithful are permitted to use any weapon they wish in His service. They also start with four Weapon Mastery slots as fighters, ensuring that they will spill even more blood in their master's service. Unlike player characters, followers of The One may stack their Weapon Mastery slots at 1st level, up to Skilled level.

**Clerics' Abilities:** Particularly fervent in their devotion, followers of The One believe that dying for their master will actually usher in the new era sooner. Consequently, these combat-oriented priests roll their hit points on a d8, instead of the standard d6 for clerics, and have a Morale of 12.

At 1st level, they are able to sacrifice themselves for their master by uttering the *death chant*. They die immediately upon doing so and their souls are consumed. If this happens within a mile of other cultists, the most experienced among them temporarily gains one free spell for every two levels of the ones sacrificing themselves. These extra spells only serve to replace those already cast. If the beneficiary hasn't cast any (or has too few to restore), the balance of free spells goes to the next most experienced priest, and so on. If there is no one to absorb the extra spells, The One consumes them instead. Unsurprisingly, a common tactic among His followers is to sacrifice themselves just prior to falling in battle.

At 10th level, followers of The One can burn up the remainder of their life forces to temporarily boost their attributes and hit points through the *rite of consumption*. Upon completing the rite, which takes one round, the devotees die and their souls are consumed by The One. However, their bodies remain alive for one round per experience level. During this time they gain as many as half their maximum hit points; their Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores increase to 25 each (modify AC, attack, and damage rolls accordingly); they also become immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells. At the end of the effect's duration, their bodies crumble into dust.

## **Hrug (a.k.a. the Traveler, the Keeper of the Way)**

*"Skin for the Traveler, the Wayfarer, for It that Creeps to the Glorious Fall. Being outside all and body outside all, you whose touch will turn all outsides in, IT THAT FEELS, we honor thee."* (fragment of a ritual)

*"We interrogated the prisoner for four days and nights, subjecting him to all manner of torments. But he, or it, would not speak of aught but the endless voids between the stars, and of worlds no man had ever seen. We silenced him on the fifth day but as he died, he spoke of soaring into the bosom of the night, to ride the aether with the Traveler."* (unknown adventurer's journal, c. AC 943)



- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** A five-pointed white star on a black background.
- **Interests:** Wandering the multiverse, heralding the final coming of the Outer Beings.
- **Locations:** Alphatia (notably Ambur), the Known World (especially Glantri).

**Appearance:** There is only one depiction of Hrug in any of the known sources—the *Precepts of Akh'All* describe Him as being a gigantic fleshy cylinder covered with brain-like lumps and other unidentifiable organs, trailing arrays of spindly tentacles for many miles.



**History:** Hrug receives hardly any mention at all in any of the major texts associated with the Outer Beings. As a result, there are scholars who do not consider Him to be a true Outer Being, but rather an exalted servitor of some kind. According to the *Precepts of Akh'All*, Hrug is fated to awaken when He finally falls from the stars onto Mystara, at which point He will issue the call that will shatter the barriers holding back the other Outer Beings. Then the multiverse can be remade in Their glory. His role beyond that is unknown.

**Personality:** Hrug is invoked seldom by Outer Being cultists and He is described as a being that flies forever asleep between the stars, unable to respond to calls from the believers. In recognition of this prophecy the more organized faiths usually have one of their own dedicate themselves to seeking communion with Hrug in order to determine when the appointed time of His awakening is nigh. This effort is particularly draining on a mortal soul. Anyone undertaking this task soon develops unique mutations rendering them less than human.

Prayers to Hrug are never answered, nor does He instruct His followers to do anything. Laymen seeking communion with Him receive nothing but a constant, intense barrage of random images and fragments of cosmic thoughts that stuns the listener for 12 rounds (10% chance of causing insanity).

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Because of their unique role (see below), Hrug's followers do not use weapons. However, armed followers of other Outer Beings are rarely far away.

**Clerics' Abilities:** To become attuned to Hrug, one must undergo a series of physical and psychological changes leading to a complete transformation. Experience is gained by successfully accessing, interpreting, and transmitting messages.

At 1st level, followers are able to mind link with Hrug. This allows them to access His thoughts without running the risk of becoming stunned or even more insane than they already were. The continual flow of simple impressions and images usually proves of little strategic value.

At 5th level, the faithful can "hear" utterances and see fragments of Hrug's dreams. Many of these impressions are vague but there is a 50% chance once per day of seeing something that

will advance the sect's plans, such as the location of an intended victim or rival. At this point, cultists are too deeply immersed in Hrug's dreams to be able to move on their own. From this point on, these devotees begin a slow transformation lasting until the 10th level of experience, starting with facial features gradually fading, the loss of hair, wrinkles, fingerprints, and muscle tone.

At 10th level, the faithful have transformed into slug-like, immobile creatures with vestigial limbs and multiple mouths from which Hrug's thoughts are uttered at random intervals. Links to Hrug are strong enough that they have a 75% chance of providing useful insights twice per day, or once per day an accurate prediction concerning a random future event.

At 15th level, the transformations are complete and enable constant contact with Hrug. His thoughts are broadcast constantly to the cultists, who mindlessly repeat them. At all stages of their metamorphoses, priests can sense their surroundings and cast spells as needed.

## **Rosheg-Kha (a.k.a. She Who Provides, the Father of Lizards)**

*"Sinew for the Provider, the Egg Mother, for It that Acts. Being that drives all and body that drives all, you who push and twist life to burst the binds and open the way, IT THAT DOES, we honor thee."* (fragment of a ritual)

*"Mighty Father, Great Mother, Progenitor of All. Thou art the First, and of Thine shall come the last. The blood persists, evermore."* (translated inscription found on a tablet unearthed in Ylaruam, author unknown)

- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** None. Some human followers use a simple black outline of a lizard's head, its jaws agape.
- **Interests:** Reptilian civilizations, the dawning of a new age of reptiles.
- **Locations:** Adakkian Sound, Amalur Lowlands, Jungle Coast (Davania), Alphatia (Orzafeth), Malpheggi Swamp, the Bayou (Savage Coast), Kingdom of Nastoreth (Arm of the Immortals), the Sea of Dread, Yavdlom. Also Kingdom of Nithia in the Hollow World.

**Appearance:** There are few known depictions of Rosheg-Kha but those that do exist portray a giant bipedal creature vaguely resembling a lizard man, from whose body numerous tentacles and pseudopods emerge.

**History:** Rosheg-Kha is credited by Outer Being cultists as being the true creator of all sentient lizardfolk on Mystara. Compared to the other Outer Beings, Rosheg-Kha receives very few mentions in any of the known texts, and where He is mentioned at all it is almost always in connection with His chosen people, the lizard men and their cousins. Rosheg-Kha wielded His greatest influence in the modern era during the heyday of Mogreth (c. BC 2600-2000), where He was one of the key venerated figures in that nation's pantheon. Many of the sorcerer-kings of that empire invoked Him in their attempts to strengthen the lizard man race through experimentation. He did take a personal interest in that work and through His interference, the first lizard man-human hybrids (the ancestors of the Ogam) were created.



Rosheg-Kha was also worshipped in Nithia but His followers were destroyed by the Immortals when that nation was scoured from the world.

**Personality:** Rosheg-K'ha cares little about destroying the multiverse or its inhabitants. His (or Her—Rosheg-Kha is depicted as male, female, and hermaphroditic, sometimes in the same text) sole focus is the advancement of His chosen people, the lizard men and their kin. This has led some scholars to question whether Rosheg-K'ha is actually an Outer Being at all but rather a fallen Immortal or some other exalted being. Nevertheless, since the destruction of Nithia, Rosheg-K'ha has rarely intervened directly in His charges. Most lizard man tribes view His cult with suspicion and revulsion and blame Him for the downfall of their race in ancient times. He prefers to send dream messages to His chosen shamans and on rare occasions will possess one of His worshippers with a small portion of His essence. His messages are largely aimed at driving His followers to strengthen themselves.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings. The reason for Ka's reticence is that He is aware of Rosheg-Kha's relatively benign attitude towards the multiverse and He hopes to convince the Outer Being to stand aside in the coming conflict to better protect their shared interest in the sentient reptiles of Mystara. His attempts at secretive communication have been unsuccessful so far but He will not give up if it has any chance of preserving the multiverse.
- **Enemies:** Everyone else, with the possible exception of Ka the Preserver, who has not explicitly commanded His clerics to oppose or support the works of Rosheg-Kha. This has caused some tension in Pandius, although no one has openly spoken out against Ka yet.
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Rosheg-Kha allows his lizard man followers to use whatever weapons they wish (anything that gives them a competitive advantage). His few human worshippers are permitted to use any hand-held melee weapon.

**Clerics' Abilities:** At 3rd level, non-reptilian worshippers of Rosheg-Kha receive the ability to become cold-blooded for as long as they wish. While in this state, they rely on external sources of energy to warm themselves as mundane reptiles do but they also gain a reptile's slow metabolism (i.e., they can go months without eating).

At 6th level, non-reptilian worshippers gain the ability to dash once per day. With this ability, a cultist can produce a burst of speed lasting 6 rounds (treat as a *haste* spell). This ability can be used twice per day at 12th level, three times per day at 18th level, and four times per day at 24th level. At this point, cultists develop patches of green or yellow scales on their bodies (–3 Charisma).

At 9th level, non-reptilian worshippers acquire a forked tongue and can "taste" scents in the air with a roll of 1-2 on 1d6 (allowing the ability to track a person, for example). Charisma is further reduced by 1.

Reptilian worshippers of Rosheg-Kha can cast spells starting at 1st level and gain the *dart* ability (as above) at 3rd level, with additional darts available at 9th, 15th, 21st, and 27th level (up to a maximum of five per day).

At 10th level, reptilian priests gain a permanent +1 bonus to hit and damage against non-reptilian sentient adversaries, in addition to other combat bonuses from attributes or weapons mastery. This bonus increases to +2 at 20th level, and +3 at 30th level. Cultists also gain the ability of *regeneration* (2 hit points per round) at 10th level.

## **Ubbeth (a.k.a. Lord of the Deep, Spawn of the Deep, Bringer of the Wave)**

*“Gut for the Deep One, the Tide Wave, for It that Loves. Being that transforms all and body that transforms all, you who take us within you and remake us as parts of the deep whispering whole, IT THAT LUSTS, we honor thee.”* (fragment of a ritual)

*“Profound are the depths of the seas and the darkness they hold. For in that primal blackness lies the answer, uttered endlessly by the Lord of the Deep.”* (*The Codex of the Deep*, author unknown)

- **Nature:** Outer Being (Chaotic)
- **Symbol:** Five whirlpools on a black background.
- **Interests:** The water element, oceans, engulfing the land.
- **Locations:** Adakkian Sound, Jungle Coast (Davania), Malpheggi Swamp, the Bayou (Savage Coast), the Sea of Dread, Yavdlom, the Undersea.

**Appearance:** Ubbeth is described variously as an enormous fish-man who lies at the bottom of a deep-sea chasm, or as a massive mound of pulsating, slowly moving coral covered with forests of festering seaweed through which His faithful servants swim, ever whispering to Him to awaken.

**History:** As with the other Outer Beings, there is no real speculation as to Ubbeth’s origin: He *“was, is, and shall be”*. He is unique among the Outer Beings in that He is associated with a specific element—water. Indeed, most Outer Being cultists hail Ubbeth as the undisputed lord of all the world’s seas. Some even claim that He created the oceans to be His personal dominion before they were stolen from Him by Protius and other aquatic Immortals during the great battle that led to the imprisonment of the Outer Beings). As written in the *Precepts of Akh’All*, He is prophesied to scour the world of its current inhabitants as the old universe is devoured by the other Outer Beings.



Due to His focus on water, Ubbeth has managed to avoid attracting the attention of most Immortals. As a result, He has been worshipped—at times openly—by a number of cultures over the centuries. Due to the role of water-based travel in communications and spreading ideas, Ubbeth is among the better-known Outer Beings, although He is seen more often as a sinister legend by those who mercifully do not know too much. Some ancient Makai tribes of the Sea of Dread, for example, worshipped Ubbeth as a father figure who provided sustenance from the

sea. Likewise, some Taymoran city-states venerated Him as a vengeful storm god that had to be appeased with blood offerings. Some Traldar clans, perhaps through contact with the Makai or survivors of fallen Taymora, threw treasure into the sea as an offering to Ubbeth before making sea voyages. Even today, pirates have been known to make sacrifices to Ubbeth, and in port cities His name is occasionally invoked as a bogeyman in phrases like, "*An' may the Lord o' the Deep take me if I'm lyin'!*"

**Personality:** Ubbeth takes a passing interest in the work of His followers, and He is relatively easy to contact in dreams, particularly if the dreamer is near a large body of water. Although dormant, Ubbeth is able to observe inhabitants of Mystara along seashores or near the banks of rivers or lakes connecting to the ocean. In the latter cases, several priests need to give Him some of their own energy to focus his vision so far from His marine environment. He regularly gives them instructions in the form of wavering images of underwater scenes filled with film-like sequences showing them carrying out His will.

Ubbeth dreams often of drowning the lands in order to cleanse them of their current inhabitants, and of spreading His seed to create a new race of servitors in the world to come. To advance the latter aim, many of His human followers perform rites that ultimately lead to their physical transformation. Some of these rites involve sacrifice; others require the faithful to mate with various undersea creatures in His service. More recently (i.e. within the last 200 years), Ubbeth has been exhorting His followers to mix more vigorously with aquatic peoples.

- **Liege:** None
- **Allies:** Other Outer Beings
- **Enemies:** Everyone else.
- **Followers' Alignment:** Chaotic
- **Favored Weapons:** Most of Ubbeth's followers are the inhuman hresha-rhak, who often rely on their claws and teeth for combat. However, those of Ubbeth's followers who use weapons are limited to spears, tridents, and nets.

**Clerics' Abilities:** Of all the Outer Being minions, followers of Ubbeth are noted for the slow, but prominent, physical changes that progress throughout their lives, which ultimately result in their abandoning the land altogether. His followers try to live as close as possible to major bodies of water. Their sacrifices often result in sudden whirlpools, tidal waves, and storms. These events are meant to overwhelm ships and drown their crews, or to weaken them enough that the hresha-rhak will make short work of them.

At 2nd level, the faithful gain the ability to breathe underwater for one hour per experience level, and if they were unable to swim, this ability is gained as a free skill.

At 4th level, a cultist gains the ability to summon a tidal wave once per day near a sea or a lake. This is treated as an instantaneous attack and inflicts 3d6 damage to everyone within an area 10' high, 10' deep, and 40' wide. If cast against a boat, the same amount of hull point damage is inflicted; small craft are capsized. An additional tidal wave can be summoned every four experience levels afterwards (i.e. at 8th level two tidal waves can be summoned each day).

At 6th level, followers develop webbed fingers and toes. Swimming speed is increased by 50%. Attacks with melee weapons are made at a –1 penalty due to awkwardness. Charisma drops by 1.

At 12th level, the faithful gains the ability to *control weather*, as per the druidic spell of the same name, when near a sea or a lake.

At 24th level, the cultists' *water-breathing* ability becomes permanent, and they are no longer able to breathe air. Furthermore, their skins have changed so that being out of water dries them out. Death results in four hours unless they return to the water. By this time, as well, they more closely resemble a hresha-rhak than a human (further reduction of 6 to Charisma).

*. . .thus their dominion is already at hand; no gates will hold back what moves outside of space and time. They come in their own time and in their own space; dimensions stretched and made more vast for entities inconceivably more vast than us. That they should lower themselves and degrade their manifold forms such as to enter the flat and insipid reality we are bound to—tears of burning pitch and joy for those that fall before the presence of these impossibly necessary Beings. . .* (from The Precepts of Akh'All)

*Special thanks to Geoff Gander for his contribution and gracious permission to use his work on the Ogam and Outer Beings, and to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial and research work.*

# The Alphatian Province of Greenspur

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Kingdom of Greenspur - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

*Greenspur: a realm of lawmen, accountants, and bureaucrats.*

Its most notorious trait is its ancient tradition of bureaucracy. As pointed out in better-known travelers' digests, Greenspur is the most vellumwork-happy realm of Alphatia. No sentient creature unable to defy the laws of this land may enter or freely go about without proper documentation. And proper documentation comes with many pages, even more fees, and to match the latter, stamps, seals, and fancy ribbons. The ever-expanding bureaucracy feeds upon itself for its own sake, for if it didn't, the entire system would collapse. Naturally, one must produce the precious records upon request. Leaving or entering any of the realm's jurisdictions require--yes my friend, you guessed it--more fees and more documentation.

Next come the accountants. There could not be a credible bureaucracy without layers of accountants keeping track of the realm's funds. Accountants are highly trained, vigilant beyond belief, and indoctrinated not to deviate from established (read: legal and accepted) practices.

One benefit is that government fraud is quasi-nonexistent while commercial fraud remains at one of the lowest levels in the empire. With good reason, monarchies and businesses across Alphatia rely on the hired services of accountants and auditors from Greenspur's universities. Private accountants maintain affiliations to one guild or another.

Finally, the last and perhaps most important aspect of Greenspur resides in its legislative structure. In other words, this realm is a paradise for lawyers, judges, and all sorts of law professionals gravitating around courts of justice. It also is a festering nest of litigious predators who use the voluminous sets of laws and ancient jurisprudence to fleece those uninformed or unwise enough to transgress established rules. In fact, the entire nobility system revolves around office titles inextricably connected with the legal system and the realm's administration, called "Exchequer." It drives the internal politics of the country.

**The Magistratar:** At the top of the pyramid presides King Sildreth II, who also holds the oddly spelled title of *Magistratar* and its corresponding jurisdiction as his personal dominion. This title is important as it directly concerns the approval process of new laws and the removal of older ones. The Magistratar resolves any cases that previous courts (and there are many successive circuits to handle appeals) failed to close. King Sildreth II naturally is the realm's top administrator and one of the three authorities that determine who should be awarded enchanted regalia (see below). The king nominates recipients for the awards, including himself, at the end of each calendar year. Enchanted regalia is awarded if the other two jurisdictions concur (see Defendar and Requisitar). The Magistratar oversees all Exchequer departments (called Squares) not directly under another jurisdiction or linked to enchanted regalia.



Another nine key office titles exist in Greenspur. Their nobility rankings vary on how good title-holders are at fulfilling their responsibilities. As such, it is a meritocracy laden with enchanted regalia enhancing one's abilities and administrative influence. Each earned medal, talisman, ring, necklace, scepter, and other honorific doodad gives a measure of control over a specific Square of the Exchequer. There are black and white Squares. Jurisdictions can only control Squares of the same color. The first attributed Square determines whether a jurisdiction is "White" or "Black."

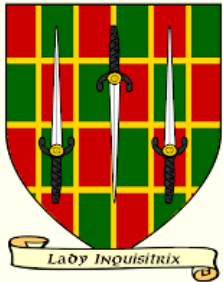
The nobility system is somewhat reminiscent of Arogansa's since titles are hereditary. Law-breaking, felony, gross mismanagement, or failure to support the Exchequer's goals and well-being may result in the loss of a title, seizure of property, fines, public torture, imprisonment and/or banishment, or the death penalty. Vast numbers of petty nobles thrive in Greenspur, recognizable by the "Esq." suffixes following their names. Naturally, inheritance or the transfer of titles are highly regulated and require beneficiaries to hold proper diplomas, birth certificates, and proof of citizenship. Occasionally, enchanted regalia may be awarded to an *Esquire of the Realm* as a reward for services above and beyond the call of duty. Ownership of enchanted regalia is not hereditary, and it must be returned to the House of Requisitar at the time of succession.





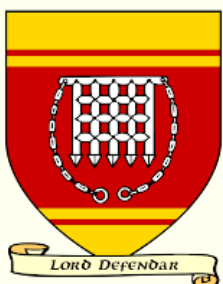
**The Jurar:** since ancient times, the Jurar runs the legislative body that verifies rules are applied when selecting members of a jury. The Jurar also acts as the King's Adviser, presides over the Ministry of Education, stands as the *Arbiter of the Guilds*, and is the de-facto regent for the monarchy. In addition, the Jurar also runs the *Office of Indoctrinations* which regulates and controls the certification process for accountants, magistrates, and administrators.

**The Justiciar:** is the realm's top bounty-hunter and head of "internal affairs." The House of Justiciar is responsible for hunting down and bringing to justice those summoned who failed to appear. Justiciars also investigate suspicions, allegations of wrongdoing, and other irregularities amid the Exchequer regardless of actual jurisdictions. The Head Justiciar has authority to requisition certain units of the military or individuals in the service of the Inquisitrix, hire native or foreign "heroes" (including non-wizards), or personally handle very important cases.



**The Inquisitrix:** traditionally, this is the top investigating branch of the Exchequer. The Inquisitrix is the king's master spy and runs the realm's intelligence network. After the Jurar, it is the next most important adviser to the king, especially in matters of foreign diplomacy and relations with the Imperial House in Vertiloch. The *Sans-Parole Penitentiary* on Malfera Island is controlled by the Inquisitrix, as well as all other gaols in the realm. Although there is no Guild of Thieves in Greenspur, the spy network comes close.

**The Prosecutrix:** originally, the Prosecutrix represented the realm when making accusations. The Prosecutrix's Jurisdiction runs parts of the army and navy outside the realm's borders, during a war or when summoned by imperial authorities. This command is of an offensive nature (as opposed to the House of Defendar in charge of homeland defense). As a counterbalance to the Defendar's authority, Prosecutrix traditionally controls the Royal Guard in Eagret and all offshore operations against piracy and smuggling.



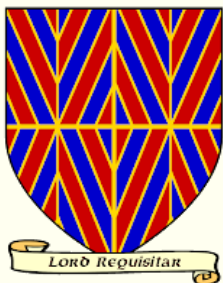
**The Defendar:** runs the army and the navy at home and stands as "Advocate of the Exchequer." The House of Defendar is responsible for general law-enforcement in the realm. If a military unit's commander isn't a member of the House of Defendar, the second-in-command must be, as a sort of political commissar to ensure the Exchequer's orthodoxy is respected and promoted. The Defendar is one of the three authorities that determine who should be awarded enchanted regalia.

**The Executar:** since Greenspur's early days, the Executar has wielded extraordinary abilities to carry out verdicts. These magical powers are generated and guaranteed by the Exchequer, so long as they are invoked to effect a verdict. The House of Executar relies upon a number of common hangmen, native or foreign heroes, and unusual creatures bound to do their duties, including outer-planar assassins. Although there isn't a Guild of Assassins in Greenspur, the House of Executar comes close.



**The Adjudicatrix:** traditionally approves or revokes judges, especially top magistrates. The House of Adjudicatrix also functions as the Ministry of the Land, which includes the administration of roads, ports, and mines, and the enacting of policy affecting farming, fishing, hunting, or commerce in general. The Adjudicatrix is the Third Adviser to the King in the matter of the realm's economy.

**The Testatrix:** since ancient times, the Testatrix handles matters of death, inheritance, succession, and the transfer of titles. Whenever common law or litigation fails to solve a case, the Testatrix may determine inheritance for any of the Ten Jurisdictions, including royal succession. So far, responsibilities have been carried out successfully since there never have been wars of succession in Greenspur, or civil wars due to a monarch passing away. The House of Testatrix also regulates all matters pertaining to religious philosophy, including those involving faiths of foreign origins. There is no official faith in Greenspur.



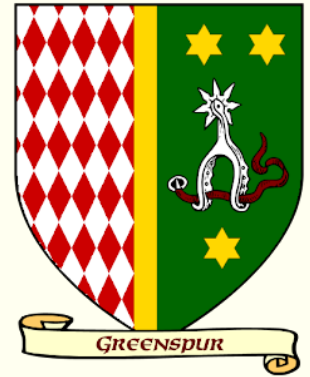
**The Requisitar:** The House of Requisitar is responsible for producing, preserving, and securing all enchanted regalia not presently attributed to other individuals. The Requisitar is one of the three authorities that determine who should be awarded any such regalia (see the House of Magistratar earlier). This jurisdiction also governs tax collection and the general finances of the realm and may requisition parts of the military to accomplish its mission.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her editorial assistance.*

# Dominion Stats - Greenspur

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

One advantage of being run by wizard lawyers and magical bean-counters is that little room remains for fraud. As a result, most of the realm's earnings are actually spent as intended rather than filling the pockets of greedy aristocrats. What this means is that a land smaller than Arogansa or Theranderol commands greater financial capability than either. Unfortunately, the lion's share of its revenues, under "Government & Politics," serves primarily to support Greenspur's tentacular *Exchequer*.



Population density per square mile and urban ratio lie very much within range of its immediate neighbors. Inflation and cost of living remain low, and farming comfortably allows significant exports to Vertiloch and other destinations. Much of the excess farming heads north to Aasla or Stonewall. Aside from its Big-Brotherish bureaucracy and litigious freaks slyly awaiting in ambush, Greenspur isn't a bad place for non-wizards to live.

Greenspur commands smaller ground forces than its neighbors but its physical borders are relatively easy to monitor. Three main garrisons guard the east including the Telsatus & Limi areas, and Sequestria, which represent more than half Greenspur's entire army. The remainder provides law enforcement throughout the realm. Experienced spies, executors, bounty-hunters, and trained wizard-inspectors form the army's backbone, fulfilling the needs of the Lords Defendar, Justiciar, and Executar, and the Lady Inquisitrix.

As can be expected, a great deal of military budget and effort goes instead toward the navy. As a result, Greenspur enjoys much greater naval capabilities. Its 52 vessels, including 11 airships and 7 submersibles, are tasked with patrolling more than 600 miles of coastline. This easily exceeds what Arogansa or Theranderol can line up. Emphasis for surface vessels and submersibles lies on the approaches to Eagret, Limi and Telsatus, and the northern shipping line to Aasla. A small force is permanently based on Malfera Island. Airships watch troublesome forested areas, the border with Arogansa, and the hills around Eagret. Illegal immigrants, wanted fugitives, and wandering monsters are the airships' main quarries. Although Greenspur's vessels are relatively light in structure, averaging 106 Hull Points, their crews are generally better suited to seafaring than most others in the region.

# The Land and People of Greenspur

Rural Population: 862,442 farmers 82.0% 43,122 armed peasants and 8,873  
 Urban Population: 177,468 townfolk 16.9% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 11,685 warrior HD 1.1% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 1,051,595 Greenspurians** the seas, the air, and the underworld.

**Total Land Area: 81,437 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 12.91 people per Sq. Mile  
 58% Wilderness Price of Bread: 5 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 28% Borderlands Price Inflation: Low  
 13% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 3.5 sp per Month

## Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Warrior <u>HD</u>
Eagret	100,000	1,500
Limi	9,700	2,000
Telsatus	8,780	2,000
Afotir	7,900	100
Ashipun	6,980	100
Gufetir	6,060	100
Afass	5,100	100
Chronicall	4,800	51
Codicilar	3,850	50
Sequestria	2,900	2,000
Circularom	1,950	50
Appendicea	1,000	50
Villages (24)	12,000	360
Sans Parole Penit.	1,000	500
Forts (3)	5,000	2,500
Towers (7)	448	224
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

## Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 4**  
 750 Convicts or Slaves  
 24 Administrators  
 90 Guards  
 456 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**1320 Total Mining Population**

## Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Fine Beverages, Dyes, Furs, Leather Goods, Papyrus & scrolls, Fines & Fees  
**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Medicinal Goods, Pipeweed, Silk, Tax on Magic, Court Surcharges  
**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Banking, Merchant Fair, Magic, Guild Profit Sharing

# Treasury of Greenspur

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	76,445	gp/month	32.1%	Farmer	0.9 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	82,553	gp/month	34.6%	Townfolk	4.7 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	3,900	gp/month	1.6%	Household	3.1 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	36,160	gp/month	15.2%	per Capita	2.3 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	39,440	gp/month	16.5%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>238,498</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	46,443	gp			

# Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	34,833	gp/month
Government & Politics	58,054	gp/month
Personal Prestige	34,833	gp/month
Treasury	23,222	gp/month
Military	34,833	gp/month

## Corruption Level:

Unbelievable Integrity  
**Farming:**  
 Greenspur may export food.

# Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	1,052	1	Spellcasters	45	5
Guards	90	1	Assassins	12	10
Heavy Infantry	263	2	Thieves (spies)	14	9
Shortbowmen	-		Bounty-Hunters	21	8
Longbowmen	-				
Mounted Archers	-		Ballista Artillerists	526	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	526	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	263	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	263	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	526	1
			Trebuchet Artillerists	263	1
Light Horsemen	263	1			
Med. Horsemen	131	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	
Heavy Horsemen	134	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	
Camel Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Good	-	
Elephant Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Best	-	
Pegasus Riders	-				
Wyvern Riders	22	6	Auxiliaries:	295	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	1,893
Mules or Oxen:	2,840
Draft Horses:	430
Tents:	1,130
Camp Followers:	591

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	131
Lt Catapults:	43
Hvy Catapults:	65
Trebuchets:	21

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	342 <sup>o</sup>
Medium Warhorses:	170
Heavy Warhorses:	174
Riding Horses:	785
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	22

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

### Total Standing Army

**4,803 Troops**  
or **7,011 HD**

(\*) *Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.*

## Naval Forces

Total Fleet Size: 52

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	15	150	900	45	300	1
Large Galley	8	160	1440	32	400	2
War Galley	3	90	900	15	225	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	15	150	--	45	375	1
Large Sailing Ship	8	160	--	32	400	2
Troop Transport	3	90	--	15	150	3

Listed Levels apply to *Marines* only. *Officers* are ranked individually.

*Rowers and sailors* are Level 1. *Rowers* are not counted among military.

Total Navy: 2,650 Seamen or 4,674 HD-worth or crews.

11 Airships, 7 Submersibles, 34 Surface Ships Average Hull Points: 108

## Posted in Eagret

90% Humans

Total Strength: 1,500 HD 3% Elves 3% Dwarves 2% Halfings

**Infantry:** 162 Lt. Infantry, 41 Hvy. Infantry,  
81 Lt. Crossbowmen, 41 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 41 Lt. Cavalry, 20 Med. Cavalry, 21 Hvy. Cavalry,  
3 Wyvern Riders,

**Special Troops:** 7 Spellcasters, 2 Assassins,  
2 Thieves (spies), 3 Bounty-Hunters,

**Siege Weapons:** 244 Artillerists with 21 Ballistae, 7 Lt. Catapults  
11 Hvy. Catapults, 4 Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 38 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 150 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 90 Sailors, 180 Marines (and 540 rower convicts)

3 Small Galley 1 Large Galley 1 War Galley

**Assigned Ships** 3 Small Sailing Ship 1 Large Sailing Ship

1 Troop Transport

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 244

Mules or Oxen: 365

Draft Horses: 56

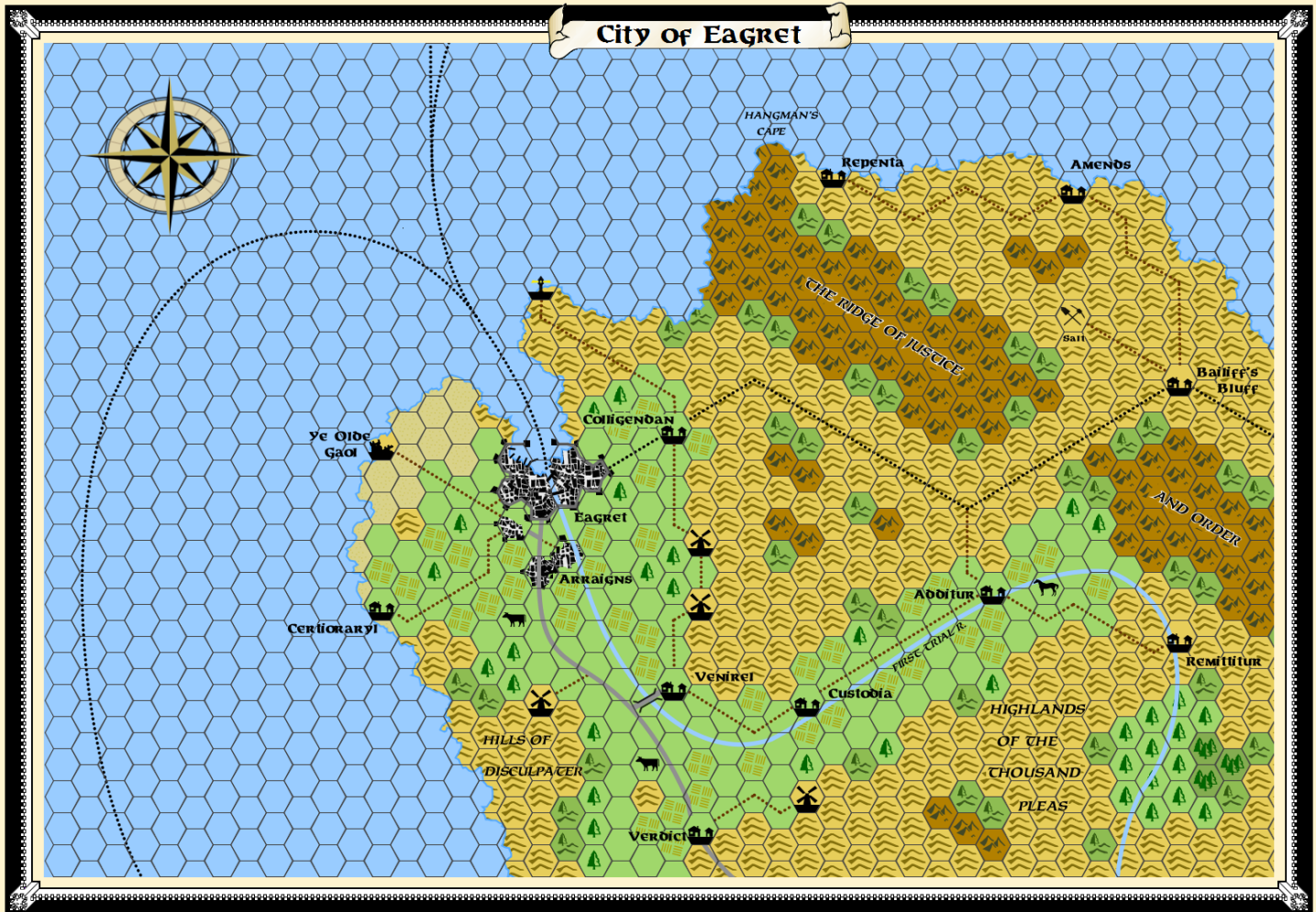
Tents: 146

Camp Followers: 76 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Eagret Militia: 5,000 People or HD**

# Eagret - City of Kingly Lawyers

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Area rendered at 2 miles per hex. Arraigns is a suburb of Eagret. Village icons represent hamlets of 200 or less inhabitants.**

## The City's Layout

Great walls and towers protect the bulk of Greenspur's capital city, featuring three main gates. Several suburban areas lie outside, including the larger district of Arraigns. Eagret houses a hundred thousand inhabitants within about 20 square miles and owns a major port facility. A massive chain protecting the port's entrance may be raised to block its access. The *First Trial River* flows in through massive pillars of an opening beneath a powerful bastion. Two stone bridges span the river before its waters reach the port area. Buildings include tightly packed multi-level tenements and other residences. The west bank is considered somewhat of a lower-class quarter which includes much of the port, granaries, warehouses, manufactures, and military barracks. The king's palace, municipal buildings, and

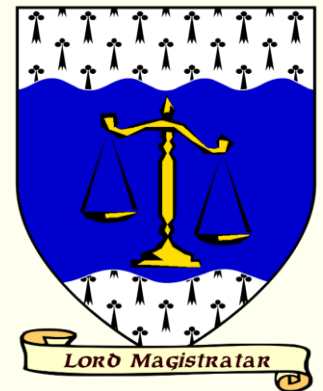


the majority of the upper class occupy the east bank area. As can be expected, there are many different courthouses besides the well-known *Royal Courthouse*, one of the largest structures in the city. Other courthouses are known as "Private Courts of Law," which are legal and legitimate. They are most often adjoining or part of private palaces. They specialize in specific areas of the law. Fierce rivalries exist between private courts of law with overlapping interests.

Eagret owns the best facilities to host a massive air fleet, including landing pads, hangars, and qualified maintenance personnel. Such fleet may gather when Vertiloch summons airships from all corners of the empire, those owned by realms and others privately owned, such as the *Princess Ark*. It would be highly impractical to assemble this Grand Fleet in or near Sundsvall for reasons explained earlier (see the post on Vertiloch).



People of the Law form an essential part of Greenspur's aristocracy. In absence of landed titles or other enchanted regalia, the "Esq." suffix indicates their special status. Much of the life in Eagret revolves around the politics of spinning new laws, producing endless amendments to those already in vigor, and eliminating others. It is a matter of prestige when one's machinations succeed in altering or eliminating a law created by a rival or preventing the same from happening with one's own sponsored laws. Entire factions of aristocrats scheme to oppose each other's pet legislative projects, even resorting to highly publicized lawsuits wherever possible. Some will employ foreign adventurers to thwart their rivals, especially to unveil dastardly plots and dig up incriminating evidence. There is no end to scheming in Eagret which remains very much in line with most big cities in Alphatia.



Ten ships hail from Eagret. Based upon proportions established earlier (see Dominion Stats) out of these ten vessels, two ought to be airships, and a larger one a submersible. In effect, Eagret commands the following fleet:

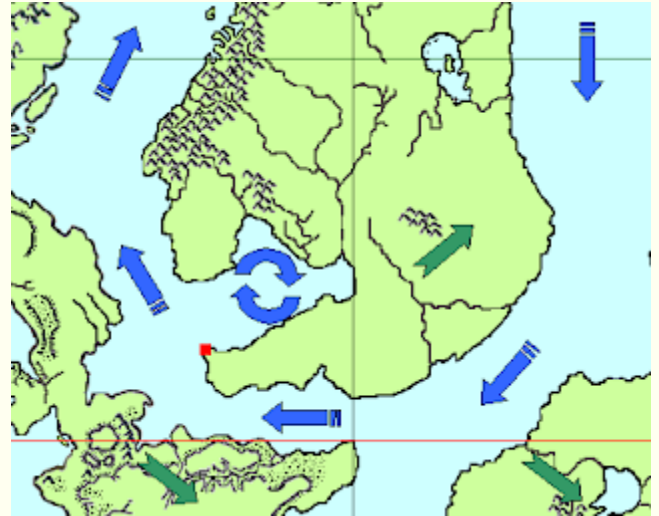
- Two Airships (small sail ships) -- HHV\* *Eagret Law & Celestial Verdict*
- One Submersible (large galley) -- HHV *Royal Subpoena*
- Three Small Galleys -- HHV *Writ, Warrant, & Summons*
- One War Galley -- HHV *King's Pardon*
- One Small Sailing Ship -- HHV *Star Witness*
- One Large Sailing Ship -- HHV *Crown Advocate*
- One Troop Transport -- HHV *Golden Jury*

(\* ) HHV stands for *His Honor's Vessel*.



Airships patrol hills and mountains within the Magistratar's Jurisdiction. The submersible typically watches Eagret's narrow seaway. The war galley and troop transport generally sail no more than a day away from the capital city (about 70 miles). The war galley is likely to remain within sight of the coast.

**High Seas Patrols:** As a team, the two sailing ships typically patrol the northern shipping lane to Haven, which takes about four days each way. As a random encounter every twelve hours, this means these sailing ships may show up with a score of 1 on a d8. They may seek to investigate the identity and cargo of any encountered vessel, especially foreign. If the encounter is resolved, the two sailing ships set sail and do not return for another six to eight days. As an alternate route, the patrol may occasionally head for East Portage on the Isle of Dawn, about six days away (seven days out and five days in, due to prevailing winds). Encounter odds on that route are 1 on a d12.



**Coastal Patrols:** As a second team, the remaining three small galleys patrol about 230 miles of the jurisdiction's coast, taking them about six days to return to port. As a random encounter every twelve hours, these light galleys may show up on a score of 1 on a d12. They may seek to investigate the identity and cargo of any encountered vessel, especially foreign. If the encounter is resolved, the galleys sail on and do not return for another five to six days (to keep it simple, ignore whether a patrol is inbound or outbound).

A deep-water cove outside Amends Hamlet offers an ideal anchorage. The sea port at Appendicea is suitable for galleys and provides a good shelter against storms. Predominant winds blow east/northeast which may alter the duration of outbound/inbound patrols. Sea currents flow westward through the Strait of Dawn, northward across the Sea of Dawn, and clockwise within the Aaslan Gulf.

# Eagret City Summary

100,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
1,500 Warrior HD 19.2 sq. miles

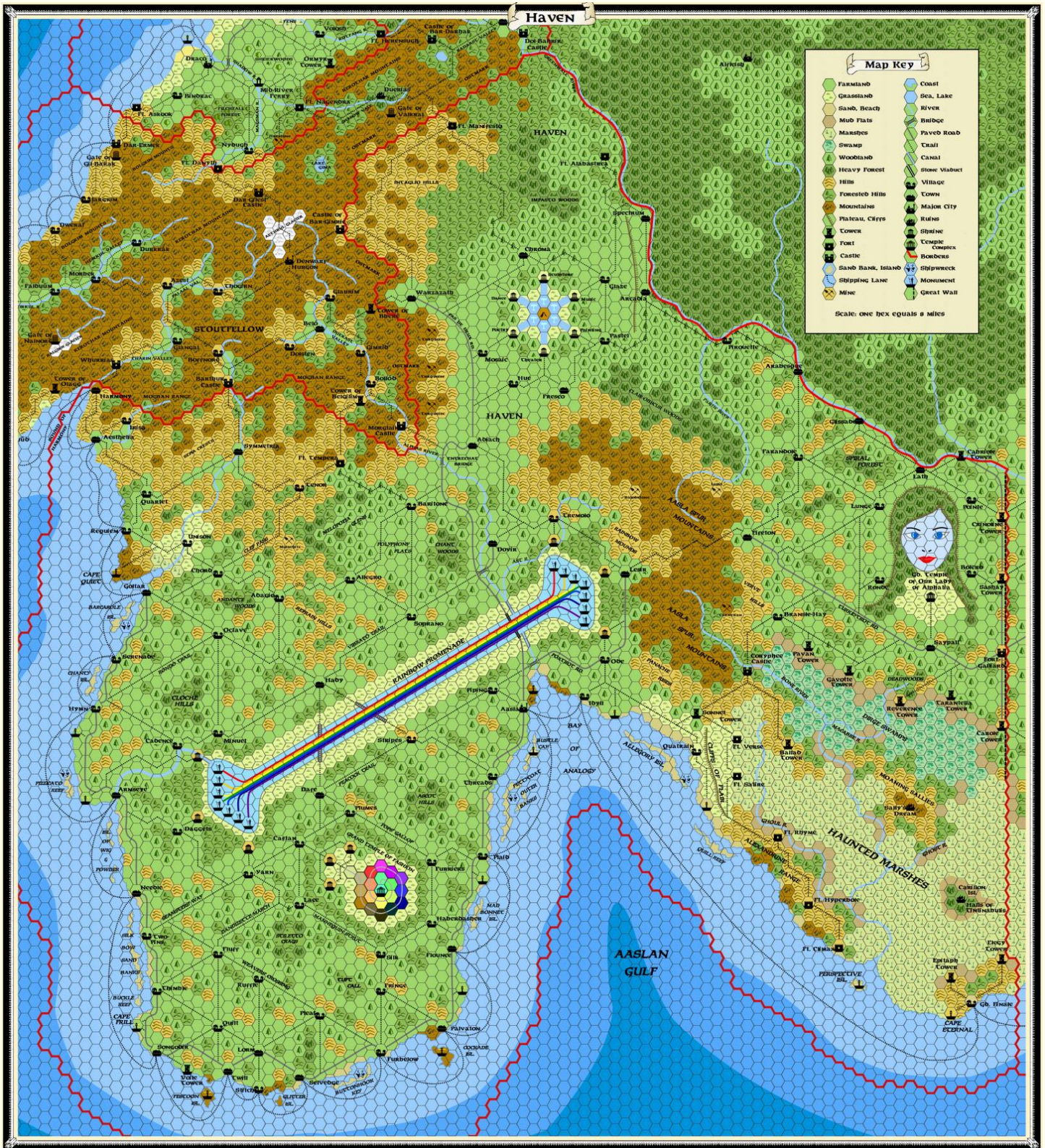
*Buildings often are inadequately maintained, still some ruined or abandoned buildings. Most important streets are paved. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

	Number	% Random* Encounter		Number	% Random Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>			<b>Shops*</b>		
Humble Hovels	700	1-2	Alchemists	14	1
Shoddy Tenements	1,575	3-7	Apothecaries	22	2
Cozy Cottages	1,157	8-10	Bakers	285	3-6
Laborers' Commons	2,603	11-24	Barbers	250	7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	428	25-26	Bathers	52	10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	139	27-30	Beer-Sellers	71	11
Large Palace	1	31	Blacksmiths	222	12-14
			Bleachers	47	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	33	16
Sordid Hostels	175	32	Booksellers	15	17
Cheap Taverns	310	33-34	Buckle Makers	71	18
Bawdy Houses	78	35	Butchers	200	19-21
Reputable Inns	288	36-37	Cabinet Makers	222	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	2	38	Carpenters	250	25-27
			Chandlers	142	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	250	30-32
Huge paved forums w/fountains, monuments, & Imposing marble guildhouses, finely	6 10	39-40 41	Coachmen, Porters	55	33
Workshops, Manufactures	13	42-45	Coopers	142	34-35
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	4	46	Copyists	50	36
Warehouses, Granaries	50	47-74	Cutlers	43	37
Very Large Port, with Large Stone Docks	132 acres	75-77	Fishmongers	250	38-40
			Furriers	243	41-43
			Glovemakers	41	44
			Harness-Makers	50	45
			Hatmakers	105	46
			Hay Merchants	83	47
			Healers	58	48
			Illuminators	25	49
			Jewelers	20	50
			Locksmiths	52	51
			Magic-Shops	14	52
			Masons	200	53-55
			Mercers	142	56-57
			Money-Changers	33	58
			Old-Clothes	250	59-61
			Painters, Art	66	62
			Pastrycooks	166	63-64
			Plasterers	71	65
			Pursemakers	90	66
			Roofers	55	67
			Ropemakers	52	68
			Rugmakers	50	69
			Sages	20	70
			Saddlers	100	71
			Scabbardmakers	117	72-73
			Sculptors	50	74
			Shoemakers	666	75-84
			Spice Merchants	71	85
			Tailors	400	86-90
			Tanners	50	91
			Watercarriers	250	92-94
			Weavers	166	95-96
			Wine-Sellers	111	97-98
			Woodcarvers	41	99
			Woodsellers	41	100
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>				
Religious Hospitals	5	78			
Chapels & Temples	31	79			
Abbeys & Monasteries	2	80			
Cathedrals	1	81			
Catacombs	None				
Cemetery	Huge	82			
Mausoleums	4	83			
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>				
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	84			
Theaters	5	85			
City Library	1	86			
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>				
Basic Learning Centers	26	87			
University	-				
World-Class School of Magic Law	1	88			
Military Academy	-				
Naval Academy	-				
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>				
Citadel	-				
Troops reside in a military district					
18 miles of stone walls		89-93			
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>				
Large gardens	5	94-96			
Imposing, marble-covered town hall with belfry	1	97			
Royal Courthouse	1	98			
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99			
Ruined or abandoned building		100			

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

# The Alphatian Province of Haven

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Kingdom of Haven - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

## The Alphatian Province of Haven

*In the words of Vidalyon-the-Barber*

As all Alphatians know, not only is Haven a place where beauty and color are worshiped, it also shines as the center of world fashion. The latter stands as a towering achievement. Forget the 3,600-square-mile mosaic face of the Immortal Alphatia imbedded among some of the region's best farmland or the three-hundred-mile rainbow arching over Haven's heartland. The most memorable artifact of all spirals 10,000 feet upward to bring closer to the immortal heavens the *Great Temple of Fashion*.

The entire realm and its population, from the lowly serf to the most elegant of wizard princes and princesses, gravitate around the production and enjoyment of all forms of art. Save for the oldest towns, all others have been renamed to illustrate an aspect of the muses and their arts. From the most obscure hamlet to the fabled port-city of Aasla, everyone strives to create something unique and marvelous, be it a particular lace pattern, a paint color, a sculpture, a musical composition, a poem, a hat, makeup for women, a perfume—no art is left untouched nor are there limits to one's imagination, on a personal or collective level. Art and prestige all come together once a year at the *Haven Art Pageantry* in Aasla, where the best crafts are celebrated and rewarded with riches and magic. Yes, my good friends! Call it silly if you wish, shrug if you must, but such is Haven, and the world loves it!

### The Lay of the Land

There are three main regions in Haven, including the *Boreal Stroke* between Stoutfellow and Shiye-Lawr, the *Austral Sweep*, west of the Aasla Spur, and the *Oriental Dab* along the border with Vertiloch. As for the Queen's Castle, it is located about fifty miles north of Aasla, directly underneath Haven's rainbow. It can only be reached with a boat.

**The Boreal Stroke:** It is best known for the *Star Shrines of the Muses*. The shrines are dedicated to the teaching and honoring of basic art forms. Each is a village supporting the masters and their disciples. As is common in Haven, the land in this area was altered on a grand scale. Originally, an extinct volcano ringed with geysers dominated the area. The mouths of the geysers were preserved while the surrounding area was turned into a star-shaped lake with a shrine at each tip. Forests and hills rose from the ground and new villages appeared to provide the massive art complex with all the services required. Mind you, the therapeutic properties of the lake's water and its mud are well known across Alphatia.

**The Austral Sweep:** Of the three regions, it is the largest, wealthiest, and perhaps best known overseas. The sweep, as it is called by the locals, is home to the greatest port-city of Alphatia, the *Rainbow Promenade*, and the *Great Temple of Fashion*. In the north, music and harmony are dominant. The south is all about fashion. Haute couture relies upon many of the basic art forms. Many a Havenite believes that masters have been blessed with a spark of the divine and that their crafts bring humankind closer to immortality.

The *Great Temple of Fashion* sits atop an immense structure made of eight-mile-wide hexagonal stone formations summoned eons ago from the depths of Mystara. Each rises 500 feet above the previous, spiraling inward until the last formation attains an altitude of 10,000 feet. A stone

ramp atop a marble archway runs to the top, allowing visitors on chariots or palanquins to visit the illustrious temple complex. Naturally, it may take some days to reach the top and many guesthouses with magnificent vistas along the way permit longer stays. Glazed tiles of the appropriate hues cover the surfaces of the stone formations. One is chosen each season as the dominant coloration for the latest fad.

The *Rainbow Promenade* remains no less fantastic an achievement. It features two sets of seven colossal statues, each receiving and shooting back a massive beam of magical light. At the points where they gather, the colored beams coalesce into a rainbow that arches high across the entire region, nearly as far as Mystara's skyshield. Beneath it lies a vast grassland and a very long lake elevated within a stone structure resting thirty feet above the ground. This parapet forms the unique *Speedway of the Wizards*, a smooth stone track on which one can travel or race. The *Great Haven Race*, whose prestigious trophy is highly sought after, is held each year. Colorful bleachers are erected for throngs of cheering spectators and supporters. The enchanted contraptions most often used on the speedway include two very tall wheels held together by a low-reaching copper frame. A leather seat cradled within the elegant frame allows a wizard to recline. A handlebar and footrests offer an adequate position to control the curious vehicle. Goggles and stylish leather gear complete a racer's outfits. Nightly races are most popular, under the rainbow's shimmering glow. The best contraptions can reach close to a hundred miles an hour. Visitors in a hurry can otherwise stop at one of the surrounding shrines and purchase a ticket to visit the top of the rainbow or just fly across the mighty arch in the blink of an eye.

A few notes about the promenade:

1. Seven stone statues stand about 300' tall at each end of the rainbow. Each receives and shoots back one beam of colored light.
2. The beams of light gather 16 miles away, at which point they soar into the sky and arch all the way to the opposite end. The base of the rainbow levels about 200-250 ft above ground.
3. Beneath the rainbow lies a vast grassland, about forty miles wide.
4. Immediately under the rainbow, a 24-mile-wide artificial lake extends the entire rainbow's length and beyond the statues' monumental plinths. It is enclosed within a massive stone parapet whose sides stand about 100' tall.
5. The *Speedway of the Wizards* runs atop the parapet, about 100' wide and made of smooth stone, and circles the entire lake. Ramps allow access to the speedway.
6. Three shrines on each end of the lake sell tickets to ride the rainbow. Speeders can be rented there.
7. Tall stone viaducts allow trails and roads to continue across the lake without interruption.
8. The Alphas River feeds Rainbow Lake. Canals allow excess water to escape toward the west and toward Aasla.

**The Oriental Dab:** *Dabbers* like to think of themselves as the ultimate dancers. More than one popular step originates from a *Dabberite* town. Yet, the most endearing feature remains the immense face built upon their land. It depicts the Immortal Alpathia staring at the celestial vault. A thick and dark forest forms her hair, while her face lies within a pool of scintillating water. Eyes, mouth, and facial details result from an immense mosaic that took tens of

thousands of serfs to complete. No matter how high in the sky, observers always feel that her eyes seem to gaze back at them. South of *Our Lady of Alphatia* stands a great temple complex to honor Haven's immortal patron.

Farther south lie the *Haunted Marshes* and *Dirge Swamps*. Although the unfortunate terrain has prevailed there since ancient times, it has become haunted by the undead, a sinister product of Haven's culture. With so many artists, it is unavoidable that some fail and decide to end it all in the marshes. With such a plethora of exalted and distraught souls, many linger in undeath, hopelessly seeking to complete some unfinished masterpiece. Havenian armed forces remain vigilant to prevent ghastly incursions into the land of the living.

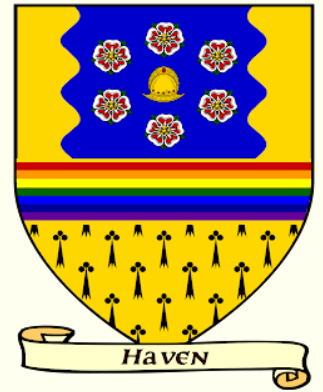
So, you might ask, what of Haven's Army? Warrior-artists, say you? How good could they possibly be? More than once did the thought arouse a smirk or a passing sarcasm. Indeed, uninformed, self-serving warlords beyond the confines of Haven have mocked Havenite martial might. O ye of little faith! How dare you think so little, mediocre spawn sprung from the murk of mediocrity! How dare you speak so poorly! The strong arm of Haven fares brilliantly, thank you very much. It so happens that there is such a thing as the *Art of War*. It has been studied and revered among Havenite military for centuries. How could Haven have grown so much were it not for its ability to carve a province from the wilderness, one so vast to stand at the fringes of Stoutfellow and Shiye-Lawr? Its sheer size rivals that of many other realms in Alphatia. Yes, Haven's warriors are well acquainted with Borea's disciplined art of parade and impeccably-fitted uniforms and armor devised in the Sweep. Yet Dabbers bestowed upon its ranks unique forms of combat that, to foreign eyes, might seem like a ballet—indeed, but a *Dance of Death* and no mistake! Heroism is divine and touching upon the divine rests at the heart of Haven's society. Trust me, my good friends. If there is one topic that will make a Havenite's blood boil, it is the frivolous and inconsiderate mocking of the realm's warriors. Go ahead. Give it a try and I'll shave your head bald like a Minaean pirate's.

*Special thanks to Janet Deaver-Pack for her unwavering support and gleeful participation.*

# Dominion Stats - Haven

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Aasla's population corresponds to *Dawn of the Emperors* figures but the overall number for the land is almost twice as high. Although the map looks busy, more than 60% of the land is wilderness, and another 30% (+) borderland. Even with a total population density of about 10 people per square mile, we still have more than two million Havenites. As much population as farmland can support is urban (about 25%). The good news is that Haven's agriculture is sufficient but, alas, it does not permit exporting much food. As can be expected, the cost of living in Haven is rather high. Fortunately, business and industry are healthy, and the political regime remains fairly stable.



Not surprisingly, much of the realm's income originates from road and port duties. Revenues from urban income taxes rate a close second, the vast majority of which can be traced back to the immense and wealthy city of Aasla and its sprawling seaport. Haven cannot afford to leave this city unprotected which explains the large military force stationed there, and of course the large share of its navy, including four out of seven 12HD water elementals watching the harbor. The other three are located at Goltar, Songodir, and Palvaton.

# The Land and People of Haven

Rural Population: 1,657,159 farmers 73.2% 82,858 armed peasants and 28,034  
 Urban Population: 560,683 townsfolks 24.8% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 45,152 Warrior (HD) 2.0% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 2,262,994 Havenites** the seas, the air, and the ground below.

**Total Land Area: 209,925 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 10.78 people per Sq. Mile  
 62% Wilderness Price of Bread: 13 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 34% Borderlands Price Inflation: High  
 3% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 7 sp per Month

## Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Aasla	400,000	22,667
Golthar	9,800	4,000
Songodir	8,200	500
Lorm	5,500	250
Palvaton	7,200	500
Dafe	5,600	250
Hady	5,800	250
Lesir	6,000	500
Dovir	6,100	250
Adiach	5,700	150
Warzazath	7,000	3,000
Fifeton	5,900	1,000
Lath	6,200	1,000
Saypalt	6,300	5,000
Small Towns x 14	35,000	1,400
Villg./Shrines x 69	34,500	1,380
Castles x2	4,000	2,000
Forts x 8	1,600	800
Towers x 13	283	260

## Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 7**  
 840 Convicts or Slaves  
 29 Administrators  
 110 Guards  
 556 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**1535 Total Mining Population**

## Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Furs, Leather Goods, Wool, Tanneries, Trinkets, Dyes

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Tapestries, Textiles, Silk, Perfumes, Artwork

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Merchant Fair, Enchanted Artwork

## Treasury of Haven

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	56,122	gp/month	14.5%	Farmer	0.3 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	142,029	gp/month	36.6%	Townfolk	2.5 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	8,820	gp/month	2.3%	Household	1.8 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	23,200	gp/month	6.0%	per Capita	1.7 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	158,047	gp/month	40.7%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>388,218</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	55,903	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	55,903	gp/month
Government & Politics	41,928	gp/month
Personal Prestige	55,903	gp/month
Treasury	27,952	gp/month
Military	41,928	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

Common Corruption

### Farming:

Population is self-sufficient.

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy	



# LAND FORCES

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	4,838	1	Spellcasters	42	5
Guards	110	1	Water Elementals	7	12
Heavy Infantry	602	2	-	-	
Shortbowmen	806	1	-	-	
Longbowmen	301	2			
Mounted Archers	289	3	Ballista Artillerists	1,489	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	-		Lt. Catapult Artillerists	605	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	-		Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	509	1
			Trebuchet Artillerists	-	
Light Horsemen	538	1			
Med. Horsemen	181	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	
Heavy Horsemen	83	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	
Camel Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Good	-	
Elephant Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Best	-	
Pegasus Riders	37	4			
Wyvern Riders	-		Auxiliaries:	1,190	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

## (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	3,615
Mules or Oxen:	5,423
Draft Horses:	598
Tents:	2,503
Camp Followers:	2,380

## Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	372
Lt Catapults:	100
Hvy Catapults:	63
Trebuchets:	-

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	699
Medium Warhorses:	235
Heavy Warhorses:	108
Riding Horses:	1,490
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	37
Wyverns:	-

## War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**11,627 HD**

# Naval Forces

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	25	250	1500	75	500	1
Large Galley	15	300	2700	60	750	3
War Galley	5	150	1500	25	375	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	24	240	--	72	600	1
Large Sailing Ship	15	300	--	60	750	2
Troop Transport	5	150	--	25	250	3

Listed Levels apply to *Marines* only. *Officers* are ranked individually.

*Rowers* and *sailors* are Level 1. *Rowers* are not counted among military.

**Total Navy:** 4,615 Seamen HD      Seamen on Shore Leave: 12  
**Total Fleet Size:** 89

## Posted in Aasia

83% Human 8% Halflings 5% Elves

**Total Strength:** 22,667 HD      3% Dwarves

**Infantry:** 2479 Lt. Infantry, 308 Hvy. Infantry, 413 Shortbowmen, 154 Longbowmen, 148 Mounted Archers,

**Cavalry:** 276 Lt. Cavalry, 93 Med. Cavalry, 43 Hvy. Cavalry, 19 Pegasus Riders,

**Special Troops:** 22 Spellcasters, 4 Water Elementals,

**Siege Weapons:** 1334 Artillerists with 191 Ballistae, 52 Lt. Catapults 33 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 597 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 2267 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 630 Sailors, 1260 Marines (and 3780 rower convicts)

19 Small Galley 12 Large Galley 4 War Galley

**Assigned Ships** 19 Small Sailing Ship 12 Large Sailing Ship

4 Troop Transport

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 1,815

Mules or Oxen: 2,723

Draft Horses: 301

Tents: 1,257

Camp Followers: 1195 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Aasia Militia: 20,000 People or HD**

# The City of Aasla - Beating Heart of Haven

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

One of the best known cities of Alphatia remains Aasla whose seaport is dubbed the greatest of all Mystara. Everyone on the wizard continent has heard of the *Tower of Mylertendal*, a ten-story-tall monument, sixty feet across, and covered with 36,000 tiny alcoves displaying a fantastic collection of statuettes. But there's much more to the fabled city, from its private palaces brimming with magic and treasures to darker alleys of the old town. It all looks so very welcoming and harmonious, yet no one can tell what will round the next corner, a phantasmal-artist, an art-smuggler, a purveyor of silk and lace, a wizard-tailor, an unforgettable diva, her retinue of guards and giddy sycophants, or the suave thug who will fleece you in such an elegant manner you'll wonder whether it was a blessing. It all looks fantastic and utterly welcoming, good and bad.



**The Grand Aaslasian & Bath House**

**The Port:** it is purported to be the greatest of them all. Not the biggest. In fact, Archport in the Realm of Eadrin is physically larger. Aasla's is always congested due to high traffic and the number of foreign ships visiting. It also is the greatest based upon the volume of people and merchandise transiting through Aasla, much of which tends to be exotic. A good portion of what is delivered at the harbor is transported by road to Sundsvall. There are several reasons for this. The Greenwall River is treacherous to navigate because of shallows and sand banks, confusing waterways winding through the marshes, and unsavory denizens dwelling amid a world of bubbling, swirling muck. The main river is thought to run for nearly a hundred miles before reaching Vertiloch's open plain but it's in reality about twice as long on account of its wide, lazy meanders. Sailing vessels, which are most common among traders, deal poorly with such conditions. Oars are nearly indispensable to navigate these difficult waters. Therefore, no foreign vessel will venture upstream. Instead, they sail for Aasla and easily trade their supplies there. An alternate route to Sundsvall exists, via Archport up the Thera River. Although Bellissarian vessels commonly follow that route, passage fees reaching extortion levels are likely to be collected by Eadrin, Theranderol, and Arogansa (AND Randel for those foolish enough to sail up the Randel River). Naturally, there is a certain amount of excitement and anticipation among crews at the idea of making for Aasla.

**Districts of Aasla:** there are several distinct areas, such as the Municipal Square housing the majority of government palaces, and the Foreign Quarter. The latter is dedicated to seafarers but in truth it also qualifies as a merchant and manufacturing quarter. Most among the city's bourgeoisie live in that area. Many realms maintain missions and trade houses there and diplomatic envoys. It's a good place for envoys to meet discretely with others away from prying eyes at their home palaces. Naturally, *Sundsvall's* prying eyes don't miss much of what happens behind closed doors. There is a poorer district but one might not recognize it as such. It exudes a certain quaint charm. The old town and its narrow alleys nonetheless boast seven religious hospitals to care for the poor and the sick. Everyone is very polite in the old town, by law.

Indeed, Aasla is a *Fine City*, where one might receive several fines for spitting upon the pavement or relieving oneself outside municipal urinals, called *Aaslasians*. But despite good manners and an undeniable flair unique to Aasla, crime thrives in the old town. Its red lantern quarter is the realm of seedy hostels, cheap taverns, bawdy houses, and gambling dens from which more than one unwise, cashless visitor was forcibly taken and made to serve aboard some foreign ship from a far, faraway realm. The old town is nestled at the edges of the Foreign Quarter, the port and its ornate warehouses, and the New City, the part of Aasla built by the wizards over the past centuries, where art is honored above all. The New City features more than a hundred shrines and temple complexes devoted to beauty, as well as magnificent parks, twenty-four mausoleums, fifteen theaters, and a large arena. At the center stands the *Tower of Mylertendal* and a number of private palaces owned by the city's aristocratic elite. The city's cemetery and ten abbeys lie outside city walls but still within city limits.

## Aasla City Summary

400,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
22,667 Troops 48.4 sq. miles

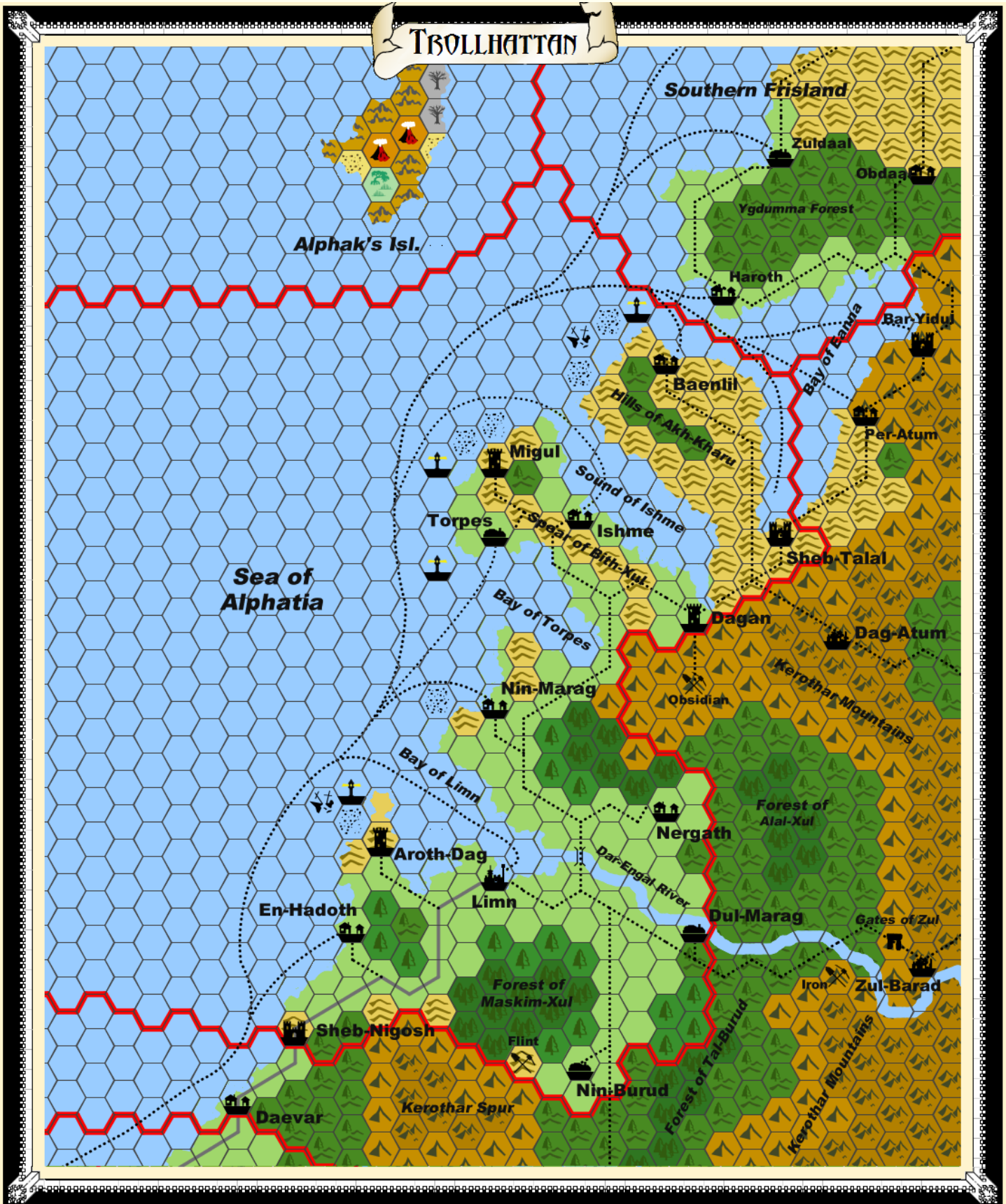
*Buildings often are in good condition, with few ruined or abandoned buildings. Nearly all streets are paved and well maintained. Most streets are magically lit at night.*

		% Random*		% Random	
	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number	Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>					
Humble Hovels	4,720	1-5	Alchemists	57	1
Shoddy Tenements	10,620	6-22	Apothecaries	88	2
Cozy Cottage	2,817	23-25	Bakers	1,142	3-6
Laborers' Commons	6,339	26-38	Barbers	1,000	7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	1,206	39-40	Bathers	210	10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	549	41-46	Beer-Sellers	285	11
<i>Tower of Mylertendal</i>	1	47	Blacksmiths	888	12-14
			Bleachers	190	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	133	16
Sordid Hostels	270	48	Booksellers	63	17
Cheap Taverns	350	49	Buckle Makers	285	18
Bawdy Houses	73	50	Butchers	800	19-21
Reputable Inns	98	51	Cabinet Makers	888	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	10	52	Carpenters	1,000	25-27
			Chandlers	571	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	1,000	30-32
Huge, paved forums, fountains, monuments, daily markets	6	53	Coachmen, Porters	222	33
Imposing, finely decorated, marble guildhouses	10	54	Coopers	571	34-35
Workshops, Manufactures	13	55	Copyists	200	36
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	8	56	Cutlers	173	37
Warehouses, Granaries	70	57-70	Fishmongers	1,000	38-40
Huge Port, with Very Large Stone Docks	430 acres	71-74	Furriers	975	41-43
			Glovemakers	166	44
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	200	45
Religious Hospitals	7	75	Hatmakers	421	46
Chapels, Shrines, & Temples	156	76	Hay Merchants	333	47
Abbeys & Monasteries	10	77	Healers	235	48
Cathedrals	5	78	Illuminators	102	49
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	80	50
Cemetery	Huge	79	Locksmiths	210	51
Mausoleums	26	80	Magic-Shops	57	52
			Masons	800	53-55
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	571	56-57
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	81	Money-Changers	133	58
Theaters	15	82	Old-Clothes	1,000	59-61
City Library	1	83	Painters, Art	266	62
			Pastrycooks	666	63-64
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	285	65
Basic Learning Centers	125	84	Pursemakers	363	66
World Renowned University	1	85	Roofers	222	67
World-Class School of Magic	1	86	Ropemakers	210	68
Military Academy	1	87	Rugmakers	200	69
Naval Academy	-		Sages	83	70
			Saddlers	400	71
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	470	72-73
Large Citadel	1	88	Sculptors	200	74
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district			Shoemakers	2,666	75-84
			Spice Merchants	285	85
28 miles of stone walls		89-91	Tailors	1,600	86-90
			Tanners	200	91
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Watercarriers	1,000	92-94
Huge, elaborate parks	15	92-96	Weavers	666	95-96
Imposing, marble-covered town hall with belfry	1	97	Wine-Sellers	444	97-98
Imposing, marble-built Court House	1	98	Woodcarvers	166	99
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99	Woodsellers	166	100
Ruined or abandoned building		100			

(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.

# The Alphatian Province of Limn

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Kingdom of Limn - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex - Original by Bruce Heard

# Limn, 1000 AC

Based on Dawn of the Emperors and maps by Bruce Heard

Cartography by Thorfinn Tait, May 2012; last revised June 2012

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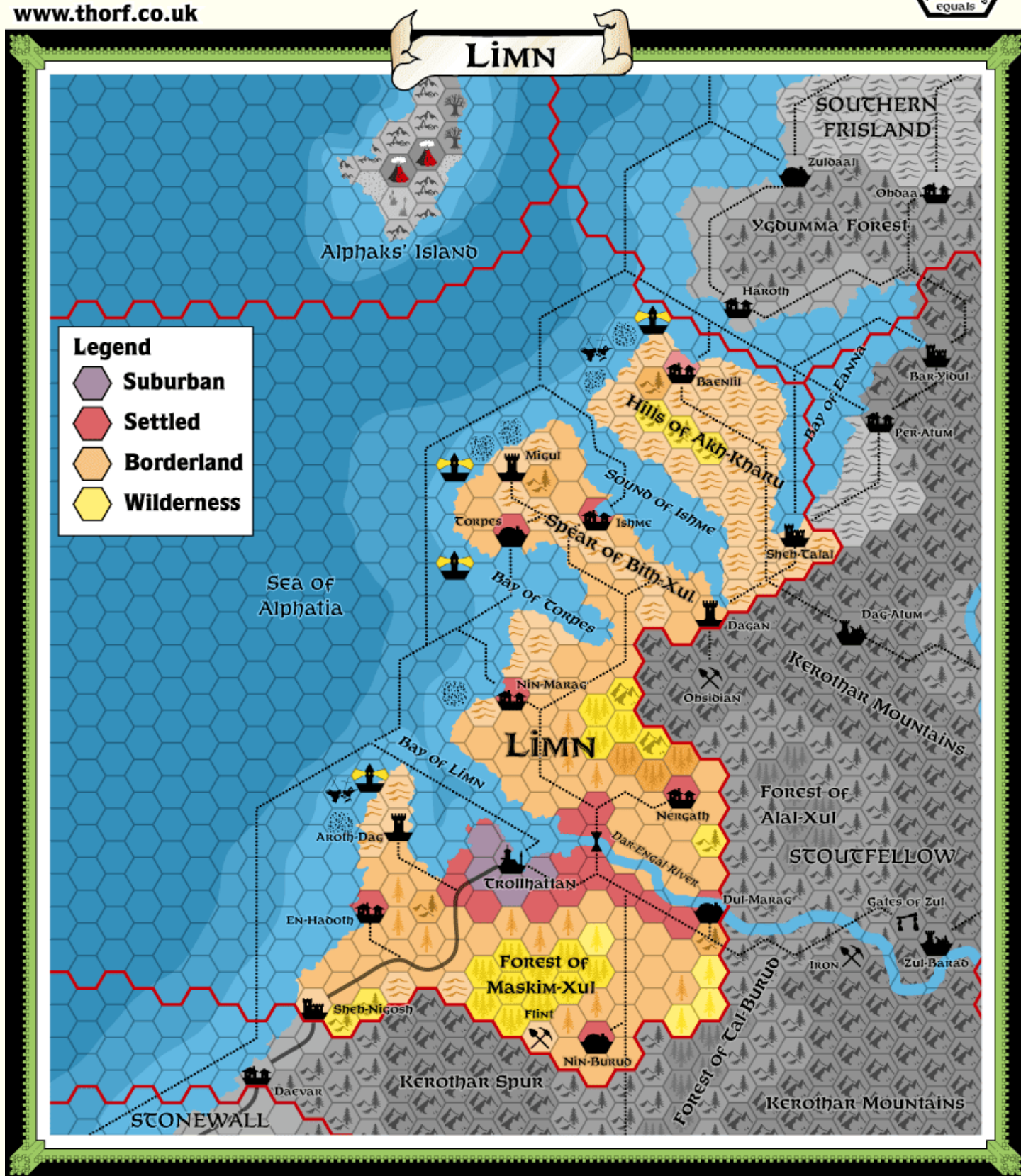
Kingdom of Limn - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex - Finalized by Thorfinn Tait

# Limn Population Density, 1000 AC

Based on Dawn of the Emperors and maps by Bruce Heard

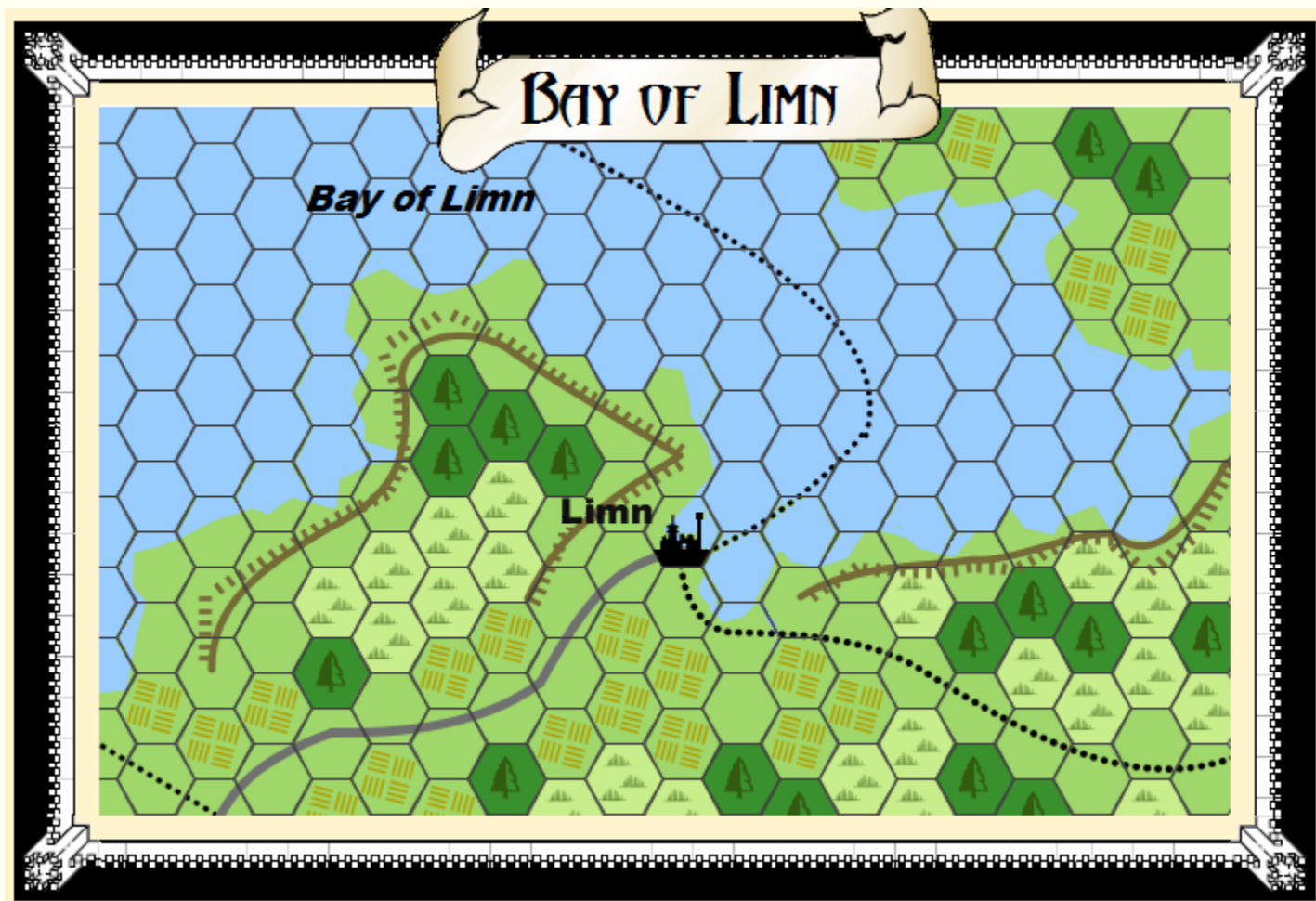
Cartography by Thorfinn Tait, June 2012

www.thorf.co.uk



The "work map" above helps me keep track of the various population densities when I tally the number of hexes and their types. Everything is relative to the terrain type—in other words a

borderland hex of farmland does not have the same population as a borderland hex of hills, trails, rivers, coastline, light forest, heavy forest, etc. All have various impacts on the population in a single hex. Naturally, settled or suburban hexes have more population than borderlands, let alone wilderness. Urban centers and fortifications come on top of those figures. Just in case you wondered.



**Trollhattan & Vicinity - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex  
(city incorrectly labeled as "Limn")**

Finally, I compiled the dominion stats for Limn. A few quirks crop up here and there with the worksheet but it's manageable.



## The Land and People of Limn

Rural Population:	254,253 farmers	74.7%	12,713 armed peasants and	3,961
Urban Population:	79,210 townsfolks	23.3%	town militias can be levied temporarily to	
Military:	6,785 Warrior (HD)	2.0%	-----> help the standing army defend the land,	
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>340,248 Limnians</b>		the seas, the air, and the ground below.	

<b>Total Land Area:</b>	<b>9,363 Sq. Miles</b>	Total population density:	36.34 people per Sq. Mile
	13% Wilderness	Price of Bread:	13 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf
	74% Borderlands	Price Inflation:	High
	14% Settled/Suburban	Min. Wage:	7.6 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Trollhattan	59,980	3,000
Torpes	7,500	1,795
Dul-Marag	4,500	200
Nin-Burud	4,100	200
Baenlil	450	20
Ishme	670	20
Nin-Marag	800	20
Nergath	620	20
En-Hadoth	590	20
-	-	-
Sheb-Talal Castle	-	700
Sheb-Nigosh Cstl.	-	700
Dagan Tower	-	30
Mingul Tower	-	30
Aroth-Dag Tower	-	30
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

### Mining Summary

<b>Number of Mines: 1</b>
100 Convicts or Slaves
6 Administrators
20 Guards
104 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants
<b>230 Total Mining Population</b>

### Industries Summary

<b>Basic Industries:</b>	Tools, Leather Goods, Timber, Pottery, Trinkets,
<b>Mid-Lvl Industries:</b>	Monsters, Fine Woods, Weapons, Tax on Adventuring, Sepia Ink
<b>Hi-Lvl Industries:</b>	Armor,

## Treasury of Limn

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	22,970 gp/month	28.4%	Farmer	0.9 sp	
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	41,021 gp/month	50.7%	Townfolk	5.2 sp	
Total Revenues from Mining	200 gp/month	0.2%	Household	3.8 sp	
Total Revenues from Trade	4,220 gp/month	5.2%	per Capita	2.4 sp	
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	12,450 gp/month	15.4%			
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>80,861 gp/month</b>	100%			
Available Treasury:	24,514 gp				

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	5,447 gp/month
Government & Politics	13,619 gp/month
Personal Prestige	10,895 gp/month
Treasury	8,171 gp/month
Military (*)	13,619 gp/month

### Corruption Level:

Common Corruption

### Farming:

Population is self-sufficient.

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	424	1	Spellcasters	11	5
Guards	20	1	Black Dragon	1	14
Heavy Infantry	163	2	Manticores	5	6
Shortbowmen	-		Armored Trolls	51	6
Longbowmen	-				
Mounted Archers	-		Ballista Artillerist	106	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	212	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	106	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	106	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	106	1
			Trebuchet Artillerists	-	
Light Horsemen	212	1			
Med. Horsemen	-		War Machine Crew, Poor	-	
Heavy Horsemen	-		War Machine Crew, Fair	-	
Camel Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Good	-	
Elephant Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Best	-	
Pegasus Riders	-				
Wyvern Riders	11	6	Auxiliaries:	123	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	386
Mules or Oxen:	579
Draft Horses:	69
Tents:	415
Camp Followers:	245

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	26
Lt Catapults:	17
Hvy Catapults:	13
Trebuchets:	-

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	276
Medium Warhorses:	-
Heavy Warhorses:	-
Riding Horses:	305
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	11

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Land Forces**  
**1,657 HD**

(\* Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Naval Forces

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	19	190	1140	57	380	1
Large Galley	5	100	900	20	250	2
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	18	180	--	54	450	1
Large Sailing Ship	3	60	--	12	150	2
Troop Transport	2	60	--	10	100	3

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.*

*Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy:** 2,130 Seamen HD      Seamen on Shore Leave: 23  
**Total Fleet Size:** 49

## Posted in Trollhattan

58% Human 29% Goblinoid 5% Orc

**Total Strength:** 3,000 HD      2% Bugbear 2% Troll 2% Ogre 1% Minotaur

**Infantry:** 263 Lt. Infantry, 101 Hvy. Infantry,  
132 Lt. Crossbowmen, 66 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 132 Lt. Cavalry,  
7 Wyvern Riders,

**Special Troops:** 7 Spellcasters, 1 Black Dragon,  
3 Manticores, 32 Armored Trolls,

**Siege Weapons:** 198 Artillerists with 17 Ballistae, 11 Lt. Catapults  
9 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets

### War Machines:

**Auxiliaries:** 54 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 300 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 198 Sailors, 396 Marines (and 1188 rower convicts)

9 Small Galley 2 Large Galley 1 War Galley

**Assigned Ships** 8 Small Sailing Ship 1 Large Sailing Ship

1 Troop Transport

### Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison

Wagons: 171

Mules or Oxen: 257

Draft Horses: 31

Tents: 184

Camp Followers: 109 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Trollhattan Militia:** 2,999 People or HD

I added the general racial mix for Trollhattan below and the actual racial makeup of the garrison based in Limn, just above (next to the Limn header).

		<b>Racial Mix</b>	<b># People</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Dominant Race</b>		<b>Human</b>	<b>179,690</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
<b>Main Races</b>	Tier 1	<b>Goblinoid</b>	89,845	28.8%
	Tier 2		-	0.0%
	Tier 3		-	0.0%
	Tier 4	<b>Orc</b>	16,846	5.4%
<b>Minorities</b>	Tier 1		-	0.0%
	Tier 2		-	0.0%
	Tier 3		-	0.0%
	Tier 4		-	0.0%
	Tier 5		-	0.0%
	Tier 6	<b>Bugbear</b>	6,177	2.0%
	Tier 7	<b>Troll</b>	5,615	1.8%
	Tier 8	<b>Ogre</b>	5,054	1.6%
	Tier 9	<b>Minotaur</b>	4,492	1.4%
	Tier 10	<b>Other</b>	3,931	1.3%
<b>311,650 Total Population</b>				

		<b>Ethnic Origins</b>	<b># People</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Dominant Group</b>		<b>Trollhattaner</b>	<b>271,437</b>	<b>87.1%</b>
<b>Main Groups</b>	Tier 1		-	0.0%
	Tier 2	<b>Alphatian</b>	30,160	9.7%
	Tier 3	<b>Outlander</b>	10,053	3.2%
	Tier 4		-	0.0%
<b>Minorities</b>	Tier 1		-	0.0%
	Tier 2		-	0.0%
	Tier 3		-	0.0%
	Tier 4		-	0.0%
	Tier 5		-	0.0%
	Tier 6		-	0.0%
	Tier 7		-	0.0%
	Tier 8		-	0.0%
	Tier 9		-	0.0%
	Tier 10		-	0.0%
<b>311,650 Total Population</b>				

# Trollhattan City Summary

59,980 Civilian Inhabitants  
3,000 Troops 15.3 sq. miles

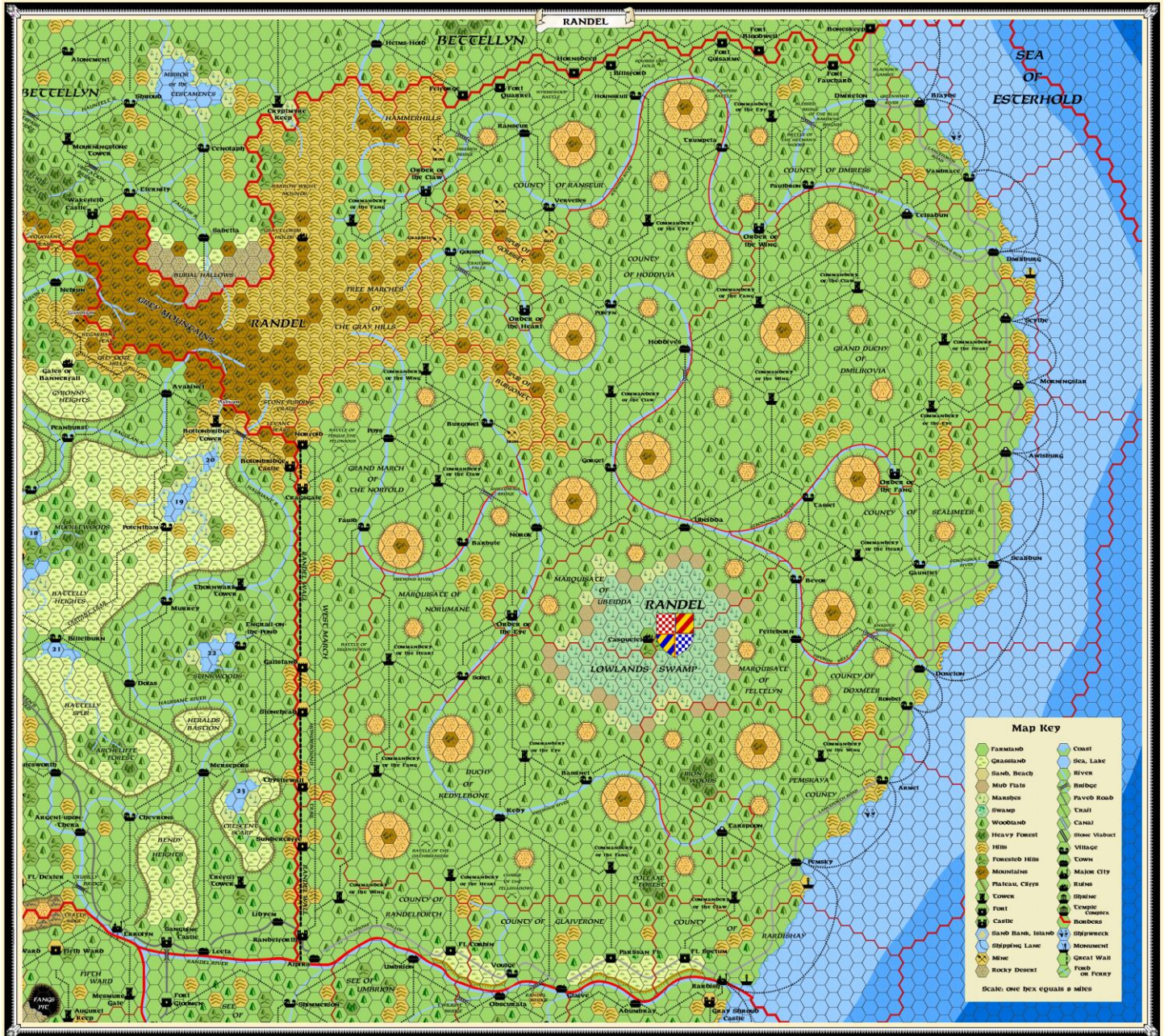
*Buildings often are in mediocre shape, some ruined or abandoned buildings. Main street alone is paved but poorly maintained. Streets are unlit at night.*

	Number	% Random* Encounter		Number	% Random Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>			<b>Shops*</b>		
Humblehovels	708	1.3	Alchemists	8	1
Shoddy Tenements	1,592	4-15	Apothecaries	13	2
Cozy Cottage	281	16	Bakers	171	3-6
Laborers' Commons	632	17-21	Barbers	149	7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	466	22-25	Bathers	31	10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	290	26-33	Beer-Sellers	42	11
Large Palace	1	34-35	Blacksmiths	133	12-14
			Bleachers	28	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	19	16
Sordid Hostels	177	36	Booksellers	9	17
Cheap Taverns	165	37	Buckle Makers	42	18
Bawdy Houses	42	38	Butchers	119	19-21
Reputable Inns	69	39	Cabinet Makers	133	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	4	40	Carpenters	149	25-27
			Chandlers	85	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	149	30-32
Large, paved forums (daily markets)	5	41-42	Coachmen, Porters	33	33
Large guildhouses, stone-built	6	43	Coopers	85	34-35
Workshops, Manufactures	11	44-47	Copyists	29	36
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	4	48	Cutlers	26	37
Warehouses, Granaries	30	49-71	Fishmongers	149	38-40
Very Large Port, with Very Large Stone Docks	155 acres	72-76	Furriers	146	41-43
			Glovemakers	24	44
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	29	45
Religious Hospitals	3	77	Hatmakers	63	46
Chapels & Temples	23	78	Hay Merchants	49	47
Abbeys & Monasteries	2	79	Healers	35	48
Cathedrals	1	80	Illuminators	15	49
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	11	50
Cemetery	Huge	81	Locksmiths	31	51
Mausoleums	6	82	Magic-Shops	8	52
			Masons	119	53-55
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	85	56-57
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	83	Money-Changers	19	58
Theaters	2	84	Old-Clothes	149	59-61
City Library	-		Painters, Art	39	62
			Pastrycooks	99	63-64
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	42	65
Basic Learning Centers	14	85	Pursemakers	54	66
University	-		Roofers	33	67
School of Magic	-		Ropemakers	31	68
Military Academy	1	86	Rugmakers	29	69
Naval Academy	-		Sages	12	70
			Saddlers	59	71
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	70	72-73
Small Citadel	1	87-89	Sculptors	29	74
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district			Shoemakers	399	75-84
16 miles of stone walls		90-95	Spice Merchants	42	85
			Tailors	239	86-90
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Tanners	29	91
Small gardens	2	96	Watercarriers	149	92-94
Imposing, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97	Weavers	99	95-96
Imposing, stone-built Court House	1	98	Wine-Sellers	66	97-98
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level	1	99	Woodcarvers	24	99
Ruined or abandoned building		100	Woodsellers	24	100

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

# The Alphatian Province of Randel

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Realm of Randel - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

A curious geological feature strikes first-time visitors. Seen from an airship at a high altitude, a pattern of mesas makes the land look as if it were covered with giant bubbles. These formations are arid, porous, and filled with caverns. Rocky spires tower above larger mesas, like giant spires. Seen from the land, the formations' flat tops become more revealing as to their fauna. With some patience and a bit of luck, one may observe a giant, bat-winged creature taking off in search of a meal. Although originally called *randels* (a play on the word "roundel") these mesas became better known as *dragon crags*. This most curious topography brought about the creation of this realm and its social makeup.



Chartered town

Randel, whose capital sits at the realm's extreme southeastern edge, includes more than a dozen dominions, six chartered towns, up to five knightly dominions, and a large number of commanderies. Chartered towns enjoy autonomy from local aristocracy but answer directly to royal authority. White star symbols mark their positions on the map.

This southern realm of Alphatia nurtures an old tradition among a certain caste of wizards. It consists in protecting dragons and, if possible, in establishing individual bonds between wizards and their chosen dragons. These wizards are known as mage-knights. The bond is an esoteric one that does not result in controlling dragons, flying them, or emulating their features and powers. These skills belong with dragon knights and dracomancers. Mage-knights of Randel are a different kind of people entirely. They draw upon the legendary ferocity of dragons buried in the breeds' racial memories. It is an arcane force enabling masters to seamlessly blend warrior-like prowess with magical skill.



## SUMMARY

Mage-knights start as conventional magic-users. At any point during their careers, they may be able to join a Draconic Order and begin in-depth training. This involves approaching dragons and attempting to establish bonds with them. Mage-knights may approach any number of dragons during their careers but can only maintain bonds with three separate dragons at a single time. Once established, bonds provide wizards with special abilities. Not all mage-knights and dragons are compatible with each other for reasons including, but not limited to, their alignments, Charisma, experience, or HD. Some deeper connection may be required, forcing wizards to seek a better fit elsewhere, provided they didn't end up as a snack.

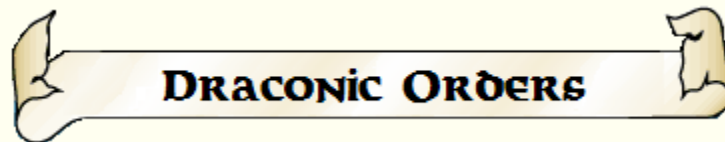


The sizes and breeds of chosen dragons determine the extent of special abilities. There are three dragon sizes that come into play: small, large, and huge (using BECMI rules, or small, average, and huge for AD&D rules). There are two conditions to these abilities. First, a mage-knight must craft a separate weapon and piece of armor for each chosen dragon. Second, a mage-knight is bound to protect his or her chosen dragons. If a chosen dragon is killed, the mage-knight loses a significant amount of experience, based on the size and breed of the dragon; the associated weapon and armor lose their enchantments; the mage-knight must also begin another quest for a bond and craft new equipment.

Special abilities of mage-knights involve three combat aspects:

- **Proficiency:** a permanent ability to use certain fighter weapons. Those are crafted after establishing bonds despite normal magic-user class limitations. The weapons are specific to the breeds of chosen dragons. For a limited duration, the mage-knight also gains a bonus to hit with these special weapons. The size of a chosen dragon determines the extent of the bonus to hit, while its duration reflects the wizard's experience level.
- **Fighting:** the ability to inflict greater damage for a limited duration, using special weapons (the duration reflects the wizard's experience, while the dragons' sizes determine the extent of the bonus to damage).
- **Armor:** the ability to craft special armor pieces fit for wizardkind. These can boost armor class for a limited duration. The AC bonus reflects the dragons' sizes, while the wizard's experience level determines the duration of the bonus.

Additional spells unique to mage-knights can be learned. These are used primarily to interact with dragons, establish bonds, and craft unique weapons and armor.



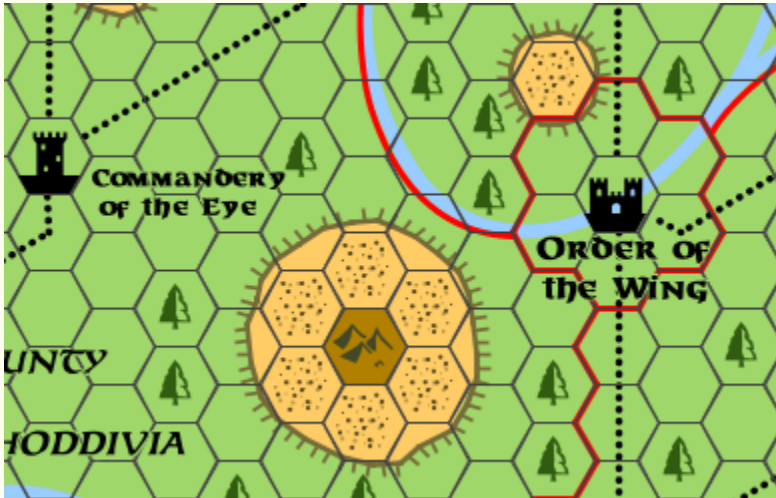
If using BECMI game mechanics, there are three Draconic Orders in Randel—one Lawful, one Neutral, and one Chaotic. With AD&D-style alignments, there are five—Good, Evil, Lawful, Chaotic, and True-Neutral. Although rivals, these orders remain obedient to Randel's monarchy. As a result of potential frictions on the battlefield, Randel rarely calls upon more than one order to participate in a battle or mix rival mage-knights within the same garrison.

To avoid further complications, general territorial jurisdictions concerning relations with dragons have been granted to the orders to separate them from one another. Within their general jurisdictions, the orders own a small domain in which they maintain their keep, enforce the laws, and collect taxes like any other Randel province. Ownership, however, is temporary. A rotation takes place every ten years following precise, predetermined routes and dates for the orders to take possession of their new domains. Dedicated chapels and knightly commanderies dotting the countryside remain in place.



The hilly region northwest of Randel is open to all orders. It is officially designated as a neutral zone by royal decree but in practice it remains largely a lawless wilderness. It is peculiar because of the frequency of caverns and deep ravines propitious for dragon lairs. Dragons of all sorts live there, maintaining a fragile balance between kinds, and provide the greatest source of bonds to the mage-knights. This explains the rotation of domains, for those located closest to the hills are more desirable. Although rivals, mage-knights would never willingly harm a dragon or follow a course of action that might result in harm to a dragon, regardless of its alignment. They stay away from those which they believe to be incompatible. All orders agree that harming

or allowing harm to come to a dragon constitutes inexcusable bad form. Undead dragons, however, are viewed as unholy aberrations that must be destroyed at once.



**Dragon Crag, Commandery, and Knights' Hold**

Choosing a dragon within Randel isn't an obligation: it is more of a practical concern for mage-knights. There is plenty of wilderness in the country to accommodate dragons, such as the dragon crags in particular, in addition to those hiding among the normal population. Because of the existence of Draconic Orders, there are more dragons living in Randel than anywhere else in mainland Alphatia. This detail remains a painful and sticky diplomatic issue with Eadrin's Shadow Lords.

Draconic Orders and their clerics generally honor dragon-related immortals such as Ka, or one of the three Dragon Rulers for BECM (Bahamut and Tiamat for AD&D). The Great One isn't worshiped in a religious sense because its alignment isn't known but remains nonetheless honored among Draconic Orders. Regardless of protection afforded by Draconic Orders, Alphatian dragons are wary of powerful wizards. Indeed, their survival there is more at risk than elsewhere on Mystara. Some dragon communities exist outside of mainland Alphatia, where they are more secure and tend to live longer. A good example are the dragons in the most savage reaches of Norwold. More experienced mage-knights seeking to replace a vacant bond may travel to very distant shores on a quest to establish a greater association. The benefits far outweigh the perils.

As the name infers, mage-knights are truly knights and faithful to their orders. Their alignment determines the manner in which they prove their loyalty and uphold the tenets of their knighthood. Sample ethics are listed below:

**Lawful Order:** a close fellowship of knights where the good of the many outweighs the good of the one. At their best when working together, they are generally respectful of local laws and traditions. These mage-knights are most likely to receive assistance from their order.

**Chaotic Order:** a loose association that rewards individuality. They support their order's goals in unpredictable and indirect manners. Individual bravery, daring, and creativeness are encouraged.

**Neutral Order:** these mage-knights seek balance in all things. They rely on common sense, logic, equitable arrangements, good business sense, and pragmatism above all.

**Good Order (AD&D):** they strive to protect both people and dragons equally. Peace between people and wyrmkind is their goal. Good will and trust lie at the heart of the bond with a dragon.



**Evil Order (AD&D):** these mage-knights bond with dragons at any cost to human life. Stronger dragons mean a stronger order. Force and fear are the fire and anvil with which bonds are forged.



An important aspect of knighthood is honor. Although the manner in which each defines it varies somewhat, honor matters a great deal to all Draconic Orders. Cowardice before a dragon, or for that matter before any foe, is the second worst crime in their eyes (after allowing harm to come to a dragon). Banishment or death are expected. A frivolous accusation of cowardice against a mage-knight is likely to earn the sternest of responses, either individually or by the entire order. Mage-knights are obligated to confront anyone bearing the title *Dragon-Slayer* or boasting to have slain, wounded, attacked, tricked, or stolen from a dragon. Wizards using live dragons as a source of spell components (other than discarded bones and loose scales) or individuals enslaving dragons, are equally reviled.

Good mage-knights are unwealthy because they must pay 10% of their earnings to the order. Much of the rest goes to sway new dragons or maintain a good relationship with those already bonded. At a higher level, a Grand Master may entrust a mage-knight with a commandery, a small domain comparable to a monastery whose objectives are to shelter and train mage-knights as well as generating cash for the order. Some farmland is included for cash crops. All orders and their commanderies employ retainers to bolster their ranks, including in particular warriors and clerics. Some thieves may be employed, usually in the role of scouts or spies. All retainers are bound by their orders' ethics and rules during their employment. Local farmers and laborers provide the basic work.

There may be personal frictions between mage-knights within the same order (using AD&D game alignments). For example, a Good-aligned mage-knight with bonds to Lawful dragons may harbor a personal dislike of another Good-aligned mage-knight with bonds to Chaotic dragons. Clashes are likely to ensue.

There are four primary ranks among mage-knights:

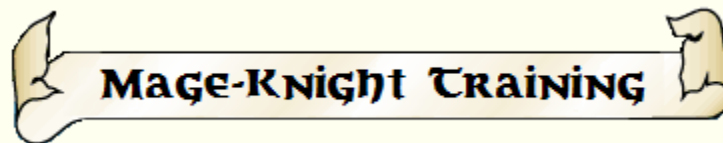
- **Squire:** a neophyte under a more senior mage-knight's tutelage. Squires haven't earned mage-knights' special abilities yet but have learned spells needed to approach dragons and basic knowledge of draconic lore. Squires may communicate through signs with any dragon including one devoid of speech.
- **First Degree Mage-Knight:** one who has established a bond with a dragon. Such a mage-knight is immune to dragon fear effects (AD&D) and speaks the languages of the chosen dragon and those of dragons with the same alignment. The mage-knight always senses the location of chosen dragons.
- **Second Degree:** a mage-knight bound to two dragons. Such a mage-knight incurs only half-damage from dragons' breath weapons (a successful saving throw reduces damage to one quarter) and may communicate with any dragon.

- **Third Degree:** a mage-knight bound to three dragons is immune to these dragon breeds' breath weapons (and comparable\* attacks) and can communicate telepathically with a chosen dragon once a day for 1 Turn within a range of eight miles per level. This powerful mage-knight can easily tell chromatic from gemstone dragons, as well as identify another mage-knight's chosen dragon from the appearance of the latter's equipment.

(\*) **Example:** a third-degree mage-knight attuned to a red dragon is entirely immune to fire-based attacks, whether magical or not.

A chosen dragon may die during a mage-knight's lifetime. Other than the loss of specially attuned equipment, none of the benefits gained from previous bonds are lost. They can still be clearly sensed, however, by any other dragon within direct sight of that mage-knight.

Other degrees exist, such as mage-knights who bonded with at least one, two, or three large, adult dragons, and mage-knights who bonded with at least one, two, or three huge, old dragons. These degrees are generally associated with upper ranks. A Grand Master ought to be of the highest degree among his or her order. The Ninth Degree remains a quasi-mythical achievement among all orders: a Ninth Degree Grand Master could theoretically command all other Draconic Orders and would be called a Draconic Overlord. Tutors gain prestige among their peers when a student reaches the Third Degree and demonstrates further brilliance throughout later stages.



Aspiring mage-knights must petition orders matching their alignments (at least in part for AD&D) for admittance and to obtain mentors. A sponsor is required to petition an order, such as a member of that order, a local aristocrat in good standing with the order, an influential merchant or banker contributing financially to the order, a high-ranking ecclesiastic of appropriate faith, a title-holder in the monarchy's administration, a member of the royal family, or (in rare cases) a dragon.

In order to qualify for a petition, the aspiring mage-knight must satisfy prerequisites for magic-user *and* fighter classes. Experience bonuses are allowed if minimum requirements are met for both. Since dealing with dragons is a perilous business, it is understood that very low-level mage-knights might not fare well, although this is technically possible. Ideally, a magic-user should seek admittance to an order just before reaching the fifth or sixth level. BECMI elves are acceptable as mage-knights but with limitations that will be explained later.

The supplicant is admitted as a neophyte student when earning a new experience level after the petition is approved (hence, level two is the earliest possible admission to a Draconic Order). Initially, two mentors provide basic guidance to an aspiring mage-knight: a sage well-versed in draconic lore, and a master-at-arms. From this point on, and as long as the mage-knight is a member of the order, a -20% experience penalty applies to all earned experience, along with a 10% tithe on earned treasures. Experience bonuses can be used to directly offset the -20% penalty. The mage-knight uses the character's original magic-user experience progression,

saving throws, and hit charts. Personal leave is permissible for neophytes to conduct private matters and gain further experience in life (such as adventuring with usual buddies).

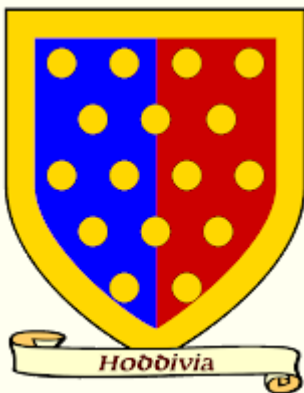
A neophyte may not knowingly approach any dragon for any reason at any time until reaching the next experience level. At this point, the neophyte becomes a squire (as described earlier), reporting to an older, more experienced mage-knight assigned as the squire's personal tutor. The tutor is selected from among those whose personality best matches the squire's, in order to foster a healthy and long-lasting relationship. The tutor's responsibility is to teach the squire the first steps toward approaching a dragon and provide advice until the aspiring mage-knight attains the Third Degree.



## Approaching Dragons

The first concern for a squire is to determine which dragons are most suitable. It is a crucial matter, as preparation may make a difference between survival and becoming someone's dinner.

There are alignment restrictions involved when considering which dragons to approach. The very first chosen dragon must match the mage-knight's own alignment. Generally, at least one dragon should match exactly the mage-knight's alignment when establishing additional bonds. With the AD&D game, one such dragon may not be available, therefore pick one that best matches the character's personality.



With BECMI game mechanics, a mage-knight may only bond with dragons of the same alignment or one degree removed, as long as none of the chosen dragons have opposite alignments. As a result, a Lawful mage-knight may only bond with Lawful and Neutral dragons. A Neutral mage-knight may bond EITHER with Lawful and Neutral dragons, OR Neutral and Chaotic dragons.

For AD&D-style alignments, the same holds true as regards conflicting alignments, including Good vs. Evil and Lawful vs. Chaotic. For example a Lawful-Neutral mage-knight may bond EITHER with LN, LG, NG, and N dragons (if available), OR LN, LE, NE, and N dragons (if available) and so on. There are many other dragons with unusual alignments which aren't listed here (shadow, mist, and cloud dragons for example, oriental dragons, and those in 2nd Edition AD&D).

Several specialty spells help establish a relationship between an aspiring mage-knight and a dragon. They are designed to identify and locate the right creature, to improve the odds that *first contact* does not end badly, and to establish a bond. They are listed later in this article.

## COURTING A DRAGON

The goal of the mage knight is to visit the coveted dragon at least once before attempting to convince it that a bond is desirable. The *first contact* spell greatly improves the odds a dragon will at least listen to the visitor initially. If the spell succeeds, the mage-knight earns an opportunity to return for a later visit. Subsequent visits help establish the beginnings of a relationship and impact directly the mage-knight's ability to eventually convince the dragon. It's a delicate balance between building trust and pestering the dragon, somewhat akin to courtship. Naturally, attempting to steal anything, being impertinent, or prying into the dragon's business would provoke an immediate "0" failure for the encounter (see below).



Once *first contact* is made, subsequent encounters are simpler in their resolution. They are visits of courtesy and need not be overly complicated. Roll 1d8 and add modifiers listed below. If the result is 5 or more, the visit is a success. If the result is 1-4, it is a failure but a safe one (a polite bow and a cautious retreat will do). If the score is 0 or worse, the effect depends upon the dragon's alignment:

- **Lawful:** leave at once; the dragon will shun the mage-knight from this point forward.
- **Neutral:** mage-knight should flee; 30% chance the dragon decides to pursue within 2d4 rounds; if so, no further visits will be permitted.
- **Chaotic:** 60% chance the dragon attacks immediately; since it is chaotic after all, it will nonetheless entertain future visits.

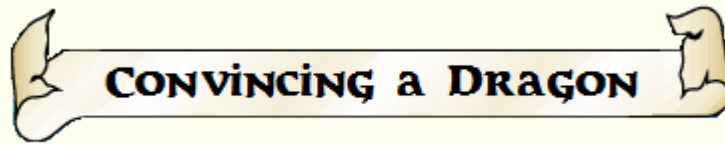
If ever attacked by a dragon, subdual damage and defensive spells are the only actions permitted to members of a Draconic Order and only for the purposes of escape. Combat bonuses linked with special abilities are allowed in this case. If a dragon is subdued, it is temporary until the mage-knight can reach safety.

<b>Visit Modifiers</b>	
Mage-knight came empty-handed:	<b>-2</b>
Mage-knight brought non-magical gifts*	<b>+1</b>
Mage-knight brought magical gifts**	<b>+2</b>
Previous visits within the past year	<b>-1/visit</b>
Previous visit was a failure	<b>-2</b>
Good role-playing effort	<b>+1-3</b>

<i>Dragon's Disposition—roll 1d8:</i>	
<b>1</b> Sleeping ( <i>if awakened</i> )	<b>-4</b>
<b>2</b> In a foul mood	<b>-3</b>
<b>3</b> Eating at the time	<b>-2</b>
<b>4</b> Looking for a misplaced valuable	<b>-1</b>
<b>5</b> Expecting the mage-knight's visit	<b>0</b>
<b>6</b> Bored, seeking news of the world	<b>+1</b>
<b>7</b> Itching and seeking relief	<b>+2</b>
<b>8</b> In a jovial mood ( <i>birthday, dragon holiday</i> )	<b>+3</b>

(\*) At least 20 gp per hit point for a small dragon, 30 gp per hit point for a large dragon, or 40 gp per hit point for a huge dragon

(\*\*) At least equivalent to one average-value magical potion for a small dragon, two for a large one, four for huge one.



The odds of success depend upon different factors listed in the next paragraph. If the mage-knight's efforts are successful, the *dragon blood* spell creates the bond and seals the association between mage and dragon. A mage-knight's business with a dragon is a personal one; friends, familiars, pets, adventuring companions, henchmen, or retainers must not be present when contact is made.

<b>Odds of Convincing a Dragon</b>	
Mage knight is of a higher level than the dragon	<b>+5%/Lvl</b>
Mage knight is of a lower level than the dragon	<b>-5%/Lvl</b>
Total number of successful visits	<b>+5%/visit</b>
Previous failures to convince the dragon	<b>-10%/failure</b>
BECMI Charisma ( <i>basic bonus times 5</i> )	<b>+5% to +15%</b>
AD&D Charisma ( <i>½ reaction adjustment</i> )	<b>+2% to +17%</b>
Mage-knight's alignment differs from the dragon's	<b>-10% to -20%</b>
Mage knight's present bonds	<b>+5%/bond</b>
Mage knight's previous Bonds	<b>-10%/bond</b>

Present dragons with other alignments	<b>-10%/bond</b>
Previous dragons with other alignments	<b>-10-20%/bond</b>
Dragon suspects something isn't right	<b>-5% to +30%</b>
Creativity and substance of the present offer	<b>+5% to +30%</b>
Role-playing and <i>pizzaz</i>	<b>+5% to +30%</b>

It is assumed the dragon senses much of the mage-knight's nature and past associations in order to determine bonuses and penalties. It is also possible that the mage-knight's reputation preceded him or her. Odds can never be less than 10% or more than 90%, regardless of modifiers.



Once odds are tallied, the player must roll a percentile score equal or less than the total. If the roll succeeded by more than 30 percentile points, the dragon willingly allows the mage-knight to cast the *dragon blood* spell. If the roll succeeded by 30 or less, the dragon demands the mage-knight first undertakes a quest of some sort. If the roll failed by 30 or less, the dragon tolerates another visit at a different time. If the roll failed by more than 30, the dragon is annoyed and refuses any further contact; if the dragon is Chaotic (BECMI) or Evil (AD&D), it may also wonder what this mage-knight tastes like.

**Experience Levels:** the mage-knight's experience levels must be compared with the dragon's Hit Dice. A more powerful mage-knight commands more credibility than a weaker one.

**Successful Visits:** the mage-knight can build up odds of success when visiting a dragon, as described earlier.

**Previous Failure to Convince:** the perky and persistent mage-knight attempts to convince the dragon more than once. The dragon's patience wears thinner. This is only possible if the previous request had failed by 30 percentile points or less.

**Charisma:** a straightforward factor, although it is a bit skewed toward AD&D game mechanics.

**Mage-Knight with Different Alignment:** with a difference of alignment in BECMI, the penalty is -20%. With the AD&D game, it is -10% per degree of difference; for example: N to LN incurs a -10% penalty, while from N to LG incurs a -20% penalty.

**Present/Previous Bonds:** refers to bonds that are current as opposed to those established with dragons that have passed away since.

**Present Dragons with Other Alignments:** if the mage-knight bonded with dragons of different alignments than the one being approached, in BECMI, the penalty is -10% for each such dragon. With the AD&D game, the penalty is -5% per degree of alignment difference for each such dragon.

**Previous dragons with other alignments:** as above. The -20% penalty refers to the case when a Neutral mage-knight lost a dragon and seeks to replace it with one of a diametrically opposed alignment. Although technically possible, the new dragon might not appreciate the fact that this mage-knight had associated with a creature of questionable repute.

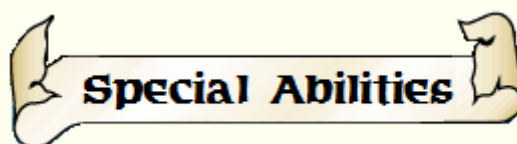
**Dragon Suspicion:** the DM adjudicates this penalty. If the dragon knows that the mage-knight's adventuring buddies are present in the lair, the offer will automatically fail. The roll must still be executed but with the full -30% penalty to determine by how much it may fail.

**Creativity and substance:** refers to measures the mage-knight took to help sway the dragon, such as meaningful gifts and actions benefiting or impressing the dragon (see Returning Visits for guidelines, listed earlier). Each dragon is unique and may require a different strategy. Offering identical "deals" to all dragons is like trying to give the same dress to rival women. It may be the mage-knight's undoing.

**Role-playing and Pizzaz:** refers to the manner in which a mage-knight interacts with a dragon. Style and panache may impress a dragon and entertain both players and DM. As self-conscious and narcissistic as they are, dragons are more inclined to associate with prestigious and colorful individuals (as if they were shining gems to be added to their hoards) than dull ones.

Regardless of bonuses, swaying a dragon, especially a powerful one, should never be an easy, routine process. If need be, the dragon should impose additional conditions to the relationship. Mage-knight and dragon may break an established bond at any time provided there is reasonable cause to do so (see Breaking Bonds later in this article).

Dragons are incorrigible hoarders. They amass precious metals and gems, magic, and if they could, valuable people too. The trouble with people is that they have hands and take stuff. They have legs and don't sit still in nice, big piles. They talk and make annoying noises that wake-up dragons. They can get pretty smelly and napping on top of them is generally a bad idea too. But most importantly, they don't last very long, not like gems for example. So, from a dragon's point of view, the next best thing is to retain people's loyalties and services for as long as they may last. For this reason, some dragons accept bonds with multiple mage-knights. The latter have proven quite valuable in the face of adversity, whether the source of danger lies in a group of greedy adventurers, monster-hunters, dragon-slayers, or rival dragons.



Once a mage-knight establishes a bond, the next task is to craft one appropriate weapon and one appropriate piece of armor. These cannot be produced in advance. The *draconic*

*enchantment* spell enables a mage-knight to attune chosen equipment to a draconic bond. The tutor will craft the equipment if the mage-knight isn't experienced enough to cast that spell.

<b>Types of Equipment</b>		
<b>Chosen Dragon</b>	<b>Chosen Weapon</b>	<b>Armor Piece</b>
White (or Brass*)	Short Sword or War Hammer	Light chainmail
Black (or Copper*)	Short Bow or Lt. Crossbow	Copper skullcap
Green (or Bronze*)	Normal Sword or Battleaxe	Bronze bracers
Blue (or Silver*)	Long Bow or Hvy Crossbow	Silver greaves
Red	Bastard Sword or Halberd	Shoulder armor
Dragon Turtle*	Trident	Heavy shield
Gold	Two-Handed Sword	Gold chest plate

(\*) AD&D game only. Read "normal" sword as longsword. Substitute oriental dragons as appropriate, based on relative Hit Dice, and replace corresponding equipment with oriental equivalents.

Gemstone dragons (BECMI) enable the same weapons as chromatic dragons of comparable tints.

Once a chosen weapon is crafted, the mage-knight automatically gains the proficiency to wield this specific weapon (and no other) using the magic-user's normal combat table. The proficiency is permanent and comes in addition to those normally permitted to a magic-user. Unless a special power is triggered, the proficiency does not confer any bonuses to hit or to damage.

Each piece of armor, once attuned to the bond, provides a non-magical +1 bonus to the mage-knight's Armor Class and does not conflict with spell-casting. If a mage-knight bonds with dragons of the same breed, pick the next available armor piece listed and change its metal. For example, if a mage knight bonds with two white dragons, the resulting armor pieces should be light chainmail and brass skullcap.



After establishing their first bonds, BECMI elves must forego the use of all previous weapons and armor (including magical) and limit themselves to equipment attuned to these bonds. Ignoring this limitation breaks a bond. This explains why there are few elves among Draconic Orders. From a game mechanics point of view, considering the elves' experience progression chart, it is a stiff price to pay. On the other hand, they do still benefit from good saving throws, a reasonable combat table, and standard racial abilities. High-level elven mage-knights can make tough NPCs to deal with.



## Special Combat Bonuses

Combat bonuses come into effect when the mage-knight draws upon the powers of the bonds. The process is immediate and does not count as an action. The effect lasts 3 rounds +1 for every three levels of the mage-knight. For example: a 6th level mage-knight would be able to sustain the bond's power for 5 rounds; at 15th level, the duration would be 8 rounds, etc.

Dragon's Might		Combat Bonuses		Frequency
BECMI*	AD&D**	Weapon	Armor	of Use
HD 6-8	hp 18-34	+2	+2	1/day
HD 9-11	hp 35-55	+4	+4	2/day
HD 12-17	hp 56-80	+6	+6	3/day
HD 18+	hp 81+	+8	+8	4/day

(\*) Treat a large green dragon as if it only had 11 HD for purposes of determining draconic equipment bonuses.

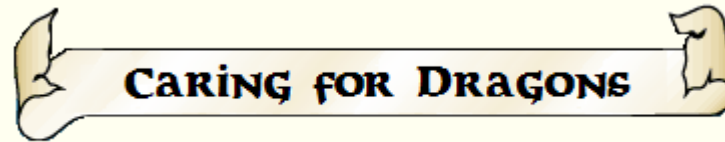
(\*\*) These ranges are for the 1st Edition AD&D game. Readjust as needed to match hit point ranges for the 2nd Edition AD&D game.

Weapon bonuses affect both hit and damage bonuses and are equivalent to magical bonuses as regards which monsters may be hit. If anti-magic comes into play, the level of magic is based upon the matching dragon's own HD. These weapon bonuses correspond specifically to the bonded dragons, if more than one (i.e. they are likely to be different). Over time, a dragon may gain HD, resulting in better bonuses to a mage-knight's matching equipment.

**Spiritual Weapons:** With two dragons bonded, the earlier chosen weapon may levitate and be used much in the manner an AD&D cleric would a *spiritual hammer*, effectively providing the mage-knight with multiple attacks. The range at which a disembodied weapon may engage in melee is no more than 30ft. Meanwhile, the mage-knight may either cast spells or wield normally the more recent chosen weapon against the same foe or any other within 30ft. If the disembodied device is a ranged weapon, it levitates within 30ft of the mage-knight, moving along with the owner if the latter steps out of range. It reloads itself but at half the normal speed and may only target a foe not yet engaged in melee and within clear sight of the mage-knight. If an opponent tries to snatch it, the disembodied weapon resists with the strength of the corresponding dragon. With three dragons bonded, the earlier two weapons may be used as a *spiritual hammer* instead of just one.



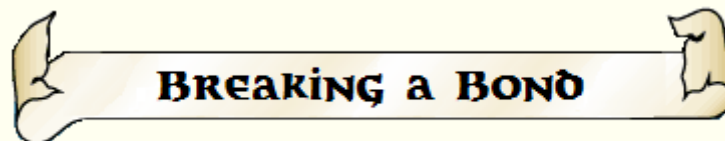
AC bonuses are given as a total. They aren't cumulative for each separate piece of armor. They also count for making saving throws.



## CARING FOR DRAGONS

Any mage-knight may provide basic care to a dragon, such as applying first aid to wounds, stopping blood loss, setting fractured bones, and fighting common draconic illnesses. Much of this non-magical care relies on mud-based cataplasms and herbal medicine. Under the care of a mage-knight, a dragon may heal twice as fast as it would otherwise. Abandoned eggs and hatchlings may be cared for, with the goal of releasing the latter as soon as it can be done safely. By the Third Degree, a mage-knight is equivalent to a sage specialized in dracology.

A dragon in peril may (and will if able) call its associated mage-knight(s) for help. First and Second Degree mage-knights might experience an ominous dream or receive the visit of a messenger (a small creature bearing a token from the dragon). A dragon would otherwise contact its Third Degree mage-knight(s) using their telepathic link. The nature of the bond is such that a huge dragon with at least 50 hp would cause the mage-knight(s) to *teleport* to its side, regardless of the distance or planar location.



## BREAKING A BOND

Whenever a bond is broken, either willingly by a dragon, by a mage-knight, or as the result of a dragon's death, the mage knight suffers a personal loss. The damage reflects an arcane wound and a loss of prestige among the order, which translates into lost experience points. The extent of the damage varies with the size of the dragon, as shown below.

<b>Dragon's Might</b>		
<b>BECMI</b>	<b>AD&amp;D</b>	<b>Effect of a broken bond</b>
HD 6-8	hp 18-34	-200 XP per dragon hit point
HD 9-11	hp 35-55	-500 XP per dragon hit point
HD 12-17	hp 56-80	-1,000 XP per dragon hit point
HD 18+	hp 81+	-2,000 XP per dragon hit point (plus permanent -1 penalty to Charisma*)

(\*) In the event the dragon died as a result of the mage-knight's personal failure.

The loss of experience may well be enough to incur the loss of a level, including consequences to hp, attack rolls, saving throws, ability to cast certain spells, etc. Furthermore, the attuned equipment involved in the bond loses its properties and can no longer be used. On the other hand, the mage-knight is not demoted to a lesser degree. The latter is an important consideration because it may allow the mage-knight to add another immunity to certain types of attacks if/when a new bond is established with an entirely new dragon breed.

## BANISHMENT



The use of magic to influence or control dragons (such as *charms*) is considered cowardice and grounds for death or banishment from a Draconic Order. Breaking a bond for a frivolous reason is seen as willful treachery and will also result in banishment from the ranks. Deliberately allowing harm to come to a dragon, or cowardice in general, are grounds for banishment.

If banned, the mage-knight retains all accumulated knowledge, spells learned, and special abilities provided chosen dragons do not break their bonds of their own accords. The latter depends on circumstances and the quality of the relationship between dragon and mage-knight. Chaotic dragons may not care one bit about being associated to a banished mage-knight (they may actually find some entertaining value to the situation); lawful dragons on the other hand would be most likely to break their bonds. Short of death, the most severe punishment for a mage-knight is a forcible breach of established bonds in addition to banishment. A Grand Master may undo the bonds of a lesser mage-knight of the order.

While banned, a mage-knight does not incur the -20% experience penalty or pay the 10% tithe on earned treasures. Establishing new bonds while banished will result in the order branding the mage-knight a renegade, which may be heard of through the dragons' grapevine. The order will thereafter remain on the lookout for this renegade, possibly dispatching one or more knights and their retainers as bounty-hunters. Randel's monarchy and common military will concur with the order's judgement and view the renegade as a criminal to be dealt with as they please.



If a mage-knight was unfairly banished, which may happen with the sort of personal rivalries existing among orders, proving one's innocence is generally enough to be reinstated. New bonds will have to be established. If the matter ever came up, mage-knights—even renegades—cannot become Shadow Lords and vice-versa. They are sworn enemies. Knowingly consorting with a Shadow Lord is punishable by the death penalty.



## Mage-Knight Spells

### **Locate Dragon (Level Two Spell)**

**Range:** unlimited

**Duration:** 1 day

**Effect:** locates a dragon

The first time the spell is cast, it selects a dragon, plus one for every three experience levels of the caster. If the spell selected multiple dragons, it presents them to the caster one at a time while the latter undergoes a trance. The mage-knight must refuse one before examining the next. If the caster rejects all choices available, the spell ends and cannot be cast again until the next day. A spell cast by a Squire always results in dragons of the same exact alignment (provided they exist in the game). A DM could decide to alter a dragon's alignment, not more than one notch, in order to cover such unusual slots as LN, CN, NG, etc. At the knighthood's first degree, the DM rolls percentile dice for each dragon the spell selects, as follows:

<b>Dragon Alignment</b>	
<b>BECMI (d%)</b>	
01-32	One degree removed*
33-00	Same alignment
<b>AD&amp;D (d%)</b>	
01-10	Two degrees removed**
11-32	One degree removed**
33-00	Same alignment

(\*) For BECMI rules: if the mage-knight is Neutral and has only bonded with Neutral dragons so far, an odd score selects Chaos (otherwise Law).

(\*\*) For the AD&D game, roll 1d10. The score determines what "path" to follow on the PHB's alignment diagram. With a score 1-5, first move horizontally one notch and, if called for, one more notch vertically. A score of 6-10 yields the opposite. With a Neutral mage-knight, the path should trend toward the alignments of previously bonded dragons, if relevant; otherwise, if the d10 score was an odd number, trend toward Chaos, and if the d10 score was an even number, trend toward Good. If no dragon breed exists that specifically matches the mage-knight's alignment, select one "on the path" between the player character's alignment and the dragon's (or make one up).

**For example:** a CN mage-knight rolled a d10 score of 4, meaning that the path from CN should first be horizontal, therefore through the Neutral box on the diagram since there's no other choice. If the percentile score had called for an alignment one space removed, a Neutral dragon

is selected, otherwise either a NG or a NE one. If the mage-knight had previously bonded with a CE or NE dragon, the selected dragon would be NE (possibly a shadow dragon from MM2, or a new breed entirely, or one lying "on the path" from CN--in this case N). If the mage-knight had not previously bonded with any other dragon but Neutral-aligned ones, the score of 4 would indicate instead a trend toward Good, therefore NG.

If there are multiple breeds of dragons matching the selected alignment (likely), the DM adds them to a list, up to the total number of dragons initially selected by the spell. Once done, the DM rolls up their hit points, based upon a choice of HD closest to the mage-knight's experience level (if tied, pick the higher HD). For the AD&D game, hit points are based directly upon the mage-knight's experience level, as follows:

Mage-Knight Levels	Dragon hit points
3-7	3-4
8-13	5-6
14-17	7
18+	8

**For example:** a 10th level mage-knight selected a green dragon. With BECFMI, this dragon can either have 8 or 12 HD--therefore 12; since it is a tie, the highest of the two choices applies. With AD&D, the red dragon would have 10 HD at either 5 or 6 hp per HD, at the DM's option.

The DM may roll percentile dice for the approximate distance (+/-10%) to the dragon's lair from the mage-knight's present location, as follows:

Percentile	Distance
01-08	8 Miles
09-24	24 Miles
25-70	80 Miles
71-86	240 Miles
87-94	800 Miles
95-98	Another continent and more than 1,000 miles away
99-00	Another plane of existence

While in Randel, the direction should be toward the northwest hills. If the distance exceeds the realm's borders by more than twice the distance to the mage-knight's present location, the direction is random. If a location is at sea, the lair is either under the sea or at an appropriate spot on the closest coast.

Roll 1d10 for random direction: 1 = N, 2 = NW, 3 = W, 4 = SW, 5 = S, 6 = SE, 7 = E, 8 = NE, 9-10 = straight down or straight up, whichever is the least nonsensical, Mystara's Hollow World being a definite possibility.

When done, the DM drafts a random list and starts disclosing these details to the mage-knight's player, one at a time, until a dragon is chosen. A mage-knight may only reject one selected dragon per experience level. Once that limit is reached with this spell or any subsequent one, the next selected dragon must be accepted, regardless of conditions. Once a dragon is selected, the mage-knight wakes up; later uses of the spell simply tell the mage-knight in what direction and how far to go to find the selected dragon (+/-1d4 miles), or whether it is no longer alive. The spell resets after *first contact*. The mage-knight's knowledge of dragons or a visit to the order's library may provide details about the dragon's life and personality, and the lair's appearance.

### **Draconic Enchantment (Level Three Spell)**

**Range:** 0 (one item)

**Duration:** 8 Hours +1 Turn for every three levels

**Effect:** attunes an item to a draconic bond

The spell enables a mage-knight to attune a chosen weapon or piece of armor to an established bond. Master crafters at the Draconic Order's disposal fashion the object needed, during which the presence and participation of the owner is required. The mage-knight must cast the spell and maintain it in effect, weaving the bond while work is in progress. The mage-knight must strive to maintain concentration while being tattooed with dragon-like patterns. Every line and dot adorning the mage-knight's skin flare as they duplicate themselves upon the item as etchings or carvings.



The strength of the bond determines the time needed to fashion the work. An item to be attuned to a small dragon's bond requires a week's work. Each morning, the caster resumes the spell until the task is accomplished. Two weeks are required for a large dragon, four for a huge one. Tattoos at first cover parts of the torso and back. If more space is needed by a mage-knight with many previous bonds, arms and legs follow, with the face and scalp coming last. It isn't rare when tattoos are seen shifting, coiling and uncoiling, or flapping their wings.

A mage-knight can always sense where an attuned object is located. If it were stolen or lost, the mage-knight has the option of leaving on a quest to retrieve it, or *enchant* a new one, which eliminates the link to the other. If within 30ft, the mage-knight can cause the item to *dimension door* to his/her hand, which requires a round of concentration.

Crafting chosen equipment while banished requires the mage-knight to find master crafters willing to betray their order or who'd been banished as well. Naturally, their working together would invariably lead all involved to become renegades. On the other hand, they may decide to start a new order outside Randel, which has happened a few times with varying results (including torture and execution).

## **First Contact (Level Four\* Spell)**

**Range:** 0 (mage-knight only)

**Duration:** 1 Turn per level

**Effect:** special

*First contact* is a true oddball as magic goes. In a nutshell, it is a cocktail of simplified spell effects blended into one. These effects play off the arcane link already generated by the *locate dragon* spell and innate senses of the mage-knight. The spell is learned when a neophyte becomes a Squire. A seventh level mage-knight can use the spell without error. Lower-level mage-knights may attempt to cast it as well but with various consequences if they fail. The spell may only be used once per day and only for the purpose of making the initial contact with a selected dragon.

Odds of failure are as follows: the DM rolls 1d10 and adds the mage-knight's experience level. If the result is less than 8, the spell fails in some way. Like searching for secret doors, there is no way to tell when the spell fails because not all of its effects may be negated as a consequence.

- **Effect #1: Find the Path** (as the clerical spell). Enables the mage-knight to find the most direct and safest route to approach the dragon within its lair. It merely amplifies the effects of the *locate dragon* spell. It ceases when reaching the dragon, or at the end of the spell's duration, whichever happens first.
- **Effect #2: Dimension Door** (as the magic-user spell). This effect is contingent upon the result of the encounter. If it goes badly and the dragon attacks, the mage-knight instantly *dimension doors* back along the ingress path. The *first contact* spell ends thereafter if this effect is triggered.
- **Effect #3: ESP** (as the magic-user spell). It helps the mage-knight adopt the best demeanor for the dragon encountered. It provides the mage-knight with 1d4+1 rounds during which to safely interact with the dragon. The effect is triggered when reaching the dragon and lasts until the end of the spell's duration, whichever occurs first.

If the spell failed, some of the effects do not manifest. If failed by 1-2, *ESP* doesn't trigger; by 3, *ESP* and *dimension door* fail, by 4, none of the effects trigger.

Generally speaking, the result of the first encounter is predicated upon the player's ability to roleplay a particular demeanor. The object of the encounter is to present one's respects, introduce oneself in a clear and concise manner, salute the dragon, and retreat. Here are some basic choices of demeanor:

1. **Debonair:** relies on good humor, panache, and personal charisma
2. **Obsequious:** plays off the pride and vanity of the dragon
3. **Warrior-like:** establishes a rapport of strength and mutual respect
4. **Business-like:** a no-frills, honest-Abe, there-you-have-it approach
5. **Scientific:** more like an insightful sage seeking knowledge
6. **Self-Sacrificing:** "*do with me as you please, Great Dragon, for all I offer is everlasting loyalty and service.*"

Every dragon is different. *ESP* will enable the mage-knight to pick the right demeanor. The rest relies on the player's ability to roleplay. After 1d4+1 rounds (or at the end of the first round if the *ESP* effect fails to trigger at all) the DM resolves the dragon's reaction, using appropriate mechanics. With BECMI for example, use the random monster reaction table, RC page 93. Picking the right demeanor should give a bonus to the reaction. Roleplaying it well should give another. If, by the end of the encounter, the dragon is at worst neutral toward the impromptu visitor, first contact is successful. Otherwise, the visit failed and another dragon should be selected with a new *locate dragon* routine.



### **Dragon Blood (Level Four\* Spell)**

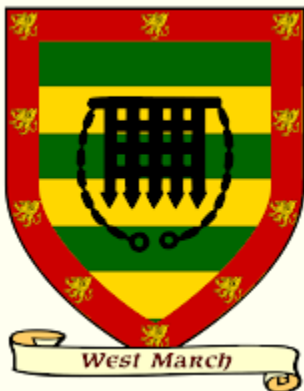
**Range:** 0 (dragon and mage-knight)

**Duration:** 1 Turn

**Effect:** establishes a permanent bond with a dragon

Once a dragon agrees to establish a bond, the spell finalizes the process (no saving throw). As with the *first contact* spell, mage-knights of lesser levels than normally required may cast the spell with a chance of failure. The DM rolls 1d10 and adds the mage-knight's experience level. If the result is less than 8, the spell fails. The actual score rolled determines the extent of the failure. If the roll failed by 1-2 the dragon pats the mage-knight on the head and requests another attempt at a better time. If it failed by 3, the dragon will need to be convinced once more. If it failed by 4, the dragon is truly annoyed: the mage knight needs to locate another dragon.

The spell, when it succeeds, requires a small wound for dragon and mage-knight to mix their bloods. Both bear henceforth small and identical scars within their forelimbs which can never be truly healed, unless one of the two dies. The dragon bears as many scars as it has consented bonds. An astute observer might catch sight of them. A mage-knight would immediately sense whether a peer shares a bond with the same dragon. For all intents and purposes, they would be blood-brothers. Whether they actually like each other remains a different story. The same is true of dragons attuned to the same mage-knight, although jealousy among dragons can be much worse than among humans. For this reason, it is generally best to bond with dragons whose lairs lie far away from each other.

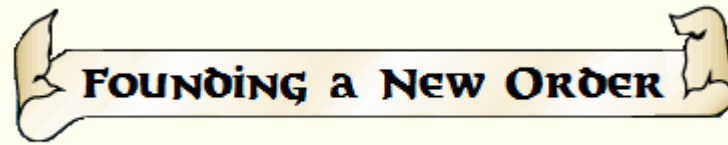


A side effect of the bond is that dragon and mage-knight can sense each other's emotions when communicating. This includes perceiving lies or half-truths.

The nature of the link from the point of view of the mage-knight has been described at length and does not need to be revisited here. From the dragon's point of view, it may be seen as a source of prestige among peers, especially if the mage-knight bears more HD than the dragon. A Lawful dragon isn't likely to entertain a bond with more than a single Draconic Order, while a Chaotic one would not hesitate to have several, seeing conflicts among its bonded knights as a source of curiosity and possibly a way to ascertain which is best. A one-upmanship contest might develop from rivalries, usually profiting



the dragon. A Good dragon (AD&D) treats the relationship as a mutually-beneficial one especially where goals coincide, while an Evil one would manipulate and exploit the bond to further its own personal ends. A dragon may decide to help a mage-knight, depending on its alignment, the quality of their relationship, and whether an intervention conflicts with its personal goals.



## FOUNDING A NEW ORDER

Banished mage-knights or others who simply chose to leave their previous order may seek to establish a new fellowship. It needs to be well away from Randel. To create an order, one requires a least one third level mage-knight, a sage in dracology, a master-at-arms, a cleric of the right faith, three master crafters, and a tattoo-wizard. Retainers can always be hired along the way. Local folks will flock to the opportunity to earn food and protection. A keep can be built in the wilderness or in a domain supplied by a friendly aristocrat. The experience penalty of the founding mage-knight grows to -30% as no higher-level tutor is available there to provide guidance. Absolutely all of the founder's income goes toward the order. If at least one of the key people leaves or dies and isn't replaced within 6 months, the new order fails and everyone leaves. Thankfully, established orders certainly have more than enough of these key people to keep functioning.



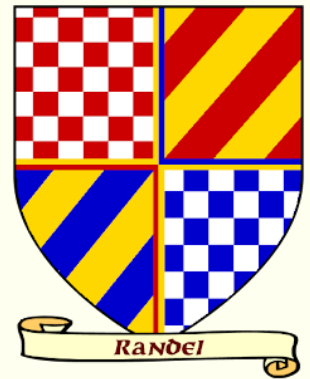
Rardish & Vicinity - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

# Dominion Stats - Randel

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Randel is an impressive and troublesome neighbor. It explains the paranoia of the Shadow Lords who spend a considerable amount of effort and resources to dissuade the Randelese from coming their way as they had so many times in history.

At a glance, Randel enjoys a living space just under the size of Haven and an army of equivalent size for the same population density. For Arogansa, this is an awful fact. Randel's population and military are about four times that of the tourism capital. Theranderol hardly presents a challenge to Randel for similar reasons, however, politics wholly disqualify the former as a target, since it ties directly with the imperial family. Despite Eadrin's more densely populated realm, Randel still outnumbered more than two-to-one its population, land forces, and navy. For that matter, Randel's warrior caste lines up almost as many troops and about twice as many ships than Vertiloch's Imperial Cohorts and could easily double these numbers.



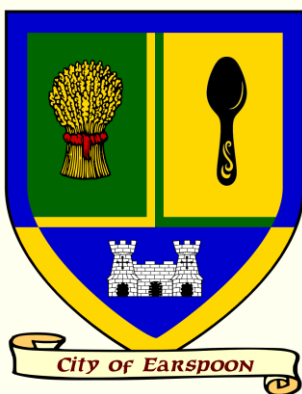
In spite of a relatively low population density, Randel benefits from the relatively recent founding of new towns financed at great cost by visionary merchants and bankers in exchange for royal charters guaranteeing autonomy from local feudal authorities. Under pressure from the monarchy, Randel's dukes and counts went along with the scheme, transferring some of their own lands in the process. It was a stiff price to pay but these high-placed aristocrats negotiated with the monarchy guarantees of their own that towns under their control would never be granted any such charters. This was imperative because all of the older towns had also started to investigate the possibility of obtaining similar autonomy. If the latter had their way, consequences would prove disastrous to the wealth and prestige of dukes and counts controlling them. Furthermore, preferential trade rights were consented to the aristocracy in their dealings with local chartered towns. The presence of wealthy trade centers also boosted commerce and population growth within nearby dominions, outweighing the initial loss of real estate. This consideration was crucial since nearly a quarter of the realm's entire population clung stubbornly along the banks of the Randel River.

## CHARTERED TOWNS

The largest beneficiary of the new arrangements was the Grand Duchy of Dmilkovia, by far the largest dominion and virtually deserted. The majority of its population resided in Dmiliburg, the second largest town in Randel, very far behind the capital city. A crafty character, Grand Duke Vadim Dmilkov, sponsored the founding of no less than three free towns to help develop his dominion's population, including Telsadun (the oldest and most successful of such towns), Scythe, and Morningstar. Nearby Sealidun helped establish the free town of Awlsburg more as a buffer with Dmilkovia than for any other reason. Not to be left behind, the County of Dmiress followed suit much more recently, with Blayde, to help open up the silted mouth of the Greenwind River for navigation and thus compete with Dmiliburg for lucrative upriver trade. The most recent venture came with the free town of Earspoon, sponsored by the Count of Pemsкая, as a way to help develop the county's lawless hinterland.



No other charters succeeded thus far, especially in the realm's western half because the most practical and potentially profitable sites lay closest to the more highly populated east coast, preferably on navigable rivers. Potential candidates nonetheless included the Duchy of Kedylebone, unsuccessful for lack of a good-enough spot, and a joint-venture involving the Counties of Hoddivia and Ranseur, for a site between Vervelles and Hounskull along the Icewind River. Lady Valoria of Ranseur speculated that a free town there would benefit her dominion economically, while Lord Marnal of Hoddives saw it more as a good way to help defend Hoddivia's northern border from potential Bettelilyn invasions. So far, negotiations have focused on where along the river to found a new free town. Hot tempers of the two aristocrats, interested parties from the two nearby villages, merchant greed, and disagreeing military advisors have so far prevented any resolution despite the monarchy's arbitration.



Anecdotally, some have wondered about the unusual "Earspoon" moniker for the southernmost chartered town, to which Earspooners cheerfully answer: "Because it hurts more!" Despite the plethora of polearm-inspired names, free towns are primarily merchant endeavors. These urban centers do not harbor any household warriors answering to local aristocracy, let alone royal troops. They rely entirely on their militias, which, compared to older towns' levies, prove generally of good military quality. Despite royal guarantees, a fear persists in the back of the merchants' minds that local dukes or counts might seize their towns by force, now that they've grown so successful—a good-quality militia stands

as a further guarantee of peace and prosperity. As part of the charters' agreements, free towns are nevertheless obligated to furnish the monarchy with a significant part of their militias in times of war or pay expensive fines.

After a few decades of trial and error, chartered towns have attracted new population and business from other mainland Alpathian regions and Bellissaria, yielding more manpower and income for the kingdom as a whole. The monarchy's policy of encouraging the creation and prominence of knightly orders sworn to loyalty is another way to militarize a greater part of the population without the risk of treachery or rebellion inherent to large numbers of people bearing arms. Farming in Randel easily covers the needs of growing urban centers and the warrior castes. Such fellowships as the Draconic Orders are very well regarded because of their strategy of self-sufficiency rooted in the establishment of commanderies to settle the wilderness. Their goal of protecting and yet keeping under control Randel's significant dragon population is another clear benefit, as it enables reasonably secure farming within relative proximity of lairs.

## Military Analysis

Royal Troops for the most part remain in Rardish, the capital city. One might wonder why since an objective observation should reveal Bettelwyn as the greatest peril. The ancestral siege of the kingdom in Rardish and the gut-level distrust of Eadrin's Shadow Lords have traditionally convinced Randelese monarchs to keep a strong force in and around the capital city. Bettelwyn agents provocateurs regularly stoke the fire of Randel's phobias, perpetrating paranoia on both sides to keep as many of Randel's troops as possible away from the northern border. A conflict between the two is even more desirable, with Bettelwyn quietly helping one side or the other to prevent closure of the conflict.



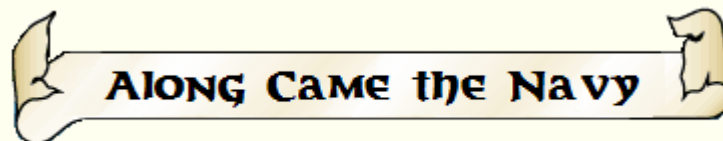
Border forts and castles (other than those belonging to knightly orders) house royal and local county forces. The latter usually guard towns and villages within aristocratic dominions\*. The small town of Ranseur exceptionally features a royal garrison for strategic reasons. Out of the realm's six small towns, five are chartered and thus rely solely upon their own militias. Ranseur accounts for all of the 2,000 troops listed in the statistics for the six small towns (see chart at the end of the article). Telsadun has grown enough to qualify as a "large" town with more than 5,000 citizens.

(\* ) Using this definition, it becomes easy to estimate actual troop strengths under each dominion's control. For example, Dmiress commands 2,000 troops (or HD-worth of such) in Dmireton plus a whopping 20 brave fellows in the villages of Vambrace and Pauldron and about half of the troops in Fort Fauchard and Fort Guisarme, for a total of 2,520 (not counting royal garrisons). Light mobile forces usually patrol borderlands and enforce the count's laws. There is no authority to be enforced in wilderness regions. The population density map shows in yellow where wilderness lies. In addition to Dmiress's forces, 100 experienced combatants hold the Commandery of the Eye. Draconic Orders as a whole line up a grand total 7,500 troops (or HD-worth of such) if all five brotherhoods are in play (see previous article) among which figure 211 mage-knights. Naturally, only one order may be called in battle to avoid frictions.

Although Randel is a powerful military force, it remains somewhat fractious. Its military orders don't necessarily work together well. Rivalries notorious among Draconic Orders exist among other fighting fellowships. The only truly integrated land force is the one under direct control of the monarchy. It consists of 11,856 household warriors in Rardish (including 160 of the King's Dragoons), the entire garrison of 500 at Fort Spetum, 1,500 troops out of the 2,000 posted in Ranseur as mentioned earlier, and half of all troops assigned to border forts and castles (another 4,500), for a grand total of 18,356 troops or HD-worth of such. This represents about 40% of all land forces defending Randel. Considering there are fifteen dominions making up the remaining 60%, royal authority appears very stable and uncontested from a military point of view.

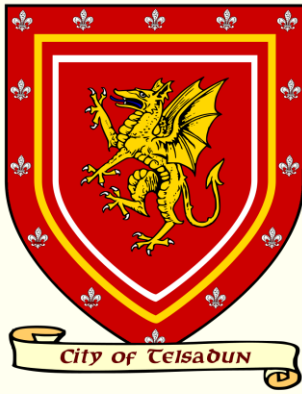


The *King's Dragoons* are unusual troops. They qualify as mounted infantry carrying single-shot rods enchanted with *lightning bolts*. These sturdy, three-foot long carved rods are curious devices with hammer-axes or pick-axes at one end and a sharp silver spike at the other. They only carry a single charge to prevent the enemy from capturing and using them. Dragoons are trained to ride to a threatened area of a battlefield, dismount, release their bolts in a devastating volley, and flip their rods around to their armed ends, enabling them to fight in a melee and hold their ground. Dragoons can also be used as engineering sappers or for law enforcement in rural areas. Their horses are generally of a lesser quality than traditional cavalry because dragoons do not fight while mounted. They can easily be recognized from their high boots, elaborate steel breastplates, and shiny helms fitted with long horsehair tails flowing from the top.



Randel's naval forces boasts 86 vessels, 49 of which theoretically hailing from Rardish. That many ships right on Eadrin's border would be a truly worrisome predicament for the Shadow Lords except that this threat just isn't there most of the time. There are two reasons for this. One is that an equally troublesome neighbor blesses Randel's entire northern border: Bettelilyn. If Randel generally demonstrates a bellicose disposition, Bettelilyn scores no worse. Because both command large numbers of troops, imperial authorities have deemed useful in their infinite wisdom to rely upon Bettelilyn and Randel as a main source of troops to enforce its more-muscled diplomacy abroad. This last detail tends to "otherwise occupy" up to half these two realms' warriors and their ships—ever so thankfully for everyone else involved, including Vertiloch. Compensation to Bettelilyn and Randel has proven adequate so far to sustain the judicious policy.

So, by a prompt fiat of imperial statesmanship, we're down to 43 ships, 25 of which based in Rardish. Those sent abroad include primarily sailing ships better suited to high seas navigation, including every single troop transport. The remaining metropolitan navy therefore includes 8 of the navy's 10 airships, all 8 submersibles, 12 small galleys, and the 15 heavier galleys. And these vessels do have their work cut out for them.



The home fleet's responsibility is to patrol more than 600 miles of coastline and vital shipping lines, task assigned exclusively to airships and submersibles. This gives them a frequency of one vessel for every 40 miles approximately (5 hexes). The fifteen largest galleys patrol the busy Randel River, allowing them a similar frequency as they sail in pairs. Half of the 12 small galleys handle the daunting task of sailing the remaining rivers (the Firewind, Swordsmelt-Strongbolt, and Icewind-Greenwind Rivers). This amounts to nearly 300 miles of meandering waterways, allowing a frequency of 48 miles per galley. All these rivers flow roughly eastward, which means ships must either use oars or be towed by teams

of oxen on the banks to proceed upstream, unless winds are favorable. Predominant winds blow toward the northeast, slowing progression upstream to a laborious 18 miles per day, whether towed or propelled by oar. Traveling downstream doubles rowing speed (to 36 miles per day) and only partially helps sailing vessels, resulting in half their normal speed (averaging 45 miles per day). The purpose of patrolling rivers is to watch settled and borderlands areas, the staggering majority of which cling to coasts and waterways.

## The Land and People of Randel

Rural Population: 1,731,131 farmers 84.5% **86,557** armed peasants and **13,600**  
 Urban Population: 272,000 townsfolk 13.3% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 46,646 warriors (HD) 2.3% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 2,049,777 Randelese** the seas, the air, and the underworld.

**Total Land Area: 187,535 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 10.93 people per Sq. Mile  
 67% Wilderness Price of Bread: 11 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 24% Borderlands Price Inflation: Acceptable  
 9% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 7 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
<i>Rardish</i>	65,000	11,856
<i>Dmiliburg</i>	9,900	2,000
<i>Alpira</i>	9,500	2,000
<i>Hoddives</i>	9,100	2,000
<i>Kedy</i>	8,700	2,000
<i>Poys</i>	8,300	2,000
<i>Telsadun</i>	7,900	-
<i>Dmireton</i>	7,500	2,000
<i>Doxeton</i>	7,100	500
<i>Sealidun</i>	6,700	500
<i>Pemsky</i>	6,300	500
<i>Felteborn</i>	5,900	200
<i>Ubeidda</i>	5,500	200
<i>Norok</i>	5,100	200
<i>Small Towns (6)</i>	18,000	2,000
<i>Villages (19)</i>	9,500	190
<i>Castles (7)</i>	42,000	10,500
<i>Forts (12)</i>	36,000	6,000
<i>Commanderies (20)</i>	4,000	2,000

### Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 5**  
 3,100 Convicts or Slaves  
 48 Administrators  
 260 Guards  
 1,232 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**4,640 Total Mining Population**

### Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** *Furs, Leather Goods, Livestock, Tools, Smelting, Prostheses*

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** *Weapons, War Horses, Textiles, Tapestries, Shipbuilding*

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** *Banking, Books, Armor, Balms vs dragon breath*

## Treasury of Randel

				<b>Mo. Tax Averages</b>	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	215,096	gp/month	43.9%	Farmer	1.2 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	136,125	gp/month	27.8%	Townsfolk	5.0 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	21,750	gp/month	4.4%	Household	3.5 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	46,320	gp/month	9.4%	per Capita	2.4 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	71,063	gp/month	14.5%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>490,353</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	169,466	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	56,489	gp/month
Government & Politics	18,830	gp/month
Personal Prestige	56,489	gp/month
Treasury	56,489	gp/month
Military	94,148	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

*Common Corruption*

### Farming:

*Randel may export food.*

## Leadership Rating

Poor

Acceptable

Ideal

Popularity

Charity

Administration

Order

Dominion's Prestige

Civic/Religious Prestige

Confidence Level

Justice

Prosperity

Technology

Fiscal Regime

Military Prestige

Healthy



## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	4,125	1	Spellcasters	26	7
Guards	260	1	Mage Knights	211	6
Heavy Infantry	1,076	3	Dragoons	646	3
Shortbowmen	2,357	1	-	-	-
Longbowmen	1,009	2	-	-	-
Mounted Archers	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	1,178	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	590	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	590	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	569	1
-	-	-	Trebuchet Artillerists	-	-
Light Horsemen	841	2	-	-	-
Med. Horsemen	246	4	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	179	5	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Wyvern Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	1,312	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	3,343
Mules or Oxen:	5,015
Draft Horses:	534
Tents:	4,321
Camp Followers:	2,624

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	294
Lt Catapults:	98
Hvy Catapults:	71
Trebuchets:	-

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	1,093
Medium Warhorses:	320
Heavy Warhorses:	233
Riding Horses:	1,825
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	-

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**15,215 HD**

(\* *Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.*)

## Naval Forces

**Total Fleet Size: 86**

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	20	200	1200	60	400	1
Large Galley	10	200	1800	40	500	2
War Galley	5	150	1500	25	375	4
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	27	270	--	81	675	1
Large Sailing Ship	14	280	--	56	700	2
Troop Transport	10	300	--	50	500	4

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.*

*Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy: 4,550 Seamen HD**

**Seamen on Shore Leave: 21**

**10 Airships, 8 Submersibles, 68 Surface Ships**

**Average Hull Points: 113**

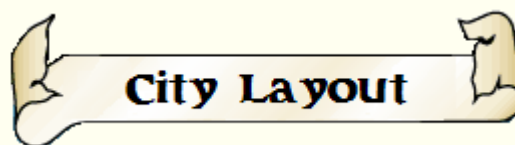


# City of Rardish - Iron Crown of Alphatia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Rardish & Vicinity - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex**



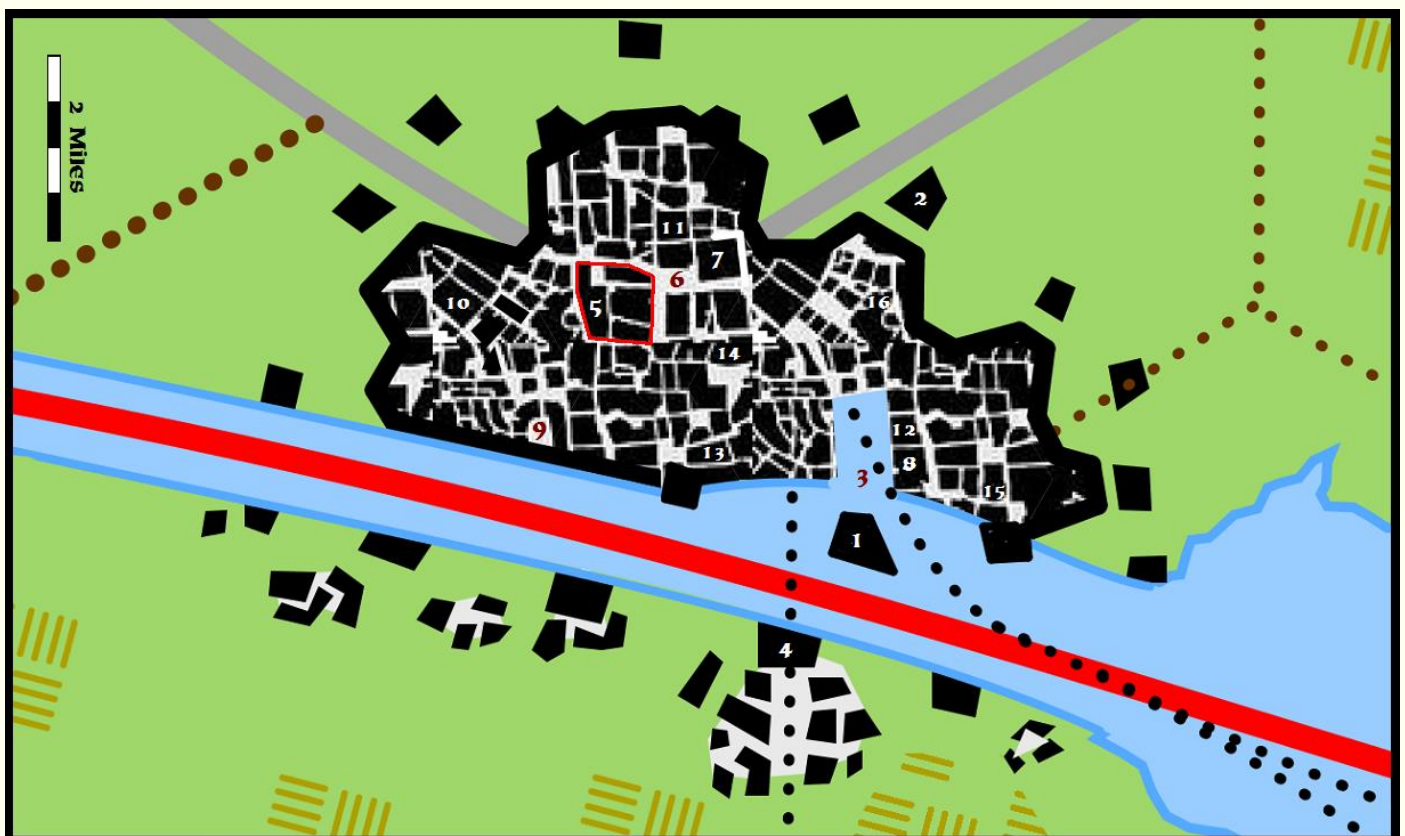
Not only has Rardish been a royal capital for as long as the realm existed, it also has housed Randel's primary military garrison. No warriors' district exists in Rardish because the entire city qualifies as such. Despite the mile-wide river behind which lies the hated realm of Eadrin, the capital city huddles within a ring of heavily fortified walls, save for its port area. Even then, massive bastions **(1)** fitted with fiery siege weapons loom above the river's turbid, gray-green waters to guard the port's access.

A row of similar fortifications **(2)** built atop earthen mounds extends from city walls, like giant sentinels sternly watching the surrounding farmland. There isn't a ditch, shrub, or tree within a mile; all is clear, smooth, and accurately marked for range, allowing defenders a perfect line of sight. Better yet, a layer of cold iron coats walls and towers, ensuring greater resistance to enemy bombardment. This feature earned the city its "Iron Crown" moniker. Metal plating, commissioned at great cost by successive monarchies, required tenacious efforts to cover 18

miles of 30-foot-tall city walls, gates, towers, and defensive bastions, and to bind everything together. Wizards spent decades casting *wall of iron* spells, shaping the iron, and enchanting animated carvings of illustrious monarchs, heroes, and dragons to enact famous scenes of Randelese history.

To help delay ravages of time and rust, thick paint covers all, giving the fortress the patina of ancient bronze. Naturally, every now and then, an iron section needs to be replaced, due to the depredations of wandering rust monsters breeding in the hills just north of the city. In truth, these small monsters never were natives of Randel. They originally hailed from the murky depths beneath Eadrin. Shadow Lords captured a good number of specimens, among much worse things, and quietly released them on the other side of the Randel River. For this reason, teams of hunters armed with clubs and nets, and accompanied with well-trained hunting dogs, patrol the fortifications at night when rust monsters are most likely to come forth.

The poorest district of Rardish surrounds the port. The large rectangular harbor **(3)** handles shipping along the Randel River. A section remains off limits, which is reserved for the king's navy. Despite tense relations between Randel and Eadrin, substantial merchant traffic persists between the capital city and suburban areas on the south bank **(4)**. All such traffic originates and terminates at fortified piers on either side where passengers and merchandise are carefully identified. Watchful wizards search for clues that might unmask an agent of the Shadow Lords, no doubt up to no good, while comparable scrutiny takes place across the border. If suspicion is involved, inspections range from intrusive to utterly revolting. Naturally, Randelese galleys occasionally board visiting ships before they reach the harbor. If anything seems suspicious, the crew and its ship are taken to the mid-river bastion **(1)** to be more thoroughly interrogated and searched.

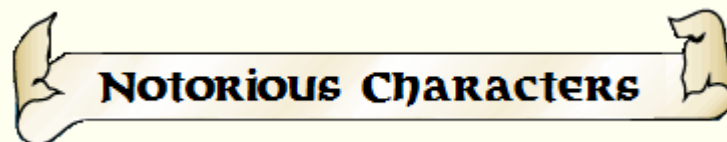


**Rardish Street Map & Districts**

The royal palace (**5 lined in red**) occupies a fortified complex that includes the king's residence as well as municipal and government buildings, just near Dragon Square (**6**). A cluster of buildings north of this open square houses Randel's Academy of War (**7**) while the Naval Academy resides in a large structure dominating the harbor's southeastern edge (**8**). Military barracks and the sieges of various knightly brotherhoods are scattered throughout the city, usually near the main temples. The wealthiest district housing the majority of aristocracy lies south of the royal palace near the jousting field (**9**). Granaries, workshops, merchant guilds, and tenements occupy Rardish's eastern half. Several small cemeteries are scattered throughout the city but a much larger one lies several miles away, up Lanceforth Road. Main temples honor the following immortals: Diamond/Bahamut (**10**), Opal (**11**), Pearl/Tiamat\* (**12**), Ka (**13**), Alphatia (**14**), Palartarkan (**15**), and Razud (**16**). Scores of tiny chapels can be found near intersections.

(\* ) Pearl/Tiamat may be known under different avatars.

**Note:** each "block" silhouetted on the city map represents a group of tightly packed structures of various sizes--a number keyed on the city map generally refers to a portion of a block. Alleys and inner courts aren't visible at the present scale.



## **Salmain III Verothrics, King of Randel, Count of Rardishay**

Salmain III, dubbed "*The Ironclad*" for ordering the completion of the capital's fortifications, is the father of future Queen Junna. Salmain enjoys a long history of leading his troops into combat, usually to repulse raids from Bettelbyn or lead punitive expeditions against the same. Many of these clashes are "reinforced skirmishes" ending with a direct order from Vertiloch to cease fighting. When not wreaking havoc in Bettelbyn or ingratiating himself with some far-flung colonial dispute at the side of imperial overseers, Salmain rules his realm expertly, keeping his counts and dukes in line as Vertiloch does with its rambunctious subject realms. On his free time, he has proven an incorrigible philanderer, recently leading him to entertain a quiet but passionate affair with a famous diva by the name of Wondress Taliddán.

M35, St 15, In 17, Wi 11, Dx 12, Co 16, Ch 17, AL N, apparent age 45.

## **Briâm (-Elby-Sondôr-Magadagh-Rëbbibo-Uff-) Delgorad, King's Advisor, Chancellor of the Wizards' Council**

Master Delgorad, also known as Delgoradis in a different dialect, tutors Salmain's progeny in the arts of war, wizardry, and the wranglings of world politics. In the absence of the king, Master Delgorad wields the powers of regency which he sees as an opportunity to solve problems the king neglected to address. In the wake of the king's steamy liaison, many administrative tasks have dropped through the proverbial cracks. Salmain resolved others but in an awkward and

uncharacteristic manner, which worries his advisor. Master Delgorad now suspects the diva of harboring ulterior motives for her relation with Salmain and relies on discreet *scrying* and *polymorph* spells to investigate the delicate matter.

M25, St 9, In 18, Wi 16, Dx 13, Co 10, Ch 15, AL L, apparent age 60.

### ***Wondress Taliddán, King's lover, lead performer at the Royal Theater, and Shadow Lord alumni***

There is more to the buxom beauty and her amorous relation with Salmain III. She was the daughter of a Randelese banker unfairly framed by agents of the king in a scheme to seize his assets, presumably to finance yet another raid against Bettelyn. While the rest of the family was captured and later executed, a servant escaped with the child to nearby Eadrin. As she grew up, she became a promising student in shadow magic, and to repay her master, undertook a mission against Salmain. The king was never aware of the terrible injustice committed in his name some twenty-five years earlier when he'd just inherited the crown. Since she gained entry to the king's quarters, Taliddán's task was to inform her contacts in Rardish of what she learned while at the palace and, if possible, to influence the king's decisions. In due time, she discovered the Royal Treasurer had instigated the scheme of his own accord. As she considered her next course of action, an influential ecclesiastic, His Grace Demrëol, told her he knew of her ties with Eadrin spies and sought an arrangement.

M12, St 8, In 17, Wi 14, Dx 17, Co 11, Ch 16, AL C, apparent age 30.

### ***Voltar Demrëol, Archcleric of Pearl/Tiamat, defrocked chaplain in the Order of the Claw***

Nearly twenty years earlier, when he was known as Brother Firetongue, Demrëol was drummed out of his Draconic Order for dereliction of duty. He had had one to many drinks and fallen asleep, as he often did back then, enabling a heartless soul to steal an ancient libram. The invaluable book contained exceedingly rare knowledge about dragons of chaos and their immortal patron. In his quest to regain it and his honor, Demrëol became Randel's Archcleric of Pearl and traced the stolen book to the king himself, who'd acquired it as his share of booty during a raid on Bettelyn. Rather than returning the precious volume to its former owners, the archcleric thought it would be a better asset for the Temple of Pearl, that is to say, himself. The attraction of being reinstated in the Order of the Claw as a mere chaplain had lost much of its luster. Thus he decided that keeping the book quiet was for the best. It was during his investigation of the king that Demrëol identified Taliddán. He now blackmails her, keeping quiet about her true activities in exchange for the diva stealing the book and delivering it to him.

C17, St 16, In 14, Wi 17, Dx 10, Co 13, Ch 11, AL C, apparent age 50.

## Gellan Marmendrill, *Royal Treasurer*

Lord Gellan, or Sapphreet Cyanbolt of its true draconic name, cleverly passed itself off as a human many decades ago. As it earned advancement in the king's service, Sapphreet became the Royal Treasurer, a title it enjoyed immensely while embezzling countless treasures in the name of the king—an exceedingly easy way of earning wealth at little or no risk. A genius with fraudulent accounting, Sapphreet also became a master at manipulating the truth in order for others to bear the responsibility for its crimes. To conceal its identity in the vicinity of so many mage-knights, Sapphreet first acquired an *amulet of protection vs. crystal balls and ESP*, a magical item he'd stolen from Master Delgorad himself when he was barely more than a conjurer. The advisor has been wondering about this ever since. Naturally, the amulet also prevents *locate dragon* spells from including Sapphreet as a potential target.

large blue dragon, *polymorphed*, apparent human age 60.

*Special thanks to Alex Benson for his treatment of Randel posted on Pandius from which King Verothrics and master Delgorad were inspired.*



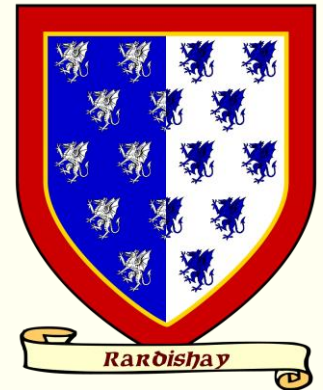
<b>Posted in Rardish</b>		84% Humans 8% Elves
<b>Total Strength:</b>	11,856 HD	4% Halflings 3% Dwarves
<b>Infantry:</b>	1021 Lt. Infantry, 266 Hvy. Infantry, 584 Shortbowmen, 250 Longbowmen, 146 Hvy Crossbowmen,	
<b>Cavalry:</b>	208 Lt. Cavalry, 61 Med. Cavalry, 44 Hvy. Cavalry,	
<b>Special Troops:</b>	6 Spellcasters, 52 Mage Knights, 160 Dragoons,	
<b>Siege Weapons:</b>	579 Artillerists with 73 Ballistae, 25 Lt. Catapults 18 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets	
<b>War Machines:</b>		
<b>Auxiliaries:</b> 333 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers		
<b>Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:</b> 1186 soldiers and seamen		
<b>At Port or at Sea:</b> 390 Sailors, 1,019 Marines & Officers (2,880 rower convicts)		
4 Small Galleys, 8 Large Galleys, 3 War Galleys		
<b>Assigned Ships</b>	5 airships	
	5 Submersibles	
<b>Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison</b>		
	Wagons: 850	
	Mules or Oxen: 1275	<b>Rardish Militia: 3,250 People or HD</b>
	Draft Horses: 136	
	Tents: 1099	
Camp Followers: 667 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)		

Land forces based in the capital city ensure order and the safety of the realm's governing body—the king, office-holding aristocracy, and the monarchy's high-ranking retainers. A third of the heavy infantry and heavy cavalry forms the *King's Household Guard*. Another third is issued

from knightly brotherhoods, which give themselves colorful names indicating their usual duties. For example, one single brotherhood, *The Fellowship of Mid-River Bastion*, bears the entire responsibility for holding the crucial island-fortress at the harbor's entrance. *The Brotherhood of Eastgate* competes in a friendly manner with its *Westgate* counterpart for the capture of miscreants attempting to enter or leave the city. *Companions of the Port* are ready to die for the defense of the harbor as well as for the collection of port fees. The *Black Hand*, the monarchy's secret police, remains far less conspicuous, yet very active (although their commander, Lord Joddar Solleron, is in the pay of the Royal Treasurer, Gellan Marmendrill). A small order known as the *Sisterhood of the Plume* is devoted to protecting and serving Council Wizards, and thus remain thoroughly loyal to Master Delgorad, the king's advisor.

The remainder of the troops form the backbone of the monarchy's regular standing forces. Most of the dragoons patrol the riverbanks for smugglers, or chase across the County of Rardishay criminals, spies, or families in arrears with taxes. The majority of siege weapons face the river, their artillerists residing in the towers and bastions below.

Detachments of 15-20 mage-knights from no more than three specific Draconic Orders are posted within fortifications closest to their related temples. As a result, Lawful mage-knights make their stand on the western rampart along the river; Neutrals guard northern strongholds between the two main gates, while Chaotic knights occupy battlements east of the harbor. This arrangement curiously permeates the cultures of adjoining city districts and the behavior of their residents. Six wizards form a permanent part of the capital's military but if Rardish suffered an attack, many more would certainly step forward from the aristocracy and the educated class to provide a helping wand. Naturally, a substantial city militia, trained but inexperienced, comes in addition to the above.



The jewel piece of the garrison is the King's Navy, when all of it happens to be present and accounted for. Half these ships are usually away on missions spanning several months (see previous chapter). Of the remaining 25 vessels based in Rardish, four small galleys watch the port's entrance and the mouth of the Randel River. Larger galleys patrol upstream, in pairs, stopping at the ports of Glaive and Alpira along the way. Airships and subs patrol the coast and are often at sea for weeks at a time. Altogether, this flotilla commands more than a thousand marines, HD 1-4.

- **Airships (5):** *Sky Gold, Sunset Blue, Red Dawn, Boreal Green, and White Blaze*
- **Submersibles (5):** *Star Decanter, Anaphasia, Black Draeger, Lord Frenzel, and Hydroxian*
- **Sm. Galleys (4):** *Cerulean Streak, Crimson Flame, Emerald Cloud, and Night Spray*
- **Lg. Galleys (8):** *Song of Rardish, Glaive Rising, Alpira Star, Cry of Earspoon, Spirit of Kedylebone, Norfolk's Glory, Clarion of Norok, and Felteborn's Toll*
- **War Galleys (3):** *Rose of Randelforth, Craggate's Thorn, and Iron Crown.*



# Rardish City Summary

65,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
11,856 Troops 19.2 sq. miles

*Buildings often are inadequately maintained, still some ruined or abandoned buildings. Most important streets are paved. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

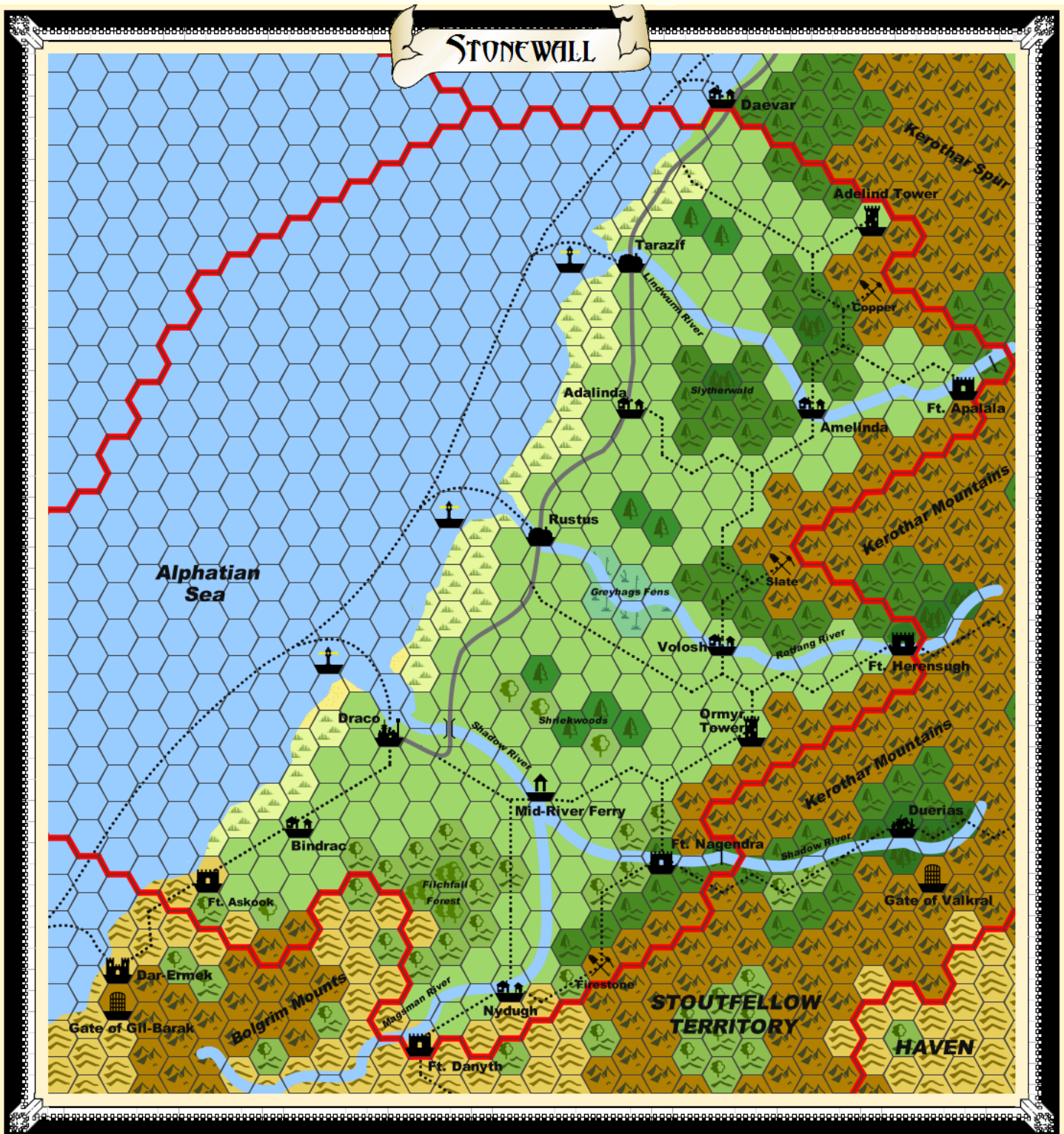
		% Random*		% Random
Dwellings	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number
				Encounter
Humble Hovels	689	1-2	Alchemists	9
Shoddy Tenements	1,550	3-10	Apothecaries	14
Cozy Cottages	528	11-12	Bakers	185
Laborers' Commons	1,187	13-20	Barbers	162
Bourgeois Dwelling	228	21-22	Bathers	34
Manorhouse, Small Palace	90	23-25	Beer-Sellers	46
Large Palace	1	26	Blacksmiths	144
			Bleachers	30
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	21
Sordid Hostels	172	27	Booksellers	10
Cheap Taverns	203	28	Buckle Makers	46
Bawdy Houses	51	29	Butchers	130
Reputable Inns	130	30	Cabinet Makers	144
Exclusive Guest Houses	1	31	Carpenters	162
			Chandlers	92
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	162
Large, paved forums (daily markets)	5	32-33	Coachmen, Porters	36
Large guildhouses, stone-built	6	34	Coopers	92
Workshops, Manufactures	12	35-38	Copyists	32
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	4	39	Cutlers	28
Warehouses, Granaries	48	40-71	Fishmongers	162
Very Large Port, with Large Stone Docks	132 acres	72-75	Furriers	158
			Glovmakers	27
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	32
Religious Hospitals	3	76	Hatmakers	68
Chapels & Temples	81	77	Hay Merchants	54
Abbeys & Monasteries	6	78	Healers	38
Cathedrals	3	79	Illuminators	16
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	13
Cemetery	Huge	80	Locksmiths	34
Mausoleums	10	81	Magic-Shops	9
			Masons	130
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	92
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	82	Money-Changers	21
Theaters	4	83	Old-Clothes	162
City Library	-		Painters, Art	43
			Pastrycooks	108
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	46
Basic Learning Centers	18	84	Pursemakers	59
University	-		Roofers	36
School of Magic	-		Ropemakers	34
Military Academy	1	85	Rugmakers	32
Naval Academy	1	86	Sages	13
			Saddlers	65
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	76
Fortified royal complex	1	87-89	Sculptors	32
Troops are scattered in barracks throughout the city			Shoemakers	433
18 miles of massive walls, bastions, towers		90-95	Spice Merchants	46
			Tailors	260
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Tanners	32
Small gardens	4	96	Watercarriers	162
Imposing, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97	Weavers	108
Imposing, stone-built Court House	1	98	Wine-Sellers	72
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99	Woodcarvers	27
Ruined or abandoned building		100	Woodsellers	27

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*



# The Alphatian Province of Stonewall

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Kingdom of Stonewall - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex – Original by Bruce Heard**

There are two new hex symbols labeled as "Gates." These refer to major entrances to the dwarven underground realm. The idea is that their very approximate location is public knowledge but not their exact position or their appearance. These are concealed at the bottom of mountainsides.

# “Stonewall” 1000 AC

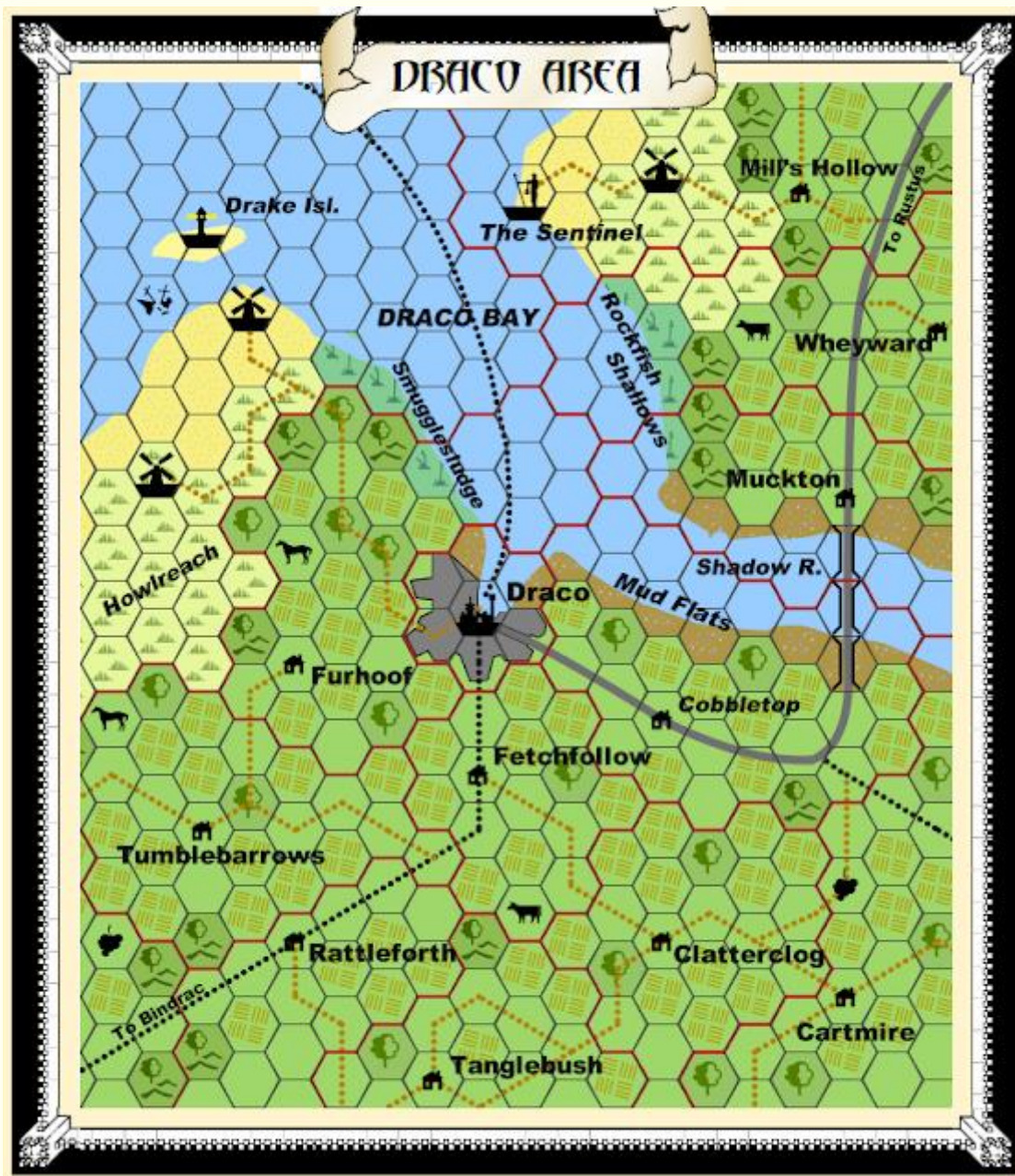
Replica of map by Bruce Heard, May 2012

Cartography by Thorfinn Tait, June 2012

[www.thorf.co.uk](http://www.thorf.co.uk)



Kingdom of Limn - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex - Finalized by Thorfinn Tait



**Draco & Vicinity - Map Scale: 2 miles per hex**

Draco isn't a major capital city. It is a provincial city in a relatively hard-to-reach spot (from the rest of the mainland) on a continent/island smaller than real world's Western Europe. Granted some people might see it as a place where they might have more rights than the norm but they're really switching from being ruled by aristocrats (like practically all other nations on the planet) to being ruled by a pack of thieves.

# Draco City Summary

234,042 Civilian Inhabitants  
6,000 Troops 38.1 sq. miles

*Buildings often are in mediocre shape, some ruined or abandoned buildings. Main street alone is paved but poorly maintained. Streets are unlit at night.*

		% Random*		% Random	
Dwellings	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number	Encounter
Humble Hovels	3,183	1-5	Alchemists	33	1
Shoddy Tenements	7,162	6-27	Apothecaries	52	2
Cozy Cottage	1,333	28-29	Bakers	668	3-6
Laborers' Commons	2,999	30-39	Barbers	585	7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	187	40	Bathers	123	10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	314	41-45	Beer-Sellers	167	11
Large Palace	1	46	Blacksmiths	520	12-14
			Bleachers	111	15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	78	16
Sordid Hostels	796	47-49	Booksellers	37	17
Cheap Taverns	753	50-52	Buckle Makers	167	18
Bawdy Houses	188	53	Butchers	468	19-21
Reputable Inns	332	54	Cabinet Makers	520	22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	3	55	Carpenters	585	25-27
			Chandlers	334	28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	585	30-32
Huge, paved forums, fountains, monuments, daily	6	56	Coachmen, Porters	130	33
Imposing, finely decorated, marble guildhouses	10	57	Coopers	334	34-35
Workshops, Manufactures	12	58-59	Copyists	117	36
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	5	60	Cutlers	101	37
Warehouses, Granaries	60	61-80	Fishmongers	585	38-40
Very Large Port, with Very Large Stone Docks	155 acres	81-82	Furriers	570	41-43
			Glovemakers	97	44
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Harness-Makers	117	45
Religious Hospitals	4	83	Hatmakers	246	46
Chapels & Temples	40	84	Hay Merchants	195	47
Abbeys & Monasteries	4	85	Healers	137	48
Cathedrals	2	86	Illuminators	60	49
Catacombs	None		Jewelers	46	50
Cemetery	Huge	87	Locksmiths	123	51
Mausoleums	3	88	Magic-Shops	33	52
			Masons	468	53-55
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Mercers	334	56-57
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	89	Money-Changers	78	58
Theaters	3	90	Old-Clothes	585	59-61
City Library	-		Painters, Art	156	62
			Pastrycooks	390	63-64
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Plasterers	167	65
Basic Learning Centers	46	91	Pursemakers	212	66
University	-		Roofers	130	67
School of Magic	-		Ropemakers	123	68
Military Academy	-		Rugmakers	117	69
Naval Academy	-		Sages	48	70
			Saddlers	234	71
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Scabbardmakers	275	72-73
Citadel	-		Sculptors	117	74
Troops reside in a military district			Shoemakers	1,560	75-84
			Spice Merchants	167	85
25 miles of stone walls		92-95	Tailors	936	86-90
			Tanners	117	91
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Watercarriers	585	92-94
Small gardens	3	96	Weavers	390	95-96
Imposing, marble-covered town hall with belfry	1	97	Wine-Sellers	260	97-98
Imposing, marble-built Court House	1	98	Woodcarvers	97	99
Imposing, stone-built, bastion & prison tower and multi-level dungeon	1	99	Woodsellers	97	100
Ruined or abandoned building		100			

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

## The Land and People of Stonewall

Rural Population:	807,788	farmers	75.2%	<b>40,389</b>	armed peasants and	<b>12,801</b>
Urban Population:	256,022	townsfolks	23.8%		town militias can be levied temporarily to	
Military:	10,666	Warrior (HD)	1.0%	----->	help the standing army defend the land,	
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>1,074,476</b>	<b>Stonewallians</b>			the seas, the air, and the ground below.	

<b>Total Land Area:</b>	<b>17,750</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	Total population density:	60.53	people per Sq. Mile
	24%	Wilderness	Price of Bread:	16 cp	per 10 Lb. Loaf
	14%	Borderlands	Price Inflation:	High	
	63%	Settled/Suburban	Min. Wage:	9.9 sp	per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
<i>Draco</i>	234,042	6,000
<i>Rustus</i>	9,100	100
<i>Tarazif</i>	8,900	3,000
<i>Adalinda</i>	900	20
<i>Amelinda</i>	800	20
<i>Volosh</i>	750	20
<i>Bindrac</i>	850	20
<i>Nydugh</i>	680	20
-	-	-
-	-	-
<i>Adelind Tower</i>	-	20
<i>Ft. Apala</i>	-	100
<i>Ft. Herensugh</i>	-	100
<i>Ormyr Tower</i>	-	20
<i>Ft. Nagendra</i>	-	100
<i>Ft. Danyth</i>	-	300
<i>Ft. Askook</i>	-	826
-	-	-
-	-	-

### Mining Summary

<b>Number of Mines:</b>	<b>3</b>
	700 Convicts or Slaves
	21 Administrators
	80 Guards
	404 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants
	<b>1205 Total Mining Population</b>

### Industries Summary

<b>Basic Industries:</b>	<i>Furs, Pottery, Timber, Tanneries, Leather Goods, Assassins Guild</i>
<b>Mid-Lvl Industries:</b>	<i>Ceramic &amp; Porcelain, Weapons, Mechanical Devices, Tax on Adventuring, Spies for Hire</i>
<b>Hi-Lvl Industries:</b>	<i>Banking, Merchant Fair, Map-Making</i>

## Treasury of Stonewall

				<b>Mo. Tax Averages</b>	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	125,640	gp/month	28.8%	Farmer	1.6 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	222,035	gp/month	50.9%	Townfolk	8.7 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	2,300	gp/month	0.5%	Household	6.5 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	9,640	gp/month	2.2%	per Capita	4.1 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	76,396	gp/month	17.5%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>436,011</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	436,011	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	34,881	gp/month
Government & Politics	17,440	gp/month
Personal Prestige	52,321	gp/month
Treasury	87,202	gp/month
Military	52,321	gp/month

### Corruption Level:

*Scandalously Rampant Greed*

### Farming:

*Population is self-sufficient.*

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Poor</i>	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Acceptable</i>	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Ideal</i>	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady	

## Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	883	1	Spellcasters	26	5
Guards	80	1	Assassins	83	9
Heavy Infantry	221	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Mounted Archers	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	441	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	441	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	221	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	221	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	221	1
-	-	-	Trebuchet Artillerists	-	-
Light Horsemen	221	1	-	-	-
Med. Horsemen	168	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	77	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Wyvern Riders	13	6	Auxiliaries:	241	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	1011
Mules or Oxen:	1517
Draft Horses:	200
Tents:	924
Camp Followers:	482

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	110
Lt Catapults:	36
Hvy Catapults:	27
Trebuchets:	-

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	287
Medium Warhorses:	218
Heavy Warhorses:	100
Riding Horses:	672
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	13

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

**Total Standing Army**  
3,558 HD

## Naval Forces

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	16	160	960	48	320	1
Large Galley	8	160	1440	32	400	2
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Small Sailing Ship	16	160	--	48	400	1
Large Sailing Ship	8	160	--	32	400	2
Troop Transport	2	60	--	10	100	3

*Listed Levels apply to Marines only. Officers are ranked individually.*

*Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.*

**Total Navy:** 2,530 Seamen HD      Seamen on Shore Leave: 9  
**Total Fleet Size:** 52

## Posted in Draco

79% Humans 10% Halflings 4% Dwarves

**Total Strength:** 6,000 HD      3% Gnomes 2% Mixed-Blood

**Infantry:** 626 Lt. Infantry, 157 Hvy. Infantry,  
313 Lt. Crossbowmen, 157 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 157 Lt. Cavalry, 119 Med. Cavalry, 55 Hvy. Cavalry,  
9 Wyvern Riders,

**Special Troops:** 18 Spellcasters, 59 Assassins,

**Siege Weapons:** 627 Artillerists with 79 Ballistae, 27 Lt. Catapults  
20 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets

### War Machines:

**Auxiliaries:** 136 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers  
**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 600 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 288 Sailors, 576 Marines (and 1728 rower convicts)  
10 Small Galley 5 Large Galley 1 War Galley

**Assigned Ships** 10 Small Sailing Ship 5 Large Sailing Ship  
1 Troop Transport

### Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison

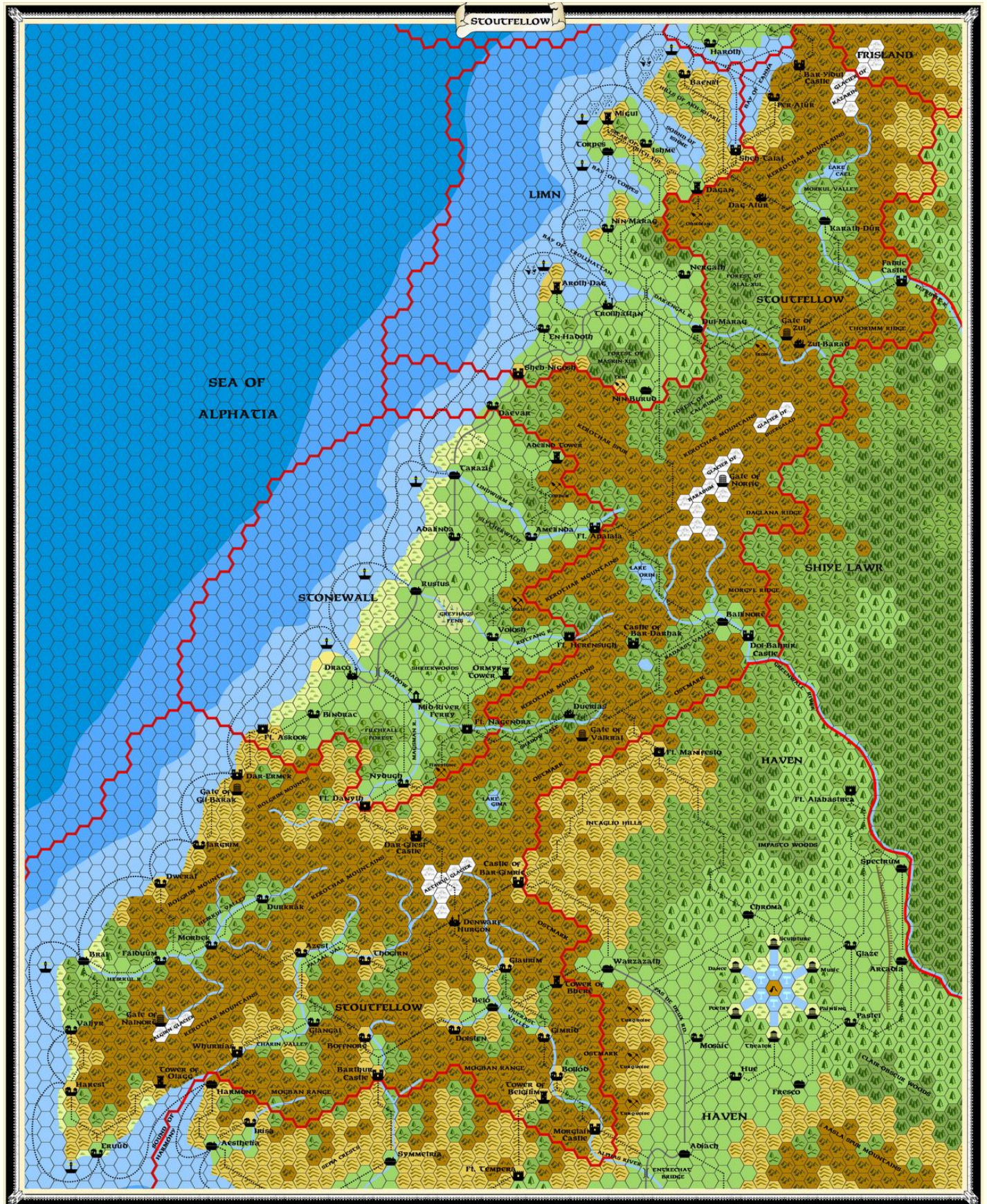
Wagons: 569  
Mules or Oxen: 854      **Draco Militia: 11,702 People or HD**

Draft Horses: 113  
Tents: 520  
Camp Followers: 272 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)



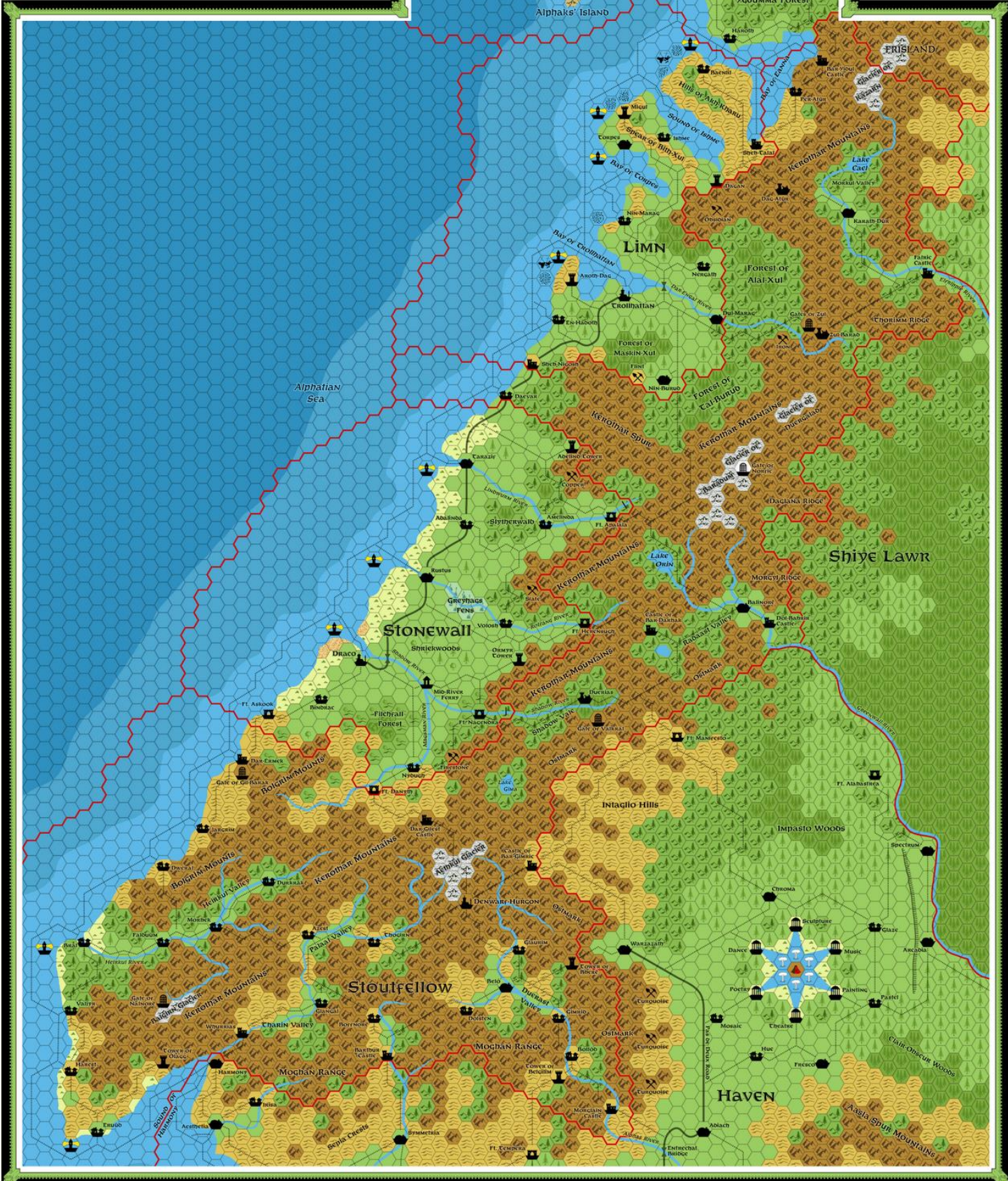
# The Alphatian Province of Stoutfellow

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Kingdom of Stoutfellow - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex - Original by Bruce Heard

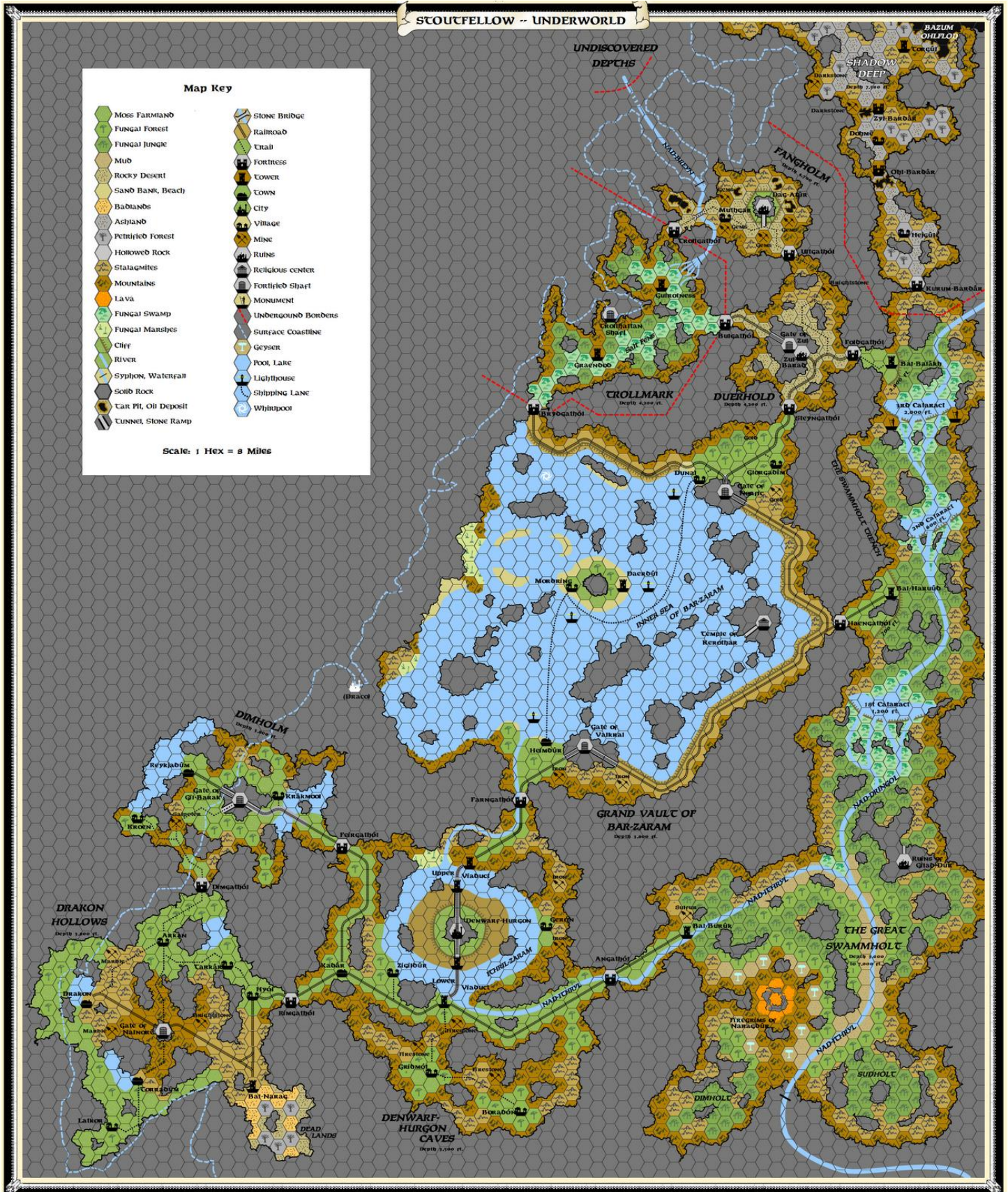
**Stoutfellow, Stonewall and Limn, 1000 AC**  
Based on maps by Bruce Heard, May-June 2012  
Cartography by Thorfinn Tait, June 2012  
www.thorff.co.uk



**Kingdom of Stoutfellow - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex - Finalized by Thorfinn Tait**

# Lower Stoutfellow – Alphatia’s Underworld

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Lower Stoutfellow - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

## A few thoughts

Stoutfellows control the following cavern complexes and their fortresses: *Denwarf-Hurgon*, *Drakon Hollows*, *Dimholm*, the *Grand Vault of Bar-Zaram*, *Duerhold*, and *Fangholm*. Stoutfellows enjoy a theoretical claim over the *Great Swammholt* and most of the *Swammholt Trench*, although they do not actually control its monster-infested fungal expanse. Cave trolls occupy the Trollmark but so far have failed to capture surrounding dwarven fortresses. A mysterious race of Shadow Dwarves own *Shadow Deep* and its fortresses, threatening the lowest reaches of the *Swammholt Trench*.

Food in the underworld comes from four main sources: moss farmlands (also known as the dwarven breadbasket), fungal forests, fishing, and breeds of cattle indigenous to the underworld. The remainder comes from the surface. All cavern complexes featuring lakes and rivers experience regular condensation rainfall. Colossal stone pillars support the caverns' vaults arching often more than three thousand feet overhead. Dwarven runes and carved decorations adorn the surface of the rock near towns and cities of the underworld. Inexplicably so far, larger caves also experience winds and updrafts near high cliffs.

Access to the underworld is available through various "Gates." These are fortified stairwells with many intermediary portals. Additional defenses come from underground fortresses which are part of the rock walls separating cavern complexes. They feature massive doors and defenses carved directly into the rock. High ledges and turrets provide platforms for siege weapons.

Travel throughout most of the underworld can be expedited through a unique and marvelous device called the Dragon Express, a steam-powered machine pulling wagons along a set of steel rails. The engine is a relic created by dwarven, gnomish, and Alphatian master crafters. It is used for passenger traffic, food transportation, and emergency military deployment.

Most of the caverns are imbued with light radiating from Brightstones or from the vegetation. It is diffuse and much dimmer than sunlight. Brightstones are brittle and of varying intensity. Some generate the full spectrum of light, others only ultraviolet or infrared. The best veins can be mined. Other mining resources include Firestone (a black mineral that can be burned to produce steam inside the Dragon Express's engine), gems, gold, iron, marble, saltpeter, and sulfur. There are rumors of Darkstone mines in *Shadow Deep* but their powers remain hopelessly unknown and feared. Nothing good ever comes from *Shadow Deep*.

**The Great Swammholt & Trench:** this large area of complete wilderness stretches all along the underworld's eastern reaches. Hunting parties often travel the land in search of more exotic catches to sell in the streets and markets of Denwarf-Hurgon. The *Firegrims of Naragdûr* consist of a ring of bubbling lava surrounding a shaft that rises to a dormant volcano on Haven's surface. A mountain ridge contains the lava. Steaming mudflats spread from the *Firegrims'* foothills, featuring geysers and ponds of boiling water. Dwarven master crafters sometimes come to this desolate and dangerous place to collect rare minerals. Fungal jungle and mycofloral swamp fill much of the *Swammholt*. Three immense cataracts interrupt the flow of the *Nad-Dringol River*. Aside from the fortress guarding the entrance to Denwarf-Hurgon, two other access points exist, located atop vertiginous cliffs overlooking the massive trench. They are used to watch for any incursions from *Shadow Deep*.

**Denwarf-Hurgon:** it is the most highly populated cave complex of the underworld. Its city was carved out from a towering stone pillar nearly sixteen miles across and stretches more than 3,000 feet to the surface. The city's lower level is located on a plateau surrounded with waters from the Nad-Ithryl River flowing northward. The city features the Dragon Express's grand central station. The railway extends north and south across the river, via stone viaducts guarded by towers. The northern segment continues through a mountain side across the river before heading down a steep slope toward the next cavern complex.

**Drakon Hollows:** this cavern complex is unusual as it harbors a breed of small wyvern-like creatures living in holes high up in the rock face or in the vault. These creatures can be captured and used as mounts by trained specialists. The main source of wealth comes from a strategic Brightstone mine near the fortified Gate of Nalnorë.

**Dimholm:** as the name implies, natural light is scarce in that area. Fishing and farming are the main activity here. However somber, the Dimholm features unique pure-white mineral lace and coral-like stone excretions covering its walls and vaults.

**The Grand Vault of Bar-Zaram:** it is essentially a vast underground sea of fresh water supplied by the Nad-Ithryl River. Water drains through a whirlpool on the northwest side, spiraling into an unexplored abyss. Fishing is the main industry here. Over the centuries, Stoutfellows carved a precarious ledge along the east wall just large enough for the Dragon Express to reach the other side. Visiting Alphatians traveling this way usually pull shut the curtains of their compartment rather than watch as the Dragon Express boldly hurtles along the edge of the cliff.

**Duerhold:** as may seem obvious, its value is mostly strategic, as a crossroads between multiple cavern systems, and a site of Brightstone mining. Its central stone pillar housed *Zul-Barad*, a city that rivaled with Denwarf-Hurgon in more ancient times. It was destroyed during an invasion from the *Trollmark*. The entire structure is filled with the rubble of destroyed great halls, caved-in floors, and crumbling stairways all the way to the surface. The ruins are now home to a host of monsters. Another passage was later built, called the *Gate of Zul*.

**Fangholm:** this cavern complex would be a worthless waste of rocks, gravel, dust, and tar pits, if it wasn't for its mines of gems—priceless goods for any dwarf worth his muck-incrusted beard. As a result, Stoutfellows maintain a vigilant presence in Duerhold and the dark confines of Fangholm. Like Duerhold, this cavern once boasted a pillar-city which was destroyed by a feat of mysterious magic. No one knows for sure what really happened but many whisper among themselves about the ancient sigils for *Shadow Deep*. One thing is certain, however. The ruins are home to the undead. Very few among Stoutfellows ever venture up the ornate stone ramp leading to Dag-Atûr for even fewer ever return.

**The Trollmark:** it isn't part of Stoutfellow's underworld, yet it remains a constant source of trouble, as its denizens mount relentless attacks against dwarven fortresses blocking the exits. However badly wounded, cave trolls always return for more. A river is said to furnish brackish waters and untold wildlife to the salt fens in which the trolls thrive. It is an inextricable, spore-infested morass of mycoflora run amok, oozes and slimes of all sorts, and muddy swamps. A

rumor persists about the existence of a shaft leading to a deep dungeon beneath Trollhattan, through which Limn rulers obtain troll champions for use in their military. It has never been proven.

**Shadow Deep:** so very little is known of the mysterious depths of ashen lands and petrified woods, thus it is best that it remains unvisited and unspoken of, for its denizens harbor dark truths and soul-wrenching secrets.

# Dominion Stats - Upper & Lower Stoutfellow

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

This is a nation of windswept mountain peaks, deserted glaciers, and deep, dark valleys. With a population density of 3 people per square mile, few will be rubbing shoulders outside urban centers. The vast majority of the population is concentrated in the river valleys in the realm's southern half.

Considering how woefully spread out Upper Stoutfellow's army is, it remains vulnerable to any concentrated attack. However, Upper Stoutfellow seems strikingly iceberg-like. . . Alright, that was a bad pun, but the image is correct. A look at what lies beneath the surface and how quickly it might emerge should help one reconsider that assessment. On the other hand, Stoutfellow has no naval warfleet--not one teensy-weensy little raft. The idea of taking to the sea invariably sinks like a rock among dwarves and gnomes. Halfling pirates will have to look for opportunities elsewhere.

Business-wise, this is a prosperous nation. Notice how little income derives from direct taxation. More than half the upper realm's funding comes from trade. Gnomes run major banking and gem-cutting operations while halflings produce outstanding agricultural goods, including massive quantities of pipeweed and fine ale. Dwarves hold much of the mining and military-related industry.

# The Land and People of Upper Stoutfellow

Rural Population: 220,843 farmers 87.1% 11,042 armed peasants and 1,360  
 Urban Population: 27,200 townfolks 10.7% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 5,581 Warrior (HD) 2.2% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 253,624 Upper Stoutfellowians** the seas, the air, and the ground below.

**Total Land Area: 84,098 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 3.02 people per Sq. Mile  
 94% Wilderness Price of Bread: 5 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 4% Borderlands Price Inflation: Low  
 2% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 2.9 sp per Month

## Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
<i>Denwarf-Hurgon</i>	5,000	1,000
<i>Balnore</i>	3,500	206
<i>Beló</i>	4,500	100
<i>Bral</i>	4,200	100
-	-	-
<i>Coastal Villages 7</i>	5,600	70
<i>Inland Villages 11</i>	4,400	110
-	-	-
<i>Mountain Gates 5</i>	-	2,000
<i>Coastal Castles 2</i>	-	1,200
<i>River Castles 5</i>	-	500
<i>Mnt Castles 3</i>	-	300
<i>Towers 3</i>	-	60
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

## Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 2**  
 2,000 Hired Workers  
 24 Administrators  
 80 Guards  
 8,416 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**10,520 Total Mining Population**

## Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** *Furs, Leather Goods, Beeswax, Honey*

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** *Pipeweed, Weapons, Jewelry, Mechanical Devices, Halfling Ale*

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** *Armor, Banking,*

# Treasury of Upper Stoutfellow

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	7,742	gp/month	16.3%	Farmer	0.4 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	2,720	gp/month	5.7%	Townfolk	1.0 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	10,500	gp/month	22.0%	Household	0.8 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	25,280	gp/month	53.1%	per Capita	1.9 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	1,400	gp/month	2.9%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>47,642</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
<i>Available Treasury:</i>	48,769	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	9,754	gp/month
Government & Politics	3,902	gp/month
Personal Prestige	3,902	gp/month
Treasury	9,754	gp/month
Military	7,803	gp/month

## Corruption Level:

*Unbelievable Integrity*

## Farming:

*Upper Stoutfellow may export food.*

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperous	



# LAND FORCES

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	670	1	Clerics	15	7
Guards	80	1	Earth Elementals	18	12
Heavy Infantry	291	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	335	1
Mounted Archers	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	335	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	335	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	335	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	167	1	Trebuchet Artillerists	167	1
Light Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Med. Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	214	1
Pegasus Riders	-	-			
Wyvern Riders	-	-			

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

## (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	1414
Mules or Oxen:	2121
Draft Horses:	298
Tents:	650
Camp Followers:	427

## Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	83
Lt Catapults:	55
Hvy Catapults:	41
Trebuchets:	13

## Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	-
Medium Warhorses:	-
Heavy Warhorses:	-
Riding Horses:	41
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Wyverns:	-

## War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
2,962 HD

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Posted in DENWARF-HURGON 51% Dwarves 34% Halflings 15% Gnomes

**Total Strength:** 1,000 HD

**Infantry:** 108 Lt. Infantry, 47 Hvy. Infantry,  
54 Lt. Crossbowmen, 27 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:**

**Special Troops:** 2 Clerics, 3 Earth Elementals,

**Siege Weapons:** 189 Artillerists with 14 Ballistae, 9 Lt. Catapults  
7 Hvy. Catapults, 3 Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 38 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 100 soldiers and seamen

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 254

Mules or Oxen: 381

Draft Horses: 54

Tents: 117

Camp Followers: 77 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Denwarf-Hurgon Militia: 250 People or HD**

# The Land and People of Lower Stoutfellow

Rural Population: 398,787 farmers 77.5% 19,939 armed peasants and 4,510  
 Urban Population: 90,200 townsfolks 17.5% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 25,827 Warrior (HD) 5.0% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 514,814 Lower Stoutfellowians** the seas, the air, and the ground below.

**Total Land Area: 70,054 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 7.35 people per Sq. Mile  
 80% Wilderness Price of Bread: 7 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 16% Borderlands Price Inflation: Low  
 5% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 4 sp per Month

## Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
Denwarf-Hurgon	25,000	7,000
Drakon	9,200	100
Reykjadûm	7,500	100
Torradûm	2,800	100
Kadâr	3,200	100
◦ Heimdûr	4,800	200
Lg. Villages 5	3,750	50
Sm. Villages 9	4,050	90
-	-	-
Fortified Gates 5	2,000	5,000
Fortresses 12	25,600	12,000
Towers 9	1,800	900
Kerothar Temple	500	187
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

## Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 19**  
 8,650 Hired Workers  
 141 Administrators  
 385 Guards  
 36,704 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**45,880 Total Mining Population**

## Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** Fine Oils, Smelting, Tools, Dried Mushrooms  
**Mid-Lvl Industries:** Ceramic & Porcelain, Mechanical Devices, Jewelry, Weapons, Dwarven Breweries  
**Hi-Lvl Industries:** Armor, Banking,

# Treasury of Lower Stoutfellow

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	15,178	gp/month	9.3%	Farmer	0.4 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	13,805	gp/month	8.5%	Townfolk	1.5 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	104,700	gp/month	64.2%	Household	1.2 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	21,680	gp/month	13.3%	per Capita	3.2 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	7,810	gp/month	4.8%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>163,173</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
Available Treasury:	135,395	gp			

# Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	27,079	gp/month
Government & Politics	10,832	gp/month
Personal Prestige	10,832	gp/month
Treasury	27,079	gp/month
Military	21,663	gp/month

## Corruption Level:

Unbelievable Integrity

## Farming:

Population is self-sufficient.

# Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Thriving	

# LAND FORCES

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	2,905	1	Clerics	28	7
Guards	385	1	Earth Elementals	33	12
Heavy Infantry	541	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	1,339	1
Mounted Archers	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	1,088	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	1,453	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	916	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	622	1	Trebuchet Artillerists	414	1
Light Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Med. Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	Auxiliaries:	906	1
Pegasus Riders	-	-			
Skinwing Riders	47	4			

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

## (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	4,693
Mules or Oxen:	7,040
Draft Horses:	947
Tents:	2,121
Camp Followers:	1,813

## Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	334
Lt Catapults:	181
Hvy Catapults:	114
Trebuchets:	34

## Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	-
Medium Warhorses:	-
Heavy Warhorses:	-
Riding Horses:	121
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Skinwings:	47

## War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**10,677 HD**

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Posted in DENWARF-HURGON 96% Dwarves 4% Gnomes

**Total Strength:** 7,000 HD 0% Other

**Infantry:** 709 Lt. Infantry, 132 Hvy. Infantry,  
354 Lt. Crossbowmen, 152 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 11 Skinwing Riders,

**Special Troops:** 7 Clerics, 8 Earth Elementals,

**Siege Weapons:** 916 Artillerists with 82 Ballistae, 45 Lt. Catapults  
28 Hvy. Catapults, 9 Trebuchets

## War Machines:

**Auxiliaries:** 246 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 700 soldiers and seamen

## Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison

Wagons: 1272

Mules or Oxen: 1909

Draft Horses: 257

Tents: 575

Camp Followers: 492 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Denwarf-Hurgon Militia: 1,250 People or HD**

The first thing to notice is that *lowlanders* outnumber *highlanders* two-to-one and they are even wealthier. Endless miles of moss farms and fungal forests, and a huge lake easily support a boisterous population which is 96% dwarven. Despite this, a population density of 7 people per square mile isn't exactly "crowded" compared to places like Ambur or Stonewall. Settlements center on the "green areas," while mountainous and stalagmite-filled areas remain essentially deserted. The present area figure (which is comparable to the surface realm) includes the great lakes but not the *Great Swammholt* and the *Trench*. Although claimed by Stoutfellow, they haven't begun to settle it and thus do not control it, save for a tiny portion in the west and on top of the two cliffs overlooking the *Trench*.

Although not at war with other "recognized" states, Stoutfellow is in fact engaged in a long-term armed struggle. The main enemies are trolls from the *Trollmark* and the enigmatic denizens of *Shadow Deep*. As a result, Lower Stoutfellow has grown into a militocracy with more than 5% of its citizens in the army. Nothing less will suffice to properly defend the strongholds locking the various cave complexes and the fortified gates leading to the surface. The *Dragon Express* was deployed initially to move reinforcements and supplies very quickly to most parts of the realm. Furthermore, mechanical elevators have been installed to lift troops to the surface either through the Denwarf-Hurgon city-pillar or the fortified gates. An army of battle-scarred, grizzled dwarven veterans specialized in cave or mountain warfare is more than enough to stop an invader unwise enough to set foot upon this harsh land.

Life is more expensive down below but then the standard of living is much higher. As with Upper Stoutfellow, direct taxation of the population remains at a minimum. Here, more than 60% of state revenues come from mining (generated by less than 9% of *lowlanders*). Agriculture is sufficient to support mining communities and urban centers, allowing excess farming goods grown on the surface to be exported, mainly by ship from Bral to Draco.

With nearly three quarters of a million Stoutfellows, we're well past original 60,000 figure from *Dawn of the Emperors*. I've remained pretty faithful otherwise to the description of Denwarf-Hurgon. Come to think of it, I was toying with the idea that the upper city's name should be just "Denwarf" (Rockborn) and the lower city, "Hurgon" (Cavern). As a whole, it is otherwise known as Denwarf-Hurgon, especially by outlanders.

Just for kicks, I tallied all the data, combining Upper and Lower Stoutfellow, as follows:

## LANDS & PEOPLE OF UPPER & LOWER STOUTFELLOW

Rural Population:	619,630 farmers	82.3%	30,981 armed peasants and	5,870
Urban Population:	117,400 townsfolks	14.1%	town militias can be levied temporarily to	
Military:	31,408 Warrior (HD)	3.6%	-----> help the standing army defend the land,	
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>768,438 Stoutfellows</b>		the seas, the air, and the ground below.	

<b>Total Land Area:</b>	<b>154,152 Sq. Miles</b>	Total population density:	4.98 people per Sq. Mile
	87% Wilderness	Price of Bread:	6 cp per 1 Lb. Loaf
	9% Borderlands	Price Inflation:	Low
	3% Settled/Suburban	Min. Wage:	3 to 4 sp per Month

### Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
<i>Denwarf-Hurgon</i>	30,000	8,000
<i>Drakon</i>	9,200	100
<i>Reykjadûm</i>	7,500	100
<i>Balnore</i>	3,500	206
<i>Beló</i>	4,500	100
<i>Bral</i>	4,200	100
<i>Torradûm</i>	2,800	100
<i>Kadâr</i>	3,200	100
<i>Heimdûr</i>	4,800	200
<i>Lg Villages 12</i>	9,350	120
<i>Sm. Villages 20</i>	8,450	200
<i>Fortified Gates 5</i>	2,000	7,000
<i>Fortresses 21</i>	25,600	14,000
<i>Towers 12</i>	1,800	960
<i>Kerother Temple</i>	500	187

### Mining Summary

<b>Number of Mines:</b>	<b>21</b>
	10,650 Hired Workers
	165 Administrators
	465 Guards
	45,120 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants
	<b>56,400 Total Mining Population</b>

### Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** *Fine Oils, Smelting, Tools, Dried Mushrooms, Furs, Leather Goods, Beeswax, Honey*

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** *Ceramic & Porcelain, Mechanical Devices, Jewelry, Weapons, Dwarven Breweries, Pipeweed, Halfling Ale*

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** *Armor, Banking,*

## Treasury of Stoutfellow

				Mo. Tax Averages	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	22,920 gp/month	11%		Farmer	0.4 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	16,525 gp/month	8%		Townfolk	1.3 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	115,200 gp/month	55%		Household	1.0 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	46,960 gp/month	22%		per Capita	2.6 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	9,211 gp/month	4%			
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>210,816 gp/month</b>	100%			
<i>Available Treasury:</i>	184,165 gp				

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	27,079 gp/month
Government & Politics	10,832 gp/month
Personal Prestige	10,832 gp/month
Treasury	27,079 gp/month
Military	21,663 gp/month

### Corruption Level:

*Unbelievable Integrity*

### Farming:

*Upper Stoutfellow may export food.  
Lower Stoutfellow is self-sufficient.*

## Leadership Rating

<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Order	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Regime	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Dominion's Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Military Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Civic/Religious Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Confidence Level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Thriving	

## LAND FORCES

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	3,575	1	Clerics	43	7
Guards	465	1	Earth Elementals	51	12
Heavy Infantry	832	2	-	-	-
Shortbowmen	-	-	-	-	-
Longbowmen	-	-	Ballista Artillerists	1,674	1
Mounted Archers	-	-	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	1,423	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	1,788	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	1,251	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	789	1	Trebuchet Artillerists	581	1
Light Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	-
Med. Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	-
Heavy Horsemen	-	-	War Machine Crew, Good	-	-
Camel Riders	-	-	War Machine Crew, Best	-	-
Elephant Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Pegasus Riders	-	-	-	-	-
Skinwing Riders	47	4	Auxiliaries:	1,120	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

### (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	6,107
Mules or Oxen:	9,161
Draft Horses:	1,245
Tents:	2,771
Camp Followers:	2,240

### Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	417
Lt Catapults:	236
Hvy Catapults:	155
Trebuchets:	47

### Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	-
Medium Warhorses:	-
Heavy Warhorses:	-
Riding Horses:	162
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	-
Skinwings:	47

### War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**13,639 HD**

(\*) Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.

## Posted in DENWARF-HURGON, Total Upper & Lower

**Total Strength:** 8,000 HD 91% Dwarves, 4% Halflings, 5% Gnomes

**Infantry:** 818 Lt. Infantry, 179 Hvy. Infantry,  
409 Lt. Crossbowmen, 179 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 11 Skinwing Riders

**Special Troops:** 7 Clerics, 8 Earth Elementals,

**Siege Weapons:** 1,105 Artillerists with 96 Ballistae, 54 Lt. Catapults  
35 Hvy. Catapults, 12 Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 284 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 800 soldiers

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 1526

Mules or Oxen: 2290

Draft Horses: 311

Tents: 692

Camp Followers: 569 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Denwarf-Hurgon Militia: 1,500 People or HD**

# Denwarf-Hurgon, Pillar of Alphatia

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



The final article on Stoutfellow includes the capital city's stats. I'll start with its surface district since the city stretches thousands of feet downward through a mighty stone pillar holding the cavern's vault far below the surface of the sea.

Although thought as a mighty city, the surface district in fact qualifies barely as a large town in D&D parlance, with only 5,000 inhabitants. The remainder, 25,000 hardy souls, dwell far below. The uninformed might think of the upper city, Denwarf (Rockborne) as a quaint provincial center lost among frozen peaks, just a few miles from the Aethkul Glacier. Prevailing winds, blowing from the northwest, bear fierce snowstorms in the winter,

which fill Denwarf's many cisterns. Visitors trek through two mountain trails to the southwest and southeast, which connect with two large valleys. They bear much of the daily supplies the city requires. Another trail leads east to Castle Bar-Gimric guarding the border. Last and treacherous, remains the path to the northwest, through the Aethkul to faraway Draco. Only the stoutest and the bravest ever come this way.

*Hurgon*, the lower city, is an entirely different affair. It includes many different levels carved out of the mountain before reaching the massive rock formation that supports the vault arching above the Denwarf-Hurgon cavern complex. Along the way, fortified passages control access up and down, including an elevator at the very center. City life centers upon huge forums and meeting halls for the proud and boisterous dwarves who dominate the lower levels. The city's layout can be confusing to outsiders and it is just as likely for a poorly-guided foreign dignitary to stumble upon public latrines as it is to make a solemn entrance into a hall of ceremonies or a mighty temple. Although much of the city lies within the giant stone pillar, additional structures were also carved on its outside surfaces. There, semi-circular towers surmounted with delicate spires overlook great battlements, bastions fitted with siege weapons, and narrow, serpentine streets winding through archways and jagged promontories.

Carved Brightstones light much of the inner structure, while residual deposits from the fabled mineral that coat the great stone vault radiate a pale, eerie glow revealing the cavern. Heavy fortifications and massive gates protect Hurgon's lower



**Painting by Jesse Van Dijk**

extremity which stands on a circular mesa surrounded by a cliff 300 feet high. Clusters of farms and hamlets dot the natural terrace and its thick blanket of moss, lichen, and fungal plantations feeding the city. Two branches of the ice-cold and crystalline Nad-Ithryl River circle round the plateau and rejoin to cascade through a northerly gallery filled with immense stalagmites. Two stone viaducts guarded with forbidding towers allow the passage of the Dragon Express through the plateau and Hurgon's lower level. It is rumored that the city extends deeper yet but if it is true, any details remain well hidden from outsiders and residents alike. Why it may exist and for what purpose stands as one of the many mysteries of Lower Stoutfellow.

The figure generated for the length of city walls is incorrect on the *City Summary*, since Lower Hurgon lies within the confines of a giant stone pillar nearly 16 miles across. The actual perimeter should be closer to 60 miles, plus any concentric fortifications on higher levels. In the end, there probably are several hundred miles of battlements and other strongholds spiraling along the city-pillar and up to the vault. Naturally, little of that is actually occupied but it may be used as fall-back positions or to address a threat at different depths. Such facilities took many centuries to build and clearly qualify as one of the world wonders of Mystara.

The same could be said about the square footage of the city because dwarves believe that nothing is worth building unless it comes with truly colossal proportions, gigantic monuments, and towering columns. Stoutfellows may be short legged but they sure think BIG! Added to this is the need for many huge stairwells, cavernous airshafts, water-retaining pools, and inner-cascades to refresh the citizens.

Not surprisingly for a militocracy, there are five warrior academies, two in Denwarf and three in Hurgon. The two on the surface concern mountain warfare, especially infantry and siege weaponry. The other three are about underground warfare. One is an infantry commander's academy, the second is for military engineering, and the last is for the fledgling elite air arm consisting of skinwing riders.



## Upper

# DENWARF-HURGON City Summary

5,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
1,000 Troops 4.2 sq. miles

*Buildings often are in excellent condition, with rare ruined or abandoned buildings. All streets are paved, free of refuse, and meticulously maintained. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

		% Random*				% Random	
Dwellings	Number	Encounter		Shops*	Number	Encounter	
Humble Hovels	70	1		Alchemists	-		
Shoddy Tenements	70	2-4		Apothecaries	1	1	
Cozy Cottage	119	5-6		Bakers	14	2-5	
Laborers' Commons	119	7-9		Barbers	12	6-9	
Bourgeois Dwelling	4	10		Bathers	2	10	
Manorhouse, Small Palace	7	11		Beer-Sellers	3	11	
Large Palace	1	12-19		Blacksmiths	11	12-14	
				Bleachers	2	15	
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>			Bookbinders	1	16	
Sordid Hostels	9	20		Booksellers	-		
Cheap Taverns	16	21		Buckle Makers	3	17	
Bawdy Houses	4	22		Butchers	10	18-20	
Reputable Inns	13	23		Cabinet Makers	11	21-23	
Exclusive Guest Houses	-			Carpenters	12	24-27	
				Chandlers	7	28-29	
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>			Chicken Butchers	12	30-33	
Paved public squares (semiweekly markets)	3	24-29		Coachmen, Porters	2	34	
Large guildhouses, wooden	2	30		Coopers	7	35-36	
				Copyists	2	37	
Workshops, Manufactures	4	31-38		Cutlers	2	38	
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	2	39		Fishmongers	-		
Warehouses, Granaries	4	40-55		Furriers	12	39-42	
No port facility				Glovmakers	2	43	
				Harness-Makers	2	44	
				Hatmakers	5	45-46	
				Hay Merchants	4	47	
				Healers	2	48	
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>			Illuminators	1	49	
Religious Hospitals	1	56		Jewelers	1	50	
Chapels & Temples	9	57		Locksmiths	2	51	
Abbeys & Monasteries	-			Magic-Shops	-		
Cathedrals	-			Masons	10	52-54	
Catacombs	9 Miles			Mercers	7	55-56	
Cemetary	Very Large	58-59		Money-Changers	1	57	
Mausoleums	1	60		Old-Clothes	12	58-61	
				Painters, Art	3	62	
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>			Pastrycooks	8	63-64	
Arenas, Stadium, and/or	1	61-62		Plasterers	3	65	
Jousting Fields				Pursemakers	4	66	
Theaters	-			Roofers	2	67	
City Library	-			Ropemakers	2	68	
				Rugmakers	2	69	
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>			Sages	1	70	
Basic Learning Centers	1	63		Saddlers	5	71-72	
University	-			Scabbardmakers	5	73-74	
School of Magic	-			Sculptors	2	75	
Military Academy	2	64		Shoemakers	33	76-82	
Naval Academy	-			Spice Merchants	3	83	
				Tailors	20	84-89	
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>			Tanners	2	90	
Citadel	1	65-80		Watercarriers	12	91-94	
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district				Weavers	8	95-96	
8 miles of massive walls, bastions, towers		81-96		Wine-Sellers	5	97-98	
				Woodcarvers	2	99	
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>			Woodsellers	2	100	
Gardens	-						
Large, wood-built town hall	1	97					
Large, wood-built Court House	1	98					
Large, reinforced-wood gaol	1	99					
Ruined or abandoned buildings		100					

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

**Lower**

# DENWARF-HURGON City Summary

25,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
7,000 Troops 9.5 sq. miles

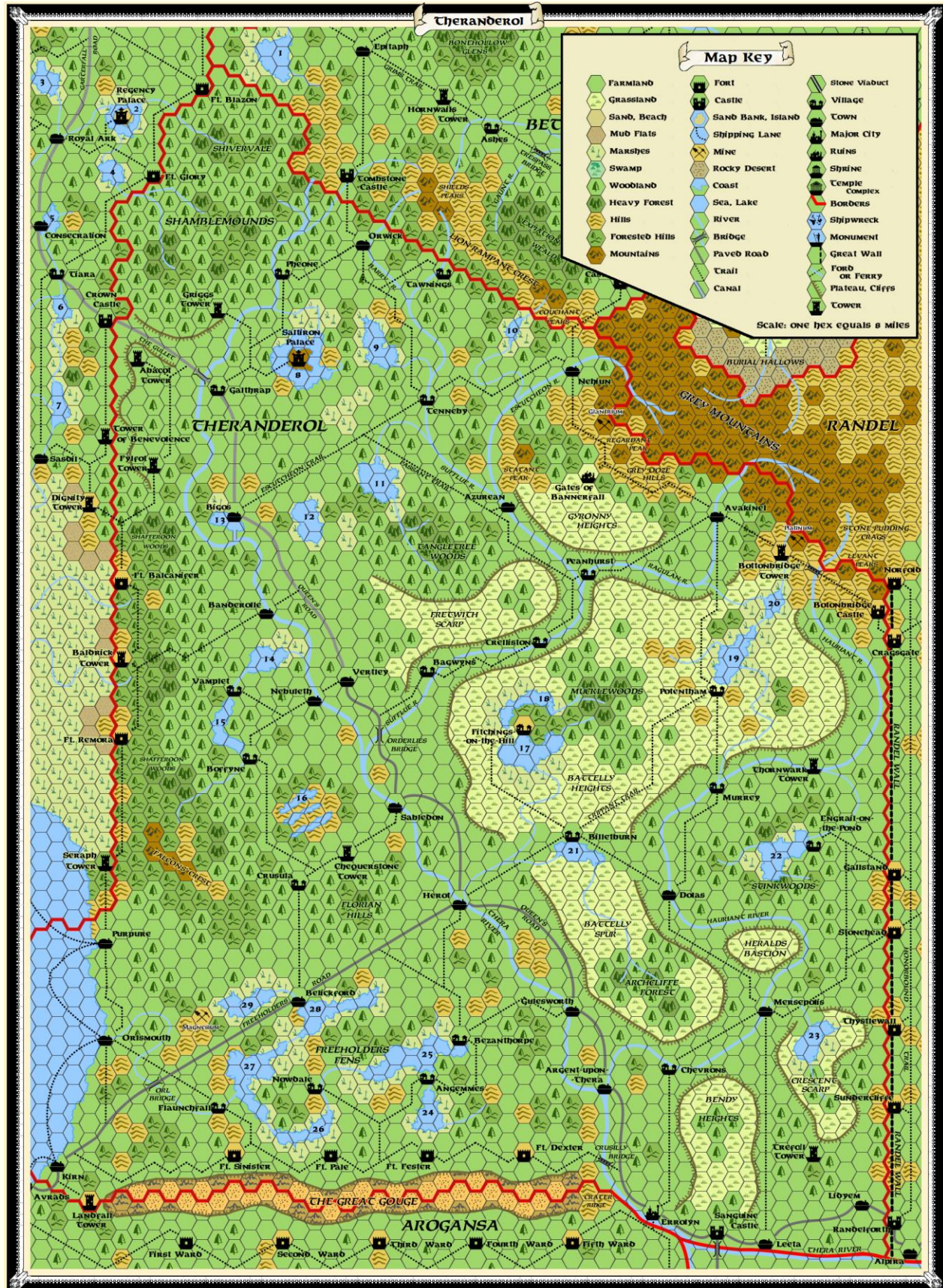
*Buildings often are in excellent condition, with rare ruined or abandoned buildings. All streets are paved, free of refuse, and meticulously maintained. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

	% Random*			% Random	
Dwellings	Number	Encounter	Shops*	Number	Encounter
Humble Hovels	205	1-2	Alchemists	3	1
Shoddy Tenements	461	3-9	Apothecaries	5	2
Cozy Cottage	276	10-11	Bakers	71	3-6
Laborers' Commons	620	12-18	Barbers	62	7-10
Bourgeois Dwelling	20	19	Bathers	13	11
Manorhouse, Small Palace	34	20-22	Beer-Sellers	17	12
Large Palace	1	23-25	Blacksmiths	55	13-15
			Bleachers	11	16
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	8	17
Sordid Hostels	51	26	Booksellers	3	18
Cheap Taverns	80	27	Buckle Makers	17	19
Bawdy Houses	20	28	Butchers	50	20-22
Reputable Inns	67	29	Cabinet Makers	55	23-25
Exclusive Guest Houses	-		Carpenters	62	26-29
			Chandlers	35	30-31
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	62	32-35
Paved public squares (daily markets)	4	30-32	Coachmen, Porters	13	36
Stone-built guildhouses	4	33	Coopers	35	37-38
			Copyists	12	39
Workshops, Manufactures	8	34-39	Cutlers	10	40
Beast- or Wind-powered Mills	3	40	Fishmongers	-	
Warehouses, Granaries	16	41-65	Furriers	60	41-43
No port facility			Glovemakers	10	44
			Harness-Makers	12	45
			Hatmakers	26	46-47
			Hay Merchants	20	48
			Healers	14	49
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Illuminators	6	50
Religious Hospitals	2	66	Jewelers	5	51
Chapels & Temples	54	67-68	Locksmiths	13	52
Abbeys & Monasteries	4	69	Magic-Shops	3	53
Cathedrals	2	70	Masons	50	54-56
Catacombs	None		Mercers	35	57-58
Cemetery	Huge	71	Money-Changers	8	59
Mausoleums	6	72	Old-Clothes	62	60-63
			Painters, Art	16	64
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Pastrycooks	41	65-66
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	73	Plasterers	17	67
Theaters	3	74	Pursemakers	22	68
City Library	-		Roofers	13	69
			Ropemakers	13	70
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Rugmakers	12	71
Basic Learning Centers	6	75	Sages	5	72
University	-		Saddlers	25	73
School of Magic	-		Scabbardmakers	29	74-75
Military Academy	3	76	Sculptors	12	76
Naval Academy	-		Shoemakers	166	77-82
			Spice Merchants	17	83
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Tailors	100	84-89
Citadel	1	77-82	Tanners	12	90
Troops reside in the citadel and in a military district			Watercarriers	62	91-94
12 miles of massive walls, bastions, towers		83-91	Weavers	41	95-96
			Wine-Sellers	27	97-98
			Woodcarvers	10	99
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Woodsellers	10	100
Large gardens	3	92-96			
Large, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97			
Large, stone-built Court House	1	98			
Large, stone-built, fortified prison or dungeon	1	99			
Ruined or abandoned buildings		100			

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

# The Alphatian Province of Theranderol

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



Kingdom of Theranderol - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex

Theranderol is a land of small secluded lakes and windswept plateaux. Some say that each is unique and veils a secret of its own. Although predominantly wizards, Theran aristocrats who inherited the realm from its founders fancy the romantic manner of knights and gallantry. Although they retained the original names of the largest and oldest towns, they renamed all others and most geographical features to better reflect their colorful inspirations and remind visitors of ancient heraldry. Although unable to equal the feats of true knights, Theran wizards adapted heraldry and enhanced it with magic to embody the skills of their families. One is never too sure what forces or creatures wizards might summon from their banners or enable household knights to do the same from their shields.

In the north, the Grey Mountains and the Lion Rampant Crest form a natural border with the exalted realm of Bettelyn. East stands the old Randel Wall. Foreigners believe this wall to be located within Theran borders, but nothing could be farther from the truth. The Randel Wall lies within. . . well, Randel! Ask this question over there and you'll get a dark look and a shrug of annoyance. The south belongs to Arogansa. Curiously, some centuries long past, a celestial body crashed and dug a two-hundred-mile-long gouge through the earth. Ever since, it became a nearly-impassable, pestilential border. One might wonder about the fortresses guarding its cliffs. There was a time, soon after the crash, when horrid creatures grew from the gouge's scorched soil and began raiding local villages. No one could explain it. In time, they were defeated, and died out. At least, it's the official version. Rumor has it, however, that these strange beings moved below ground to rebuild their forces. Judging from the soldiers still holding the forts and patrolling the edges of the Great Gouge, one might conclude the old affair was never wholly settled.

In the west stands Vertiloch, but you knew that, didn't you?

The list of names for Theranderol's lakes is provided below:

1. Prophetia Lake
2. Regency Lake
3. Lake Suzerain
4. Lake Paragon
5. Lake Celestia
6. Lake Temporia
7. Hegemony Lake
8. Lake Chalice
9. Basilisk Waters
10. Tarn of the Enfield
11. Lyzard Lake
12. Chancellor's Lake
13. Martletts Pond
14. Golden Badge Lake
15. Allegiance Lake
16. Immortal Claws
17. Yales Waters
18. Kingfisher Lake
19. Tyger Trough
20. Opinicus Lake
21. Lucy's Pond
22. Cameleopard Mist
23. Crapaudy Mudhole
24. Alphyn Spring
25. Amphisbæna Deep
26. Boreyne Mere
27. Trough of the Catoblepas
28. Calopus Pond
29. Parandrus Puddles

# Dominion Stats - Theranderol

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))

Theranderol is just about as “white-bread” as an Alphatian realm can be. It boasts lots of land, more than half of which is wilderness: a nice, gentle sort of wilderness where even monsters seem polite and quite well-fed. At least it’s what Errolyn’s upper crust believe. The land indeed looks idyllic and tidy, with its large plateaux of swaying grasslands, welcoming light forests dotting the countryside, and an abundance of rivers of all sizes and small lakes. On the other gauntlet, cohorts of paladins at the service of the realm never run short of work. The peaceful wilderness is charming, at least the pacified parts where smoldering carcasses of what ought not live there (from a paladin’s point of view) rest in piles away from sight. Paladins working with wizards can do wonders. It’s just that Theranderol is so darned big.



In short, it’s sparsely populated and mostly rural. It produces a good deal of grain and other foodstuffs exported nearly exclusively to neighboring Vertiloch. This explains why passage and port fees exacted from foreign vessels are so high. Merchant ships laden with grain aren’t exactly welcome since they compete with Thera agriculture. It is only thanks to an imperial order that Errolyn doesn’t altogether block unwanted traffic on its rivers.

Thera armed forces include a proportion of cavalry higher than most other realms, more than a thousand in total. They also rely upon a hundred and fifty mid-level spellcasters and paladins, all of whom with access to pegasus mounts. A third of Theranderol’s army is posted in Errolyn to face two possible threats. The capital sits on the border with Eadrin and Arogansa. Not that a war with either realms is expected anytime soon, it is best nonetheless to forestall any such temptation. Second but not least, the Great Gouge ends about thirty miles away.

Theranderol’s small navy dedicates itself to protecting its seaports and patrolling rivers. The two war galleys hail from the town of Kirn, along with two large galleys and another two smaller galleys. The two troops transports are used only if forces are urgently needed someplace else; one anchors in Errolyn, the other in Herot. The remainder patrol the Thera and Hauriant Rivers up to Bigos and Dolas. Only barges and river boats go beyond or up the Sufflue River to either Avakinel or Nehiun. The crossings at Crusilly and Sanguine are fitted with drawbridges allowing warships and merchant vessels to get through.

# The Land and People of Theranderol

Rural Population: 1,259,409 farmers 88.6% 62,970 armed peasants and 7,291  
 Urban Population: 145,810 townsfolk 10.3% town militias can be levied temporarily to  
 Military: 16,735 warriors (HD) 1.2% -----> help the standing army defend the land,  
**Total Population: 1,421,954 Therans** the seas, the air, and the underworld.

**Total Land Area: 116,562 Sq. Miles** Total population density: 12.20 people per Sq. Mile  
 63% Wilderness Price of Bread: 8 cp per 10 Lb. Loaf  
 24% Borderlands Price Inflation: Low  
 13% Settled/Suburban Min. Wage: 5.1 sp per Month

## Urban Areas and Military Centers

	Civilians	Military
<i>Errollyn</i>	30,000	5,000
<i>Herot</i>	9,800	250
<i>Kim</i>	9,200	2,000
<i>Nehiun</i>	8,600	2,000
<i>Leeta</i>	8,000	250
<i>Lydiem</i>	7,400	875
<i>Mesepolis</i>	6,800	750
<i>Dolas</i>	6,200	750
<i>Avakinel</i>	5,600	1,750
<i>Small Towns (11)</i>	38,500	1,100
<i>Villages (20)</i>	12,000	200
-	-	-
<i>Saltiron Palace</i>	150	30
-	-	-
<i>Botonbridge Castle</i>	1,000	500
<i>Sanguine Castle</i>	1,000	500
<i>Forts (6)</i>	1,200	600
<i>Towers (9)</i>	360	180
-	-	-

## Mining Summary

**Number of Mines: 3**  
 120 Convicts or Slaves  
 7 Administrators  
 25 Guards  
 128 Relatives, Peddlers, Servants  
**280 Total Mining Population**

## Industries Summary

**Basic Industries:** *Fine Beverages, Food Delicacies, Livestock, Tanneries, Tools, Heraldic Notaries*

**Mid-Lvl Industries:** *Ceramic & Porcelain, Perfumes, War Horses, Weapons, Minor Heraldic Magic*

**Hi-Lvl Industries:** *Armor, Merchant Fair, Spells, Major Heraldic Magic*

# Treasury of Theranderol

				<b>Mo. Tax Averages</b>	
Total Tax Income from Rural Areas	116,703	gp/month	50.6%	Farmer	0.9 sp
Total Tax Income from Urban Areas	51,875	gp/month	22.5%	Townsfolk	3.6 sp
Total Revenues from Mining	1,620	gp/month	0.7%	Household	2.4 sp
Total Revenues from Trade	31,800	gp/month	13.8%	per Capita	1.6 sp
Total Revenues from Tolls and Duties	28,781	gp/month	12.5%		
<b>Total Dominion Income</b>	<b>230,778</b>	<b>gp/month</b>	<b>100%</b>		
<i>Available Treasury:</i>	78,742	gp			

## Fiscal Strategy

Construction & Upkeep	26,247	gp/month
Government & Politics	26,247	gp/month
Personal Prestige	26,247	gp/month
Treasury	26,247	gp/month
Military	26,247	gp/month

## Corruption Level:

*Occasional Venality*

## Farming:

*Theranderol may export food.*

## Leadership Rating

*Poor*  
 *Acceptable*  
 *Ideal*

**Popularity**   
**Charity**   
**Administration**   
**Order**   
**Dominion's Prestige**   
**Civic/Religious Prestige**   
**Confidence Level**

**Justice**   
**Prosperity**   
**Technology**   
**Fiscal Regime**   
**Military Prestige**

Healthy

# Land Forces

Troop Type	Number	Level	Troop Type	Number	Level
Light Infantry	1,427	1	Spellcasters	54	5
Guards (mines)	25	1	Paladins	99	7
Heavy Infantry	387	2	Pegasi	174	2
Shortbowmen	-		-	-	
Longbowmen	-				
Mounted Archers	-		Ballista Artillerists	714	1
Lt. Crossbowmen	714	1	Lt. Catapult Artillerists	356	1
Hvy. Crossbowmen	356	1	Hvy. Catapult Artillerists	327	1
			Trebuchet Artillerists	-	
Light Horsemen	691	1			
Med. Horsemen	232	2	War Machine Crew, Poor	-	
Heavy Horsemen	106	3	War Machine Crew, Fair	-	
Camel Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Good	-	
Elephant Riders	-		War Machine Crew, Best	-	
Pegasus Riders	-				
Wyvern Riders	-		Auxiliaries:	533	1

*Auxiliaries include: knights' esquires and valets, animal handlers, cooks, sappers, carpenters, masons, menial workers, etc.*

## (Entire) Baggage Train

Large Wagons:	1,855
Mules or Oxen:	2,783
Draft Horses:	317
Tents:	1,491
Camp Followers:	1,066

## Siege Equipment

Ballistae:	178
Lt Catapults:	59
Hvy Catapults:	40
Trebuchets:	-

(\*) *Elephant team: 1 handler w/sword + 1 spearman + 1 archer.*

## Mounts:

Light Warhorses:	898
Medium Warhorses:	302
Heavy Warhorses:	138
Riding Horses:	1,466
Camels:	-
Elephants*:	-
Pegasi:	174
Wyverns:	-

## War Machines:

Poor:	-
Fair:	-
Good:	-
Best:	-

**Total Standing Army**  
**6,195 HD**

## Naval Forces

Total Fleet Size: 19

Ship Types	Number	Sailors	Rowers	Officers	Marines	Level
Small Galley	11	110	660	33	220	1
Large Galley	4	80	720	16	200	1
War Galley	2	60	600	10	150	3
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Troop Transport	2	60	--	10	100	3

Listed Levels apply to **Marines** only. **Officers** are ranked individually.

Rowers and sailors are Level 1. Rowers are not counted among military.

**Total Navy: 980 Seamen HD** Seamen on Shore Leave: 26

**3 Airships, No Submersibles, 16 Surface Ships** Average Hull Points: 112

## Posted in Errolyn

83% Human 10% Halflings

Total Strength: 5,000 HD 3% Dwarves 2% Elves

**Infantry:** 398 Lt. Infantry, 108 Hvy. Infantry,  
199 Lt. Crossbowmen, 99 Hvy Crossbowmen,

**Cavalry:** 193 Lt. Cavalry, 65 Med. Cavalry, 30 Hvy. Cavalry,

**Special Troops:** 15 Spellcasters, 28 Paladins,  
49 Pegasi,

**Siege Weapons:** 389 Artillerists with 50 Ballistae, 17 Lt. Catapults  
12 Hvy. Catapults, No Trebuchets

**War Machines:**

**Auxiliaries:** 159 civilian horse handlers, esquires, sappers, or other laborers

**Sick, Hurt, or Furloughed:** 500 soldiers and seamen

**At Port or at Sea:** 99 Sailors, 198 Marines (and 594 rower convicts)  
7 Small Galley 2 Large Galley

**Assigned Ships**  
1 Troop Transport

**Baggage Train, when leaving the garrison**

Wagons: 555

Mules or Oxen: 832

Draft Horses: 95

Tents: 446

Camp Followers: 319 (incl. some families, merchants, harlots, and/or soothsayers, etc)

**Errolyn Militia: 1,500 People or HD**



# Errolyn - City of Knightly Romance

by **Bruce Heard** ([click here for the original blog post](#))



**Errolyn & Vicinity - Map Scale: 8 miles per hex**

If there is such a place that honors the quaint ways of knighthood in Alphatia, Errolyn clinches the title. With the name itself harking back to a beloved thespian notorious for his swashbuckling style and debonaire swagger, one may think all Errols behave in such a way. Most do. It would be bad enough if wizards and all others clearly not of the knightly sort wouldn't also adopt the same mannerisms. There isn't a street, alley, or city square where a dashing suitor doesn't attempt to woo a love interest peering down from a balcony or from behind her bedchamber's window. All too often, string instruments screech painfully, would-be manly voices falter, and tossed roses miss their marks, landing on a nearby donkey's head or in a pile of manure. Nonetheless, suitors of all ilk do put their hearts into courtship. There are many who are blessed with the gift of charm and heroics, and they make it all better, somehow. Flair and daring can earn you quite a lot in Errolyn. It is nothing of substance, yet it seems to be all that matters.

Theranderol's capital isn't a very large city compared to Sundsvall or Aasla, yet it exudes panache and unique personality. Although bold, its architecture pays homage to elegance, offering many a sight for poets to find inspiration. One such a place is Thera's Falls; a portion of the mighty river flows through canals converging to the city's center where its waters thunder down a waterfall. Thera's remainder circumvents the outer walls through series of locks allowing traffic upriver. White marble buildings and great statues abound, telling the stories of the heroes of old who carved from dark and savage lands the empire that is now Alphatia.

Although citizens of an Alphatian magocracy, knights enjoy a special status, especially those in good standing and with great charisma. Ultimately, local laws favor wizardkind, yet they provide constructive alternatives for those knights who somehow stray from the establishment. Even more so, mages keenly see after their own household knights with a jealous sense of competition that one might find among horse owners. "My knight is better than yours," is the sense one gets when dealing with Theran aristocracy. A nobleman without a decent household is a pitiful thing. Having no knights at all glares as an infamy. Worse yet, a knight without a

household remains even more unthinkable and would attract the immediate interest of nobility competing fiercely to acquire the new treasured prize. Bidding can be fabulous, alas freedom never defines the final outcome. Aristocrats rarely trade knights amongst themselves, as a matter of common courtesy and principle. Chivalry orders do exist in Theranderol, however, one may only join with permission of the wizardly liege. Aristocrats never entirely let go of their precious knights, regardless of how well-founded or prestigious an order may be. Lesser wizards may be hired and sent along to act as companions and assist household knights in any way they may. It is one of the rare occasions in Alphatia where mages might serve knights.

## ERROLYN City Summary

30,000 Civilian Inhabitants  
5,000 Troops 12.2 sq. miles

*Buildings often are inadequately maintained, still some ruined or abandoned buildings. Most important streets are paved. A few streets are magically lit at night.*

	Number	% Random* Encounter	Shops* Number	% Random Encounter
<b>Dwellings</b>				
Humble Hovels	264	1	Alchemists	4 1
Shoddy Tenements	594	2-4	Apothecaries	6 2
Cozy Cottages	283	5	Bakers	85 3-6
Laborers' Commons	637	6-11	Barbers	75 7-9
Bourgeois Dwelling	170	12-13	Bathers	15 10
Manorhouse, Small Palace	42	14-15	Beer-Sellers	21 11
Large Palace	1	16-17	Blacksmiths	66 12-14
			Bleachers	14 15
<b>Other Accomodations</b>	<b>Number</b>		Bookbinders	10 16
Sordid Hostels	66	18	Booksellers	4 17
Cheap Taverns	91	19	Buckle Makers	21 18
Bawdy Houses	23	20	Butchers	60 19-21
Reputable Inns	69	21	Cabinet Makers	66 22-24
Exclusive Guest Houses	1	22	Carpenters	75 25-27
			Chandlers	42 28-29
<b>Large Businesses</b>	<b>Number</b>		Chicken Butchers	75 30-32
Paved public squares; daily markets	4	23-24	Coachmen, Porters	16 33
Stone-built guildhouses	4	25	Coopers	42 34-35
			Copyists	15 36
Workshops, Manufactures	8	26-29	Cutlers	13 37
Water-powered Mills	3	30	Fishmongers	75 38-40
Warehouses, Granaries	48	31-75	Furriers	73 41-43
Large Port, with Spacious Stone Docks	110 acres	76-79	Glovesmakers	12 44
			Harness-Makers	15 45
<b>Religious Establishm.</b>	<b>Number</b>		Hatmakers	31 46
Religious Hospitals	3	80	Hay Merchants	25 47
Chapels & Temples	72	81	Healers	17 48
Abbeys & Monasteries	6	82	Illuminators	7 49
Cathedrals	3	83	Jewelers	6 50
Catacombs	9 Miles of Galleries		Locksmiths	15 51
Cemetery	Huge	84	Magic-Shops	4 52
Mausoleums	9	85	Masons	60 53-55
			Mercers	42 56-57
<b>Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>	<b>Number</b>		Money-Changers	10 58
Arenas, Stadium, and/or Jousting Fields	1	86	Old-Clothes	75 59-61
Theaters	2	87	Painters, Art	20 62
City Library	-		Pastrycooks	50 63-64
			Plasterers	21 65
<b>Education &amp; Research</b>	<b>Number</b>		Pursemakers	27 66
Basic Learning Centers	8	88	Roofers	16 67
University	-		Ropemakers	15 68
School of Magic	-		Rugmakers	15 69
Military Academy	-		Sages	6 70
Naval Academy	-		Saddlers	30 71
			Scabbardmakers	35 72-73
<b>Military</b>	<b>Number</b>		Sculptors	15 74
Citadel	-		Shoemakers	200 75-84
Troops reside in a military district			Spice Merchants	21 85
			Tailors	120 86-90
14 miles of stone walls		89-95	Tanners	15 91
			Watercarriers	75 92-94
<b>Other Municipal Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>		Weavers	50 95-96
Small gardens	2	96	Wine-Sellers	33 97-98
Large, stone-built town hall with belfry	1	97	Woodcarvers	12 99
Large, stone-built Court House	1	98	Woodsellers	12 100
Large, stone-built, bastion & prison tower with multi-level dungeon	1	99		
Ruined or abandoned building		100		

*(\*) (\*\*) Shops occupy laborers' commons or shoddy tenements at street level. Owners live on the upper floors if any. Random Encounters for buildings take into account both their numbers and relative sizes.*

VAULTS OF PANDIUS

# GAZETTEER

UNOFFICIAL GAME ACCESSORY

## The Kingdoms of Alphatia

The island of Alphatia is the home of an empire of wizards consisting of over a dozen kingdoms. While each bends their knee to the imperial capital, they also have their own distinct interests, faiths, and laws. These differences have lead to frictions which simmer below the surface, waiting for the right opportunity (or adventuring party) to help them erupt.

Others also settled the island long before the wizards arrived. Each band of humans, humanoids, and monsters have left their own mark on the kingdoms they now find themselves living within. Some have become contributing members while others stir up horrors best left forgotten.

Inside these pages you will find historical details, new spells, game playing ideas, and new rules for expanding game play that can breathe new life into any campaign.

# MYSTARA