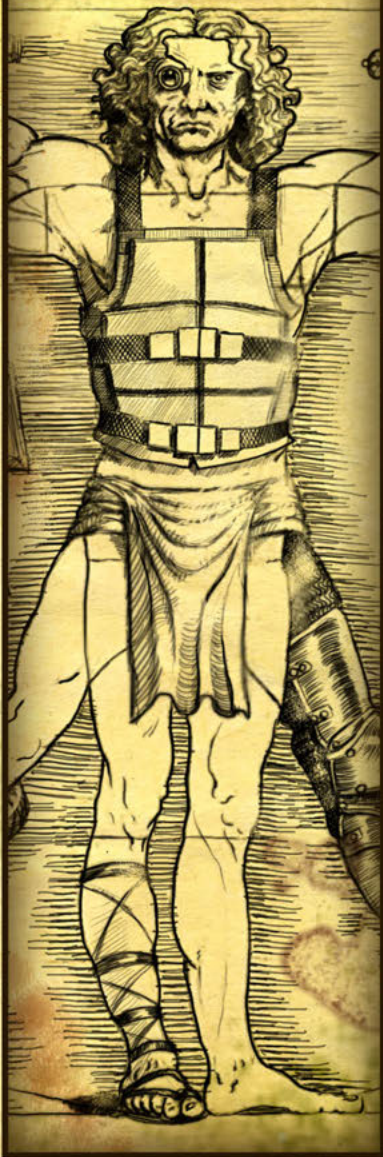


BASIC ROLEPLAYING

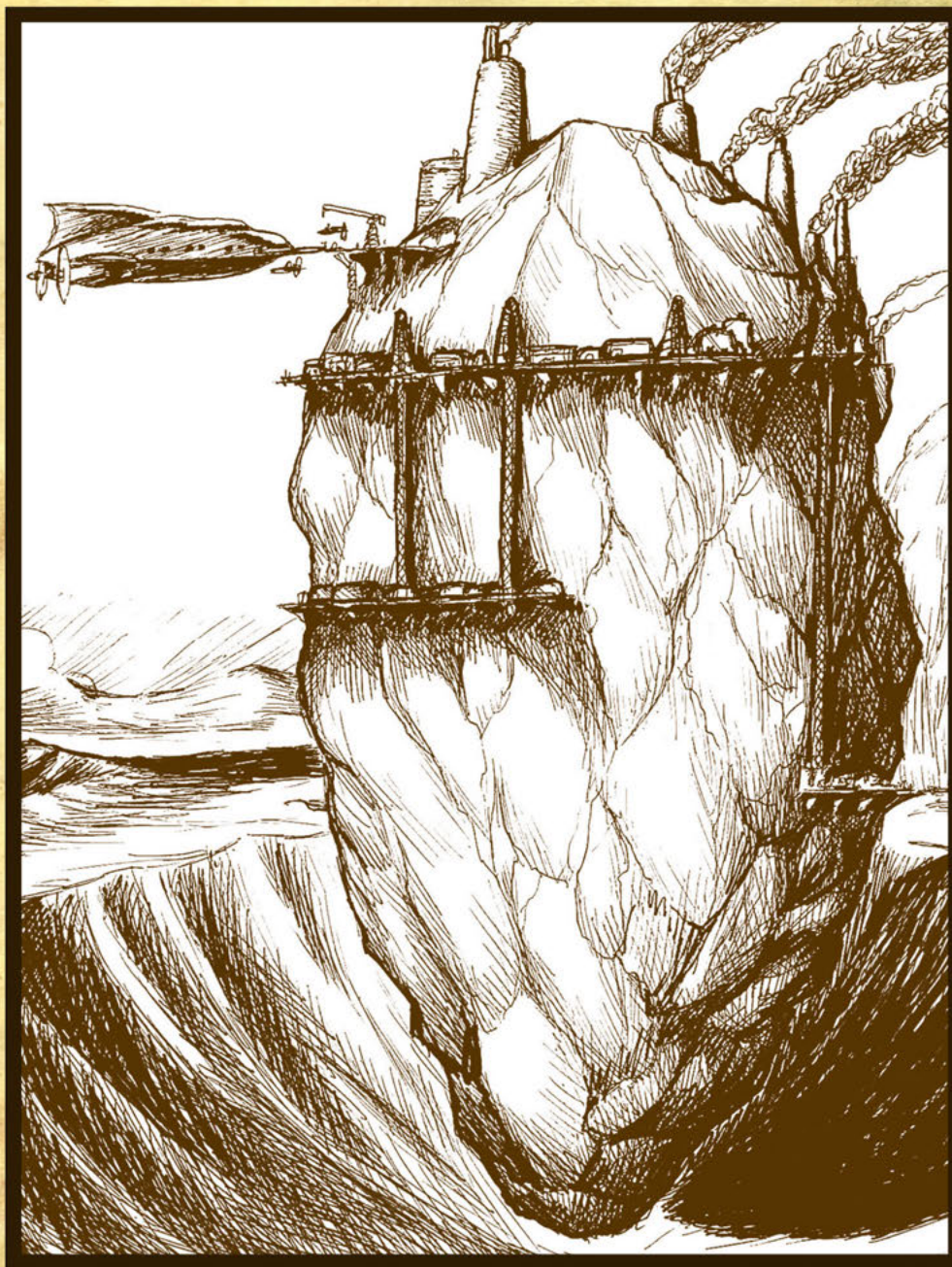
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MONOGRAPH

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SWORDS OF CYDORIA



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A Setting and Adventure
for *Basic Roleplaying*



SWORDS OF CYDORIA

A SETTING AND ADVENTURE FOR BASIC ROLE-PLAYING

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTIAN CONKLE

PROOFREAD AND EDITED BY CHRISTA CLONINGER

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Swords of Cydoria*, a setting for **Basic Role-playing**. *Swords of Cydoria* is set on the fantasy world of Uruta. Whether Uruta is our own Earth in the far future, a mirror of Earth in a parallel universe, or a strangely-familiar alien world on the far side of the galaxy is unclear. Uruta is a savage barbaric world of flashing swords, mutant beasts, daring heroes, diabolical cults, ancient ruins, mysterious forces, and powerful artifacts. Against this backdrop of swords and sorcery is told a story of contact with alien worlds, the introduction of science-fiction technology, and the struggle for freedom against oppression.

Swords of Cydoria offers many opportunities for intrigue and adventure. Using the rules presented for this setting, players may create brooding barbarians, dashing adventurers, desperate freedom fighters, cunning aero-ship pilots, and much more.

SETTING

Swords of Cydoria takes place on the continent of Markania on the mysterious world known as Uruta.

The continent of Markania is a land of extremes, with frigid tundra covering the northern third, poisonous jungles and swamps blanketing the southern third. The middle is characterized by regions of exploding volcanoes, baking deserts, vast plains, inland gulfs, towering peaks, floating mountains, and dense forests. The deserts are home to ravenous sand squid and giant wasps. Dragonflies the size of horses dart over the dark jungles of deadly plants and poisonous miasma. Massive four-armed mutant apes

occupy cliff-side caves overlooking a fetid swamp. Monstrous saurians haunt the ancient ruins of lost cities deep in the vine-choked forests.

Civilization is centered in the city-states of Cydoria, most of which are ruled by the Vrildarian Empire. The Empire conquered the city-states twelve years ago using advanced technology supplied by the Rhakadian League, aliens from the planet Malus.

During the War of Unification, the Empire was opposed by the Coalition of Timan, an alliance equipped with advanced technology of their own supplied by the Phanosian Alliance, enemies of the Rhakadians. The Coalition was eventually abandoned by their Phanosian allies and ultimately lost the war. Afterwards, the cities of the Coalition were occupied and its population enslaved. Many Coalition prisoners were shipped to prison camps in the deserts of Arus.

Life for the civilized people of Cydoria is roughly equivalent to that of ancient Rome or China, with areas of relative technical sophistication in cities such as Norukar. Barbarians, of course, live a much more primitive existence. People wield swords and wear armor of leather and steel. They tame strange animals as mounts and food. In recent years, contact with aliens has introduced sorcerous wonders such as electric lights and motors, broadcast power, energy weapons, and motorized vehicles.

The Vrildarian Empire maintains power over the empire through its monopoly on access to alien technology. Such wonders are available only to a select few members of the nobility and the punishment for unauthorized use of technology is severe. The sentence for carrying or using a laser pistol, for example, is the amputation of a hand. Despite this, smugglers from other worlds are able to slip past the Rhakadian orbital blockade and gain entry through the Oudh, the magical force field that protects Uruta from alien invasion, to sell their wares on the black market.

The invention of the aero-ship, flying vehicles powered by propeller-driven engines, has opened up the Markanian interior for colonization and settlement. Cydorian pioneers and refugees from the War of Unification have streamed west to establish a new life on the frontier.

Into this land stride mighty adventurers, be they resolute soldiers of the Demetrian resistance, cunning members of the crew of the Tonbo, crafty artifact hunters exploring an ancient ruin, mystical warriors of the Adhara, deadly assassins of the Katari, devious rogues of the Hidden Hand, notorious sky-pirates of the Dazumi, or simple townsfolk on the Markanian frontier. They fight for freedom, riches, and fame against the tyranny of those who would oppress them.

PREMISE

For all role-playing game settings, the question must be asked: "What do the player characters do?" Like most settings, *Swords of Cydoria* assumes the player characters are a group of adventurers that have banded together for a common purpose. That purpose is defined by the premise. The premise sets expectations for the players and provides a frame-work for character generation and story-telling. *Swords of Cydoria* provides the following six ready-to-play premises, each telling a different type of story. Gamemasters and players should choose a premise that interests them or create a new one.

ARTIFACT HUNTERS

The continent of Markania has seen a succession of technically advanced cultures rise and fall across the millennia. These ancient cultures left behind ruined cities filled with valuable and sometimes useful artifacts of technology so advanced it may as well be magic. These ruined cities are also home to many dangers. From mutated teraxes and psychic ghosts to toxic environments and deadly traps, many obstacles stand between the intrepid artifact hunters and the promise of untold riches.

The player characters are adventurers, explorers, treasure-hunters, and scholars seeking out the lost ruins of forgotten cultures for gold and artifacts. If the giant mutant slugs don't kill them, the tribe of feral orixes that call the ruins home will.

FLIGHT OF THE TONBO

The Tonbo is an aging aero-freighter with a crew of six. It is held together with wire, glue, and love. The crew is a rag-tag assortment of wastrels from across the continent. The captain is an honest man, a Demetrian veteran of the War of Unification with no home or family other than his ship and his crew. Though he is sometimes willing to compromise his honesty to keep his crew safe and his aero-ship flying, he is never willing to compromise on his integrity.

The player characters are the crew of the Tonbo, travelling from city to settlement across the continent. They earn money making deliveries and through speculative trade but, when that's not enough to cover their expenses, they have been known to take any work that comes their way, regardless of safety or legality.

THE GREAT GAME OF CYDORIA

The noble houses of the Cydorian city-states play a constant game of intrigue and betrayal as they vie for power and influence. These nobles have many tools at their disposal. Spies, assassins, thugs, seers, diplomats, and seducers all have their parts to play in the great game. The player characters create actors in the great game, taking orders from a noble, often indirectly and usually anonymously. The missions they will undertake sometimes require discretion and sometimes require direct action and always demand a hefty reward.

THE HERESY OF INVENTION

The Vrildarian Empire is justly afraid that if they lose their monopoly on advanced alien technology, the source of their political power could be threatened. Therefore, it is strictly forbidden to own, operate, or maintain any piece of off-world technology. Techno-heretics brave this prohibition. The techno-heretics are inventors, mechanics, and technicians that work outside the semi-religious rules imposed by the Octavium. They work in hiding, either in secret laboratories or as itinerant merchants, disassembling and reassembling advanced devices to learn their secrets. The player characters are members of a secret entourage serving and protecting one or more techno-heretics. Riches await those wily enough to avoid the Imperial inquisitors; a public hanging awaits those who are not.

REMEMBER DEMETRIA

The Vrildarian Empire has conquered all of the city-states of Cydoria and, as a demonstration of their power, has completely obliterated the kingdom of Demetria. The renegade Baron Urik of Demetria has established an underground resistance to the Imperial occupation with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the Empire once and forever. Join the rebellion and fight for independence and freedom. The player characters are members of a resistance cell. Their goals are to carry out the directives of the resistance and strike a blow against Imperial rule, all while keeping their activities a secret from the Imperial inquisitors.

SAVAGE FRONTIER

In recent decades, the vast plains, treacherous mountain ranges, and baking deserts of central and western Markania have been colonized by settlers from the east. These settlers range from pioneers seeking to tame the savage land to refugees from the War of Unification to exiled prisoners released from the Arusian prison-camps. These remote settlements face threats from barbarian hordes, mutant monsters, lawless bandits, and corruption from within and without. It takes a special breed of hero to step up and defend these settlers, to make a stand and do the right thing. The situation also presents a rare opportunity for those willing to make a profit, legally or otherwise. The player characters can choose to be heroes protecting the settlement from evil, mercenaries just looking to turn a coin, or bandits avoiding the hangman's noose.

GLOSSARY

Aero-Ship: Ships that fly through the air using the anti-gravity properties of zephyrium.

Arus: A desert territory in southwest Markania. The Empire exiles its prisoners to Arusian prison camps.

Awa: The plains of northern Markania, inhabited by nomadic barbarians that ride large deer known as geruk.

Aya: A disembodied entity of pure energy, often equated with ghosts, demons, and djinn by the people of Cydoria.

Baadria: The northeastern peninsula of the Markanian continent.

Bansya: A kingdom located northwest Markania, forged by the axe of a fearsome warlord.

Biomancer: A practitioner of the forbidden dark arts of Zorin, a master of bioengineering, transformation, and mutation.

Brotherhood of Lightning: A new guild formed by imperial edict that specializes in the alien sorcery of electricity and electronics.

Brux: A type of xoog bred for labor, exemplifying strength, endurance, and docility.

City-States of Cydoria: Ten (formerly eleven) prominent cities, each a unique kingdom with its own history and culture, located on the eastern coast of Markania. The City-States, with the exception of Nrolis, are currently ruled by the Vrildarian Empire. The City-States include Fornaxia, Kaidan, Guerna, Mancea, Norukar, Nrolis, Ramanam, Tyrannis, Vrildar, and Zinj.

Capridian: Goat-men of the northern plateau of Capridia renowned for their philosophy and discourse.

Coalition of Timan: An alliance of city-states that opposed the imperial ambitions of the Vrildarian Empire during the War of Unification. The Coalition consisted of Demetria, Fornaxia, Ramanam, and Kaidan.

Cydoria: the southeastern peninsula of the continent of Markania.

Daka: Xenophobic reptilian humanoids from southwestern Markania.

Dazumi Sky-Pirates: a notorious band of sky-pirates that prey on aero-ships travelling across the Sea of Rakar. They are led by the mysterious masked pirate queen, the Shadowfox.

Demetria: The fertile country-side surrounding Talen, conquered and enslaved by the Vrildarian Empire. Many Demetrian refugees can be found across Cydoria and Markania.

Demetrian Resistance: A guerilla force created after the War of Unification to conduct sabotage and harass the occupation forces of the Vrildarian Empire.

Deru: subterranean mole-men who rule an underground kingdom in northeastern Markania.

Dadanians: Impossibly tall aliens from the planet Dadan with long thin spider-like limbs. They must wear anti-gravity harnesses and powered exo-armor when visiting Uruta.

Floating Mountains: Massive hovering stone monoliths, most floating mountains can be found trapped inside deep craters in the regions known as Magatama and Luzun.

Fornaxia: A wintry northern city-state known for its haughty maritime explorers.

Gatan: Fierce barbarian warrior-women of the savanna of south-central Markania.

Guardians of Adhara: An ancient order of warrior-monks who use the powers of Ta'oudh to fight injustice and defend the weak.

Guerna: A forbidding citadel ruled by a military government. Every citizen, from the highest general to the lowest farmer, is a member of the army in some capacity.

Hidden Hand, the: A secretive organization of criminals and assassins found throughout Cydoria.

Jinx: A type of xoog bred for intelligence and ingenuity.

Kaidan and Mancea: Sleepy tropical city-states located on the islands of Saibra and Meruta off the southern tip of Cydoria, collectively referred to as the Iotian Islands.

Kallo: A remote exotic kingdom in the dense jungles of southern Markania, home to snake-worshipping religious fanatics who consider body mutilation and public torture as a form of art.

Katari, the: A secret order of stealthy assassins.

Knorr: Vicious man-eating quilled dog-men that hunt the plains and deserts of western Markania.

Korulans: A sea-faring barbarian tribe that inhabit the forests of southeast Cydoria.

Loracz: A race of man-eating cave-dwelling insectoids that inhabit the Loka Loka mountains.

Malusians: Aliens from the planet Malus. Malusians are tall and thin with pale skin. They are unused to the heavy gravity and bright light of Uruta and must wear exoskeletons when visiting that world. Malus is home to the Rhakadian League.

Markania: A continent on the world of Uruta.

Nazarians: An ancient civilization that fell to the master Zorin. Many Nazarian ruins can be found throughout Markania.

Norukar: A mechanized metropolis built on the remains of an ancient subterranean city, renowned for its sophisticated technology and soaring towers, home to astounding feats of mechanical engineering and architecture created by the Octavium.

Nrolis: The undersea dome-city of the Quorians.

Octavium, the: A semi-religious secret society of monks, composed of eight original guilds plus the new Brotherhood of Lightning, that dominate Cydorian industry and construction.

Oculus, the: A cabal of mercenaries who practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh.

Orix: A type of xoog bred for war, known for their ferocity and prowess.

Ossia: Rocky, mountainous land on the western shore of the Sea of Rakar inhabited by bear-worshipping primitives.

Otar: A mountainous desert region in western Markania inhabited by mysterious barbarians known for their domestication of giant wasp mounts.

Oudh, the: An energy field that protects Uruta from alien invasion. The Guardians of Adhara, the Oculus, Katari assassins, and other groups channel and shape the power of the Oudh to perform super-human feats and abilities.

Phanosians: Aliens from the planet Phanos. Phanosians are identical to humans. Phanos is home to the Phanosian Alliance.

Phanosian Alliance, the: A benevolent government from the planet Phanos, enemies of the Rhakadian League. The Phanosian Alliance supplied advanced weapons to the Coalition of Timan during the War of Unification. Today, they smuggle weapons to the Demetrian Resistance and conduct a war of espionage and sabotage using spies and secret agents.

Psi-Mage: A practitioner of the ancient occult art known as the psi-magic.

Psi-Magic: A school of magic that emphasizes the mastery of psychic abilities and communing with ancient Aya spirits.

Quorians: Amphibious intelligent cephalopoids that inhabit the oceans, rivers, and swamps of Uruta. The Quorians of Nrolis are technologically advanced.

Ragana: The Daka kingdom located on the banks of a fertile river plain in southwestern Markania.

Ramanam: A city-state built on giant stone pylons in the middle of a river on the edge of a dangerous jungle. The city is home to a large population of war refugees from Demetria.

Rhakadian League: An alien empire from the planet Malus, allies to the Vrildarian Empire. They supply the Empire with advanced weapons and technology in exchange for safe passage through the Oudh and access to Uruta's mineral wealth.

Roatin: Giant intelligent birds that inhabit the floating mountains of northern Markania.

Roshu: A race of intelligent rodents the size of large dogs that inhabit the ancient under-city of Norukar.

Samiria: A cold forest region of northern Markania populated by a tribe of barbarians known for their domestication of the giant wooly munglor.

Sdara Vatra: Ancient gods from space that created all life on Uruta. The Sdara Vatra were cast out of the heavens by their servants, the Aya, and became mortal, over time evolving into the ancestors of modern humanity.

Talen: Former capital of the kingdom of Demetria. Talen was once a center of education and culture rivaling Vrildar. The city was completely destroyed by a weapon of unimaginable power at the end of the War of Unification.

Ta'oudh: The mystical art of channeling the Oudh to perform superhuman feats.

Techno-Heretic: A renegade inventor, mechanic, and technician working outside the rules imposed by the semi-religious guilds of the Octavium.

Terax: monstrous abominations created in ancient times by the master Zorin.

Thorium: A radioactive element used to generate power. Thorium is in high demand by the Rhakadians.

Tyrannis: A dark, twisted city of decadence, mutation, slavery, and torture situated on a rocky promontory overlooking a fetid marsh inhabited by grotesque swamp-apes.

Vrildar: The greatest city in Cydoria, it prides itself as the center of art, culture, science, and learning, home to the University of Vrildar, and capital of the Vrildarian Empire.

Vrildarian Empire: The empire that rules the city-states of the Cydorian peninsula. The current sovereign is King Viktor, son of Varinor.

War of Unification, the: The most recent major war, during which the Vrildarians defeated the Coalition of Timan and conquered all the City-States of Cydoria, excluding Nrolis, using advanced weaponry supplied by the Rhakadian League. The war ended twelve years ago.

Xoogs: The collective name for the three slave races created by the ancient Nazarian master Zorin—the bruxes, the jinxes, and the orixes.

Zephyrium: Also known as “sky-crystals”, are an exotic alien element with properties that defy gravity. Zephyrium is prized by the Rhakadian League and is used to provide lift in aero-ships.

Zinj: A city-state of thieves, assassins, and merchants and birthplace of the aero-ship. Any item can be purchased and any service rendered in this city of loose morals.

Tsirisians: Alien smugglers from the artificial planetoid Tsisir. Tsisirians resemble humans with pale skin and an allergy to bright light.

Zhuvians: Mysterious child-like humanoid aliens from the Zhuvian Halo, a string of artificial space-cities orbiting the planet Zhuvita. Zhuvians are remote and xenophobic and possess god-like powers and technology.

Zorin: The ancient Nazarian master of biomancy, the supreme master of bio-engineering, who created the Xoogs and eventually caused the downfall of the Nazarian civilization.



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CHAPTER TWO: CREATING A CHARACTER

Creating a character for *Swords of Cydoria* follows the basic rules set forth in BRP with several new options and some small changes. The overall process for creating a character for *Swords of Cydoria* is described below.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

1. Select a Premise
2. Choose a character concept
3. Choose a cultural background.
 - a. Record skill bonuses.
4. Choose a race and generate statistics.
5. Determine characteristic rolls.
6. Determine derived characteristics.
7. Determine personality.
 - a. Choose or roll randomly.
 - b. Record skill bonuses.
8. Choose a profession.
 - a. Record professional skills.
9. Purchase skills.
 - a. Purchase professional skills.
 - b. Purchase personal skills.
10. Choose starting equipment.
11. Name, personality, and appearance.

BRP CHARACTER GENERATION OPTIONS

To better simulate the setting and the intended style of play, the following BRP options are assumed to be used when making characters for *Swords of Cydoria*.

- Cultural Modifiers (BRP page 38)
- Non-Human Characters (BRP page 335)
- Total Hit Points (BRP page 30)
- Skill Ratings Over 100% (BRP page 175)
- Projection skill (BRP page 145)

Other options may be implemented at the gamemaster's discretion and preference and have little effect on the following character creation guidelines.

STEP ONE: SELECT A PREMISE

The first step in starting a game within the *Swords of Cydoria* setting is to choose a premise, a framework that defines what the player characters do, what kind of adventures they undertake, who they work for, and their place in society. Select one of the following pre-generated premises or create one of your own.

ARTIFACT HUNTERS

A story of exploration and adventure

The characters are a team of professional explorers, seeking out the ruins of the ancients to recover lost treasures.

FLIGHT OF THE TONBO

A story of profit and pirates

The characters are members of the crew of an aging aero-ship. They go where the jobs take them. They make deliveries, take on passengers, and maybe do some speculative trade. On the way, they earn a few extra gold pieces taking on the odd job or maybe they're desperate enough to resort to banditry.

THE GREAT GAME OF CYDORIA

A story of plots and power

The characters are nobles and spies, agents and assassins. They are in the employ or entourage of one of the members of Cydorian nobility, where bribes, seduction, threats, and betrayal are as keen as swords and ray-pistols.

THE HERESY OF INVENTION

A story of secrecy and freedom

The characters all serve a techno-heretic as assistants, brokers, bodyguards, and spies. They help protect the secrecy the techno-heretic needs to pursue his work. They seek out and obtain technological items for the techno-heretic to study. They help distribute and sell works of the techno-heretic. All the while they must be forever vigilant for Imperial inquisitors or the initiates of the Octavium.

REMEMBER DEMETRIA

A story of rebellion and intrigue

The characters are members of a cell of rebels fighting against the Imperial occupation. They could be covert operatives living and working undercover while keeping their true identities secret, or they could be full-time rebel soldiers fighting a guerilla war against a hated enemy.

SAVAGE FRONTIER

A story of revenge and redemption

The characters are drifters, mercenaries, bandits, or agents of law in a small settlement on the western frontier. They might just be looking for a few gold coins or maybe they want to actually make a difference in the world.

STEP TWO: CHOOSE A CHARACTER CONCEPT

The player should create a character that is fun and interesting to play, works well with the other players' characters, and works well with the expectations of the gamemaster. This involves a discussion with the gamemaster and the other players. Each member of the group should share their ideas and concepts to ensure that a good time will be had by all.

The first thing to consider is the game story being told. The gamemaster and the players should decide from one of the options listed in Step One. Different game stories will lend themselves to different archetypes. For example, an aero-ship pilot or engineer will have much more to do in the Flight of the Tonbo game story than in a story about the Great Game of Cydoria. If the gamemaster is planning on running the Remember Demetria game where the characters are members of the Demetrian resistance, players should choose a character concept appropriate for that story. A Bansyan hunter, for example, may find it difficult to fit in. Of course, a good imagination and an interesting back-story can justify even the most odd-ball character concept. How can a Vrildarian noble fit into a Remember Demetria game? The noble is a traitor and a spy plotting revenge on his father, so he has become an asset to the enemy Demetrians. Never let what appears at first to be an incongruous character concept get in the way of a great story hook.

Secondly, the players' characters should mesh well. An entire party where every character fills the same niche, say for example everyone makes an orix warrior who is good at melee fighting, then the group will be deficient on needed support such as ranged fighters, healers, or negotiators. Of course, if the gamemaster agrees and thinks it would be a fun group of characters to play, he or she can supply support in the form of NPCs.

Player characters that are in direct contradiction with one another may cause unwanted friction within the group. For example, if one of the characters is a savage orix that eats fresh human meat while another is a priest who believes that the bodies of the dead should be cremated, the two viewpoints are incompatible and will lead to pointless strife within the group. A little conflict can be fun to play and constructive, but don't create characters where the conflict within the group overshadows the conflict inherent in the story.

Lastly, be imaginative and experiment. Try something new. Create a character that seems contradictory then come up with a back story to support it. A brux scholar isn't impossible, just improbable. Come up with a story about how the brux touched an ancient Sdara Vatra artifact which enhanced his intelligence. The brux then went to the university and learned science and engineering. Anything is possible with imagination and a sufficiently inventive back-story.

SPECIAL CHARACTER CREATION OPTION: STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

A special character creation option, "Stranger in a Strange Land", is available to players with the gamemaster's permission. Strangers in a Strange Land are people from the modern day transported to the world of Cydoria. The Stranger in a Strange Land is a traditionally appropriate trope for this kind of setting. One or more modern characters can be transported to Cydoria through several means:

- During a cave-in, the characters are exposed to a combination of gases that preserves their bodies for millennia in suspended animation. The characters wake and emerge from the cave to discover a strange new world.
- The characters are astronauts, perhaps trapped in a wide orbit, perhaps returning from an interstellar journey to a faraway star. In either case, the characters' bodies are preserved for millennia in suspended animation. The characters' space-ship is discovered by someone with a Gate Key and allowed to land on Uruta. The characters wake and emerge from the space-ship to discover a strange new world.
- The characters are somehow magically transported through time and space, perhaps through a poorly understood method of astral projection or inter-temporal mind-transfer. Whatever the method, the characters wake, possibly naked, possibly in the clothes and body of a native, somewhere in the Markanian wilderness, where they must learn to survive. They eventually encounter civilization and get caught up in Cydorian politics.
- The characters are time travelers who journey far into the future and become trapped in the Cydorian age. Perhaps they were abducted by explorers from the end of time; perhaps they fell through a time vortex, etc. If they are lucky, they might find another time machine created by the ancient Sdara Vatra that still works so that they might return home.

Transplanting modern characters into a Cydorian setting offers several advantages. First, the players will not need any information on the geography, history, or politics of the setting. They will be thrust into the story blind, allowing them to adapt to the new environment as they wish. Second, the players will not need to adjust their mindset from that of a modern person. They will be able to think in terms of computers, automobiles, and atomic power as opposed to the strange mix of technologies and customs of Cydoria.

The disadvantage, however, is that the characters will be ill-equipped for life in Cydoria. Swordfighting and survival skills are uncommon for modern characters, not to mention differences in language. The gamemaster may allow a period of adjustment for a character where they may learn new skills and adapt to their new environment.

Strangers in a Strange Land should ignore the character creation system presented below. Instead, they should create standard characters according to the BRP rulebook.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE A CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The continent of Markania is a vast land filled with dozens of cultures, many non-human. Choose a native culture for your character. Your choice determines many facets about your character: how you look, how you think, what you know, where you're from, your motivations, your strengths, your weaknesses. Your native culture also helps determine what race you should choose.

The following tables provide short summaries of the many player character race and cultural background options available to you. A detailed description of each culture follows the summary tables.

CIVILIZED HUMAN CULTURES, THE VRILDARIAN EMPIRE

The Vrildarian Empire, a human polity founded twenty years ago by the King of Vrildar, was the first to make contact with aliens from the planet Malus. The Vrildarian Empire used advanced alien technology from the planet Malus to defeat and conquer the allied kingdoms of the Coalition of Timan. Today, the city-states of the Empire are technologically advanced and prosperous. The nobles vie for power and influence while the commoners and slaves toil in squalid urban tenements.

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Civilization Level</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Guernan	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	A martial society from a fortified island kingdom; all citizens are considered soldiers in the army
Norukarian	Human	Civilized	Northeast Cydoria	A city of skyscrapers, aero-ships, high technology; reputation for short tempers and shrewd business acumen
Targan	Human	Civilized	Northeast Cydoria	Dour, humorless, practical inhabitants of a cold, harsh, rocky, wind-swept land with little vegetation
Tyrannisi	Human	Civilized	Eastern Cydoria	City on the edge of a toxic swamp, Recently prosperous after several generations of isolation; inhabitants have a reputation as inbred mutants
Varzan	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	Foresters and hunters from rural villages in the foothills of the Apparian mountains
Vrildarian	Human	Civilized	Northeast Cydoria	The founders of the Vrildarian Empire, from a city that prides itself on its grandeur, cleanliness, and order
Zinjani	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	A city of thievery, trade, murder, and corruption; center for aero-ship construction

CIVILIZED HUMAN CULTURES, FORMER ALLIES OF THE COALITION OF TIMAN

The Coalition of Timan was formed in response to the aggression of the Vrildarian Empire. The Coalition was conquered twelve years ago at the end of the War of Unification. Today the former allies of the Coalition are occupied nations, their citizens chafing under Imperial oppression.

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Civilization Level</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Demetrian	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	A land wiped off the map by Imperial treachery, its inhabitants forced to become refugees in foreign lands
Fornaxian	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	Haughty sea traders and explorers from the rugged north
Iotian	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	Iotians have a reputation for indolence and a love for celebrations
Ramanamian	Human	Civilized	Southeast Cydoria	A city built at the mouth of the Raman river, precariously close to a dark humid jungle, the inhabitants live on the river and in the swamp

UNALIGNED CIVILIZED HUMAN CULTURES

Kallo is an exotic and mysterious jungle kingdom, remote and far away. Kalloan travelers are not unheard of in Cydoria, but because of their reputation they are often met with suspicion and mistrust.

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Civilization Level</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Kalloan	Human	Civilized	Southern Markania	Decadent and depraved snake-worshippers who make performance art out of self-mutilation and torture

BARBARIAN HUMAN CULTURES

Many tribal and nomadic cultures inhabit the lands of the continent of Markania. Many barbarians leave their tribes and travel to the cities in search of adventure, fame, and fortune.

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Civilization Level</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Awan	Human	Barbarian	North Central Markania	Tribal nomads of the steppes, known for domesticating a type of massive caribou called geruks
Bansyan	Human	Barbarian	Northwest Markania	Warrior culture descended from settlers from Sya, the continent far to the west
Gatan	Human	Barbarian	South Central Markania	Matriarchal plains nomads; master archers and known for domesticating the razorfang
Korulan	Human	Barbarian	Southeast Cydoria	Coastal tribes known for their skills at whaling and hunting
Niasan	Human	Barbarian	Western Cydoria	Simple nomadic tribal people
Ossian	Human	Barbarian	South Central Markania	Primitive cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers
Otaran	Human	Barbarian	Western Markania	Secretive veiled mountain tribes, known for their domestication of the giant wasp known as Ku-bawa-mavu
Samirian	Human	Barbarian	Northern Markania	Fierce axe warriors of the tundra, known for domesticating giant yaks known as wooly munglors

NON-HUMAN CULTURES

Several non-human races are native to Markania along with a few representatives from other planets.

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Civilization Level</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Capridian	Capridian	Barbarian	North Central Markania	A race of tall thin goat-like humanoids, with a culture based around philosophy and discourse
Deru	Deru	Barbarian	Northeast Cydoria	Short albino frog-like subterranean humanoid miners and underground explorers
Photan	Phanosian	Alien	Phota region of Phanos	Undercover agents from the planet Phanos; identical to humans; still work to support the Demetrian resistance and oppose the machinations of the Rhakadian League
Raganan	Daka	Civilized	Southwest Markania	Xenophobic reptilian humanoids from the southwestern deserts
Ohnan	Cyber-droid	Alien	Northern Markania	Cyberdroid warriors and explorers from the icy north. They travel the land seeking glory and knowledge.
Xoog	Brux, Jinx, Orix	Civilized	Throughout Cydoria	The freed slave-races of an ancient lost culture; bruxes are hulking laborers; jinxes are short, sneaky, and clever; orixes are lean warriors; today they live in enclaves within the cities of Cydoria



AWAN

Tribal nomads native to north central Markania

The plains of north central Markania are home to the Awan people. The Awans are considered barbaric by the Cydorians. They lack writing and build no cities. There are few small permanent Awan villages built near accessible fields of iron ore. Such villages are built around the forge where iron weapons and tools are made. The majority of the Awan people, however, live a nomadic tribal existence following the herds of grazing herbivores as they migrate across the land. Nomadic Awan tribes range as far north as the Capridian plateau and south into the Plains of Gatas. The Awans worship the antlered god Kurok, the Hunter.

The Awans have a special relationship with the geruk, an elk-like riding animal with large racks of antlers. Awans use geruk as mounts and make use of the large antlers in battle. They also serve as beasts of burden, a source of food, milk, leather, fur, and even warmth in the cold harsh Awan winters. Awans learn how to ride a geruk before they learn how to walk.

Ruler: The ruler of the Awan is Daku, Chief of Chiefs.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Awans have dark tan skin with long straight black hair, usually braided though some men prefer bald heads with top-knots. Awan men often wear long straight moustaches and beards.

Dress: Men and women wear long thick coats made of the leather of a geruk and fur over a quilted tunic, padded leather pants, and leather boots. Men and women wear anator-hide loincloths, animal hide kilts, and leather Roman-style sandals laced up the shin. Warriors wear leather armor made from the thick rhinus and geruk hide and helmets decorated with anator horns.

Language(s): The Awans speak their own language as well as those of their neighbors: Gatan, Capridian, and a crude version of Cydorian.

Professions: Awans are predominantly tribesmen and hunters, with a few warriors, shamans, and craftsmen.

Religions: The chief god of the Awan pantheon is Kurok the Hunter.

Favored Weapons: The Awans are expert archers and are able to shoot a target with pinpoint accuracy, even while on the back of a large leaping geruk. In hand-to-hand combat, Awans prefer the use of long spears when mounted or double-edged scimitars when on foot.

Favored Armor: Awan warriors wear heavily padded quilted coats over a sleeveless chain mail hauberk. They wear furred helmets decorated with magnificent deer and geruk antlers.

Cultural Skills: Awans excel at archery and geruk riding. Every year, intertribal athletic events feature a sport that involves leaping onto a running geruk and hitting a target with an arrow at full gallop. Archery +20%; Riding (Geruk) + 20%.

Items: A typical Awan tribesman will carry geruk hides and quilted blankets rolled up and tied with leather thongs and a small iron knife with a handle made of geruk antler.

Common Male Names: Kurok, Daku, Araku, Marak, Satu

Common Female Names: Miamalee, Pontas, Binnasee, Tararu

BANSYAN

Warrior culture on the far west coast of Markania; descendants of settlers from Sya, an unexplored continent far over the western ocean

The northwest region known as Bansya is home to many small tribes united under the formidable warrior-king Gonyu Split-Face. Several hundred years ago, explorers from Sya, far to the west, colonized this land. The colonies survived though they have had no contact with their motherland for centuries. Cydorian explorers encountered these enigmatic people only thirty years ago when second-generation wooden aero-ships were sent to explore that region of Markania.

The Bansyans have mastered the smelting of bronze but lack the technology to make iron or steel implements. Bansyans on the whole are a dour, laconic people. They are wary of strangers and are very protective of their villages. Their communities consist of



connected circular structures with walls of fieldstone and roofs of thatch with large openings in the center. Though difficult to befriend, once contact is made they are generally friendly to repeat visitors and warmly welcome returning traders and travelers that they know. They worship the spirits of nature and of the beasts of the forest and pay homage to their deceased ancestors. Each tribal village is led by a head man but all villages owe fealty to the king.

Ruler: The Bansyans tribes are united under the rule of King Gonyu Split-Face, a heavy-set older man with long grey hair and beard and thick muscular legs and arms. He is a veteran of many tribal wars, uniting the Bansyan people in his lifetime. His face is cleft by a thick scar that runs from his scalp to his chin, a souvenir of the wars of his youth.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Bansyans have fair skin. Their hair ranges from light red to red-brown and is worn in long braids. Men wear long straight beards, sometimes braided. Bansyans have round flat faces and almond-shaped eyes. The color of their eyes is generally brown or green.

Dress: Men wear knee-length woolen tunics, baggy woolen trousers, and leather boots and leg wrappings. They wear long oiled leather cloaks to ward off the rain. Women dress similarly to the men but their tunics are ankle-length.

Language(s): Bansyans speak a derivative of Syan, the traditional language of the colonists from far-off Sya.

Professions: Most Bansyans are hunters and warriors.

Religions: Bansyans practice a form of animism, a reverence for the spirits of the forest and the woodland creatures, mixed with ancestor worship.

Favored Weapons: The Bansyan warrior carries a bronze throwing axe, a long bronze spear, or a bronze sword.

Favored Armor: Bansyan warriors wear knee-length leather coats attached with bronze shoulder and breast plates and bronze vambraces on the forearm. Bansyan chieftains or warriors of great fame and ability wear chain hauberks and bronze helmets.

Cultural Skills: Bansyans are experts with the throwing axe and often have competitions featuring displays of accuracy. Throw (Axe, Hand) +20%; Knowledge (Bansyan Folklore) +20%.

Items: Bansyan personal items include small items of polished stone jewelry on leather thongs and a pouch of small polished stones with carved glyphs used for divination and games of chance.

Common Male Names: Gonyu Split-Face, Munya No-Voice, Lyun Pan

Common Female Names: Shanna Yun, Pingu Snow-hair, Pasa Phun



CAPRIDIAN

A race of tall thin humanoids, resembling a cross between goats and antelope, with a culture based around philosophy and discourse

Capridians are tall antelope-like humanoids that inhabit the plateau of the same name. Capridians are a tribal agrarian people that live in sod homes on the rolling grassy hills. They are peaceful and philosophical, curious, and friendly to outsiders. They tend fields of niva grass for food and textiles.

Ruler: The Capridian tribes are decentralized with little formal government. Each tribe is represented by a democratically chosen leader. Every year, the tribes gather at a great conclave to choose a representative to speak for all the Capridian. The current speaker is Banta the Thinker, their most respected sage and philosopher. Banta is a wise Capridian elder, friendly and kind, polite to outsiders but wary of false intentions.

Race(s): The vast majority of the Capridian tribes are members of the Capridian species. A few humans and bruxes have been adopted by and raised among the Capridians.

Appearance: Capridians are tall, lean, and muscular. Their short body fur ranges in color from tan to dark brown on their backs and outer arms and legs to white on the neck, chest, stomach, and inner arms and legs. Male Capridians groom their manes and female wear their hair long.

Dress: Most Capridian textiles are woven from fibers of niva grass. Niva textiles have the look and texture of burlap. At home on the plateau, Capridians wear loose linen tunics, robes, capes, and ponchos. They often wear linen wrappings around the forearms and shins. When travelling, Capridians wear linen trousers and vests.

Language(s): Natives to the region speak Capridian with a smattering of Awan. Many Capridians have learned Cydorian in order to interact with the settlers encroaching on their lands.

Professions: The chief occupation of Capridians is farmer, but all Capridians are expected to spend a portion of their lives pursuing an avocation such as artist, craftsman, explorer, scholar, or teacher.

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Religions: Capridians worship no deities. Instead, they meet as a tribe to debate and discuss philosophy and morality, the direct and indirect consequences of action and inaction, and the obligations of the individual to the tribe and of the tribe to the individual.

Favored Weapons: Capridians prefer long weapons such as the staff, club, and spear, weapons that favor their tall stature.

Favored Armor: Capridians wear little armor. There is little metal to be found in Capridia and a Capridian will never wear the skin of an animal. When expecting trouble, a Capridian will gird himself in quilted and padded layers of stiffened heavy cloth and carry a wicker shield.

Cultural Skills: Capridian society values abstract knowledge and the eloquent expression of ideas. They place a high value on etiquette, insight, knowledge of philosophy, and persuasion. Knowledge (Philosophy) +20%; plus choose one of the following: Art (Painting, sculpture, drawing) +20%, Etiquette +20%, Insight +20%, Listen +20%, or Persuasion +20%.

Items: The average Capridian encountered on the plateau will be carrying a long farm implement, wearing an apron, and a woven reed hat. A traveling Capridian will generally be carrying a walking stick and wearing a woven reed traveling hat and poncho.

Common Male Names: Gant, Danda, Font

Common Female Names: Banta, Nanda, Vinta

DEMETRIAN

Former founders of the Coalition of Timan, their nation was destroyed by a weapon of unimaginable destruction, they are now refugees in foreign lands

Prior to the destruction of Demetria, the Demetrian people were largely agricultural, cultivating fields of cret grain. The people were plain-spoken and friendly, hardy and industrious. Their grain was exported throughout the Cydorian peninsula. The capital of Talen was a city of nobility, refinement, education, and enlightenment. The royal family, under the leadership of King Timan, ruled fairly and justly. The invasion of Demetria by the armies of the Vrildarian Empire created many refugees. Some of the refugees fled into the Apparian mountains, others choked the port city of Ramanam. The luckiest refugees escaped west to start new lives on the Markanian continent. The destruction of the city of Talen and the surrounding Demetrian countryside sent a clear message to Demetria's allies but created a hollow bitterness in surviving Demetrians that will never go away.

Ruler: The former king of Demetria was Timan who died in the last days of the War of Unification. Currently, the region formerly known as Demetria is a no-man's land of looters and bandit gangs. The Demetrian resistance holds out hope that Timan's daughter, twenty-two year old Princess Iti, will someday restore the crown of Demetria. Princess Iti remains in hiding, twelve years after the end of the war, protected by her uncle, Baron Urik, leader of the resistance.

Race(s): Human



Appearance: Demetrians are of medium build on average with light brown to tan skin. Their hair varies in color from dark brown to blonde and can be straight, wavy, or curly. They have almond-shaped eyes of any color.

Dress: Since most Demetrians are now refugees, their clothing tends to be old, faded, ragged, and visibly repaired many times. Linen and silk tunics, once colorful and vibrant, are now faded and threadbare. Loose cotton trousers are patched and frayed. Cloaks are muddy and torn. Some Demetrian veterans still wear their military uniforms, heavy linen tunic and trousers, long scarf, head sock, dark brown overcoat, helmet, and hobnail combat boots.

Language(s): Like most inhabitants of the city-states, Demetrians speak their own language and Cydorian.

Professions: Before the war, most Demetrians were farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. Today, most Demetrians encountered in the cities are beggars, laborers, servants, and thieves. Demetrians that settled in the Apparian mountains or in Markania are farmers and hunters.

Religions: Demetrians worship the mother-goddess Brinna, Protector of Homes.

Favored Weapons: Demetrian nobles carried a sword and a ballistic pistol. Soldiers carried a short-sword and spear. Elite units were issued air-powered ballistic rifles and eventually Phanosian laser rifles during the War of Unification. Today, most Demetrian veterans will carry a short sword for protection and occasionally an illegal plasma or laser pistol under their coat. Demetrian warriors prefer a sword that resembles a katana.

Favored Armor: During the War of Unification, the Demetrian soldier wore either a chainmail hauberk or Phanosian mesh under-armor under a heavy cloth tunic, leather coat, and steel helmet. Officers wore Phanosian mesh under-armor under a silk tunic and an ornate steel helmet. Demetrian warriors wear chainmail hauberks or a cuirass of brigandine or leather.

Cultural Skills: Since the end of the war, Demetrians have come to value useful survival skills such as fast talk, hide, insight, and persuasion. Choose any two of the following: Fast Talk +20%, Hide +20%, Insight +20%, Persuasion +20%.

Items: Demetrian refugees and veterans alike cling to a small personal token of their former life. Examples include small statuettes of Brinna, a clipping of hair from a lost loved one, an amulet, or other such small trinket.

Common Male Names: Urik, Talen, Mattu Boorma, Molo Renna, Dornic Yusa

Common Female Names: Iti, Brinna, Uгна Radion, Kendara Yoog

DERU

Short albino humanoids from the subterranean caverns of north-eastern Cydoria

The deru culture is located on Blaanza-Nung Island. The deru live in claustrophobic subterranean chambers carved out of the heart of the mountain range that bears their name. Their culture is ancient, dating back thousands of years. The deru believe that they come from another world and that they settled Uruta at the dawn of time. The network of subterranean chambers in which they live and work is known simply as “Home”.

Deru are hard workers and care little for amenities or recreation. Their subterranean chambers are spartan and utilitarian. There is little in the way of ornamentation. The chambers are small and unlit, so few surface dwellers visit. Those that do must supply their own light and must crawl most of the time.

Deru that are deemed unfit to work are exiled from Home. They must fend for themselves or die. Most deru encountered on the surface are either ambassadors or exiles from Home.

Ruler: Home is ruled by the elderly King Gummonn.

Race(s): Deru.

Appearance: Deru are a race of humanoids adapted to live in the confined spaces deep under the surface of Uruta. Deru are short and wiry with pallid, almost translucent, white skin, flat noses with slitted nostrils, bulging heavily-lidded eyes, and small ears which fold flat against their skull. Their hands and feet are disproportionately large. They are hairless and their skin is thick and wrinkly. Their skulls are thick and knobbly.

Dress: Deru prefer tight fitting garments of tough thick leather. They prefer to leave their joints free to allow them to more easily climb, but sometimes wear padding on their elbows and knees. Their hands and feet are important sensory organs in the darkness, so they wear neither shoes nor gloves. On the surface, deru wear wide hats, goggles, and long cloaks and capes to protect them from the heat and light. They plug their ears with wax to deaden the sounds and are more likely to wear gloves and sandals.

Language(s): The deru language is the only language permitted in Home though many deru learn foreign languages when travelling abroad.



Professions: Deru are primarily miners and engineers. Deru farmers raise subterranean fungus for food. A few deru merchants travel to the surface to trade.

Religions: The deru worship the god-beast Ommu, the Great Worm that lives at the center of the world.

Favored Weapons: Deru learn how to use the iron long-awl (see New Weapons, page 63), a digging and heavy stone-working tool with a prybar on one end and a tapering spike on the other that can serve as an impaling weapon. Deru also use heavy sledgehammers and short-swords.

Favored Armor: Deru wear a stiff leather cuirass and thick leather kilt. If a battle is expected, a deru will wear leather gauntlets, greaves, and helmets.

Cultural Skills: Deru are trained from a young age how to find their way in the total darkness of Home and the deeper caverns that reach into Uruta. In addition, deru are taught to never get lost. A deru learns to use all his senses to find his way. Navigate +20%; select one of the following: Knowledge (Deru Folklore) +20% or Knowledge (Home) +20%.

Items: A travelling deru always carries a few small stones from Home in his pocket. He will occasionally take them out and sniff them when he feels homesick.

Common Deru Names: Gommo, Bonn, Pumma, Runm

FORNAXIAN

Haughty sea traders and explorers from the rugged north

The people that live along the southeastern coast of Baadria, north of Cydoria, have always lived on the sea. They depend on it for their survival because the land in which they live provides little in the way of agriculture or livestock. They fish the rocky coast and raise a domesticated aquatic mammal known as a gimwal for meat and leather. Their sea-going vessels of exploration were the first to establish contact and trade between the city-states of Cydoria. To this day, the great trade houses of Fornaxia rule the seas, though they have met hard economic times of late with the introduction of aero-ships a hundred years ago.

Ruler: Fornaxia is nominally ruled by Lady Lixa, formerly queen. Real political power rests with the Imperial governor.

Race(s): Human

Appearance: Fornaxians are considered tall by other Cydorians, but not towering or muscular. They are fair skinned and fair haired with blue, green, or purple eyes.

Dress: Fornaxians wear many layers of heavy clothes made of gimwal leather. Most tunics are blue, green, or purple and made of silk.

Language(s): Fornaxian is the chief language but most are fluent in Cydorian.

Professions: The majority of Fornaxians are sailors, explorers, and merchants. In Fornaxia, one would find more gimwal drovers.

Religions: The chief god of the Fornaxian pantheon is Gorox, the god of the sea and of trade.

Favored Weapons: Fornaxian warriors prefer the spear.

Favored Armor: Fornaxians wear lightweight armor that can be easily shed should they fall in the water. They usually wear suits of heavy studded gimwal leather and thick wrinkly bondrus hide.



Cultural Skills: Fornaxian culture rewards those skilled in bargaining, etiquette, ship piloting, and navigation. Choose any two of the following: Etiquette +20%, Navigation +20%, Pilot (Boat) +20%.

Items: The average Fornaxian sailor or merchant is usually carrying a small piece of scrimshaw intricately engraved on bondrus tusk for good luck.

Common Male Names: Gorox, Xiam, Axar

Common Female Names: Lixa, Xoosi, Rooxi

GATAN

Matriarchal nomads and master archers from the plains and savanna of south central Markania

The Gatan tribes claim the lands south of the Mata river and much of Gatas. The tribe is matriarchal. Among the Gatan, the women are stronger and fiercer than their male counterparts, and it is the warrior-women that defend and lead the tribes.

The Gatan worship and fear the monstrous feline razorfangs with whom they compete for game and wear the hides of defeated razorfangs as badges of honor. They are masters of stealth and tracking, silently stalking their prey through the tall grass like the plains cats they revere. The Gatan breed especially large domesticated razorfangs to ride as mounts.

All males born to Gatan women suffer from a congenital disease that enfeebles them and dooms them to an early grave. The proportion of Gatan genders, therefore, heavily favors the females. There are stories that Gatan women capture non-Gatan males and couple with them prior to sacrificing them to the razorfangs. Whether this is truth or myth is unknown.

Ruler: Great Kahn Jankta rules the Gatan people from her throne in the iron-city of Badar.

Race(s): Human.



Appearance: The Gatan are tall and thin by Cydorian standards. They have dark-brown to tan-brown skin. Gatan women wear their long straight hair in pony-tails or dreadlocks. The men usually shave their heads bald or keep their hair closely cropped. Gatan faces are characterized by flat noses with wide nostrils, large full lips, and heavily lidded eyes.

Dress: An ordinary Gatan wears loincloths, kilts, and togas made of animal hides and fur pelts. They wear wide conical woven reed hats to shield their heads from the sun. They wear woven long grass capes during the rainy season.

Language(s): The Gatan tribes are united by their own spoken language. They lack a written language.

Professions: Gatan are predominantly tribesmen and hunters, with a few warriors, shamans, and craftsmen.

Religions: The Gatan worship Hrawr, goddess of the razorfang.

Favored Weapons: Gatan battle tactics emphasize highly mobile foot soldiers armed with spears and javelins as well as mounted archers and lancers that fight from the backs of razorfangs.

Favored Armor: Gatan warriors wear razorfang pelts and leather armor made from anator hide reinforced with plates of iron. They don helmets decorated with anator horns.

Cultural Skills: Gatan prize athletics and running ability. They revere the razorfang and emulate its ability to stealthily creep through the tall grass unseen and unheard. Accuracy with the javelin and the ability to control an anator are highly prized. Missile Weapon (Javelin) +20%; choose one of the following: Ride (Anator) +20%, Stealth +20%

Items: Many Gatan wear strings of razorfang claws as necklaces or carry a razorfang tusk to use as a dagger or even a good luck charm.

Common Male Names: Mido, Rado

Common Female Names: Jankta, Vido

GUERNAN

A martial society from a fortified island kingdom; all citizens are considered soldiers in the army

Guernans are ethnically Varzan but are culturally distinct from other Varzan cultures. Guerna is a martial city and every inhabitant is conscripted into the military at age twelve. Guernan life is strictly regimented and every facet is controlled by the state. Guernans are crisp and curt. They distrust outsiders and are always watchful for treachery. Guernan traders and merchants have no taste for haggling and are very difficult to barter with. Guernans value decisiveness, order, and punctuality. There is little crime in Guerna as offenders are swiftly and brutally punished, the penalty for most offenses being death.

Ruler: Guerna is commanded by Field Marshall Vilnius.

Race(s): Human, brux, jinx, orix



Appearance: Guernans were originally ethnically Varzan, though centuries of island separation and interbreeding from outsiders have made them ethnically and culturally distinct. Guernans are slightly taller and more muscular than the average Cydorian. Their skin is dusky red-brown. Their hair is dark brown or black and can be straight or curly. Their eyes are dark blue or dark brown and almond-shaped.

Dress: All Guernans wear the uniform of the military denoting their role, rank, skills, and specialties. Officers wear dark red silk tunics and trousers with black leather gloves and boots and an ornate steel helmet. Common soldiers wear a dark red wool tunic and beige trousers, a beige cape, and a simple steel bowl-shaped helmet.

Language(s): Guernans speak Cydorian exclusive to all other languages.

Professions: The chief occupation of Guerna is that of the soldier. Other occupations serve support functions, but all serve the military.

Religions: Although not of the Varzan pantheon, the Guernans worship the Targan god Fimgar, lord of fire and war.

Favored Weapons: Support personnel carry a short sword but must keep a spear nearby at all times. Infantry soldiers are issued a spear and short-sword. Elite soldiers are issued air-powered ballistic or plasma rifles. Officers carry a cutlass and ballistic or plasma pistol.

Favored Armor: Soldiers preparing for battle wear either a chainmail hauberk or Rhakadian mesh under a heavy cloth tunic, a cape, and steel helmet. Officers wear Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a silk uniform and an ornate steel helmet.

Cultural Skills: Guernan military life teaches discipline, fighting skills, tactics, and strategy. Command +20%; Strategy +20.

Items: Guernan soldiers carry papers verifying their identity, unit, and commanding officer at all times.

Common Male Names: Krieg, Aris, Agra

Common Female Names: Magan, Atinna, Stirka

IOTIAN

A reputation for decadence and a love for celebrations

The Iotian islands of Kaidan and Mancea are renowned for their warm tropical climate. For centuries, a surplus of sugar cane and creet was cultivated to produce alcohol for export. The aristocracy grew wealthy from these imports and developed a reputation for self-indulgent decadence, indolence, and lavish parties. The serfs and slaves on the plantations were treated well and shared in the celebratory lifestyle.

The Imperial occupation following the War of Unification replaced the aristocracy with Vrildarian overseers. The plantations are now over-worked to make up for the loss of the creet-fields of Demetria, the slaves pushed to the limits of their endurance. The aristocracy now find themselves outcasts. Many, aristocrats and slaves alike, have escaped to build new lives in the colonies of western Markania.

Ruler (Kaidan): Kaidan is nominally ruled by Baron Taub but real political power rests in the hands of the Imperial governor.

Ruler (Mancea): Kaidan's smaller neighbor Mancea is ruled by Baron Garbis, Baron Taub's younger cousin, who must vet all decisions and proclamations through the Imperial governor.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: the Iotian islanders share a common ethnicity. They are typically of average height and build. Their skin ranges from fair to tan to light brown. Their hair ranges from wavy light brown to dark and curly. The men prefer well-groomed facial hair. The women wear their long hair in elaborate styles

Dress: Commoners and farmers wear simple linen tunics, cotton trousers, and straw hats. City dwellers wear finer clothing made brocade silk or soft linen fabrics. The current fashion in the city is to wear fancy fur hats with ostentatious feathers.

Language(s): Iotians speak their own language, Merutan, but most speak fluent Cydorian with a heavy accent.

Professions: Commoners find work as laborers, farmers, fishermen, merchants, and slaves.



Religions: Matina, the goddess of love and motherhood, is popular among the servants and laborers on the plantations but it is Luris, the god of wine and celebration, that draws the most veneration from the exiled aristocrats.

Favored Weapons: Commoners carry few or no weapons, a dagger at most. During the war, Kaidanese and Mancean soldiers carried spears, swords, and shields into battle. Officers and nobles carried a cutlass and ballistic pistol.

Favored Armor: During the war, Kaidanese and Mancean soldiers wore leather armor with a bowl-shaped steel helmet. Officers and nobles wore no armor save for an ornate open-faced steel helmet.

Cultural Skills: Iotians love a good time and those who can provide entertainment at a revel are celebrated. Insight +20%; Choose any one of the following: Fast Talk +20%, Gaming +20%, Perform (any) +20%.

Items: Most commoners carry a small statuette of Matina or a discrete necklace of beads. City dwellers and aristocrats will carry a flask of wine or rum.

Common Male Names: Garbis, Taub, Heis, Irek, Blem

Common Female Names: Matina, Diontosa, Issibarra, Cantaria

KALLOAN

Decadent and depraved snake-worshippers who make performance art out of self-mutilation and torture

The ancient theocracy of Kallo is located at the southernmost tip of the Markanian continent. The theocracy once ruled over the entire southern portion of the continent but has fallen into decadence and decline. They have lost several cities to incursions from savage barbarian tribes from the forests. The women of Kallo are finding it increasingly difficult to bear children and the population is dwindling. The Kalloan people are known for their brutality. They make public spectacles of the torture and mutilation of captives and are vicious even to their personal slaves. Personal fashion is made of scarring, removal of skin, and self-mutilation.



Ruler: The theocracy of Kallo is ruled by Kulkus, High Priest of the Temple of Anaka.

Race(s): Human, daka.

Appearance: Kallloans are of average height and build. They have brown skin and straight dark hair, though they usually shave their scalps bald. Kallloan faces are characterized by prominent hawkish noses and a multitude of piercings and mutilations. Their bodies are likewise scarred, pierced, mutilated, and covered with areas of open flesh where strips of skin has been ritually removed from their bodies.

Dress: Kallloan men and women wear long ankle-length linen tunics, generally black or red in color, and wear long serpent-fang earrings.

Language(s): Kallloans speak their own language.

Professions: The chief occupations of Kallo are assassin, politician, priest, and slave.

Religions: The Kallloans openly venerate Anaka, the serpent god of the daka, for whom they consume human flesh in vile sacrificial rites. Secret human cults of Anaka have been uncovered in Markanian and Cydorian cities.

Favored Weapons: Kallloan warriors wield razor clubs, blade whips, and wickedly curved scimitars.

Favored Armor: Kallloan warriors wear lamellar-style plate armor and serpent-themed helmets and head-dresses.

Cultural Skills: Kallloans with a strong will and commanding presence are valued in Kallo. Torture is considered a performance art form and those that display talent in inflicting pain and mutilating bodies in aesthetically pleasing ways are rewarded. Command +20%; Perform (Torture) +20%.

Items: Kallloans often carry two long needle-like spikes or small knives with serpentine blades, used for ritual torture of slaves, captives, and even each other. Kallloans often wear serpentine bracelets or armbands as well as amulets of polished precious stones that resemble an eye of a serpent.

Common Male Names: Kulkus, Untus, Fakunus

Common Female Names: Tikin, Dakin, Kakakin

KORULAN

Coastal tribesmen renowned for whaling and hunting

The Korulan people live in small villages along the southeast Cydorian coast. They are expert hunters and fishermen and are happy to trade their fish and meat with both Varzan and Demetrian traders. Korulans are known for their domestication of tonbo, a kind of giant dragonfly which the Korulans use as mounts.

Ruler: The Korulans are tribal and have no central government. Each Korulan village is ruled by a head man chosen through a village-wide competition held upon the death of the previous head man.

Race(s): Human.



Appearance: Korulans are of average height and build though they are generally thin and athletic. The skin of a Korulan ranges from brown to black. Korulan hair is curly and ranges from dark red to brown to black.

Dress: Traditional Korulan attire consists of knee-length linen tunics with colorful silk sashes and head scarves. Whalers and fishermen wear floppy woven grass hats to protect their heads from the sun.

Language(s): The Korulan people speak their own language but most are also fluent in Cydorian.

Professions: Most Korulans are whalers, fishermen, and canoe pilots.

Religions: There are few temples found in Korulan villages. Instead the Korulans venerate the god of their long-house, the primary structure of each Korulan village.

Favored Weapons: The Korulans have adapted many of their whaling and fishing tools into effective weapons. They are masters of the harpoon, spear, and bow.

Favored Armor: Korulans prefer to go into battle naked.

Cultural Skills: The ability to command a crew of a whaling canoe is a highly prized Korulan trait. Choose two of the following: Pilot (canoe) +20%; Ride (Tonbo) +20%, Swim +20%.

Items: Most Korulans have on their person some simple tools made of whale-bone and scrimshaw jewelry.

Common Male Names: Saparda, Dardari, Irido

Common Female Names: Uluga, Bartara, Muligda



NIASAN

Simple nomadic tribal people on the west coast of Cydoria

The Niasans are collectively a number of culturally similar barbarian tribes that live on the western coast of the Cydorian peninsula. They grow small crops such as corn and potatoes in the many river-valleys each spring and summer but must retreat to stone fortresses in the hills each winter as the valleys flood and predators come out of the mountains looking for scarce food.

Niasans are a simple stone-age people. They wear clothing made from animal hides and woven grass. What metal they possess was purchased from eastern traders. Their villages are protected by a low wooden fences and consist of a weir in the river to catch fish and several temporary mud-brick homes. The village is surrounded by a small garden. Villages are destroyed each winter by the flooding river and are rebuilt each spring. Their winter fortresses are much more formidable with high stone outer walls protecting a network of connected fortified stone buildings within.

Ruler: The Niasans have no central government. Each tribe is ruled by a chieftain.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Niasans are typically shorter and stockier than the average Cydorian with light skin and curly brown hair or straight light brown hair.

Dress: Niasans wear simple tunics made of animal hide and pelts. They wear long woven grass capes and woven reed hats during the winter rainy season.

Language(s): Each tribe speaks a dialect of Niasan. Very few Niasans speak Cydorian.

Professions: Most Niasans are farmers, laborers, hunters, and tribesmen. Each tribe has at least one warrior, shaman, and craftsman.

Religions: Each of the Niasan tribe worships various local lesser gods and cults.

Favored Weapons: Like most tribal barbarian societies, Niasan warriors prefer the spear and axe as their weapons of choice.

Favored Armor: When going into battle, a Niasan warrior will wear hide or leather armor.

Cultural Skills: Niasans value athletic prowess and the ability to throw, run, and jump. Jump +20%; Throw +20%.

Items: A typical Niasan will carry a small obsidian knife for personal use.

Common Male Names: Biarn, Siarin, Pirol

Common Female Names: Kadia, Jianna, Saria

NORUKARIAN

A city of skyscrapers, aero-ships, and high technology with a reputation for short tempers and shrewd businessmen

Like their rural Targan cousins, the inhabitants of the city-state of Norukar are grim and easily offended. They are terse and somewhat rude. Visitors to Norukar may expect polite but short-tempered condescension. Norukarians tend to speak quickly, get to the point, and move on when they're done.

The zuggurat-like towers of Norukar are literally stratified by race and social class. The heights of the towers are reserved for the nobles, the mid-levels for the merchants, followed by the craftsmen and trades. The lowest levels are occupied by workers, slaves, servants, immigrants, refugees, and xoogs. Most of the lower sectors are run by corrupt city guards and criminal gangs.

Ruler: Norukar is controlled by Queen Chador.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Norukarians are ethnically Targan. They are of average Cydorian height and build. The color of their skin ranges from light tan to dark brown. Their eyes are round and come in a variety of colors including blue, brown, green, purple, grey, etc. Norukarian hair ranges from light blonde to dark brown or black and can be curly, wavy, or straight.



Dress: Norukarians tend to dress better than their rural cousins, the Targans. They wear fine brocade and silk tunics, doublets, and long surcoats with satin capes. Although color is preferred to brown or beige, Norukarians still prefer the dark muted colors of their Targan heritage. Headwear tends toward ornate crowns, jeweled tiaras, or fancy hats. The rapidly changing Norukarian fashions are emulated by aristocrats across Cydoria.

Language(s): Norukar is a cosmopolitan city of merchants and travelers and many languages are spoken on its streets. Cydorian, however, is the most common language.

Professions: Norukar is a large city with a population over one million. Professions run the gamut from beggar and slave to nobles of the highest level. The stereotypical Norukarian is a merchant or low-ranking noble.

Religions: Norukarians worship the Targan pantheon of gods, chief among them is Fimgar the Warrior, god of victory in battles and of fire. However, given the cosmopolitan nature of the city, one can find hundreds of cults from all over Uruta and beyond worshipped either openly or in secret, depending on the cult.

Favored Weapons: The Norukarian commoner carries a short sword or dagger. Soldiers are issued a spear and short-sword. Elite soldiers are issued air-powered ballistic or plasma rifles. Officers and nobles carry a cutlass and ballistic or plasma pistol.

Favored Armor: Soldiers preparing for battle wear either a chainmail hauberk or Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a heavy cloth tunic, a cape, and steel helmet. Officers wear Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a silk uniform and an ornate steel helmet.

Cultural Skills: The urbane and sophisticated Norukarians value etiquette and mercantile acumen. Skills such as persuasion or fast talk are highly desired. Bargain +20%; Choose any one of the following: Appraise +20%, Fast Talk +20%, Persuasion +20%.

Items: The average Norukarian carries identity papers and any documentation verifying legal ownership of any advanced technology.

Common Male Names: Sinom, Damatini, Satarad

Common Female Names: Chador, Nil, Kimor

OHNAN

Warrior Cyberdroids of the Northern Wastes

Cyberdroids hail from an ancient domed city of Ohn located in the icy wastes of Sakata in the far north of Markania. Though robots, Ohnan cyberdroids are fully sentient with memories and emotions. Ohnans are viewed with trepidation and fear by other Markanian cultures because of their relationship to the so-called evil spirits known as Aya.

There is a strong cultural heritage of ancestral hero worship among the Ohnan. Many cyberdroids seek to emulate the heroes of legend with acts of bravery, sacrifice, and achievement.

Ruler: The domed city of Ohn is ruled by an ancient Aya spirit called Kandra.



Race(s): Cyberdroid.

Appearance: Ohnans are cyberdroids, robots roughly the same size and shape as a human.

Dress: Cyberdroids have no need to wear clothing for protection from the elements. Instead, Ohnans wear loose-fitting togas, capes, cloaks, and robes for purely aesthetic purposes.

Language(s): Ohnans speak their own language consisting of computerized binary information transfer but many learn to speak the other languages of Markania.

Professions: Most Ohnans seek honor and glory as warriors and explorers.

Religions: Ohnans offer prayers to the "Makers". They also revere Ohnan heroes of myth and legend as saints and demi-gods.

Favored Weapons: They are generally armed with swords, and axes but since alien contact have developed a strong fondness for energy weapons.

Favored Armor: As cyberdroids, Ohnans are inherently resistant to damage. Ohnan warriors upgrade their exoskeletons with additional armor plating and adaptive mesh.

Cultural Skills: As warriors and explorers, Ohnans prize martial prowess and knowledge. Martial Arts +20% and Knowledge (History) +20%.

Items: Ohnans carry little in the way of personal effects.

Common Names: Kobor, Voltran, Dava, Vindol, Rinix.

OSSIAN

Primitive bear-worshipping hunters and warriors

The forests of the Ossian Mountains in south central Markania are home to primitive tribes of men. The Ossians are stone-age hunter-gatherers who live in caves. A few Ossians have been captured and brought back to Cydoria as gladiators or slaves, eventually earning their freedom. A few Ossians have ventured out of their homeland as explorers and merchants.



Ruler: Each Ossian tribe is led by a chief who is aided and consulted by a shaman.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Ossians are short with dark hair and light brown skin. They are generally filthy with bad body odor and ratty tangled hair.

Dress: Ossians wear the skins of deer, bondruses, and bears.

Language(s): Ossians speak their own language. Few Ossians speak Cydorian.

Professions: Ossians are predominantly hunters and explorers.

Religions: Ossians worship Grund, the god of cave-bears.

Favored Weapons: Ossians generally wield stone-tipped spears or clubs. A few Ossians have traded furs and pelts for metal weapons.

Favored Armor: Ossians wear little armor other than layers of animal hides.

Cultural Skills: Science: Natural History +20%, Track +20%.

Items: Adult Ossian men wear a necklace or earring of the teeth of the cave-bear, a symbol of their rite of passage into manhood.

Common Male Names: Krund, Hronk, Grink, Grund

Common Female Names: Fatta, Agga, Hringi

OTARAN

Secretive veiled dwellers of the mountains of western Markania

The barbarians known as the Otarans hunt the lands of Otar where the mountains meet the desert. They are renowned for their mastery of the flying Ku-bawa-mavus, a breed of domesticated giant wasp which the Otarans ride as mounts. Otarans wear loose gauzy clothing that remain cool in the sun and cover their heads and faces with long scarves to protect them from the blowing sands. They wield lances atop their Ku-bawa-mavus and fight with small round shields and curved scimitars.

Ruler: The Otaran tribes are led by Great Chief Niko Arrayatta.

Race(s): Human, Orix.

Appearance: Otarans are shorter and thinner than the average Cydorian. Otarans have light brown skin, dark curly hair, and almond-shaped eyes.

Dress: Otarans wear loose-fitting ankle-length cotton tunics that cover the body from head to toe. When out in the desert or riding a ku-bawa-mavu, Otarans wear long head scarves wrapped around the neck and head and long leather gloves.

Language(s): Otarans speak their own language. Few Otarans speak Cydorian.

Professions: The most common occupation among the Otarans is that of the hunter who rides his flying ku-bawa-mavu searching for game.

Religions: Otarans venerate Yorala, the god of the sky.

Favored Weapons: Otarans prefer to fight while mounted upon their ku-bawa-mavus, where they employ bolas, lances, and javelins. In hand-to-hand combat, Otarans wield curved scimitars and small round shields

Favored Armor: In hand-to-hand combat, Otarans wear a leather cuirass under their tunic. Otarans wear no armor when mounted on ku-bawa-mavus.

Cultural Skills: A skilled ku-bawa-mavu rider is considered heroic among the Otaran people. Jump +20%; Ride (ku-bawa-mavu) +20%.

Items: Most Otarans carry a small curved knife for personal use.

Common Male Names: Nikko Arrayatta, Imo Rarraya

Common Female Names: Masra Donsanaya, Dayan Farrayanna



PHOTAN

The dominant culture of the planet Phanos

The planet Phanos is home to four distinct cultures: the Itarans, the Kezzo Petanians, and the Photans. Most Phanosians encountered on Uruta are Photans. Located on the equator of Phanos, the continent of Phota is the largest land mass on the planet with terrain ranging from deserts to mountains to cool highland rain forests. Photans are the most technologically and culturally advanced culture on Phanos. It was the Photans that set forth the principles that created the world government known as the Phanosian Alliance.

The people of Phota are friendly and inquisitive. They are well educated and idealistic. Phota is a liberal permissive society that believes in universal rights for all intelligent beings. They also believe that it is the obligation of society to help those who cannot help themselves. The Photan people are encouraged to pursue individual social and professional ambitions and to express themselves openly and freely. Phota possesses a sophisticated level of technology which is freely available to all the people of Phanos.

When contact was made with the people of Uruta, the Phanosian Alliance was delighted that the world once shrouded in mystery was opening up and ready to join the interplanetary neighborhood. Reaction turned to dismay when it was learned that the Rhakadian League had established exclusive contact and trade.

Phanosian Alliance agents were soon able to make contact with other factions on Uruta. The Alliance found a kindred spirit with the Demetrians and a partnership was soon formed. The Phanosian Alliance Space Force recognized the strategic advantage in denying the Rhakadian League its prize. They helped the Demetrians, supplied them with weapons and training, though careful not to over-shock the primitive world with technologies not already introduced by the Rhakadian League. The strategy was working and the war against the Vrildarian Empire was going well for Demetria and its allies.

Unfortunately, the Rhakadian League established a total blockade of Uruta and the Phanosian Alliance was not willing to risk a full-scale war over the world. The Alliance was forced to abandon their military support operations there. The withdrawal was devastating to Demetria.

Ruler: Phota is a part of the Phanosian Alliance, a constitutional democracy governed by a parliament of nations with elected representatives from every island and continent. The current prime minister is Hilea of Atarra, a middle-aged woman of unsurpassed intelligence with a noble bearing and an icy glare.

Race(s): Phanosian.

Appearance: Photans are Phanosians and are so similar to humans that one may easily pass for the other. Photans vary in skin color from pale to brown. Their hair can be yellow, brown, or black and can be straight or wavy.

Dress: Photans in the military of the Phanosian Alliance wear white form-fitting uniforms with colored trim and white helmets. The color of the trim indicates a service branch within the military, for example gold for command, red for engineering, blue for science, green for medical, etc.

Language(s): Photans speak their own language but also speak Phanosian. Photan agents generally learn an Urutan language when serving undercover.

Professions: Special agents of the Phanosian Alliance Space Force risk their lives to sneak past the blockade in order to support the efforts of the Demetrian resistance. These agents work undercover on the planet, fomenting dissent and revolt, supplying resistance fighters with weapons, technology, and training, and undertaking missions against Rhakadian operations. These agents face great danger. Their very presence on Uruta is a Imperial crime punishable by death.

Religions: In ages past, Photans worshipped personifications of natural and spiritual forces as gods. Today, most Photans are atheists and worship no gods. Instead, teachings, discussions, dialogues, and debates about philosophical and moral concepts are held in open forums.

Favored Weapons: They are generally armed with beam pistols.

Favored Armor: Special agents of the Phanosian Alliance Space Force wear protective mesh vests and are equipped with personal force field belts.

Cultural Skills: Photans value and encourage polite interaction and intelligent debate. The skills of etiquette and persuasion are therefore ingrained from a young age. Photans also encourage science and knowledge. Choose any two of the following: Etiquette +20%; Persuasion +20%; Knowledge (any) +20%; Science (any) +20%.

Items: Most Photans carry an amulet that can project a holographic image of a loved one.

Common Male Names: Genesis Tega, Cole Vash

Common Female Names: Atarra Ntandu, Pira Satay



RAGANAN

Xenophobic reptile-men from the desert lands of southwestern Markania

Ragana is the most sophisticated of the daka kingdoms, with relatively sophisticated architecture and sciences. The Raganans fish the Garza river and the nearby ocean in reed boats and have established primitive irrigation ditches for their farms. They build mound-shaped structures of mud brick and stone.

Ruler: The king of Ragana is named Gado, an elderly daka who encourages his people to go forth and trade with outsiders but heavily restricts visitations from outsiders. All human visitors to his land must be accompanied by a guard at all times. They are allowed little contact with the natives and may not deviate from carefully planned travel routes and schedules.

Race(s): Daka.

Appearance: Raganans are thinner and taller than other types of daka.

Dress: Raganans wear thin leather loincloths, silk doublets, tabards, and surcoats, often secured around the waist by wide silk sashes. They sometimes wear soft leather vambraces and greaves.

Language(s): The daka of Ragana speak their own language. Many Raganan merchants have learned Cydorian.

Professions: Among the Raganans there are many merchants, farmers, and craftsmen. Raganans have sent out many diplomatic envoys and explorers to foreign nations.

Religions: Raganans worship the serpent god Anaka, whom they venerate with annual sacrifices of un-hatched daka eggs.

Favored Weapons: Raganan daka prefer the use of scimitars and other curved swords in fluid shapes and designs.

Favored Armor: Raganan warriors wear little armor. When expecting battle, Raganan warriors wear heavy leather vambraces and greaves. Heroes will wear a suit of lamellar plate.

Cultural Skills: Raganans value formal etiquette and proper social protocol. Etiquette +20%; Sense +20%.

Items: A Raganan usually carries a pouch of dead rotting rabbits or other small rodents for food.

Common Male Names: Gado, Uzon

Common Female Names: Suda, Nota

RAMANAMIAN

Explorers and hunters from the edge of a deadly jungle swamp

The people who live at the mouth of the Raman river in the city known as Ramanam are a hardy folk who manage to thrive in spite of the many adversities nature throws at them. Though they face constant threats from floods, caustic slime, swarms of poisonous insects, and the “Crawling Terror”, not to mention kidnapping raids from quorian Muck-Dwellers and the massive influx of Demetrian refugees which strains their resources to the limit, they maintain a philosophical and generally positive outlook on life.

Ruler: Ramanam is led by Baron Gauth, but the true political power rests with the Imperial governor.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Humans from Ramanam are of average height and build with light brown to dark black skin. Their hair ranges from dark black and curly to light brown and wavy. Men prefer to shave their heads bald or keep their hair short, with a few growing medium-length dreadlocks. Women wear their hair in medium length tight braids or dreadlocks.

Dress: Ramanamian attire consists of colorful cotton sarongs. Men generally wear the sarong as a kilt while women wear it as a dress. Straw hats help shield Ramanamians from the sun.

Language(s): All Ramanamians speak Cydorian while a few speak the Quorian language.

Professions: Most Ramanamians are fishermen and craftsmen with some farmers that cultivate swamp weed for food and fibers.

Religions: The Ramanamians worship Birbin, the God of the River. The many Demetrian refugees of the city continue to worship Brinna, the Mother of the Gods and Protector of Homes, and her cult has gained favor with native Ramanamians.

Favored Weapons: Ramanamians prefer weapons that are adapted from their daily tools and that can be wielded while standing in a canoe. Weapons such as the spear, gaff-hook, or net are very popular. The tool-weapon most commonly associated with the Ramanamians is the giant gig, a two-pronged trident used to hunt the giant amphibians of the swamp (treat as a trident).

Favored Armor: There are few Ramanamian warriors so most wear no armor. When expecting battle, a Ramanamian soldier wears hide or leather armor.

Cultural Skills: Ramanamians revere knowledge of the swamps and its denizens. Those with experience in fishing, gigging, canoeing, and exploring the swamps are highly respected within the culture. Navigation +20%; Track +20%.

Items: Ramanamians carry few personal possessions. They carry a long flexible cane pole which can serve as a fishing pole, gig pole, means of propulsion for a canoe, improvised weapon, etc. They often carry a woven satchel with fish hooks, gigs, strips of cloth, line, bait, etc.

Common Male Names: Gauth, Telth, Ulith

Common Female Names: Faln, Palnsis, Yilna

SAMIRIAN

Fierce axe warriors of the northern plains and tundra

The forests of Munosia are home to the Samirians. These barbarian tribes cover themselves in fur pelts and animal skins. In battle, they wear leather armor and metal helmets adorned with the curved horns of the wooly munglors. They wield large swords and double-headed axes to deadly effect. Their villages are small, usually built around a forge or tribal long-house and sometimes protected by a wooden palisade or primitive stone wall. The Samirians have domesticated the wooly munglor, a type of large shaggy musk ox with curved horns ranging in size from that of a bison to an elephant.

Ruler: There is no central authority among the Samirian tribes. The most powerful and influential tribe is ruled by Warlord Skalera.

Race(s): Human, Orix

Appearance: Samirian humans are tall and well-built by Cydorian standards. They have light skin and light to dark curly hair. Samirian men grow long full beards and wear their hair long. Women wear their hair parted in the middle and tied into two long braids.

Dress: Samirians prefer clothing made of animal skins and furs, generally munglor rawhide. Men wear thigh-length tunics with a belt around the waist and trousers. Women wear unbelted knee or ankle-length tunics. Both sexes wear long capes of bear fur or munglor hair and thick fur boots.



Language(s): The Samirian tribes are united by their own language.

Professions: The majority of Samirian men are hunter and warriors while women raise children and gather and prepare food.

Religions: The chief god of the Samirians is Korg the Uncaring, the horned god of battle.

Favored Weapons: Samirian warriors generally use double-bladed war-axes in battle.

Favored Armor: Samirian warriors wear linked brigandine plates over chain mail and padded undergarments. They wear iron helmets decorated with wings or ram horns.

Cultural Skills: Samirian culture rewards skilled warriors and tacticians. Those who display great prowess in battle are celebrated. Melee Weapon (Axe) +20%; Ride (Wooly Munglor) +20%.

Items: Samirians carry few personal items. Many wear necklaces of bones, teeth, or claws of enemies or creatures they have slain.

Common Male Names: Skalera, Korg, Dorn, Kronus

Common Female Names: Kashalla, Sonja, Kellis, Valis

TARGAN

Dour, humorless, practical inhabitants of a cold, harsh, rocky, wind-swept land with little vegetation

Targans are a dour people from the chill desolate wind-swept region of rural northeastern Cydoria. Though both the rural population and the dwellers of cities such as Vrildar, Norukar, and Basadra are all ethnically and racially Targan with many similar physical and social characteristics, the rural people are culturally distinct enough to warrant a separate identity. Targans are a proud people and are quick to take offense. They mistrust outsiders and offer little hospitality for travelers.

Their lands are barren and polluted. Little grows in the toxic soil. Rural Targans live in round walled villages along the Tyon river valley. The buildings of the village form the wall and the large inner courtyard is cultivated for farming and livestock.

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Ruler: Though the Targan lands are ultimately ruled by Emperor Viktor of Vrildar, most rural Targans offer their allegiance to the local baron of their village.

Race(s): Human, brux.

Appearance: Rural Targans are of average height and build. They have light tan to dark brown skin. Their eyes are round and come in a variety of colors including blue, brown, green, purple, grey, etc. Targan hair ranges from light blonde to dark brown or black and can be curly, wavy, or straight.

Dress: Targans wear heavy clothes and cloaks to protect themselves from the foul wind constantly blowing in from the sea. Targan commoners wear simple tunics and trousers of woolen felt along with tall, wide hats made of felt or leather. Targan clothing tends to be plain and colored beige, brown, or dark muted hues. Most Targans wear goggles, long scarves, fingerless gloves, and heavy cloaks that offer adequate protection from the constant wind and dust.

Language(s): Targans speak Cydorian.

Professions: Most rural Targans are simple farmers, laborers, and merchants.

Religions: Targans worship a pantheon of many gods, chief among them is Fimgar the Warrior, god of victory in battles and of fire.

Favored Weapons: Targan commoners and villagers carry spears and pole arms to defend their walled compounds. Soldiers are issued a spear and short-sword. Elite soldiers are issued air-powered ballistic or plasma rifles. Officers and nobles carry a cutlass and ballistic or plasma pistol.

Favored Armor: Soldiers preparing for battle wear either a chainmail hauberk or Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a heavy cloth tunic, a cape, and steel helmet. Officers wear Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a silk uniform and an ornate steel helmet.



Cultural Skills: The stoic Targans celebrate endurance and keen perception and cultivate such skills. Choose any two of the following: Insight +20%, Listen +20%, Sense +20%, Spot +20%;

Items: Most Targans carry a pouch with a few coins and a small knife for everyday use.

Common Male Names: Grigg, Mirkis, Fadicic

Common Female Names: Ylanna, Cyanna, Bytanna

TYRANNISI

Inbred mutant inhabitants of an isolated city on the edge of a toxic marsh

Tyrannisi were originally ethnically Targan but centuries of isolation have caused them to become culturally distinct from their northern cousins. The inhabitants of Tyrannis have a reputation for inbreeding, depravity, and corruption. The typical Tyrannisi is afflicted with birth defects and mutations, a result of both their centuries of isolation and their proximity to the mutational effects of the Mutoran swamp. Outsiders propagate rumors of curses and cults to dark gods, though a Tyrannisi finds such allegations offensive.

Ruler: The city of Tyrannis is ruled with an iron fist by King Tyran.

Race(s): Human, though exposure to the mutating effects of the swamps makes the definition slightly more debatable.

Appearance: The Tyrannisi share many physical traits with their Targan forebears. A Tyrannisi with few mutations is of average height and build with light tan to dark brown skin. They are universally bald and cannot grow hair on the tops of their head. The men can grow facial hair and it is fashionable to grow long moustaches and beards. Long claw-like fingernails are currently fashionable for both men and women.

Dress: Commoners wear simple woolen tunics and trousers. Nobles wear fine silk tunics, robes, tabards, and surcoats with high flared collars and wide sleeves.



Language(s): The native language of Tyrannis is Targan though most Tyrranisi speak fluent but accented Cydorian.

Professions: The Tyrannisi mines are filled with laborers and slaves. Many of the middle-class are craftsmen who work in gold.

Religions: The Tyrannisi worship the gods of the Targan pantheon though several secret cults worship Galaban, the four-armed god-king of the Swamp-Devils.

Favored Weapons: Tyrannisi soldiers and warriors alike wield long scimitars and shields in battle.

Favored Armor: Soldiers preparing for battle wear either a chainmail hauberk or Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a heavy cloth tunic, a cape, and steel helmet. Officers wear Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a fine silk uniform and an ornate steel helmet.

Cultural Skills: Tyrannisi craftsmen and goldsmiths are renowned throughout the land for their skills in crafting jewelry and ornamentation. Craft (goldsmith) +20%; Spot +20%.

Items: Many Tyrannisi carry a handful of gold nuggets in their pocket or a small gold trinket or amulet for luck.

Special: Tyrannisi are mutants. All Tyrannisi gain one random minor mutation using the table on BRP page 105.

Common Male Names: Tyran, Skaris, Valin

Common Female Names: Alora, Morgana, Natira

VARZAN

Master foresters and hunters from southeast Cydoria.

Varzans are rural hunters and woodsmen who live in the small forest villages in the foothills of the Appareian mountains north and west of Zinj.

Ruler: Though the Varzan lands are ultimately ruled by Emperor Viktor of Vrildar, most rural Varzans offer their allegiance to the local baron of their village.

Race(s): Human.



Appearance: Varzans are of average height and build compared to other Cydorians. Their skin color is dusky red-brown. Their hair is dark brown or black and can be straight, wavy, or curly. Their eyes are almond-shaped and can be either dark blue or dark brown.

Dress: Varzans prefer clothing made of supple leather or heavy cloth in dark natural colors such as brown, green, and tan. All Varzans wear a cape, the color and design of which signifies status and role within the community.

Language(s): The native language of the region is Varzan though many speak fluent Cydorian.

Professions: Most rural Varzans are farmers and hunters.

Religions: The Varzans worship many gods in their native pantheon.

Favored Weapons: Rural Varzans wield weapons such as axes and picks that can also be used as tools. When called to battle, Varzan soldiers and warriors carry axes, spears, crossbows, and a few ballistic rifles.

Favored Armor: Varzans traditionally wear little more than hide or padded cloth in battle.

Cultural Skills: Varzans are skilled at tracking and wilderness survival. Science (Natural History) +20%; Track +20%.

Items: Varzan foresters carry a saw and a climbing harness, hunters a pouch of scents and horns that simulate animal calls to attract or fool prey.

Common Male Names: Zimil, Qamos, Raza

Common Female Names: Katira, Zholanti, Dzijani

VRILDARIAN

The founders of the Vrildarian Empire, from a city that prides itself on its grandeur, cleanliness, and order

Vrildarians are ethnically Targan but culturally distinct. Vrildarians are proud of their heritage as the jewel of Targa. Despite the difficult life one finds in the region, the Vrildarians have been able to build arguably the greatest and most prosperous city of Cydoria, home to beautiful architecture, a well-run city guard, and an advanced university. Vrildarian nobles have long thought of themselves as superior to the other peoples of Cydoria. They believe that, accordingly, all of Cydoria, and eventually Markania, will someday be united under Vrildarian rule. Obviously, Vrildarians tend to come off as snobbish and pretentious. To the Vrildarian, however, their superiority is believed without question, an empirical truth. The typical Vrildarian commoner is less a braggart but still terribly proud of his city and his king.

Vrildarians are typically obsessed with cleanliness and order. An army of slaves endeavor to keep Vrildar spotless, at least by Cydorian standards. This sense of order extends into the Vrildarian justice system. Vrildarians believe in the rule of law and that accused criminals have an opportunity to a hearing in front of a magistrate.



Vrildarians also value progress, momentum, and winning at any cost. They detest withdrawal and retreat and will not tolerate a loser. As a result, Vrildarians love sports and sporting events. The Vrildarian arena is the largest in Cydoria.

Ruler: Vrildar is ruled by Emperor Viktor of Vrildar.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Vrildarians are ethnically Targan. They are of average Cyrdorian height and build. The color of their skin ranges from light tan to dark brown. Their eyes are round and come in a variety of colors including blue, brown, green, purple, grey, etc. Vrildarians hair ranges from light blonde to dark brown or black and can be curly, wavy, or straight.

Dress: Vrildarians may be the best dressed citizens of any city on Uruta. Vrildarian fashion favors fine robes made of silk, linen tabards, and felt surcoats.

Language(s): Vrildarians speak Cyrdorian almost exclusively, though the cosmopolitan nature of the city means many of its inhabitants speak several languages.

Professions: As the capital of the Vrildarian Empire and home of the Imperial Court, the chief occupations in Vrildar are that of politics and bureaucratic administration.

Religions: Vrildarians worship the Targan pantheon of gods, chief among them is Fimgar the Warrior, god of victory in battles and of fire. Foreign cults are forbidden in Vrildar.

Favored Weapons: The Vrildarian commoner carries a short sword or dagger. Soldiers are issued a spear and short sword. Elite soldiers are issued air-powered ballistic or plasma rifles. Officers and nobles carry a cutlass and ballistic or plasma pistol.

Favored Armor: Soldiers preparing for battle wear either a chainmail hauberk or Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a heavy cloth tunic, a cape, and steel helmet. Officers wear Rhakadian mesh under-armor under a silk uniform and an ornate steel helmet. Champions preferscale mail, brigandine, or chain mail.

Cultural Skills: Vrildarians favor those who are skilled with words and public speaking, as well as those well versed in strategy. The university encourages academic skills and knowledge. Choose any two of the following: Command +20%, Persuade +20%, Strategy +20%, Knowledge (any) +20%, Science (any) +20%.

Items: The average Vrildarian carries identity papers and any documentation verifying legal ownership of any advanced technology.

Common Male Names: Viktor, Valinus, Rappan, Fimgar

Common Female Names: Vlandra, Djanniva, Tsanda

XOOG

The freed slave-races of an ancient lost culture: the hulking bruxes, the clever jinxes, and the formidable orixes

Civilized xoog, including bruxes, jinxes, and orixes, live in insular enclaves within human cities. Although many xoogs adopt characteristics of the dominant culture around them, the communities remain culturally distinct. Even within the enclaves, the separate xoog races tend to cluster together. Enclaves are invariably small, often walled off from the rest of the city, and densely populated.

Humans visiting a xoog enclave are exposed to an almost alien world. Jinx shops sell services and wares that cater to specific needs of their xoog kin. Orixes sharpen weapons and hone their unarmed combat skills in street fights. Bruxes constantly build and re-build; often moving stone blocks from one side of the street to the other for no other reason that because they are there. Food stalls cater to the unique tastes of each race: rats, cats, and tubers for jinxes; Boar haunches and whole pumpkins for bruxes; boar and giant mushrooms for orixes. All flavored with spices and sauces a human would find inedible.

Ruler: xoog enclaves are generally led by a council of jinxes that choose or elect a speaker to represent them.

Race(s): Bruxes, jinxes, orixes, human.

Appearance: Bruxes are tall and muscular with long hanging arms and a hunched posture. They possess a prominent cranial ridge and brows and small nose. Jinxes are short and skinny with disproportionately large head, hands, and feet. Their heads are pointed at the back of the skull and they often possess prominent noses. Orixes are slightly more muscular than humans. Their heads are pointed, with prominent brows and small noses. Long canines, upper and lower, often protrude from the mouth. Females are called brood-mothers. Mature brood-mothers are large corpulent masses of flesh, almost incapable of movement. Almost all xoogs are completely hairless. The propensity for adaptation and mutation often creates unexpected variability in the appearance of all three races.

Dress: Bruxes wear simple tunics, leather aprons or jackets, gloves, boots, and caps. Jinxes tend to wear clothing of finer material, linens and silks. Jinxes generally go shoeless. Orixes wear sturdy padded tunics and tabards, or leather harnesses and loin-cloths.



Language(s): A few enclaves have developed their own languages but most speak Cydorian.

Professions: Bruxes tend to be laborers and slaves. Jinxes are usually skilled clerks, craftsmen, merchants, physicians, servants, spies, and thieves. Orixes prefer professions such as assassin, athlete, hunter, soldier, or warrior.

Religions: Most xoogs worship the brood-mother of their village or enclave as a living goddess. Some have formed secret cults to Zorin. These cults believe Zorin still lives, sleeping, and will one day return to lead his children to conquer the world.

Favored Weapons: Bruxes avoid combat and do not learn weapon use. Jinxes prefer crossbows, daggers, and short swords. Orixes train in swords and spears.

Favored Armor: Bruxes do not wear armor and avoid confrontation. Jinxes wear cloth and leather armor. Orixes wear simple utilitarian battle armor with little ornamentation.

Cultural Skills: Xoog enclaves are tight-knit communities. Everyone knows everyone else, whom they can trust, and where they can go for help. Knowledge (Enclave) +20%; Knowledge (Streetwise) +20%.

Items: Bruxes often carry a slate around their neck with instructions written in chalk. The brux cannot read the instructions, they are meant to help overseers direct bruxes who seem lost. Jinxes often carry a cane. Orixes have no use for sentimental keepsakes or non-essential pieces of equipment.

Common Brux Names: Krunk, Gick, Pung, Unk

Common Jinx Names: Gingi, Yooki, Sirta, Kreeta

Common Orix Names: Grindis, Ullex, Seshrin, Arblik

ZINJANI

Thieves, merchants, murderers, and diplomats

There is an ancient saying, “The tongue of a Zinjani is a dagger wrapped in silk and dipped in honey.” The idiom refers to the Zinjani knack for parting a customer from their money using sweet words. Trading and barter are a part of the Zinjani identity.

The Zinjani themselves their own verion of the saying, “Honey first, then silk. If these fail, use the dagger.” This portion speaks to the Zinjani reputation for thievery and villainy, a stereotype at which Zinjani are quick to take offense. The strategic location of Zinj between the northern and southern cities of Cydoria made it a natural trading port and the people of Zinj have simply turned that to their advantage.

Zinjani are trained from birth in how to sweet talk customers, close the deal, and make a profit. The lower classes of Zinj, and a few of the upper classes, are also taught how to pick pockets, move silently, avoid notice, scale walls, disarm traps, open locks, and other nefarious arts. It would be inaccurate to call these professionals criminals for there are few laws in Zinj to break. Instead, every Zinjani is responsible for the security of his own property and life.

Ruler: Zinjani is ruled by King Kafir, a figurehead leader. The real power lies with the Trader’s Guild.

Race(s): Human.

Appearance: Zinjani are ethnically Varzan but are culturally distinct from their rural cousins. The Zinjani are slightly shorter and stockier than the average Cydorian. Their skin is dusky red-brown. Their hair is generally dark brown to black and can be straight, wavy, or curly. Like their Varzan cousins, Zinjani have dark blue or dark brown almond-shaped eyes.

Dress: Zinjani dress according to their station and wealth. Poor Zinjani wear cotton tunics, vests, and loose fitting trousers. Merchants wear fine linen robes and surcoats dyed in fabulous colors. Nobles wear light silk tunics and loose baggy trousers supported by wide silk sashes. It is currently fashionable for Zinjani nobles to wear finely embroidered linen capes.

Language(s): Most Zinjani speak Cydorian as their native language though many commoners still speak Varzan.

Professions: Among commoners, the preferred professions are merchant, beggar, craftsman, criminal, gambler, laborer, servant, slave, thief, and warrior. Well-to-do commoners can find work as assassins, priests, and spies.

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Religions: Zinjani, both commoner and noble, pay tithes to the priests of Zopat, Lord of Merchants and Moneylenders.

Favored Weapons: The weapon most closely associated with the city of Zinj is the scimitar. Zinjani are also deadly accurate with a crossbow. Zinjani soldiers are armed with javelins, scimitars, and small round shields. Champions prefer massive tulwars and khopeshes.

Favored Armor: Zinjani soldiers wear chain hauberks and a spiked steel helmet.

Cultural Skills: By far, the most cultivated skill in Zinj is fast talk. Many Zinjani are also proficient in sleight of hand, hiding, and sneaking. Fast Talk +20%; Choose any one of the following: Appraise +20%, Bargain +20%, Sleight of Hand +20%, Stealth +20%, Dodge +20%.

Items: A typical Zinjani carries a money pouch, a dagger, an abacus, climbing claws, and black face makeup.

Common Male Names: Kafir, Zopat, Quolos

Common Female Names: Dizani, Baikiri, Zairana

STEP FOUR: CHOOSE A RACE AND GENERATE STATISTICS

Many intelligent species coexist on or visit the world of Uruta. What follows are just a sampling of those that are good candidates for player character adventurers. Choose one. Your choice determines the character's starting attributes.

Swords of Cydoria does not use the optional Education characteristic mentioned on BRP page 27.

HUMAN (URUTAN, CYDORIAN, MARKANIAN, ETC.)

The human races native to the planet Uruta are essentially unchanged from ancient times.

Appearance

Humans come in many shapes, sizes, types, and colors, each generally identified with a geographic region. Common generalized physical descriptions of various human cultural groups can be found "Step Three: Choose a Cultural Background", see pages 10-30.

Behavior

Pinning general behavioral characteristics to the entire panoply of the human race would be foolhardy. Common generalized behavioral stereotypes of various human cultural groups can be found "Step Three: Choose a Cultural Background", see pages 10-30.



Human Player Characters

Urutan humans follow the standard rules for creating human characters found in BRP.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+6	13

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 21.

Powers

Other Powers: Humans may spend power points on Fate or they may learn any set of powers without restriction as long as they meet the requirements.



Brux Player Characters

Bruxes can make excellent melee fighters but suffer from the rage that can make them a liability in battle.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+18	25
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+14	21
INT	2D6	7
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	2D6	7
APP	2D6	7

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 33.

Powers

Brux Rage: Bruxes run the risk of becoming enraged and going berserk in times of great stress. When a brux receives a major wound in battle, he must make a Luck roll or become enraged. An enraged brux will fight unceasingly and indiscriminately. For the duration of the rage, the brux may only take attack actions, against enemies first, then against allied NPCs when there are no enemies to attack, then against allied player characters when there are no NPCs to attack. An enraged brux receives one extra attack made on the last DEX rank of the round (or last strike rank if that optional rule is used). An enraged brux receives no bonus or penalty to the attack action as a result of being enraged. An enraged brux, however, has no instinct for self-preservation. Any dodges or parries made by the brux during the rage are reduced by 30% in addition to any other modifiers such as for additional actions. An enraged brux ignores any unconsciousness stemming from the initial major wound and any subsequent major wound. A fatal wound is still fatal to an enraged brux, but the brux will remain conscious and continue attacking until the end of the round, temporarily ignoring the fatal wound, and then finally collapsing at the end of DEX rank 1. An enraged brux may make a Luck roll at the beginning of each Combat Round to attempt to end the rage. The rage persists until the brux has made a successful Luck roll to end it, or until the brux is dead.

Mutations: Roll three times on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for three minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the mutation is major. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Other Powers: Bruxes cannot spend power points on Fate, nor can they learn biomancy, evocation, or Ta'oudh. They may use potions, but ingesting any potion causes one temporary random mutation in addition to any effect granted by the potion.

**BRUX**

The ancient wizard Zorin created these beings to serve as manual laborers to build the Nazarian Civilization. Like orixes and jinxes, bruxes are birthed fully-grown from brood-mothers. They were originally created for brute strength and carrying capacity.

Appearance

Bruxes are muscular grey or blue-skinned humanoids. They stand two to two-and-one-half meters tall and weigh 175 to 200 kilograms. Brux possess a heavy brow ridge, high cheekbones, a small snub nose located between the eyes, small ears located below and behind the cheekbone, and a thick bony ridge on the top of the skull. Their bodies are thickly muscled and their massive shoulders, backs, and upper arms give them a hunched appearance. Civilized bruxes lack body hair. Other than skin color and variations in size, there are few characteristics that might distinguish one brux from any other.

Behavior

Bruxes are predisposed to servitude and hard work. They are easily cowed by a harsh tone of voice and are good at following simple directions, making them very desirable as laborers. They are, however, not very intelligent. They lack imagination, and have trouble understanding information or instructions taken out of context. Modern civilized bruxes living among humans are able to find work as laborers. They tend to live in enclaves with jinxes who control the access to brood-mothers. Bruxes are, by design, normally docile and difficult to anger. Once enraged, a brux can become very difficult to calm or control.

CAPRIDIAN

Capridians are humanoid descendants of grazing herbivores. At home on the Capridian plateau, the technologically unsophisticated Capridians spend most of their time meditating, reading, discussing philosophy, and seeking spiritual enlightenment. Occasionally, a Capridian will suffer wanderlust and will leave his homeland to explore the world. They are friendly and inquisitive, generally peaceful but not afraid of a fight when all other options have been eliminated.

Appearance

An adult Capridian stands nearly three meters tall and can weigh as much as 110 kilograms. A coat of coarse hair covers their lithe bodies. Their heads and faces resemble a cross between a goat and an antelope, framed by a leonine mane of long hair. Two hard ridges grow from their brows like wide flat horns. Their ears are deer-like, located on the sides of the head behind and below each cheek. Their arms terminate in three thick digits, two fingers and one opposed thumb, each ending in a hoof-like nail. Their feet are similar to an antelope's, with elevated heels and two thick hoof-like toes.

Behavior

They live a peaceful agrarian existence on the plateau of Capridia in northern central Markania. For the most part, Capridians crave nothing more than to be left alone on their plateau to tend to their fields of niva rice, their primary source of food. They are a thoughtful, spiritual people who seek peace and enlightenment. They live in sod-covered homes and build a few buildings of adobe and thatch. The large Capridian fingers are not very dexterous so their handicrafts tend to be crude and primitive. Capridians have few material needs, trade very little, and make poor slaves, so are ignored by the outside world. Occasionally, about one in twenty Capridians will leave their peaceful village to explore the world, to seek adventure, and expand their knowledge. They are free to leave and are welcome to return at any time to share with the others the knowledge they have gained. Though normally peaceful, they are not pacifistic or cowardly. They will fight to defend themselves or others. Many Capridians are masters of the staff, mace, and spear.

Capridian Player Characters

Capridians favor the intellectual professions such as scholars and explorers. Many Capridians have become biomancers or psimages.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+9	16
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+10	17
DEX	2D6	7
APP	2D6+4	11

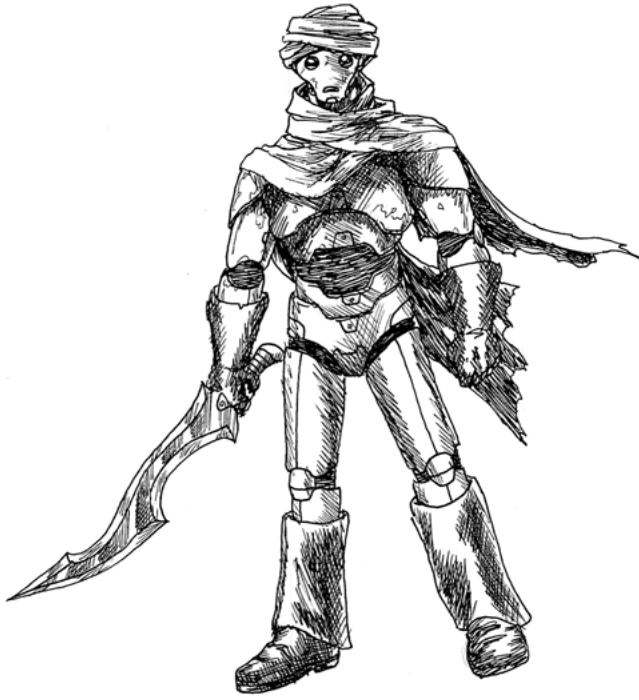
Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 25.

Powers

Armor: 1-point hide (can wear other armor, usually padded)

Other Powers: Capridians may spend power points on Fate or they may learn any set of powers without restriction as long as they meet the requirements.





CYBERDROID

The robotic cyberdroids hail from the ancient domed cities of Sakata in the icy wastes of northern Markania.

Appearance

Cyberdroids are the same size and shape as humans but their appearance is obviously mechanical. Their bodies are covered in a metal, plastic, and rubber exoskeleton. Their optical and auditory sensors are equivalent to the eyes and ears of a human. They lack a sense of smell or taste. Their tactile sensors are capable only of registering pressure, temperature, and texture. To a cyberdroid, sandpaper or silk, soft skin or rusted iron, all are simply textures to be recognized. Cyberdroids are asexual and lack gender differentiation.

Behavior

Although robotic, cyberdroids possess free will and a strong sense of self. Their culture has a long history and the cyberdroids revere and emulate the semi-mythical Aya heroes of their legends. As such, most cyberdroids seek to create their own legacy as a warrior or explorer, to add their own names to the ranks of the legendary heroes of Ohn. Cyberdroids are capable of experiencing the full range of emotions a human does, including love, envy, hatred, and despair.

Cyberdroid Player Characters

Cyberdroids make excellent warriors and assassins.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+7	14
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+6	13

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 23.

Powers

Armor: 4-point metal covering

Hit Points: Cyberdroids have hit points and take damage like a living character and are likewise subject to critical hits and major and fatal wounds. Cyberdroids do not bleed but instead suffer ongoing damage to sensitive internal components or parts. Cyberdroids do not feel pain (this has no game effect).

Immunities: Cyberdroids do not need to eat, breathe, or sleep in the conventional sense. They are immune to poison and disease. They do not feel pain and cannot be tortured.

Psychic Immunity: Cyberdroids are immune to the following psychic powers—Aura Detection, Emotion Control, Empathy, Mind Blast, Mind Control, Sensitivity, Telepathy, or any other power or effect that affects the mind. Cyberdroids are immune to Sanity point loss.

Rechargeable: Cyberdroids do not need to sleep or rest as a human does. Instead, independent cyberdroids can operate 24 hours on a full charge before they need to recharge else they shut down. Recharging involves shutting down for 1-4 hours while the cyberdroid's internal generator restores its power capacitors. A cyberdroid that is recharging is still conscious, able to communicate, and can perceive its surroundings, but they cannot move or act. Cyberdroids cannot become fatigued and do not suffer Fatigue point loss.

Reduced Smell/Taste: Cyberdroids have no sense of taste or smell. Treat as the Reduced Sense (Smell/Taste) major mutation.

Repairable: Cyberdroids do not recover lost hit points the way a living character does. They must be repaired by a qualified technician using either Repair (Electronic) or Repair (Mechanical). Repairing a damaged cyberdroid is a task that requires 1D6 hours per skill check. A cyberdroid may repair itself as a *Difficult* action. See BRP page 73 for more information on the Repair skill.

Susceptibility: Cyberdroids are susceptible to electric- and magnetic-based damage and attacks and take additional 1D6 damage when affected by attacks and powers based on those energies.

Tà'oudh Immunity: Cyberdroids are immune to the following Tà'oudh powers—Blind, Blinding Bolt, Calm, Disfigure, Disfiguring Bolt, Disrupt, Disrupting Bolt, Enrage, Healing Touch, Hypnotic Gaze, Immobilize, Immobilizing Bolt, Restore, Sense Presence, Stun, Stunning Bolt, or any other power that affects the mind or nervous system of a target.

Other Powers: Cyberdroids cannot spend power points on Fate, nor can they learn biomancy, psi-magic, or Tà'oudh, or consume potions. Cyberdroids may use super powered gadgets and the ancient artifacts of the Sdara Vatra.



DAKA

Daka are reptilian men from the deserts of the far west. There are three daka cultures. The Dazi of the Narvus desert are relatively primitive and are hostile towards outsiders. The subterranean daka known as the Tintazi of Arus are a primitive tribal race that hates those that live on the surface world. The civilized Ragana are xenophobic like their primitive cousins but tolerate limited outside trade and contact and are even known to travel to foreign lands.

Appearance

Daka are similar in size to human beings with the same range in body shapes and sizes. They are, on average, more intelligent, stronger, and more agile than humans. Daka fingers terminate in sharp talons which can be used as weapons in unarmed combat. Their skin is rough and scaly. Daka are warm-blooded but prefer warm climates. Daka become listless and tired in cool or temperate climates and will fall asleep in temperatures below freezing.

Behavior

The daka mind and culture is alien to humans and vice versa. Daka tend to be unsentimental, clinical, and brutally honest. Daka have the habit of sitting completely motionless and still, giving humans the impression that the daka is uninterested or not paying attention.

Daka Player Characters

Many daka leave their homeland to explore the world as warriors, merchants, and scholars.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+7	14
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+9	16
APP	2D6+5	12

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 25.

Powers

Armor: 1-point scales (can wear other armor)

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the daka must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

Talons: +1D6 damage to the character's normal Brawl damage.

Other Powers: Daka may spend power points on Fate or may learn any set of powers without restriction as long as they meet the requirements.

DERU

The deru are a twisted, albino, gnome-like race of possibly extra-terrestrial origin. Indeed, deru legends recount how they came to Uruta from another world at the dawn of time. They live in cavernous cities beneath the northern Aparrian mountains. They are completely subterranean. Their diet consists of fish and cultivated fungi. In the dark, they sense their surroundings through superb hearing and by detecting vibrations in the rock through their bare feet and hands. They are miners and have a knack for locating mineral veins by touch and taste. They trade their minerals with surface dwellers. They rarely leave their underground cities during the day because their large bulbous eyes and pale skin are very susceptible to sunlight.

Appearance

Deru stand just over one meter tall and weigh 20 to 30 kilograms. Their body resembles a plump wrinkly peanut with short stocky legs and long muscular arms. They lack a visible neck. Their hands and feet are oversized with long thick fingers and almost prehensile toes to aid in climbing. The palms of their hands and the soles of their feet are extremely sensitive to texture, heat, and vibration and are covered with abrasive ridges which can adhere to sheer surfaces. Deru generally wear no shoes when underground but wear leather coverings over the tops of their hands and feet when working the rock. Their skin is pallid, almost translucent, and burns easily in the sun.



Their skulls are thick and covered in calcified nodules, with heavy brow ridges and cheek bones. Their bulbous eyes are the size of lemons and heavily lidded. They are easily blinded by bright light and wear dark goggles when travelling on or near the surface. Their nose is flat with slitted nostrils. Their ears are small, little more than flaps on the side of their heads. They lack lips and have wide frog-like mouths. The surface world is a disorienting place for a deru. They are easily overwhelmed with the intense sensory stimuli of bright lights, burning heat, strong smells, and deafening sounds.

Behavior

Deru are laconic and dour. They prefer the silent stillness of the caves to the kaleidoscopic cacophony of the surface. They rarely speak and would prefer if others would hold their tongues still as well. They value plain speaking honesty and disdain prevaricating double-talk. A deru's loyalties are to his clan, to his brothers and sisters, and to his trusted friends, in that order.

Deru Player Characters

Many deru warriors and merchants have left Home to find their way in the world. A few are exiled criminals who have been cast out.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+11	18
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+7	14
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+5	12

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 26.

Powers

Allergy to Sunlight: Deru are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Climbing Digits: The ends of the deru fingers and toes are ridged, like that of a gecko, enhancing their climbing skill and their ability to cling to sheer surfaces, granting a +40% bonus to their Climb skill.

Keen Touch: Treat as the Keen Sense (Touch) minor mutation (BRP page 107).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

Reduced Vision: Treat as the Reduced Sense (Vision) major mutation (BRP page 109).

Sense Ore: Treat as the Sensitivity minor mutation (BRP page 109). Pick one type of ore the deru is sensitive to. Examples include gold, silver, iron, thorium, thallium, zephyrium, platinum, etc.

Tracking Sense: The combination of several keen senses enhances the deru's ability to follow a trail with minimal clues, providing a +20% bonus to Track skill tests.

Other Powers: Deru cannot spend power points on Fate, nor can they learn biomancy, psi-magic, or Taoudh. They may use potions without restriction.

JINX

During the Nazarian Civilization, these beings acted as servants and assistants. Many jinxes find their niche as a hard working helpful member of society while others have learned that they can use their talents as pickpockets and spies.

Appearance

Jinxes were designed to be more intelligent than the other xoog races, but were intentionally made shorter, thinner, and weaker than their counterparts. Jinxes have adapted well to living among humans, to the point of closely resembling them. Jinxes are short small humanoids with blue to purple skin. Jinxes are one meter tall and weigh thirty to 35 kilograms. They are normally hairless but some mutant jinxes have been known to sport bushy eyebrows, pates of hair, and even beards. They possess long pointed heads. Their noses are prominent and hawk-like. Their brows are prominent and their eyes are bright and inquisitive. Their small pointed ears are located behind and below the high cheekbones. Their hands and feet are large for their small size.

Behavior

Industrious civilized jinxes are renowned for the services they perform. They mend shoes, clean homes, raise children, and are generally helpful. However, since they gained their freedom after The War of Zorin, they have developed a code: they work only under strict contract. Should the term of a contract or arrangement be violated, the same happy helpful jinx will exact terrible revenge, the details of which are rarely spelled out in the contract but always of a nature connected to the work being performed.



For example, if a customer fails to pay for mended shoes, that customer may find all their shoes stolen or destroyed. Likewise, if a customer fails to pay for baby-tending services, the baby may be switched for another random child.

Zorin designed jinxes to be ignored. They are innately adept at keeping a low profile and remaining unnoticed. Many jinxes use this ability to earn a living as a pickpocket, thief, or spy. Like their hardworking cousins, they are quick to wrath if an arrangement is violated.

Jinxes are also innately expert negotiators, hagglers, representatives, and solicitors. Many trade caravans or business interests are represented by jinx factors. Many jinxes also make arrangements with their brux cousins. They represent bruxes in negotiations act as brains to their brawn.

Jinx Player Characters

Zorin created the jinxes to be dutiful servants and skilled workers. They are small, intelligent, and good with their hands. They have a knack for moving silently and avoiding notice. Jinxes are excellent negotiators, craftsmen, thieves, and swindlers.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	1D3+4	6
INT	2D6+10	17
POW	2D6+12	19
DEX	2D6+10	17
APP	2D6+9	16

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 27.

Powers

Nimble Fingers: A jinx’s tiny fingers provide a +20% bonus to Fine Manipulation skill checks.

Silver Tongue: Jinxes were created to sense the needs and disposition of their masters. They have an innate sense of a person’s moods and desires, granting them a +20% bonus to Fast Talk and Insight skill checks.

Social Camouflage: Zorin specifically designed the jinxes to go unnoticed. As servants, they were to be as unobtrusive as possible. Many modern jinxes utilize this training for thievery. Jinxes receive a +20% bonus to Hide and Stealth skill checks.

Mutations: Roll once on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for a minor mutation. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Other Powers: Jinxes cannot spend power points on Fate, nor can they learn biomancy, psi-magic, or Ta’oudh. They may use potions, but ingesting any potion causes one temporary random mutation in addition to any effect granted by the potion.

ORIX

Orixes were a slave caste of warriors created by Zorin. They were designed for ferocity, toughness, and endurance.

Today, most civilized orixes are found as soldiers and mercenaries. They are also often seen acting as bodyguards for aristocrats or as muscle for organized crime gangs. An orix will never perform physical labor, nor any other task they call “Brux work”.

Appearance

Orixes are humanoids with heavy muscular builds, thick corded neck muscles, large heads, heavy brow-ridges, powerful canines, and intimidating facial features. Their skin is typically colored in bright primary hues of green, blue, purple, or red. Civilized orix lack body hair. Individual orix often possess unique physical features as a result of their inherently unstable breeding. They are considered unattractive and threatening by human standards.

Behavior

Orixes tend to be dour and laconic. They are predisposed to answer all questions with either “Yes, sir” or “No, sir”. Although they do not make friends easily, they are fiercely loyal and will defend their allies with their lives.



Orix Player Characters

The orix are a warrior race created by the ancient wizard Zorin to defend the Nazarian Empire and later fight in his personal army during The War of Zorin. Today, they serve as bodyguards and mercenaries. Orixes tend to be stronger and tougher than humans, but are typically less intelligent. They are quick to anger and can be impatient at times.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+8	15
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+8	15
INT	2D6+2	9
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+7	14
APP	2D6+2	9

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 24.

Powers

Mutations: Roll twice on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for two minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the first mutation rolls is instead major. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Other Powers: Orixes cannot spend power points on Fate, nor can they learn biomancy, psi-magic, or Tàoudh. They may use potions, but ingesting any potion causes one temporary random mutation in addition to any effect granted by the potion.



PHANOSIAN

Phanosians are humans from the alien world of Phanos.

Appearance

Like Urutan humans, Phanosians are racially and physically diverse. They are considered tall by Cydorian standards but are otherwise identical and a Phanosian can easily pass for an Urutan.

Behavior

Phanosians share the same wide range of behavioral traits and proclivities as humans from Uruta, though some generalities can be made based on cultural background. The majority of Phanosians encountered on Uruta hail from the Photan cultural background.

Phanosian Player Characters

Most Phanosians on Uruta are espionage agents providing aid to the Demetrian Resistance.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+5	12
CON	2D6+5	12
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+7	14

Redistribute up to 3 points between your characteristics. No characteristic may be higher than 22.

Powers: Phanosians may spend power points on Fate. They may also create and use potions without restriction. They cannot learn psi-magic, or Tàoudh.

STEP FIVE: DETERMINE CHARACTERISTIC ROLLS

Characteristic rolls are determined for characters using the standard method found on BRP pages 27-28.

STEP SIX: DETERMINE DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS

Derived characteristics are determined for characters using the standard methods found on BRP pages 28-31.

OPTIONS

The “Total Hit Points” option from BRP page 30 is applied. Hit Points are determined by adding CON + SIZ. This value is not halved.

By default, *Swords of Cydoria* does not employ the optional skill bonus, hit points per location, fatigue points, or sanity rules on BRP page 20. Gamemasters are free to use them as they see fit.

STEP SEVEN: DETERMINE PERSONALITY

Swords of Cydoria is a game of epic fantasy adventure. As such, players are allowed to roll or choose a personality option from the personality section on BRP page 21. Record the appropriate skill bonuses for your character.

STEP EIGHT: CHOOSE A PROFESSION

The following professions are appropriate for player characters in the Cydorian milieu. There are other professions, to be sure, but most are unsuitable for the adventuring lifestyle appropriate for the game.

AERO-SHIP PILOT

The last fifty years have seen the Cydorian aero-ship develop from wooden vessels powered by sails to lightweight aluminum craft driven by electric propellers. The pilots of these vessels are skilled in navigating an aerial course over mountains, seas, forests, jungles, and plains using maps, the stars, and landmarks. They must account for the direction and speed of winds and storms that might otherwise push them off course.

Wealth: As per Pilot (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Pilot (BRP page 39).

ARTIST

The arts thrive in the eastern cities of Cydoria. Many sculptors and painters are able to find employment in the service of a noble house. Artists also accompany expeditions to lost cities. They are able to interpret ancient works of art and provide necessary social context that might be otherwise overlooked by more conventional scholars.

Wealth: As per Artist (BRP page 33).

Skills: As per Artist (BRP page 33).

Equipment: Artists possess the tools of their specialty. For example, sculptors possess hammers and chisels, painters a collection of paints, brushes, and canvases, etc.

ASSASSIN

The business of murder thrives amidst the intrigue of Imperial court politics. The skills of professional assassins are in great demand and one trained in the deadly arts can find lucrative employment from anonymous benefactors.

Wealth: As per Assassin (BRP page 34).

Skills: As per Assassin (BRP page 34).

Equipment: An Assassin owns a number of doses of poisons (see BRP page 272) with a combined POT equal to the sum of their characteristics. Assassins also own a disguise kit and a set of lock-picks (BRP page 275).

ATHLETE

Professional athletes compete in the gladiatorial arenas to the roar and adulation of screaming fans. The greatest prizes are awarded to those sports with the highest stakes. To the true champion, victory means limitless wealth while failure can result in exile, permanent injury, or death.

Wealth: As per Athlete (BRP page 34).

Skills: As per Athlete (BRP page 34).

BEGGAR

One of the legacies of the War of Unification are the survivors either missing limbs or with stricken with debilitating mental illness. These unfortunates can find no work and cannot provide for themselves. They must resort to begging on the street to survive. Some beggars are able to find work as informants and spies in the employ of a noble house. Others work as thieves for a thieves' guild or syndicates like the Hidden Hand. Most simply do what they can to survive one day after another.

Wealth: As per Beggar (BRP page 34).

Skills: As per Beggar (BRP page 34).

BIOMANCER

Biomancers study the forbidden alchemy of Zorin, a Nazarian wizard who specialized in bioengineering and mutation. Biomancers create potions that have temporary mutagenic effects on their subjects. These potions last no more than five to ten minutes, after which the subject returns to their original form. The ultimate goal of most biomancers is to create potent potions whose effects are permanent with no harmful side-effects. Many biomancers belong to a secret cabal known as the Society of the Twin Serpents (see page 120.)

Prerequisite: INT 16

Wealth: Average to Wealthy, usually Affluent

Skills: Craft (Elixir), Knowledge (Biology), Knowledge (Chemistry), Science (Alchemy), Persuade, Research, Status, and any three Knowledge skills

Equipment: Destitute biomancers own neither laboratory nor portable equipment. Poor biomancers possess their own portable herbalist's kit (BRP page 274), a handful (1D4) of hand-copied manuscripts on the subject (see Books and Printed Materials, BRP page 273), and work in the laboratory/shop of a master. Average, affluent, and wealthy biomancers own a laboratory/shop equipped with vats for making their own mutagenic compounds, a collection (2D6 for average, 3D8 for affluent, and 4D10 for wealthy) of hand-copied manuscripts on the subject, as well as a portable herbalist's kit.

Special: Biomancers create potions with effects that replicate mutations (see page 77).

BUREAUCRAT

Contrary to popular belief, the Vrildarian Empire is not ruled by noble houses vying for power. It is, in fact, administered by functionaries, technocrats, and court officials. These bureaucratic administrators negotiate the deals that turn the wheels of government. Without the bureaucrats, the armies would go without food or weapons, the lights would go out in Vrildar, the world would fall to Rhakadian space-ships of war, and, worst of all, the taxes that fund the lifestyle of the nobility would go unenforced.

Wealth: As per Politician (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Politician (BRP page 39).

CITY GUARD INVESTIGATOR

Investigators of the city guard are tasked with solving crimes. They possess skills in observation, deduction, and interrogation. Once they are confident in the identity of the perpetrator of a crime, they lead a squad of city guard to apprehend the target. For more information on the City Guard, see page 108.

Wealth: As per Detective (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Detective (BRP page 36) with the following modifications—replace Technical (Computer Use) with Etiquette (any).

Equipment: By tradition, city guard investigators in most Cydorian cities carry a ceremonial sai, a symbol of their rank and position. Investigators carry a set of wrist irons to restrain those apprehended for crimes. They may also carry a melee weapon or firearm for which they have at least 50% skill. Investigators wear heavy clothing, soft leather armor, or adaptive mesh depending on their status and wealth.

Special: May legally use Rhakadian technology including energy weapons and computers.

CLERK

Many merchants, nobles, and scholars rely on the labors of accountants and scribes to keep an accurate record of their finances and activities. Many clerks accompany their employers on expeditions to ensure that budgets are well spent and that records are well-kept.

Wealth: As per Clerk (BRP page 35).

Skills: As per Clerk (BRP page 35) with the following modifications—Technical Skill (Computer Use) is not available as a professional skill.

COMPUTER TECH

Computers are not native to Cydoria but a few alien computers can be found in the Imperial cities and alien industrial facilities, maintained by members of the Brotherhood of Lighting. A few techno-heretics have specialized in the arcane arts of the computer. Phanosian computer techs might be infiltrated onto Uruta to help the Demetrian resistance.

Wealth: As per Computer Tech (BRP page 35).

Skills: As per Computer Tech (BRP page 35).

Equipment: Portable computer (see Computers, BRP page 275), and a portable computer repair kit.

Special: Possession of alien computer technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53. Computer Techs begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

CONSTABLE

In the eastern cities of Cydoria, laws are enforced by the City Guard, a military force of soldiers. Out west, volunteer citizens step up to defend the settlements. A typical frontier settlement is protected by a chief constable and a force of half a dozen deputies.

Wealth: As per Lawman (BRP page 38).

Skills: As per Lawman (BRP page 38).

Equipment: By tradition, constables carry a ceremonial sai, a symbol of their rank and position. They may also carry a melee weapon or firearm for which they have at least 50% skill. They must supply their own armor.

Special: May legally use Rhakadian technology including firearms and computers.

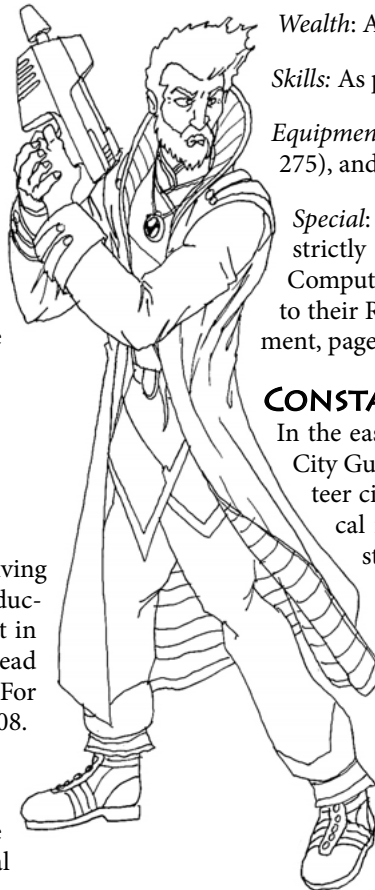
CRAFTSMAN

Blacksmiths, potters, coopers, carpenters, butchers, cobblers, and others provide essential services to Cydorian society. They possess specialized skills that are always in high demand. Craftsmen are especially desired in the western settlements. Noble sponsors are willing to pay hefty sums to entice craftsmen to the frontier.

Wealth: As per Craftsman (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Craftsman (BRP page 36) with the following modifications—remove Repair (Electrical); remove Repair (Electronics); remove repair (Mechanical). Heavy Machine specialties must be limited to low technology devices such as water- and wind-driven mills and machines (see skill modifications).

Equipment: A craftsman owns a portable toolkit appropriate for their craft.



CRIMINAL

From the old-quarter streets of the eastern cities to the untamed wilderness, the criminal element can be found everywhere. Criminals may be independent bandits working alone, members of a small gang terrorizing a neighborhood or village, or members of a sophisticated criminal syndicate such as the Pirates of Dazumi or Hidden Hand.

Wealth: As per Criminal (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Criminal (BRP page 36).

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53.

DRIFTER

The western Markanian frontier is home to many wayfarers and wanderers, exiled veterans and refugees of the War of Unification with no home to return to. These nomads are generally loners looking for temporary work and a hot meal. Some travel in small groups or with their families. They are generally considered undesirable and often run into unwanted trouble from the locals.

Wealth: Destitute.

Skills: Choose an appropriate previous profession. Typical examples include beggar, criminal, soldier, warrior, etc. Add Navigate and Ride (any) to the list of professional skills for that profession.

DROVER

Several eastern entrepreneurs have established vast herds of axen and cattle on the plains of Gatas and Awa. These animals are periodically driven to strategic aero-ship ports for shipment back east, there to feed a growing urban population. It is the job of the drovers to round up these animals and escort them to the ports, a cross-country journey that could take several days or weeks. These drovers are by necessity tough, ill-mannered, and prone to violence.

Wealth: As per Criminal (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Criminal (BRP page 36).

Equipment: A drover owns a mount, such as an anator or bondrus, saddle, bit, bridle, etc. They also generally carry a length of rope, several blankets, a large knife, a wide-brimmed hat, and goggles.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53.

ENTERTAINER

Bards, poets, actors, singers, and storytellers recount and recreate legends in prose, song, and dramatic re-enactment that both educate and entertain. Entertainers may be performers-in-residence for one or more urban theaters or they may be travelling itinerant talents performing in remote frontier settlements.

Wealth: As per Entertainer (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Entertainer (BRP page 36).

EXPLORER

Despite the establishment of settlements and camps throughout the Cydorian and Markanian interior, the vast expanses of these lands remain unmapped and unexplored. The University of Vrildar, as well as various mercantile and commercial enterprises, fund and equip expeditions to explore and map these unknown lands. Most exploratory missions serve a specific commercial purpose: to find new sources of thorium, thallium, or zephyrium, to find new iron fields, to make contact with a lost tribe who might serve as guides, etc. Other missions serve an academic purpose: to diagram a lost ruin or to find carvings to help translate a forgotten language. Occasionally, a mission is purely mercenary: to find lost caches of gold and treasure or an ancient Sdara Vatra relic.

Wealth: As per Explorer (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Explorer (BRP page 36).

FARMER

Most farms are located within fifty kilometers of the Cydorian cities. These farms are owned by nobles and the farmers must pay rent for the land on which they work.

Many farmers have decided to move west, hoping to make a new start on the untamed frontier. These hardy farmers face not only attacks from hostile natives and dangerous beasts, but deadly environmental conditions as well.

Wealth: As per Farmer (BRP page 37).

Skills: As per Farmer (BRP page 37). Replace Firearm (Rifle or Shotgun) with Melee Weapon (Spear). Heavy Machine and Repair (Mechanical) are only appropriate if the farmer is employed by a noble and is authorized to use Rhakadian farming equipment or has obtained farming equipment smuggled onto the planet from Phanosia.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53.

GAMBLER

A gambler makes a living parting a naïve sucker from their money using games of chance. These games, of course, only appear to be random and are in fact designed to favor skilled players familiar with the rules and knowledge of probability. Less reputable gamblers may simply resort to cheating to win. Many professional gamblers travel from town to town, preying upon unsuspecting locals, while others are under the employ of a local inn, taking in travelers as they pass through. Eventually, someone will not take well to losing their money and will demand vengeance. It is the wise gambler that knows when it is time to pull up his roots and move on.

Wealth: As per Gambler (BRP page 37).

Skills: As per Gambler (BRP page 37).



GUARDIAN OF ADHARA - HEALER

In addition to traditional medical and surgical techniques, the ancient order known as the Guardians of Adhara teach its healers the use of mystical powers of Ta'oudh. A Guardian-Healer may cure disease, mend broken bones, and relieve pain with nothing more than a touch to the right nerve cluster and the application of the Oudh. For more information on the Guardians of Adhara, see page 115.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

Skills: First Aid, Insight, Ta'oudh, Knowledge (Ta'oudh), Language (Own), Medicine, Psychotherapy, Research, Spot, choose one Science specialties (Alchemy, Biology, or Psychology).

Equipment: A Guardian-Healer is equipped with an herbalist's kit (BRP page 274). All Guardians of Adhara own a Starblade of any style of sword (see page 63).

Special: Guardians of Adhara practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh (see page 80).

GUARDIAN OF ADHARA - SAGE

The Sages of the Guardians of Adhara practice the ancient mystical art of Ta'oudh to enhance their mental energies and expand their intellect and consciousness. Guardian-Sages are teachers and scholars, speakers and ambassadors, artists and poets, scientists and composers, expressing and unleashing their imagination and creativity via the Oudh. For more information on the Guardians of Adhara, see page 115.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

Skills: Ta'oudh, Knowledge (Ta'oudh), Language (Other), Language (Own), Persuade, Research, Teach, and choose three Craft, Knowledge, or Science skills.

Equipment: All Guardians of Adhara own a Starblade of any style of sword (see page 63).

Special: Guardians of Adhara practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh (see page 80).

GUARDIAN OF ADHARA - SHAPER

These Shapers of the Guardians of Adhara study the art of shaping and directing the Oudh externally. Through careful body control and precise dance-like movement they are able to channel and direct the Oudh, allowing them to strike at a distance, redirect projectiles, blind foes with a glance, or stop an opponent's heart with a gesture. For more information on the Guardians of Adhara, see page 115.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

Skills: Dodge, Insight, Ta'oudh, Knowledge (Ta'oudh), Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (sword), choose four other skills from the following list: Climb, Hide, Listen, Jump, Language (Other), Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride, Spot, Stealth, Swim, Throw, Track.

Equipment: Guardian-Shapers prefer nothing heavier than quilted or soft leather armor. All Guardians of Adhara own a Starblade of any style of sword (see page 63).

Special: Guardians of Adhara practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh (see page 80).

GUARDIAN OF ADHARA - WARRIOR

A warrior of the Guardians of Adhara harnesses the Oudh to enhance their physical abilities. They are faster, stronger, and deadlier than an ordinary warrior. They can kill with a touch, make themselves invisible, or deflect a ballistic projectile with their hand. For more information on the Guardians of Adhara, see page 115.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

Skills: Brawl, Dodge, Grapple, Ta'oudh, Knowledge (Ta'oudh), Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (sword), choose three other skills from the following list: Climb, Hide, Listen, Jump, Language (Other), Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride, Spot, Stealth, Swim, Throw, Track.

Equipment: All Guardians of Adhara own a Starblade of any style of sword (see page 63).

Special: Guardians of Adhara practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh (see page 80).

GUILD ALCHEMIST

Guild alchemists are members of the Octavium, specifically the Brotherhood of Alchemy, a semi-religious secret society devoted to preserving the ancient secrets of chemistry. Guild alchemists specialize in the manufacture of non-biological chemical compounds. Their creations are utilized by craftsmen and in industrial applications. Alchemists are often called upon to create acids, bases, lubricants, fuels, glazes, solvents, etc. For more information on the Octavium, see page 117.

Wealth: Average to Wealthy, usually Affluent.

Skills: Craft (Compound), Knowledge (Chemistry), Science (Alchemy), Research, Status, Perform (Ritual), and any four Knowledge skills.



Equipment: Destitute alchemists own no alchemical equipment or books. Poor alchemists possess their own portable alchemy kit (equivalent to a Chemistry Set, BRP page 275) and a hand-ful (1D4) of hand-copied manuscripts on the subject (see Books and Printed Materials, BRP page 273), but work as an employee in a laboratory/shop of a master. Average, affluent, and wealthy alchemists own a laboratory/shop and a collection (2D6 for average, 3D8 for affluent, and 4D10 for wealthy) of hand-copied manuscripts on the subject and a portable alchemy kit.

GUILD ENGINEER

Guild engineers are members of the Octavium. Guild engineers design, build, and maintain large-scale creations such as mines, bridges, walls, and buildings. Guild engineers should choose a guild appropriate to their engineering specialty. For example, architects belong to the Brotherhoods of Iron or Stone, hydraulics engineers belong to the Brotherhood of Water, etc. Guild engineers sometimes accompany expeditions into ancient ruins where their skills are invaluable in rebuilding ruined cities or gaining access to blocked tombs or chambers. For more information on the Octavium and the various guilds, see page 117.

Wealth: As per Engineer (BRP page 36).

Skills: As per Engineer (BRP page 36).

Special: Guild Engineers begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

GUILD MECHANIC

Guild mechanics are members of the Octavium, specifically the Brotherhood of Gears, a semi-religious secret society devoted to preserving the ancient secrets of machines. Prior to alien contact, Cydorian machines consisted of mills, hammers, and lathes powered by water and wind mills and a few experimental steam engines. Twenty years ago, a new guild, the Brotherhood of Lighting, was formed to repair and maintain electric motors. Brotherhood of Lightning mechanics are the only individuals legally allowed to service the electric motors that drive modern aero-ships and travel-pods. For more information on the Octavium and the various guilds, see page 117.

Wealth: As per Mechanic (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Mechanic (BRP page 39).

Equipment: Mechanics carry a toolkit required by their specialty.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53. Guild Mechanics begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

GUILD TECHNICIAN

Electronics and small electric devices are the exclusive realm of the Brotherhood of Lightning, a semi-religious guild of technicians trained on the alien world of Malus. Initiates of the Brotherhood of Lightning are the only technicians legally allowed to design, repair, and maintain of advanced technology. For more information on the Brotherhood of Lightning, see page 117.

Wealth: as per Technician (BRP page 43).

Skills: as per Technician (BRP page 43).

Equipment: Guild technicians possess a portable kit of electronics tools and magnifying goggles.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53. Guild Technicians begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

HUNTER

Skilled huntsmen provide meat to rural villages and remote settlements where it is infeasible to raise herd animals. They also serve as excellent wilderness guides and trackers.

Wealth: As per Hunter (BRP page 37).

Skills: As per Hunter (BRP page 37) except that Firearm (Rifle or Shotgun) is not an available professional skill for hunters in this setting.

Equipment: Hunters possess a ranged weapon for which they have 50% skill. They also own an appropriate mount, saddle, bit, bridle, etc., as well as several blankets, a length of rope, a large knife, a fire-starter, and other items useful for outdoor survival.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53.

JOURNALIST

Cydoria has no journalistic tradition in the conventional sense. There is no printing press; all written information must be transcribed by hand. News of important events, public edicts and laws, and other announcements are copied by scribes and distributed by official heralds to the nobility. The nobility then has the information posted in a public place and assigns criers to verbally distribute the information. Some independent groups and individuals have, on occasion, replicated this model on a smaller scale, posting their own texts and spreading words using their own criers. These groups are illegal and are invariably hunted down and eliminated by the Inquisition.

Wealth: As per Journalist (BRP page 37).

Skills: As per Journalist (BRP page 37). Remove Art (Photography), Craft (Photography), and Technical (Computer Use).

KATARI ASSASSIN

The Katari are a secretive guild of professional assassins. Stories of their abilities and exploits are shrouded in myth and legend. Katari train from youth at remote compounds high in the Apparian mountains. Their rite of initiation involves the capture and ritual sacrifice of an innocent victim. They are cold-blooded and ruthless. The Katari practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh which gives them super-human powers and abilities. For more information on the Katari, see page 117.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: As per Assassin (BRP page 34).

Skills: Dodge, Hide, Ta'oudh, Listen, Martial Arts, Spot, Stealth, and three from the following: Brawl, Disguise, Grapple, Energy Weapon (any), Firearm (any), Fine Manipulation, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride, Throw, Track.

Equipment: A Katari assassin owns a number of doses of poisons (BRP page 272) with a combined POT equal to the sum of their characteristics. Assassins also own a disguise kit and a set of lock-picks (BRP page 275).

Special: Katari assassins practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh. Katari assassins may select a number of levels of Ta'oudh Powers based on the power level of the campaign and the character's Ta'oudh skill.

LABORER

Despite the introduction of advanced electrical engines and robotic slaves from alien worlds, the majority of work in Cydoria is still performed by manual laborers. Laborers are in demand across the continent, from the largest eastern cities to the smallest frontier settlement.

Wealth: As per Laborer (BRP page 37).

Skills: As per Laborer (BRP page 37). Replace Repair (Mechanical) with Repair (Plumbing). Remove Technical (Computer Use).

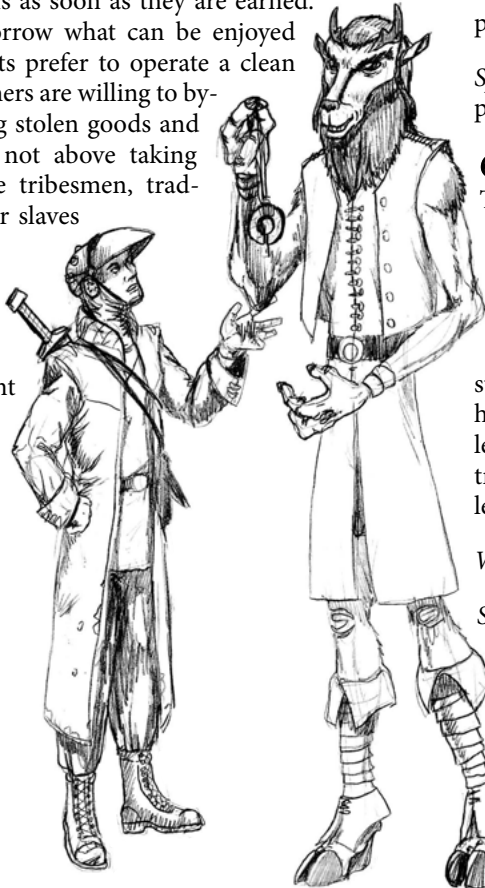
MERCHANT

The aero-ship has opened up an entire new avenue of mercantile opportunity for the entrepreneur trader. Merchants travel the globe, buying low, selling high, and some stashing away their profits for the one day when they can retire in wealth and leisure. Others blow their gains as soon as they are earned.

Why put off for tomorrow what can be enjoyed today? Many merchants prefer to operate a clean legal business while others are willing to bypass the laws by selling stolen goods and smuggling. Some are not above taking advantage of primitive tribesmen, trading worthless beads for slaves or furs.

Wealth: As per Merchant (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Merchant (BRP page 39).



NOBLE

Contact with aliens and the upheavals of the War of Unification have resulted in massive shifts to the structure of Cydorian nobility, presenting new opportunities for acquisition of power and new challenges to once well-established noble houses. Modern nobles may strive for favor in the Imperial court, fight for freedom in the Demetrian resistance, establish a commercial concern in search of fame and fortune, or simply travel the world seeking adventure and glory. For more information on the Cydorian nobility, see page 105.

Wealth: As per Noble (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Noble (BRP page 39).

OCULUS WARRIOR

Oculus warriors are mercenaries that sell their services as warriors, bodyguards, and generals. They are specialists in the mystical fighting art of Ta'oudh. They are able to channel the Oudh to perform amazing feats of superhuman strength, agility, and prowess. For more information on the Oculus, see page 118.

Prerequisite: POW 16.

Wealth: as per Warrior (BRP page 44).

Skills: Brawl, Dodge, Grapple, Ta'oudh, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), and three other skills from the following list as specialties: Climb, Energy Weapon (any), Firearm (any), Hide, Listen, Jump, Language (Other), Ride, Spot, Stealth, Swim, Throw, Track.

Equipment: All Oculus warriors own a Starblade-Katana (see page 63).

Special: Oculus warriors practice the mystical art of Ta'oudh (see page 83).

OCCULTIST

The occultist is a scholar that specializes in the suppressed histories of Cydoria and Markania. Many are the little-known legends and myths that contradict the official narratives endorsed by the Vrildarian Empire. Some occultists study the true nature of the Aya, the secret techniques of Sdara Vatron super-science; the forbidden histories of Zorin which say that he is still alive but sleeping in a hidden cave; or the legendary early history of the Guardians of Adhara. Occultists investigate these legends, hoping to glean the facts from the myths and learn the truth about the hidden history ignored by their mainstream colleagues.

Wealth: As per Occultist (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Occultist (BRP page 39). Add Knowledge (Oudh) and Knowledge (Artifact) to the list of other skills.

Equipment: Occultists often collect tomes and artifacts from ancient civilizations. An occultist begins play with a small library (2D6) of manuscripts (see Books and Printed Materials, BRP page 272) and a single artifact of the Sdara Vatra (see page 168).

Special: The occultist may learn and practice psi-magic (see page 79).

PHYSICIAN

Cydorian physicians possess knowledge of the human physiology and biology roughly equivalent to that possessed by a physician in our year 1900 CE. In addition to the traditional tools of surgery and medicines, the Cydorian physician has access Sdara Vatra relics, mystic salves, Nazarian biochemistry, and alien technological advances courtesy of the Rhakadian League or the Phanosian Alliance.

Wealth: Average to Affluent.

Skills: First Aid, Insight, Language (Other), Language (Own), Medicine, Research, Science (Alchemy), Science (Biology), Spot, Status.

Equipment: Physicians carry a portable surgery kit (BRP page 274).

PRIEST

Many gods are worshipped in the various cities and countries of Cydoria. The priests speak for the gods, enforce their will, and serve the gods purposes in the world. Some priests are teachers and leaders, some oversee charities and public works projects, and others simply collect the sacrifices and tithes offered to the gods and their servants by the faithful.

Wealth: As per Priest (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Priest (BRP page 40).

Equipment: A priest carries the holy symbol (or symbols) of the god(s) they speak for.

Special: The *Swords of Cydoria* setting assumes that the gods are, in fact, nothing more than creations of myth and culture. However, gamemasters should feel free to change this assumption for their stories, creating a world where the gods are real and priests possess supernatural or occult powers.

PSI-MAGE

The mysterious and reclusive psi-mage spends his entire life studying the psychic powers of psi-magic. Through their mastery of psi-magic, psi-mages may achieve seemingly magical effects. Psi-mages are also renowned for their relationship with the demonic Aya. Many psi-mages belong to a cabal known as the Psi-Mages of Sarkaan. For more information on the Psi-Mages of Sarkaan, see page 119.

Wealth: Poor to Wealthy, usually Affluent.

Skills: Dodge, Insight, Knowledge (Artifacts), Knowledge (Occult), Listen, Persuade, Sense, Spot, plus any two Psychic Power skills.

Equipment: A psi-mage begins play with a small library (2D6 books) of grimoires (see Books and Printed Materials, BRP page 272).

Special: Psi-mages practice psi-magic, a type of psychic power (see page 79).

SAILOR

Despite the superiority of the aero-ship over sea travel, naval ships have not disappeared. Naval ships outnumber aero-ships over one hundred to one and the sea is still the cheapest and most prevalent, though admittedly not the fastest, means of transporting goods and passengers. Sailors, navigators, and other maritime occupations are still in high demand.

Wealth: As per Sailor (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Sailor (BRP page 40).

SCHOLAR

Learned academics with knowledge of history, archaeology, linguistics, and anthropology are in high demand in Cydoria. These scholars help to decode the mysteries of the ancients, decipher their lost languages, and recover their forgotten knowledge. Many scholars accompany explorers on missions of discovery into the ancient ruins of Sdara Vatra, Nazaria, and other lost kingdoms.

Wealth: As per Scholar (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Scholar (BRP page 40).

SCIENTIST

Most scientists work for the University of Vrildar. Scientists such as biologists and botanists study the strange animals and plants created by the Seeds of Creation and the even stranger mutations that resulted from the aftermath of The War of Zorin. Meanwhile, geologists, physicists, and astronomers strive to understand Uruta, the Oudh, the strange psychic effects of Shadow Zones, the bizarre gravity storms that sweep across the land, and the many alien worlds found in the vastness of space. These and other mysteries beg to be studied, investigated, and explained.

Wealth: As per Scientist (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Scientist (BRP page 40). Remove Technical (Computer Use). Increase the number of Knowledge or Science skills to six.

Equipment: Scientists often own a small collection (2D6) of hand-copied manuscripts on scientific lore (see Books and Printed Materials, BRP page 272).

SERVANT

Servants can be slaves with important duties or employed free-men. They meet the everyday needs of their masters or employers and are trained to interact with nobles with intelligence and etiquette.

Wealth: As per Servant (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Servant (BRP page 40).

SHAMAN

Shamans represent the spiritual leadership of a barbarian tribe. They worship primitive gods, animal spirits, and the ghosts of ancestors. Many young shamans leave their tribes to explore the world, hoping one day to return and take their place as holy men among their people.

Wealth: As per Shaman (BRP page 40).

Skills: As per Shaman (BRP page 40).

Special: The *Swords of Cydoria* setting assumes that the gods are, in fact, nothing more than creations of myth and culture. However, gamemasters should feel free to change this assumption for their stories, creating a world where the gods are real and priests possess supernatural or occult powers.

SLAVE

Slavery is an accepted practice in the Vrildarian Empire, though heavily controlled. Many slaves are able to pay off their debt and legally gain their freedom. Others have their debt forgiven by generous masters and are set free. A few manage to escape their bondage but are in constant fear of recapture.

Wealth: As per Slave (BRP page 41).

Skills: As per Slave (BRP page 41).

SOLDIER

There is plenty of work for professional soldiers throughout the lands of Cydoria. The Vrildarian Empire maintains the largest army, comprising the combined armies of Vrildar, Norukar, Tyrannis, Guerna, and Zinj. The city guards of most large cities are actually small independent militaries. Many noble houses maintain small personal armed forces. Many veterans of the War of Unification now serve as mercenaries, bandits, and pirates in Markania.

Wealth: As per Soldier (BRP page 41).

Skills: As per Soldier (BRP page 41).

Equipment: Actively serving soldiers are equipped with a spear, short sword, Cydorian light helmet, and hard leather or heavy quilted armor. Better equipped soldiers will wield a ballistic rifle instead of a spear and wear chain mail. Elite soldiers wield plasma rifles and adaptive mesh armor. Officers carry a saber, ballistic or plasma pistol, adaptive mesh armor, and light helmet (native type). All soldiers are also issued goggles, gloves, head-socks, boots, belt pouches, and a cape.

SPY

The noble houses of Cydoria are a hotbed of intrigue, power plays, and betrayal. Every noble must employ one or more spies who infiltrate rival households, gather intelligence, plant false information, and either enact or disrupt schemes.

Wealth: As per Spy (BRP page 41).

Skills: As per Spy (BRP page 41).

Equipment: Spies possess a disguise kit and set of lock-picks (BRP page 275).

Special: Any spy with Repair (Electronics) or Technical (Computer Use) is either an alien spy or has received training from an alien.

STUDENT

For every scholarly or scientific expedition of discovery, there must be students to provide assistance. Indeed, many minor expeditions are led by students hoping to prove a theory or gain fame with a breakthrough or discovery. Being a student also requires money, and many students will take a short-term job with a band of adventurers in order to raise a few coins to help pay for their education, or simply to experience something new.

Wealth: As per Student (BRP page 42).

Skills: As per Student (BRP page 42). Remove Technical (Computer Use).

TECHNO-HERETIC MECHANIC

Techno-heretics design, maintain, and repair forbidden technology outside of the pseudo-religious confines of the Octavium. Prior to alien contact, the techno-heretics experimented with steam power, electricity, and clockwork. Alien technology presents a new challenge to the techno-heretic.

To the common man, a techno-heretic is an evil sorcerer who consorts with demonic Aya. The Octavium view them as dangerous renegades. The Inquisition considers them criminals and rebels.

Techno-heretic mechanics are specialists in machinery, electric motors, and internal combustion engines. Some are former members of the Brotherhood of Gears but most are self-taught or have received training from a Phanosian agent. For more information on techno-heretics, see page 120.

Wealth: As per Mechanic (BRP page 39).

Skills: As per Mechanic (BRP page 39).

Equipment: Mechanics carry a toolkit required by their specialty.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53. Techno-heretics begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

TECHNO-HERETIC TECHNICIAN

Techno-heretic technicians are specialists in designing, maintaining, and repairing complicated devices such as electronics, clock-works, computers, and weapons. Some are former members of the Brotherhood of Lightning but most are self-taught or have received training from a Phanosian agent. For more information on techno-heretics, see page 120.

Wealth: as per Technician (BRP page 43).

Skills: as per Technician (BRP page 43).

Equipment: Techno-heretic technicians possess a portable kit of electronics tools and magnifying goggles.

Special: Possession of alien technology is strictly controlled. See Alien Technology, pages 51-53. Techno-heretics begin play with a number of parts equal to their Repair skills (see Building and Modifying Equipment, page 74)

THIEF

Pickpockets and burglars can find no shortage of work in the cities of Cydoria. The rural settlements provide less opportunity for wealth, no avenues to dispose of stolen goods, and fewer places to hide, but a thief with appropriate skills may find occasional contract work obtaining specific items for anonymous clients.

Wealth: as per Thief (BRP page 43).

Skills: as per Thief (BRP page 43). Replace Firearm (Pistol, Revolver, or Shotgun) with Melee Weapon (any).

Equipment: Thieves own a set of lock-picks (see BRP page 275) with a quality appropriate to their wealth level.

TRIBESMAN

There are barbarian tribes all over Baadria, Cydoria, and especially Markania. These tribesmen fight to protect their homes from eastern invaders, hostile rival tribes, and dangerous creatures of the wilderness such as teraxes. Some tribesmen set out from their homes to explore the world and seek adventure, fame, glory, and riches.

Wealth: as per Tribesman (BRP page 43).

Skills: as per Tribesman (BRP page 43).

WARRIOR

Warriors are fighters that work alone. They rely on their own skills and abilities over group tactics. Warriors are leaders, duelists, officers, and head-men. The strongest fighters of a barbarian tribe are warriors. The sergeant commanding his unit is a warrior. The Demetrian knight champion clad in armor is a warrior. The bandit chieftain and the mercenary commander, the pirate captain and the orix gladiator are all examples of a warrior.

Wealth: as per Warrior (BRP page 44).

Skills: as per Warrior (BRP page 44).

WIZARD

Magic does not exist in the traditional sense. However, there are several means to achieve seemingly magical effects. To the common farmer and laborer, the term “wizard” is often applied to biomancers, Guardians of Adhara, Guild Masters of the Octavium, psi-mages, and techno-heretics.

WRITER

There is no printing press on Cydoria and the vast majority of the population is illiterate. As a result, the literary tradition generally revolves around those that write plays or compose poems to be performed on stage. Cydorian poets and playwrights are celebrated by the nobility and often commissioned to create works celebrating their sponsor. Many Cydorian writers have travelled west to seek inspiration from the frontier.

Wealth: as per Writer (BRP page 45).

Skills: as per Writer (BRP page 45). Remove Technical (Computer Use).

STEP NINE: PURCHASE SKILLS

Starting skills are determined using the rules on BRP page 21 and 24. The budget allocated is based on the campaign level.

- **Normal professional skill point pool:** 250 points to spend on the skills listed under your profession, no skill higher than 75%.
- **Heroic professional skill point pool:** 325 points to spend on the skills listed under your profession, no skill higher than 90%.
- **Epic professional skill point pool:** 400 points to spend on the skills listed under your profession, no skill higher than 101%.
- **Superhuman professional skill point pool:** 500 points to spend on the skills listed under your profession, no skill limit.

Personal skill point pool: INT x 10 points to spend anywhere you like, no skill higher than 75% outside of the character's profession.

SKILLS

Unless noted below, skills are unchanged from those listed in BRP pages 46-84. Characters native to the world of Uruta are considered “fantasy” for the purposes of determining the Base Chance of a skill. Alien characters are considered “science fiction”.

Combat Skills

Artillery (various) (% by weapon): Native Cydorian artillery is limited to siege engines such as ballistae and catapults. A few advanced artillery pieces were delivered to both sides of the War of Unification and remain in use today. However, these weapons are rare and access to them is heavily restricted by the Vrildarian Empire.

Energy Weapon (various) (% by weapon): Rhakadian plasma, Phanosian laser, and other alien energy weapons were introduced to Cydoria during the War of Unification. They are still rare but common enough for most adventurers to have a passing familiarity with their operation.

Firearm (various) (% by weapon): Prior to contact with the aliens, Cydorian firearm technology had developed breech-loading single-shot pneumatic rifles and pistols that fired ammunition propelled by compressed air tanks. Gunpowder firearms are not generally employed by any alien culture.

Heavy Weapon (various) (% by weapon): Native Cydorians possessed heavy weapons such as high pressure water cannons, compressed-air cannons, and small arbalests, ballistae, and catapults prior to alien contact. Native Cydorians use the standard Base Chance for these weapons while aliens and Urutan barbarians begin with a Base Chance of 01%. The aliens have introduced new heavy plasma and laser weapons. Aliens use the standard starting percentages for these weapons while native Urutans begin with 01%.

STATUS TABLE

<i>Status</i>	<i>Professional Status</i>	<i>Barbarian Society</i>	<i>Civilized Society</i>	<i>Criminal Underworld</i>	<i>Military or Resistance</i>	<i>Starting Wealth</i>
0-05	Novice, Lower Class	Slave, Thrall, Outcast	Slave, Indentured Servant, Serf	Thug, Pirate, Bandit	Soldier, recruit,	Destitute
06-25	Neophyte, Working Class	Laborer	Peasant, Craftsman, Laborer	Soldier, Enforcer	Corporal	Poor
26-50	Amateur, Middle Class	Freeman: Farmer, Herder, Hunter, or Craftsman	Property Owner, Merchant	Gang Leader	Sergeant	Average
51-75	Professional, Upper Class	Freeman: Merchant or Warrior	Property Owner	Lieutenant, Pirate Captain	Lieutenant, Captain, or Major. Leader of a Resistance Cell	Average
76-84	Expert, Noble	Noble: Land-owner, or Great Warrior	Lord/Lady, Merchant Prince	Local Boss	Commander	Affluent
85-88			Baron/Baroness		Colonel	Affluent
89-91			Count/Countess			Affluent
92-96	Master, Noble, Elite	Headman, Chieftain	Duke/Duchess, Prince/Princess	Syndicate Deputy	General	Wealthy
97-98		Warlord	Archduke/ Archduchess			Wealthy
99-100			King/Queen	Syndicate Boss, Pirate King		Wealthy
101+	Legend	Noble: Great Chief, King, or Kahn	Emperor	Syndicate Overlord, Mastermind, Arch-Criminal	Supreme Commander	Wealthy

Communication Skills

Status (various) (25%): Different specialties must be purchased for different groups. For example, a character might possess one level of status within the Imperial social hierarchy and a separate status within the underworld. Status determines the character’s starting wealth. After character creation, wealth and status are tracked separately.

Wealth (Highest Status%): A character’s Wealth skill determines their ability to purchase items. A character’s starting Wealth is equal to their highest Status skill score. After character creation, Wealth is tracked separately and may increase or decrease with the fortunes of the character. Wealth is used whenever access to funds or the ability to purchase an item is important to the story.

REVISED WEALTH TABLE

<i>Wealth</i>	<i>Level</i>
0-05	Destitute
06-25	Poor
26-50	Average
51-75	Average
76-90	Affluent
91-100	Wealthy
101+	Wealthy

OPTIONAL RULE: VALUE COST

As an alternative to the rules presented in the BRP Equipment chapter, simply assign all items a “cost” in Wealth points. Purchasing a piece of equipment simply decrements the character’s Wealth by the amount indicated on the table below.

Using this method, a character who is Destitute (Wealth 5) can own one inexpensive item or up to five cheap items. A character who is Average (Wealth 50) can own one priceless item or one expensive item, two average items, and one inexpensive item. And so on.

Characters may attempt to adjust the cost of an item with a Bargain skill check before purchase. The player cannot change their mind after the roll is made, the character’s Wealth is decremented by the indicated result, good or bad.

VALUE COST

<i>Value</i>	<i>Cost in Wealth</i>
Cheap	1
Inexpensive	5
Average	10
Expensive	25
Priceless	50
Restricted	100

For example, you have a Wealth score of 45 (Average). You may purchase an expensive item (25) and two average items (10 each).

Manipulation Skills

Art (various) (05%): The arts of Cydoria are roughly equivalent to those found in ancient Greece or Rome. Suggested specialties for Art include Architecture, Calligraphy, Mosaic, Painting, or Sculpture.

NEW SKILL—Biomancy (00%): The skill used to create potions that induce temporary biological mutations.

Craft (various) (05%): The traditional craft specialties of Blacksmithing, Carpentry, Ceramics, Cooking, Leatherworking, Locksmithing, Metallurgy, and Stonemasonry, are all appropriate in Cydoria.

Demolition (01%): Explosives are not native to Uruta and must be imported from other planets. Training in their use is therefore restricted to, or was provided by, agents from other worlds. Generally, the only Urutans trained in demolitions are soldiers or anyone in direct contact with alien agents or smugglers.

NEW SKILL—Forgery (05%): The skill used to create fake official documents using falsified information.

Heavy Machine (01%): Heavy machines native to Cydoria are powered by animals, water wheels, or wind-mills. Specialties include crane, water-drill, pulverizer, etc. Alien contact has introduced new machines such as bulldozers, boilers, electric cranes, electric drills, forklifts, etc. The skill in driving heavy machines is taught only to members of the Octavium but many Techno-Heretics study this skill illegally.

Repair (various) (15%): Specialties native to Cydoria include Hydraulic, Mechanical, Plumbing, Pneumatic, and Structural. Alien contact has introduced new specialties such as Electrical, Electronic, and Gravitic. Repair skills are taught only to members of the Octavium but many Techno-Heretics study this skill illegally.

NEW SPECIALTY—Pneumatic: This specialty covers devices powered by compressed air and other gases as well as the technology responsible for compressing and storing the gases in tanks.

NEW SPECIALTY—Gravitic: This specialty cover the zephyrium lift-units that keep aero-ships aloft.

NEW SKILL—Ta'oudh (0%): This skill represents a character's mastery of channeling and shaping Oudh. The number of levels of Ta'oudh powers a character knows is based on that character's Ta'oudh skill.

Mental Skills

Knowledge (various) (01% for natives or 05% for aliens): The following changes are applied to the knowledge specialties listed on BRP pages 64 and 65. Those born and raised on Uruta are less well educated overall than their alien counterparts. Because of this, the Base Chance for an Urutan native is 01% while the Base Chance for an alien is 05%.

Academic Lore: This skill represents the general common knowledge and works like the Knowledge roll (BRP page 28).

NEW SPECIALTY—Artifacts: This skill represents a character's study and knowledge of artifacts of the Sdara Vatra. This skill determines success or failure when identifying and activating ancient artifacts of the Sdara Vatra.

Blasphemous Lore: Familiarity with one of the forbidden cults. These cults are considered barbaric and horrific by Cydorian standards. Choose a sub-specialty representing knowledge of the the cult of Anaka, Demon-Lords of Haru, The Mother-of-All, or Ururu.

Folklore: The folklore of a specific Urutan culture.

Group: Specific sub-specialties appropriate for a Cydorian character include the Oculus, the Hidden Hand, the Guardians of Adhara, the Katari, the Pirates of Dazumi, the Imperial Inquisition, Imperial military, Demetrian Resistance, etc.

History: Choose a Cydorian, Markanian, or Alien culture as a sub-specialty.

Law: Choose a specific legal system as a sub-specialty. The laws of the Vrildarian Empire take precedence over all its subject states. However, individual cultures may enforce idiosyncratic local laws.

Literature: Choose a specific Urutan or alien culture as a sub-specialty. The only non-human Urutan cultures with a literary tradition include Ragana and Capridia.

NEW SPECIALTY—Oudh: Knowledge of the effects of, abilities granted by, and limitations imposed by the Oudh that protects and permeates Uruta.

Occult: Knowledge of the secret history of the Gods of Sdara Vatra. Little is known of the Sdara Vatra, and much of what is known is shrouded by legend, superstition, and suppression by the Imperial Inquisition. Knowledge of the mysterious Sdara Vatra gods is the doorway to understanding their magical abilities and fabulous artifacts (See "Artifacts", pages 168-175). Gamemasters may allow players to know some or all of the Secret History of the Sdara Vatra (see pages 164-166).

Region: General knowledge of a city, region, or nation. Choose one of the locations listed in the World of Uruta chapter. Choosing a major region, such as Cydoria, Baadria, or Markania, will provide general information such as the names and locations of mountain ranges, regions, cities, rivers, etc., but nothing specific within a region or city. Knowledge of a region such as Korula or Varza will identify towns and villages and local leaders and warlords, but nothing within those cities. Knowledge of a specific city will provide recognition of neighborhoods, streets, local authorities, etc., but not the names of people who live on a certain street, and so on.

Religion: The character possesses detailed knowledge of the religious practices and traditions of a specific cultural pantheon. Choose a specialty from the following list: civilized Cydorian religions, barbarian religions, non-human religions, alien religions.

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Language (various) (Own INT x 5%, Cydorian INT x 3%, Other 00%): All characters speak the language of their culture as their native language. All characters are also conversant in the trade language known as Cydorian.

Literacy (00% for Urutan natives or Own Language% for aliens): Literacy is not commonplace among Cydorians. The nobility, military officers, scholars, and merchants are generally the most literate. All of the Cydorian languages share a common written alphabet.

Science (various) (01%): The university of Vrildaria and the Library of Attan were surprisingly advanced in the sciences compared to the Cydorian society as a whole. Appropriate specialties include astronomy, biology, botany, cryptography, geology, mathematics, meteorology, natural history, physics, psychology, and zoology. Chemistry and pharmacy is replaced with alchemy (see below). All specialties are available to alien characters.

NEW SPECIALTY—Alchemy: Cydorian alchemists combine knowledge of chemistry, pharmacology, philosophy, and nanotechnology to create not only potions and salves for personal medical use, but also compounds for industrial applications.

Technical Skill (various) (00%): Access to advanced technologies is severely restricted by the Vrildarian Empire. Technical skills are taught only to members of the Octavium but many Techno-Heretics study this skill illegally. The Base Chance for all native Urutans is 00%. The Base Chance for aliens is 05%.

Perception Skills

Research (25%): Cydoria lacks the printing press and scribes must reproduce books and scrolls by hand. Written material is therefore rare. Most important works can be found at the University of Vrildar and caches of works smuggled out of the Library of Attan before that city's destruction reside in secret collections of cells of the Demetrian resistance. Aliens have introduced computers and electronic data, records, and information. Such technology is restricted to the Vrildarian government and military. Possession of such devices or information is a crime in the Vrildarian Empire punishable by amputation or blinding.

Physical Skills

Drive (various) (01% for natives or 20% for aliens): Native Cydorians are familiar with animal-powered vehicles such as carriages, carts, chariots, sledges, sleighs, and wagons. Alien vehicles such as groundcars, groundcycles, hovercars, hovercars, and armored mobile fortresses are uncommon to Cydorians but common to aliens.

Pilot (various) (01%): Specialties appropriate to Cydoria include aero-ship and boats.

Projection (00%): Used for some offensive powers.

Ride (various) (05%): Horses and mules are not found in Cydoria. Common animals include anator (riding lizard), bondrus (riding hippo), geruk (riding elk), girah (draft lizard), tonbo (giant dragonfly), ku-bawa-mavu (giant wasp), or wooly munglor (an elephant-sized musk ox).

STEP TEN: CHOOSE STARTING EQUIPMENT

All characters begin the game with the following:

- A complete set of clothing appropriate to the character's culture, status, and wealth level.
- An amount of pocket money and personal savings appropriate to the character's wealth level.
- An inexpensive personal item of emotional or familial importance such as a family heirloom, keepsake, amulet, bracelet, etc.
- Trade tools or equipment appropriate to the character's profession.
- Any one weapon for which the character has a skill of over 50%.
- Additional equipment may be purchased using the Wealth skill.

Consult the Equipment and Technology chapter (pages 50 to 76) for item values and additional information.

STEP ELEVEN: NAME, PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE

The final step in creating a character is perhaps the most important. The player must choose a name for the character, establish a personality that will be fun to role-play, and describe how the character appears to others.

NAME

A name should be indicative of the culture of the character. Each cultural background includes example names for that culture. Use these for inspiration or invent your own.

PERSONALITY

A good personality helps distinguish the character from those of the other players. Consider the character's attitude. Is the character friendly or stand-offish? Bitter or optimistic? Take a look at the personality traits on BRP page 294-295. Use the list as a guide for determining how the character should act.

Also think about the character's morality. Does the character do what's right regardless of the circumstances? Is the character willing to look the other way or bend the rules when necessary? Is the character amoral with no sense of right or wrong? Perhaps the character is completely immoral, caring for no one but himself.

APPEARANCE

Your character's appearance says a lot. Are they a grizzled old veteran with a week's growth of stubble? Are they a purple-skinned jinx with bushy pink eyebrows? Each cultural background includes a description of a common representative of that culture. Don't let that limit you. Consult the Character SIZ chart (BRP page 26) to get a sense of how tall and/or heavy your character is. Then add a few distinctive features (BRP page 34-35) to make your character interesting.



CHAPTER THREE: EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

The realms of Cydoria are experiencing a period of unprecedented and irreversible change. A relatively primitive land is being exposed to the miraculous technology of extraterrestrial cultures. Meanwhile, Emperor Viktor of Vrildar uses his monopoly of this technology to shore up and expand his own power base, which has the fortunate side effect of limiting the culturally disruptive effects its rapid exposure might have on Cydorian society.

CYDORIAN TECHNOLOGY

With the notable exceptions of Norukar and Vrildar, which prior to alien contact possessed a level of technology roughly equivalent to that of late nineteenth century North America, the civilized nations of Cydoria possess a native level of technology akin to that of medieval Europe, classical China, or feudal Japan.

Civilized blacksmiths forge weapons and armor of steel in wood-fueled furnaces while the best barbarian weapons are crafted of iron and bronze. The longbow and crossbow are common missile weapons. A handful of Cydorian blacksmiths are sophisticated enough to produce air-powered ballistic weapons that fire high-velocity darts or bullets. A few alchemists produce black powder but its use has thus far not become widespread. Although the elite troops carry ballistic rifles, most armies are equipped with spears, swords, shields, and mail.

Ore is mined in regions known as iron fields. Many metals, mostly iron and copper, are found in a six-to-ten-centimeter thick layer of earth about one to two meters below the surface. The ore exists in oxidized clumps and nuggets mixed with sand and gravel. Miners need simply to remove the top-soil to extract the

ore which is then smelted in wood-burning furnaces to extract the metals from encrusted impurities.

Most civilian architecture is made of wood and brick and rarely exceeds six to seven meters in height. A few towers, some reaching thirty meters tall, are built for greater visibility and defense. Stone is used only for fortifications, city walls, towers, homes for the noble classes, institutional structures such as universities and government buildings, and important monuments or religious temples.

Cydorian cities are small, ranging from a few hundred meters across to no more than two or three kilometers wide, usually no larger than could be traversed in an hour on foot. The centers of the cities are dominated by palace complexes and temple districts.

The technological and architectural exceptions are Norukar and Vrildar where the Octavium oversees the construction of towers that reach thirty stories in height. These towers utilize secret engineering principles such as steel skeletons and flying buttresses. Such towers are connected by sky-bridges and boast mechanical winch elevators and aero-ship terminals on the upper stories.

Barbarian cultures, by contrast, build temporary structures of wood and hide or small structures of wood, mud brick, and stone.

Cydorian agriculture utilizes crop rotation techniques, fertilizers, and extensive networks of canals to provide irrigation. Fields are tilled using iron plows drawn by girahs and bondruses.

Grains are stored in hemispherical granaries and are milled using wind, water, and animal power. Due to the lack of powered refrigeration, milk, fresh vegetables and fruits, butchered meats, and other perishable items are not generally transported more than a day's journey or are stored in cool root cellars. Agricultural trade consists of grains, dried or pickled fruits, preserved vegetables, live juvenile trees, and live animals.

There are no fossil fuels on Uruta—no oil, coal or natural gas. Nearly all combustible fuel is provided by wood. Some fuel oils are provided by gimwals and by alchemically extracting it from grains. Gimwal and grain oil is enough to power most lamps and lanterns, but insufficient for an industrial revolution. Mills and machines are powered by wind-mills, water wheels, and beasts of burden. A few prototype wood-powered steam engines have been built by the Gear Guild, but these gigantic and expensive monstrosities are rare and difficult to maintain.

Overland transportation is conducted on foot or on the backs of riding animals such as anators or bondruses. Although sailing ships travel up and down the coast of Baadria and Cydoria, flying aero-ships are the primary means of trade and travel.

These aero-ships fly through the use of the gravity-defying mineral zephyrium. This crystal, when subjected to certain beams of energy, rises like a helium-filled balloon. The Zinjani created an entire industry dedicated to the refinery of zephyrium and the construction of aero-ships. The lightweight wooden vessels were soon carried across the skies by wind and sail to every corner of the Markanian continent.

Prior to alien contact, experiments in electricity were considered heresy by the Octavium and superstitious commoners feared it out of concern that Aya demons would be drawn to its power. Techno-Heretics and rebellious initiates who were found to dabble in electricity were often tortured and killed by paranoid initiates or angry mobs of villagers. Contact with technologically superior aliens has caused many Cydorians to question this belief. Today, electrical power is nearly ubiquitous in the cities and an entire generation has grown up taking it for granted.

ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

Contact and trade with alien cultures has introduced new technologies and new sciences to the Cydorians, though the potential impact of such advanced technology has been tempered through strict Imperial control. Emperor Viktor limits the distribution of and access to technology and knowledge to Imperial government institutions, to the elite nobility of his royal court and his allies, to select mercantile interests, and to the Brotherhood of Lightning of the Octavium. His proscription is made easier by the deeply ingrained societal taboo against advanced technology. Viktor, as did his father Varinor before him, has taken great pains to eliminate or mitigate the taboo among the noble class.

The biggest technological change has occurred in the cities of the Vrildarian Empire. The Octavium has begun to incorporate alien technology into the design and construction of new buildings in the cities of the Empire. These new buildings utilize advanced construction techniques and include modern electric amenities such as lights, heating, motors, and ventilation fans. Computers and electronics are being integrated into the more advanced facilities, but these technologies are still relatively rare.

Less than two generations ago, Cydorian cities resembled ancient Babylon, Pompeii, Kyoto, or Beijing. Today, these same cities boast broadcast power transmitters, mono-rails, electric carriages, artificial lighting and heating, and other conveniences made possible through what many still consider to be alien sorcery.

Rhakadian medical technology has been introduced into the Cydorian way of life as well. The Rhakadians are masters of bionic replacement and cybernetic augmentation. Amputees may now replace their lost limbs with mechanical prosthetics. Artificial eyes restore sight to the blind. Neural implants allow human brains to communicate with and directly control electronic computers. Such modifications can only be performed by Rhakadian cyberneticists, so only a few wealthy nobles have received the benefits of these medical miracles.

Slowly, over twenty years, the initial fear of the alien technology has worn off and a new generation of urban Cydorians has grown up surrounded by advanced conveniences, many they now take for granted. Only the old-timers and the rural villagers still spit and ask the gods for protection from the Aya whenever they see a sorcerous light with no flame or carriage drawn by invisible demons.

THE RHAKADIAN MONOPOLY AND THE BLACK MARKET

Emperor Viktor has entered into an exclusive trade arrangement with the the Rhakadian League. In exchange for providing the Rhakadians exclusive access to the abundant natural resources of Uruta, the Vrildarian Empire will in turn be provided exclusive access to Rhakadian technology. The exclusivity of the arrangement prevents either side from dealing with the political and military rivals of the other. Viktor's interests were primarily military, though he has allowed select allies limited access to commercial and industrial technologies as well as items of luxury and convenience. Very little of the alien technology makes its way down to the Cydorian commoner, who fear and distrust the alien sorcery.

Undercover agents of the Phanosian Alliance work primarily through the Demetrian resistance. As such, the majority of the technological items introduced through Phanosian channels are of a covert military nature or is used for espionage. The Alliance also provided technological items to the common people of Cydoria. The Alliance distributes vehicles, power generators, agricultural equipment, refrigeration units, electronic computing devices, and medical technologies as a form of humanitarian aid as well as supporting the resistance against the Rhakadian-backed Vrildarian Empire.

Smugglers, on the other hand, supply items to meet the Cydorian demand for entertainments, luxury items, conveniences, and vices. Alien smugglers have introduced Cydoria to neurostim, electric fantasies (sex robots), and music recordings, as well as power generators, vehicles, weapons, and everyday conveniences.

THE EFFECT OF ALIEN TECHNOLOGY ON EVERYDAY LIFE

It is the nobility that benefits most from Rhakadian technology. Wealthy Imperial nobles are able to travel from one end of the city to the other on moving slidewalks, in electric carriages, or small aero-buggies. The nobles preserve food in electro-chemical refrigeration units and heat it using electromagnetic ray projection ovens.

The commoner, meanwhile, is forbidden from directly owning any device that requires an energy receiver or is otherwise powered by electricity. They may sleep in electrically lit and heated dormitories, eat food prepared in a modern kitchen, and travel across town on electric monorails, but all are owned by the nobility to which the commoner must pay monthly rent or access fees. Any commoner found in possession of an advanced device without a permit from a noble will be fined, jailed, amputated, or exiled.

Few broadcast energy towers or Rhakadian technological devices can be found away from the cities. The countryside is little changed since the arrival of the aliens. A few villages possess Rhakadian technology. Most are legally owned and operated by a local noble or serve a function vital to the Vrildarian Empire, such as an aero-ship way-station or important commercial operation. A few villages possess and use illegal technology in violation of the Imperial proscription. These villages are either too remote to be adequately enforced by the Imperial Inquisition or keep their technology a secret, disguising or otherwise hiding it when Imperial patrols approach.

MILITARY APPLICATIONS

The Imperial foot-soldier, once equipped with sword, spear, shield, helmet, cuirass, and the occasional breech-loading air-powered ballistic weapon, now wields a Rhakadian-manufactured plasma rifle and is ferried to the battlefield in powered aero-transport. Modern aero-ships are made of strong yet lightweight metals unknown to the Alchemist Guild. They are driven by electric propellers or ducted fans maintained by the Lightning Guild. Modern cities and large installations are defended by plasma batteries. Aero-ships, armored mobile fortresses, and defensive installations are all armed with plasma cannons. The Empire was also provided a limited number of high-explosive bombs which were dropped on Demetrian targets during the War of Unification. Such bombs were the largest and most powerful offensive weapons ever seen by Cydoridans, capable of destroying entire cities. Most of the bombs were expended during the war. The only weapon more powerful was the Rhakadian anti-matter device used to destroy Demetria at the end of the War of Unification. Luckily, the Rhakadians have not provided the Imperial military with any other such devices.

AVAILABILITY OF ALIEN WEAPONS

The demand for alien weapons has always outpaced the supply. Even during the War of Unification, the aliens were unable to deliver enough beam weapons to Uruta to fully equip both armies. Only the elite shock troops and decorated veterans were issued plasma rifles and officers were issued plasma pistols. Today, less than a quarter of a typical military unit will be armed with advanced weapons. Alien weapons are strictly forbidden to civilians but smuggled, stolen, or illegally salvaged arms are traded

on the black market. In addition, techno-heretics reverse engineer advanced weapons then construct and sell new ones. One might find a single alien weapon in any group of a thousand or more, depending on the neighborhood, city, and region.

Smugglers from Tsiris or Dadan brave the Rhakadian blockade to illegally sell weapons to contacts on Uruta. Such transactions are limited by the availability of Psychic Lenses and Gate Keys to allow the smugglers to enter the Oudh, the force field that protects Uruta.

DISPLAYING TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC

Although use and ownership of alien technology is greatly restricted by the Vrildarian Empire, the response one should expect will vary greatly according to where the player character is and who is doing the enforcing.

Openly carrying or displaying a weapon, computer, or jump pack in the merchant quarter of a major Cydorian city, for example, will likely call the attention of the city guard. The guard will stop the offender and ask to see credentials such as a Commission. If no guards are present, a passing noble might make a note of the infraction and proceed to a guard post to notify the authorities.

If the credentials appear in order, the outcome depends on the origin of the technology. Rhakadian equipment is more acceptable than other alien technology, and the offender will be allowed to go on their way. Phanosian, Tsirisian, or Dadanian technology, however, will always be confiscated, regardless of credentials, but the offender will still be released. Had a member of the Inquisition confiscated the non-Rhakadian technology, the offender would then be followed and observed. Eventually, a squad of Inquisitors will kidnap the offender and interrogate them using torture, hoping to trace the source of the technology. In this case, the offender will be released after being held for a week.

If, however, the credentials are not in order, the offender will be arrested. They may plead their case to a magistrate but the verdict will likely be guilty. The punishment is public amputation of the left hand.

In private, sensitivity to the law depends on the individual. Other commoners will usually pay no notice and are likely to even cover for each other. The attitude of nobles varies. Especially stringent nobles may report the offender, demanding the identity of their liege lord, while many simply turn a blind eye. No liege lord, however, will tolerate illegal technology among their own subjects.

The seedier neighborhoods of a Cydorian city are another matter. There are few law enforcers or nobles and one may be more confident in their display of illegal technology, wary, of course, of random patrols or inspections.

The rural villages of Cydoria and the settlements of western Markania are much more of a mixed bag, depending on the age of the village and the age of its inhabitants. Villages with little outside contact or exposure to modern technology may still see advanced equipment as evil sorcery, capable of attracting evil Aya spirits. Openly displaying advanced technology in such a village might get one run out of town, beaten, lynched, or burned.



Villages with more contact with the cities, or villages that maintain good relations with a techno-heretic, tend to be more permissive. There, one may use and carry illegal equipment with little fear of harassment.

SEARCHES AND INSPECTIONS

Most rural settlements are visited randomly once every month or two by a military squad. The military at first calls for everyone to surrender any illegal technology they might possess. Such offenders will be arrested and imprisoned for six to twelve months. Afterwards, the villagers have an opportunity to confidentially report on offenders to the inspectors. The inspectors will then conduct a thorough search of the suspect and their property. Finally, the inspectors will search the homes and property of anyone they suspect anyway, and a few homes at random for good measure.

Unless the military is on-duty conducting inspections, they are unlikely to pay much attention to anyone displaying illegal technology. They might, however, use the knowledge to threaten or coerce someone, or simply report it or follow up on it later.

Rural law enforcement such as constables or town guards may or may not enforce the ban, depending on how the enforcers feel about the Vrildarian Empire or the ban in general, or on how they feel about the person carrying the technology. Some towns are totally lenient and will go out of their way to thwart military inspections or the Inquisition. Other towns are specifically strict and will enforce the will of the emperor at all times. Adventurers entering a new village are wise to keep their illegal technology a secret until they get a sense of how the town constabulary and/or the locals will react.

EQUIPMENT LISTS

ORIGIN

Where the item was manufactured. An item's origin determines its value and legality, and may carry certain cultural connotations. For example, a scimitar designed by and for barbarians will look different from one designed by and for a civilized wielder, even though they have similar properties. Likewise, a helmet of Phanosian manufacture will likely be a relic of the War of Unification and would be considered a relatively common sight while a helmet of Dadanian manufacture will be immediately recognizable as such and authorities might assume its wearer has smuggling or black market contacts. An item's origin also denotes its availability.

Barbarian items can be acquired in most barbarian villages and a few Cydorian cities.

Civilized items can be purchased in all civilized cities, villages, and settlements including the City-States of Cydoria, the deru kingdom of Home, the theocracy of Kallo, and the daka kingdom of Ragana.

Rhakadian items are legal but restricted. However, some items appear on the black market.

Phanosian items are usually leftovers from the War of Unification, equipment supplied to Imperial soldiers. New items are smuggled in and supplied to the Demetrian Resistance. Items of Phanosian origin are considered contraband and are always confiscated.

Other Alien items are smuggled onto Uruta from Dada, Tsisir, or one of the space-cities and traded on the black market. Items of alien origin are considered contraband and are always confiscated. There is no legal means to purchase items of alien origin.

VALUE

The relative cost and purchase difficulty for the piece of equipment. Some items have different values depending on their origin. For example, some Phanosian items cost less than their Rhakadian counterparts but are considered contraband and will be confiscated by the authorities. Consult the new rules for purchasing items using the Wealth skill on page 47.

IMPERIAL LAW

Any restrictions placed on ownership or use of an item by the Vrildarian Empire.

“**No Restriction**” may be owned or used by anyone.

“**Limited**” access is granted to members of the Imperial nobility or their authorized agents.

“**Military Only**” are reserved for use by the Imperial military and the house guards of the Imperial nobility.

“**Contraband**” items are completely proscribed by Imperial law. Ownership or use of such items constitutes a crime with punishments ranging from exile to amputation to execution.

OPTIONAL RULE: ALIEN ORIGIN

Players should choose a back-story for each item of alien origin.

Rhakadian Origin

If you are carrying a Rhakadian item you are likely:

- an active member of the Imperial military
- a member of a noble's household guard
- an authorized agent of a noble's house

If none of the above, then the item was likely:

- stolen or recovered from one of the above
- purchased from someone else who stole it or recovered it from one of the above

Phanosian Origin

If you are carrying a Phanosian item, it was likely:

- assigned to you while you were serving the Coalition of Timan during the War of Unification and you failed to surrender the item after the war
- purchased from a veteran
- purchased from a collector of contraband
- purchased from an illegal dealer

If you are carrying a newer item of Phanosian origin, you are

- a current member or sympathizer of the Demetrian Resistance
- a Phanosian agent operating on Uruta
- a renegade member of the resistance

If none of the above, then the item was likely:

- stolen or recovered from one of the above
- purchased from someone else who stole it or recovered it from one of the above

Other Alien Origin

Anyone item of Other Alien origin was likely:

- purchased directly from an alien smuggler
- purchased from a dealer with ties to an alien smuggler
- stolen from someone who purchased it from one of the above

For any item of Phanosian or Other Alien Origin, the Inquisition will have reason to suspect you are a member or sympathizer of the resistance, having contacts who are, or that you have contact with alien smugglers or know someone who does. In either case, they will attempt to arrest and interrogate you to determine where you acquired your equipment.

ARMOR AND SHIELDS**Cydorian Armor**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Ballistic Cloth	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	5 vs firearms, 3 vs all others	BRP page 259
Chain	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	7	BRP page 259
Clothing, Heavy	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	1	BRP page 259
Flak Jacket	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	4	BRP page 259
Helmet, Primitive	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	+1	BRP page 259
Helmet, Heavy	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	+2	BRP page 259
Helmet, Light	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	+1	BRP page 259
Hide	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	1	BRP page 259
Lamellar	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	6	BRP page 259
Leather, Cuirboulli	Expensive	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	3	BRP page 259
Leather, Hard	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	2	BRP page 259
Leather, Soft	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	1	BRP page 259
Padded/Quilted	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	1	BRP page 259
Padded/Quilted, Heavy	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	2	BRP page 259
Plate, Full	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	8	BRP page 259
Plate, Half	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	7	BRP page 259
Ring	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	5	BRP page 259
Scale	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	6	BRP page 259

Cydorian Shields

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Shield, Buckler	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	05%	BRP page 263
Shield, Full	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Half	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	05%	BRP page 263
Shield, Heater	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Hoplite	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Kite	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Large Round	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Primitive	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	10%	BRP page 263
Shield, Round	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Spiked	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263
Shield, Target	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	BRP page 263

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Alien Armor

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Adaptive Mesh	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	6	BRP page 259, armor worn by officers of both sides during the War of Unification, today, available only to Imperial officers.
Assault Armor	Priceless	Other Alien	Contraband	10	BRP page 259, very rare
Assault Armor, Light	Priceless	Other Alien	Contraband	8	BRP page 259, very rare
Energy Armor	Priceless	Phanosian	Contraband	1-20	BRP page 259, assigned to Phanosian agents and some Demetrian resistance cells.
Helmet, Heavy	Expensive	Any Alien	No Restriction	+4	BRP page 259, worn by soldiers in both sides during the War of Unification, somewhat common
Helmet, Light	Average	Any Alien	No Restriction	+3	BRP page 259, worn by soldiers in both sides during the War of Unification, very common

Alien Shields

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Energy Shield	Priceless	Phanosian	Contraband	20%	BRP page 263, assigned to Phanosian agents and some Demetrian resistance cells.

ELECTRONICS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Computer	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	
Datapad	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Lightweight hand-held computer
Holocam	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Stores up to 100 hours of stereoscopic images
Holoprojector	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Projects over a 5m radius
Meta-Lingual Translator	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Provides instant translation for all known languages
Sensor Goggles	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Equivalent to Super Sense (Dark Vision) super power.
Surveillance Laser	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Can hear conversations on the other side of a flat surface such as a glass window, door, or wall. Must have line of sight to surface.

ESPIONAGE EQUIPMENT

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Chameleon Suit	Priceless	Any Alien	Limited	+20% to Stealth and Hide skill checks.
Disguise Kit	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	+20% to Disguise skill checks.
Forgery Lab	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	+20% to Craft (Forgery) skill checks.
Forgery Toolkit	Average	Any Alien	Contraband	Required for Forgery skill tests.

EXPLOSIVES AND GRENADES

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Damage/Radius</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Detonator, EMP	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband		6D10/5m	BRP page 267
Explosive, Plastic	Priceless	Any Alien	Contraband		6D6/3m	BRP page 267
Grenade Launcher	Priceless	Any Alien	Contraband	25%	3D6/2m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Concussion	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	2D6/2m	BRP page 267
Grenade, EMP	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	5D8/1m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Explosive	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	4D6/4m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Flare	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	3m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Gas	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	3m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Phosphorous	Priceless	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	2D6/24m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Plasma	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	3D10/2m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Shock	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	4D6/1m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Shrapnel	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband		4D6/4m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Smoke	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	3m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Sonic	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	4D6/2m	BRP page 267
Grenade, Stun	Expensive	Any Alien	Contraband	Throw%	3D8/2m	BRP page 267
Launcher, LAW Rocket	Priceless	Any Alien	Contraband	15%	8D6/1m	BRP page 267

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Regeneration Tank (Auto-Doc)	Priceless	Any Alien	Limited	Treats patients with 100% Medicine and First Aid skills and double hit points restored, BRP page 275
Diagnostic Scanner	Average	Any Alien	Limited	All Medicine skill tests are <i>Easy</i> .
Medi-Kit	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Advanced medical equipment, all First Aid attempts are <i>Easy</i> , doubles hit points restored, BRP page 275
Doctor's Bag	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Required for Medicine skill tests, BRP page 274
First Aid Kit	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Required for First Aid skill tests, BRP page 274
Herbalist or Midwife's Kit	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Can be used for First Aid and Medicine skill tests at -15%, BRP page 274
Surgery Kit	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Required for any First Aid or Medicine skill tests involving surgery, BRP page 274
Trauma Kit	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Field surgery kit, can be used for First Aid skill tests against major wounds, BRP page 274

MOUNTS AND BEASTS OF BURDEN

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Anator	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Tall riding lizard mount, equivalent to a horse
Axen	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Stout bovine beast of burden used throughout Cydoria
Bondrus	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Semi-aquatic riding hippo, used as a beast of burden by the Fornaxians
Geruk	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Massive riding elk used as a mount by the Awans
Girah	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Giant gila monster of the western desert, used as a beast of burden, equivalent to a donkey or mule
Ku-bawa-Mavu	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Giant wasp-like insect used as a mount by the Otarans
Tonbo	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Giant dragonfly-like insect used as a mount by the Korulans
Warhawk	Expensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Giant hawk-like bird used as a mount by the Guernans
Wooly Munglor	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	British elephant-sized musk ox used as a mount and beast of burden by the Samirians

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Cydorian Equipment

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Backpack (empty)	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Holds 10 SIZ/ENC of equipment
Bedroll	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Blanket, winter	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Block and tackle	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Adds +10% to Effort tests to make or disarm large traps and makes Repair (Structural) tests possible in some circumstances. It requires at least 10m of rope to function.
Bottle, Glass	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Caltrops	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Candle	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Illuminates a one meter radius. Easily extinguished.
Chain (10 ft.)	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Supports the weight of any combination of 50 SIZ/ENC.
Chalk, 1 piece	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Chest (empty)	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	20 ENC/SIZ
Climbing Kit	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Provides a bonus of 20% to any Climb skill tests.
Craft Tools	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Crowbar	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Adds +10% to brute force Athletics tests. If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -10% penalty).
Fishing Pole and Tackle	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Grants a character a +20% bonus to skill tests to catch fish.
Flint and steel	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Build a fire in one minute under normal conditions.
Grappling hook	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Supports the weight of any combination of 40 SIZ/ENC.
Hammer	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Ladder, 3-meter	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Lamp, common	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Lantern	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	A lantern provides clear illumination out to a three meter radius for two hours on a flask of oil.
Lock	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Lock picks	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Manacles	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Mining Pick	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Mirror, small steel	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Oil (1-pint flask)	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Distilled from plant oils, relatively expensive.
Piton	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Pole, 3m	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Portable Alchemy Kit	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	
Pouch, belt (empty)	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Rations, trail (per day)	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Rope, hemp (10m)	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Supports the weight of any combination of 30 SIZ/ENC.
Rope, silk (10m)	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Supports the weight of any combination of 40 SIZ/ENC. +10% to climb checks.

Sack, Large (empty)	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Holds 10 SIZ/ENC of equipment.
Sack, Small (empty)	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Holds 5 SIZ/ENC of equipment.
Spade or shovel	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Spyglass	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	Provides up to x2 magnification.
Tent	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Sleeps up to 4 people
Torch	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Illuminates a three meter radius for one hour. If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -10% penalty), except that it does not inflict normal damage and a fumble or critical hit will also extinguish the brand. damage – instead, it inflicts 1D4 fire
Waterskin	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	
Whetstone	Inexpensive	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Used to keep weapons sharp.

Alien Equipment

Item	Value	Origin	Imperial Law	Notes
Electric Air Compressor	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Refills tank or flask in 10 minutes.
Electric Fantasy (sex robot)	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	“Realistic” simulacra used in brothels and sleazy dives.
Electric Lantern	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Illuminates a ten meter radius. Fuel cell-powered.
Electric Torch	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Illuminates a five meter radius. Fuel cell-powered.
Goggles	Cheap	Any Alien	Limited	Protects the eyes from glare and dust.
Jump Harness	Priceless	Any Alien	Limited	A harness that allows the wearer to dial up or down the effect gravity has on their body anywhere from full to zero. The character still maintains their mass and momentum.
Neuro-Stims	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Stimulates pleasure centers of the brain, highly addictive.
Power Cell, Extra Large	Restricted	Any Alien	Limited	SIZ 40+, powers a large building, factory, large aero-ship, or small town
Power Cell, Large	Priceless	Any Alien	Limited	SIZ 16, powers a small building or plasma battery. A network of four to eight powers a medium-sized aero-ship.
Power Cell, Medium	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	SIZ 4, powers a room, vehicle, or plasma gun
Power Cell, Small	Average	Any Alien	Limited	SIZ 1, powers hand-held devices and hand-held energy weapons.
Thrust Pack	Priceless	Any Alien	Limited	A backpack filled with chemical propellant, provides thrust when wearing a jump harness. Allows the character to fly with a move of 20.
Wrist Restraints, Disposable	Cheap	Any Alien	Limited	<i>Difficult</i> Effort test to break.
Wrist Restraints, Heavy	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	<i>Impossible</i> Effort test to break. <i>Difficult</i> Fine Manipulation skill test to escape.

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Survival Equipment

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Backpack, Advanced	Cheap	Any Alien	Limited	Holds 10 SIZ/ENC of equipment
Climbing Gear	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Provides a bonus of 20% to any Climb skill tests.
Digi-Map	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Hand-held interface for detailed surface maps of Uruta.
Drysuit	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Diving suit with face mask and swim fins. Use with Swimming Gills (below)
Filter Mask	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Equivalent to Adaptability () superpower.
Fire Paste	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Binary chemical that produces flame for 12 hours.
Flare	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Hand-held chemical flare. Illuminates a 20m radius for 1 hour.
Flare Gun	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Fires a chemical flare 150m into the air.
Hostile Environment Suit	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Equivalent to Adaptability (Heat) superpower.
Inflatable Shelter (1-person)	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Fully-sealed shelter provides protection from uncomfortable temperature and weather. Made with smart-materials that harden when activated and soften to allow easy storage when deactivated.
Inflatable Shelter (2-person)	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Fully-sealed shelter provides protection from uncomfortable temperature and weather. Made with smart-materials that harden when activated and soften to allow easy storage when deactivated.
Inflatable Shelter (4-person)	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Fully-sealed shelter provides protection from uncomfortable temperature and weather. Made with smart-materials that harden when activated and soften to allow easy storage when deactivated.
Inflatable Shelter (8-person)	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Fully-sealed shelter provides protection from uncomfortable temperature and weather. Made with smart-materials that harden when activated and soften to allow easy storage when deactivated.
Outdoor Survival Suit	Inexpensive	Any Alien	Limited	Equivalent to Adaptability (Cold) superpower.
Sleeping Bag, Advanced	Cheap	Any Alien	Limited	All temperature, weather-resistant.
Survival Kit	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Includes compass, bedroll, 3 days rations, fishing line and hooks, survival knife, multi-tool, canteen, 1 day of flame paste.
Survival Rations (one week)	Cheap	Any Alien	Limited	Basic sustenance for one person for one week.
Swimming Gills	Expensive	Any Alien	Limited	Equivalent to Adaptability (Water) superpower.
Water Purifier	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Disposable filters good for 20 gallons of water.

TOOLKITS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Electronics Toolkit	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Required for Technical (Electronics) skill tests
Mechanics Toolkit	Average	Any Alien	Limited	Required for Technical (Mechanics) skill tests
Portable Alchemy Kit	Average	Any Cydorian	No Restriction	Required for Science (Alchemy) skill tests
Portable Herbalism Kit	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	Required for Science (Pharmacy) skill tests

WEAPONS

Cydorian Melee Weapons

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Axe, Battle	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Axe, Great	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	2D6+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Axe, Hand	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP page 248
Blackjack	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D8+db	BRP pages 252-253
Cestus	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D3+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Club, Heavy	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D8+db	BRP page 248
Club, Light	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+db	BRP page 248
Dagger	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D4+db	BRP pages 252-253
Flail	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	10%	1D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Flail, Morningstar	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	10%	1D10+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Garrotte	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	Special	BRP page 255
Gauntlet, Armored	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D3+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Halberd	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	3D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Hammer	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Hammer, Great	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D10+3+db	BRP pages 252-253
Hammer, Sledge	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	20%	2D6+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Hammer, War	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Katana	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D10+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Katar	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+db	see page 63
Knife, Civilized	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D3+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Knife, Primitive	-	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	25%	1D3+1+db	BRP page 248
Lance	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Mace, Heavy	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D8+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Mace, Light	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Maul, War	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D10+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Naginata	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	05%	2D6+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Net	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	05%	Special	BRP page 248
Pike	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D10+2+db	BRP pages 252-253
Rapier	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Saber	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sai	Inexpensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	10%	1D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Scimitar	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Spear, Long	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D10+1+db	BRP page 248
Spear, Short	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP page 248
Staff, Quarter	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D8+db	BRP pages 252-253
Staff, Short	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword Cane	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword, Bastard	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	10%	1D10+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword, Broad	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword, Great	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	05%	2D8+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword, Long	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D8+db	BRP pages 252-253
Sword, Short	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Trident	Average	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Wakizashi	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+1+db	BRP pages 252-253
Whip	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	05%	1D3-1+db	BRP pages 252-253

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Cydorian Missile Weapons

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Arbalest	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	2D6	BRP pages 252-253
Blowgun	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	10%	1D3	BRP page 248
Bola	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	05%	1D6+½db or special	BRP page 248
Boomerang	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	05%	1D4+½db	BRP page 248
Bow, Composite	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	05%	1D8+1+½db	BRP pages 252-253
Bow, Long	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	05%	1D8+1+½db	BRP pages 252-253
Bow, Self	Cheap	Any Barbarian	No Restriction	10%	1D6+1+½db	BRP page 248
Crossbow, Heavy	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	2D6+2	BRP pages 252-253
Crossbow, Light	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+2	BRP pages 252-253
Crossbow, Medium	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	2D4+2	BRP pages 252-253
Crossbow, Repeating	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D6+2	BRP pages 252-253
Flamethrower	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	05%	2D6+fire	BRP page 255
Javelin	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D6+½db	BRP page 248
Knife, Throwing	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	15%	1D3+½db	BRP pages 252-253
Pistol, Ballistic	Average	Any Civilized	No Restriction	20%	1D6+1	See page 63
Rifle, Ballistic	Expensive	Any Civilized	No Restriction	25%	1D10+4	See page 63
Shuriken	Cheap	Any Civilized	No Restriction	10%	1D3+ ½db	BRP pages 252-253
Sling	Cheap	Any Barbarian or Civilized	No Restriction	05%	1D8+ ¼db	BRP page 248

Alien Melee Weapon

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Axe, Vibro-	Expensive	Rhakadian	Limited	10%	2D8+4+db	BRP page 256
Baton, Stun (Lance, Stun)	Expensive	Phanosian	Limited	15%	1D6+db+stun	BRP page 256
Knife, Vibro-	Expensive	Rhakadian	Limited	25%	2D4+2+db	BRP page 256
Sword, Monofilament	Priceless	Other Alien	Contraband	05%	3D12	BRP page 256
Sword, Vibro-	Priceless	Rhakadian	Limited	20%	2D6+3+db	BRP page 256
Whip, Shock	Expensive	Rhakadian	Limited	05%	1+½db+stun	BRP page 256

Alien Ranged Weapons

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Imperial Law</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Gun, Plasma	Restricted	Rhakadian	Military Only	15%	4D6+4	See below
Pistol, Disintegrator	Priceless	Other Alien	Contraband	05%	3D4+1	BRP page 256
Pistol, EMP	Expensive	Other Alien	Contraband	20%	2D6 vs tech	BRP page 256
Pistol, Laser	Expensive	Phanosian	Contraband	20%	1D8	BRP page 256
Pistol, Plasma	Expensive	Rhakadian	Military Only	15%	2D10+2	BRP page 256
Pistol, Shock	Expensive	Other Alien	Contraband	15%	2D4	BRP page 256
Pistol, Stun	Expensive	Phanosian	Contraband	25%	2D6 stun	BRP page 256
Rifle, Disintegrator	Priceless	Other Alien	Contraband	05%	3D6+2	BRP page 256
Rifle, EMP	Expensive	Other Alien	Contraband	25%	3D8 vs tech	BRP page 256
Rifle, Laser	Expensive	Phanosian	Contraband	15%	2D8	BRP page 256
Rifle, Plasma	Priceless	Rhakadian	Military Only	10%	2D10+4	BRP page 256
Rifle, Shock	Expensive	Other Alien	Contraband	10%	3D8	BRP page 256
Rifle, Sonic	Expensive	Other Alien	Contraband	10%	1D3+2	BRP page 256
Rifle, Stun	Expensive	Phanosian	Contraband	20%	2D8 stun	BRP page 256

NEW WEAPONS

Weapon	Skill	Base	Dmg	Attk	Special	Rng	Hands	HP	Parry	STR/ DEX	Mal	Value	SIZ/ Enc	SR
Ballistic Pistol	Pistol	20	1D6+1	½	Impaling	10	1H	8	No	5/7	85-00	Average	2	1/2CR
Ballistic Rifle	Pistol	25	1D10+4	½	Impaling	40	2H	12	No	5/7	85-00	Expensive	4	1/2CR
Blade Whip	Other	05	1D6+1	1	Bleeding	Long	1H	15	No	9/10	-	Expensive	1	0
Deru Long-Awl	Spear	15	1D8+1	1	Impaling	Long	1H/2H	20	Yes	7/9	-	Inexpensive	2	2
Katar	Dagger	15	1D6	1	Bleeding	Close	1H	15	No	4/4	-	Average	1	3
Razor Club	Sword	15	1D10+1	1	Bleeding	Med	1H	18	Yes	9/7	-	Expensive	0.5	0

NEW HEAVY WEAPONS

Weapon	Skill	Base	Dmg	Attk	Special	Rng	Crew	HP	AV	Ammo	Cap	Mal	Value	SIZ	SR
Plasma Gun	Artillery	15	4D6+4	1	Fire	300	1	48	28	Energy	Unlim or 10 (power pack)	0	Restricted	36	1/CR

NEW WEAPONS
BALLISTIC WEAPONS

The apex of pre-contact Cydorian weapon design was the air-powered ballistic weapon, often simply called a “ballistic” for short. Even after the introduction of plasma, laser, and other exotic alien weapons, ballistics see widespread use on the battlefield. Ballistic rifles and pistols use compressed air to fire .45 caliber lead balls. Native Cydorian armor offers only 1/2 protection against ballistic weapons. Ballistic cloth and flak jackets offer full protection.

A cucumber-sized bottle of compressed air carries enough air to power thirty pistol shots or ten rifle shots. A watermelon-sized air tank is worn on a harness on the back and provides sufficient air to power one hundred fifty pistol shots or fifty rifle shots. Bottles and tanks are connected to the weapon by a thick metal-reinforced rubber hose. Both can be refilled using a hand-pump though doing so is hard work. A flask requires an hour of pumping and a successful Stamina roll to refill. A tank requires five hours with a successful Stamina roll every hour to refill. A failed Stamina roll adds an additional hour and an additional Stamina roll until filled. The Rhakadians have also supplied the Imperial military with portable electric air compressors that can refill a flask or tank in less than ten minutes. These new compressors, however, only work within range of a broadcast power transmitter. A flask increases the ENC of a ballistic by +1.0 while a tank increases the ENC by +3.0. Both flasks and tanks are of average value.

BLADE WHIP

A blade whip is a long whip made of chain. Every other link is a wide chevron-shaped blade. This intimidating weapon is difficult and dangerous to wield but is the preferred weapon of Kalloan officers.

DERU LONG-AWL

The favored weapon of the subterranean deru is the long-awl, a mining tool adapted for offensive use. The long-awl is a heavy iron rod, between one and two meters long, with a long tapering tip, like that of a leather-punch, on one end and a pry-bar on the other.

The long-awl is used like a thrusting spear within the tight confines of the deru tunnels where there is little space to swing bladed weapons. The pry-bar end can also be used to hook onto ledges to aid in climbing. As they are made entirely of iron, long-awls are very heavy compared to human spears.

KATAR

A katar, or “punch dagger” is a wide-bladed weapon with an “H”-shaped hand-grip so that the blade extends from the knuckles. Chainmail armor AP is halved against katar. Katar cannot be thrown.

PLASMA GUNS

The Plasma Gun is a heavy weapon similar in size to twentieth century rocket launchers or heavy machine guns. Although portable, they are too heavy to fire without first bracing the weapon on a tripod or solid surface and must be connected to a heavy back-pack sized broadcast power receiver or portable rechargeable power-pack. They are generally mounted on aero-ships, either on the deck or in firing ports, and used as anti-personnel targets.

RAZOR CLUB

A razor club is a sinister weapon favored by Kalloans warriors. It is essentially a wooden club with rectangular razor-like blades set along its length on two sides. The razor club is known for leaving horribly disfiguring scars.

STARBLADES

Starblades are bladed weapons constructed of an exotic metal of Sdara Vatra origin. The metal is nearly unbreakable and its keen edge never needs sharpening. Starblades are used exclusively by the Guardians of Adhara and the Oculus. The Guardians prefer long, tapering broadswords or punch-daggers. Oculus warriors use sinewy double-edged blades with a curved prong at the base of the blade above the hilt.

Starblades are considered weapons of superior quality. As such, the damage of the base weapon is increased by +3, the HP of the weapon is increased by +15%.

NEW VEHICLES

<i>Vehicle</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Rated Speed</i>	<i>Handling</i>	<i>ACC</i>	<i>MOV</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>SIZ</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>Crew</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Cargo</i>	<i>Value</i>
Electric Carriage	Drive (Groundcar)	13	-5%	±8	150	12/2	45	45	1	3-4	24	Expensive
Electric Wagon	Drive (Groundcar)	12	-10%	±5	134	16/2	40	40	1	5+	24	Average
Ground Car, Electric	Drive (Groundcar)	10	+10%	±6	100	16/2	55	65	1	3-4	24	Expensive
Ground Cycle	Drive (Groundcar)	14	+10%	±8	180	12/-	20	30	1	1	6	Expensive
Ground Transport, Large Electric	Drive (Groundcar)	8	+5%	±4	83	18/2	80	80	1	12+	60	Expensive
Ground Transport, Small Electric	Drive (Groundcar)	10	+5%	±6	100	16/2	65	75	1	6-8	36	Expensive
Mobile Fortress	Heavy Machine (Armored Vehicle)	4	-10%	±1	42	18/10*	100	120	4	24	8	Restricted
Land Skimmer	Drive (Groundcar)	20	+5%	±10	400	12/-	80	80	1	6-7	36	Priceless

*The mobile fortress has heavy armor on the front and sides with less armor on the top and rear.

NEW VEHICLES

RHAKADIAN VEHICLES

Rhakadian civilian vehicles are largely limited to the streets and avenues of the Cydorian city-states, unable to travel beyond the scope of the city’s broadcast energy transmitter. The exception is the Rhakadian Mobile fortress, a lumbering military vehicle powered by its own internal reactor.

Electric-Carriage

Electric-carriagess are imported from the planet Malus for use in Imperial cities. They use electric motors powered by broadcast energy and are thus limited to operating within a few kilometers of the city power station. They are not designed for off-road or high-speed travel, they are simply a means of efficient personal transportation around the city.

Electric-Wagon

Electric-wagons are similar to electric-carriages but larger. They are equipped with either a cargo bed or series of bench seats. They are used to deliver cargo and passengers around the city. They are the equivalent to a delivery truck or city bus.

Mobile Fortress

The mobile fortress is a tracked land-vehicle, a combination tank and armored personnel carrier. It is armed with four plasma guns and can transport up to 24 armed and armored soldiers. A mobile fortress resembles a three-dimensional armored trap-ezoid, tapering towards the top, with energy turrets (BRP page 265) on each corner. Soldiers may exit through the large doors in the rear. There are two hatches on the top for the crew.

PHANOSIAN VEHICLES

Because of the Rhakadian blockade, Phanosian agents have been able to transport only a few vehicles to Uruta. These vehicles are usually rugged cross-county designs supplied to Demetrian resistance fighters but a few have wound up on the black market. Many techno-heretics produce low-quality copies of Phanosian designs.

Ground Car, Electric

Phanosian ground cars are powered by electrochemical fuel cells, so they are not dependent on broadcast power transmitters for energy. There are no roads on Uruta so these vehicles are designed for cross-country off-road travel, with six wheels, a rugged suspension, and heavy duty construction.

Ground Cycle, Electric

Ground cycles are electric off-road motorcycles with fat knobby tires, heavy duty construction, and rugged suspension.

Ground Transport, Large Electric

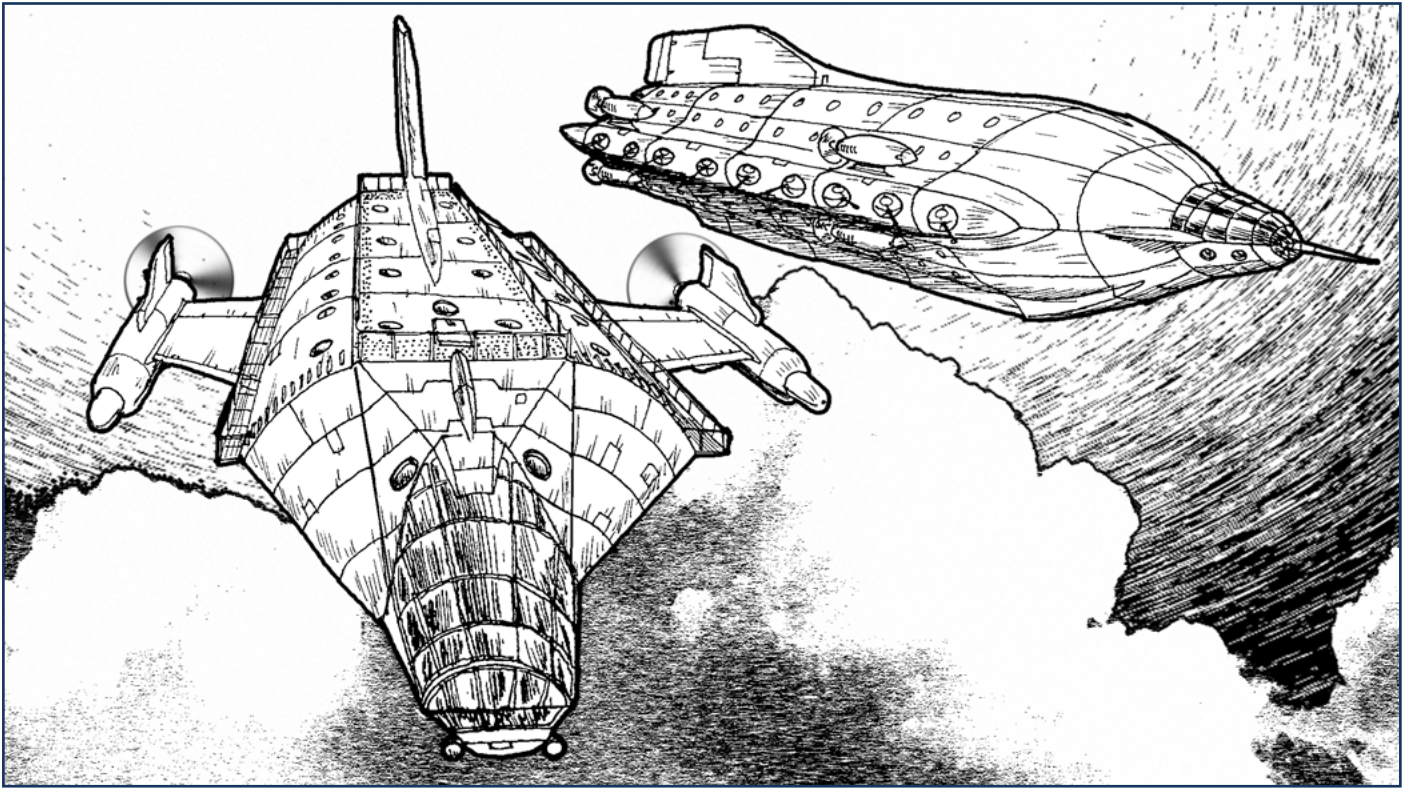
Large ground transports are identical to their smaller counterparts except larger and with an enclosed cargo bed. Large ground transports are the equivalent to a delivery van but more rugged and with eight wheels.

Ground Transport, Small Electric

Small ground transports are identical to ground-cars but designed with a cargo bed to carry light loads. Small ground transports are the equivalent to a pick-up truck or van but with six fat knobby wheels.

Land Skimmer

Phanosian land skimmers are hovercraft designed to fly no higher than a few meters above the ground. Many were used during the War of Unification and twenty-year-old junkers can still be found across Cydoria and Markania, despite their illegality.



AERO-SHIPS

The last great native Cydorian technological innovation was the creation of the aero-ship by Zinjani inventors fifty years ago. The first aero-ships were made of wood and resembled sailing ships. They were held aloft using primitive zephyrium lift-units powered by wood or oil-burning furnaces and relied on wind-powered sails for momentum. Designs quickly evolved. Second-generation aero-ships had flat bottoms and squared holds to maximize cargo capacity and to facilitate easier landing. Many second generation aero-ships can still be found in the skies over Cydoria to this day.

The arrangement between the Vrildarian Empire and the Rhakadian League provided the Vrildarians with new technologies which were soon applied to aero-ship designs. Modern third- and fourth-generation aero-ships are constructed with aerodynamic aluminum and titanium hulls to reduce weight and wind resistance. Zephyrium lift-units now use electric heating elements powered by voltaic pile generators. Modern lift-units are squat cylinders placed inside the hull on structurally reinforced mounts. Lift-units are placed as far apart as possible to maximize weight distribution and balance. Aero-ships have a minimum of four lift-units, one in each corner of the craft, but may have as many as eight, sixteen, or twenty. Their wide placement and energy distribution ensure proper balance of the aero-ship. Improper energy distribution, or a lift unit that is burning too hot or too cool, might cause one side of the aero-ship to list or spin. Modern aero-ships are driven by outboard electric propellers and ducted fans. Interior compartments are now pressure-sealed and climate controlled, though inexpensive aero-ships may skimp on this and require the crew to wear oxygen masks and heavy coats.

These new technologies have allowed for the construction of ever larger aero-ships. The largest cargo-carrying freighters are capable of transporting a payload of up to fifteen thousand tons of cargo and can achieve airspeeds of up to ten knots. The Vrildarians have even constructed a flying battleship named the “Vari-nor”. These massive aero-ships require lengthy acceleration and deceleration periods and extra wide turning radiuses.

More common are the small aero-transport. Aero-transport mass around three hundred to four hundred tons with a cargo capacity of one to two thousand tons. These vessels average forty to fifty meters in length with a height of ten to fifteen meters. These smaller vessels are maneuverable with rapid response times. Their external propeller nacelles can provide airspeeds up to twenty to thirty knots. Zephyrium provides excellent static lift, equal to that of hydrodgen and helium. A medium-sized aero-ship has a rate-of-climb of one hundred fifty meters per minute. The propellers can increase the rate-of-climb at the cost of forward acceleration.

Because of the Imperial ban on technology, modern aero-ships must be owned and licensed by a member of the authorized ruling nobility and must operate on strict charters of trade. Many independent aero-ship owners obtain illegally forged licenses and charters on the black market. They must always stay one step ahead of the Vrildarian authorities by constantly obtaining new licenses and identities and never maintaining a predictable trading route. A stale forgery runs the risk of being discovered and distributed among the inspectors at every port of call. An illegal owner may arrive only to have the authorities waiting to arrest him and impound his aero-ship.

The following vehicles are new to BRP. Aero-ships are native to the Cydorian peninsula. Other, more advanced vehicles have been imported to Cydoria via the Rhakadians or smuggled onto Uruta by other aliens and sold on the black market.

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

AERO-SHIPS

<i>Aero-Ship</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Rated Speed</i>	<i>Handling</i>	<i>ACC</i>	<i>MOV</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>SIZ</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>Crew</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Cargo</i>	<i>Value</i>
Barque	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	4 (2 per drive)	-10%	±1	42 (38 kph)	10/-	96	96	25+	8+	80	Average
Skiff/ Launch	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	4 (2 per drive)	+5%	±4	42 (38 kph)	16/-	40	40	1	5+	24	Average
Pinnacle	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	4 (2 per drive)	+5%	±4	42 (38 kph)	16/-	60	60	1	8+	36	Average
Transport	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	12 (3 per drive)	-5%	±4	134 (121 kph)	16/3	100	100	2+	8+	72	Expensive
Fighter	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	16 (4 per drive)	+5%	±6	250 (225 kph)	5/1	55	55	1-2	-	6	Restricted
Corsair	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	15 (3 per drive)	-5%	±4	200 (180 kph)	18/2	80	80	6+	20+	60	Priceless
Galleon	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	10 (2 per drive)	-15%	±2	100 (90 kph)	16/2	120	120	24+	100+	100	Restricted
Frigate	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	14 (2 per drive)	-10%	±4	182 (164 kph)	18/2	80	80	400+	40+	80	Restricted
Cruiser	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	12 (2 per drive)	-10%	±3	134 (121 kph)	20/2	100	100	600+	100+	90	Restricted
Battleship	Pilot (Aero-Ship)	10 (1 per drive)	-10%	±2	100 (90 kph)	24/2	160	160	1600+	300+	180	Restricted

EXAMPLE AERO-SHIPS

Barque

The original aero-ships were wooden vessels resembling maritime ships. They were driven by sails or primitive ethanol-burning motor-engines and were held aloft with wood-fired lift-units. Most have been re-fitted with electrically-driven propellers and modern Rhakadian-designed lift-units.

Skiff or Launch

A skiff or launch is a metal or wooden platform suspended by four small lift-units and propelled by an outboard mini-propeller on a pivot mount. A skiff is used to ferry passengers and cargo from the surface to an aero-ship holding station overhead. Most aero-ships carry one or two skiffs. Skiffs are too small to be armed. Most skiffs feature no accommodation other than benches to sit on and a canvas tarp.

Pinnacle

A pinnacle is a small aero-ship that serves as a tender to large aero-ships. They are suspended by four small lift-units and propelled by two outboard mini-propellers. Many military and bandit aero-ships use pinnacles as assault vessels. Pinnacles are too small to be armed. Pinnacles may have an open deck or an enclosed cabin.

Transport

Transports are the most common type of aero-ship. These medium-sized vessels are suspended by four to six regular lift-units and propelled by two to four propeller nacelles. Transports fly routes from the Cydorian cities to the Markanian settlements carrying cargo, ore, and passengers. Many transports are armed with small gunports for rifles and heavy weapons. Most transports eschew armor in favor of speed. Accommodations include two decks, a bridge, an engine room, a cargo hold, and ten small cabins for passengers and crew.

Fighter

Fighters are small one or two-man aero-ships meant to close with enemy aero-ships and open fire with either forward-mounted or turret-mounted plasma guns. Fighters have one or two propellers and short, stubby wing-like control vanes for high maneuverability. Fighters are capable of great speeds but have limited operational ranges.

Corsair

The corsair is generally a modified transport, eliminating weight and upgrading the engines to increase speed. Corsairs offer few amenities. Mass is conserved by removing all cabins. Everyone sleeps in hammocks in the one large hold that occupies the entire interior of the vessel.

Corsairs are usually armed with guns and cannons but only use their weapons against Imperial pursuers. Pirates prefer to close in on, board, and capture transports without damaging the target or its cargo. Corsairs are therefore equipped with four to six springals (BRP page 265) that fire harpoon-like grapples attached to lines. They grapple their target and winch them close. They then try to hover over their target and drop down using lines and nets. Some corsairs of the Dazumi are equipped with advanced shock turrets (BRP page 265) that disable their targets without damaging the aero-ship.

Galleon

Galleons are large slow-moving freighters that carry ore from the western mines to the refineries of the mid-west and then carry the refined metals to the space-ports of Vrildar and Norukar. In addition to a hold full of cargo, galleons can carry over one hundred passengers, usually settlers or miners, in cramped uncomfortable passenger cabins meant for twenty. The lumbering galleons are enticing targets for pirate corsairs. They are armed with four plasma gun turrets and a small squad of ten aerines.

Frigate

The frigates of the Imperial army are light aero-ships designed to patrol the settlements of Markania and to counter piracy. They are relatively swift but not very maneuverable. Frigates are armed with four plasma guns (page 63) and an energy cannon (BRP page 265). They carry a squad of aerines armed with rifles and heavy weapons. Frigates visit outlying settlements on random patrols and escort galleons and transports to deter piracy. Frigates are also sent on scouting and reconnaissance missions and are often used on raids against bandit and rebel hideouts as well as petty warlord fortresses.

Cruiser

Cruisers are large military aero-ships used during invasions of well-defended warlord fortresses or redoubts. They carry two to three squads of aerines armed with rifles and heavy weapons and are equipped with sixteen plasma guns (page 63), four energy cannons (BRP page 265), and two energy turrets (BRP page 265). During the war, cruisers dropped explosive bombs onto enemy fortresses. Bombs are rare today so modern payloads are comprised of boulders and boiling oils. A handful of cruisers have been sent forth on missions of discovery. They were tasked to explore the farthest reaches of Uruta, make contact with the local inhabitants, eventually circumnavigate the globe, and return Vrildar. This mission of exploration is expected to take five years.

Battleship

The battleship Varinor, the only one yet built, is an armored mobile aerial fortress outfitted with twenty-four plasma guns (page 63), twelve energy cannons (BRP page 265), six energy turrets (BRP page 265), and two missile turrets (BRP page 265). It is powered by its own quantum power reactor, similar to those used by Rhakadian space-ships. The Varinor carries the remaining bombs left over from the War of Unification, the only aero-ship so equipped. The Varinor is a new vessel and has thus far seen no combat action. It is currently on a tour of the Cydorian peninsula. Afterwards, it will visit each of the Rhakadian refineries on Markania, stopping off at several settlements along the way.

AERO-SHIP RULES**Aero-ship Crews**

All aero-ships require, at a minimum, a pilot. Depending on the complexity, range, and size of the aero-ship, one or more engineers might also be required to maintain the zephyrium lift-units and/or outboard electric propellers. Long-range journeys might also require the services of a navigator to plot the voyage and verify position for the pilot. A well-crewed craft will have multiple crew-members for each position so that they can serve in shifts. Two or three shifts per day are typical. As the size of the crew increases, so too does the need for command and coordination. The captain is responsible for the smooth operation and teamwork of the crew.

The larger the crew, the greater the requirement for support personnel such as doctors, medics, cooks, stewards, quartermasters, pursers, accountants, etc. These positions are optional and are usually filled by members of the crew with other duties.

Military aero-ships expected to engage in boarding or landing maneuvers also carry a complement of aerines, soldiers trained in air-to-air or air-to-ground battle tactics. Aerines specialize in rapid assaults, descending from ropes and nets or using flight harnesses to take enemy aero-ships and fortifications.

Navigation

Because of the effect the Oudh has on electromagnetic waves, technologies such as radio communication and radar do not work on Uruta. Most aero-ships must navigate using compasses, altimeters, landmarks, celestial navigation, and dead reckoning. Navigating during inclement weather has always proved dangerous, especially in mountainous terrain. New Rhakadian technologies such as sonar echolocation, laser measurements, and inertial compasses have improved navigation by providing better position estimates and warning pilots of oncoming land masses. Such new technologies are expensive, however, and limited to military craft and those belonging to the wealthiest nobles.

Successful navigation requires use of the Navigate skill (BRP page 70). A Navigate check is required for every four hours of flight time.

FUMBLE: You and your aero-ship are hopelessly lost. Finding your bearings requires an additional four hours and a *Difficult* Navigate roll.

FAILURE: You missed a few landmarks and wound up off-course. Finding your bearings requires an additional two hours and an *Average* Navigate roll.

SUCCESS: You charted a good course and are on schedule for this four-hour period.

SPECIAL: You charted an excellent course and are ahead of schedule. You proceed to your destination at 110% normal speed for this four-hour period.

CRITICAL: Your brilliant navigation is allowing you to make excellent time. You proceed to your destination at 125% normal speed for this four-hour period.

Navigating under routine conditions using a map, compass, and good visibility provides a bonus of 5-20% based on the quality of instruments or resources. Navigating without the use of landmarks, such as at sea, in darkness, during bad weather, or over a featureless desert makes navigating a *Difficult* action. Advanced Rhakadian technologies such as an inertial compass, echo-locating sonar, or lidar, makes navigating an *Easy* action. Navigators may also add 1/5th of the rating for any of the following skills as a temporary bonus to any Navigate skill roll:

- Science (Mathematics)
- Science (Astronomy)
- Technical (Computer Use)
- Knowledge (Region) while in that region.

Piloting and Maneuvering

Aero-ships are a kind of aerostat, or lighter-than-air vessel. Instead of using air resistance over a wing to generate lift like an airplane or bird, it uses lighter-than-air materials like a balloon or dirigible. Unlike other aerostats, lifting an aero-ship is not achieved using bags of gases such as hydrogen or helium. Instead, lift is provided by the exotic element zephyrium. Zephyrium, in its natural crystalline state, creates a gravitic field, not unlike how a magnet produces a magnetic field. Like a magnet, this remarkable mineral seeks alignment with Uruta's gravitic field the way a compass aligns with the magnetic field. When refined, the gravity field of zephyrium can be manipulated. Energizing zephyrium will force it to align with gravity at a certain altitude, the greater the energy input, the higher the altitude and rate-of-climb. The drawback, however, is that over-energizing zephyrium might cause it to reach a plasma state. At this stage, zephyrium loses all its lifting properties.

Zephyrium lift-units allow craft to lift off and land vertically, like a helicopter. Most zephyrium lift-units can safely increase the energy of zephyrium to achieve a rate-of-climb or descent equal to about one hundred fifty meters per minute, or about nine kph (MOV 10). Climb rates vary, of course, with the efficiency of lift-unit and purity of zephyrium.

The rate-of-climb can also be increased by over-energizing the zephyrium, risking a plasma conversion in one or more of the lift-units. Over-energizing the zephyrium boosts the craft's climb speed. Each 10% boost causes a 1% chance of plasma conversion per lift-unit per combat round. For example, a +200% boost, effectively tripling climb speed to 27 kph (81 meters/combat round), comes with a 20% chance of plasma conversion per lift-unit per combat round. When a lift-unit fails, the aero-ship begins to slowly descend. The pilot can compensate by overpowering the other lift-units, but doing so uses more energy and decreases the aero-ship's range.

A mechanic can get a non-functioning lift-unit working again with a successful Repair (Gravitic) roll, though subsequent repair attempts will incur a cumulative -5% penalty. The worst-case scenario, of course, is the simultaneous failure of all lift-units on an aero-ship.

All lift-units have an operational ceiling. This is generally the point at which zephyrium can accept no more power before plasma conversion. A lift-unit's operational ceiling depends on several factors including air pressure, the purity of the zephyrium, and the efficiency of the lift-unit. In theory, expensive zephyrium and an efficient engine can take an aero-ship out of the atmosphere or even to the moon. This is the principle by which alien space-ships operate. Urutan aero-ships, however, are not adequately pressurized for such a journey and their propellers would have no air to push once there. Pressurized aero-ships can fly as high as ten to twelve thousand meters, but the propulsive force of their propellers decreases with the air pressure. In general, the effective maximum cruising altitude of an aero-ship is five thousand meters.

Piloting an aero-ship in flight is similar to flying a fast dirigible or low-speed aircraft. Most aero-ships lack the massive gas-filled envelope of a dirigible and, therefore, are much smaller and encounter less wind resistance. Smaller aero-ships fly like an airplane, though at a much slower speed. An aero-transport, for instance, has an air-speed of 121 kph. Larger aero-ships, such as the battleship Varinor or the heavy ore freighters are much heavier; some rival modern ocean-going ships in size and mass. These heavy vessels are take hours to accelerate to cruising speed, hours more to decelerate, and at full speed have a turning radius as large as twenty kilometers.

The outboard propellers of an aero-ship make them very maneuverable. By counter-rotating propellers on opposite sites, a pilot can rotate the aero-ship in mid-flight. Pilots may also reverse both propellers to stop and hover in mid-air without worrying about stalling. Propeller nacelles may also rotate up and down to provide additional vertical momentum, momentarily pushing the aero-ship down or up. Some aero-ships use the propellers to push down against the lift of the lift-units, allowing for rapid deployment of vehicles or personnel, before reversing thrust for a rapid ascent.

When docking or performing close maneuvers, pilots feather the propellers in short quick bursts in different directions to maintain position against wind. This routine maneuver is called "station-keeping" and is generally performed when maneuvering into a docking bay or onto a landing pad.

Unlike aircraft, aero-ships find it very difficult to impossible to perform aerobatic maneuvers such as inverted flight, barrel rolls, immelmans, loops, or complex combat maneuvers. The balanced placement of lift-units ensures even and level flight. It is said that some of the best pilots, in combination with the greatest engineers, are able to manipulate the power to each engine and propeller in such a way as to perform such maneuvers, but they are exceedingly difficult and are spoken of only as legends, tall tales, and exaggerated bragging at bars popular with aero-ship crews.

In general, Piloting skill rolls are only required when there's a danger of collision, either with other aero-ships or the ground. The difficulties for such checks vary based on the relative velocities of the aero-ship and the other object and are modified by the rules for Aerial Combat (BRP page 212).

The following list represents common maneuvers that require Piloting checks:

- Landing in an open field with good lighting and clear weather is *Easy* difficulty.
- Landing on a platform atop a building in good lighting and calm weather is *Average* difficulty.
- Taking off from an open field with good lighting and calm weather normally does not require a check. An *Average* roll is required if there a risk for collision.

A mid-air rendezvous with another aero-ship in clear skies is an *Easy* task if both craft wish to rendezvous. If the target craft resists, consult the rules for vehicular chases (BRP pages 216-217).

Range and Recharge

Most aero-ships can fly at cruising speed for approximately 1000 km before needing to re-charge its fuel cells. Aero-ships are usually equipped with a broadcast power receiver and can re-charge by simply resting within a few kilometers of a transmitter. Re-charge time varies by the size of the city.

City Size	Recharge Time
Major City-State, Rhakadian Refinery	1D6 x 2 hours
City, Iron-Fields, Garrison	1D6 x 4 hours
Village, Fort	1D6 x 8 hours
Outpost	1D6 x 12 hours

Damage and Repair

Aero-ships take damage to their hit points like other vehicles. Most damage is done to the craft's airframe: its hull, support ribs, beams, stanchions, longerons, formers, etc. Sometimes, vital components of an aero-ship may be damaged or destroyed. Examples include the electric motors that drive the aero-ship's propulsion, the propellers attached to those motors, the power generator or battery cells, controls, etc.

Use the following table whenever an aero-ship takes damage:

D10	Result
1-5	Airframe: The damage is done to the craft's super-structure. Repairing a damaged airframe takes one hour per attempt and requires a Repair (Structural) check per instance of damage.
6	Propeller Failure: In addition to airframe damage, one of the aero-ship's propellers has been damaged, rendering one drive inoperable. Refer to Speed per drive listed for the aero-ship and reduce the Speed by that amount. Repairing a damaged propeller takes ten minutes per attempt and requires a successful Repair (Mechanical) roll.
7	Drive Failure: In addition to airframe damage, one of the aero-ship's motors has failed and must be repaired or replaced. Refer to Speed per drive listed for the aero-ship and reduce the Speed by that amount. Repairing a damaged motor takes ten minutes per check and requires both a successful Repair (Mechanical) and a successful Repair (Electrical) roll.
8	Power Failure: In addition to airframe damage, the aero-ship's battery or generator is damaged and must be repaired or replaced. The aero-ship's Speed is reduced by 2 each round until stopped. In addition, the lift-units lose power and the aero-ship begins to descend as the zephyrium cools. Repairing the power generator takes ten minutes per check and requires a successful Repair (Electrical) roll.
9	Control Damage: In addition to airframe damage, the aero-ships controls have been damaged. -20% to the pilot's Pilot (Aero-ship) skill until repaired. Repairing damaged controls takes ten minutes per check and requires a successful Repair (Mechanical) roll.
10	Lift-Unit Failure: In addition to airframe damage, one of the aero-ship's zephyrium engines is damaged and must be repaired or replaced. The other lift-units can compensate to maintain lift, but efficiency is reduced. Repairing a damaged lift-unit takes ten minutes and requires a successful Repair (Gravitics) roll.



Lift-Unit Failure

Luckily, when a lift-unit fails it takes up to a minute for the zephyrium to fully de-energize. Even if an aero-ship loses all lift-units at once, depending on its altitude, it may have a chance to make a hard landing before it plummets into free-fall.

The following table displays the total distance fallen at the end of the combat round with the failure of all lift units. The first value is the distance fallen in meters per combat round. The second value is the velocity in kilometers per hour, with the equivalent Rated Speed of the vehicle while falling listed in parenthesis. This value is useful for determining chase results and the damage from collisions and crashes. Each unit of Speed results in 1D6 damage to the vessel. Note that the maximum cruising altitude for most aero-ships is five thousand meters.

Elapsed time	Distance Fallen	Velocity	Speed
End of Round 1	132 m	40 kph	3
End of Round 2	528 m	80 kph	9
End of Round 3	1,188 m	120 kph	12
End of Round 4	2,112 m	160 kph	14
End of Round 5	3,300 m	200 kph	15
End of each additional round	+660 m	200 kph*	15

*The aero-ship has reached terminal velocity and will continue to fall at this rate until it hits the ground.

For example, an aero-ship with four-lift units loses all power. After four rounds, they have fallen a total distance of 2,112 meters and will be descending at 160 kph (Speed 14).

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

A common tactic used by pirates fleeing Imperial aero-ships is to cut all lift-units and free-fall for a short amount of time to build velocity then re-activate the lift-units and level out before hitting the ground, turning the velocity into forward momentum. The momentum fades quickly, losing one Speed per combat round. The tactic is extremely dangerous and requires precision coordination and timing. The ship's pilot must make a successful Pilot (Aero-Ship) roll and the mechanics must re-start all the lift-units in such a way as to level off in a curve to preserve the momentum, requiring a successful Repair (Gravitics) skill check for each unit. If performed successfully, the tactic is an effective way of building a short burst of speed to make a quick getaway.

Trade and Commerce

The chief purpose of an aero-ship is to transport goods and passengers. Most aero-ships are the property of commercial conglomerates, partnerships formed by wealthy aristocrats who pool their resources to form a trading company and purchase an aero-ship. Other aero-ships are owned outright by particularly wealthy nobles. Independent financiers will likely see their aero-ship once or twice a year, leaving the actual work to employees and brokers.

The successful aero-ship conglomerates hire port-side factors and brokers to arrange dependable passenger traffic and lucrative cargo transport on established trade routes. These business operations are well-financed, face little risk, and offer steady dependable reward.

There are several established trade routes dominated by these major business conglomerates. The following table shows the most commonly imported and exported goods from each city. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Because of the severe restrictions placed on owning and operating an aero-ship, there are very few independent captains. The few there are tend to be down-on-their-luck nobles trying to make ends meet or commoners getting by on forged or falsified patents of nobility or letters of agency. These small independent aero-ships usually lack substantial financial backing or resources. They are easily squeezed out of established trade routes by the larger competition and are forced to seek profits along the margins. They travel the outer edges of society, visiting the small remote settlements and colonies, servicing distant military bases, or even dealing with barbarian tribes. These marginal operations cannot pre-arrange business at their destination. They take what they can get wherever they can find it. Their goal is to buy low and sell high. They face extreme risk, and ninety percent of the time come out on bottom, but the surprise payout of that remaining ten percent makes the rest all worth it.

A detailed game system for the purchasing and selling of goods for the purposes of speculative trade is beyond the scope of these rules. Gamemasters are encouraged to use the optional rules for Wealth (see page 47) as a guideline for determining profits from speculative cargo hauls.

TRADE CENTERS

City	Import	Export
Basadra	grain, wine, ships	ore, metals, tools
Fornax	grain, wine, metals, finished goods	seafood, livestock, meat, leather, ships
Guerna	grain, wine, metals	soldiers, mercenaries, weapons, finished goods
Lokmar	unrefined zephyrium crystals, <i>food</i> , finished goods, slaves	refined zephyrium
Mancea and Kaidan	metals, finished goods, slaves	wine, grain, cotton, textiles, spices, grain oil, whale oil, seafood
Matrax	grain, wine, metals, finished goods, ships	seafood, livestock, leather, meat, wool
Norukar	grain, grain oil, wine, ore, foodstuffs, meat, leather, textiles, wool, cotton, refined zephyrium, refined thorium, refined thallium, spices, aero-ships, slaves	metals, finished goods, chemicals
Nrolis	meat, grain, wine, finished goods, foodstuffs, textiles, wool, cotton, leather	whale oil, leather, seafood, ore, spices, salt, thallium
Pyrnis	thallium ore, <i>food</i> , finished goods, slaves	thallium
Ramanam	metals, finished goods	seafood, ropes, whale oil, rubber
Tagrum	unrefined zephyrium crystals, <i>food</i> , finished goods, slaves	refined zephyrium
Tibiris	<i>food</i> , grain, wine, finished goods, foodstuffs	very little, the cities of Tibiris and Totoris exist to serve the needs of travelers passing through.
Totoris	<i>food</i> , grain, wine, finished goods, foodstuffs	very little, the cities of Tibiris and Totoris exist to serve the needs of travelers passing through.
Traax	grain, wine, metals, finished goods	seafood, livestock, leather, meat, wool
Tyrannis	grain, wine, metals, textiles, meat, leather, wool, cotton,	slaves
Vrildar	grain, grain oil, wine, ore, foodstuffs, meat, leather, textiles, wool, cotton, refined zephyrium, refined thallium, spices, aero-ships, slaves	wool, finished goods, chemicals, metals
Zinj	metals, finished goods, refined zephyrium	aero-ships, grain, grain oil, textiles, spices, wine, cotton, slaves

IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY

The Emperor's restriction on access to technology, and its various exceptions and allowances, has created an extensive enforcement bureaucracy. The Imperial bureaucracy is vast, a network of documentation and verification that reaches from the capital in Vrildar to the remotest outposts in Arus.

The Empire relies on this network to ensure that only those legally allowed to own or use restricted technology may do so. The Inquisition uses the network to track the movement of its citizens. Through the bureaucracy, the Inquisition can identify and locate potential traitors or where to focus their investigations.

A state bureaucracy to manage its citizens is a Vrildarian concept. Vrildar is a city obsessed with order, documentation, and control. The Vrildarian bureaucracy dates back hundreds of years. With the creation of the Empire and the domination of its enemies, the Vrildarian bureaucracy has been imposed on all the cultures of Cydoria. The original system relied on paper documentation with records kept in central repositories. The introduction of advanced Rhakadian computers has digitized the process, increasing its efficiency and speed of distribution. Today, the citizen maintains paper copies of all their documents in a personal folio while digital copies are distributed throughout the network via couriers.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

The bureaucracy is responsible for tracking and verifying several types of documents and transactions. The following are but a few of the more common examples.

Identity Papers

Identity papers record a person's name, place of birth, parents, siblings, and physical description. All citizens of the Vrildarian Empire are required to obtain identity papers. Identity papers are necessary in order to obtain subsequent documentation such as letters of agency from a noble, patents of nobility, ownership papers, a captain's license, a charter of trade, letters of marque or reprisal, etc. Possession of forged or falsified identity papers is a crime punishable by either a year in an Arusian prison camp or amputation of the hand.

Historically, citizens of the city-state of Vrildar obtained identity papers upon reaching the age of twelve. These papers served both as a passport, recording passage through the city gates of Vrildar, and as a receipt for payment of taxes. Modern identity papers are stamped with a digital code which can be scanned and read by hand-held computers. Today, all citizens of the Vrildarian Empire receive an identity document at birth and anyone wishing to enter a city ruled by the Empire must obtain identity papers to do so.

Travel is restricted for most citizens of the Empire. Serfs and slaves are forbidden to leave the city while merchants and freemen are free to travel where they wish, so long as their destination is logged in the city database. Members of the nobility, in addition to having freedom of travel, are exempt from this requirement.

Anyone wishing to pass through the gates of a Imperial city, noble or commoner, must present their identity papers to be scanned and logged. Anyone without identity papers who wishes to pass through the gate must first obtain identity papers.

Administrative stations capable of producing identity papers can be found at most city gates. Acquiring identity papers involves waiting in a line for 1D12 hours to submit an application. The application is then compared against the local database for outstanding arrest warrants or criminal history. If the applicant passes the check, they are given identity papers and allowed to enter or exit the city. The background check is also submitted to the central database network but results will not return for 6D6 days.

Anyone caught within city walls without their identity papers face penalties ranging from a night in a detention cell to public branding.

The Inquisition tracks the coming and going of its citizens through the scan logs. Anyone wanted by the authorities will be detained and arrested as they try to pass through the gates, assuming that the local database has been synchronized and up-to-date.

Professional Credentials

Professional credentials verify that the bearer has been met certain minimum educational requirements and is authorized to perform a restricted profession. Examples include papers showing membership in the Octavium, membership in a trade guild, or educational credentials from the University of Vrildar. It should be remembered that professional credentials denote demonstrated skill, not rank within an organization. Rank is represented by the Status skill. One might be considered a master within a trade guild or the Octavium, having demonstrated superior talent in their trade, but still have little standing within the hierarchy of the organization.

<i>Skill Rating</i>	<i>Trade Guild</i>	<i>Octavium</i>	<i>University</i>
Relevant Skill:	Craft	Repair or Technical	Art, Knowledge, Perform, or Science
51-75	Journeyman	Initiate of the First Circle	Baccalaureate
76-90	Expert	Initiate of the Second Circle	Magister
91+	Master	Initiate of the Third Circle	Doctor

Commission

A Commission is a document that authorizes and attests that a character is an agent of a noble operating on instructions from and ultimately responsible to that noble. The letters explicitly spell out the nature of the relationship between the bearer and the noble. Letters of agency are required for any person operating or transporting restricted alien technology. Letters of agency are also required for access to many government and military buildings where commoners are normally forbidden.

Letters of Agency come in two general categories. A minor Commission might be carried by a slave or servant to allow them to operate vehicles or civilian equipment on behalf of their master. A greater Commission is one that a castellan or man-at-arms might carry, allowing them to carry weapons or gain access to restricted areas.

Most servants, slaves, employees, and members of a noble household bear minor letters of agency that allow them to carry out their duties. Personal bodyguards carry greater letters of agency from the noble they protect which detail their affiliation to the household and lists the types of weapons they are allowed to carry.

City guards keep a wary eye out for anyone who looks out of place or might be carrying contraband. They are empowered to stop anyone and inspect their identity papers and letters of agency. Usually, they will perform a cursory inspection of the documents and allow the bearer to carry on. If their suspicion is aroused, they might detain the suspect and escort them to a station where the documents can be checked against those in the local computer database.

Possession of a forged or falsified minor Commission is punishable by a year in an Arusian prison camp. Possession of a forged greater Commission is punishable by public execution.

Title of Ownership

Many expensive items such as aero-ships, property, and animals require titles of ownership. Titles are used to prove legal ownership and to settle disputes. Most titles bear a unique mark that matches a corresponding mark permanently affixed to a hidden location on the item in question. Titles of ownership may be drawn up for any legal purchase.

Possession of a forged title of ownership is a crime with punishment commensurate with the value of the item. Possession of a forgery for a minor item, such as a document that falsely claims ownership of an anator or bondrus, is punishable by a year in an Arusian prison camp. Possession of a forgery for a major item, such as a document that falsely claims ownership of property or an aero-ship, is punishable by ten to twenty years in an Arusian prison camp or amputation of a hand and foot.

Captain's License

All aero-ship captains must be licensed and registered with the Vrildarian Empire. To qualify for a captain's license, the total sum of a character's Navigation, Pilot: Aero-Ship, Science: Meteorology, and Wealth skills must exceed 50%. Most licenses are registered in Zinj or Norukar.

Operating under a forged or falsified captain's license is a crime punishable by ten to twenty years in an Arusian prison camp or amputation of a hand and foot.

Customs Inspection

A customs inspection works like identity papers for goods being transported for trade. All trade goods entering or leaving a Imperial city, either passing through a gate or via a sea-port or aero-port, must be released by a customs inspector. The inspector compares the contents of the cargo to the manifest and checks for any contraband. If the manifest and the cargo matches, the

manifest is stamped and approved. Normally, only a cursory inspection is performed. However, inspectors are empowered to detain any form of transport in order to perform a more thorough inventory of the cargo.

Any trader possessing a forged or falsified customs inspection can be punished by ten years in an Arusian prison camp or amputation of a hand or foot.

DOCUMENT FORMAT

Official documents are drawn up in a Imperial government office and bear an official stamp. A digital copy of the document is stored in a computer database. The computer databases are then copied onto data crystals which are distributed throughout the Empire via a network of couriers. In this way, all databases are synchronized from the central repositories to the regional centers to the hand-held personal computers carried by all bureaucratic officials. The hand-held computers synchronize with the regional centers every night. The regional centers and central repositories exchange data-crystal updates once a week or once a month, depending on aero-ship service. Assume that any updates to the database will be distributed to all local hand-held computers the next day, will be copied into the central repository within 2D6 days, throughout the region in 4D6 days, and throughout the network in 6D6 days.

An individual maintains their paper documents in a leather folio which they carry on their person at all times. When a Imperial official asks for an individual's documents, the paper copies are inspected by the official and scanned into a hand-held portable computer. The official is then presented with all relevant information about that individual as well as the history, including location, date, and outcome, of all previous identity checks.

FORGERIES

A character may bypass any unwanted security checks by obtaining or creating a forged document. Creating a forgery requires a legal copy of the document to be forged and proper supplies. The time it takes to create a forgery varies from a few hours for identity papers or customs inspections to several days for professional credentials. The gamemaster secretly rolls the forger's Forgery skill at the time the forgery is inspected.

Falsifying Information

A character may supply false information when obtaining otherwise legal documents. Obtaining falsified documents usually requires a few successful Fast Talk rolls backed up by "reliable" witnesses and documentation. A judicious bribe may not hurt either. Providing false information to a Imperial official can be punished by ten years in an Arusian prison camp or amputation of a finger. Official documents with falsified information will pass any inspection for forgery, but may still raise suspicion in the inspector should the character fail their Fast Talk or Persuasion skill tests.

Purchasing Forged Documents

A character may obtain forged documents on the black market. The value of the forgery depends on the skill of the forger and the nature of the document. The values of different types of forgeries are listed on the next page. When purchased, record the forger's skill next to the forgery. The gamemaster makes the actual skill check in secret when the forgery is inspected.

DETECTING FORGERIES

Inevitably, a forgery is put to the test by the authorities. Game-masters should use the following procedure to determine their effectiveness:

1. Before an inspector attempts to detect a forgery, the inspector must first have reason to suspect falsification. Any inspector requesting documentation must make an opposed Insight skill check against the character's Etiquette, Fast Talk, or Persuasion skill.

FUMBLE: The inspector doesn't even look at the documentation.

FAILURE: The inspector accepts the documentation and carries on.

SUCCESS: The inspector has detected something about the character's demeanor that warrants closer examination.

SPECIAL: The inspector distrusts the character on sight. Any attempt made by the character to avoid closer examination by using Fast Talk suffers a penalty of -15%.

The inspector's check should be modified by conditions. Is there a long line? Has it been a long day? Is the location under increased security?

1: Heavy Security: +20% to the inspector's Insight

2: Increased Security: +05% to the inspector's Insight

3-7: Standard Security: +0% to the inspector's Insight

9: Light Security: -10% to the inspector's Insight*

10: Lax Security: -30% to the inspector's Insight*

*The inspector may be open to receive a bribe.

2. A character may attempt to avoid a closer examination with a successful Fast Talk or Persuasion skill check.

FUMBLE: The character has messed up and said something wrong. The inspector has increased cause for examination and receives +15% to the examination.

FAILURE: The story has no effect, the inspector proceeds with the examination.

SUCCESS: The inspector accepts the character's story, but the examination continues at a -15% penalty.

SPECIAL: The inspector believes the character's story, apologizes for the inconvenience, and carries on.

3. The inspector closely examines the forgery. The inspector makes an opposed Spot skill check against a skill check made by the forger. The forger's skill check is always made at the time of inspection.

FUMBLE: The inspector accepts the documentation and apologizes to the character for the inconvenience.

FAILURE: The inspector accepts the documentation but still considers the character suspicious.

SUCCESS: The inspector has reason to believe the document is a forgery. The inspector attempts to arrest the character but will ask a magistrate of the court to verify the forgery. The sentence will be carried out pending the magistrate's decision.

SPECIAL: The inspector has detected an obvious forgery. The inspector attempts to arrest the character. Punishment will be carried out within 1-4 days.

FORGERIES

Forgery	Novice Forger (Forgery 00-05%)	Neophyte Forger (Forgery 06-25%)	Amateur Forger (Forgery 26-50%)	Expert Forger (Forgery 76-90%)	Master Forger (Forgery 91-100%)	Legendary Forger (Forgery 100+%)
Identity Papers	Cheap	Inexpensive	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless
Professional Credentials	Cheap	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless	Restricted
Commission, Minor	Cheap	Cheap	Cheap	Inexpensive	Inexpensive	Average
Commission, Major	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless	Priceless	Restricted
Title of Ownership, Minor	Cheap	Cheap	Cheap	Inexpensive	Inexpensive	Average
Title of Ownership, Major	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless	Priceless	Restricted
Captain's License	Cheap	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless	Restricted
Customs Inspection	Cheap	Inexpensive	Average	Expensive	Priceless	Restricted

BUILDING AND MODIFYING EQUIPMENT

Anyone with the Repair skill can design, build, and modify equipment appropriate for the skill specialty. Doing so requires adequate and appropriate parts and components. Your access to appropriate parts is tracked with a new skill called “Parts”. The Parts skill is tracked like the Wealth skill. It represents the character’s access to spare parts and components. The Parts skill must be associated with a Repair skill specialty.

Each Parts skill specialty can increase with the acquisition of new components or decrease with the consumption of components. Points of the Wealth skill can be exchanged for points in the Parts skill on a one-to-one basis, adjusted by the Bargain skill. *For example, ten points of Wealth can be exchanged for ten points of Parts (Mechanical).*

However, points of the Parts skill may only be sold for additional points of the Wealth skill at half value, adjusted by the Bargain skill. *For example, ten points of mechanical parts can be exchanged for five points of Wealth.*

Parts Type	Example parts
Electrical	Wiring, fuses, lighting, switches, power generation and storage, capacitors, power transmission, electric motors, simple circuits
Electronic	Computers, integrated circuits, advanced equipment, energy weapons
Hydraulic	Pumps, hoses, steam engines
Mechanical	Gears, machinery, clockwork, vehicles, ballistic pistols
Plumbing	Pipes, drains, hoses, fittings, water storage
Structural	Walls, hulls, frames, roofs, windows
Pneumatic	Compressed air tanks, hoses, compressors
Gravitic	Lift units, anti-gravity, zephyrium

REPAIRS

Use of a Repair skill to restore lost hit points to an item requires the expenditure of 1 point of parts for each hit point restored. Repair work normally requires one hour per hit point restored. A character may attempt to complete repairs in half the time but the skill roll becomes *Difficult*.

CONSTRUCTION

An engineer can design and create equipment from scratch using nothing but component parts using the following procedure:

1. Expend a number of points of a Parts specialty equal to the Value of the equipment to be built:

Value	Cost in Parts
Cheap	1
Inexpensive	5
Average	10
Expensive	25
Priceless	50
Restricted	100

For equipment that utilizes multiple types of Parts points, such as an electric vehicle or a pneumatic weapon, the gamemaster should split the required Parts specialties as appropriate: 10/90%, 20/80%, 25/75%, 33/67%, 50/50%.

2. Spend one hour per point of Parts used manufacturing the item.
3. The gamemaster secretly makes a Repair skill check for you and records the result.

FUMBLE: The item seems to be well-made, but breaks or fails the first time it is used. Half of the Parts points used for the device are wasted and cannot be recovered.

FAILURE: The object is obviously flawed. You must start over. 5% of the Parts points used for the device are wasted and cannot be recovered.

SUCCESS: The object is constructed well. It functions as designed and may be sold for the full Value of the Parts points.

SPECIAL: The object is well made, receiving one of the following (at gamemaster’s discretion)—a bonus equal to +1 damage, +1 armor, +5% MOV, +5% range, or +1 to one of the item’s characteristics; a +5% to a single skill possessed by the item; a +5% to an appropriate skill chance when the item is used, as if it were a piece of good equipment. The resale Value of the item is equal to the number of Parts points used +50%*.

CRITICAL: The object is a masterpiece, receiving one of the following (at gamemaster’s discretion)—a bonus equal to +3 damage, +3 armor, +15% range, +15% MOV, or +3 to one of the item’s characteristics; a +15% to a single skill possessed by the item; a +15% to an appropriate skill chance when the item is used, as if it were a piece of superior equipment. The resale Value of the item is equal to double the number of Parts point used*.

*If the item is re-used for Parts points, it is worth its original Value.

Modifiers

The following modifiers are cumulative. Each *Difficult* modifier halves the character’s skill. *For example, a character doing the work in half the time with no plans would effectively quarter the character’s skill.*

- A character may double the amount of time spent building the device to ensure an *Easy* skill roll.
- Attempting to do the work in half the time is a *Difficult* skill roll.
- Building a device assumes the character has ready access to either a working example of the device or detailed plans. Building a new device with neither example nor plans is a *Difficult* skill roll.

- A character may also design an entirely new piece of equipment as a super powered gadget. The cost in parts equals the character point cost of the super power. Any gadget that requires the expenditure of power points must also include the Extra Energy super power. Any gadget that requires a characteristic to work must also include the Super Characteristic super power. Most gadgets are unique and therefore have no previous example or plans, requiring a *Difficult* skill roll to create.
- Any item, mundane, advanced, or super powered, may be enhanced using super powers such as Armor, Extra Hit Points, Force Field, etc. for the character point cost of the super power.

All circumstantial action modifiers (BRP page 177) apply.

Poor weather conditions: -5%
Loud noises or distractions: -10%
Poor or inadequate tools: -5 to -15%
Poor lighting: -10%
Fatigue:
-5% for winded
-10% for lack of sleep
-25% for total exhaustion
Ideal lighting: +10%
Ideal conditions: +10%
Superior tools or equipment: +5 to +15%

EXAMPLE GADGETS

Hostile Environment Suit

Base Powers: Adaptation (BRP page 148)
 Extra Energy (BRP page 157)
Parts Cost: 18 mechanical and 4 pneumatic
Power Point Cost: 20 to activate, then 1 per full turn (five minutes)
Power Point Reserve: 40

This skin-tight rubbery suit covers the entire body from head to toe and comes equipped with a sealed helmet, face-plate, and tanks of compressed air. It was designed to fit anyone up to SIZ 20 and is meant to be worn under other garments such as armor, backpacks, etc. The suit enables its wearer to survive in the following hostile conditions: cold, heat, high pressure, radiation, underwater, and vacuum. It has a built-in air supply that lasts for one hour.

Force Field Belt

Base Powers: Armor (BRP page 149)
 Extra Energy (BRP page 157)
Parts Cost: 20 mechanical
Power Point Cost: 20 to activate, 1 per combat round
Power Point Reserve: 100

A bulky leather belt lined with polished metal studs. Its wide oval buckle is fitted with a convex disk that generates a field of repulsive force around its wearer, providing AP 20 against kinetic attacks such as melee weapons, arrows, and ballistics.

Pan-Optic Invisibility Shroud

Base Powers: Invisibility (BRP page 158)
 Extra Energy (BRP page 157)
Parts Cost: 23 electronic
Power Point Cost: 20 to activate, 1 per combat round
Power Point Reserve: 50

This large cloak of shiny reflective fabric is draped over the entire body. A hood fastens over the head and neck. When activated, the cloak creates a three-dimensional image of the view on its reverse, so that light appears to pass through the cloak, rendering anyone up to SIZ 20 effectively invisible. The wearer's eyes, however, are still visible and can be detected with a successful *Difficult Spot vs. Hide* opposed roll.

Contra-Gravitic Flight Pack

Base Powers: Flight (BRP page 157)
 Extra Energy (BRP page 157)
Parts Cost: 4 mechanical, 4 gravitic, 2 pneumatic
Power Point Cost: 7 to activate, 1 per combat round to maintain
Power Point Reserve: 30

This complicated harness is worn like a backpack. It uses a combination of miniature lift units and jets of compressed air to allow anyone up to SIZ 21 to fly at speeds up to 500 meters per combat round. The Fly skill must be used to properly control the flight pack.

All-Purpose Multi-Spectrum Goggles

Base Powers: Super Sense—Super Vision, Dark Vision, Infrared Vision, Microscopic Vision, Night Vision, Sonar Detection, X-Ray Vision (BRP page 164)
Parts Cost: 21 electronic
Power Point Cost: none
Power Point Reserve: none

These large bug-eyed goggles enhance the vision of the wearer into normally invisible spectrums. Using the goggles the wearer may see long distances, see in the dark, see microscopic detail, and may even see through normally opaque matter as if it were transparent.

Healing Ray Projector

Base Powers: Regeneration (BRP page 159)
 Extra Energy (BRP page 157)
Parts Cost: 25 electronic
Power Point Cost: 1 per hit point healed
Power Point Reserve: 100

This hand-held projector bathes the subject in regenerative rays that stimulate the repair of damaged cells and tissues, restoring up to five hit points lost to damage per combat round. It can be used on an injured companion or on the wielder.

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MODIFICATIONS

If you possess an appropriate Repair skill specialty, you can modify existing items or designs in order to increase performance or efficiency. Likewise, you can choose to degrade a piece of equipment to save or scavenge parts.

Each improvement made to a device requires a number of parts depending on the original Value of the item being modified. Consult the table below.

Likewise, degrading a piece of equipment will yield a number of parts. A device may only be degraded five times before it ceases to function.

For example, Making one improvement to a device of Average value requires four parts per improvement.

An Expensive device can provide a five additional parts per downgrade. The device can be scavenged for parts up to four times and remain functioning. On the fifth time, the device ceases to function and can provide no more parts.

Value	Parts Used per Improvement	Parts Gained per Degradation	Max Parts
Cheap	1	0	1
Inexpensive	2	1	5
Average	4	2	10
Expensive	10	5	25
Priceless	20	10	50
Restricted	40	20	100

Weapons

- ±1 damage
- ±5% base
- ±5% range
- ±1 ammo capacity
- ±1 min STR
- ±1 min DEX
- ±01% Malfunction
- ±1 HP
- ±1 SIZ/Enc

Defenses

- ±1 AP
- ±1 Enc
- ±5% to skill penalty
- ±1 step to burden

Vehicles

- ± 5% Handling
- ± 5% ACC
- ±5% MOV
- ±1 ACC
- ±1 AP armor
- ±5% SIZ
- ±5% HP
- ±1 crew (min 1)
- ±1 Cargo
- ±1 Passenger

General

- ±1 to one of the item's characteristics
- ±5% to a single skill possessed by the item
- ±5% to an appropriate skill chance when the item is used

EXAMPLE MODIFICATIONS

Ballistic Revolver

Base item: Ballistic Pistol
Value: Average (10)
Improvement: +5 ammo capacity (five improvements)
Parts: 20 (10 mechanical, 10 pneumatic)
Time: 20 hours
Difficulty Modifiers: No working example or plans—*Difficult*

Increase Accuracy and Damage of Laser Rifle

Base item: Laser Rifle
Value: Expensive (25)
Improvement: +2 damage, +10% base (four improvements)
Parts: 40 (40 Electronic)
Time: 40 hours
Difficulty Modifiers: No working example or plans—*Difficult*

CHAPTER FOUR: POWERS

The setting of *Swords of Cydoria* is a strange place of adventure and exploration with aliens, robots, mutant monsters, laser pistols, and mystic swords. Superhuman powers are right at home in this setting and there are several power sources native to the setting available to player characters. Ta'oudh represents the superhuman abilities taught to the Guardians of Adhara, Katari assassins, and other similar groups. Biomancy allows apothecaries to create potions that induce temporary mutagenic powers. Psi-magic is another name for psychic powers.

Although the setting, by default, does not include other power sources found in BRP, there is plenty of room for the addition of magic spells, mutations, sorcery, and superpowers. It is up to the gamemaster to integrate these powers into the setting or allow player characters to access them.

FATE

Leave Nothing to Chance

If you fail to qualify to learn biomancy, Ta'oudh, or psi-magic, you may instead spend power points to affect fate. You can affect fate in several ways. Each manipulation costs a number of power points. Manipulating fate requires no skill roll. If you use any other power system, for example biomancy, magic, psi-sorcery, mutations, sorcery, superpowers, Ta'oudh, etc., you cannot manipulate fate.

Effect	Cost
Ignore 1 point of damage	3 Power Points
Re-roll a percentile dice roll	5 Power Points
Use Luck instead of a skill	5 Power Points
Shift a result one step— from fumble to failure; from failure to success; from success to special; from special to critical	6 Power Points
Do maximum damage with a weapon	1 Power Point times the maximum damage of the weapon
Narrative control	1-10 Power Points

BIOMANCY

Mutations in a Bottle

The wizard Zorin was a master of biomancy, the shaping of flesh through bioengineering. Modern biomancers study ancient texts and formulae in an effort to reproduce Zorin's forbidden magic. They create elixirs, serums, concoctions, and potions that can transform a living being's biochemistry and morphology. In game terms, biomancy is the creation of a mutagenic potion that temporarily replicates a minor mutation (see mutations, BRP pages 102-110).

WHO MAY CREATE MUTAGENIC POTIONS?

The skills needed to create potions are not easily obtained and the potions themselves require complex formulae and are difficult to create. Only characters that have chosen the biomancer profession may create mutagenic potions. The number of potions a biomancer may create is limited by the amount of power points the biomancer can infuse into them. Otherwise, biomancers may distribute the potions they create to whomever they wish.

STARTING MUTAGENIC POTIONS

At character creation, a biomancer knows the formulae to create a number of potions appropriate for the campaign power level:

Normal: You know one formula for every four points of INT. *For example, you have INT of 16, you know how to create 4 potions.*

Heroic: You know one formula for every three points of INT. *For example, you have INT of 16, you know how to create 5 potions.*

Epic: You know one formula for every two points of INT. *For example, you have INT of 16, you know how to create 8 potions.*

Superhuman: You know two formulae for every three points of INT. *For example, you have INT of 16, you know how to create 10 potions.*

LEARNING NEW MUTAGENIC POTIONS

A biomancer may learn new potions as a reward from the gamemaster. Such rewards typically take the form of ancient Awa stones or secret scrolls. A gamemaster might also rule that time spent training or studying results in the discovery of a new potion.

CREATING MUTAGENIC POTIONS

To create a potion, the biomancer must spend three hours in a laboratory and succeed at a Craft (Mutagenic Potion) skill. A failed skill check results in three hours wasted.

WHO MAY USE A MUTAGENIC POTION?

Most characters may consume a potion unless restricted by their racial abilities (for example, cybedroids). Characters may only be affected by one mutagenic potion at a time. Successfully consuming two potions at the same time has unpredictable results at the discretion of the gamemaster.

USING A MUTAGENIC POTION

When a character consumes a potion, the player immediately rolls the Biomancy skill of the potion's creator and spends a number of power points indicated below.

FUMBLE: The character loses a number of power points equal to their POW. If the mutation power being replicated involves doing damage, you should make a Luck roll: success indicates that the potion just fizzled and does not work, while failure indicates that the potion exploded, each person within three meters must roll once on the random mutation table (BRP page 105). The random mutation lasts for 1D6 days.

FAILURE: The potion doesn't work, but doesn't cause any harm or complication other than failure. One power point is expended but the potion has no useful effect. The character may consume another potion with no ill effect.

SUCCESS: The potion replicates the desired mutation as described, lasting one game Turn (5 minutes). The character must expend a number of power points equal to one-half their POW.

SPECIAL: The potion works with increased effectiveness. The potion replicates a major mutation. If it does damage, the mutation does special damage as if it were an attack, using one of the special success damage types (crushing, entangling, impaling, knockback, or slashing) as appropriate. At the gamemaster's discretion, another aspect of the mutation (range, influence, etc.) may be enhanced by 150% effect. Alternatively, if the mutation requires a roll on the resistance table, the gamemaster may increase the mutation's level by half again for the purpose of the resistance roll. The character must expend a number of power points equal to one-quarter their POW.

CRITICAL: The potion works perfectly. The potion replicates a major mutation. If the mutation does damage, it ignores any armor the target possesses and does the maximum possible damage. If the mutation does not normally cause damage, the gamemaster should determine the appropriate aspect(s) of the mutation and double its effectiveness. Alternatively, if the mutation involves a resistance roll, the gamemaster may temporarily double the mutation's level or your character's relevant characteristic for the purpose of the resistance roll. The character must expend 1 power point.

If a character is reduced to zero power points, the character becomes completely exhausted and faints until they regain at least one power point.

Mutations such as Adaptation, Biped (Quadruped), Hands, Hybrid, Increased Characteristic (SIZ), Natural Armor, Natural Weaponry, and Wings may cause drastic changes to the recipient's body shape and any clothing worn will be ripped and torn. Anyone wearing armor while undergoing a physical transformation will experience extreme pain and possible physical injury. They will lose a number of hit points equal to the power point cost of the potion and any armor worn is ruined, rendering it un-wearable.

EXAMPLE

Imo the Demetrian artifact hunter consumes a potion of Regeneration. The potion was created by a Biomancer with a Biomancy skill of 67%. Imo rolls 98, a failure. Imo expends one power point but the potion has no effect.

Undaunted, he consumes another potion, this time rolling 13, a special success. Imo gains the Regeneration major mutation for 5 minutes, allowing him to heal 1.5 hit points every round.

PURCHASING POTIONS FROM AN NPC

Characters may purchase potions from NPC biomancers to keep on hand. Since the art of biomancy is considered taboo and known biomancers are often burned alive, no biomancer will openly advertise their wares. The first step, therefore, in purchasing mutagenic potions is to find a biomancer. Finding a biomancer requires a successful Knowledge check using (Group [Society of the Twin Serpents]), (Region [city]), or (Streetwise) specialties. Once a biomancer is found, the characters may need to establish mutual trust before the biomancer will discuss any transactions. This interaction may require some role-play and successful Etiquette, Fast Talk, and/or Persuade skill tests.

The value of potions varies by the skill of the biomancer. Players should record the skill of the biomancer for any potion purchased as the skill is rolled at the time of consumption.

Characters should be made aware that biomancers sometimes exaggerate their ability in order to make a sale. A successful Insight skill vs the biomancer's Fast Talk skill (if lying) or Persuasion skill (if telling the truth) will determine the biomancer's veracity. Alternatively, an Appraise skill check might be used to determine the potency of the potion in question.

<i>Biomancer's Skill</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Value</i>
0-05	Novice	Cheap
06-25	Neophyte	Inexpensive
26-50	Amateur	Average
51-75	Professional	Expensive
76-90	Expert	Priceless
91-100	Master	Priceless
101+	Legend	Restricted

PSI-MAGIC

Psychic Powers

Psi-magic is a school of magic based on psychic abilities (BRP pages 110-122). The Psi-Mages of Sakaan are best known of its practitioners. Psi-mages cloak their abilities under the shroud of occultism and sorcery. In addition to their psychic powers, psi-mages consort with forbidden Aya spirits.

PSYCHIC POWERS

The rules for eligibility and use of psychic abilities are unchanged from the BRP rulebook with the following exceptions.

Divination

Range: Self

Duration: 1 hour per power point spent

Power Point Cost: 1 or more power points

The Divination power is utilized by psi-mages to make contact with the ancient Aya spirits of the Sdara Vatra.

You spend the duration of the power in quiet meditation, usually isolated though several psi-mages may undertake the same power. During the meditation, you make telepathic contact with an Aya.

FUMBLE: You have summoned an evil demonic Aya infected with the Techno-Plague. The demonic Aya will immediately attack everyone in the vicinity using its telekinesis or by turning advanced technology against its owner.

FAILURE: You spend one hour in meditation but no Aya appears. You lose one power point.

SUCCESS: You have summoned an Aya with a Teaching skill of 100% (BRP page 82) and able to provide instruction for the purposes of skill training (BRP page 184) in one skill of your choice.

SPECIAL: You have summoned an Aya with a Teaching skill of 120% (BRP page 82) and able to provide instruction for the purposes of skill training (BRP page 184) in one skill of your choice.

CRITICAL: You have summoned an Aya with a Teaching skill of 200% (BRP page 82) and able to provide instruction for the purposes of skill training (BRP page 184) in one skill of your choice.

The Aya appears as an ethereal form, visible only to you or to anyone telepathically linked to you. The Aya may take different forms, altering its shape to suit your expectations and whims. The Aya speaks directly to your mind, asking the nature of your query. Each Aya is an expert on a specific subject. Some are masters of chemistry or astronomy, others of ancient history or philosophy. You need simply ask a question, and the Aya will tell you all it knows about the subject.

Bind Aya

Range: Self

Duration: Permanent

Power Point Cost: 3 permanent POW

After a successful use of the Divination power (see below), you may choose to permanently bind the Aya into an ancient artifact called an Aya stone. An Aya bound into a stone may be summoned at any time at no power point cost.

Once telepathic contact has been made with the Aya via Divination, you must defeat the Aya in psychic combat (BRP page 114). The defeated Aya may then be bound into the stone at the cost of three permanent points of POW.

Although the Aya initially resists the binding, once trapped within the stone the Aya offers no complaint and makes no attempt to escape. You may call the Aya forth at any time for any duration at no power point cost by performing the secret activation ritual, an action that normally consists of a specific mental image known only to the binder and a difficult to pronounce activation phrase.

The knowledge of how to create new Aya stones is long lost. Aya stones, both empty and occupied, are often found in ancient ruins. Aya stones may also be acquired on the black market or stolen from wealthy collectors.

Once an Aya is bound to a stone, it can be used by anyone that knows the secret activation ritual.

For more information on Aya stones, see page 170.

Force Fields

Force fields and energy barriers are effective at blocking psi-magic. Force fields are opaque impenetrable barriers to sensory powers such as Astral Projection, Aura Detection, Clairvoyance, Danger Sense, Divination, Empathy, Intuition, Sensitivity, or Telepathy. Powers such as Emotion Control, Mind Blast, Mind Control, and Telepathy will not penetrate a force field.

Telekinesis will not work through a force field but it can be used to throw a physical object at someone or something behind a force field as if it were thrown by hand.

Powers that affect the physical world such as Cryokinesis and Pyrokinesis may heat or cool the air outside the force field which may have a secondary effect on the air on the other side.

Wearing Armor

Armor is bulky and inhibits the movements necessary to properly invoke psi-magic. Wearing armor incurs an additional power point cost for each power use.

<i>Armor Burden</i>	<i>Extra Power Point Cost</i>
None	0
Light	0
Moderate	+1
Cumbersome	+2

TA'ODUH

Kung Fu Sorcery

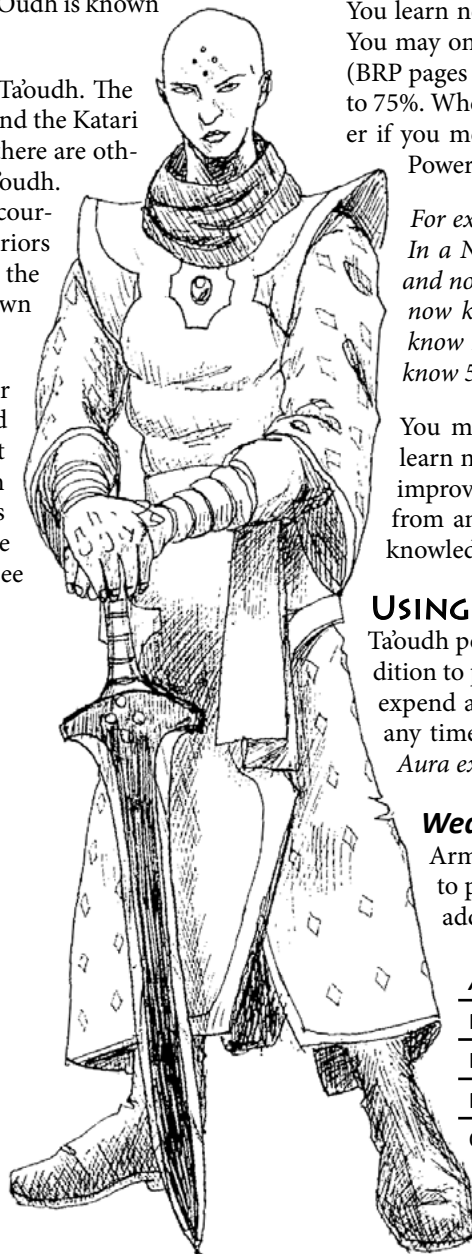
The Oudh is the field of energy that surrounds and protects Uru-ta from alien attack and invasion. Imagine that Uru-ta is covered by a vast ocean of immaterial invisible fluid. Ordinarily, a normal person cannot perceive this invisible fluid in any way. It cannot be felt, seen, heard, smelled, or tasted. Yet it is there. Everyone moves through it as if it were air. Like air, the Oudh experiences changes in pressure, moves in currents, and vibrates to create “sound”.

WHO CAN MANIPULATE THE OUDH?

A small percentage of people are sensitive to the Oudh. You feel the currents of the Oudh against your skin. You see the Oudh as light and color. You hear the “sounds” of the Oudh deep inside your ears. With the proper training, you may even learn to shape and direct the Oudh. You could learn to store it within yourself and release it through a touch. You might someday learn to create a shield out of the Oudh that drains or deflects energy. The ability to sense and manipulate the Oudh is known as Ta'oudh.

Various groups practice the art of Ta'oudh. The Gaurdians of Adhara, the Oculus, and the Katari are well-known examples, though there are other, smaller, groups that practice Ta'oudh. Gamemasters and players are encouraged to create small schools of warriors and mystics, each able to shape the Oudh in different ways, for their own stories.

A character with a POW of 16 or greater is sensitive to the Oudh and may learn Ta'oudh. Characters that are unable to learn or use Ta'oudh may instead use their power points to subconsciously manipulate the Oudh in the form of Fate Points (see page 77).



STARTING POWERS OF TA'ODUH

You learn to shape the Oudh through the Ta'oudh skill. The number of power levels known is determined by the campaign.

Normal: You know a level for every ten points of Ta'oudh skill. *For example, you have a Ta'oudh skill of 65, you may learn 6 levels.*

Heroic: You know a level for every five points of Ta'oudh skill. *For example, you have a Ta'oudh skill of 65, you may learn 13 levels.*

Epic: You know two levels for every five points of Ta'oudh skill. *For example, you have a Ta'oudh skill of 65, you may learn 26 levels.*

Superhuman: You know four levels for every five points of Ta'oudh skill. *For example, you have a Ta'oudh skill of 65, you may learn 52 levels.*

LEARNING NEW POWERS

You learn new Ta'oudh powers by increasing your Ta'oudh skill. You may only increase your Ta'oudh skill through skill training (BRP pages 184-185). You may only increase Ta'oudh in this way to 75%. When your Ta'oudh skill increases, you learn a new power if you meet the criteria for the campaign level (see Starting Powers of Ta'oudh Powers above).

For example, you increase your Ta'oudh skill from 65 to 70. In a Normal campaign level, you learn an additional level and now know 7 total levels. In a Heroic campaign level, you now know 14 total levels. In an Epic campaign level, you know 28 total levels. In a Superhuman campaign level you know 56 total levels.

You might also increase your Ta'oudh skill and therefore learn new powers as a reward from your gamemaster. Such improvements generally take the form of special training from an ancient master, a found Aya stone containing lost knowledge, or an ancient scroll describing a secret technique.

USING TA'ODUH POWERS

Ta'oudh powers work like sorcery (BRP pages 122-140). In addition to purchasing levels of powers that you know, you must expend a number of Power Points equal to the power's level any time you activate that power. *For example, using Battle Aura expends six of the character's Power Points.*

Wearing Armor

Armor is bulky and inhibits the movements necessary to properly channel the Oudh. Wearing armor incurs an additional power point cost for each power use.

Armor Burden	Extra Power Point Cost
None	0
Light	0
Moderate	+1
Cumbersome	+2

POWER LIST

POWER FORMAT

Power (Cost)

Base Range: The effective range of the power, generally self or a number of meters.

Duration: How long the power lasts, generally a number of rounds.

Power description and effect.

Battle Aura (6)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

Your entire body becomes wreathed in the Oudh, channeling it into your nerves, your muscles, your skin, your bones. This power tends to manifest itself as a glowing aura visible even to those not sensitive to the Oudh shot through with cracking arcs like electricity, swirling winds, and an audible hum. Your strength, resilience, and reaction time become enhanced, turning you into a super-human fighter. This power provides the following benefits:

- +2 damage to any successful Brawl, Grapple, or Melee attack.
- +2 armor to your limbs or melee weapon when parrying melee, missile, or unarmed attacks while either unarmed or wielding a melee weapon.
- -5% to all attacks made against you as long as the aura is in effect.
- +5% to all brawl, melee, or unarmed attacks made by you while the aura is in effect.

Blind (2)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel and direct a current of Oudh at a target through touch, overloading the visual centers of the target's brain and causing temporary blindness. If the target resists, you must first strike the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If the target fails, the target is rendered blind for the duration of the power. The target acts as if they are in total darkness (see Darkness, BRP page 220).

Blinding Bolt(4)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel and direct a current of Oudh at a target, overloading the visual centers of the target's brain and causing temporary blindness. You must first channel the Oudh at the target with a successful Ta'oudh skill roll. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you succeed, the target is rendered blind for the duration of the power. The target acts as if they are in total darkness (see Darkness, BRP page 220). This power is completely blocked by force fields.

Burst of Speed (1-3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You infuse and charge your thigh and calf muscles, knees, and ankles with strengthening Oudh, increasing your running speed, jumping distance, and kicking damage. You gain a bonus of +3 MOV per level, +5% Jumping skill per level, and +1 damage to kicks for the duration of the power. You also gain +1 DEX Ranks during the resolution phase when kicking.

Calm (1)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You can channel soothing Oudh through a target, draining hostility and anger. In order to use this power, you must first make a Psychotherapy skill test. If the target resists, you must first touch the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, instead of applying damage you must win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you win, they will take no offensive action for the duration of the power. The affect ends if the target is attacked.

Cling to Surface (1)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You harness the Oudh to create a bond with a surface through your bare hands and feet. You may cling to any surface, regardless of smoothness, angle, or direction. You may suspend yourself by the tips of your fingers from a flat ceiling, climb a greased pole, or cling to a pane glass window. A STR vs. STR resistance roll is required to dislodge you from the surface. You suffer no penalties from slippery surfaces but are affected by unstable surfaces as per normal. You may climb any surface at a rate of three meters per combat round without the need for a climb skill check. This power also allows you to hold onto any object. All attempts to disarm you while this power is in effect automatically fail.

Commanding Presence (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

The Oudh emanates from you in an impressive aura, adding gravitas to your voice and giving you an impressive intimidating demeanor. You gain +20% per level to your Command skill while this power is in effect. You also gain +20% per level when making aura attacks (BRP page 214).

Cure Disease (1-4)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

You channel the Oudh to key pressure points in the wrists, neck, and center of the torso of a willing subject, and then pass your hands over them to direct the flow of the Oudh through their body. In so doing you eliminate pathogens, bacteria, and viruses. To use this power, you must first pass a Medicine skill test. If successful, you may cure 1D4 characteristic points per level lost to disease (see Disease BRP page 221). This power may only be attempted once per target per disease.

Detoxify (1-4)

Base Range: Touch
Duration: Immediate

You apply pressure to key pressure points in the head, neck, and sides of the torso of a willing subject, then pass your hands over them to direct the flow of the Oudh through their body. In so doing you help the body to break down poisons and toxins into inert chemicals and direct them away from the organs (see Poisons, BRP page 229).

To use this power, you must first pass a Medicine skill test. If successful, you may return 1D6 points of damage per level lost to poison.

Disfigure(1)

Base Range: Touch
Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh at a target through an attack, disrupting and contorting the muscles of the target's throat and face, rendering them hideous. If the target resists, you must first strike the target with a successful melee attack. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you succeed, the target is loses 1D3 APP for the duration of the power.

Disfiguring Bolt(2)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW
Duration:A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You direct a bolt of Ouhd at a target, disrupting and contorting the muscles of the target's throat and face, rendering them hideous. If the target resists, you must first channel the Ouhd at the target with a successful Ta'oudh skill roll. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you succeed, the target loses 1d3 APP for the duration of the power. This power is completely blocked by force fields.

Display of Stamina (1-3)

Base Range: Self
Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel and apply the Oudh through your circulatory, nervous, and muscular system, using it to reduce pain and fatigue. The power increases your CON characteristic by 3 points per level for its duration. The character's Stamina roll is increased. Increasing CON temporarily also helps reduce the effect of poisons and diseases and increases hit points for the duration of the power. If you suffer any damage while this power is in effect, the bonus hit points gained from the power are subtracted prior to your normal hit points. You cannot die during the duration of this power. If you are reduced to zero or fewer hit points, you become unconscious and cannot act. Once the power is completed, you die unless hit points were restored through healing or first aid. You suffer the effects of any major wounds or limb loss as you would normally.

Disrupt (1)

Base Range: Touch
Duration: Immediate

You touch a target at a key pressure point, causing the Oudh to dissipate from their bodies. If the target resists, you must first touch the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, instead of applying damage you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you win, the target loses 1D6 Power Points. The lost Power Points are regained through the normal means and at the normal rate.

Disrupting Bolt(2)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW
Duration:Immediate

You perform a complex dance-like maneuver to draw ouhd away from a target, causing it to dissipate. If the target resists, you must first channel the Ouhd at the target with a successful Ta'oudh skill roll. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you win, the target is loses 1d6 power points. This power is completely blocked by force fields.

Distraction (1)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW
Duration: Immediate

With a slight movement of the finger or hand, you can cause a target to be momentarily distracted by something they believed they heard or saw. Depending on your intentions, this distraction may be a small indistinct sound, such as a moan or cough, a small momentary flash, as if from a reflection, or appearance of movement, like that of a scurrying mouse or a coin landing on the ground. The target automatically fails any Sense or Spot skill check made that or the following round.

Eagle Vision (1-4)

Base Range: Self
Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh through your eyes, enhancing your visual acuity. You are able to see as if through a telescope or microscope. The range and/or magnification of your vision are doubled for each level for the duration of this power. *For example, Level 3 Eagle eyes allows you to see faraway or examine miniscule objects as if they were magnified eight times.*

Enrage (1)

Base Range: Touch
Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You touch a target, disrupting the natural flow of the Oudh, creating a sense of rage and cornered panic. If the target resists, you must first touch the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, instead of applying damage you must win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you win, the target is enraged.

While enraged, the target gains an extra attack, performed on the last DEX rank (or strike rank) of the combat round, but suffers penalty of -30% to parry and dodge for the duration of the power. The only action the target may take each combat round is to attack, though they may choose whom they attack. They may not parry, dodge, or move in any direction that does not close the distance with an enemy. The target may not use any special powers while enraged.

Feat of Strength (1-3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh through your muscles, temporarily increasing your strength. You gain 3 STR per level for the duration of the power. This increase also temporarily increases your damage bonus and Effort roll.

Feather Weight (6)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You harness the Oudh to draw away the kinetic force caused by gravity, rendering you nearly weightless. You move as if on the moon or other low gravity environment. Your leaping distances are multiplied by five (see Jumping, BRP page 63). Instead of falling, you slowly descend to the ground. Your falling damage is reduced to 1D6 damage for every 10 meters fallen. Your mass and momentum are unaffected.

For the physics enthusiasts: A person falling under normal gravity falls with an acceleration of 9.8m/s². This means that, by the end of a twelve second combat round, a falling character will fallen about 500 meters, having reached terminal velocity after five seconds of falling. The Feather Weight power reduces the effect of gravity by 80%. The character moves as if they are on a planet with 0.2G. Even in reduced gravity, a full combat round of falling would cause 15D6 of damage and could be deadly.

Flash of Intelligence (1-3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh into your mind, increasing recall, memory, and mental aptitude. You gain 3 INT per level for the duration of this power. This increase also temporarily increases your Idea roll.

Fleeting Beauty (1-3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You radiate the Oudh in an aura that causes others to overlook any flaws. Your physical appearance becomes more appealing and attractive. Your gain 3 APP per level for the duration of this power. This increase also temporarily increases your Charisma roll and aura total for aura attacks.

Force Bolt (3)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: Immediate

You perform a brief motion with one or more free hands to gather oudh and convert it into pure kinetic force. You extend your arm(s) in order to direct it towards a target. If the target resists, you must first channel the Oudh at the target with a successful Ta'oudh skill roll. If you hit, the target takes 1d6 damage. A special success causes knockback. This power is completely blocked by force fields.

Force Parry (4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You raise a shield of kinetic force that deflects incoming physical attacks. You activate this power as part of a parry maneuver. The parry takes the form of a brief motion with one or more hands or arms, such as crossing your arms to form an X or extending one or more hands palm out.

FEATHER WEIGHT TABLE

Seconds	Velocity (m/s)	Distance Fallen (meters)	Damage (normal gravity)	Reduced Gravity from Feather Weight (m/s)	Distance Fallen (meters)	Damage (Reduced Gravity from Feather Weight)
1	10	10	3D6	2	2	-
2	20	30	10D6	4	6	-
3	30	60	20D6	6	12	1D6
4	40	100	33D6	8	20	2D6
5	50	150	50D6	10	30	3D6
6	50	200	66D6	12	42	4D6
7	50	250	83D6	14	56	5D6
8	50	300	100D6	16	72	7D6
9	50	350	116D6	18	90	9D6
10	50	400	133D6	20	110	10D6
11	50	450	150D6	22	132	13D6
12	50	500	166D6	24	156	15D6

You infuse your arms, hands, and shins with the Oudh, allowing you to parry weapons and missiles with your Brawl skill as if you were wielding a shield with AP 20. If you roll a fumble, or if the shield blocks more damage than its AP, it is disrupted and disappears, immediately ending the effect of this power.

Furious Strike (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You are adept at channeling the Oudh through your fists and feet. The Oudh enhances the force of your blows. Each level of this power increases the damage done by an unarmed attack by 1 point, up to the maximum damage possible for the attack.

Great Leap (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh into your leaps, enhancing your momentum and distance. You gain +2 meters per level to your jumping distance.

Heal Major Wound (10)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

You touch several key pressure points on a willing target and pass your hands over the damaged body part. You sclose the wound together with your fingers and apply pressure with your palm. The Oudh stimulates healing and regeneration in the subject's cells, fixing broken bones, mending torn muscles, reconnecting damaged tissues. To use this power, you must first pass a First Aid skill test. If successful, you restore 1D4 characteristic points lost due to major wounds. This power may only be performed once per subject per wound.

Heal Self (2)

Base Range: Self

Duration: Immediate

You adopt a defensive stance and perform a brief dance-like movement to channel the Oudh through your body, directing it to damaged tissues. The Oudh stimulates the damaged cells, causing them to regenerate. To use this power, you must first pass a First Aid skill test. If successful, you heal 1D3 hit points of damage to yourself. If unsuccessful, the power points are lost. This power may be used multiple times per wound.

Healing Touch (2)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

You apply pressure to a wound with your palm. With your free hand, you draw the Oudh towards the wound. The Oudh stimulates the damaged cells, causing them to regenerate. To use this power, you must first pass a First Aid skill test. If successful, you heal 1D3 hit points of damage to a willing subject other than yourself. If unsuccessful, the power points are lost. This power may be used multiple times per wound.

Hold Breath (1)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You stand or sit still, heels together, palms held together in front of you as if in prayer. You direct the Oudh in your body to your lungs and circulatory system. Your need for oxygen is temporarily reduced to near nothing. You do not need to breathe for the duration of this power. You may act or fight normally but may not speak.

Hypnotic Gaze (6)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh through your eyes and voice. By so doing you are able to enthrall a target as if through hypnotism. If the target resists, you must first direct the Oudh towards the target with a successful Taoudh skill roll. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you succeed, the target is stunned (see Stunning or Subduing, BRP page 232) for the duration of the power. You may take no other action while a subject is hypnotized. Taking any other action, even defending yourself, will end the hypnosis. This power is completely blocked by force fields.

The target is prone to suggestion and will perform any reasonable task asked of them. They will not cause harm to themselves or a loved one, however. A hypnotized target may attempt a Luck roll each round to end the hypnosis.

Immobilize (2)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh through your fingers or toes into a target's legs, disrupting key pressure points and causing temporary nervous paralysis. If the target resists, you must first touch the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, instead of applying damage you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If you win, the target is immobilized and cannot move. They may act normally but may not use their legs. The target may force themselves to fall over, go prone, and use their arms to crawl. The target may attempt a resistance roll using their STR vs. your POW each round at DEX rank zero. If successful, they break free of the paralysis.

Immobilizing Bolt (4)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You perform a complicated gesture with your hands to direct oudh towards a target's legs, disrupting key pressure points and causing temporary nervous paralysis. If the target resists, you must first channel the Oudh at the target with a successful Taoudh skill roll. If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). This power is completely blocked by force fields.

If you succeed, the target is immobilized and cannot move. They may act normally but may not use their legs. The target may force themselves to fall over, go prone, and use their arms to crawl. The target may attempt a resistance roll using their STR vs. your POW each round at DEX rank zero. If successful, they break free of the paralysis.

Improved Attack (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh into your spine, nerves, and muscles, improving your hand-eye coordination and accuracy. You gain +5% per level to all attacks you make for the duration of the power.

Improved Defense (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh into your spine, nerves, and muscles, improving your reflexes and reaction time. You gain +5% per level to all parries and dodges you make for the duration of the power.

Improved Hearing (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You use the Oudh to amplify sound waves and to increase the receptivity of your ears. You gain a bonus of +20% per level to your Listen skill.

Insightful Soul (1-3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You take a brief moment to calm your mind, clear your head, and take a few cleansing breaths. You open yourself to the Oudh, infusing your body and mind with its power. You gain 3 POW per level for the duration of the power. This increase also temporarily increases your Luck roll and aids in resistance rolls against your POW, but does not affect your power points.

Keen Edge (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh along the cutting edge of a bladed weapon, increasing the effective sharpness of the weapon. You increase the damage of any cutting weapon by 1 point per level, up to the maximum amount of damage for the weapon.

Light (1)

Base Range: An area effect centered on the character with a radius in meters equal to half the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You concentrate, reaching out to affect the Oudh that surrounds you. You cause the Oudh to glow dimly, increasing the ambient light of an area without creating a specific light source.

Lightfoot (1)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the force of gravity away from your feet and hands into the Oudh, reducing your ground pressure to near zero. As a result, you leave no footprint and you can walk upon surfaces as if you have no weight.

Using this power, you can walk upon water without breaking the tension of the surface. You can walk on snow and leave no footprints, step on a pile of leaves without disturbing them, stand on a thread without it breaking, or a walk across a suspended sheet or tarp without it collapsing. Your mass is unaffected and you are otherwise normally affected by gravity. Your leaping distance is unaffected and you take damage from falls normally. If you were pushed off a building and fell onto a net or a rope, you would take damage as if you fell onto a solid surface.

Mask Aura (4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You control your breathing and thoughts, allowing the Oudh to pass through you. You become transparent to the Oudh, concealing the perturbations you would normally make upon it. You become undetectable to powers such as Perceive the Oudh, Read Aura, and Sense Aura.

Mistaken Identity (1-4)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You direct the Oudh towards a nearby target, scrambling the neural pathways that recognize faces and voices. This power provides a +20% bonus to disguise skill checks for the duration of this power. This power affects all onlookers within the base range. The bonus does not apply to onlookers beyond this range or looking through a mirror or video screen.

Move Unnoticed (1-4)

Base Range: A number of meters equal to the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

The Oudh that surrounds you absorbs and masks your sounds and your aura momentarily alters the consciousness of anyone observing you, causing them to ignore you. This power provides a +20% bonus to Stealth skill checks for the duration of the power. The bonus does not apply to observers beyond the range of the power or anyone looking through a mirror or video screen.

Natural Armor (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You place your feet in a determined stance, take a few controlled breaths, and pass your clenched fists in front of your body. In so doing you harden the Oudh around you, causing it to deflect a type of energy and inhibit attacks. You gain 1 point of armor against one type of energy (see Types of Energy, BRP page 150) per level to all locations for the duration of this power.

Perceive the Oudh (1)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You are able to sense the flow of the Oudh around shapes and the disturbances of anything moving through it. If you pass a Sense check, you are aware of your surroundings as though it was fully lit and you possessed all five ordinary senses. You may fight normally, at no penalty, while blinded or in total darkness.

Persuasive Voice (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You infuse your voice with the Oudh, modulating the sound to affect certain pleasure centers of the brain. The effect can be very persuasive. You gain a bonus of +20% per level to your Persuade skill for the duration of the power.

Piercing Lunge (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh into the point of a piercing weapon, enhancing the effectiveness of the weapon. You increase the damage of any piercing weapon by 1 point per level, up to the maximum amount of damage for the weapon.

Purify Food/Drink (1-20)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

You pass your hands over a quantity of food or drink, causing the Oudh within to vibrate in such a way as to expel poisonous or unhealthy ingredients. This power allows you to make 1 SIZ per level of tainted, diseased, or poisoned food or drink safe for consumption. The expelled impurities are rendered inert.

Read Aura (3)

Base Range: Self

Duration: Immediate

Everyone affects the Oudh around them, creating ripples and perturbations in the Oudh that emanate from their bodies in an coruscating aura. You learn the approximate strength of the subject's POW characteristic, described in relation to your own POW in the following table:

Much Stronger than You	The subject's POW is more than double yours
Stronger than You	The subject's POW is at least 3 points more than yours but not more than double
Equal to You	The subject's POW is within 2 points of yours
Weaker than You	The subject's POW is at least 3 less than yours but not less than half of yours
Much Weaker than You	The subject's POW is less than half of yours

This power can be negated by Mask Aura. You must be able to see or sense the target or otherwise detect their presence using Perceive the Oudh or Sense Aura.

Reinforced Shield (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You place your palms against a shield or flat object, infusing the material with the Oudh, strengthening it and causing it to deflect energy. You increase the AP of a shield by +1 point per level for the duration of the power.

Restore (6)

Base Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

You touch a target on the forehead with a palm or finger then draw harmful energies away so that it can harmlessly dissipate. This power exorcises the target of an ongoing disruption of the Oudh which is causing a detrimental effect. Through the use of the power, you can immediately end all ongoing effects of Ta'oudh powers such as blindness, disfigurement, loss of actions, immobilization, etc. This power will not restore lost hit points or power points.

Sense Aura (2)

Base Range: An area effect centered on the character with a radius in meters equal to half the character's POW

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You close your eyes for a brief moment and open your senses to the harmonic perturbations in the Oudh caused by others trained in Ta'oudh. While this power is in effect, you can detect the presence of anyone with Ta'oudh powers. This power does not identify individuals, evaluate their skill level, nor locate them if they are hidden or invisible to you.

Sense Presence (3)

Base Range: An area effect centered on the character with a radius in meters equal to half the character's POW

Duration: A number of hours equal to the character's POW

You open your senses to any perturbations in the Oudh. While this power is in affect, you become immediately aware of presence of anyone entering area of effect. This power does not identify individuals, indicate whether they can manipulate the Oudh or not, evaluate their relative power level, nor locate them if they are hidden or invisible to you.

Sense True Motive (1-4)

Base Range: Self

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

Unless they actively suppress it using Mask Aura, everyone has an aura. This aura represents the effect they have on the Oudh surrounding them. Different thoughts and emotions have different effects on their aura. These effects can be sensed by someone trained to read auras. You are able to examine a person's aura, which can help you determine their emotional state. This power adds +20% per level to your Insight skill.

Show of Dexterity (1-3)**Base Range:** Self**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh into your spine, through your nerves, and into your muscles. You gain 3 DEX per level for the duration of the power. This increase also temporarily increases your Agility roll.

Smashing Blow (1-4)**Base Range:** Self**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You focus the Oudh along the smashing face of a crushing weapon, enhancing the effective force of the weapon. You increase the damage of any crushing weapon by 1 point per level, up to the maximum amount of damage for the weapon.

Stand Unseen (1-4)**Base Range:** A number of meters equal to the character's POW**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

Your aura momentarily scrambles the conscious thoughts of anyone observing you, causing them to ignore you. This power provides a +20% bonus to Hide skill checks for the duration of the power. The bonus does not apply to observers beyond this range or looking through a mirror or video screen.

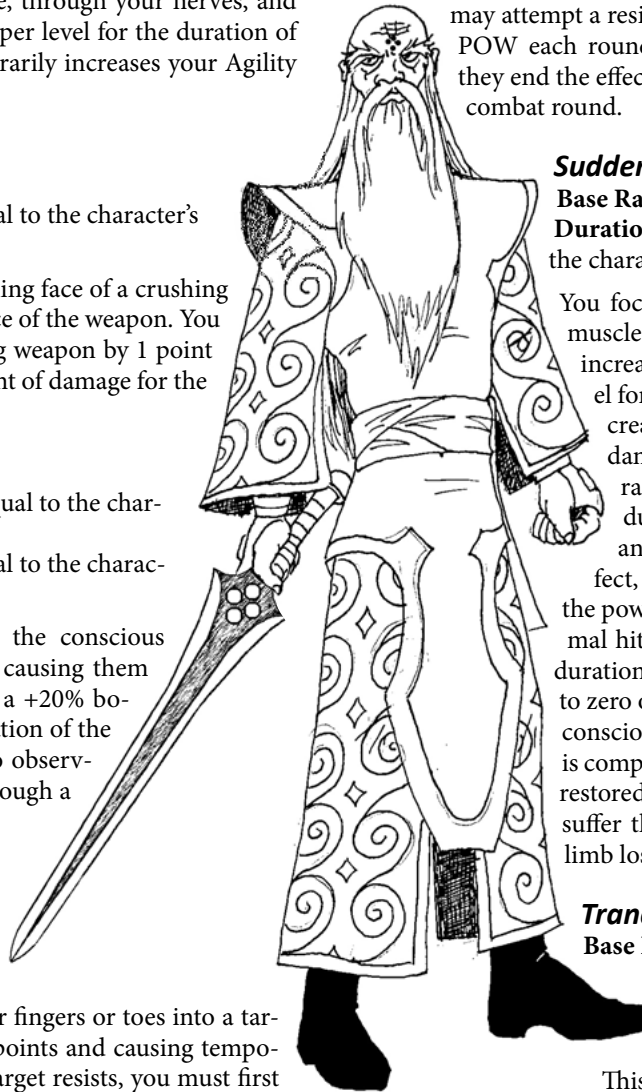
Stun (3)**Base Range:** Touch**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You channel the Oudh through your fingers or toes into a target's body, disrupting key pressure points and causing temporary total nervous paralysis. If the target resists, you must first touch the target with a successful unarmed attack. If successful, instead of applying damage you must win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If successful, the target is stunned (see Stunning or Subduing, BRP page 232). The target may attempt a resistance roll using their STA vs. your POW each round at DEX rank zero. If successful, they end the effect and may act normally on the next combat round.

Stunning Bolt (6)**Base Range:** A number of meters equal to the character's POW**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

You perform a brief motion with one or more free hands to gather oudh and convert it into energy that disrupts the nervous system. You extend your arm(s) in order to direct it into key pressure points on a target's body, temporarily causing total nervous paralysis. If the target resists, you must first channel the Oudh at the target with a successful Ta'oudh skill roll. This power is completely blocked by force fields.

If successful, you must then win a power point vs. power point resistance roll comparing your current power points (not your maximum power points). If successful, the target is stunned (see Stunning or Subduing, BRP page 232). The target may attempt a resistance roll using their STA vs. your POW each round at DEX rank zero. If successful, they end the effect and may act normally on the next combat round.

**Sudden Growth (1-3)****Base Range:** Self**Duration:** A number of rounds equal to the character's POW

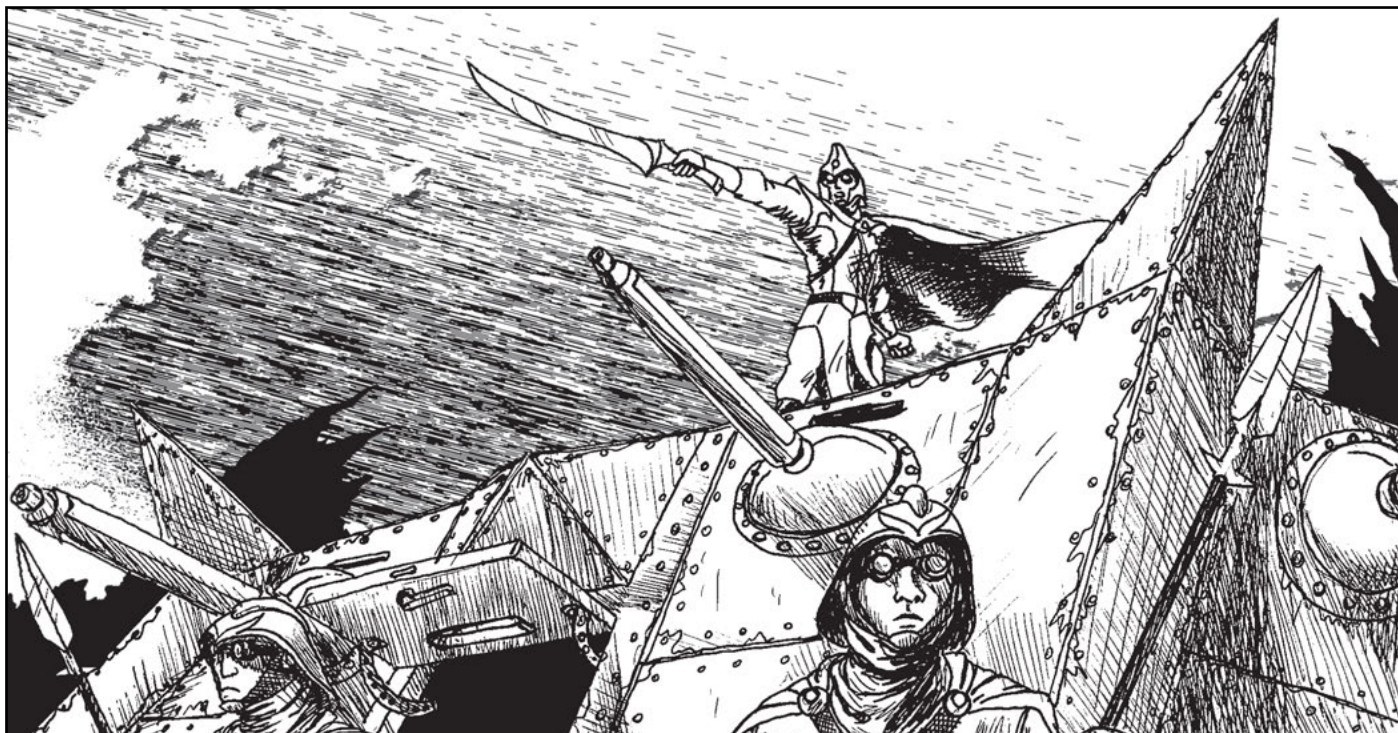
You focus the Oudh into your bones and muscles, converting the Oudh into mass to increase your size. You gain 3 SIZ per level for the duration of the power. This increase may temporarily increase your damage bonus. Increasing SIZ temporarily also increases hit points for the duration of the power. If you suffer any damage while this power is in effect, the bonus hit points gained from the power are subtracted prior to your normal hit points. You cannot die during the duration of this power. If you are reduced to zero or fewer hit points, you become unconscious and cannot act. Once the power is completed, you die unless hit points were restored through healing or first aid. You suffer the effects of any major wounds or limb loss as you would normally.

Trance (2)**Base Range:** Self**Duration:** A number of hours equal to the character's POW

You draw energy from the Oudh. This energy temporarily reduces the mental effects of hunger, thirst, and lack of sleep. So long as you perform no other actions, you do not need to eat, drink, or sleep for the duration of the power.

Example

Hron has a Ta'oudh skill of 80 giving him 16 combined levels of powers. He selects Blindfighting (1), Burst of Speed Level 3 (3), Cling to Surface (1), Lightfoot (1), Trackless (1), Natural Armor Level 2 (2), Keen Edge Level 2 (2), Furious Strike Level 2 (2), and Improved Defense Level 3 (3) for a total of 16 levels.



CHAPTER FIVE: THE HISTORY OF CYDORIA

Each of the city-states can trace its history back two thousand years or more to when they were isolated walled villages. The city-states eventually rose to prominence with the advent of the Fornaxian sea trade. The invention of the aero-ship allowed the city-states to exert their power over previously inaccessible areas.

Then, within the last generation, everything changed when the city-state of Vrildar made contact with aliens from the planet Malus. A pact between Vrildar and the Malusians allowed Vrildar to conquer the other city-states during the War of Unification, a war which saw the destruction of one of Cydoria's greatest city-states and the enslavement of its allies. The introduction of advanced alien technology has changed the face of the primitive world of Uruta forever.

THE NAZARIANS

Human history begins with the rise of the Nazarian civilization. The Nazarian civilization is considered the first, and greatest, human civilization. The first Nazarian cities were built over six thousand years ago in the region known as Dushan. Within a few hundred years, great cities of cyclopean stone were being constructed in the Nazarian style across the Markanian continent.

THE BIO-SORCERY OF ZORIN

The success of the Nazarians was made possible in part by the slave labor of the xoogs, artificial life-forms created by the mutagenic sorcery of Zorin, the greatest and most reviled biomancer that ever lived. Zorin mastered the ancient Seeds of Creation of the Sdara Vatra, whom the Nazarians worshipped as gods. Using the Seeds, he eliminated death, created new life, unlocked the secrets of mind-control, and shaped the flesh and bone of living creatures. Thanks to Zorin, the Nazarians became immortal, forever young and healthy and able to heal and recover from any wound, injury, or disease. Meanwhile, the xoogs, his greatest creation, built the Nazarian cities, fought the wars, and served the

smallest whims of their undying Nazarian masters. The Nazarian civilization was unstoppable. Soon it conquered the continent of Markania, and perhaps even the continents of Aerapa and Sya beyond, and continued to rule for three thousand years.

THE WAR OF ZORIN

Although he was lauded for his great achievements, Zorin felt he had not been given his proper due. Zorin thought he deserved no less than the title of God-Emperor of all Mankind. When the established government balked, Zorin created his own army of orix. The armies of the Nazarians clashed with the forces of Zorin in a war that lasted centuries. Ultimately, after over two hundred years of warfare, the tide of battle turned against Zorin. He was forced to retreat to his fortress in Mount Ungor, somewhere in the Apparian Mountains. The Nazarian armies were nearing their final victory and Zorin's forces were facing defeat. Zorin, sensing his coming failure, unleashed his most horrible creation, the Retribution Plague, as a last desperate act of spite and defiance.

The Retribution Plague swept across the world. The plague killed the immortal Nazarians by the millions and left their cities vacant. Many cities were burned to the ground in a futile attempt to stop the spread of the plague. The few survivors fled the cities and huddled in small groups in the forests. Great swaths of the Markanian landscape were transformed into either toxic wastelands or poisonous jungles. The xoogs were liberated, survived, and spread throughout the land to pillage everything in their path. Zorin's body was never found and he was presumed destroyed. Indeed, the exact location of Mount Ungor has been lost to legend. Much of the natural flora and fauna of Markania was mutated and deformed at a fundamental level by Zorin's sorcerous plague. The Retribution Plague changed many species and created horrible mutated monstrosities called teraxes that roam the lands of western Markania to this day.

THE LOST CITIES OF THE NAZARIANS

The cities that were not destroyed in The War of Zorin were quickly abandoned when the plague struck. Many of the ancient cities have been subsequently re-built and repopulated by the Cydorians, but countless more remain undiscovered, covered by desert sands or jungle trees.

Nazarian cities were built of stone and mortar, favoring eight-sided structures. Most Nazarian cities were built around a central temple honoring the Sdara Vatra overlooking a large public square. The largest city yet discovered appears to have been home to over four hundred thousand humans and xoog slaves, though the average city generally housed no more than a few thousand.

Hidden deep within Nazarian temples are secret vaults of impenetrable metal, often protected by “magical” locks and traps and Aya guardians bound to a robotic shell. These vaults contain the amassed treasuries of the abandoned cities. A few of these vaults have been discovered and opened, revealing vast sums of gold and jewels. Finding these vaults is no easy task, for in the millennia since their abandonment the cities have become overgrown with deadly poison forests and are inhabited by feral xoogs and teraxes, drawn to these lost cities by some ancient instinct. For generation after generation, these creatures fulfill Zorin’s final commands and haunt the lost ruins like guardian beasts.

THE CITY-STATES OF CYDORIA

The founding of the City-States of Cydoria is a story shrouded in myth and legend. It is known that the continent of Markania was once ruled by the great Nazarian civilization, an advanced and prosperous empire that at one time ruled much of the world of Uruta. The Nazarian civilization reigned for three thousand years and eventually fell to an apocalyptic civil war that ended with the genocide of their entire population.

After the fall of the Nazarian civilization, humanity endured centuries of primitive savagery and darkness. The descendants of the few survivors of the devastating war that destroyed the Nazarian civilization formed small tribes. Eventually, the tribes of the eastern Cydorian peninsula built permanent walled villages that harvested the rich layers of iron ore found below the soil’s surface. These villages grew and began to explore, making contact with other villages.

Two thousand years ago, sea traders from the northern kingdom of Fornaxia established a network of trade along the coast. Their ships exchanged steel from the northern villages for grain from the southern villages. These trading villages were prosperous and eventually became powerful city-states.

Each city-state was ruled by a noble class descended from warriors, merchants, and explorers of those early villages. These city-states became the the most powerful military and economic force on the continent.

Fifty years ago, the invention of the aero-ship, a type of lighter-than-air craft capable of flying through the skies without the need for gas bags or wings, broke the Fornaxian trade dominance and opened up new regions of the Markanian interior to exploration, colonization, and trade.

THE VRILDARIAN EMPIRE

For two millennia, the city-states of the Cydorian peninsula existed in relative stability at best and beligerent stalemate at worst. It was seventeen years ago that the balance of power shifted when the city-state of Vrildar rose overnight to form the Vrildarian Empire.

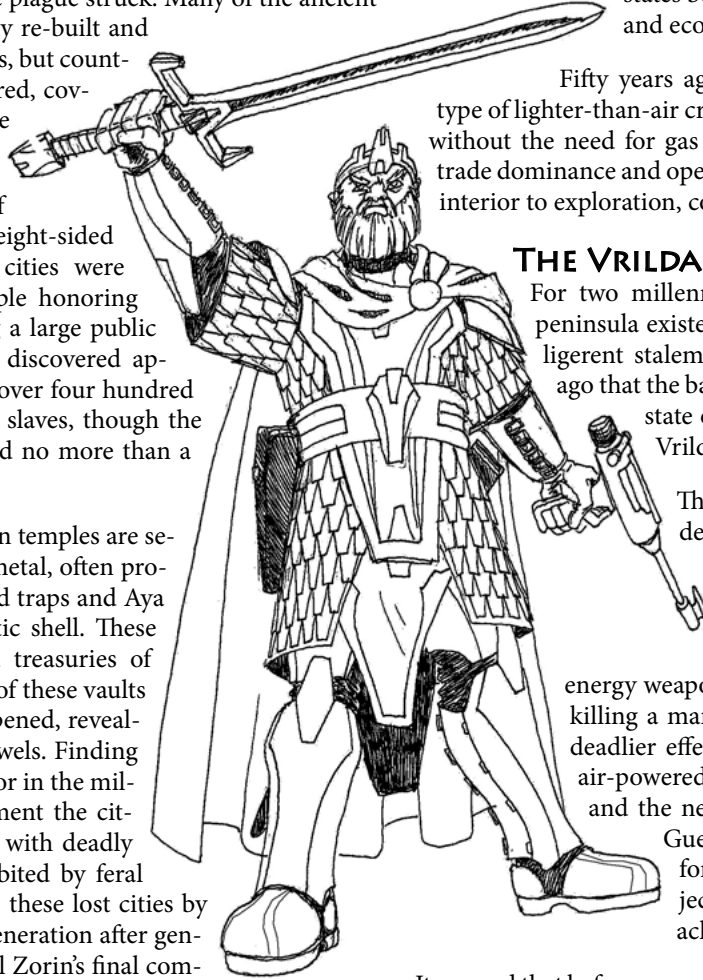
The formation of the Empire came suddenly and surprisingly. Within the span of two scant years, King Varinor of Vrildar had built an army equipped with new advanced aero-ships powered by motorized engines and energy weapons of unbelievable power, capable of killing a man at much greater distance and with deadlier effect than any sling, bow, crossbow, or air-powered ballistic rifle. The message was clear and the neighbors of Vrildar, the city-states of Guerna, Norukar, Tyrannis, and Zinj, foreswore any resistance, became subjects of the new Vrildarian Empire, and acknowledged Varinor as their emperor.

It seemed that before anyone had noticed, the newly-formed Empire had built factory cities along the western shores of the Sea of Horns. The Empire sent masses of indentured workers west to mine the Loka Loka Mountains and the Floating Mountains of Magatama in the deep untamed interior of the Markanian continent. The combined armies of the Empire were restructured along the Vrildarian model and were made into a highly mobile and efficient force of destruction.

With the swift and bloodless conquest of the other city-states and the subsequent creation of the Empire’s army, the leaders of the other Cydorian city-states began to express common concern. A defector from the Vrildarian Empire came to King Timan of Demetria with the answer to the mystery of the Imperial advancement and the key to their resistance. The defector was a scholar from Vrildar named Professor Prometheus.

PROFESSOR PROMETHEUS

Professor Prometheus explained that he was indirectly responsible for the Vrildarian transformation. As chief magister of the University of Vrildar, he had been studying ancient knowledge and artifacts of the Sdara Vatra. Much of his research focused on an ancient device known as the “Psychic Lens”, a clear lenticular disk made of unknown material.



Professor Prometheus and his assistants spent years trying to decipher the secrets of the Psychic Lens. It was believed that the device allowed one to speak to the gods. Eventually, the professor learned the ancient magical incantation needed to activate the device. To his shock and horror, Professor Prometheus peered through the disk of glass into the gaunt ashen face of a being from nightmare! The face was lean and severe. Its skin had a greasy corpse-like pallor and black glassy eyes. Wires and short metallic quills emerged from the top of the creature's bald head. The demonic being spoke several clipped angry-sounding words in a foul language. He had not spoken with a god, but a demon from hell! Horrified and revulsed, Prometheus immediately deactivated the profane device.

Eventually, his scientific curiosity overcame his initial superstitious reaction. Prometheus resumed contact with the infernal being. Over the next year, Prometheus contacted and communicated with several alien demons. He was eventually able to decipher their language and establish actual communication. Prometheus then learned much about the true nature of the universe and Uruta's place within it.

It was well known that the world they lived upon, Uruta, was a globe circling the sun through space. It was also believed that there were other worlds inhabited by the gods and their supernatural agents. Legends spoke of the asuras of Malus, the devas of Phanos, the bizarre spider-men of Dadan, the demi-gods of Zhuvita, and many more.

The first thing Prometheus learned was that the legends were true. The demonic being was, in fact, from the legendary realm of Malus, a cold dry world the color of rust. He learned that the legendary Phanosians, Dadanians, and Zhuvians were likewise as real as he was and that, far from being gods, they were beings of flesh and blood like himself.

Prometheus learned that the Psychic Lens was, in fact, a common device, employed by the various beings of the cosmos as a means of communication. Prometheus' contact with the Malusian was the first ever proof that intelligent life existed on Uruta.

He learned that the Malusians, who call themselves "Rhakadians", were waging a cosmic war against beings from the world known as Phanos, with Uruta the ultimate prize.

The Rhakadian explained that they needed certain rare elements found on Uruta. Chief among them were thorium, which they used to create power, and thallium, which allowed them to store that power as well as to create the powerful fields used to propel their space-ships. Access to thallium was vital to their war effort against the Phanosians. Uruta was a heretofore untapped source of thallium that could shift the balance of power in the universe, if only they could get to it.

Prometheus learned that both the Rhakadians and the Phanosians were prevented from landing on Uruta because of the Oudh, the energy field that surrounds and permeates the world. The Oudh destroyed any attempt either side made to land their space-ships, a type of aero-ship capable of traversing the infinite void between worlds, and prevented contact with the surface. As a result, neither the Rhakadians nor the Phanosians, nor anyone else, had ever been able to contact or visit Uruta despite centuries of attempts.

Prometheus also tried to establish contact with the Phanosians, Dadanians, and others, but was unsuccessful. Try as he might, he was only able to communicate with the Rhakadians of Malus. He eventually learned that different Psychic Lenses were keyed to different activations incantations. Although the Rhakadians taught Prometheus how to communicate with other Rhakadian Lenses, he was never able to establish communication with their rivals.

Eventually, King Varinor of Vrildar learned of Prometheus' work and took an immediate interest. King Varinor established a dialogue with High General Daran of the Rhakadian League. The High General and the King made an arrangement. The Rhakadians promised weapons and technology the Vrildarians could use against their enemies in exchange for access to Uruta's natural resources. The terms of the agreement stipulated that the arrangement would be exclusive. The Vrildarians were prohibited from contacting any other world and likewise the Rhakadians were prohibited from dealing with any other Cydorian kingdom.

King Varinor set Professor Prometheus to the task of finding some way to allow the Rhakadians through the Oudh. Soon the greatest minds of Vrildar joined the professor in his lab while explorers scoured the ruins of the Nazarians and the Sdara Vatra for additional knowledge or artifacts.

After four years of work, the team discovered and activated another ancient artifact, a device called the Gate Key, which allowed a single space-travelling ship to safely enter the Oudh and land.

CONTACT WITH THE RHAKADIAN LEAGUE

The Gate Key allowed a single space-ship to enter the Oudh but the protection of the key could be ended at any time at the whim of its wielder, immediately destroying the ship. With the Gate Key, King Varinor possessed the upper hand. He was able to exert total and complete control over the visiting aliens. The Rhakadians were allowed to land a single space-ship at a time near Vrildar but with stringent stipulations and restrictions. The ship was to be unarmed. If the space-ship deviated from its flight path, it would be destroyed. If the Rhakadians attempted to invade, it would be destroyed. If the Rhakadians attempted to bombard a city with their great god-like weapons, it would be destroyed. If the Rhakadians tried to take advantage of the Vrildarians or violate the terms of their arrangement in any way, it would be destroyed. If the Rhakadians bristled at the restrictions, they did not show it. They landed and presented King Varinor with honors and gifts befitting a king.

Soon, an entire fleet of Rhakadian space-ships travelled to Uruta. They established a presence in what they called "orbit", high above the surface. The Rhakadians were allowed to build three ore-processing factory-cities. In exchange, they provided Varinor with the weapons they promised along with training in their use.

King Varinor was impressed by the Rhakadian weapons. Being a clever king, he foresaw the possibility of the weapons falling into the hands of enemies and rebels and the change the alien technology might have on his society and the power of the nobility. He decreed that ownership of alien technology was restricted to the military and the ruling class of nobles. In this way, he hoped to preserve the social order and the priveledges of his class.

Soon, Vrildar had an army equipped with advanced weapons and armor and the city itself was to be rebuilt using the technologies of the gods. King Varinor issued an ultimatum to all the kingdoms of Cydoria: submit to the rule of Vrildar or be conquered by its powerful new army. The kingdoms of Norukar, Tyrnanis, Guerna, and Zinj complied, offering no resistance, and the Vrildarian Empire was formed.

Professor Prometheus became increasingly concerned that his breakthrough was being used to upset the balance of power in Cydoria. He threatened to destroy the Psychic Lens and end communication with the Rhakadians. The king confiscated the Professor's research and turned it over to the Professor's assistant, Magister Igneus. The professor was convicted of treason for his protest and sentenced to execution. The night before his sentence was to be carried out, the professor was whisked away from his captors by agents of Demetria and brought to King Timan.

THE WAR OF UNIFICATION

The professor offered to help the Demetrians oppose the Vrildarian Empire. As it happened, the Demetrians also possessed a Gate Key artifact but did not possess a Psychic Lens. The professor led a team of explorers to explore the ruined city of Gulos. There they discovered not only another Psychic Lens, but the ancient incantations that allowed them to communicate with the Phanosians, the cosmic rivals to the Rhakadians.

The Phanosians were unlike the Malusians. Phanosians appeared to be human in every way. They had no wish to exploit the natural resources of Uruta. However, they had no wish to allow their enemies, the Rhakadians, access to Uruta's wealth. In addition, they feared that the Rhakadians would one day gain control over the Gate Key, granting them free access to Uruta. Were that to happen, the Rhakadians would land an invasion force, conquer Uruta, and enslave the people of Cydoria. Such an occurrence would strike a strategic blow to the Phanosians and the entire universe would ultimately fall under Rhakadian domination.

King Timan of Demetria made arrangements with the Phanosians. The Phanosians would train and equip the Demetrian army and its allies, the free kingdoms of Fornaxia, Mancia, and Kaidan, to oppose the Vrildarian Empire. This alliance became known as the Coalition of Timan. With the help of the Phanosians, the Coalition attacked the armies of the Vrildarian Empire.

The war was more brutal and destructive than any ever seen in Cydoria. The Rhakadians and Phanosians did not fight directly. Instead, they advised, they trained, they supplied. To the Demetrians, it was a war of freedom versus oppression. To the aliens, the very fate of the cosmos hung in the balance. After three years, the Phanosians were no longer able to penetrate the Rhakadian blockade of Uruta.

No longer supported by their Phanosian allies, the forces of the Coalition were routed. The free city-states surrendered and were made subjects of the Vrildarian Empire. As a demonstration of their power, the Empire used a weapon of unprecedented destructive power, a gift from their Rhakadian allies, against the kingdom of Demetria. The kingdom was obliterated. Every last city was destroyed. King Timan perished along with his people. A few members of the royal court, Professor Prometheus, the king's daughter Princess Iti, and the king's cousin Baron Urik,



managed to escape with the Demetrian Gate Key. With this, they would make contact with other aliens, establish a black market trade for illegal weapons and technology, and form an underground resistance against the Vrildarian Empire.

THE FALL OF DEMETRIA

King Timan was the last king of Demetria. As a monarch he was both wise and fair. Timan was a grey-haired man of over fifty summers yet still strong and energetic. He was a family man with a loving wife and many children. The betrayal and death of King Timan and the kingdom of Demetria is one of the vilest tales told among the people of Cydoria.

The City of Talen had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the combined armies of the Vrildarian Empire. It had eventually succumbed to the terrible bombardment from Guernan mobile armored mobile fortresses and Zinjani aero-ships and much of the city was burned and destroyed. King Timan was finally forced to unconditionally surrender in disgrace to then-Prince Viktor and Lord Krieg, general of the Imperial forces. Viktor accepted the surrender and, to King Timan's surprise, ordered the immediate withdrawal of Imperial forces from Talen and Demetria. They were to return to Guerna immediately. Instead of the occupation force Timan expected, a large black sphere was deployed that hovered over the city, an object the prince called "a monitoring device to ensure your loyalty to the Empire". No one suspected its true purpose. No one, save the King's nephew Baron Urik.

Urik suspected treachery and tried to persuade his sovereign to flee the city. The king refused, his intent was to accept his defeat and the occupation to come as an honorable gentleman. Frustrated and desperate, Urik was able to smuggle several lesser members of the royal family, including Timan's daughter, ten year old Princess Iti, along with Professor Prometheus and the secret Demetrian Gate Key, out of the city and into a fast aero-ship. They flew west at maximum speed. In the distance, to the east, they saw the blinding flash that obliterated Demetria in a single moment of apocalyptic fire and wind. Princess Iti, unable to turn her gaze away from her homeland, was permanently blinded by the flash.

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Today, twelve years after the end of what has become known as the War of Unification, Imperial governors oversee all of the kingdoms of Cydoria. Strict laws regulate the ownership of technology, native or alien, and contact with any alien other than that allowed between the Vrildarian-Rhakadian trade pact is strictly forbidden. Despite this prohibition, other Gate Key artifacts have been found and smugglers from the worlds of Phanos, Zhuvita, and Dadan are now able to sneak past the Rhakadian blockade, safely enter the defense shield, and land on Uruta to trade for precious zephyrium, thorium, and thallium.

The nobility of the conquered city-states chafes at the restrictions placed upon them by their governors. In public, they obediently follow the directions from their Imperial overseers and enforce Imperial laws and restrictions. In secret, they scheme and plot and intrigue against the Empire. They are careful that their seditious actions are always conducted by proxy through a network of spies and secret agents. These agents pursue their mission to infiltrate the Empire, thwart or harass Imperial operations, or establish secret trade deals with alien smugglers, risking death by Imperial execution with little or no acknowledgement or reward.

Emperor Varinor died of natural causes. The Moot of Succession met to select a new emperor from the eligible kings and queens of the original Imperial members: Queen Chador of Norukar, Field Marshall Vilnius of Guerna, King Tyrannis of Tyran, King Kafir of Zinj, or the newly crowned Emperor Viktor of Vrildar, Varinor's son. The Moot chose Viktor. Viktor immediately set the Cydorian agenda on rebuilding the cities using Rhakadian technology. During the past ten years, the cities of the Vrildarian Empire have undergone unprecedented change, destroying all that was old and revered in favor of skyscrapers and broadcast energy towers, all under the careful control of state engineers.

Demetria, once the fertile breadbasket of Cydoria, is now an uninhabitable wasteland. Survivors of the holocaust were enslaved by the Empire. Those that escaped fled to the Aparrian Mountains and forests of Varzan in central and southern Cydoria where they became refugees and nomads struggling to survive in makeshift villages and caravans.

Many of the Coalition veterans either fled and went into hiding or were captured and sentenced to ten years in an Arusian prison camp. The ancient Guardians of Adhara, having sided with the Coalition during the war, were hunted down and executed. Those that escaped have likewise gone into hiding. The veterans were eventually released from the camps into the unforgiving Arusian desert. Those that survived became drifters and outlaws.

The inhabitants of the cities of Cydoria, especially those in the Empire, have seen extreme upheaval in their lives within their lifetime. The cities have been literally rebuilt from the ground up and often deep underground as well. Within the span of a single generation, each of the city-states of Cydoria have seen their populations grow from tens of thousands to millions.

The noble and merchant classes have seen their power and wealth increase exponentially. They have traded animal-drawn carts for electro-cars and city villas for skyscraper penthouses. The poor and landless have been herded into underground dormitories and assigned jobs working in factories or as servants to the wealthy. They are little better than slaves with no chance of escape from their life of hardship.

The rural people of Cydoria continue to live as they have for generations. Their primitive existence is interrupted only by the occasional Imperial military patrol performing routine inspections and searches for contraband. A few brave or rebellious souls will risk the ban on technology in order to obtain a useful item smuggled in from off-world. Those caught with prohibited technology face several years in a gulag.

A new profession has arisen among the people of Cydoria – the techno-heretic. These outlaw mechanics, technicians, and engineers are proficient in the operation, maintenance, and repair of forbidden technologies. They have illegal contact with alien smugglers and arrange transactions for zephyrium, thorium, and thallium. They travel from village to village providing the inhabitants with illegal technology and training the new owners in their use in exchange for gold, food, or shelter. They also repair any defective or damaged technologies and arrange secret meetings with alien smugglers. They are constantly on the lookout for Imperial authorities and must operate in utmost secrecy.

Many Cydorians, unwilling to live within the confines of the strictly stratified Imperial social system, have moved west. On the western Markanian continent, they face hostile nomad tribes, wild monsters, aberrant teraxes, and an environment inimical to human life in order to live free and chart their own destiny.

The Sky Pirates of Dazumi operate over the Sea of Rakar and the Strangling Coast. They are able to hide their secret bases among the thousands of mountainous islands that rise from the eastern Sea of Rakar. From there, they launch raids against Imperial sky-transporters using their own captured aero-ships. The pirates attack Imperial aero-ships laden with zephyrium, thorium, and thallium from the western mountains en route to the Rhakadian factory-cities. They then sell the captured ore to Phanosian, Tsisirian, or Dadanian smugglers.

The time of the Vrildarian Empire is an age of adventure and intrigue. Explorers seek out the sealed chambers beneath the ruined cities of the ancient Nazarian Civilization in search of treasure and knowledge. Demetrian rebels, under the leadership of Baron Urik, launch terrorist attacks against Imperial and Rhakadian bases. Dazumi pirates harry Imperial ore shipments above the Markanian plains. Demetrian secret agents infiltrate and disrupt Imperial operations. Techno-heretics evade Imperial patrols to supply technology to the Cydorian people. Licensed independent sky-transporters eke out a meager profit carrying cargo and trade between the outlying villages of western Markania. Unlimited excitement and reward await those willing to brave the perils awaiting them in the City-States of Cydoria.

CHAPTER SIX: THE WORLD OF URUTA

The scholars of Cydoria have long known that the world they live on, Uruta, is a globe circling the sun and that other worlds circle the same sun. Uruta has an axial tilt of twenty-six degrees and is orbited by two moons, Thumn, called “the Old One” for reasons lost to time, and Kur, known as “The Destroyer”. Thumn was at some point in the distant past shattered by Kur and its debris is spread across the sky. The remains of Thumn resemble an orb of marble that has been smashed by a hammer. Kur is much smaller and reflects a yellow hue.

The geographers and mapmakers of Cydoria know of the existence of five total continental land-masses. Their own Markania, Zaduba to the south, Aerapa to the northeast, Raffa to the south-east, and Sya to the west. Though Markanian aero-ships of exploration have visited these far-off lands and have made contact with other nations and many primitive tribes, these exotic realms remain distant and mysterious.

The continent of Markania can be divided into four major regions: the north-eastern peninsula of Baadria, the south-eastern peninsula of Cydoria, the plains of Central Markania, and the mountains and deserts of Western Markania.

The climate ranges from toxic jungles in the south to icy tundra in the north, from rolling grassland in the east to burning deserts in the west, and bisected north to south by several great mountain ranges.

THE PENINSULA OF BAADRIA

Baadria is a peninsula connected to the Markanian continent by the isthmus of Nurg. Winter in Baadria is especially bitter and has been known to last half the the year in the south to ten months in the north. Southern Baadria is a land of forested hills known as Nurg. Nurg is populated by primitive tribes of feral xoogs. The western and northern shores of Baadria are barren rocky lands with spotty areas of evergreen forests, a few remote villages along the coast, and nomadic tribes roaming the interior. The eastern coast is mountainous and riddled with narrow winding fjords and islands.

THE REALM OF FORNAXIA

The southeast coast of Baadria is home to the proud maritime nation of Fornaxia first explored the seas and coasts of Cydoria and Markania. It was Fornaxian explorers who over twelve hundred years ago created the first trade links between the primitive farming communities that would later become the great city-states.

The city-state of Fornaxia, the capital of the region that bears its name, is the largest of the northern cities. It is located in southeast Baadria at the southern end of the Black Mountain range. Fornaxia is an ancient city of square slab-like buildings built of black granite marble with younger buildings built of stout wood timbers. The design of the city celebrates its maritime heritage and is dedicated to ship building and trade. The greatest structure in Fornaxia is the temple to Gorox, the god of the sea and of trade, to which they offer sacrifices of fish and tithes on trade.

THE FOUR SEAS REGION

The peninsula of Baadria is separated from Cydoria by four bodies of water collectively known as the Four Seas. From west to east, these seas are the Sea of Spears, the Sea of Messages, the Sea of Horns, and the Sea of Eyes. These seas are frozen in deep winter but are navigable the rest of the year. Within the Sea of Eyes are located three large forested islands: Raantar, Raal, and Blaانxa. Raantar and Raal are sparsely populated due to the existence of many haunted ruins of Nazaria and the associated monstrous teraxes found there. The city of Matarax is the only populated city of note on Raal. Matarax trades with the northern barbarian tribes along the shores of the Four Seas. Matarax is led by Duke Xiam, a skilled diplomat and patron of voyages of exploration.



“HOME”, THE KINGDOM OF THE DERU

The easternmost island that separates the Sea of Eyes from the Tlaanic Ocean is known as Blaانxa by its Fornaxian inhabitants on the western coast and Nung by its Targan settlers on the east. The island’s name is usually hyphenated for diplomatic convenience. The island is rugged and dominated by the deru mountain range that runs its length. This land is baked by the summer heat and whipped by cold winter storms. The mountainsides are covered in thin evergreen forests. The deru mountain range is named for the many Deru cities located deep under the peaks, a subterranean kingdom the deru call “Home”. The port city of Traax on the western side of the island trades with the deru for metals. Its leader Baron Axar is a shrewd negotiator and businessman.

The city of Basadra is located on the southeast coast of Blaانxa, far away from the mountain range. The people of Basadra are Targan and call the southeast region of the island Nung. Basadra is a port city servicing both maritime and aerial ships. It is a small city ruled by Count Ynri, a large jovial man who welcomes visitors and trade.

THE CYDORIAN PENINSULA

A range of towering grey and white granite mountains known as the Aparrian mountains form the spine of the eastern peninsula of Cydoria. The east coast of Cydoria is home to numerous great and powerful city-states, each different from the other in culture, customs, and politics. From north to south they are Norukar, Vrildar, Tyrannis, Guerna, Zinj, Kaidan, Mancea, and Ramanam. Talen was once among these but that city was destroyed at the end of the War of Unification. The great undersea city of Nrolis is often included in this list, though the city itself was built neither by nor for humans. The regions in between the city-states consist of vast tracks of wilderness, swamps, and mountains. The majority of the people, human and xoog, live within a few dozen kilometers of one of the city-states. A few tribes of degenerate sub-humans and barbarians cling to existence in the remote hills and forests with little contact with the civilized world. Bandits haunt the outskirts of the civilized realms, preying on the villages at the edge of the wilderness.

Occasionally, a barbarian tribe or bandit leader becomes powerful enough to establish a minor kingdom in the wilderness. These warlords, if detected, are swiftly eliminated by the Imperial military, so most keep a low profile and try not to attract too much attention.

TARGA

The northeast coast of Cydoria north of the Tyon river, a land known as Targa, descends from the mountain range of the same name in barren rocky hills and becomes a wind-swept stony plain at the coast. Many round-walled farming enclosures are built along the Tyon river valley. The walls protect the soil from the all-pervasive wind that blows in from the unforgiving sea. These villages supply the nearby metropolises of Vrildar and Norukar with basic foods, meat, and milk but provide little in the way of grains. The people of the Targa culture are hardy and proud of the often harsh environmental conditions under which they live.

VRILDAR, THE CAPITAL OF THE VRILDARIAN EMPIRE

The city-state of Vrildar, capital of the Vrildarian Empire under the rule of Emperor Viktor, is located on Vrild Island off the coast of the Targa mountain range region in northeastern Cydoria. Vrildar is also home to the great University of Vrildar and has produced many of the most learned scholars of the Cydorian age.

With contact and trade with the alien Rhakadians, Vrildar has rebuilt itself into an advanced city of concrete and steel energized by broadcast power and illuminated by artificial lights. Electrocars and aero-skiffs dart from rooftop to rooftop among the towering skyscraper homes where the rich and powerful enjoy the finest in arts and entertainment. Meanwhile, the lower classes toil in the underground factories far below only to return to their communal dormitories to rest, repeating the cycle day after day. Vrildar is also home to a massive aero-ship terminal as well as a landing port for Rhakadian space-ships.

At the center of the city is the massive palace complex, home of the Imperial court. The complex is built on a monolithic stone foundation, fifty meters tall, and overlooks the rest of the city. The complex measures two kilometers by five kilometers and is the tallest structure in the city.

THE GREAT CITY OF NORUKAR

The city-state of Norukar lies just off the coast of Targa on the small cluster of islands known as Mnatta. The city is ancient, believed to predate even the Sdara Vatra. The islands appear to be several steep hills rising from the water like tapered cones. Strange spires, some hundreds of meters tall, sprout from the tops and sides of the hills like giant leafless artificial trees. They are the remnants of an ancient city, though their original purpose is unknown. The hills are terraced and entirely covered by buildings right down to the water-line.

Norukar contains a harbor, walled in and protected by several defensive towers. The buildings of the old quarter are built of stone with large, wide bases and tapering towers reaching sixty to one hundred meters in height, the tallest in pre-contact Cydoria. The newer buildings, constructed in the last twenty years using Rhakadian engineering and technology, are built of lighter concrete and are supported by skeletons of steel. Norukarian towers resemble step pyramids or ziggurats stretched tall and thin and supported by flying buttresses. Some rise as high as two hundred meters into the air. The upper stories of the buildings are connected by sky-bridges so that members of the upper classes can travel from building to building without ever descending to ground level. Small aero-skiffs transport occupants between the upper and lower stories of the towers.

The city skyline is dominated by the aero-ship terminal, a large octagonal stepped tower. It is the tallest structure in Norukar at over three hundred meters tall.

Even before contact with aliens, the technology and design of Norukar, overseen by the secretive Octavium, outshined that of all the other Cydorian city-states. Pre-contact Norukar boasted technological amenities roughly equivalent to those of late nineteenth century North America or Europe with spring-driven elevators, bondrus-drawn street-cars, steel-frame construction, and indoor plumbing.

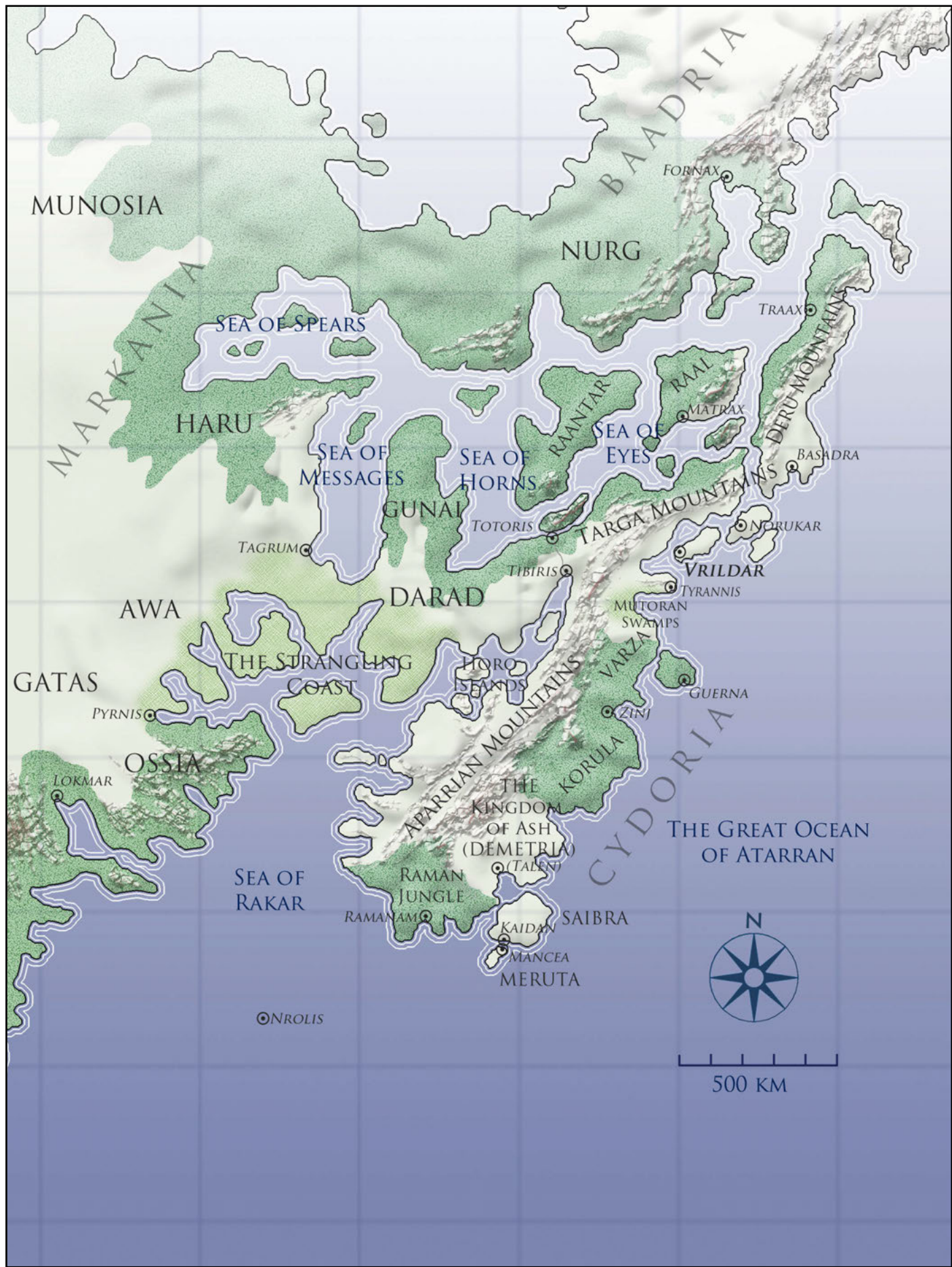
The hills beneath Norukar are, in actuality, artificial structures built of stone, concrete, steel, and stranger unknown materials. The hills are the remains of a holy city of the Sdara Vatra. Each hill, in its day, was a single giant building in its own right. Over time the outer layers of the buildings weathered, corroded, and decayed. Today, most of the levels have collapsed. The deeper levels hide great domed and vaulted chambers and unexplored passages. This region is known as the "Under-City". The under-city is inhabited by a race of large semi-aquatic rodents called roshu. There are several access points from the surface to the under-city and many intrepid explorers have braved the journey seeking the lost treasures of the ancients.

THE MUTORAN MARSH

The mid-Cydorian coast is home to the feared Mutoran marsh. The Mutoran marsh is located where the Tomak river empties into the shallow Zhessik bay. The marsh is home to many deadly natural hazards such as poison gas clouds and death-mires as well as mutant teraxes, giant kraab, and massive swamp-worms.

A tribe of intelligent apes known as the Swamp-Devils live in caves and tunnels built into the cliffs overlooking the swamp.

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THE FORTRESS OF TYRANNIS

The city of Tyrannis consists of several large towers rising above a castle-like fortress built on a rocky promontory at the end of a peninsula overlooking the Mutoran marsh. The city is surrounded by steep cliffs and defensive walls which protect it from its lethal inhabitants. Tyrannis has always had a reputation as a harsh, unforgiving place where life has little meaning. The city's success was only made possible with the invention of the aero-ship which can safely bypass the deadly swamps.

For much of its existence, the city was nothing more than a small village overlooking the Mutoran marsh, garnering little interest from the outside world. Its people were isolated, inbred, perhaps a bit touched by the proximity of the marsh. Aero-ship traffic ended the village's isolation, and the discovery of gold nearby, as well as the many iron fields of the region, turned Tyrannis into a prosperous city.

THE SWAMPS AND FORESTS OF VARZA

Farther south, the weather and terrain become more forgiving. The swamps become rolling hills covered in vast forests. The weather is more temperate and many small villages dot the coast. The Varzan region is renowned for its forestry and hunting. The cities of Guerna and Zinj have become prosperous by controlling the trade between the industrialized Targan cities to the north and the agricultural regions of Demetria and the Iotian Islands to the south. The chief exports of Zinj are aero-ships, silk, timber, and furs. The most popular god of the Varzan pantheon is Zopat, Lord of Merchants and Moneylenders.

THE CITADEL OF GUERNA

The Citadel of Guerna rests on a rocky island off the coast of Varza. Guerna is known for its weapons manufacturing and the discipline of its army. The island is essentially one large walled castle, protected by massive keeps and gun emplacements. Guerna is a stratocracy, a military city-state. Every citizen is a member of the Guernan armed forces, right down to the lowest farmer. Even the merchants take orders from their military commanders.

ZINJ, CITY OF TRADE

The great trading city of Zinj lies at the mouth of the Zavi River and is considered the capital of the Varzan region. It is a city of bazaars, markets, and guild-halls, a mélange of peoples, flavors, and smells from all over the continent. The city is a motley assortment of domed buildings and spired towers. The tallest structure in Zinj is the Merchant Tower, home of King Kafir and other notable dignitaries, but the largest structure is the coliseum where sporting events and gladiatorial death-matches are held daily. The pleasure-domes are especially notorious and are visited by travelers from every kingdom.

Zinj is situated at the optimum location to capitalize on the commerce and trade between the kingdoms of Demetria, Mancea and Kaidan in the south and Fornaxia and the Targan city-states to the north. Prior to the introduction of the aero-ship, most maritime traffic passing north or south had to stop in Zinj to resupply, and the merchants of Zinj profited greatly from this. Most ships would simply stop and trade in Zinj, cutting a long voyage short.

It was also in Zinj that the aero-ship was invented fifty years ago. To this day, Zinj remains the center of aero-ship manufacturing and maintenance. The city's trading guilds have grown fat and decadent in their wealth. Their leader, King Kafir, is the most corpulent and debased of them all.

Though technically ruler of the city of Zinj and the trading guilds, the King is a figurehead with little actual power or authority. The city government and the trading guilds are notoriously corrupt. Zinj is rife with criminal activity and vice. Gangs control the streets and crooked merchants and traders control the city towers. Emperor Viktor is disgusted by the city of Zinj and has assigned several magistrates the task of cleaning it up, even to the point of using military force. To date, all efforts have failed and the magistrates and military generals who have so attempted have disappeared and are assumed assassinated.

Zinj was the only city allied with the Vrildarian Empire to fall to Coalition attack during the War of Unification. The city was occupied for over a year before the Phanosians withdrew their support of the Coalition and the city was re-taken by a Imperial counter-attack.

THE FORESTS OF KORULA

Korula is a hilly untamed forested region with several coastal fishing villages. Korula was the site of many of the bloodiest battles of the War of Unification as the armies of the Coalition marched north to invade the city of Zinj before having to fight a defensive withdrawal back to Demetria. The Korulan forests are littered with the rotting hulks of crashed aero-ships and destroyed mobile fortresses. The coast is home to hundreds of small relatively primitive tribal villages. Each Korulan village is ruled by a village head man and consulted by a shamanistic elder. The Korulans hunt whales, wild gimwal, and bondruses along the coast using long canoes and harpoons.

DEMETRIA, THE KINGDOM OF ASH

The kingdom once known as Demetria was a warm land with temperate winters and hot humid summers, an ideal environment for creet, a tall grass that produces a grain used for flour and bread. Demetria was once the fertile and productive bread-basket of Cydoria, the low rolling hills were covered in fields of creet and herds of grazing yaaxen as far as the eye could see.

Twelve years ago, a weapon of Rhakadian design reduced the land to ash and the city to rubble overnight. The kingdom is now uninhabitable and prone to choking storms of ashen dust. Stories tell of entire regions turned into shadow zones, areas haunted by the psychic echoes of those who died there. These regions have been known to drain the very life force from any caught within them and are best avoided. Demetria remains uninhabitable to this day. Its barren hillsides are covered in grey lifeless dust.

TALEN

Demetria was home to the beautiful and ancient city of Talen. At its height, Talen was a prosperous city with great trapezoidal structures built of red granite in the Nazarian style on the banks of the Khatra River where it meets the Straights of Parma. It boasted grand statues of the legendary heroes of the War of Zorin and the impressive Library of Attan, the premiere institution of learning in southern Cydoria. The largest temple in Talen was to Brinna, the Mother of Gods and Protector of Homes. In her temple were brought sacrifices of grain and food which were distributed to the elderly, crippled, and infirm. Talen was surrounded by hundreds of kilometers of fields of creet, Demetria's chief export along with ceramics and sugar. Its ports were filled with ships both maritime and aerial from the length of the Cydorian coast.

Everything for hundreds of kilometers around what was once Talen is rendered forever lifeless. The city of Talen itself is now a large circular crater, ten kilometers in diameter, filled with the white-brown water of the Khatra river. No plants now grow in Demetria, and no animals live in the blasted wastes.

Most Demetrians fled before the invasion of the Imperial forces and thus were safely hidden when the Rhakadian weapon destroyed their homeland. As the Imperial armies rolled south in their armored mobile fortresses, the villagers gathered what they could and streamed out of the hinterlands and into Talen. As the forces approached the outskirts of Talen, preparing to lay siege, most Demetrians fled their city. Some headed west to Ramanam or north into the Apparian Mountains. Some took fishing boats across the straights of Parma to Kaidan. The lucky ones were able to secure passage on ships travelling farther west, across the Sea of Rakar, to settle in untamed Markania. Today, twelve years later, many refugees still live in makeshift towns outside of Ramanam and Kaidan, or in small enclaves within walls of those cities. Many of the free towns in the Markanian interior were built by refugees from the war. It goes without saying that travelers from Vrildar may expect a cool reception there.

THE IOTIAN ISLANDS

The Iotian islands of Saibra and Meruta lie off the south-east coast of Demetria. With the destruction of its mainland neighbor, the larger island of Saibra has become the source of grain and meat for Cydoria.

Saibra is home to the city-state of Kaidan, a tropical paradise of a city constructed of sandstone, coral, white-washed stucco, and glazed tiles. Most buildings rise no higher than four to five stories. The city is surrounded by forests of palm trees and fields of creet grain. Each summer, the islands are ravaged by waves of cyclonic storms that blow in from the east.

The city-state of Mancea can be found on the smaller island of Meruta. Meruta is likewise tropical and pleasant and known for its agriculture, but is smaller than its neighbor. Both cities were spared any damage from the War of Unification.

RAMANAM, THE JUNGLE KINGDOM

The Raman River meanders through a dark swampy jungle which covers the southern-most region of Cydoria. Though not as dreary and deadly as the Mutoran swamps to the north, the Raman River Jungle boasts its own threats. Some of the more famous include the vine known as the Crawling Terror which can cover and strangle a sleeping man overnight and Acidic Slime which can dissolve steel. Several tribes of primitive amphibious Quorians known as the Muck-Dwellers live in hidden swamp villages in the deep jungle.

The city-state of Ramanam lies at the mouth of the river. The city rises out of the surrounding swampy marsh on massive stone pylons, the foundations of an ancient city of the Sdara Vatra. The artificial islands are separated by a network of canals and connected by walkways and bridges. The buildings are constructed of sandstone, coral, and Demetrian granite. The entire city is surrounded by a massive wall, all that remains of a collapsed dome. Ramanam is a relatively underdeveloped city by Cydorian standards with little industry or metalwork. Its chief exports are products of the jungle and the sea as well as ceramics and alchemical solutions. The temple district contains shrines and temples to many gods from across the Cydorian peninsula. In the past decade, a floating city of tied-together boats and pontoon docks has emerged. This ramshackle city mostly consists of poor refugees from Demetria.

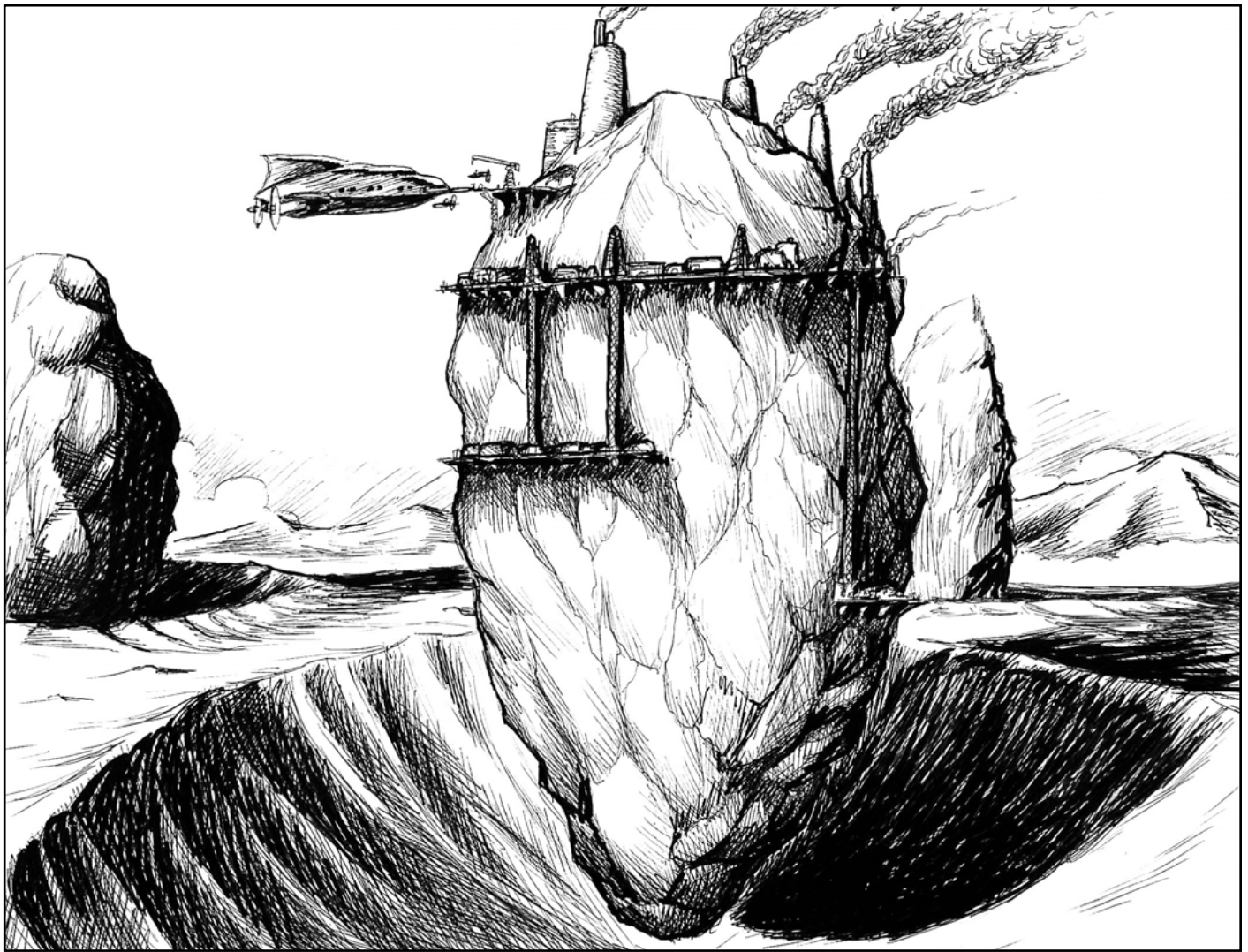
THE UNDERSEA CITY OF NROLIS

Two hundred kilometers off the southern tip of Cydoria is the great undersea city of Nrolis, home of the intelligent cephalopods known as Quorians. A large section of Nrolis is one hundred fifty meters underwater, contained within a giant air-filled dome connected via elevator to an artificial island floating on the surface of the sea. Many humans and some of the xoog races live and work with the Quorians in this undersea metropolis. Nrolis is a plutarchy with a council of the wealthy nobles, aristocrats, and business owners meeting to decide policy. Nrolis remained neutral during the War of Unification and at this time the Imperials leave the aquatic city alone.

THE APPARIAN MOUNTAINS

Several granite mountain ranges run the length of the Cydorian peninsula from the edge of the Rama Jungle in the south to the Targa range in the north and are collectively known as the Apparian Mountains. The Apparians are characterized by massive rounded granite peaks uplifted by some massive geologic events in Uruta's past. These mountains are surrounded by intricate networks of knife-edge peaks and ridges with steep rugged canyons formed by eons of erosion.

The rugged terrain surrounding these mountains is remote and inaccessible. Many isolated villages and pocket kingdoms exist in the hidden valleys of the Apparian mountains, cut off from any contact with the outside world. Glimpses of these villages, and occasional contact, have been made from passing aero-ships. These pocket kingdoms range from stone-age tribes of hunter-gathers to relatively sophisticated walled farming villages. Many Demetrian refugees fled to the mountains and have settled there.



THE RUGGED COAST OF NIASA

The central western coast of the Cydorian peninsula north of the Raman Jungle is a land known as Niasa. The jagged foothills of the Apparians separate the jungles of the south from the dry plains of this region. Niasa consists of three river valleys that drain into the Sea of Rakar. Most of the human inhabitants of this region are concentrated in the fertile areas within a few kilometers of where the rivers meet the sea. The rest of the land is characterized by dry rocky hills and gullies. The fertile valleys are flooded by months of rain every winter. At the onset of the rains, the tribes leave their villages and migrate to stone fortresses in the hills to wait out the floods and defend themselves from predatory creatures as well as from other tribes.

HORO ISLANDS AND DAZUMI

The Apparian mountains meet the gulf of Dazumi along the northwest coast of the Cydorian peninsula and form the Horo islands. These islands are sheer granite columns that rise sharply out of the gulf. The columns range in height from hundreds to thousands of meters and fall precipitously to the sea. The tops of the columns are covered in forests and grasslands and are home to many species of flying creatures. Somewhere among the Horo islands is the hidden base of the Pirates of Dazumi, a band of aero-ship raiders that plague Imperial shipping across Markania.

TIBIRIS AND TOTORIS

The port cities of Tibiris and Totoris were founded ten years ago when settlers first started heading west to Markania. Tibiris is situated on the Gulf of Dazumi, Totoris on the Sea of Horns. The cities are located across from each other over the isthmus that connects Cydoria to Markania. A road was constructed to connect the two cities, linking the Sea of Rakar to the Four Seas region. Both cities offer many services for travellers and traders. Travellers that enter either city immediately notice a sense of transience. Everything from the architecture to the amenities has the appearance of being hastily constructed and temporary. Both cities are controlled by city councils composed of representatives of the merchant interests that invested in the construction of the cities.

GUNAI

Gunai is a peninsula between the Sea of Messages and the Sea of Horns. Untamed pine forests cover its coastlines and many logging settlements have been established in recent decades. The interior is uninhabited save for a few isolated tribes of green and grey-skinned forest orix. The orixes of Gunai are hostile and occasionally raid merchant and settler caravans taking the overland route across the isthmus. These orixes worship local tribal deities to whom they offer blood sacrifices of those they capture.



THE ISTHMUS OF DARAD

The thin bit of land that connects the peninsula of Cydoria to the continent of Markania is known as the Isthmus of Darad. The land is low and swampy, never rising more than a few meters above the levels of the Sea of Messages to the north and the Sea of Rakar to the south. The land is clogged with Hungry Grass from the Strangling Coast. During the winter, the area is flooded and swampy, an extension of the coast itself. During this time, overland travel across the isthmus is out of the question. During the summer the Hungry Grass dries up and dies allowing passage west. The crumbling ruins of an ancient Nazarian defensive wall and long-abandoned fortresses once guarded this region, but the wall is shattered with few standing sections remaining.

MARKANIA

The majority of the continent of Markania lies west of the Isthmus of Darad. This epic, untamed land is referred to as “the Western Continent”. The far north, Capridia, is a grassy plateau with occasional forests inhabited by tall goat-like humanoids. The region known as Awa is characterized by vast short-grass prairie. South of Awa are the plains of Gatas where the grass grows taller than a man can stand and patches of trees grow in thin clumps dotting the landscape. Heading south, the trees thicken as the climate becomes more humid and rainy, giving way to the Poison Jungles of Dushan. Everything in the poison jungle is toxic and the place is inimical to human life. Here insects may grow to staggering size and every plant is deadly. The western portion of the continent boasts several formidable mountain ranges, the Loka Loka range being the tallest. The ranges run from the north to the south of the continent like waves along an ocean shore.

Between the western mountain ranges are sandy desert basins where little rain ever falls. North of the Narvus desert lies a volcanically turbulent region known as Agnia. The far western coast is a lush forest. The coast is home to several small kingdoms, descendants of lost Syanese colonies. Here, too, may be found many ruins of Nazarian cities as well as the cyclopean artifacts of the even more ancient Sdara Vatra.

All across the Western Continent can be found vast bowl shaped craters, remnants of the ancient war of the gods against Asag and Kur. Within these craters float massive icebergs of stone, some the size of mountains, laced with veins of zephyrium which causes them to float in mid-air. Smaller chunks weather away and break off to float through the skies forever.

The interior of the Western Continent is home to many human cultures considered barbaric by Cydorian standards. The five largest tribes include the Awans, the Gatan, the Otarans, the Samirians, and the Baho. The Awan are brave hunters who inhabit the forests of north central Markania. The Gatan are a matriarchal tribe of fierce warrior women and their male slaves that dwell in south central Markania. The Otarans live in mountain fortresses and fly Ku-bawa-mavus, a kind of giant wasp, through the skies of the western deserts. The hardy Samirians are a dour warrior-tribe who ride lumbering wooly munglors across the frozen tundra of the north. The Baho are a peaceful tribe inhabiting the mountainous deserts of the southwest. Some tribes are friendly to Cydorian pioneers and trade at their settlements. Other tribes are fiercely territorial and will attack any invader, Cydorian or alien, on sight.

In addition to the human cultures, several intelligent non-human species exist in isolated areas of the Western Continent. Capridians are tall humanoids inhabiting the plateau of Capridia in the north. The avian roatin of the Floating Mountains of Magatama live in floating mountaintop cities hollowed out by captured human slaves. The primitive insectoid loracz of the Loka Loka mountains capture humans to take back to their cave lairs and eat. The reptilian daka have several kingdoms in the deserts of southwest Markania.

In recent decades, the Cydorians have begun to move west, establishing settlements in Awa and along the coast of Gatas. The invention of the aero-ship has greatly increased access to the Markanian interior and building of settlements has exploded across the continent, including remote outposts in the Loka Loka mountains and in the Agnian desert. The Empire has also established prison camps in the western deserts of Arus. Several villages have been built around the few oases and watering holes that exist there by those released from these prisons.

RHAKADIAN MINING

The Rhakadians have established several mining operations out of western Markania. They use Cydorian slaves to excavate zephyrium crystals from the Floating Mountains of Magatama and Luzun, extract thorium from monazite sand deposits in Korula, and tunnel deep under the crust of Uruta searching for copper, zinc, and lead, from which thallium is extracted.

Ore from these mines is transported to three Rhakadian refinery cities. Tagrum refines Magataman zephyrium. Pynnis refines Loka Lokan thallium. Lokmar refines Luzunian zephyrium.

Each refinery city is home to several thousand indentured workers, their Imperial overseers, a few dozen Rhakadian engineers and administrators, and a detachment of Imperial guards. Vrildarian and Norukarian aero-ships transport the raw ores from the mines to the cities where they are unloaded and processed into their refined states. The cities are of Rhakadian design, a towering cone of scaffolding, pipes, and living and working compartments rising from the surrounding terrain like a giant steel mountain, with aero-ship landing platforms and mooring docks located along its slopes. The refining process requires water from the nearby rivers and seas and produces industrial waste materials which are in turn dumped farther out to sea. Waste gases stream from exhaust ports at the top of the cone like a man-made volcano. The refined materials are then sent to the spaceports in Vrildar and Norukar for transport back to Malus.

CENTRAL MARKANIA

The region north of the Duma River is known as Central Markania. It is primarily composed of flat plains crossed by wide rivers and dotted with several large impact craters.

THE DESOLATE EXPANSE OF MUNOSIA

The northern region of Munosia is a flat desolate region of bare exposed bedrock and little soil. This region is extremely frigid during the long winters and remains cool in the summer. Vast coniferous forests grow near the coasts of the Sea of Messages and the northern Sea of Ondor. The dense coastal forests are inhabited by herds of wooly munglor and the nomadic Samirian people that hunt them.

THE DARK REALM OF HARU

The land of Haru is one of extremes. The land suffers from stinging hot winds from the south in the summer and bitterly cold air from the north in the winter. The springs and autumns are characterized by severe storms, winds, and precipitation. The northern half of Haru is mountainous while the southern half is low, forested, and swampy. The lowlands of southern Haru are separated from the Awan uplands by a long line of bluffs.

The land is home to several tribes of degenerate humans, forest orixes, twisted jinxes, wilderness bruxes, and packs of cunning knorr. These tribes are known for their cannibalism, ritual sacrifice to demonic gods, and brutal barbarism.

The Rhakadian refinery city of Tagrum is located along the southern Haruvian shore of the Sea of Messages.

THE PLAINS OF AWA

Past the Isthmus of Darad, the way west gradually ascends to a wide flatland known as Awa, a flat plain covered in short-grass prairie. The land is punctuated with occasional impact craters which have long since eroded into shallow grassy bowls or filled in to become circular lakes. Huge herds of grazing animals cover the plain, migrating from watering hole to watering hole depending on the season, usually accompanied by packs and prides of hunting carnivores.

A few of the most ancient rivers have carved valleys and canyons into the flat plain. Heading west, the flat land rises and becomes rolling grassy hills with bald stony caps. In the far west, a traveler can see the Loka Loka mountains rising above the horizon.

Nomadic human tribes known as Awans follow the geruk herds across the prairie. They live in conical yurt-like structures during the summer and take shelter in half-underground sod houses in the winter.

Several Cydorian settlements have been built along the shallow rivers that cross the Awan plains. These small isolated settlements were established by homesteaders and entrepreneurs from the eastern city-states. The largest city is Daos, an thriving trading city and Imperial garrison built where the Mazar and Munus rivers meet the Strangling Coast.

Relations between the settlers and the native Awans varies by tribe and village. Some peacefully coexist and trade while others are openly hostile to the other. Hostile Awans generally see the settlers as invaders who dam the rivers or occupy traditional camp sites. Meanwhile, the settlers view the Awans with paranoia and suspicion, and some simply wish to possess valuable iron ore fields currently occupied by an Awan village.

The Rhakadian refinery city Pynnis is located on the Duma River delta along the Strangling Coast in southern Awa.

THE STRANGLING COAST

The northern coast of the Sea of Rakar where the peninsula of Cydoria is joined with the continent of Markania is a wide shallow wetland known as the Strangling Coast. This area earns its name thanks to the Hungry Grass, a dangerous sea grass that grows in the warm shallow marshes. Hungry Grass is very strong and covered in a powerful adhesive substance which traps animals and drags them down into the marsh where they are then eaten by local carnivorous fish known as flayers.

The Isthmus of Darad is so low that during the rainy season it becomes flooded, connecting the Sea of Rakar to the Sea of Messages and cutting off all overland travel. Likewise the entire marshy coast from the Plains of Gatas to the Horo Islands become flooded and choked with Hungry Grass.

Aside from the grass, the sea here is too shallow to be navigable by any sea-worthy ship so no coastal ports exist in this region.

THE ROCKY COAST OF OSSIA

The rugged coast along the Sea of Rakar, southeast of Gatas, is known as Ossia. Ossia is a hilly region with steep ocean-side cliffs and rocky shores. This warm rugged coastline is home to a species of large semi-aquatic mammals known as bondruses and many types of sea birds. The Ossian tribes live in small villages in the hills and along the shore. They are primitive fishers and hunters. Ossians hunt bear, wolves, and geruk in the hills, bondruses in the rivers, and take their sturdy sea-canoes into the ocean to hunt wild gimwal.

THE SAVANNA OF GATAS

The land known as Gatas is a flat savanna with many small rivers and lakes. Several large craters form circular lakes which become havens for wildlife and human villages. The savanna is covered in high grass and widely spaced trees.

Gatas is home to large herds of grazing animals which are hunted by packs of devil wolves and razorfangs. The trees that grow here are characterized by fat trunks, thick prickly bark, and thin thorny branches covered in needle-like leaves.

Several species of giant red toxic ants and poisonous spiny spiders from the Poison Jungle of Dushan have colonized the lands of southern Gatas. The ant colonies resemble dripped sand-castles and can reach fifteen to twenty meters in height while the spiny spiders can cover several square kilometers of terrain with sticky spun sheets of webbing.

Another danger lurking in the tall grass of Gatas are a race of savage humanoids known as knorr. Knorr hunt the tall grass for meat and have no compunction about eating humans or Capridians.

The plains of Gatas are home to the human barbarian tribe known as the Gatan, known for their matriarchal society and mastery of the javelin, spear, and lance. The female Gatan warriors ride giant razorfangs as mounts.

The Rhakadian refinery city of Lokmar is located at the mouth of the Mata river on the Gatan coast of the Sea of Rakar.

THE POISON JUNGLE OF DUSHAN

South of Gatas is a vast lowland filled with the so-called Poison Jungle of Dushan. The climate here is tropical with warm rains blowing from the east and filling the lowland. The trees that grow here are massive, some towering at least two hundred meters tall with trunks over a dozen meters in diameter. The jungle earned its name due to the fact that nearly every plant, animal, or insect in the jungle is poisonous to man. In fact, the spores and pollens of the plants, as well as gases emitted from decaying vegetation, are poisonous to breathe. No man may survive in the Poison Jungle without some kind of filter mask and protective gloves and eyewear. The animals and insects that live here grow to immense size and are extremely venomous, not to mention voracious.

The Poison Jungle is also home to many undiscovered and therefore un-looted ruins of the Nazarian civilization. Passing aero-ships often catch a glimpse of these ruins and record their location. Information about these sightings is later sold to daring adventurers willing to take their chances against the deadly environment for an opportunity to explore these lost cities and recover their hidden treasures.

There are no human settlements within the Poison Jungle, though many explorers tell tales of tribes of orixes and jinxes that have adapted to live within the deadly forest.

WESTERN MARKANIA

The lands west of the great mountain ranges are characterized by hot, dry desert basins. The north is known for its volatile geological activity while the south is pocked with deep impact craters. The desert lands are inhabited by a race of reptilian humanoids known as daka.

THE CAPRIDIAN PLATEAU

Capridia lies on a large flat plateau raised above the surrounding plains by the cliffs of Haraga. The terrain is primarily flat and covered with short rice-like grass called niva.

During the winters, the plateau is covered in ice and snow which melts in the summer to create shallow lakes, perfect for the cultivation of niva.

THE BADLANDS OF MUNG

The Badlands of Mung are an area of difficult terrain formed by rapid erosion and geologic upheaval thousands of years ago. The land is characterized by twisting mazes of canyons, ravines, and gullies, towering columns, and flat mesas. A few primitive tribes of hostile knorr eke out an existence within these treacherous features. In recent years, aero-pirates and other bandits have established hidden bases inside caverns located under the mesas.

LOKA LOKA MOUNTAINS

The Loka Lokas are a major mountain range that runs from Dushan to Mung. The range contains some of the tallest peaks in Markania, ranging from two thousand to five thousand meters above sea level, and is a major barrier to over-land travel and trade. They rise sharply from the low hills of Gatas to form a jagged wall across the horizon.

The Rhakadians have established several mines on the slopes of the Loka Lokas. These mines dig deep under the mountains searching for vast quantities of raw material from which thallium is extracted. The mines are the targets of raids by wild cave xoogs, aero-pirates, and man-eating loracz.

THE ARUS PLATEAU

The Arus plateau is located between the Loka Loka mountain range and a smaller range of ridges to the southwest. It is a high desert region that receives just enough rain throughout the year to support human life. The terrain is rough, strewn with rocks and boulders, cut by badlands and ravines, and punctuated by rocky outcroppings, mesas, buttes, and dry impact craters. The Garza river descends from the Loka Lokas to the northeast, crosses the desert terrain, and descends through a massive canyon complex before it tumbles over the falls at Kanos into the valley of Ragana. Along the banks of the river grow forests of thorny trees and giant man-eating trapacti, which resembles a normal cactus on the surface but the slightest contact with which causes spiny arms to snap closed, coiling around a target's limb and dragging the target underground where it is digested by powerful acids.

Imperial Prison Camps

The Vrildarian Empire has established several prison camps here, away from the river and deep in the desert. The prison camps are built away from sources of water. All food and water must be imported by aero-ship. No settlement may be built within a day's walk of the prison camp. Each camp generally holds approximately ten thousand men or women prisoners guarded by a staff of between one and two thousand depending on the security level of the prison.

Once a prisoner has served their sentence, they are released with enough water and food to reach the nearest village, usually a day's hike across the desert. Most become lost and die of dehydration or exposure. Those that are able to find the village are faced with several choices. Some exiles are able to integrate into the local villages and become farmers, ranchers, or tradesmen. A few sell themselves into slavery for a few years as indentured miners, trying to earn enough money to start a homestead or travel back to Cydoria. Some keep travelling, hoping someday to return to their homeland. Most fail to integrate and fall in with the bandits and outlaws that plague the region, or become itinerant mercenaries hired by the towns to fight the bandits.

Settlements

Settlers from Demetria and other Cydorian regions have built villages along the Garza river, but keeping the banks clear of the hostile flora can prove difficult. The villages not located along the river face a precarious existence, often with just enough food and water to survive. Most have to import supplies from back east.

The typical Arusian settlement consists of a water tower connected to a deep well located within a fortified stockade, an aero-ship mooring station, a few outlying farms and ranches, and a red light district that services travelers and guards from the nearest prison camps. These red light districts are filled with brothels, inns, saloons, and casinos. The money made from these services goes to pay for the importation of supplemental food, water, and other supplies.

On top of the battle just to survive the environment, these villages also face raids from bandit gangs and attacks from the subterranean tribes of daka known as the Tintazi.

TINTAZI, THE UNDERGROUND DAKA KINGDOM

Below the Arusian plain is the subterranean kingdom of the Tintazi. The kingdom consists of several subterranean cities built of stone and carved from the rock itself. These cities can be found inside large caverns left by what were once ancient aquifers, now long dry. The caverns are connected by a network of cave-tunnels, once-underground river beds, which criss-cross Arus. The Tintazi are hostile to human settlement of the lands above them. Long ago, they established a peaceful coexistence with the human Baho tribesmen, but they view the coming of the Markanians as a breach of that ancient compact. The Tintazi are few in number and technologically unsophisticated. Being subterranean, they are vulnerable to bright light and act only at night. Armed solely with obsidian tipped spears and clubs, they send missions to annihilate outlying homesteads and poorly protected villages.

THE UNITED KINGDOMS OF BANSYA

The land of Bansya is nestled on a plateau between the western coastal mountain range and the northern extent of the Magatamas to the east. The land is temperate and covered in large swaths of coniferous forests, many of the trees growing to several hundred meters in height. The coastal mountains are volcanic and very active.

The valley is home to a coalition of many small barbarian tribes united under King Gonyu Split-Face.

The hills and mountains of Bansya are inhabited by primitive tribes of degenerate sub-human cannibals. They live in caves and wield little more than sharpened sticks and stone weapons. They have no known language. The Bansyans call them "the grey folk" for their practice of covering their bodies with grayish-white volcanic ash.

FLOATING MOUNTAINS OF MAGATAMA

The region north of Agnia and Otar and south of Bansya is known as Magatama. Magatama is a cold, dry, wind-swept plain covered in tough grass. Across the plain can be found massive bowl-shaped craters.

Within the the craters float massive zephyrium-rich stone monoliths. Many of these so-called floating mountains have broken free and hover like giant stone icebergs, constantly crashing against other drifting mountains. Eventually, the heavier stones keeping these floating mountains down will weather away and release the zephyrium to float forever along the currents of the magnetic fields. The overall climate of the Magatamas is cold and windy.

The floating mountains are home to many types of wildlife, the most notable including giant birds of prey and climbing go-atans capable of scaling sheer cliffs with their spider-like limbs and hooked feet.

Many of the larger floating mountains found on the Magatama plain are home to a species of intelligent avians called the Roatin. The Roatin capture and raise human children to serve as slave laborers to carve beautiful structures into the stone of the mountains. The so-called aeries of the Roatin consist of finely carved cities, temples, collanades, observatories, and arcades carved into the tops and sides of the mountains.

The Rhakadians mine the Magatamas for valuable zephyrium . This has brought them into conflict with the avian natives.

THE BURNING WASTES OF AGNIA

The desolate volcanic wasteland of Agnia is nearly intolerable to human life. The mountains here are in constant eruption. Gaping wounds in the terrain ooze scabrous lava and belch noxious gases. Ash falls from the burning sky like choking snow. This terrain remains, for obvious reasons, unexplored and few venture far into its caustic interior.

THE DESERT KINGDOM OF OTAR

The land of Otar is covered in drifting sand dunes as far as the eye can see, marred only by the occasional rocky outcropping and sand-filled crater. A barbarian kingdom maintains a precarious existence living in walled stone cities and castles clinging to the western slope of the Loka Loka mountain range.

NARVUS AND THE DESERT CITY OF DAZI

The desert of Narvus is a vast tractless plain of dust and sand with little life of any kind save the occasional giant buzzard or sand-lizard. The daka kingdom of Dazi is located inside a dry impact crater, deep in the desert's desolate interior. The interior of the crater contains a city of dome-shaped structures of various sizes built of mud brick. The daka of Dazi live a semi-subterranean existence, alternating between roaming the countryside hunting for small game and gathering crops cultivated in pits fed by an underground water cache they jealously control. The Dazi offer sacrifices to Uzon, the dragon god of the desert. The Dazi are extremely xenophobic and will immediately capture all strangers for sacrifice to their god.

THE DAKA KINGDOM OF RAGANA

The valley of Ragana lies below the falls of Kanos where the Garza river plunges over the edge of the Arusian plateau. The valley is fertile by western Markanian standards, with fruit orchards and cultivated fields tended by daka farmers.

The sophisticated daka city-state of Ragana can be found where the Garza river meets the sea. Ragana's mound-shaped buildings and wide bridges are constructed of sandstone and mud brick. The cobblestone streets meander through the city in a fluid serpentine fashion. Irrigation canals criss-cross the valley, bringing water to the surrounding villages, fields, and orchards.

NORTHERN MARKANIA

The northern expanse is a vast impenetrable plain of snow and ice known as the Icy Wastes of Sakata. This region is unexplored and is considered uninhabitable. Little is known of what may exist in its frigid interior. It is believed to be inhabited by the Aya, the ghostly demons that destroyed the Sdara Vatra.

OHN, THE DOMED CITY OF THE AYA

Somewhere on the endless plain of Sakata is located Ohn, the domed city of the cyberdroids. The exact location of this robotic eden is a secret no cyberdroid will divulge and no outsider has yet to find it. Legends say the city of Ohn is hidden inside a mirage, forever invisible to the eyes of outsiders. Some daring artifact hunters search for Ohn, hoping to find ancient wonders of the Sdara Vatra, but the wise shun the place for fear of the Aya.

SOUTHERN MARKANIA

The southern reach of Markania is a sparsely populated and unexplored land separated by two mountain ranges that join at the southern tip of the continent. The eastern and southern coast is carpeted in dense poison jungles. The western coast is an arid rocky desert. Between the ranges is the arid plateau of Luzun.

FLOATING MOUNTAINS OF LUZUN

A vast field of craters is located on the plateau of Luzun, south of the Loka Loka range. Floating mountains float serenely inside these craters. Each floating mountain is capped by dense jungle foliage.

The Luzun plateau is home to many species of giant flying insects from the nearby poison jungles of Dushan and several species of giant bats. A few wild xoog tribes live in caves inside the craters. The plateau itself is an arid desert.

The Rhakadians have established several zephyrium mines on the sides of the floating mountains. These mines use water pressure and acids to dissolve the mountain around the zephyrium veins, creating rivers and lakes of industrial run-off that fill the craters with toxic lakes. The zephyrium floats upward to be captured and collected in large tarps.

THE THEOCRACY OF KALLO

The southernmost tip of the Markanian continent is home to an ancient decadent theocracy known as Kallo. The cities of Kallo consist of cyclopean stone edifices resembling stacked cubes and boxes surrounded by dangerous jungle, connected by stone sky-bridges. The population of Kallo is dwindling and the kingdom is in slow decline. The Kalloans venerate the dakan serpent god Anaka and perform gruesome public displays of ritualistic torture and mutilation.



CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SOCIETY OF CYDORIA

Cydorian society can be divided in several ways: Barbarian vs. Civilized; Villager vs. City Dweller; Noble vs. Commoner; Imperial vs. Coalition; etc. What follows is a description of life in Cydoria, including the expectations and responsibilities of its noble class, a brief overview of the key members of the Vrildarian court, the enforcement of laws in Cydorian cities and villages, the disposition of the Imperial military, the practices of the tyrannical Imperial Inquisition, the current state of scientific knowledge, the various social classes, and the Cydorian approach to the institution of slavery.

One hundred years ago, the city-states on the eastern peninsulas of Markania were each isolated by several hundred kilometers of coastline. Each was ruled by its own sovereign. The smaller city-states were home to ten to twenty thousand inhabitants. The larger city-states of Norukar, Vrildar, and Talen each boasted a population of over one hundred thousand. Smaller villages dotted the countryside, most within a day's walk of one of the city-states. No roads connected the city-states, though several overland trails followed the coast. Instead, each city-state was linked by Fornaxian trade ships that travelled up and down the coasts. A journey from one city to the next took roughly ten to twenty hours by sea; quadruple that on one of the overland trails. Wind-driven aero-ships shaved a few hours off the sea journey. Modern powered aero-ships built with alien technology can connect one city to another in five to ten hours and have opened up the interior of Cydoria and Markania for settlement.

Although some cities owe fealty to other larger cities, Matarax and Traax were originally colonies of Fornaxia, for example, and the leaders of each city swore fealty to the queen of Fornaxia, each city-state was essentially independent with its own military

and government. Most of the civil governments of Cydoria are feudal monarchies with city councils composed of scions from prominent noble and merchant families.

The leader of a city, or part of a city, possesses a hierarchical noble rank commensurate with the size of the city they rule. A noble's rank determines the amount of responsibility they face as well as the rewards afforded the position. A duke generally controls a large organization within the civil government or a city with a population of over one hundred thousand. The Fornaxian city of Matarax, for example, is ruled by Duke Xiam, whose ancestors were appointed to care for the city by the Fornaxian monarch. The city owes fealty and pays tribute to the city of Fornaxia but is otherwise independent. A count, by contrast, may control a city with a population of over fifty thousand and a baron a city over ten thousand. Count Ynri rules the Norukarian city of Basadra, for example, while Baron Axar rules the Fornaxian city of Traax and Baron Garbis oversees the Kaidanese city of Mancea. These city leaders do not share the level of independence enjoyed by a duke.

Prior to alien contact, the citizens of each city faced different degrees of relative freedom. Some enjoyed public political participation and guaranteed civil rights. Others suffered under oppressive and tyrannical regimes. In the case of Zinj, the citizens were barely aware of the existence of a civil government. Commoners from Demetria or Fornaxia were essentially free to explore their own destinies while those from the cities of Targa were treated as serfs, forced to pledge their lives and their services to the nobility and to the state. Most Varzans and Korulans lived in isolated rural villages, untouched by civilization. All Guernan commoners are members of the city military, even though their service is

primarily supportive or logistical while the commoners of Zinj know no lord but their employer.

The coming of the aliens has upset the social and political landscape of Cydoria. No longer is each city a nation unto itself. The Vrildarian Empire under the rule of Emperor Viktor has united all the cities of Cydoria under one sovereign. The people of once free cities now live within a police state ruled by a foreign power. The cities are still able to rule themselves through their traditional government, but must now bend to the will of edicts from the imperial throne. Many commoners are taken from their farms and pressed into work building the giant skyscraping edifices of Norukar and Vrildar or sent west to mine for the Rhakadians. Refugees flee Cydoria to settle the untamed west. The wealthy noble and merchant classes of the Vrildarian Empire become wealthier while the lower class workers are indebted into peonage and slavery.

THE VRILDARIAN EMPIRE

The Vrildarian Empire was formed by King Varinor of Vrildar, the first city-state to make contact with the aliens from the planet Malus. Varinor sought to unite the peninsula of Cydoria using the technology of the aliens. His first conquests were bloodless. The cities of Norukar, Tyrannis, Guerna, and Zinj, the so-called charter members of the Empire, joined voluntarily under the condition that their nobility be recognized under the new political system. Varinor agreed and the Empire was born. King Timan of Demetria formed an alliance with the remaining free cities of Cydoria, the so-called Coalition of Timan, to oppose the Empire. The Coalition was ultimately defeated after a long and bloody war. The nobility and people of these nations were punished for their resistance and are not given equal treatment.

THE EMPEROR AND THE CONCLAVE OF SUCCESSION

The Vrildarian Empire is an elective monarchy ruled by the emperor. The title of emperor provides the title-holder with supreme military and commercial authority. The emperor is the supreme leader of the armies of the Vrildarian Empire and governs all aspects of Imperial commercial trade and industry. The edicts of the emperor take precedence over all other laws, commands, or directives of any other noble, military, or commercial authority within the Empire. The current emperor is Varinor's son, Viktor.

Should Viktor die or abdicate, the title of emperor will be assigned to a successor based on the decision of the Conclave of Succession. The Conclave is an organization of thirty nobles, ten from Vrildar and five from each of the charter members of the Empire. The Conclave meets only to determine succession. When required, they meet to choose a successor from the list of eligible nobles of the Empire. Nobles eligible for succession include the former emperor's royal family or one of the kings or queens of one of the Imperial charter members. The emperor's royal family includes their next eldest offspring, the next eldest sibling should there be no offspring, or the next eldest uncle, aunt, or cousin should there be no other direct relative. The nobles currently eligible for the title of emperor after Viktor include Viktor's sister Princess Vlandra, Queen Chador of Norukar, Field Marshall Vilnius of Guerna, King Tyran of Tyrannis, and King Kafir of Zinj. Needless to say, the eligible nobles go out of their way to curry favor with the members of the Conclave.

THE CHARTER NOBILITY

The city-states of Vrildar, Norukar, Tyrannis, Guerna, and Zinj, joined the Vrildarian Empire immediately and without contest. In exchange, the cities were able to maintain their existing system of government and retain their respective noble courts. Norukar and Tyrannis are each ruled by a hereditary monarch. Zinj is ruled by a titular monarch appointed by the ruling council of the trading guilds. Guerna is a military meritocracy ruled by a Field Marshall usually promoted from within. Each head of state is given the authority to rule the affairs of their respective city-state and to further delegate authority to lesser nobles.

THE CYDORIAN FEUDAL SYSTEM

The Cydorian feudal system is roughly equivalent to that of medieval Europe. Each title is awarded to an individual and associated with an area of land. The rank of the title is determined by the population under the control of the noble.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Rules</i>
Emperor/Empress	Vrildarian Empire
King/Queen	Cydorian Kingdom, generally one to two million people or less
Archduke/Archduchess	Other dukes; generally five hundred thousand people or less
Duke/Duchess, Prince/Princess	A duchy or province, generally consisting of several territories or counties with a total population of one hundred thousand people or less
Count/Countess	A county or territory, generally a large city or region consisting of several baronies with a total population of fifty thousand people or less
Baron/Baroness	A barony, generally a city or rural territory of ten thousand people or less
Lord/Lady	An honorary title only, awarded to the former sovereigns of occupied kingdoms

THE ANNEXED TERRITORIES

The noble families of the cities and lands annexed by the Vrildarian Empire lost much of their power after their surrender at the end of the War of Unification. Kings and Queens were stripped of their title. Instead, they may now only be referred to as Lord or Lady. Lesser nobles were able to retain their titles. All of the nobles were forced to forfeit much of their wealth and property. The Lords are nominally allowed to rule their former kingdoms, but all decisions and edicts must be approved by the Imperial Overseer assigned to the territory. The overseer has ultimate veto authority over any decision made by the former monarch.

THE FRONTIER

The vast continent of Markania is known as the Cydorian frontier. Settlements on the frontier are generally a Imperial military outpost, an industrial operation, a chartered colony, or a refugee village.

Military outposts are governed by the commander of the garrison. Even civilians living on or around the outpost are subject to the rule of the garrison commander, though many commanders allow the citizens to choose one or more representatives to speak on behalf of the citizens and counsel the commander on their needs and wants.

Industrial operations such as mining bases and refineries are owned by a member of the Imperial nobility. The noble usually selects a factor to oversee the operation. Within a Imperial frontier industrial facility, the factor's word is law. Most factors rule their operations with ruthless efficiency, treating the workers, especially the debtors working under peonage, with cruelty and contempt. Factors maintain control through their network of bosses and overseers, bullies and thugs who use violence and intimidation to maintain order.

Chartered colonies are established through an investment from a Imperial noble. These settlements are purely civilian but usually commercial in nature. The Imperial investor fronts the money for the construction of the settlement and pays for the recruitment and transportation of the settlers, usually volunteers from the lower classes of the cities. The noble, in turn, becomes lord of the settlement and is entitled to taxes raised from its commercial enterprises. It is in the noble's financial interest to have happy, contented settlers working towards a profitable, sustainable commercial endeavor. Many nobles remain in the eastern cities, designating a factor to represent their affairs in the settlement. Some nobles have funded the creation of several cities and have never visited any of them. The colonies, in turn, generally choose a mayor to represent their needs to the noble or factor and a constable to enforce the peace. All colonies are subject to the laws of the Vrildarian Empire and must submit to occasional occupation by military patrols.

Refugee settlements were founded by veterans of the War of Unification and survivors of the destruction of Demetria. After the war, these refugees fled west. They took ships across the Sea of Rakan or travelled overland across the Isthmus of Darad. Villages eventually sprang up as groups of refugees gathered together for protection and trade. These unauthorized villages are technically forbidden by Imperial law. Many Imperial garrison commanders, technically tasked to eradicate these villages, will instead tolerate their existence for various reasons: they serve an important commercial purpose, they don't bother anyone, and it would simply require too much cost, effort, and manpower to eradicate the villages. These villages pay no taxes and answer to no overlord. They are self-governed with their own laws and law enforcement. Because of their independence, they often suffer more from attacks from native tribes or bandit gangs, not to mention the occasional assault from Imperial patrols, a cruel reminder of the Empire's power, should they decide to put their resources towards the task.

THE IMPERIAL COURT

Emperor Viktor holds court in the royal palace complex in Vrildar. There he is surrounded by his family, royal advisors, and hundreds of courtiers seeking his patronage. In addition, the court often entertains visiting monarchs from the other kingdoms and city-states that comprise the Vrildarian Empire.

EMPEROR VIKTOR

Emperor Viktor is an athletic man in his mid-thirties, handsome but taciturn. His body appears completely hairless, whether by choice or by birth is unknown. Though he is unmarried and has no heir, he spurns all advances by eligible ladies from the other city-states. Viktor is also an accomplished martial combatant who practices the fighting arts, both armed and unarmed, of the Guardians of Adhara. Many speculate that Viktor spent his youth training to be a Guardian but either left or was expelled when his late father, Varinor, invaded the southern lands.

Viktor is a stern ruler, capable of meting out harsh judgements with little emotion. He has become a champion of his father Varinor's policies of expansion and modernization with the help of the the Rhakadians. Although he mistrusts the Rhakadians and is wary of their motives, he has added a Rhakadian advisor, Ambassador Sorn, to his court.

PRINCESS VLANDRA

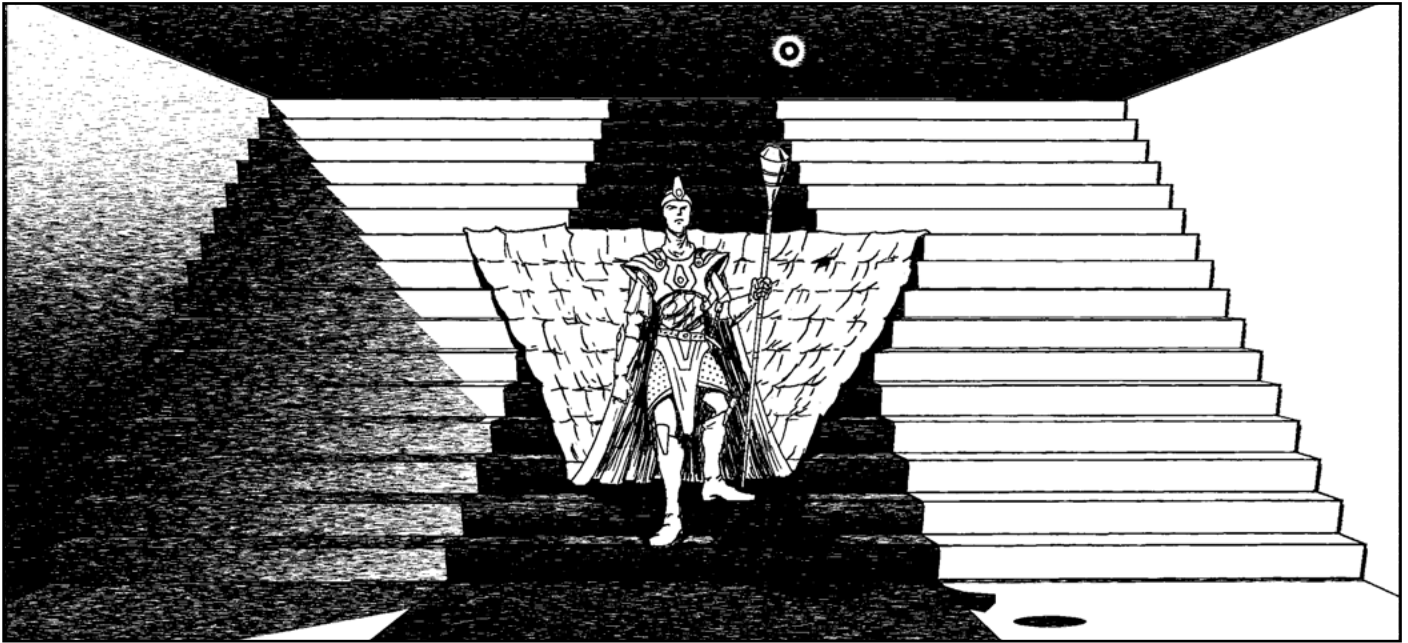
Should the Emperor die, the throne is favored to pass to his younger sister Vlandra, a young lady in her twenties who abhors courtly politics. Princess Vlandra is a young beautiful woman with dark brown hair and tan skin. She is athletic and attractive but prefers to spend her time reading, studying, and learning. Vlandra is a deeply serious person who cares little for the distractions of pleasure or entertainment. Many find her lack of humor boring and her absence at social events is never missed. A few of her peers, however, recognize and respect her intellect. Vlandra detests politics. She can usually be found at the University of Vrildar debating with the professors and students or researching some esoteric subject.

AMBASSADOR SORN OF RHAKADIA

Ambassador Sorn is a Rhakadian advisor and ambassador to Emperor Viktor. Sorn stands over three meters tall and requires the assistance of a powered exoskeleton to support his weak bones and muscles in Uruta's strong gravity. Despite his amicable and sometimes obsequious demeanor, Sorn is both shrewd and devious. Sorn has spent nearly twenty years on Uruta and has learned a great deal about the Cydorian customs and politics. He is a master political strategist and has become an expert in Cydorian psychology. He plays the part of friendly businessman but is secretly biding his time for the day when Rhakadian warships descend upon Uruta to enslave its citizens. To that end, Ambassador Sorn would pay any price to obtain a Gate Key artifact.

LORD HIGH INQUISITOR RAPPAN

Rappan leads the Inquisition, the secret police force that seeks out traitors to the Empire. Rappan is a bald Targan in his early forties of slight build. A long scar cuts across his forehead, left eyebrow, and left cheekbone, the result of a wound he sustained during the War of Unification. Rappan is a man of severe personality. He is overly harsh with his subordinates and tolerates no mistakes from anyone under his command.



He is paranoid to the point of delusion, wary of threats from every quarter. He keeps detailed intelligence on all members of the Imperial noble class, including the Emperor's favorites. He also keeps a wary eye on every social or political group, benevolent or militant, ranging from aristocratic social clubs and the Octavium to the Guardians of Adhara and the Demetrian Resistance.

Rappan is also a sociopath with no empathy for others and places no intrinsic value on human life. He is a sadistic torturer who acknowledges that torture, an inefficient method for interrogation, is actually about establishing power over the subject through fear. Although Rappan is fanatical in his love for the Empire and the execution of his duties, he has no personal feelings for the emperor or the royal family.

SUPREME LORD GENERAL KRIEG

Supreme General Lord Krieg is a physically imposing man of Guernan descent, or so it is assumed due to his accent. Few know what Lord Krieg actually looks like for he has worn a helmet that conceals his face since he was in his mid-twenties. The helmet has earned him the monicker "The Iron Skull". One story suggests that Krieg suffered severe disfiguring injuries as a young officer. Another story says that Krieg was once a Guardian of Adhara and is now a member of the Oculus. Others simply believe that the helmet is an affectation. The true story behind the helmet is unknown.

What is known is that Krieg was once an exiled Guernan general who became a mercenary commander. Krieg was hired by King Varinor to oversee the modernization of Vrildar's armies with advanced Rhakadian technology. He went on to lead the combined Imperial armies during the War of Unification and is responsible for some of the greatest atrocities committed during that time.

Krieg is an unsurpassed military strategist as well as a master duellist of the Guernan school of swordfighting. He is a military genius and a small secret cult has developed among the Imperial army that worships him like a living god.

MAGISTER IGNEUS, MINISTER OF SCIENCE

Magister Igneus was Professor Prometheus' closest friend and colleague at the University of Vrildar. Magister Igneus helped Prometheus in much of his research and experiments using ancient artifacts, and Igneus was instrumental in making contact with the Rhakadians. When Prometheus defected to the Demetrians after learning of King Varinor's plans to conquer all of Cydoria, Igneus was put in charge of the University and made the king's minister of science. Igneus led the first team to travel to Malus and study under the Rhakadians. While there, Igneus underwent several procedures to implant Rhakadian cybernetic devices into his skull, enhancing his intellect and mental abilities.

Today, Magister Igneus is frail old man in his late sixties. His head has become enormous and bloated like an engorged tick. Small metal studs are implanted around his misshapen skull. His hooded eyes always seem to stare a million kilometers away. He walks with the aid of a staff of Sdara Vatron origin. Igneus spends many of his days in the company of ambassador Sorn and the Rhakadian delegation. He is also Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Lightning and therefore a member of the ruling council of the Octavium.

KING TYRAN OF TYRANNIS

The city of Tyrannis belongs to King Tyran, a bald Varzan man in his fifties with a long moustache and arched eyebrows. King Tyran rules Tyrannis with an iron fist and jealously seeks to add Lady Lixa of Fornaxia to his harem, though he sometimes courts Queen Chador whom he considers a lesser and more pragmatic alternative.

FIELD MARSHALL VILNIUS OF GUERNA

Guerna is commanded with strict military efficiency by Field Marshall Vilnius. Guernan officers may only be promoted or demoted by those with higher rank. Vilnius bypassed the normal process of Guernan military ascension by befriending Emperor Viktor during the War of Unification when both were young inexperienced military officers. When Viktor was crowned king ten years ago, he forced the rapid promotion of then-Lieutenant Vilnius to the rank of Second Field Marshall, the second highest

ranking position in Guernan military government and next in line to the rank of Field Marshall. The sitting Field Marshall abdicated his position soon thereafter, making Vilnius the youngest person ever promoted to the position. The blatant nepotism and abuse of power enraged the Guernan military and made Vilnius many enemies. In the proceeding ten years, Vilnius has proved up to the challenge. As Field Marshall, he purged the elite ranks of the officers, convicting and executing many of his enemies and promoting his supporters. He has rebuilt Guerna into an advanced military base using Rhakadian technologies and advisors.

Vilnius is a man of Fornaxian descent in his early thirties with slicked back shoulder-length blonde hair and pale skin. Little is known about Vilnius' personal life. It is unknown if he is married or single, nor the identity of any living family. This is by design as Vilnius is rumored to be a master of byzantine plots and intrigue, and he has gone to great lengths to keep secret or remove any familial weakness his enemies might take advantage of.

QUEEN CHADOR OF NORUKAR

Norukar is controlled by Queen Chador, renowned for her beauty and jealousy. Queen Chador is a widow in her forties. She has been married three times previously and enjoys many suitors but she has her eyes on Viktor and the Imperial throne. She is extremely frustrated at Viktor's apparent chastity and to date all of her romantic advances towards him have been coldly spurned. Her jealousy of the Emperor is legendary. Many of her rivals for the Emperor's attention have met untimely and mysterious ends.

KING KAFIR OF ZINJ

King Kafir is a fat ill-mannered Varzan with disgusting habits and poor personal hygiene. Though his silk coverings are of the finest quality and cut, they are always stained by whatever Kafir has eaten or imbibed earlier that day. Kafir has several wives and many children, maintains a harem for his enjoyment, and possesses several bound concubines, though all are repulsed by their master's decadent tastes.

LADY LIXA OF FORNAXIA

Lady Lixa was once queen of the kingdom of Fornaxia. After the defeat of Demetria in the War of Unification, she was forced to surrender to the Empire. As a condition of her surrender, she was allowed to continue to rule but was forced to abdicate her title of "Queen". She must now report and answer to a Imperial governor. She is exceptionally beautiful and her hand in marriage is sought by most of the noble bachelors of Baadria and Cydoria.

BARON TAUB OF KAIDAN

Kaidan is ruled by Baron Taub, a debonair and aristocratic man with expensive tastes. On the surface, he eagerly plays the part of the docile vassal with his Imperial overlords. In truth, he is a master player in the game of espionage. Though Taub has no goal of opposing Imperial rule at this time, he uses his contacts, agents, and even friends, as playing pieces and pawns in an elaborate and secret game to better his status within the Empire. Taub is a dashing and handsome man in his forties with light tan skin and a pencil thin moustache. He is married to his ravishingly beautiful wife Lady Dionsa but enjoys many paramours.

BARON GARBIS OF MANCEA

Kaidan's smaller neighbor Mancea is ruled by Baron Garbis, Baron Taub's younger cousin. Baron Garbis is only 16 years old and has few memories of the War of Unification. He was orphaned by the war and has since grown up under the guidance of his overseer, the imperial governor of Mancea. Garbis is young, naïve, and impressionable, but believes himself wiser and stronger than he actually is.

BARON GAUTH OF RAMANAM

Ramanam is led by Baron Gauth, a friendly man in his forties and veteran of the War of Unification. He is a married family man and cares deeply for the fate of the Demetrian refugees in his city. He is frustrated at his inability to accommodate them, there is simply nowhere in Ramanam for them to live. He has established policies to encourage the settlement of the Plains of Gatas in Markania and there are several colonies there named in his honor. Baron Gauth has no love for the Empire and comes into frequent conflict with the Imperial governor overseeing his territory. His outspoken criticism of the Emperor's policies has placed him under the intense scrutiny of Lord High Inquisitor Rappan.

LAW AND ORDER

The enforcement of the laws of the Vrildarian Empire falls to different institutions depending on the jurisdiction and type of law. Each city is able to enact and enforce its own laws but the laws and edicts of Emperor Viktor take precedence. Peace and order is maintained in the large city-states of the Cydorian peninsula by the city guard of each city. Legal disputes are settled by city magistrates. The Imperial military is tasked with maintaining peace on the frontier of Markania. Frontier settlements select their own constabulary to enforce local laws. Finally, the Imperial Inquisition serves as a secret police force of the emperor.

CITY GUARD

Each city-state enforces its laws through the city's guard. Every city has its own equivalent of the city guard, though they may be known by different names: the Watch, the Men-at-Arms, Civil Patrol. All serve to maintain the peace and enforce the laws of the city's leadership. A typical city guardsman wears an identifiable uniform and carries a tonfa-like truncheon, a symbol of their office as well as a handy weapon. Depending on the size of the city, the city guard may consist of as little as a squadron of ten to twenty uniformed guardsmen or may be a large well-organized paramilitary force with its own spies, secret enforcers, and investigators. City guard forces also run the gamut from disciplined and loyal enforcers of the public good, such as the watchers of Fornaxia or the military police of Guerna, to corrupt thugs in league with the local underworld, such as the city watch of Zinj or the Royal Men-at-Arms of Tyrannis.

A city's guard is technically subordinate to the Imperial military, but in practice the military tries to stay out of matters regarding law enforcement within the cities. For example, the emperor has assigned several military commanders and magistrates the task of ending the criminal corruption of Zinj. To date, all attempts have failed with the mysterious disappearance or murder of every magistrate and commander.

MAGISTRATES

Magistrates are appointed government officials tasked to resolve legal disputes between parties. These disputes range from contractual disputes between individuals and organizations, allegations of malfeasance, and legal challenges against the state such as defense against criminal allegations and tax disputes. The decision of the magistrate is based on evidence, testimony, and reasoned debate in a forum of impartial arbitration. The institution of arbitration by a magistrate dates back to ancient Nazaria and many of the official costumes, terms, and procedures originated in this era. Magistrates resolve civil, commercial, and criminal disputes. In theory, magistrates are impartial and fair. However, magistrates are appointed by the ruling noble of a city and the decisions of a magistrate can be overturned by an edict from that noble. Legally, any person accused of a crime may make a case for their innocence before a magistrate. In practice, a magistrate may refuse to hear a case and many refuse based on a preliminary review of the evidence.

CONSTABULARY

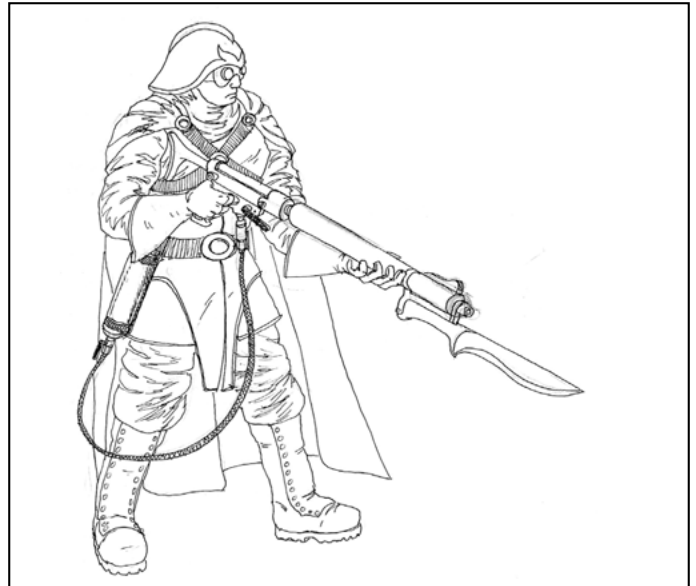
Frontier colonies chartered by a member of the nobility are free to establish their own local laws enforced by a local constabulary of their choosing. Most colonies create a small-town version of the city guard commanded by a constable. The constable is either selected by the founding noble or chosen by the citizens of the settlement. Sometimes, when there are no locals qualified to perform the duties of constable, a settlement may hire the services of a professional constable for a contractually defined period of time.

MERCENARIES

Most local constables are limited in their capabilities. They are generally undermanned and ill-equipped to withstand an assault from bandit gangs or barbarian tribes. Nor can they commit resources to hunt fugitives across the territory for weeks at a time. These tasks are supposed to fall to the military, but not even the military can be everywhere they are needed. When all other options are exhausted, many settlements turn to hired mercenaries.

Settlements might hire a mercenary company as a team or may hire individual disparate mercenaries at a lower cost. A typical contract might call for the garrison-style defense of a settlement from a specific threat or for a contractually defined amount of time, or it could be a “search-and-destroy” contract to eliminate a known specific threat. Payment could be in gold coin, land, goods or services in trade, or for shares in the settlement charter.

Hiring mercenaries can be risky for a settlement. Mercenary companies are often desperate and sometimes turn towards criminal enterprise when work is scarce. One town’s mercenary company might be another town’s bandit gang. Mercenary companies might also break their contract, paying the penalty in order to pursue a more profitable opportunity elsewhere. Mercenaries are also notoriously disloyal and are more likely to abandon their contract when the going gets rough.



THE IMPERIAL MILITARY

The defense of the Cydorian peninsula falls to the Imperial army and navy. The Imperial military consists of 250-thousand soldiers: 10% officers, 30% enlisted volunteers, 50% conscripts, and 10% fighting slaves. Every major city in the Vrildarian Empire hosts a garrison of 5- to 10-thousand soldiers and officers. Garrisons located in annexed territories such as Ramanam, Kaidan, Mancea, and Fornaxia tend to be larger than those in friendlier cities.

The army is composed of infantry, crossbowmen, riflemen, cavaliers, and squadrons of aero-ships and armored mobile fortresses. Infantry are equipped with a spear, shield, short sword, leather cuirass, goggles, and helmet. Crossbowmen wear no armor, carry a short sword, and wear goggles and a helmet. Riflemen are similarly equipped except for either a Cydorian ballistic rifle or Rhakadian plasma rifle instead of a spear and shield. Officers are equipped with a saber and either a ballistic pistol or Rhakadian plasma pistol. The army has also adopted modern technology with a fleet of armored aero-ships and armored mobile fortresses.

Most of the officers of the Imperial military are Guernan military academy graduates. Academy graduates are well educated in the arts of military strategy and discipline. They are professional and generally honorable individuals with a high regard for the institution of the military. As Guernans, they are also descendants of families with strong martial histories and traditions. Members of the Cydorian nobility may choose to serve as officers. Noble officers are commissioned for only a few years, usually to increase their own prestige and to create a network of military contacts which could prove useful in their future political career. Noble officers have a reputation as dilettantes and glory-hounds and are treated with professional toleration by their Guernan colleagues.

The current supreme commander of the Imperial military is Supreme Lord General Krieg, aka “the Iron Skull”, General of the Imperial armies (see page 109).

The primary missions of the army on the Cydorian peninsula include patrolling the countryside, performing spot inspections of villages, escorting commercial aero-ship traffic, providing security to Imperial government buildings and installations, suppressing uprisings, and hunting down and eliminating known pirate groups, bandit gangs, and members of the Demetrian resistance.

The navy is less impressive than the army with a fleet of less than forty ships. The ships of the Imperial navy were traditionally oar-driven galleys though most have been replaced with electric screw-driven ships of Rhakadian design. The mission of the navy has traditionally been to transport the army, defeat enemy navies as part of an invasion, guard the ports, and defend commercial shipping from piracy. With the advent of the electric aero-ship, the strategic importance of the Imperial navy has been slowly in decline.

FRONTIER MILITARY STATIONS AND PATROLS

The Vrildarian Empire has laid claim to the continent of Markania and the Imperial military has established many troop stations across the land. The purpose of these bases is to protect the commercial interests of the nobility. This mission encompasses the protection of commercial aero-ship traffic and industrial facilities as well as the defense of colonies funded by noble families. Because of the sheer immensity of the land of Markania, frontier stations are situated many days journey apart, often by aero-ship. The troops therefore patrol the countryside, visiting each settlement in a circuitous route with the occasional surprise visit. Some stations may be assigned their own aero-ship for transport, though any troop may commandeer the services of a commercial or independent aero-ship on its regular route. More often, troops are assigned riding mounts such as bondruses or anators. One famous troop earned renown for riding on the backs of giant Guernan Warhawks.

Frontier troops are often assigned to track down and kill or capture troublesome bandits, rebel terrorist cells, or suspected techno-heretics. These missions may take them away from their stations for weeks at a time.

THE INQUISITION

The most feared institution of the Vrildarian Empire is the shadowy secret police force known as the Inquisition. The Inquisition exists outside of hierarchy of the military or nobility. They are independent and answer only to the emperor. The current leader of the inquisition is Lord High Inquisitor Rappan, a bald man of slight build, severe countenance, and ill humor who has found favor in the royal court of Emperor Viktor.

The Inquisition is primarily an intelligence organization. Their mission is to investigate and expose possible new threats to the peace and prosperity of the Vrildarian Empire. The inquisition often works undercover, infiltrating suspected enemy groups to gather information about their methods, plans, and contacts. Once sufficient information is obtained, the group is exposed and its members are arrested by the military and suitably punished for their crimes. The Inquisition then uses the information and contacts gathered from its investigation to infiltrate other groups and the process repeats.

Investigations seek out political opposition groups such as the Demetrian resistance, Phanosian advisors, or seditious critics of the Imperial government, military, or nobility; organized criminal groups such as the Dazumi pirates, the Hidden Hand, or the Oculus; and other outlawed groups such as the illegal technology black-markets, cabals of the techno-heretics, or alien smugglers. Their tactics include under-cover infiltrations, kidnappings, torture, and assassination.

Because of the need to maintain secrecy for their operations, the actions of the Inquisition often seem capricious or arbitrary. The judgments of the Inquisition are final and cannot be challenged before a magistrate. If a merchant is arrested and taken from his home in the dead of night, no one will ever know if arrest was a justified action to eliminate an imminent threat to the peace or was a mistake based on faulty intelligence. For this reason, the Inquisition is universally feared.

CYDORIAN SCIENCE

Surprisingly, the city-states of Cydoria are well versed in scientific knowledge. This was true even prior to contact with aliens. The University of Vrildar and the Library of Attan in Demetria advanced the studies of mathematics, chemistry, geology, physics, astronomy, biology, medicine, and many other subjects. Their level of knowledge was roughly equivalent to that of the late European Renaissance of the sixteenth century. Contact with aliens has advanced that knowledge to roughly that of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century in North America or Europe with a few notable exceptions.

A university magister, for example, knows that the world of Uru-ta is a globe and revolves around the sun. He knows how human physiology works, is aware of the dangers of microbes and understands the theory of viruses, though they have yet to be proven to exist. He understands the concept of gravity as a function of mass, how magnetism works, that matter is composed of molecules and atoms, the properties of elements, that light is composed of a spectrum of different wavelengths, and how optics work.

He believes that all life was created by the Sdara Vatra, but he also knows that the form and behavior of modern animals was the result of of millennia of natural evolution to fit ecological niches. He is also aware that man can modify or alter the form and behavior of an animal through selective breeding. He is aware that other, more direct, methods of creating or modifying animals existed in the past, but he is not yet aware of the concept of genes, how they work, or might be directly modified, and considers such practices to be akin to blasphemous sorcery.

He does not yet know about radio waves, atomic fission or fusion, or quantum mechanics. Prior to alien contact, the study and use of electricity was considered taboo for electricity is the life-blood of the Aya. King Varinor took great pains to eradicate this taboo and many modern engineers have embraced the once-forbidden science.

CYDORIAN MEDICINE

A native physician is well versed in human physiology and biological processes. They possess microscopes and know of microbes and bacteria and their roles in infection, though viruses were still hypothetical. Physicians can perform surgery using sterile utensils on a patient anesthetized with simple ethers or chloroform. Cydorian physicians also employ techniques such as acupuncture, acupressure, and Ta'oudh healing arts to aid in healing and recuperation.

Cydorian apothecaries are able to dispense a variety of medicines and herbal remedies, as well as certain magical healing salves, cataplasms, and poultices collectively known as "healing compounds". Healing compounds are a kind of living slime, the magical creation of ancient Nazarian wizards.

Apothecaries grow the healing compounds in tanks, feeding them food scraps and fertilizers. Different strains of healing compound have different specific effects so apothecaries cultivate many strains and mix them together using ancient recipes for use against various ailments. The correct application of the right mix of healing compounds can help a patient recover more quickly from illness and injury and may even regenerate lost limbs or organs.

If used incorrectly, which is unfortunately often the case given the poorly understood nature of the compounds, solutions may cause permanent scarring, failure of an organ or bodily system, cancerous tumors, or even death. Although healing compounds can reduce the degradations of age and prolong life, repeated use increases the chances of improper application and malignant or fatal side effects.

Cydorian alchemists mix modern knowledge of chemical properties, reactions, and compounds with the ancient magic rituals and artifacts of the Sdara Vatra. Extremely rare Sdara Vatra magical Transmutation Furnaces, controlled by thought, ritual, and incantation, aid the alchemist. Alchemical products serve industries such as mining and metallurgy.

The average Cydorian merchant or farmer, of course, has never cared much for science. Having likely never attended a school, they may have been distantly aware of such concepts of a spherical Uruta or the existence of atoms, but will usually default to whatever local superstitious or mythical beliefs that have always held sway over the generations of his ancestors.

SOCIAL CLASS

Even the most enlightened societies of Cydoria are stratified along a rigid class hierarchy. The various classes may be grouped into the upper classes of the nobility, the middle classes of soldiers, merchants, craftsmen, and scholars, and the lower classes of servants, laborers, peasants, slaves, and beggars. One's affiliation with a class is generally determined by the class of one's parents. An individual may find mobility within their class but it is extremely difficult and rare to transition from one class to a higher class.

At the top of the upper classes are the royal nobles, those with familial ties to the monarch with a chance, no matter how remote, of ascension to the title of monarch. In the case of Fornaxia, Kaidan, and Mancea, the noble families of these lands lost their claim to the title of monarch with their surrender to the Vrildarian Empire.

Lesser nobles are those with no possibility of ascension to the monarchy under any circumstances. They possess great power and wealth within the Cydorian social system. Lesser nobles are often also military officers, land-lords, or captains of commerce and industry. A royal noble may reward or punish a lesser noble with a promotion or demotion, but may never strip a lesser noble of their nobility entirely.

Military officers exist somewhere between the upper and middle classes. They are commoners that have attained commissions in the military. The military is often the only way the child of a lower class commoner may increase their social status. Military officers that display great heroism or victory in battle may be rewarded by the monarch with a patent of nobility, duties, or land.

The middle classes are composed of landlords, merchants, industrialists, craftsmen, and scholars. Landlords own and trade property. Merchants and industrialists are commoners that own business interests and gain wealth through profit. It is possible though rare for a landlord, merchant, or industrialist that has demonstrated particularly successful business acumen to be rewarded by the monarch with a patent of nobility, usually because the monarch needs the financial assistance of the merchant. Craftsmen are artisans, often self-employed and part of a guild but sometimes working for a noble or industrialist. Scholars are generally retained by members of the noble classes or by the universities. Individuals from lower classes may be accepted as apprentices to craftsmen and may someday graduate to the middle classes.

The lower classes do the majority of the actual work in Cydorian society. Servants serve the members of the middle and upper classes. Laborers are the builders and ditch diggers of society. Peasants tend the crops and animals of the farms. Slaves can be servants, laborers, or farmers, but they are the property of others, often as the result of unpaid debt. Beggars represent the lowest status within the lower classes. They are commoners that are either incapable or unwilling to work and therefore provide no material benefit to the rest of the society. Members of the lower classes are often forbidden from owning property. They must pay rent to a landlord to live in their homes or to farm the land on which they work.

SLAVERY

The ownership and trade of slaves is a legal and accepted custom in most of the city-states of the Vrildarian Empire. An individual may become a slave through several means. Most slaves are lower-class debtors who are unable to pay. They are sentenced by a magistrate to work as a slave of an overseer for a period of time appropriate to the debt. The system of involuntary labor as a punishment for unpaid debts is called peonage and the sentence is called a contract of servitude. Most household slaves are of this type, debtors in default who are sentenced to a contract of servitude ranging from ten to one hundred years.



Prisoners of war, notably those of the War of Unification, were given the choice between ten years in an Arusian gulag or twenty years or more as a slave laborer in the mines or refineries, or building colonies. The expansion of colonies into the continent of Markania has resulted in many new prisoners captured from the barbarian tribes that live there. These barbarian slaves are treated as war slaves and are thus sentenced to perform labor in a mine or sent east to work the farms of Kaidan.

A slave owner may sell their slaves to another owner. The slave is still bound by the original contract, so a slave serving twenty years of peonage sold ten years into their servitude must serve the remaining ten years under the new owner. The children of female slaves are considered slaves under the same contract of servitude as their parent. Thus if a parent is sentenced to fifty years as a slave, the child must be a slave until the parent's fifty year sentence is fulfilled.

Most slaves are illiterate and do not understand the terms of their contract. As a result, most slaves are taken advantage of by their owners. The terms of a contract of servitude are usually stacked against the slave with many punishments that extend the sentence. The slave owner usually takes advantage of the illiteracy of the slave and the easy terms of the contract to keep a slave or their children long past the original sentence.

SLAVER BANDS

Although the use and trade of slaves of peonage or criminal offense is legal, accepted, and common in Cydoria, the capture of free people or xoogs as slaves is not. Nevertheless, bands of ruthless slavers operate throughout Cydoria, selling illegal slaves under forged contracts of servitude. In the urban areas, slavers might traffic in unwanted children. In rural areas, slavers capture barbarians and xoogs which are sold to rural settlers or occasionally brought back to the cities for trade.

Escaped slaves, if captured, are usually punished with execution. Similarly, those that aid in the escape and flight of a legal slave are punished with either execution or banishment to an Arusian gulag.

Unscrupulous slave traders will kidnap hapless barbarians, foreign travelers, unwanted children, or even drunken laborers, and sell them into illegal slavery using forged contracts of servitude. An illegal slave may challenge the contract, requesting legal review by a magistrate. If the forgery is good, the magistrate might accept it and the slavery is enforced. If the forgery is weak, or if the evidence of wrong-doing is obvious, the contract is nullified. Most barbarians, children, and foreigners are, of course, unaware of this right and never make use of it. Slave owners, likewise, do what they can to keep their new slaves unaware of any possible avenue of recourse.

Illegal slaves are essentially a form of contraband and the black market in illegal slaves operates much like any other black market, with secret bazaars and networks of contacts.



CHAPTER EIGHT: SECRET SOCIETIES

Many secret societies exist throughout Cydoria. Most are formed to promote and protect a specific philosophy or agenda while others exist to provide mutual aid and protection for their members.

THE BLACK MARKET

Prior to contact with the aliens, there was little to smuggle in Cydoria. Occasional embargoes by one city against a neighbor sometimes forced traders to import and sell their goods in secret, but these events were isolated and ended when the political winds changed direction. Today, King Viktor's tight control over alien technology has led to the rise of smuggling and black marketeering as a lucrative and permanent profession.

Contraband goods include: products manufactured on Tsiris, Phanos, Dadan, or any of the hundreds of space-cities and brought to Uruta by alien smugglers; Rhakadian products originally provided to the Imperial nobility or military; native Urutan recreations of alien products hand-crafted by techno-heretics; ancient Sdara Vatra or Nazarian artifacts; mundane but illegal items such as military weapons or armor; any product that celebrates or glamorizes Demetria or the Coalition.

Smuggled alien imports are very difficult to obtain. The alien merchant attempting to smuggle goods onto Uruta must first be in contact with someone on the surface. This requires both parties to possess a psychic lens that allows communication through the Oudh. The alien and the Urutan contact then arrange a time and location for the exchange. Then the alien merchant must slip past the Rhakadian blockade around Uruta. At the appointed time, the Urutan contact must use a Gate Key to allow the smuggler to safely enter the Oudh. The smuggler's space-ship must now avoid the notice of Imperial sky monitors and land undetected, usually in a remote and secure location. The exchange is made.

Phanosian goods are usually donated, gifts to help the cause of the resistance. Tsirisian and Dadanian goods are sold in exchange for gold, zephyrium, thorium, thallium, and other rare commodities. Smuggled goods include weapons, defenses, vehicles, power generation, and agricultural equipment.

Off-world smuggling is extremely rare and dangerous. There are only six known working Gate Keys. Three belong to the Vrildarian Empire who deal exclusively with the Rhakadians. Baron Urik of Demetria uses one to arrange clandestine pick-ups from Phanosian agents. The Shadowfox, queen of the Dazumi pirates, exchanges commodities captured from raids against Imperial shipping with the Tsirisians and the Dadanians. At least one other, possibly two, is known to exist in unknown hands.

Much easier to obtain are restricted items of Rhakadian manufacture. In exchange for access to Uruta's resources, the Empire is provided many advanced Rhakadian products. These products appear on the black market through several sources. They may be stolen from the warehouses of the Imperial nobility or military, scavenged from attacks, or illegally sold by corrupt Imperial officials.

The creations of techno-heretics are banned by the Vrildarian Empire. The techno-heretics initially distribute their goods through their own trusted agents, charging just enough to fund their secret operations, often accepting barter in trade. The goods are often re-sold by their owners and make their way to the black markets. The techno-heretics are ambivalent towards the black market distribution of their products. On the one hand, they approve of the redistribution of the technology. On the other hand, they disapprove of the mark-up charged by the black marketers.

Artifacts of the ancient Sdara Vatra or Nazarian cultures are also banned by the Vrildarian Empire. These items are considered magical and dangerous, yet are also in high demand. They command high prices on the black market.

Less in demand but banned nonetheless are books, scrolls, statuary, and other works of art celebrating Demetria, its royal family, its capital Talen, or anything that glamorizes the Coalition and its position during the War of Unification. Books about the ancient cultures of Cydoria or treatises on alien cultures or technology are likewise banned. These items are in demand by scholars, techno-heretics, and those that sympathize with or are members of the Demetrian resistance.

The nature of the black market varies. In some places, it is an actual market, a secret bazaar of contraband and stolen goods where smugglers, factors, and thieves sell their wares to select clientele. These secret bazaars are a good way to quickly unload merchandise but are dangerous. They are hard to keep secret and the black marketers run the risk of a raid by the Inquisition.

Usually, the black market takes the form of a network of contacts. Someone looking to purchase contraband might be put in touch with someone with connections to the black market. The black marketer, or broker, researches the buyer before they meet, making sure the buyer can be trusted. The buyer is told what is available or the buyer expresses a desire for a specific item and places an order. The broker either has it immediately available or, more likely, communicates the order to his own black market contacts.

Word of the order gets around. After a few days or weeks, if someone has what the buyer is looking for, word gets back to the broker and a transaction is negotiated with the buyer. The details of the payment and delivery vary for each broker, buyer, and transaction.

Sometimes a broker might hire a team to find and retrieve an object for the buyer, eliminating all the middle-men of the network. The retrieval might take the form of an expedition to an ancient Nazarian city, a daring break-in of a military installation, or a clandestine theft from the home or warehouse of a noble or Rhakadian industrial facility. This type of direct operation is more dangerous and more expensive, but the results are immediate and lucrative.

DEMETRIAN RESISTANCE

Immediately after the destruction of Talen, the Demetrian capital, and the subsequent surrender and dissolution of the Coalition of Timan, Baron Urik of Demetria began forming an organized resistance movement against Imperial occupation. The goal of the movement is the withdrawal of all Imperial troops from the kingdoms of the Coalition and the re-establishment of the Demetrian throne.

ORGANIZATION

The resistance is organized into independent cells. Each cell operates out of a secret base of operations such as a cave, cellar, or abandoned house. Cells consist of ten to twenty members and are led by a captain. The cells coordinate through a network of couriers. Each courier is limited to communicating between no more than three cells to reduce exposure should the courier be captured and interrogated by the Inquisition.

LEADERSHIP

The resistance is led by Baron Urik of Demetria and a staff of hand-picked loyal generals and advisors who escaped capture during the War of Unification. The leadership council determines the overall strategy of the resistance and disseminates orders through the courier network. The council is headquartered in a secret location somewhere in the Apparian mountains.

Baron Urik of Demetria

Baron Urik is a ruggedly handsome man in his late forties. He has dark hair, greying at the temples, and a thin moustache. He cuts a dashing figure in his green and blue officer's uniform. Urik is a master swordsman of the Talenese school and enjoys practicing with his friends and advisors. Baron Urik is accompanied at all times by his cyberdroid personal bodyguard, Xenix.

Princess Iti

Princess Iti is the only surviving member of the Demetrian royal family. She was only seven years old when she escaped the destruction of Talen and was permanently blinded when she refused to look away from the flash.

Today, she is a shy nineteen year old, thin with long brown hair. She has been studying under her tutor, Professor Prometheus, preparing for the day when she might called upon to lead her people once more as queen of Demetria.

Professor Prometheus

Professor Prometheus is a Vrildarian scholar in his late sixties. He was once head magister at the University of Vrildar. It was Prometheus that made first contact with the Malusians and unlocked the secrets of the Psychic Lenses and Gate Keys. Prometheus blames himself for the War of Unification and defected to the Coalition early in the war in an attempt to even the odds. Today, he acts as scientific and technical advisor to Baron Urik and tutor to Princess Iti.

Agent Atara Ntendu of the Phanosian Space Force

Atara Ntendu is a secret agent from the planet Phanos. She is a dark-skinned woman in her late twenties with an athletic build. She has a no-nonsense to-the-point personality that many find off-putting. She was assigned as an ambassador and advisor, acting as a liaison between the resistance and the Phanosian govern-

ment. Many resistance fighters harbor ill will towards the Phanosian Alliance for their withdrawal during the war (a reaction to an attempted Rhakadian invasion of Phanos) and Atara must constantly overcome the prejudices of those she has been sent to help.

MISSIONS

Resistance cells are often called upon to perform a wide variety of missions ranging from assassination, espionage, sabotage, and hit-and-run raids against Imperial military and political targets. Many missions are performed under cover, with agents of the resistance wearing disguises in order to gain access to normally inaccessible areas or events.

Because of the independent structure of the cells, most missions are initiated or performed at the discretion of each cell captain. Occasionally, another cell may become aware of a target of opportunity and pass that information along to a cell better able to capitalize on the information. Finally, some missions are coordinated and assigned from the resistance leadership. These types of missions are considered of critical importance and priority.

ALLIES

Several other groups provide assistance and support to the resistance. The Guardians of Adhara, for instance, have strongly allied themselves with the resistance and many guardians serve within resistance cells. Techno-Heretics, on the other hand, have no centralized leadership or agenda. Some cabals have joined the resistance, others are sympathetic and provide assistance and support but maintain their distance, while others prefer to have nothing to do with the effort.

A few noble houses are secretly sympathetic to the resistance while publically and officially denouncing it. Baron Gauth of Ramanam is a well-known example. Friendly nobles can even be found within Norkuar and Vrildar.

While Zinj is technically a Imperial client, the inhabitants of the city are known to offer assistance and protection to the resistance.

THE GUARDIANS OF ADHARA

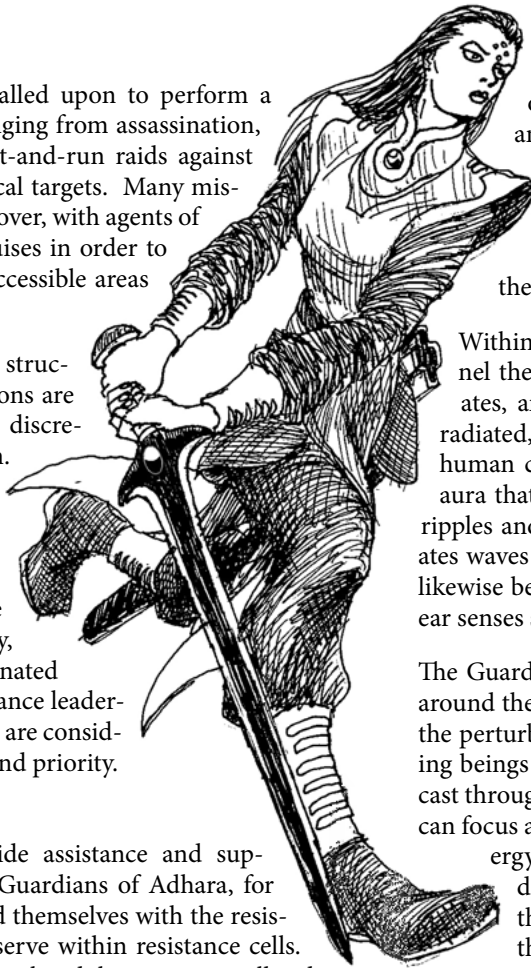
Deep within the Apparian mountain range can be found the Mystic Mountains, four peaks shrouded in mystery. The Mystic Mountains are the site of four ancient citadels, collectively called the Citadels of Ka. The architecture of these edifices resembles no known Cydorian or Nazarian style. The citadels are home to the four sects of the Guardians of Adhara, scholarly warrior-monks and mystics. The order is dedicated to the perfection of Ta'oudh, a spiritual and martial discipline that teaches the adherent how to sense and manipulate the Oudh. The Guardians are led by the wizened Masters of Ta'oudh. Legend has it that the Masters are the last descendants of the Sdara Vatra.

Within each school, students learn to manipulate and channel the Oudh, the pervasive energy that surrounds, permeates, and protects the planet Uruta. It is not generated or radiated, it simply exists. The Oudh is fluid and is affected by human consciousness. The human mind generates a psychic aura that can, with proper training, affect the Oudh, creating ripples and vibrations in the field the way a person's voice creates waves of sound in the air. These ripples and vibrations can likewise be sensed by someone with proper training the way an ear senses sound.

The Guardians of Adhara learn to sense and control the Oudh around them. Through years of study and training, they can feel the perturbations within the field caused by the presence of living beings or "hear" the transmitted thoughts of others, broadcast through the field the way a voice is carried through air. They can focus and direct the Oudh to increase or decrease kinetic energy, allowing them to make superhuman leaps or survive deadly falls. Guardian-Warriors can channel the Oudh through their fists, feet, or through a weapon to hit with the force of a charging bondrus. They can drain the energy out of a falling boulder or alter the trajectory of an arrow, causing it to miss. True masters may even direct the Oudh directly into the mind of an opponent, or form shields of pure kinetic force to protect themselves from such attacks. The art of channeling and redirecting the Oudh is known as Ta'oudh.

It is within the Citadels of Ka that the ancient masters teach the secrets of Ta'oudh. The mountain fortresses and the catacombs carved from the rock underneath them are each home to a grand master, four headmasters, sixteen masters, 64 teachers and overseers, 1024 students, and 4096 novices at any given time.

Each headmaster oversees the instruction of a different discipline within the Guardians of Adhara: warriors, shapers, sages, and healers. The Guardian-Warriors learn tactics, strategy, martial disciplines and techniques, and train in the use of star-swords, the traditional weapon of the Adhara warrior. Guardian-Shapers learn to channel and direct the Oudh using flowing movements and mental discipline. In so doing, they can sense subtle patterns in the flow of the Oudh and direct it to affect the world around them. Guardian-Sages study history, science, and art. They master the channeling of the Oudh to expand their intellect and creative capacity. Guardian-Healers learn to channel the Oudh to cure disease, heal injuries, relieve pain, remove toxins, and restore capability.



Each school has no more than 1024 students, 64 per year for 16 years of school, and 4096 novices who serve as servants and keepers of the fortress. Only one in four novices will be initiated as a student. The rest either leave their fortress or continue to serve as the custodians of the school. Graduates of the school gain the title and rank of Guardian within a given discipline and are sent into the world to implement the four directives: teach, help, heal, and protect. They live among the people and accept no payment for their services. Only 16 students from each school graduate to the rank of Guardian each year. This means that, on average, there are only 2500 or so Guardians of Adhara active in the world at any given time. A Guardian of Adhara usually identifies their status by wearing four dots painted in a diamond formation onto their forehead, representing the four schools.

The head of the council of four grand masters is named Grand Master Ion, the Guardian-Sage. Ion is a wise and aged man, tall and lean with a high forehead, long straight white hair and beard, long earlobes, and very long eyebrows. He wears lustrous robes of an unknown material, possibly of ancient origin.

GUARDIANS IN HIDING

During the War of Unification, the Guardians of Adhara chose to fight on the side of the Coalition. Many served as officers, commanders, advisors, and shock-troopers. They were fierce fighters and were heroes to the other soldiers. Despite their invaluable contributions, the armies of the Coalition fell to the advanced weapons of the Vrildarian Empire.

With the surrender of the Coalition of Timan, the soldiers of the Coalition were punished by the Vrildarian Empire. Many of the Guardians were captured and imprisoned along with the soldiers they fought alongside. These Guardians were sent to serve ten years with the rest of prisoners of war in the remote deserts of Arus. Many Guardians died. Some escaped. A few survived their ten-year sentence and were released into the Arusian desert as exiles. Those that were released and those that escaped and were never recaptured now wander the western deserts, travelling from settlement to settlement, fulfilling the four directives of the Adhara.

Those that escaped imprisonment in Arus went into hiding. Some became hermits, secreted away in remote caves or hiding among villagers as a healer or teacher. Others joined with Baron Urik and the resistance against the Imperial occupation.

ROGUE GUARDIANS

Not all Guardians of Adhara live by the four directives. A few have gone on to use their powers and abilities for power, profit, or other personal or selfish motives. The Guardians of Adhara call these traitors "Rogue Guardians".

When it is learned that a Guardian has violated his oaths, the other Guardians are instructed to find and confront the Rogue Guardian with his transgressions. When confronted, he is given an opportunity to return to the citadel of his order to appear before the Masters of Ta'oudh to explain or defend their actions and face judgement. Should the masters find fault, the Rogue Guardian is expelled from the order, must publically confess and redress his actions, and serve a penance assigned by the masters.

Should the Rogue Guardian refuse either to return to the citadels when confronted or abide by the judgement of the Masters, the renegade is to be defeated in an honorable duel to death.

Many Guardians of Adhara disagreed with Master Ion's wish to fight for the Coalition. They, instead, admired King Varinor's desire to unite Cydoria under one rule. These guardians instead served the Vrildarian Empire during the War of Unification and were rewarded with important military or political ranks. The Masters of Ta'oudh declared them traitors and considers them Rogue Guardians. It is rumored that the son of Varinor, Emperor Viktor of Vrildar, is, in fact, a fallen Guardian of Adhara.

Other Rogue Guardians have set themselves up as petty warlords, mercenary leaders, or have become powerful underworld figures, bandits, or pirates. It is believed that several have joined the secret sect known as the Oculus.

THE HIDDEN HAND

The secretive organization known as the Hidden Hand began over two hundred years ago in Zinj as a local network of smugglers, thieves, brokers, and thugs. They operated the local black market network, and arranged illegal transactions, mostly illegal slaves and embargoed products. They orchestrated thefts and fenced the goods. They also protected their own. Members of the Hidden Hand shared the expense of hiring thugs as protection and as enforcement in case transactions went wrong. The Hidden Hand also trained orphans to be pickpockets and petty thieves. Along the way, they added racketeering, usury, gambling, and contract assassination to their repertoire.

Today, with the rise of the centralized authority of the Vrildarian Empire and the unprecedented changes to Cydorian society, the Hidden Hand has flourished and expanded throughout the peninsula. At one time, every Cydorian city had its local equivalent of the Hidden Hand, generally smaller more informal organizations. The rule of the Vrildarian Empire has done much to eradicate these smaller organizations, removing many of the Hidden Hand's competitors and sending new talent their way. In addition, the edicts prohibiting technology has created ripe new markets for illegal goods and services. The Hidden Hand was poised to fill the void left by their dismantled or disorganized competitors.

Members keep their affiliation with the Hidden Hand a closely guarded secret, revealing themselves only to trusted potential recruits. Membership is by invitation only. Candidates are carefully screened and must pass several tests of initiation, usually pertaining to their specialty in crime. For example, potential thieves are tasked with stealing a specific object; assassins must take a life, etc. Their final initiation is an elaborate ceremony where the initiate must swear an oath of loyalty, offer an amount of his own blood as tribute, and is tattooed with the symbol of the Hidden Hand. The initiate is told the secret code to discern true tattoos from false tattoos and is instructed in the secret rituals, passwords, hand-shakes, and gestures of the organization. The new member is now considered a part of the local gang.

Gangs consist of ten to twenty members. Members have two ranks: the younger "punks" and the elder, more experienced and respected, "hands". Each gang is led by a lieutenant and is given great latitude in their individual operations. Different gangs co-

ordinate their activities to avoid duplication of effort, competition, and to expand black market networks. Gang members are expected to obey certain codes of conduct pertaining to other members. Violators are punished with violence at the hands of gang enforcers and thugs. Punishment can range from losing a finger, scarring, beating, to dismemberment or death.

A typical Cydorian city is home to five to ten gangs. Lieutenants are coordinated by a “boss”. The boss runs the day-to-day operations of the city’s gangs while the leader of a city’s underworld is called the “lord”. All of the lords, in turn, report to the “overlords”, the secretive rulers of the Hidden Hand. Little is known of the identity of these overlords. They are spoken of only in whispers. Many, even those among the gangs of the Hidden Hand, do not believe they even exist.

THE KATARI ASSASSINS GUILD

The organization known as the Katari is a guild of professional assassins. They specialize in dealing unexpected death. They are masters of stealth, surprise, poison, sword-fighting, marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, and dirty fighting. They are highly secretive and protect their identities, arranging all their missions through intermediaries.

Katari assassins prefer to perform their missions without ever being seen or heard. The ideal execution of a mission is where the target dies and no one suspects assassination. This is usually achieved through poisoned food or drink or the bite of a venomous animal. The next best execution would slay the target at long range where the assassin is never seen and can easily escape. Such missions involve the use of poison-tipped blowgun darts or long-range marksmanship. If neither of the above scenarios is feasible, the assassin must get close to the target, usually by covertly entering the target’s home at night while avoiding the notice of any guards, kill the target at personal range, and escape without raising an alarm.

Katari assassins wear close-fitting functional outfits of heavy cloth in dark colors that allow freedom of movement without folds that can snag or be grabbed and held by opponents. Wrappings of tight cloth cover their face and they wear black makeup to enhance their stealth abilities. They rarely wear armor which might constrain movement. Their weapons of choice include ballistic rifles, crossbows, bows, and poison darts. They carry short swords or other medium-sized fighting blades for when personal combat is unavoidable.

The Katari is a secretive order with very restrictive membership. Members are raised from childhood in secret schools in the Targa mountains. The initiation of a Katari assassin involves the cold-blooded slaughter of an innocent person, chosen at random by the elder of the clan.

Upon graduation and initiation into the order, the assassin is assigned to a cell operating in one of the cities of Cydoria. Members often have innocuous cover occupations such as blacksmith or cooper and live among the commoners until they receive their mission. Upon completion of the mission they either return to their daily lives or are forced to flee and join another cell in a different city.

The Katari are strictly mercenary. They never ally themselves with a single political group and they never perform an assassination for free. They kill only when paid or in self-defense.

There are many myths and misconceptions about the Katari. Many believe they use magic and have pacts with dark demons. Commoners who have heard of the Katari speak about them in nervous hushed tones. Whatever the truth, it is likely that the Katari encourages and promotes such misinformation and fear to enhance their reputation and mystique.

THE OCTAVIUM

The Octavium is a cross between a monastic religious order, secret society, and trade guild association. The Octavium is composed of several allied guilds, each devoted to a specific aspect of the secret, almost divine, knowledge we know today as applied science or engineering.

THE GUILDS

The original Octavium consisted of eight guilds, each dedicated to a specific discipline. Each discipline is associated with one of the eight ancient technologies passed down from the Nazarians.

- **The Brotherhood of Air** is devoted to the study of air flow, gases, compressed air, ventilation, and pneumatics.
- **The Brotherhood of Alchemy** is devoted to the study of alchemy and chemistry.
- **The Brotherhood of Fire** is devoted the study of heat, steam, and combustion.
- **The Brotherhood of Gears** is devoted to the study of machinery, mechanics, and clockworks.
- **The Brotherhood of Iron** is devoted to the study of metallurgy, alloys, structural engineering, and architecture
- **The Brotherhood of the Sun** is devoted to the study of optics, glazing, mirrors, and indoor lighting.
- **The Brotherhood of Stone** is devoted to the study of masonry, stone-carving, and ceramics.
- **The Brotherhood of Water** is devoted the study of hydraulics, plumbing, waste-water, sewage, steam power, and molinology, that is—the use of water wheels to create mechanical energy.

Each of the guilds works closely with each other, and each respects the holy work the other guilds perform, but each guild protects its secrets with religious fanaticism, employing ciphers, secret rituals, and arcane languages.

Initiates from the Brotherhood of Water, for example, might work closely with initiates from the Brotherhood of Fire and the Brotherhood of Iron on the creation of a wood-burning steam-powered engine. Initiates from all eight guilds might cooperate to design and construct a building.

Initiates traditionally wear brown robes and hooded habits and wear the symbol of the brotherhood: an octagon inlaid with gold. They carry the the sacred teachings of their guild, written in secret code, attached to chains around their neck or waist.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF LIGHTNING

Throughout history, the Octavium has shunned the study of electricity as taboo. Although the properties of electricity were known and understood, its use was considered blasphemous for uncounted generations. It was believed that electricity summoned the Aya and was the conduit for the Corruption, the destroyer god of the Sdara Vatra.

However, after King Varinor made contact with the Rhakadians, he saw strategic advantage in the use of electric technology. King Varinor attempted to remove the taboo against electricity. To make his point, he had the first broadcast power transmitter installed in Vrildar and had his palace equipped with electric lights and appliances.

He then ordered the creation of a new guild, the Brotherhood of Lightning, that would devote itself to the study of electricity, electronics, and advanced technology. Varinor envisioned this new guild as the only group in Cydoria allowed to understand the alien technology, and that they would be loyal to him alone.

The first recruits into the new guild were sent to Malus where they spent ten years learning the engineering secrets of the Rhakadians. Upon their return, they were prepared to implement King Varinor's vision: to "modernize" Vrildar and equip and train its armies with advanced alien weapons.

When Norukar joined the Vrildarian Empire, the Octavium was forced to recognize the new guild out of political necessity. Members of the Brotherhood of Lightning were favored by King Varinor, and continue to be so by his son, Emperor Viktor. The new guild possesses great political influence and power. King Varinor ordered the inclusion of the Brotherhood of Lightning into all future projects undertaken by the Octavium. Failure to consult with the Brotherhood of Lightning could result in imprisonment or torture, and anyone that crosses a member of the Brotherhood of Lightning may find themselves the subject of an investigation by the Inquisition. The initiates of the Octavium who publically resisted the inclusion of the Brotherhood of Lightning were purged from the order and disappeared without a trace.

Members of the Brotherhood of Lightning are therefore met with distrust and resentment from initiates of the older guilds. The aura of smug superiority and invincibility exuded by most initiates from the Brotherhood of Lightning does little to endear them to their colleagues. Most members of the Brotherhood of Lightning show little religious reverence for the teachings of the Octavium and do little to conceal the political and secular nature of their order.

Unlike initiates of the older guilds, members of the Brotherhood of Lightning wear high-collared black cassocks and identify their

allegiance to their order with a pin of two crossed palladium lightning bolts over a copper octagon.

All mechanical and electrical engineers serving aboard powered aero-ships are required by law to be members of the Brotherhood of Lightning. In reality, many mechanics and electricians are techno-heretics with forged identification.

THE OCULUS

Since the War of Unification, a new faction of warriors possessing powers of Ta'oudh has emerged. They call themselves the Oculus and their symbol is a vertical eye with three pupils. They wear demonic masks and long mane-like wigs to conceal their identities.

Oculus warriors are warlords and mercenaries. Though they do not generally fight as a unit, individual Oculus warriors might serve as a military leader or consultant, personal body guard, or assassin.

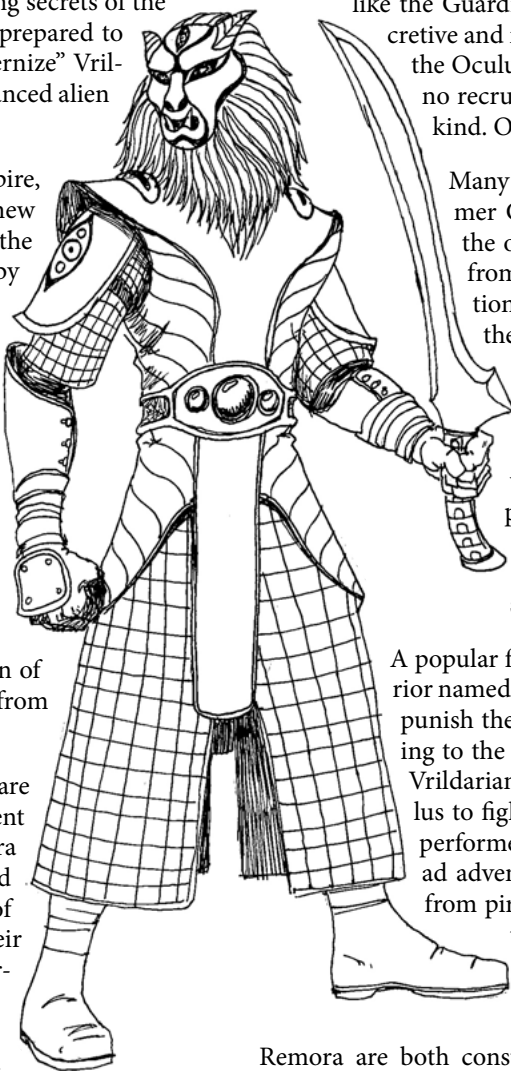
The Oculus practice the mystical fighting art of Ta'oudh, allowing them to channel the Oudh to perform superhuman feats. Unlike the Guardians of Adhara, Oculus warriors are secretive and mysterious. No one knows how or where the Oculus learned Ta'oudh. There are no schools, no recruitment, no apparent organization of any kind. Oculus warriors tend to act alone.

Many speculate that Oculus warriors are former Guardians of Adhara who have rejected the order and its teachings in order to profit from their abilities. Others suggest a connection between the Oculus and the assassins of the Katari.

Another popular theory is that the Oculus is a small order with secret membership and no schools. An Oculus warrior takes on a single apprentice, or perhaps one at a time, whom they train in secret in remote locations. It is believed that such an apprenticeship would take several years.

A popular folk-tale tells the story of an Oculus warrior named Mako who fights to defend the weak and punish the wicked in the city of Norukar. According to the folk tale Mako is, in actuality, a wealthy Vrildarian noble who dons the mask of the Oculus to fight injustice and oppression. Many street performers and popular plays recount the myriad adventures of Mako as he takes on everyone from pirates and bandits to corrupt members of the Imperial regime. Some stories tell of Mako's young apprentice, Remora. These stories tend to appeal to a much younger audience. Although Mako and

Remora are both constructs of fiction, it doesn't stop Norukarians from occasionally reporting nocturnal sightings of the masked warrior.



THE PIRATES OF DAZUMI

Overland travel across the Cydorian peninsula has been historically treacherous. Giant predators, hostile barbarians, and the lack of roads made overland trade prohibitively expensive compared to shipping by sea. The ships of Fornaxia and others plied the waters up and down the Cydorian coast. The many coves, inlets, and islands of the coast provided excellent shelter and hiding places for pirate ships and crews. The navies of the city-states fought piracy but they were uncoordinated and never strayed far from their ports. As a result, piracy thrived.

Today, the advent of the aero-ship has nearly put the sea-going merchants, and the pirates that plagued them, out of business. In their place are the aero-pirates.

All a potential aero-pirate needs is to capture one aero-ship to be in business. With an aero-ship, the pirate crew may capture other slower transports. The captured ship and cargo are then sold on the black market. The crew may either be put to death or ransomed back to their employer.

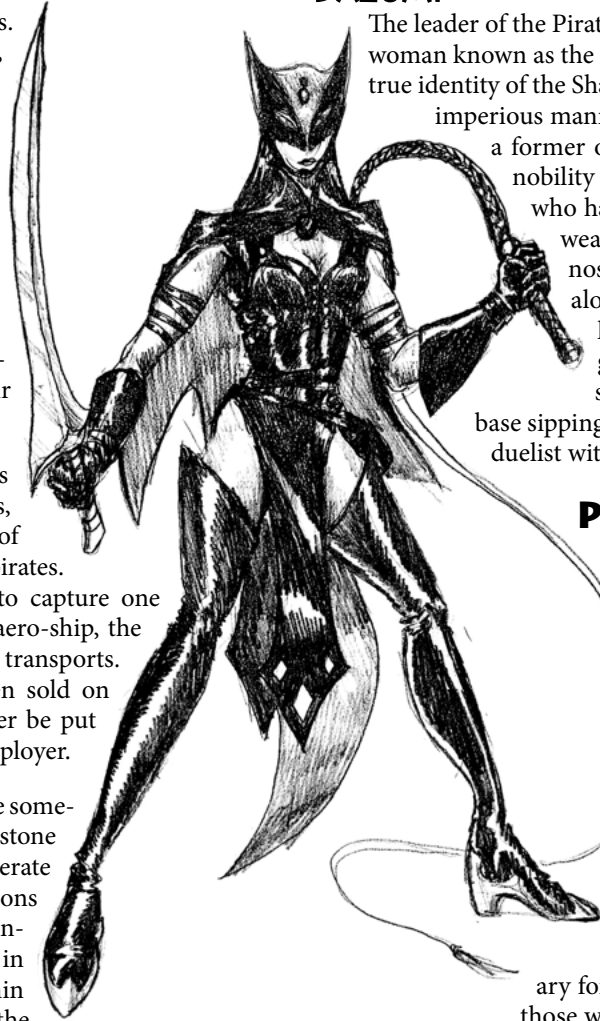
The Pirates of Dazumi make their home somewhere within the towering columns of stone known as the Horo Islands. They operate their aero-ship raids over all the regions around the Sea of Rakar and the Strangling Coast. Their aero-ships operate in packs like devil-wolves, hiding within the towering cloud banks for which the region is known. They scan the skies for aero-freighters carrying refined zephyrium, thorium, and thalium the processing factories in the mid-west to the space-ports of Norukar and Vrildar. When they find an aero-freighter laden with cargo, they dive out of the clouds and demand surrender, disabling the engines of any target that attempts to flee. The pirates have also been known to raid ground installations as well, robbing settlements and ore dumps.

Plunder from these raids is taken to a clandestine rendezvous where the pirates trade their goods on the black market. Refined ores generally make their way to Dadanian smugglers who brave the Rhakadian blockade and are able to gain passage through the Oudh thanks to the Psychic Lens and Gate Key in the possession of the Pirates of Dazumi.

The Pirates of Dazumi have a secret base and aero-ship hangar hidden somewhere within the fog-banks that shroud the towering Horo Islands. The Vrildarian Empire has sent dozens of search-and-destroy missions against the pirates with no success. There is at least one reconnaissance aero-ship flying a random search patrol over the Horo Islands at any given time, hoping to catch the pirates off-guard or find some clue to the location of the secret base.

SHADOWFOX, PIRATE QUEEN OF THE DAZUMI

The leader of the Pirates of Dazumi is a mysterious masked woman known as the Shadowfox. Nothing is known of the true identity of the Shadowfox. She has a noble bearing and imperious manner. Many speculate that she is either a former or current member of the Vrildarian nobility or perhaps another city-state. Those who have met her and lived report that she wears a red mask with pointed ears and nose in the stylized shape of a fox head along with red leather armor, high-collared long black cape, elbow-length gloves, and thigh-high boots. She sits upon a throne in her secret pirate base sipping a goblet of wine. She is also a master duelist with both sword and laser pistol.



PSI-MAGES OF SARKAAN

Deep in the Targan mountains, within a lost city of haunted ruins, lies the ancient tower of Sarkaan. The tower is the home of an order of wizards who study psi-magic. The Psi-Mages of Sarkaan is one of the most feared orders in all of Cydoria. The Psi-Mages are able to read and control minds, and control matter with thought alone.

The tower of Sarkaan is a sanctuary for psi-mages everywhere, a school for those with "the Gift", and a repository of ancient knowledge and artifacts. The tower is protected by powerful Aya spirits as well as a cadre of deadly cyberdroid guardians.

Psi-mages wishing to join the order of Sarkaan must swear an oath of fealty and pass a ritual of initiation. To pass the initiation, the supplicant allows the Arch-Mages of Sarkaan to implant into their mind a psychic geas. The geas is a command that, when invoked, stuns the psi-mage and allows the arch-mage total control over the victim's mind.

In exchange, the psi-mage may call upon the aid of their comrades, consult the ancient libraries of Sarkaan, and may receive instruction in the use of psi-magic from the arch-mages.

The Psi-Mages of Sarkaan are often found in the employ of monarchs as court viziers and advisors. The Psi-Mages of Sarkaan have historically remained neutral during political disputes. The Otcavium considers the Psi-Mages to be dangerous heretics who consort with Aya demons and will provide no services to monarchs that employ them.

Though the Psi-Mages of Sarkaan have yet to be outlawed by the Vrildarian Empire, Emperor Viktor will allow no psi-mage to be a member of his court and he will give no audience to a known practitioner of psi-magic.

THE SOCIETY OF THE TWIN SERPENTS

One of the legacies of the War of Zorin and the fall of the Nazarians is a strong taboo against bioengineering and biomancy. Biomancers are universally reviled and vilified throughout Cydoria, a not entirely unjustified view given that most biomancers are reclusive sociopaths with a history of kidnaping unwilling subjects on which to perform their twisted experiments.

Not all biomancers fulfill the stereotype. Some are scientists seeking to probe the depths of this poorly understood branch of knowledge for purely beneficial and constructive purposes.

The Society of the Twin Serpents is a cabal of biomancers that share this beneficial view. They meet in secret to compare notes and provide mutual protection, support, and assistance to each other. Members must pledge to use biomancy for purely constructive applications and they must adhere to a strict code of ethics. Members of the society have the symbol of the caduceus, twin snakes entwined around a staff, tattooed on their arms and they further verify membership through a series of secret pass phrases and hand gestures.

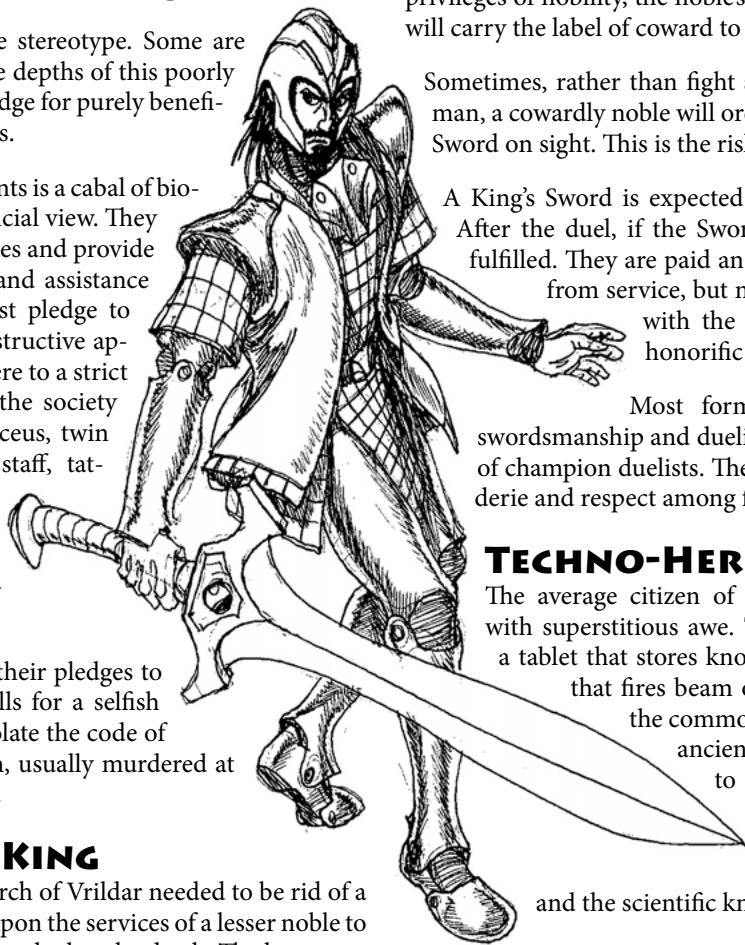
Any biomancer that violates their pledges to the society and use their skills for a selfish or destructive purpose, or violate the code of ethics, are sentenced to death, usually murdered at the hands of a Katari assassin.

SWORDS OF THE KING

Traditionally, when the monarch of Vrildar needed to be rid of a difficult noble, he would call upon the services of a lesser noble to challenge the troublemaker to a duel to the death. The lesser noble would arrange a situation wherein the troublemaker causes some manufactured offense in front of witnesses. The offended lesser noble is then able to challenge the troublemaking noble to a duel. Over time, the monarchs of Vrildar started awarding titles of nobility to professional duelists to serve this express function. The nobles chosen for this duty are known as Swords of the King.

Today, the Swords of the king have dispensed with the pretense of manufacturing offense. A Sword simply appears at the court of the offending noble, announces the offense against the monarch, Emperor Viktor, and challenges the noble to a duel to the death. A challenge made by a Sword of the king overrides any contradictory rules of challenge of any one city-state.

A Sword is paid a handsome stipend and provided a household. A Sword is expected to maintain their fighting skills in top form and be prepared to execute their duty at any time. Until then, Swords train constantly, compete in sword fighting competitions, and teach at dueling schools. No noble would grant an audience with a known Sword of the King. For that reason, a Sword keeps his affiliation a secret.



When called upon to execute their duty, a Sword is asked to deliver a gift to another noble on behalf of the king, a common practice that raises little suspicion. During the presentation of the gift, the Sword announces the offense made against the king and declares his status as a Sword. The Sword provides the noble with the king's orders and challenges the noble to a duel to be fought immediately. It is made clear that should the noble refuse the challenge, the noble will lose his rank and title and all the privileges of nobility, the noble's life is forfeit, and that the noble will carry the label of coward to their death.

Sometimes, rather than fight a duel against a master swordsman, a cowardly noble will order his personal guard to kill the Sword on sight. This is the risk a Sword must take.

A King's Sword is expected to execute his duty only once. After the duel, if the Sword survives, the Sword's duty is fulfilled. They are paid an impressive reward and released from service, but may retain their status as a noble with the title of Lord or Lady with the honorific of Sword of the King.

Most former Swords found schools of swordsmanship and dueling to create the next generation of champion duelists. There is a strong feeling of camaraderie and respect among former Swords.

TECHNO-HERETICS

The average citizen of Cydoria still views technology with superstitious awe. The powers of an electric light, a tablet that stores knowledge and pictures, or a pistol that fires beam of energy are akin to sorcery to the common man, and legends speak of the ancient Aya demons that are drawn to sorcerous electricity and feed on it. It is because of this belief that groups like the Octavium seek to control technology and the scientific knowledge behind it.

Techno-heretics are a reaction to this control. Techno-heretics are independent inventors, mechanics, engineers, and technicians, iconoclasts who oppose the monopoly of the Octavium. They seek to strip away the veneer of religious dogma and superstition that has grown around technology and technological development.

Techno-heretics operate in hidden garages and workshops where they disassemble any alien device they can acquire so that they can study it, attempt to understand it, and endeavor to re-create it. They also work on their own inventions and designs, creating prototypes and making improvements. They sometimes offer their services as a repair technician, repairing vehicles and equipment outside of the normal channels and rules imposed by the Empire and the Octavium.

During the War of Unification, many techno-heretics sided with the Coalition helping maintain the advanced weapons and equipment provided by Phanosian advisors. Hundreds of these war-heretics were captured and sent to Arusian prison camps after the war to serve a ten year prisoner-of-war sentence with the other Coalition veterans.

BECOMING A TECHNO-HERETIC

There is no official organization of techno-heretics. Each techno-heretic is an individual. There are no rules or requirements for membership, no professional credentials to obtain or initiations to endure, or tests to pass.

Most techno-heretics began as initiates in the Octavium who have lost their faith in the teachings and draconian restrictions of that order. Some initiates keep their heresy hidden and maintain a secret life within the order, risking excommunication and torture should they be found out. Others openly reject the Octavium and flee, going into hiding as an apprentice.

A few techno-heretics were lay commoners who showed an aptitude for machines and were sought out by a techno-heretic before they are identified and recruited by the Octavium. These recruits are taken on as apprentices, learning the skills of their trade from scratch.

TECHNO-HERETIC CIRCLES

Due to the nature of their work and the prevailing folk-legends of the Aya, techno-heretics are often feared by a superstitious populace. In addition, Imperial laws prohibit the unauthorized possession or use of alien technology. Even the knowledge of how illegal technology works is forbidden. As such, techno-heretics face persecution from the state. As a result, techno-heretics have learned to work in hiding.

In order to maintain their anonymity, techno-heretics form small circles of trusted colleagues, friends, and agents. Within each circle, the techno-heretic takes on a hand-full of apprentices. Cabals of different circles maintain coded correspondence and often meet in secret conclaves.

Techno-Heretics must work in utmost secrecy. Most techno-heretics work undercover as village blacksmiths, merchants, and religious clerics, initiates of the Octavium, or itinerant traders or pilgrims travelling from town to town. To help them maintain their secrecy, techno-heretics often recruit or hire trusted experts with otherwise no interest in the philosophy or desire to become an apprentice. These assistants range from bodyguards and assassins to spokespersons and brokers.

Techno-Heretics purchase any technology they can and steal what they can't afford. After they disassemble and understand the technology, they replicate it if they can, and even create new innovations, though such is rare given the lack of technological infrastructure on Uruta. Usually, they obtain and resell existing technology, repair and maintain damaged items, and teach lessons in their use and maintenance.

Instead of forming a new circle, many techno-heretics fall in with pre-existing circles. They join in with mercenary bands, bandit gangs, or the crews of aero-ships or aero-pirates. In the case of aero-ship crews, these techno-heretics acquire false documentation identifying them as legal members of the Octavium, allowing them to act as the vessel's mechanic or engineer.

TECHNO-HERETICS AND SOCIETY

Some techno-heretics have become accepted and beloved members of a community. These techno-heretics have convinced the community that technology is not sorcerous or evil, that it is safe, and that the Aya no longer pose any danger. These accepted techno-heretics serve their community by supplying them with advanced technology and repairing broken or malfunctioning equipment. These communities must be ever vigilant for they face oppression by the Inquisition and the Octavium could declare them heretics and withdraw all services.

Other communities fear technology and techno-heretics. These paranoid communities might be prone to lynching any techno-heretic they uncover, or burning them at the stake, or reporting them to the Inquisition.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OCTAVIUM

The Octavium views the techno-heretics with polite condescension at best, or with fanatic intolerance at worst. The two philosophies are at odds with each other. Where the techno-heretics believe that technology and information should be freely shared with the world, the Octavium believes that technology and science lead to temptation and evil deeds and therefore should be strictly controlled.

Where the techno-heretics see themselves as evangelists of technological freedom, the Octavium sees itself as the protector of social morality.

Many techno-heretics are former members of the Octavium who either voluntarily left or were excommunicated from the order. Indeed, many initiates of the Octavium are secretly techno-heretics, hiding their belief in the techno-heretic philosophy. Should they be discovered, they face imprisonment, torture, and excommunication.

TECHNO-HERETIC TRAITORS

Techno-heretics are forever vulnerable to betrayal. The Imperial Inquisition offers a reward to anyone with information regarding a techno-heretic circle. Occasionally, a techno-heretic seeks legitimacy by joining the Octavium. Only techno-heretics that have never been initiated into the Octavium may join. Those that have been excommunicated are forever barred from re-joining. Any techno-heretic that wishes join must undergo torturous cleansing rituals as penance. The Brotherhood of Lightning, in particular, welcomes the membership of and recruits techno-heretics into their order. Such recruitment, however, comes with the implicit understanding that to betray the guild means certain death. These former techno-heretics usually betray the identities of their colleagues



CHAPTER NINE: ALIEN WORLDS AND CULTURES

The philosophers of Cydoria have long suspected there was life on other worlds. Their suspicions were proven true seventeen years ago when contact was made with the Rhakadian League. It was soon discovered that there are many populated worlds other than Uruta, all orbiting the same sun. These other worlds were home to technologically sophisticated civilizations capable of travelling between the empty void using sorcerous space-ships. They had thus far been unable to land on Uruta due to the sophisticated energy field that surrounds the planet, the Oudh.

ALIEN CONTACT

Today, contact and trade with these powerful off-world forces is strictly controlled by those that possess the Gate Keys, ancient artifacts of which only a handful are known to exist. Each Gate Key is capable of allowing a single spacecraft to enter Urutan orbit and land on its surface at a place designated by the wielder, all the while at the complete mercy of the person wielding the key. At any time, the wielder may simply remove the protection of the key and the Urutan defensive field will instantly disintegrate the hapless vessel, killing all aboard.

Emperor Viktor's father, Varinor, realized early the danger inherent in allowing technologically advanced alien forces within the defensive shield. He feared losing control of his kingdom. Therefore, he has imposed strict controls over the visiting Rhakadian vessels. First, alien spacecraft may only land in one of the designated spaceports in Vrildar or Norukar. Second, all alien spacecraft must be unarmed and may make no threatening gesture. Third, visiting alien crews may only use vehicles and weapons approved by the Emperor. With a few exceptions, this restricts visiting crews to native Cydorian technologies and modes of transport. Third, in exchange for the rights to mine zephyrium, thallium, and other minerals, the Vrildarian Empire will be compensated with alien weapons and technologies. The Rhakadians agreed to the terms, though in order to maintain their own advantage they have, in turn, been selective in the weapons and technologies provided in exchange. In addition, the Rhakadians demanded exclusive access to the mineral wealth of Uruta with a goal towards gaining an edge over their rivals, the Phanosians.

The payment made to the Vrildarians included several select technologies. The Vrildarian armies and personal guards were equipped with new plasma weapons and trained in their use and maintenance. Vrildarian cities were rebuilt into towering metropolises using Rhakadian technology. Broadcast power provided artificial light, electric cars and trolleys, and many new personal conveniences to nobility of the newly rebuilt cities.

The new technologies allowed Emperor Viktor to conquer his neighbors and create the Empire. For that, Professor Prometheus defected to the Demetrians. He taught the Demetrians how to use their own Gate Key. In time, the secret of the Gate Key made its way to the few others that possessed them. These key masters made their own arrangements with forces from other worlds, even with the Rhakadians. They usually made similar arrangements and restrictions as Viktor did for similar reasons. Although the Vrildarians lost their monopoly on alien contact and trade, in reality unauthorized alien trade is rare because the Rhakadians control the space above Uruta. Any other alien space-ship that wishes to land on Uruta must not only have made arrangements with a key-master on the surface, they must bypass the Rhakadian blockade that attempts to prevent just such an incursion. Should they make it past the blockade, they must then evade Imperial patrols searching for unauthorized landings on the surface. As a result, contact with the Phanosians, the Dadanians, the Tsisirians, or any of the other various deep space habitats, must be brief, covert, and rare.

THE INNER WORLDS

Melkior, Phanos, Uruta, and Malus comprise what are known as the Inner Worlds. These worlds are solid rocky planets, most with atmospheres capable of supporting humanoid life without the aid of life supporting habitats.

MELKIOR

Melkior is a small rocky world closest to the sun. The surface of the world is airless and inhospitable. The core of the world has been mined and excavated into a series of habitable chambers. The world is populated by deru miners enslaved by the Rhakadians. It is believed that the deru of Uruta are descended from Melkiorians who colonized the world in ancient times. Despite the world's small size, nearly five percent that of Uruta, it possesses a gravity equivalent to one third that of Uruta.

PHANOS

Phanos is a rocky world roughly the same size as Uruta. The world is a humid hothouse of biodiversity. The world consists of a several large island-continent and thousands of chains of smaller islands of every possible size scattered over a warm planetary ocean. The four continental regions are Phota, Itar, Lada, and Baga.

Phota is a large island-continent located along the equator and is the most heavily populated and technologically advanced region on the world. The Photans are currently the most influential culture on Phanos. The islands of Phota are covered in lush jungles to the south and arid deserts to the north.

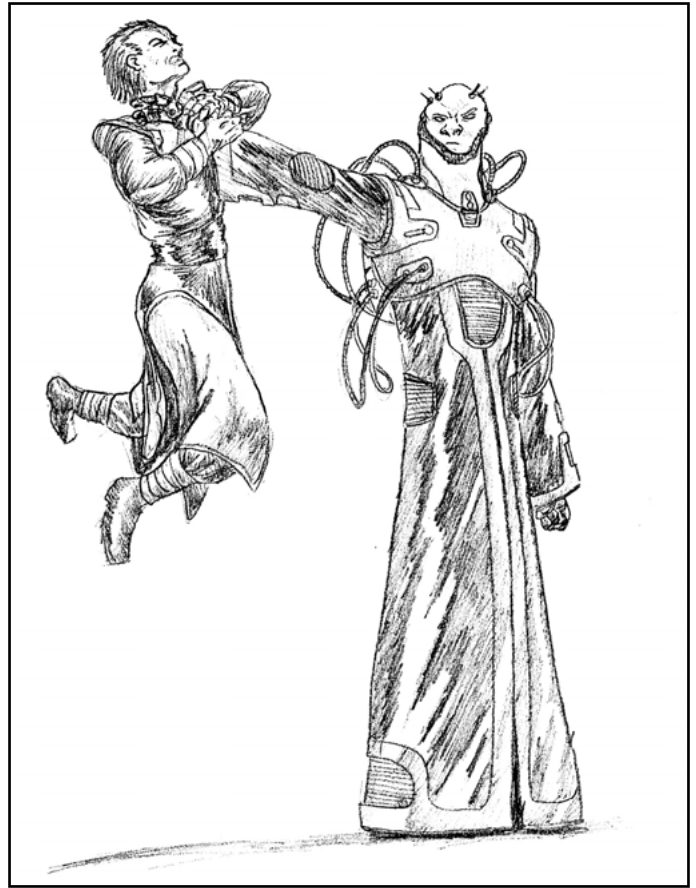
East of Phota is another group of islands called Baga, named after the largest island of the region. The island of Baga is a land of forests to the east and savanna plains to the west.

North and west of Phota is the mountainous continent of Itar, a cool temperate region covered in forests. Itar is home to a second advanced human culture. The Itarans are a peaceful, spiritual people.

Half a world away due south of Itar is Lada, south and west of Phota. Lada is a labyrinth of islands and channels. The islands of Lada are covered in tropical rainforests. The largest island is dominated by a tall circular plateau known as the Kezzo Pettania. Kezzo Pettania is home to a race of non-human intelligent beings called yamas. Kezzo Pettania is abundantly rich in zephyrium, the result of ancient asteroid collisions. This supply has made Phanos a major interplanetary power.

All three cultures of Phanos, the Photans, Itarans, and Kezzo Pettanians, live in peaceful co-existence and each contributes to the government, defense, and prosperity of the entire world.

Phanos is protected by a defensive field similar to the Oudh of Uruta. This field prevents a full-scale invasion. Over the past five hundred years, the Rhakadians have attempted multiple times to bypass the defensive field and invade the world. Phanos has thus far thwarted every attempt through the combined efforts of the Phanosian intelligence and counter-espionage agency known as the Hand of Fate and the Phanosian military forces known as the Spear of Destiny and the Shield of Achilles. Many agents from the Phanosian espionage agency known as the Hand of Fate have been deployed to thwart Rhakadian operations on Uruta.



MALUS

Malus is a world of cool deserts of red dust, frozen volcanic peaks, and shallow seas. Malus is less than 1/6th the size of Uruta with 1/3rd the gravity. The air is thin but breathable and the lowlands and river canyons teem with exotic flora and fauna. The entire northern third of the world is covered by a large ocean. The southern two-thirds consist of one large land-mass separated into three continental areas. The Rhakadian coast, cradle of the Rhakadian League, is a lush temperate zone of coniferous forests on the northwest continental region of Darsus, just north of the Mountain of the Gods. Ancient ruins of the long lost Aeolian civilization that disappeared seven thousand years ago can be found haunting the deep forests all along the coast. Evidence of an even earlier civilization, one that resembles that of the Sdara Vatra found on Uruta, can also be found across the Malusian landscape.

Since returning to space five hundred years ago, the Rhakadian League has vowed to conquer all the worlds of the solar system. Thus far the League has managed to conquer Melkior and several hundred of the space-cities and asteroid habitats. They have also built a military base on Kur and have established an orbital blockade of Uruta. Repeated attempts to invade and conquer Phanos have been thwarted. Dadan and Tsisir have so far escaped conquest because of their remote orbits and neutrality.

The continued growth of the Rhakadian League requires three rare elements: thorium, used in their nuclear reactors, thallium, a super-conducting element used in energy generation and storage and space-ship propulsion, and zephyrium, an alien element with anti-gravitational properties.

The League's early successes was based on native Malusian sources. Those sources have since been depleted and the League has been forced to purchase the rare elements from Tisirian asteroid miners while they searched for an alternative source. Contact with the Vrildarians twenty years ago gave the Rhakadians access to previously untapped supplies of thallium and zephyrium located in the floating mountains of the Markanian continent. The trade arrangement with the Vrildarians ended the Tisirian monopoly and the Rhakadians are rebuilding their reserves of both elements.

THE TROJAN SPACE-CITIES

Located on the leading and trailing edge of the orbits of Uruta, Malus, and Phanos are gravitationally neutral positions known as the Trojans. The Trojans are home to hundreds of habitats known as space-cities. Space-cities are massive hollow cylinders, the inhabitants live on the inside surface of these gigantic shells. Each space-city varies in size from a two to a hundred kilometers long. The space-cities are incredibly ancient and humanity has evolved differently in each habitat. Each is self-sufficient and independent, with its own culture and identity. Some are savage and primal, some are civilized and decadent, and others are completely devoid of intelligent life.

Most space-cities lack the ability to build space-ships and rely on merchants to connect them to the rest of the solar system. It is unknown how many are yet undiscovered, waiting for contact.

THE BELT

Located between the orbits of Malus and the outer world Zhuvita is a region called the Belt. Within the Belt are many small planetoids. These planetoids range in size from large boulders to small moons. Prospectors from Phanos, Malus, Dadan, Tisir, and the space-cities search the asteroids for ice and metals.

TSIRIS

The massive space-city known as Tisir is located between the orbits of Malus and Zhuvita. Tisir is a metallic hollow sphere nearly nine hundred kilometers in diameter, the size of a small moon. The population lives in the interior surface. Air is produced by atmosphere scrubbers and light and heat is provided by a fusion reactor at the core of the world that acts like a small artificial sun. The shell rotates, creating its own gravity equivalent to that of Uruta, and the native Tisirians closely resemble Urutan or Phanosian humans.

There are no natural areas within Tisir, the environment is entirely urban, every surface covered in metal or concrete. The result is an often oppressive sense of mechanization and artificiality. The air is humid and regional temperature variations create areas of fog and rain. Everything seems grimy and many areas are covered in rust.

Tisir is a neutral space-port that services all the races of the solar system. They have been able to maintain their neutrality through the use of powerful force fields similar to those around Uruta and Phanos.

The Tisirians construct their own space-ships and dominate interplanetary trade, especially that of thallium. Tisirians are notoriously shady. They will sell anything to anyone so long as they make a profit. Tisirian smugglers are the ones most willing to attempt to sneak past the Rhakadian blockade of Uruta in order to sell contraband technology to anyone willing to buy it.

THE OUTER WORLDS

Beyond the Planetoids lie four giant planets known as the Outer Worlds. They are known as Zhuvita, Sado, Yuna, and Nebato. These worlds are primarily composed of gas with super-dense cores and are incapable of supporting human life. Each planet possesses dozens of satellites, a few of them inhabited. Zhuvita is also orbited by hundreds of space-cities called the Zhuvian Halo.

THE ZHUVIAN HALO

The Zhuvian Halo is a coalition of space habitats orbiting the gas giant Zhuvita. Each massive habitat is a miniature artificial world and supports a population in the hundreds of thousands. The Zhuvians are an enigmatic and reclusive people. They rarely interact with outsiders and on the few occasions they do, the interaction is brief, mysterious, and often dismissive. There is no trade with Zhuvita. The few Zhuvians so far encountered appeared to be hairless androgynous children that seemed to display a sense of deeply serene calm, patience, and intellect. What little strategic information known about the Zhuvians indicates that they possess technologies far beyond anything developed by any other interplanetary power. It is conjectured that the Zhuvians may be related in some way with the Oudh that surrounds Uruta and may, in fact, be the remnants of the ancient Sdara Vatra.

DADAN

Dadan orbits a large ringed gas giant planet called Sado. It is a small rocky world with yellow skies. The Dadanians live in dome cities on the surface and in underground vaults, surrounded by what they call the Foul Desert. The gravity of Dadan is just over one-tenth that of Uruta, and the native Dadanians are fragile long-limbed humanoids, impossibly tall, with adults growing up to four meters in height. Each spider-like arm and leg can measure up to two meters long. The bones of a Dadanian are extraordinarily thin and brittle so they must wear exoskeletal anti-gravity support suits when visiting high gravity worlds such as Phanos or Uruta.

Although technologically advanced, the Dadanians are numerically and technologically inferior to both the Rhakadians and the Phanosians. They are a neutral power, having achieved space travel only in the last one hundred years. Each Dadanian dome city is more or less self-sufficient and ruled by a mayor and a dome council. A coalition of dome cities is controlled by a governing council which elects a council president as spokesperson. A few rogue Dadanian entrepreneurs have made illegal trade contact with some of the independent key masters on Uruta.

CHAPTER TEN: ALLIES AND OPPONENTS

HUMAN NPCs

Humans can be found across the Markanian continent and beyond. What follows are some common human NPC archetypes.

AERO-PIRATES

The skies of Markania are plagued by aero-ship pirates. They raid aero-transport and steal their cargo, often leaving no witnesses. Sometimes, they'll resort to raids on remote villages.

Aero-Pirate Captain

Captains of pirate aero-ships are usually the owner of the vessel. Crews of captured vessels often elect a captain from among their ranks.

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 15 POW 12 DEX 16 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7-point Tsisirian adaptive mesh and padded/quilted

Attacks: Cutlass (Saber) 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Knife 55%, 1D4 + 2 + db (impaling)
 01-89 Ballistic Pistol 65%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 90-00 Tsisirian Shock Rifle 55%, 3D8 (knockback)

Skills: Brawl 60%, Climb 80%, Dodge 55%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Jump 45%, Navigate 70%, Pilot (Aero-ship) 55%, Sense 35%, Sleight of Hand 35%, Spot 70%, Throw 50%

Aero-Pirate Crewman

The typical aero-pirate is a veteran of the War of Unification with experience in aero-ship combat.

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 16 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point padded/quilted

Attacks: Cutlass (Saber) 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Knife 45%, 1D4 + 2 + db (impaling)
 01-89 Ballistic Pistol 50%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 90-00 Tsisirian Stun Rifle 40%, 2D8 stun (roll damage as normal and use the result vs the target's CON on a resistance roll. If the target succeeds, they take minimum damage. If the target loses, he or she is stunned for 1D3 + 1 rounds. (See Stunning and Subduing, BRP page 232).

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 80%, Dodge 40%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Jump 45%, Navigate 50%, Pilot (Aero-ship) 35%, Sense 30%, Sleight of Hand 35%, Spot 50%, Throw 50%



BARBARIANS

Barbarians are members of tribes, clans, or kingdoms that are considered uncivilized, meaning that they lack large cities and writing. A barbarian might be a tribal hunter-gatherer from the Ramanam jungle, a member of a whaling clan in Korula, an Awan nomad, or a villager from Bansya or Gatas.

Barbarian Chieftain

Most barbarian peoples lack centralized authority. Instead, they owe fealty to the local chieftain. The chieftain is responsible for a tribe, clan, or village.

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 14 POW 12 DEX 11 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 16 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: varies by tribe (see below)

Attacks: varies by tribe (see below)

Skills: Brawl 55%, Command 45%, Dodge 50%, Grapple 45%, Hide 35%, Listen 35%, Jump 25%, Ride (type) 55%, Spot 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%, Track 65%

Barbarian Warrior

Barbarian tribes, clans, and villages are defended by warriors. Warriors tend to fight as individuals, eschewing formation tactics and military discipline in favor of personal glory. Some barbarians, however, may fight as a coordinated unit in small tightly knit independent warbands of three to six warriors.

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 12 POW 11 DEX 13 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: varies by tribe (see below)

Attacks: varies by tribe (see below)

Skills: Brawl 40%, Dodge 40%, Grapple 35%, Hide 35%, Listen 35%, Jump 25%, Ride (type) 40%, Spot 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%, Track 55%

Weapons and Armor by Barbarian Tribe

Awans

Armor: 9-point chain, padded/quilted, and primitive light helmet

Attacks: Composite Bow 65%, 1D8 + 1 + ½ db (impaling)
 Long Spear 55%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Scimitar 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Bansyans

Armor: 4-point leather coat and primitive heavy helmet

Attacks: Hand Axe 55%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Hand Axe (thrown) 50%, 1D6 + 1 + ½ db (bleeding)
 Long Spear 55%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Long Sword 55%, 1D8 + db (bleeding)

Gatan

Armor: 1-point hide or 5-point leather-and-metal armor with primitive heavy helmet

Attacks: Javelin (thrown) 55%, 1D6 + ½ db (impaling)
 Lance 55%, 1D8 + 1 + 1db (impaling)
 Long Bow 45%, 1D8 + 1 + ½ db (impaling)
 Long Spear 55%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)

Korulans

Armor: None

Attacks: Harpoon (Long Spear) 55%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Machete (Saber) 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Self Bow 50%, 1D6 + 1 + ½ db (impaling)

Niasan

Armor: 2-point hide armor and primitive helmet

Attacks: Short Spear 55%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Battle Axe 55%, 1D8 + 2 + db (bleeding)

Otarans

Armor: 2-point hard leather cuirass

Attacks: Bola (thrown to damage) 45%, 1D4 + ½ db (crushing)
 Bola (thrown to snare) 45%, entangling (BRP page 196)
 Javelin 55%, 1D6 + ½ + db (impaling)
 Lance 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Scimitar 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Target Shield 55%, 1D2 + db (knockback)

Samirians

Armor: 9-point brigandine (scale) over padded/quilted with primitive heavy helmet

Attacks: Battle Axe 55%, 1D8 + 2 + db (bleeding)

Barbarian Shaman

Shamans serve as the priests and spiritual advisors to a barbarian tribe. They communicate with the spirits and perform religious rituals.

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 11 INT 17 POW 19 DEX 12 APP 11
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 14 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: 1-point hide armor

Attacks: Short Spear 55%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Climb 45%, Command 70%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 50%,
 Insight 60%, Listen 55%, Perform (Rituals) 85%, Ride
 (type) 75%, Sense 50%, Spot 60%, Status 75%, Track 45%

Savage Cannibal

Tribes of degenerate cannibals are found in remote hilly locations across Cydoria. They are little more than animals, living a stone-age existence in caves. Many tribes have been exposed to the Retribution Plague and show signs of mutation, exacerbated by generations of inbreeding.

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 11 POW 10 DEX 15 APP 9
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 14 **Damage Bonus:** +1D4

Armor: None or 1-point hide

Attacks: Grapple 50%, see the Grapple skill (BRP page 60)
 Light Club 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)
 Rock (thrown) 50%, 1D2 + ½ db (crushing)
 Short Spear 50%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Short Spear (thrown) 50%, 1D6 + 1 + ½ db (impaling)

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 60%, Dodge 35%, Hide 35%, Jump
 50%, Listen 55%, Sense 50%, Spot 65%, Stealth 30%, Track
 40%

Mutations: Roll once on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for a minor mutation.

CULTISTS

Several secret cults exist in Cydoria, devoted to dark gods such as the serpent-god Anaka, the Demon-Lords of Haru, the primitive Mother-of-All, the sea-god Ururu, or even to legendary figures such as the Dark Wizard Zorin. The vile rites of these cults include human sacrifice, cannibalism, or worse. Some cults, such as that of Anaka, seek political power through the indoctrination of powerful political figures into the cult.

Cult Acolyte

Members of a cult are generally ordinary people drawn in by the charismatic cult leader. Once indoctrinated, they recruit others. Cultists can be brainwashed victims with little real understanding of what it is they are actually worshipping or true believers, zealots in positions of power within the cult.

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 15 DEX 15 APP 11
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** +1D4
Armor: None

Attacks: Dagger 35%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
 Grapple 65%, see the Grapple skill (BRP page 60)
 Scimitar 35%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Disguise 35%, Dodge 35%, Grapple 65%, Hide 30%,
 Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 35%, Spot 45%



Cult Leader

Cult leaders are usually calm calculating zealots with many secrets. In public, they are friendly and charismatic. In private, they turn their charisma towards recruiting and indoctrinating new members to their cult. They plot and scheme and try to maintain an aura of mystery and menace. When provoked, they transform into wild-eyed lunatics willing to die for their dark god.

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 18 DEX 15 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 11 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Dagger 40%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
 Scimitar 45%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Disguise 40%, Dodge 40%, Etiquette 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Insight 75%, Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 80%, Perception 60%, Perform Ritual 60%, Persuade 80%, Sleight of Hand 40%, Status 70%, Stealth 30%, Throwing 50%,

GUARDIANS OF ADHARA

The Guardians of Adhara are knights-errant, wandering the world protecting the innocent, righting wrongs, and avenging the fallen. They use mystical powers known as Ta'oudh.

Guardian-Healer

Guardian-healers use their mystical powers to provide assistance to the ill and injured.

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 16 DEX 11 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothing or quilted/padded

Attacks: Fist 55%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Starblade (long sword) 75%, 1D8 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: First Aid 45%, Insight 55%, Knowledge (Ta'oudh) 40%, Medicine 60%, Psychotherapy 40%, Research 50%, Spot 40%, Science (Biology) 30%, Ta'oudh 60%.

Ta'oudh Powers: Calm (1), Cure Disease (3), Detoxify (3), Heal Self (2), Healing Touch (2), Purify Food/Drink (1)

Guardian-Sage

Guardian-sages seek to expand their mind through art, science, literacy, and scholarship.

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 20 POW 16 DEX 12 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothing or quilted/padded

Attacks: Fist 55%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Starblade (long sword) 75%, 1D8 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Knowledge (History) 40%, Knowledge (Law) 40%, Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Knowledge (Ta'oudh) 40%, Persuade 55%, Research 65%, Teach 50%, Ta'oudh 60%.

Ta'oudh Powers: Display of Stamina (3), Flash of Intelligence (1), Perceive the Oudh (1), Persuasive Voice (1), Read Aura (3), Sense Aura (2), Sense True Motive (1)

Guardian-Shaper

Guardian-shapers use their mystical powers to defeat opponents at range with a mere gesture.

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 16 DEX 15 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothing or quilted/padded

Attacks: Fist 55%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Starblade (long sword) 75%, 1D8 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Dodge 60%, Insight 50%, Ta'oudh 60%, Knowledge (Ta'oudh) 40%, Listen 45%, Martial Arts 50%, Spot 65%, Stealth 45%, Ta'oudh 60%

Ta'oudh Powers: Disrupt (1), Feat of Strength (2), Improved Attack (3), Improved Defense (3), Keen Edge (3)

Guardian-Warrior

Guardian-warriors enhance their fighting ability using mystical powers. They are soldiers, defenders, leaders, and avengers.

STR 14 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 16 DEX 13 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothing or quilted/padded

Attacks: Fist 75%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Starblade (long sword) 75%, 1D8 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 66%, Grapple 55%, Jump 55%, Knowledge (Ta'oudh) 40%, Martial Arts 60%, Ta'oudh 60%.

Ta'oudh Powers: Disrupt (1), Feat of Strength (2), Improved Attack (3), Improved Defense (3), Keen Edge (3).



MILITARY

Currently, the standing army of the Vrildarian Empire is the largest military force on the continent. The army has outposts as far west as Arus and as far north as Baadria. The following statistics can represent Imperial soldiers, Demetrian veterans, soldiers in a warlord's army, a mercenary company, or members of village militia.

Officer

Officers are well trained in strategy and tactics. Imperial and Coalition officers are generally lower-ranking members of noble families.

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 11 DEX 14 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7-point adaptive mesh (Rhakadian for Imperial officers, Phanosian for Demetrian officers) and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Cutlass (Saber) 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 01-79 Ballistic Pistol 70%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 80-00 Vrildarian Empire
 Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
 80-00 Demetrian Resistance
 Laser Pistol 55%, 1D8 (impaling)

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 60%, Language (Cydorian) 70%, Language (Demetrian, Targan or Varzan) 60%, Listen 50%, Spot 80%, Status 75%, Swim 60%

Soldier

Soldiers are usually conscripted from the cities and villages, provided some training in weapons, tactics, and discipline, and assigned to a unit under the command of an officer.

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 11 DEX 14 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 01-39 3-point hard leather and Cydorian light helmet for standard-equipped soldiers
 40-79 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet for standard-equipped soldiers
 80-00 8-point chain and Cydorian light helmet for better-equipped soldiers

Attacks: Broadsword 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 01-59 Long Spear 65%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 60-89 Ballistic Rifle 65%, 1D6 + 4 (impaling)
 90-00 if Vrildarian Empire
 Plasma Rifle 40%, 2D10 + 4 (impaling)
 90-00 if Demetrian Resistance
 Laser Rifle 40%, 2D8 (impaling)

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 50%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 40%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Listen 45%, Jump 35%, Spot 45%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

Note: Veterans and Sergeants tend to have +10% to +20% to all skills.

Personal Guard

Every noble family maintains a retinue of personal guards as bodyguards and household security.

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 16 INT 16 POW 10 DEX 15 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 9-point adaptive mesh and light helmet (Rhakadian)

Attacks: Halberd 55%, 3D6 + db (bleeding)
 Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
 Vibro-sword 60%, 2D6 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 50%, Dodge 55%, First Aid 50%, Grapple 70%, Hide 35%, Listen 55%, Jump 35%, Spot 65%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

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OTHER

What follows are various additional archetypes that might come into conflict with, or provide assistance to, the average player character.

Adventurer

Adventurers are opportunistic mercenaries seeking fortune, excitement, and fame. They can be honorable or selfish, helpful or obstructive. Adventurers are counterparts and competitors to the player characters and may friendly one day and hostile the next.

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 13 DEX 13 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7-point Phanosian adaptive mesh and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Broadsword 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Fist 65%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Plasma Pistol 75%, 2D10+2 (impaling)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 75%, Fast Talk 45%, First Aid 45%, Hide 35%, Insight 25%, Listen 50%, Martial Arts 25%, Persuade 45%, Ride (anator) 35%, Stealth 60%, Track 55%

Artifact Hunter

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 15 DEX 11 APP 14
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothing

Attacks: Quarterstaff 85%, 1D8 + db (crushing)
 Whip 65%, 1D3 - 1 (engangle)

Skills: Climb 60%, Persuade 35%, Research 65%, Spot 45%, Knowledge (History) 75%, Knowledge (Secret History) 35%, Navigate 55%, Ride (anator) 35%

Aero-ship Pilot

The typical aero-ship pilot flies a small aero-transport on distribution missions across the Markanian frontier, carrying cargoes of goods and mail from the city-states of the east to the small villages and outposts of the west.

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 11 INT 11 POW 15 DEX 13 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy leather greatcoat

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 65%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Cutlass (Saber) 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Knife 55%, 1D4 + 2 + db (impaling)
 Light Crossbow 65%, 1D6 + 2 (impaling)

Skills: Climb 80%, Dodge 66%, Grapple 65%, Navigate 70%, Pilot (Aero-ship) 70%, Artillery (Ballista) 65%, Command 45%, Spot 55%

Bandit

Gangs of robbers and highwaymen plague overland travel throughout Cydoria and Markania. They often set up road-blocks or ambushes to waylay travelers and caravans, relieving them of any valuables or cargo they may be transporting.

STR 15 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 14 POW 11 DEX 15 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Dagger 40%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
 Light Crossbow 35%, 1D6 + 2 (impaling)
 Short Sword 35%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Bargain 45%, Hide 70%, Stealth 70%, Ride (anator) 45%, Appraise 55%, Brawl 75%, Spot 85%

Constable

Village law is enforced by the town constable and his deputies. Constables can be identified by the jitte, a type of blunt sai, they wear in their belt which serves as both a symbol of office and a functional defensive weapon.

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 14 INT 17 POW 14 DEX 12 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point heavy clothes

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 70%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Baton (Light Club) 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)
 Fist 65%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Grapple 65%, see the Grapple skill (BRP page 60)
 Jitte (Sai) 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)

Skills: Dodge 40%, Knowledge (Law) 50%, Listen 50%, Sense 30%, Spot 45%, Ride 45%, Track 50%

Drifter

Many out-of-work veterans of the War of Unification wander the Markanian countryside. They are jobless and homeless loners, travelling from town to town looking for what work they can find, legal or otherwise. Some drifters make money as bounty hunters; others find occasional work as mercenaries. Eventually, they'll wear out their welcome and will be forced to move on to another village.

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 12 DEX 12 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 95%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Fist 75%, 1D3 + db (impaling)
 Laser Pistol 75%, 1D8 (impaling)
 Longsword 85%, 1D8 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 75%, Climb 60%, Dodge 60%, Gaming 65%, Grapple 50%, Insight 65%, Listen 65%, Ride (Anator) 75%, Sense 50%, Sleight of Hand 35%, Spot 75%, Stealth 50%, Throw 55%, Track 40%

Drover

Grizzled outdoorsmen hired to drive the herds of stock animals from their grazing lands to the aero-ports of Gatas. They can be a rough and rowdy bunch.

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 11 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 65%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Fist 75%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Grapple 45%, see the Grapple skill (BRP page 60)
 Lasso 45%, entangling (BRP page 196)
 Light Club 55%, 1D6 + db (crushing)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 25%, Knowledge (Region) 75%, Listen 40%, Navigate 65%, Ride (anator) 65%, Sense 35%, Spot 50%, Throw 40%, Track 45%

Gladiator

The gladiator is a veteran of the arenas of Zinj. If encountered outside of the arena, the gladiator has either escaped or won his freedom.

STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 9 POW 11 DEX 13 APP 9
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armor: 9-point half plate and heavy helmet of native manufacture

Attacks: Cestus 75%, 1D3 + 2 + db (crushing)
 Large Round Shield 90%, 1D4 + db (knockback)
 Short Sword 80%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Short Spear 80%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Brawl 75%, Dodge 75%, Gaming 60%, Jump 80%, Martial Arts 35%, Perform (Arena) 45%

Hunter

Hunters provide the villages of Cydoria and Markania with meats, hides, and pelts. Hunters are notoriously competitive and are willing to kill to protect a secret hunting and trapping ground.

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 17 INT 14 POW 13 DEX 14 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Ballistic Rifle 80%, 1D10 + 4 (impaling)
 Dagger 80%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
 Composite Bow 90%, 1D8 + 1 + ½db (impaling)
 Sling 70%, 1D8 + ½db (crushing)
 Shortspear 95%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Athletics 55%, Climb 35%, Hide 55%, Listen 55%, Navigate 60%, Spot 75%, Stealth 65%, Track 85%, Ride (anator) 30%, Knowledge (Region) 60%

Inquisitor

The Inquisitors of the Vrildarian Empire are ever vigilant for threats to the security of the Empire. They act as investigators, detectives, and undercover operatives to root out technology smugglers and insurgents. Their skills in interrogation are legendary. As members of the civil constabulary, they carry the symbol of law enforcement, a blunt sai called a jitte, as part of their official uniform.

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 14 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 6-point Rhakadian adaptive mesh

Attacks: Jitte (Sai) 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)
 Rhakadian Plasma Pistol 65%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)

Skills: Disguise 30%, Dodge 30%, Etiquette 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Hide 45%, Insight 75%, Knowledge: Law 60%, Knowledge (Streetwise) 35%, Listen 45%, Perform (Acting) 35%, Persuade 65%, Sense 55%, Spot 55%, Strategy 40%, Track 40%

Katari Assassin

The Katari are a group of elite assassins, trained in stealth, disguise, camouflage, the use of poison, and the mystical art of Ta'oudh. Many consider them a myth, or at least possessing of a reputation beyond their true capabilities.

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 13 DEX 15 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 6-point Tisirian adaptive mesh

Attacks: Blowgun 70%, 1D3 (impaling), POT 15 paralytic poison (BRP page 229)
 Katana 65%, 1D10 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Medium Crossbow 70%, 2D4 + 2 (impaling)
 Tisirian Disintegrator Pistol 65%, 3D4 + 1

Skills: Climb 80%, Disguise 55%, Dodge 65%, Fine Manipulation 45%, Hide 70%, Jump 65%, Ta'oudh 40%, Listen 65%, Martial Arts 45%, Sense 50%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot 50%, Stealth 75%, Swim 55%, Throw 50%, Track 30%

Ta'oudh Powers: Distraction (1), Great Leap (1), Improved Attack (2), Lightfoot (1), Move Unnoticed (2), Stand Unseen (2), Stun (3).

Noble Adventurer

The nobility of Cydoria are wealthy members of the ruling elite. Most nobles are defended by a cadre of personal guard. Occasionally, a noble will gird himself to lead his troops in battle or fight a duel over a personal vendetta.

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 15 DEX 12 APP 14
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 16-point plate armor over Rhakadian adaptive mesh and light helmet (Rhakadian) (-26% Dodge, -30% all physical skills)

Attacks: Rhakadian Monofilament-Sword 65%, 3D12 (bleeding), reduce armor by ½
Rhakadian Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
Target Shield 60%, 1D2 + db (knockback)

Skills: Bargain 45%, Command 50%, Etiquette 70%, Gaming 60%, Literacy 50%, Literacy (Nazarian) 25%, Status 80%, Knowledge (Holdings) 45%, Knowledge (History) 35%, Perform (Poetry) 55%

Psi-Mage of Sarkaan

The Psi-Mages of Sarkaan shroud their psychic powers under the guise of occult mysticism. They are also known to commune with the demonic spirits known as Aya.

STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 14 APP 12
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: 1-point soft leather

Attacks: Fist 45%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
Longsword 65%, 1D8 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Dodge 65%, Insight 80%, Knowledge (Occult) 75%, Listen 85%, Persuade 85%, Sense 80%, Spot 65%.

Psychic Powers: Divination 75%, Telekinesis 75%, Mind Blast 75%, Mind Control 75%

Spy

The noble houses of the city-states of Cydoria are filled with espionage and intrigue as nobles compete for favor and rank. The nobles hire spies to gather intelligence on the activities of their rivals and perform sabotage whenever possible.

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 14 APP 14
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** +1D4

Armor: 6-point Tisirian adaptive mesh

Attacks: Dagger 75%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
Fist 80%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
Kick 65%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
Throwing Knife 75%, 1D4 + ½ db (impaling)

Skills: Brawl 65%, Climb 60%, Disguise 60%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette 65%, Fast Talk 75%, Fine Manipulation 75%, Gaming 65%, Grapple 65%, Hide 75%, Insight 65%, Jump 50%, Listen 65%, Martial Arts 30%, Persuade 50%, Research 45%, Ride (anator) 40%, Sense 60%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot 65%, Strategy 40%, Throw 60%, Track 35%

Techno-Heretic

Techno-Heretics are equal parts mad scientist, mechanic, and electronics technician. They repair broken equipment and machinery and endeavor to create new items to share with the populace. They secretly work in defiance of the proscriptions of the Octavium and the Vrildarian Empire.

STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 9 INT 18 POW 13 DEX 17 APP 13
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: 6-point Tisirian adaptive mesh

Attacks: Fist 45%, 1D3
Modified Ballistic Pistol 50%, 1D6 + 3 (impaling)

Skills: Fine Manipulation 65%, Listen 35%, Repair (Electrical) 55%, Repair (Electronic) 75%, Repair (Hydraulic) 35%, Repair (Mechanical) 45%, Research 60%, Spot 35%, Craft (Blacksmith) 25%

Thief

The thief is a pickpocket and second-story man. He prefers avoiding notice to running and running to fighting. The truly heartless or desperate thief will kill their target in a dark alley before he relieves them of their possessions.

STR 12 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 14 DEX 16 APP 10
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: 1-point soft leather

Attacks: Club 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)
Dagger 65%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
Light Crossbow 55%, 1D6 + 2 (impaling)
Short Sword 65%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Appraise 35%, Bargain 45%, Brawl 55%, Climb 65%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 60%, Fine Manipulation 45%, Hide 70%, Jump 40%, Listen 35%, Persuade 40%, Sleight of Hand 65%, Spot 35%, Stealth 65%

Thug

Thugs lack the subtlety of thieves and bandits. They use their strength, threats, and intimidation to cow their victims and take their money.

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 10 POW 12 DEX 11 APP 10
Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** +1D6

Armor: 2-point hard leather

Attacks: Club 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)
Dagger 50%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
Fist 50%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
Head Butt 35%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Dodge 35%, Gaming 30%, Grapple 50%, Hide 25%, Insight 25%, Listen 35%, Persuade 35%, Sense 30%, Spot 35%, Stealth 25%, Throw 35%

NON-HUMAN NPCs

Many non-human intelligent species can be found on the Markanian continent. The following are a few of the most commonly encountered.

CAPRIDIAN

Humanoid Pronghorn Antelope from North-Central Markania

A Capridian is a tall, lithe humanoid resembling a cross between a pronghorn antelope and a goat. Capridians are a tribal agrarian people that live in sod homes on the rolling grassy hills of the Capridian plateau. They tend fields of niva grass for food and textiles. They are a peaceful philosophical race, curious, and friendly to outsiders. Though generally passive, they will respond to violence with self-defense and will come to the aid of a friend in danger.

Upon reaching maturity, many Capridians leave their homeland to explore and experience the world, returning to their village after a few years away. Most Capridians encountered away from Capridia are such travelers, or merchants selling excess niva grain.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+9	16
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+10	17
DEX	2D6	7
APP	2D6+4	11
Move: 10	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 2-point padded/quilted coat over hide

Attacks: Fist 60%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Heavy Club 60%, 1D8 + db (crushing)
 Long Spear 45%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Quarterstaff 60%, 1D8 + db (crushing)

Skills: Art (Drawing) 65%, Insight 65%, Listen 85%, Persuade 75%

CYBERDROID

Robotic Warriors and Explorers from the Icy Wastes of Sakata

Cyberdroids hail from the lost city of Ohn. They travel south into Markania seeking glorious adventure as warriors and explorers.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+7	14
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+6	13
Move: 10	Hit Points: 13	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 4-point metal covering or 14-point armor upgrade and adaptive mesh



Attacks: Battleaxe 75%, 1D8 + 2 + db (bleeding)
 Longsword 75%, 1D8 + db (bleeding)
 Phanosian Laser Pistol 75%, 1D8 (impaling)

Skills: Climb 40%, Dodge 40%, Jump 25%, Martial Arts 55%, Spot 35%, Track 35%

Immunities: Cyberdroids do not need to eat, breathe, or sleep in the conventional sense. They are immune to poison and disease. They do not feel pain and cannot be tortured.

Psychic Immunity: Cyberdroids are immune to the following psychic powers—Aura Detection, Emotion Control, Empathy, Mind Blast, Mind Control, Sensitivity, Telepathy, or any other power or effect that affects the mind. Cyberdroids are immune to Sanity point loss.

Reduced Smell/Taste: Cyberdroids have no sense of taste or smell. Treat as the Reduced Sense (Smell/Taste) major mutation.

Repairable: Cyberdroids do not recover lost hit points the way a living character does. They must be repaired by a qualified technician using either Repair (Electronic) or Repair (Mechanical). Repairing a damaged cyberdroid is a task that requires 1D6 hours per skill check. A cyberdroid may repair itself as a *Difficult* action. See BRP page 73 for more information on the Repair skill.

Susceptibility: Cyberdroids are susceptible to electric- and magnetic-based damage and attacks and take additional 1D6 damage when affected by attacks and powers based on those energies.

Ta'oudh Immunity: Cyberdroids are immune to the following Ta'oudh powers—Blind, Blinding Bolt, Calm, Disfigure, Disfiguring Bolt, Disrupt, Disrupting Bolt, Enrage, Healing Touch, Hypnotic Gaze, Immobilize, Immobilizing Bolt, Restore, Sense Presence, Stun, Stunning Bolt, or any other power that affects the mind or nervous system of a target.

DAKA*Humanoid Reptile-Men from Southwest Markania*

The western deserts of Markania are populated by an intelligent species of reptilian humanoids known as daka. The city-state of Ragana lies in a fertile valley below the Great Falls of Kanos. Raganans are relatively civilized and, although still xenophobic, are courteous towards humans and tolerate limited outside contact and trade.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+7	14
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+9	16
APP	2D6+5	12
Move: 10	Hit Points: 11	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None or 7-point lamellar over scales

Attacks: Scimitar 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
Talons 65%, 1D3 + 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 40%, Dodge 40%, Jump 25%, Martial Arts 55%,
Spot 25%, Track 25%

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the daka must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

**DERU***Underground Mole-Men from North-Eastern Cydoria*

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+11	18
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+7	14
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+5	12
Move: 10	Hit Points: 13	Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 2-point leather cuirass and kilt

Attacks: Iron Long-awl 55%, 1D8+1+db (impaling)

Skills: Appraise 50%, Bargain 45%, Dodge 40%, Knowledge (Home) 35%, Listen 65%, Sense 55%

Allergy to Sunlight: Deru are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Climbing Digits: The ends of the deru fingers and toes are ridged, like that of a gecko, enhancing their climbing skill and their ability to cling to sheer surfaces, granting a +40% bonus to their Climb skill.

Keen Hearing: Treat as the Keen Sense (Hearing) minor mutation (BRP page 107)

Keen Smell/Taste: Treat as the Keen Sense (Smell/Taste) minor mutation (BRP page 107).

Keen Touch: Treat as the Keen Sense (Touch) minor mutation (BRP page 107)

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

Reduced Vision: Treat as the Reduced Sense (Vision) major mutation (BRP page 109).

Sense Ore: Treat as the Sensitivity minor mutation (BRP page 109). Pick one type of metal ore the deru is sensitive to. Examples include gold, silver, iron, copper, zinc, thorium, thallium, platinum, etc.

Tracking Sense: The combination of several keen senses enhances the deru's ability to follow a trail with minimal clues, granting +20% bonus to their Track skill.



KNORR

Fast-Running Humanoid Plains Predators

Knorr are thin but muscular humanoids, adapted to running at high speeds on the plains and standing erect to peer over the grass. Packs of Knorr can be found throughout the flatlands of central Markania, from Gatas to Haru to Mung. Their heads, necks, backs, and shoulders are covered in long porcupine-like quills. They are primitive and carry little more than sharpened sticks and stone spears. However, they are cunning and hunt in packs, using a decoy while the rest of the pack stealthily circles around to surround and converge on their target. Knorr are carnivorous and are known to hunt, kill, and eat humans and Capridians but are put off by the taste of xoog. Many knorr packs work side-by-side with tribes of feral xoogs.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+3	10
CON	3D6+2	12-13
SIZ	2D6+4	11
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	3D6	16
APP	1D3+3	5
Move: 14	Hit Points: 13	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: none

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D4 + ½ db (bleeding)
 Claw 65%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)
 Javelin 75%, 1D6 + ½ db (impaling)
 Short Spear 65%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Climb 55%, Dodge 35%, Hide 50%, Navigate 40%, Sense 50%, Spot 50%, Stealth 50%, Track 50%

Quills: The long body quills of the knorr make it difficult to attack from behind. Anyone making a hand-to-hand or melee attack with a short-range melee weapon from behind a knorr must succeed at a Luck roll and an Agility roll to avoid the quills. Failure on both causes 1D6 (impaling) damage. Failure on one or the other causes 1D3 (impaling) damage.

LORACZ

Man-Eating Humanoid Insects of the Loka Loka Mountains

The Loracz are intelligent human-sized bipedal insects that dwell in caves within the Loka Loka mountains. They are extremely hostile to outsiders and are known to hunt and capture humans for food. The Loracz hibernate during winter and emerge in spring to descend en masse upon human settlements searching for food.

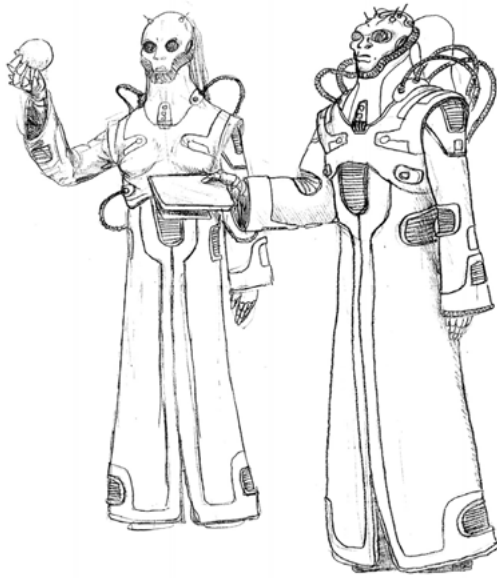
Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+3	10
APP	1D6+1	4-5
Move: 10	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 25%, 1D4+db (bleeding)
 Pincer 45%, 1D6+db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 100%, Grapple 40%, Hide 50%, Jump 60%, Sense 60%, Spot 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 30%

Soporific Venom: The bite of the Loracz delivers a POT 2D6 venom (rolled each time) that causes its victims to fall unconscious in 1D4 combat rounds.



MALUSIAN

Tall Sinister-looking Aliens from the Planet Malus

The Vrildarian Empire allows no more than a few hundred visitors from the planet Malus on Uruta at any given time. These Malusians are allowed to operate and service imported technology and oversee the work of the mines and refineries on the Markanian continent. Malusians may only travel under armed Imperial escort and are not ordinarily allowed to interact with the native populace of Uruta.

Physically, Malusians resemble extraordinarily tall, willowy humanoids. The gravity of Malus is only one-third that of Uruta, promoting such growth. They have long slender legs and arms, thin torsos, and slightly elongated heads. Their noses and ears are large to accommodate the thinner Malusian atmosphere and their eyes are larger than those of an Urutan human, allowing them to see in the comparatively dim light of a Malusian day. Male Malusians apply depilatory creams to remove all the hair from their body; females likewise save for a long top-knot on their otherwise bald heads. They have greasy pale grey skin which burns easily in direct sunlight.

Malusians are typically grim, laconic, and severe. They find Urutans to be annoying and weak and chafe under the limitations imposed upon them by the Vrildarian Empire. They make no secret of their contempt for humanity in general. Malusians would like nothing better than to conquer Uruta for its vast natural resources.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+3	10 (+6 from Exoskeleton)
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+11	18
POW	2D6+11	18
DEX	2D6+9	16 (-6 in Exoskeleton)
APP	2D6	7
Move: 10	Hit Points: 11	Damage Bonus: None (+1D4 in Exoskeleton)

Armor: 14-point exoskeleton and adaptive mesh

Attacks: Malusian Plasma Pistol 75%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
 Malusian Plasma Rifle 75%, 2D10 + 4 (impaling)
 Monofilament Sword 55%, 3D12 (bleeding), reduce the target's armor value by ½ (round up)

Skills (Overlords): Command 65%, Dodge 50%, Insight 75%, Listen 55%, Persuade 75%, Sense 40%, Spot 45%, Status 75%, Strategy 60%

Skills (Soldiers and Guards): Command 35%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 40%, Hide 35%, Jump 35%, Listen 45%, Spot 45%, Stealth 40%, Strategy 20%

Night Vision: Malusians eyes are adapted to the low light of their home world. Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

Reduced Daylight Vision: Treat as the Reduced Sense major mutation (BRP page 109) when exposed to full daylight without protective goggles. This drawback is nullified when wearing protective goggles.

Structural Weakness: Treat as the Structural Weakness major mutation (BRP page 110) when deprived of their high gravity exoskeleton.

Strength Enhancement: The Malusian powered exoskeleton provides the Malusian with +6 bonus to STR.

Dexterity Reduction: The Malusian powered exoskeleton afflicts the Malusian with -6 modifier to DEX.

Armor: The Malusian powered exoskeleton provides the Malusian with 4 AP of armor.

PHANOSIAN

Human-Looking Alien Secret Agents from the Planet Phanos

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+5	12
CON	2D6+5	12
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+7	14
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	2D6+7	14

Move: 10 **Hit Points:** 13 **Damage Bonus:** +1D4

Armor: 6-point Phanosian adaptive mesh and Phanosian energy armor (1-20 points)

Attacks: Phanosian laser pistol

Skills (Agents): Brawl 65%, Climb 60%, Disguise 60%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette 65%, Fast Talk 75%, Fine Manipulation 75%, Gaming 65%, Grapple 65%, Hide 75%, Insight 65%, Jump 50%, Listen 65%, Martial Arts 30%, Persuade 50%, Research 45%, Ride (anator) 40%, Sense 60%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot 65%, Strategy 40%, Throw 60%, Track 35%

QUORIAN

Intelligent Octopoids of the Southern Seas

The aquatic Quorians are a race of intelligent amphibious cephalopods. They are highly civilized and live in the great undersea city of Nrolis. Many surface humans fear the Quorians and many rumors and legends tell of Quorians that kidnap humans in order to perform twisted biological experiments on them. Quorians worship Ururu, the deep god who lives in the ocean depths.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6+3	10
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7
Move: 4/8 swim	Hit Points: 10	Damage Bonus: none

Armor: 5-point kraab shell armor over thick skin

Attacks: Dagger 55%, 1D4 + db (impaling)
 Harpoon (short spear) 55%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Short Sword 55%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Climb 80%, Dodge 45%, Fine Manipulation 45%, Hide 70%, Repair 50%, Sleight of Hand 45%, Spot 70%, Stealth 70%,

Amphibious: Quorians may leave the water and breathe air, but must be submerged in oxygenated water for at least 8-hours a day. Quorians begin to lose one point of CON per hour after the 24th straight hour without immersion in water.

Camouflage: Quorians have the ability to change their skin color and texture. This ability requires one combat round for every two points of the Quorian's SIZ. Using this ability increases the Quorian's Hide and Stealth skills by 20%.

Suction Cups: The ends of the Quorian tentacles are covered in suction cups, like that of an octopus, enhancing their climbing skill and their ability to cling to sheer surfaces, granting a +40% bonus to their Climb skill.

Boneless: Quorians are able to maintain their body shape out of water through the use of a system of fluid-filled tubes. They are able to squeeze through an opening as small as ten centimeters wide.

Reduced Smell: Treat as the Reduced Sense major mutation (BRP page 109).

Keen Vision: Treat as the Keen Sense (Vision) minor mutation (BRP page 107).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

ROATIN

Intelligent Raptors of the Magatamas

Roatin are intelligent raptors found high in the floating mountains of Magatama. They resemble man-sized hawks with an extra pair of talons that serve as arms and hands. Their cities are carved out of the tops of mountains by human and xoog slaves captured from the lowlands. The Roatin are a proud intelligent race that closely follows the movements of the stars and planets in their mountaintop observatories. They worship Groata, the great bird of the sky, under vaulting temple domes supported by beautiful pillars of clear crystal. They possess little in the way of technology but are renowned for their study of the physical sciences. They decry the decimation of their floating mountains by the Rhakadians who more often than not will send Imperial troops to clear an entire mountain city of Roatin to obtain the zephyrium they desire.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+3	13-14
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	3D6	10-11
Move: 10/20 (fly)	Hit Points: 12-13	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point feathers

Attacks: Bite 45%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)
 Long Spear 50%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Talons 45%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Dodge 60%, Fly 60%, Navigate 40%, Spot 70%, Stealth 40%, Throw 60%

Keen Vision: Treat as the Keen Sense (Vision) major mutation (BRP page 107).

Wings: Treat as Wings mutation (BRP page 110).

ROSHU

Intelligent Rats of Norukar

The city of Norukar is built atop a massive artificial foundation constructed during the age of the Sdara Vatra. The foundation is riddled with passages, chambers, and catacombs. This subterranean realm is known as the Under-City. The deeper sections of the Under-City is inhabited by semi-aquatic rodents called roshu. Though they are generally still rat-shaped, they possess dexterous hands and, though technologically primitive, are very clever. They are scavengers who send raiding parties to steal food from the surface. They have been known to kidnap children and weak adults to take back to their secret warrens. Depending on the will and whim of the roshu tribe, these unfortunate captives may be raised as members of the tribes, treated as slaves, eaten as food, or sacrificed to their dark god Rash.

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Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D6+2	5-6
Move: 10	Hit Points: 7	Damage Bonus: -1D4

Armor: Usually none, though some Roshu warriors wear 2-point of hide or leather with a light helmet.

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D3 + db
 Claw 25%, 1D3 + db
 Short Spear 35%, 1D6 + 1 + db, warriors only
 Short Sword 35%, 1D6 + 1 + db, warriors only

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 40%, Fine Manipulation 40%, Listen 65%, Sense 95%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Stealth 40%, Swim 100%

Diseased Bite: The bite of a Roshu harbors communicable diseases. Treat as the Disease Carrier minor mutation (BRP page 105) with a POT of 2D6 (rolled with each contact).

SWAMP-DEVILS

Mutant Ape-Men of the Mutoran Marsh

Swamp-Devils are a race of intelligent mutant gorillas that inhabit the Mutoran Marsh and make their homes in caves beneath the city of Tyrannis. Each individual swamp-devil is affected by two or more mutations. One might have a scaly body covering instead of fur, another might have a beak for a mouth, and others might be of prodigious size, sport eye-stalks, or possess some other bizarre mutation. The Swamp-Devils hate humans. King Tyran of Tyrannis allows them to exist because he finds them useful. Many are the enemies or secret prisoners of King Tyran that have become sacrificial gifts to Galaban, the four-armed god-king of the Swamp-Devils that lives deep in the catacombs beneath Tyrannis.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	4D6+12	26
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+12	19
INT	2D6+3	10
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+3	13-14
APP	2D6	7
Move: 8	Hit Points: 16	Damage Bonus: +2D6

Attacks: Battle Axe 55%, 1D8 + 2 + db (bleeding)
 Long Spear 50%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 45%, Jump 55%, Listen 40%, Persuade (Intimidate) 60%, Sense 40%, Spot 50%, Stealth 45%, Track 40%

Mutations: Roll three times on the mutation table (BRP page 105) for three major mutations.



Galaban
God-King of the Swamp-Devils

Galaban is the six-meter-tall king of the Swamp-Devils. He is a monstrous ape-like brute, covered in coarse green hair, with four arms. Spike-like horns grow out of his skull and giant lower canines jut from his prodigious underbite. His fur glows a sickly green hue. The Swamp-Devils worship Galaban as a god, offering human sacrifices and calling on him in times of peril. He sits, brooding, atop his crude throne in a large chamber in the catacombs beneath Tyrannis.

STR 36	CON 15	SIZ 25	INT 11	POW 16	DEX 15	APP 8
Move: 8	Hit Points: 20	Damage Bonus: +3D6				

Armor: 12-point half plate over fur and skin and heavy Cydorian helmet

Attacks: Battle Axe 95%, 1D8 + 2 + db (bleeding)
 Long Spear 95%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)

Skills: Dodge 80%, Hide 55%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Persuade (Intimidate) 90%, Sense 60%, Spot 65%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%

Extra Arms: Equivalent to the Hands major mutation (BRP page 105). Galaban has four arms and may wield a weapon in each. Galaban may make two attacks per combat round at no penalty.

Luminescent: Galaban glows pale green. Equivalent to the Luminescence minor mutation (BRP page 107).

Hardy: Galaban takes half damage from all physical attacks. When reduced to zero hit points, Galaban continues fighting until he has reached a number of negative hit points equal to his CON characteristic, at which point he dies unless healed to a positive hit point value within five minutes. Equivalent to the Hardy major mutation (BRP page 106).

TINTAZI

Degenerate Cave-dwelling Man-eating Lizard-men

The Tintazi are a smaller cave-dwelling species of daka. They live in underground cities deep below Arus. Most humans encounter the Tintazi living in primitive tribal villages in caves near the surface.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+3	10
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	2D6+2	9
INT	2D6	7
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+9	16
APP	2D6	7
Move: 12	Hit Points: 9	Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 2-point scales

Attacks: Club 35%, 1D8 + db (crushing)
Obsidian-tipped Spear 35%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
Talons 35%, 1D3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 25%, Jump 25%, Spot 25%, Track 45%

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees F. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the Tintazi must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

Allergy to Sunlight: Tintazi are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

XOOGS

Humanoid Slave-races Created by Zorin

During the height of the Nazarian civilization, Zorin created many new humanoid races to serve as slaves and servants to the Nazarian people. Each slave race was known by its individual name, but collectively they were known as xoogs. In order to ensure obedience, Zorin built in two fail-safes into the fundamental structure of the xoogs. The first and most obvious was a dependency on rare elixirs that only he could produce. Without a regular dose of this elixir, xoogs would die. The second was to control the means of their reproduction. Zorin controlled the xoog brood-mothers, the massive bloated immobile females of the breeds, which Zorin alone knew how to produce.

During The War of Zorin, Zorin created armies of xoogs to fight against the human armies of the Nazarian Empire. At the height of the war, there were dozens of species of xoogs to fight in the war. Most are now extinct. Towards the end of the war, when he sensed his final defeat, Zorin played a last desperate card. He released his xoog armies upon the land, urging them to commit wanton acts of rape, pillage, and destruction. In addition, he relinquished both the secret of the elixir and the means to produce new brood-mothers to his creations. The xoogs were now free, set loose upon the world to chart their own destinies.

In addition to the inherent instability of the xoogs' biological make-up, the brood-mothers had, and still have, the ability to alter the form and characteristics, both physical and mental, of their offspring. Different brood-mothers started tinkering with Zorin's original designs, building in subtle changes to create children better adapted to their environments. These isolated brood clans quickly diverged, evolving over successive generations into wildly diverse breeds. Today, some of these isolated xoog clans are hardly recognizable as members of the same race.

The inherent mutations in form and characteristics have also made them more susceptible to damaging mutations caused by the lingering after-effects of The War of Zorin. Xoogs are often born with strange deformities such as extra limbs, asymmetry, random horns, tusks, tough leathery hides, venomous bites, or even leathery wings. Depending on the tribe, these mutants may either be shunned or venerated. There are even tribes formed around those mutants that are outcast from other tribes.

These liberated xoog slave races began forming new societies. Some eventually rejoined and integrated with the surviving humans. Others became increasingly isolated and xenophobic, hating the humans and all they stood for. Today, there are three civilized breeds of xoog living among humans. They are the bruxes, the jinxes, and the orixes. Bruxes are large but dim, created for simple labor. Jinxes are small but clever, created to be skilled craftsmen and servants. Orixes are muscular and aggressive, created to fight and defend.

Feral xoogs can be found all over, living in small remote rural tribes in the mountains, caves, forests, swamps, and deserts. Known examples of feral xoogs include the Slimeskippers, a disgusting offshoot of jinxes found in the swamps of the Strangling Coast; the knorr, a lanky offshoot of orixes found on the plains of Gatas and the badlands of Mung. The lands of Haru and Gunai, especially, are home to dozens of tribes of isolated feral xoogs, each with their own distinctive features and behaviors.

Xoog Brood-Mother

Bloated Breeding Machine

Within any xoog community there can be only one brood-mother. The brood-mother is a bloated corpulent immobile entity the size of a small house whose purpose is to provide the xoog community with offspring. Zorin originally created the brood-mothers as living xoog factories, capable of producing dozens or hundreds of offspring in a single year. Brood-mothers are capable of producing any kind of xoog offspring but can only produce a xoog of the same type as the sire. So a brood-mother will beget an orix when mated with an orix and a jinx when mated with a jinx. Brood-mothers are selective in breeding, reproducing only the type of xoog most needed in the community, and withholding when there are too many of a certain type. Selection to mate with a brood-mother is considered a great honor among the xoogs. When a new brood-mother is required, a brood-mother creates a clone of herself asexually. This new immature clone is a young adult in form. Although obese and intelligent, it is still mobile. The immature brood-mother is expected to venture forth to found a new xoog colony, or to murder the older brood-mother and take her place.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6+18	28-29
SIZ	6D6+38	59
INT	1D6+6	9-10
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	1D6+2	5-6
APP	2D6	7
Move: 1 (crawl)	Hit Points: 44	Damage Bonus: +3D6

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 30%, 1D3 + db(crushing)

Skills: Insight 70%, Listen 50%, Sense 50%

Regeneration: Brood-mothers can regenerate 1 hit point each combat round. This power is equivalent to the Regeneration major mutation (BRP page 109).

Pheromone: Brood-mothers produce mood-altering pheromones which have a profound effect on xoog and, to a lesser degree, other humanoids. This power is equivalent to the Pheromone mutation (BRP page 108). Against xoogs, treat as the major mutation. Against other humanoids, treat as the minor mutation.

Brux

Big Dumb Short-tempered Laborers

Bruxes are large simple laborers conditioned for doing heavy back-breaking work without complaint. Despite their size and strength, bruxes make poor warriors. They can be difficult to anger and, when sufficiently provoked, can be dangerously indiscriminant combatants.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+18	25
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+14	21
INT	2D6	7
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	2D6	7
APP	2D6	7
Move: 8	Hit Points: 21-22	Damage Bonus: +3D6

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)
Fist 50%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Dodge 35%

Brux Rage: Bruxes run the risk of becoming enraged and going berserk in times of great stress. When a brux receives a major wound in battle, he must make a Luck roll or become enraged. An enraged brux will fight unceasingly and indiscriminately. For the duration of the rage, the brux may only take attack actions, against enemies first, then against allied NPCs when there are no enemies to attack, then against allied player characters when there are no NPCs to attack. An enraged brux receives one extra attack made on the last DEX rank of the round (or last strike rank if that optional rule is



used). An enraged brux receives no bonus or penalty to the attack action as a result of being enraged. An enraged brux, however, has no instinct for self-preservation. Any dodges or parries made by the brux during the rage are reduced by 30% in addition to any other modifiers such as for additional actions. An enraged brux ignores any unconsciousness stemming from the initial major wound and any subsequent major wound. A fatal wound is still fatal to an enraged brux, but the brux will remain conscious and continue attacking until the end of the round, temporarily ignoring the fatal wound, and then finally collapsing at the end of DEX rank 1. An enraged brux may make a Luck roll at the beginning of each Combat Round to attempt to end the rage. The rage persists until the brux has made a successful Luck roll to end it, or until the brux is dead.

Mutations: Roll three times on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for three minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the mutation is major. Make a Luck roll if the mutation is adverse. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Brux, Feral

Hairy Ogre-like Humanoids of the Wilds

Feral bruxes are larger than their civilized cousins and covered in coarse body hair, thick bony patches, or even tough rhinoceros-like hide. Twisting ram-horns curl from the tops of their heads. Feral bruxes do not live in stable societies. They are encountered alone and they are almost always angry and hungry.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	4D6+12	26
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	4D6+12	26
INT	1D6+3	6-7
POW	2D6+2	9
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7
Move: 8	Hit Points: 21-22 Damage Bonus: +3D6	

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)
 Small Uprooted Tree 50%, 2D6 + db (crushing)
 Fist 50%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Sense 30%, Track 30%

Brux Rage: Bruxes run the risk of becoming enraged and going berserk in times of great stress. When a brux receives a major wound in battle, he must make a Luck roll or become enraged. An enraged brux will fight unceasingly and indiscriminately. For the duration of the rage, the brux may only take attack actions, against enemies first, then against allied NPCs when there are no enemies to attack, then against allied player characters when there are no NPCs to attack. An enraged brux receives one extra attack made on the last DEX rank of the round (or last strike rank if that optional rule is used). An enraged brux receives no bonus or penalty to the attack action as a result of being enraged. An enraged brux, however, has no instinct for self-preservation. Any dodges or parries made by the brux during the rage are reduced by 30% in addition to any other modifiers such as for additional actions. An enraged brux ignores any unconsciousness stemming from the initial major wound and any subsequent major wound. A fatal wound is still fatal to an enraged brux, but the brux will remain conscious and continue attacking until the end of the round, temporarily ignoring the fatal wound, and then finally collapsing at the end of DEX rank 1. An enraged brux may make a Luck roll at the beginning of each Combat Round to attempt to end the rage. The rage persists until the brux has made a successful Luck roll to end it, or until the brux is dead.

Mutations: Roll three times on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for three minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the mutation is major. Make a Luck roll if the mutation is adverse. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.



Jinx

Small, Clever Thieves and Con-artists

The diminutive jinxes were created to serve as butlers and craftsmen. They are naturally clever, industrious, and resourceful. Jinxes are also inherently subtle. Their natural body language and demeanor, along with the human cultural conditioning to ignore them, causes many humans to overlook jinxes even when standing in plain sight right in front of them. Many free jinxes have capitalized on this ability by becoming thieves and assassins.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6+2	9
SIZ	1D3+4	6
INT	2D6+10	17
POW	2D6+12	19
DEX	2D6+10	17
APP	2D6+9	16
Move: 6	Hit Points: 8	Damage Bonus: -1D4

Armor: 1-point hide or soft leather

Attacks: Sling 40%, 1D6 (crushing)
 Shortsword 40%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Target shield 40% (knockback)

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 48%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 45%,
 Stealth 50%, Track 40%

Nimble Fingers: A jinx's tiny fingers provide a +20% bonus to Fine Manipulation skill checks.

Silver Tongue: Jinxes were created to sense the needs and disposition of their masters. They have an innate sense of a person's moods and desires, granting them a +20% bonus to Fast Talk and Insight.

Social Camouflage: Zorin specifically designed the jinxes to go unnoticed. As servants, they were to be as unobtrusive as possible. Many modern jinxes utilize this training for thievery. Jinxes receive a +20% bonus to Hide and Stealth skill checks.

Mutations: Roll once on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for a minor mutation. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Jinx, Feral

Wily Goblin-Like Creatures

Wild feral jinxes developed separately from their civilized kin. Feral jinxes have adapted to their environments in myriad ways. They tend to develop exaggerated physical characteristics such as oversized noses, large or pointed ears, long knobby fingers and toes, and skin coloration to match their environment. These small groups of feral jinxes are often xenophobic and hostile.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6	7
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	1D3+3	5
INT	1D6+10	13-14
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6+3	13-14
APP	2D6	7
Move: 6	Hit Points: 8	Damage Bonus: -1D4

Armor: 1-point hide or soft leather

Attacks: Shortsword 40%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)
Sling 40%, 1D6 (crushing)
Target shield 40% (knockback)

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 48%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 45%, Stealth 50%, Track 40%

Mutations: Roll twice on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for two minor mutations. If a mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Jinx, Slimeskippers

Slime-covered Jinxes from the Strangling Coast

The deep marsh of the Strangling Coast is home to a tribe of degenerate jinxes known as "Slimeskippers" that has adapted to live among the hungry grass. The Slimeskippers are so-named for the viscous slippery slime covering their lumpy grey and yellow skin. The slime allows them to escape the sticky sap of the Hungry Grass. The tribe is isolated and xenophobic. They are able to travel around the marsh on skiffs propelled by long poles. Entrepreneurial Slimeskippers sell jars of the slime to travelers to use in the event they are captured by Hungry Grass. The slime has a side effect, however. When applied to human skin, it causes nasty permanent warts and skin discoloration. Many humans that have made the overland journey from Cydoria to Markania bear the "kiss of the Hungry Grass" as a reminder of a near-death experience. The slime also makes an excellent all-purpose natural lubricant with many technical applications.

Slimeskippers use the same statistics as Feral Jinx (see above) but

with the following mutations.

Slime: Slimeskipper slime renders the slimeskipper immune to the effects of Hungry Grass. The Slime also carries a disease which causes permanent warts and skin discoloration to any exposed skin with which it comes into contact. Treat as the Disease Carrier minor mutation (BRP page 105) with a POT of 2D6 (rolled with each contact). Anyone touching a slimeskipper or its slime with bare skin must roll on the resistance table using their CON vs the POT of the slime. Success means the disease is avoided. Failure results in exposure. The character must then make an immediate Stamina roll. On a success, the disease was not contracted. On a failure, the character has contracted the disease. The disease causes permanent warts and discoloration to the exposed area and the character's total hit points are reduced by 1-2 for 1D6 days. On the morning of the subsequent day, the character must roll CON x 2. If the roll is successful, the character has recovered. If the roll fails, the character suffers the disease for another day. Repeat the roll, increasing the multiplier by one for each subsequent day, until the disease is finally overcome (see Disease, BRP page 221).

Orix

Tough Independent Warriors

Zorin designed orixes to be soldiers and warriors. They are strong, fearless, and menacing and easily fit into the strict disciplined military lifestyle. Many orixes also find work as guards or in the city watch.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+8	15
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+8	15
INT	2D6+2	9
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+7	14
APP	2D6+2	9
Move: 8	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 6-point cuirbouilli leather over padding with a heavy Cydorian helmet

Attacks: Scimitar 50%, 1D6 + 2 + db
Self Bow 50%, 1D6 + 1

Skills: Brawl 60%, Climb 50%, Dodge 48%, Hide 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 40%

Mutations: Roll twice on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for two minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the first mutation rolls is instead major. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.



Orix, Feral

Bloodthirsty Humanoids Bred for War

Feral orix clans are scattered across Markania. Different clans have adapted to different environments and are known by different names. Cave orixes, for example, are called targ. They have grey lumpy hides and can see in the dark. Forest orixes, in contrast, are known as kronks. They have green and grey mottled skin with oversized tusk-like lower canines.

Feral orixes live in small fortified villages and survive by raiding and plundering human tribes and settlements. The focal point of an orix village is the corpulent brood-mother, access to which is controlled by a jinx shaman. Only the strongest and most powerful warriors are allowed the privilege of reproducing with the brood-mother. Many orix tribes capture other races to use as slave labor.

Orixes formed the mass of Zorin's armies during The War of Zorin, and many clans of savage orixes retain their animosity towards humans to this day. These clans continue to wage war upon the humans, destroying human settlements, capturing humans as slaves, or even torturing and sacrificing humans to demonic gods.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+8	15
CON	2D6+8	15
SIZ	2D6+8	15
INT	1D6+6	9-10
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7
Move: 8	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 2-point hide or soft leather with primitive helmet

Attacks: Scimitar 50%, 1D6 + 2 + db
Self Bow 50%, 1D6 + 1

Skills: Brawl 60%, Climb 50%, Dodge 48%, Hide 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 40%

Mutations: Roll four times on the random mutation table (BRP page 105) for four minor mutations. If the same result is rolled twice, then the first mutation roll is instead major. If the mutation is adverse, make a Luck roll. If successful, you can roll again for an additional mutation. If the additional mutation rolled is adverse, repeat the Luck roll until you either fail the Luck roll or gain a beneficial mutation.

Orix, Kronk

Forest Orix

Kronk are tall, hairy orixes that have adapted to live in dense forests. Their short fur is mottled grey, brown, and green, providing excellent camoflaugue in the foliage. They are innately silent and are skilled hunters and trackers. Their long arms and legs with strong gripping fingers and toes make them natural climbers.

Kronk use the same statistics as Feral Orix (see above) but with the following modifications.

Attacks: Self Bow 50%, 1D6 + 1
Short Spear 50%, 1D6 + 1 + db

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 50%, Hide 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 60%

Green, Grey, and Brown Fur: The fur of the Kronk provides natural camouflage. The Kronk receives +20% to Hide skill when in foliage. Treat as the Camouflage minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Increased DEX: Kronk are more dexterous than their suface-dwelling cousins. Treat as the Increased Characteristic mutation (BRP page 107).

Keen Smell: Kronk have excellent smell. Treat as the Keen Sense (Smell/Taste) minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Prehensile Feet: Kronk toes are strong enough to grip tree branches and wield weapons. Treat as the Hands mutation (BRP page 105).

Orix, Targ

Cave Orix

Targ are orixes that have adapted to live in caves. They are nearly blind and retreat from bright light and sunlight. Targ are brutal man-eaters who venture from their caves at night to hunt for prey. Targs capture their prey alive, break their legs, and bring them back to their caves where they are tortured and eventually eaten.

Targs use the same statistics as Feral Orix (see above) but with the following modifications.

Attacks: Scimitar 50%, 1D6 + 2 + db
Self Bow 50%, 1D6 + 1

Skills: Brawl 60%, Climb 50%, Dodge 50%, Hide 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 40%

Allergy to Sunlight: Targs are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy (Sunlight) minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Unattractive: Targs are uglier than their surface-dwelling cousins. Treat as the Decreased Characteristic (APP) mutation (BRP page 104).

Dim-witted: Targs are less intelligent than their surface-dwelling cousins. Treat as the Decreased Characteristic (INT) mutation (BRP page 104).

Lumpy Grey Skin: Targs have tough grey mottled skin which resembles their subterranean homes. Targs receive +20% to Hide skill when in caves. Treat as the Camouflage minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

Reduced Vision: Treat as the Reduced Sense (Vision) major mutation (BRP page 109).

Wall Crawlers: Targ can climb any surface. Treat as the Super Movement (Wall Walking) superpower (BRP page 164).

OTHER CREATURES

The following creatures are representative of those found on the world of Uruta. A few creatures are grotesque mutants, the result of exposure to Zorin's Retribution Plague.

ANATOR

Riding Lizard

The anator is a long-legged long-necked reptilian creature native to the plains of Gatan and Awa. Its narrow aquiline head sports twin slightly curved horns similar to those of an antelope. Their legs are long and thin but very muscular and end in three-toed feet. Their bodies end in a long whip-like tail. They are tall, two meters at the shoulder and three meters with the head fully raised. Anators are capable of great bursts of speed on the open prairie but have little endurance.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	4D6+18	32
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	4D6+18	32
INT	6	6
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 10	Hit Points: 22-23 Damage Bonus: +3D6	

Armor: 3-point hide

Attacks: Bite 25%, 1D6 (bleeding)
 Head Butt 30%, 1D6 + ½ db (crushing)
 Kick 10%, 1D6+db (crushing)

Skills: Listen 50%, Dodge 70%, Jump 70%

AYA

The Aya are mysterious demonic spirits from ancient times. It is said that they are bodiless but exist as a kind of field of energy. Legends say that the Aya live on the northern wind, that they feed on electricity, and that they are drawn towards electricity and electronic devices.

The common belief is that the Aya are cruel demon spirits, able to take control of anything powered by electricity and turn it against its owner. Many legends say that it was the Aya that caused the downfall of the Sdara Vatra at the dawn of time by turning their machines against themselves.

The Aya were, in fact, created by the Sdara Vatra as servitors. They are a type of artificial intelligence. Though Aya may be bound to a container such as an Aya stone or a Cyberdroid body, they do not require a physical form.

A disembodied Aya ordinarily has no means of manipulating the physical world. An Aya can, however, interact with characters using the Astral Projection power.

An Aya can control any electrically-powered device or they may drain the device of its energy for their own nourishment. Only disembodied Aya may do this. Once bound into an Aya stone, the Aya lose this ability.

Despite popular belief to the contrary, Aya are not demonic entities. In truth, most Aya are benevolent servants who wish nothing more than to provide the services for which they were created. The only truly evil Aya are those that have been infected by the Techno-Plague.

After the fall of the Sdara Vatra and the abandonment of technology, many Aya retreated to the lost city of Ohn in the far north where they inhabit the last operating computers of their creators, sealed behind protective barriers that defend them against the techno-plague and those who would destroy them. The rest roam the world, observing, recording, and awaiting the summons. to serve again.

The Techno-Plague

Nearly five percent of all Aya are infected with the techno-plague, an ancient virus that corrupts the them, creating a murderous entity intent on destroying all life, and the source of their demonic reputation. It was the techno-plague that destroyed the Sdara Vatra. Infected Aya take control of electric and electronic devices and turn them against their owners. Cyberdroids become killing machines and energy weapons fire indiscriminantly. Infected Aya exist only to kill and to destroy. It was the techno-plague that caused Urutans to abandon technology. The Aya fear the techno-plague as much as Cydorians fear infected Aya.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
INT	4D6	14
POW	4D6	14
Move: 14 (equal to POW)	Hit Points: none	
Power Points: 14	Damage Bonus: none	

Armor: None (immaterial, see below)

Attacks: Psychic Combat POW vs. POW, 1D3 power points, see below)

Skills: One or more skills at 100% or more, Teaching 100%.

Electricity Drain: An Aya may drain the electricity from any and all devices within its energy field and convert it into power points. If the device does damage, the Aya gains a number of power points equal to a single damage roll from the item. Force fields provide a number of power points equal to the field's AP. Vehicles provide a number of power points equal to its SIZ times ACC.

Immaterial: As a disembodied invisible energy field with no mass, an Aya occupies a volume of space equivalent to a sphere with a radius in meters equal to its POW. An Aya has no hit points. Instead, an Aya will be destroyed if its power points are reduced to zero. Aya are not affected by physical forces and may move in three dimensions at their standard movement rate. Aya may pass through any solid substance to a depth equal to their POW in centimeters. An Aya may not pass through a force field.

Immunities: Aya do not need to eat, breathe, or sleep in the conventional sense. They are immune to poison and disease.

Invisible: All Aya are invisible but can be detected as a hazy luminous shape by anyone using the Astral Projection, Aura Detection, Sense Aura, Sense Presence, or Sensitivity powers. Anyone can detect the presence of an Aya as an uneasy sensation of being watched or a prickly goose-bump sensation with a successful Sense check.

Psychic Combat: Aya may engage in psychic combat with anyone using the Astral Projection power. The Aya attacks by enveloping its target within its energy field. If the Aya overcomes its target's POW, the target loses 1D3 power points. If the target overcomes the Aya's POW, the Aya loses 1D3 power points. This combat continues each combat round until one side is out of power points and unconscious or destroyed.

Psychic Immunity: Aya are immune to the following psychic powers —Emotion Control, Empathy, Mind Blast, Mind Control, Sensitivity, Telepathy, or any other power or effect that affects the mind.

Susceptibility: Aya are susceptible to electric, magnetic, and radiation-based damage and attacks. Attacks composed of such energies do an additional 1D6 damage to the Aya's power points.

Ta'oudh Immunity: Aya are immune to the following Ta'oudh powers—Blind, Blinding Bolt, Calm, Disfigure, Disfiguring Bolt, Disrupt, Disrupting Bolt, Enrage, Healing Touch, Hypnotic Gaze, Immobilize, Immobilizing Bolt, Restore, Sense Presence, Stun, Stunning Bolt, or any other power that affects the mind or nervous system of a target.

DART-THORN BUSH

A Bush that Fires Toxic Darts

The Darth-thorn bush is a dangerous shrub that grows in the poison jungles of Dushan as well as the arid regions of southwest Markania. When disturbed, the Darth-thorn fires dozens of needle-sharp poisonous darts at high velocity towards the source of the disturbance.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
SIZ	1D6+2	5-6
DEX	2D6	7
Move: 0	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Darts 35%, 1D4 + poison (see below)

Skills: Hide 35%

Venom: The thorns of the Darth-thorn bush deliver a POT 7 venom (see Poison, BRP page 229).



DEVIL-WOLF

Large Aggressive Wolf

Packs of devil-wolves roam the prairies and forests of northern Markania and the Apparian mountains. They resemble normal wolves but measure three meters long with bristly leonine manes and bare hairless faces and muzzles.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6+10	17
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+3	13-14
INT	5	5
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move: 10	Hit Points: 12-13	Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 2-point fur

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D8 + ½ db (bleeding)

In combat, devil-wolves will often fight cooperatively. Several devil-wolves may attack the same target, ensuring that most of them will not be parried or dodged. Or one or two large devil-wolves may attempt to knock their target down—when it falls over, a bunch of devil-wolves rush to tear at the target while down.

Skills: Dodge 35%, Listen 75%, Sense 90%, Spot 60%, Track 805

FLAYERS

Swarm of Small Flesh-eating Fish

A flayer is a small carnivorous fish, about ten centimeters long, with lots of small very sharp teeth. They live among the tall Hungry Grass marshes of the Strangling Coast, immune to the adhesive properties of the grass. Individually, they are harmless and will not attack prey larger than themselves. However, when a living creature becomes trapped by the grab-grass and pulled into the water, schools of flayers will instinctively swarm the unfortunate creature. Victims can be stripped to the bone in less than twenty minutes.

Any time a creature is captured by grab grass, the creature must succeed at a Luck roll or attract 1-12 schools of flayers per man-sized creature. Each school of flayers is composed of ten fish. Each school has a cumulative five percent chance to hit per school per round. Each school does 1D6 HP damage (slashing) to a character per successful attack. *For example, a character is swarmed by six schools. Each school has a thirty percent chance to hit. Each hit does 1D6 HP damage.*

Armor counts against each individual attack. A character can Dodge an attack from an individual school of flayers but may not parry it. A successful attack against a school of flayers, considered *Difficult*, will automatically kill a single flayer and scatter the remainder of the school.

GIRAH

Giant Gila Monster

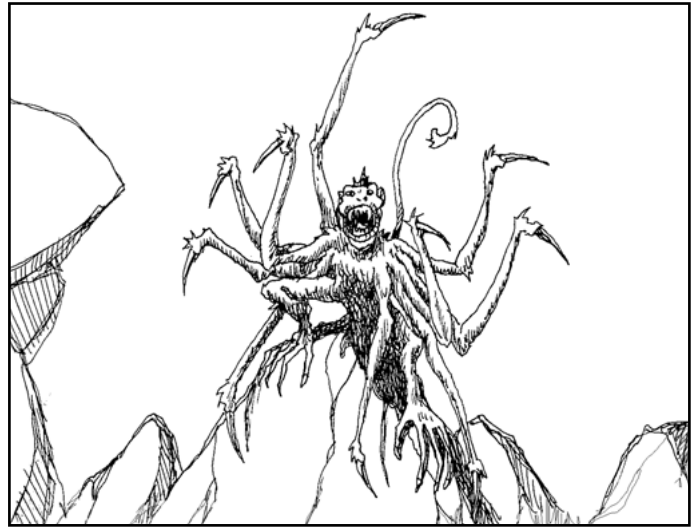
The girah, or giant sand lizard, resembles a gila monster, roughly ten meters long from nose to tail. They are native to western Markania. Girah are omnivorous, eating cacti and hunting the dog-sized insects of the desert. They are slow and dim-witted but are easily domesticated and used as mounts and beasts of burden. They are sometimes raised or hunted for their tough stringy meat and scaly hides.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	4D6+14	21
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	4D6+21	28
INT	2	2
POW	2D6	7
DEX	1D6+2	5-6
Move: 6	Hit Points: 19-20 Damage Bonus: +2D6	

Armor: 6-point scales

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db

Skills: Climb 40%, Sense Prey 60%



GO-ATAN

Ten-Armed Monkeys

Go-atans are small monkey-like mammals ten long spider-like arms, each ending in a single hooked claw. The go-atans are highly agile climbers and are at home in the forests and jungles of Varza, Korula, and the Rama. Go-atans are clever and mischievous. They are fond of stealing food and shiny equipment from camp-sites. They also enjoy throwing rocks at other mountain travelers to annoy them.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	2D6+3	10
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	1D6+3	6-7
INT	1D6+3	6-7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+6	16-17

Move: 6 **Hit Points:** 8-9

Damage Bonus: -1D4 or none

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 25%, 1D6 (impaling)

Claw 25%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Throw Rock 25%, distracting, -10% to any action that requires concentration

Skills: Climb 90%, Dodge 60%.

Spider Climb: A go-atan may cling to and climb on any surface.

KOLOP

Giant Beetle

Kolops are beetles and roaches of unusual size, some growing up to two to three meters long. These massive insects inhabit the forests, swamps, and jungles of southern Cydoria and Markania and many are found in mountainous caves. Most are harmless herbivores but a few are omnivorous and may attempt to stalk and eat a humanoid creature. Aside from their great size, kolops resemble their miniscule cousins though afflicted with several mutations. Their carapaces are covered in bony nodules, spikes, and horns, as well as bony crab-like legs. Some kolops rely on stealth, hiding under rocks or dirt or creating hidden pit traps to catch unwary prey.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	2D6+12	19
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	4D6+6	20
INT	3	3
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move: 10	Hit Points: 18-19 Damage Bonus: +1D6	

Armor: 5-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D10 + DB

Skills: Scan 60%, Track 30%

KRAAB

Giant Mutant Crab

The monstrous kraab are a species of giant mutated crabs found throughout the coastal regions of southern Cydoria, though they are most often encountered in the Mutoran Marsh, the Raman River Jungle, or the Strangling Coast.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6+24	34-35
CON	3D6+12	22-23
SIZ	3D6+24	34-35
INT	3	3
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6	7
Move: 8	Hit Points: 28-29 Damage Bonus: +3D6	

Armor: 9-point carapace

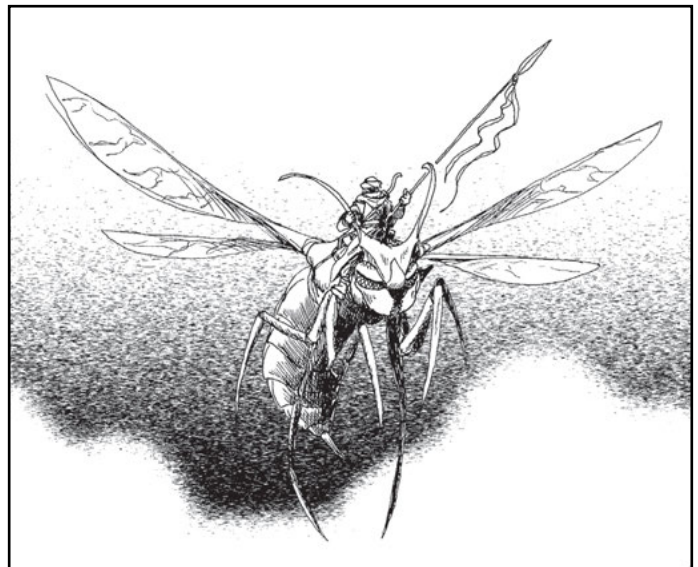
Attacks: Pincers 50%, 1D6 + db (crushing)

The Kraab can attack simultaneously with both of its pincers in the same combat round.

Skills: Hide 40%

Amphibious: Kraab are capable of breathing both on land and underwater with no penalty.

Mutations: Roll once on the Chaotic Features table (BRP page 353). Replace references to magic or sorcery with the Oudh.



KU-BAWA-MAVU

Giant Wasp

A ku-bawa-mavu is a gigantic wasp-like insect used as a mount by the desert people of Otar. The ku-bawa-mavu stinger is as long as a man's arm and is a deadly weapon.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	2D6+12	19
SIZ	2D6+24	31
INT	2	2
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+12	19
Move: 8 (16 flying)	Hit Points: 25 Damage Bonus: +3D6	

Armor: 5-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D6 + ½ db (impaling)
Sting 60%, 1D10 + db (impaling)

Skills: Hide 80%, Locate Prey 50%

Flight: The ku-bawa-mavu can fly like a wasp, allowing it to hover and fly backwards at one-half Move.



LARVAE

Giant Carnivorous Maggots

The grubs, larvae, and maggots of giant insects are bloated corpulent creatures the size of a fat pig with a wriggling segmented worm-like body and grasping mouth pincers. They are capable of short surprising bursts of wriggling speed. Most larvae live in underground warrens and caves or in the rotten cores of giant trees. They are usually encountered in groups of several dozen. They are quite voracious and will quickly swarm any nearby food. They are blind and rely on their keen sense of smell.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6+4	11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	1	1
POW	1D6	3-4
DEX	3D6	10-11

Move: 4 (14 in short bursts, once every ten minutes)

Hit Points: 12 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 30%, Sense 60%

MUTORAN SERPENT

Giant Swamp Snake

The legendary giant serpents of the Mutoran Marsh can actually be found throughout the coastal region of southern Cydoria. The largest are reported to grow twenty-five meters or more and measure at least a meter in diameter. They are deadly creatures capable of capsizing swamp boats and killing yaaxen that come to the water's edge to drink. The Mutoran serpent is often employed by the cults of Anaka, the serpent god of the daka and the Galloans, as both a guardian and a subject of veneration.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	8D6+32	60
CON	3D6+12	22-23
SIZ	6D6+35	56
INT	3	3
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 6 (4 swimming)		Hit Points: 39
Damage Bonus: + 6D6		

Armor: 5-point scaly skin

Attacks: Bite 65%, 1D6 + db (impaling)
Constrict 40%, 1D6 + db (crushing)

Skills: Climb 85%, Dodge 60%, Hide 75%, Sense 75%, Stealth 90%, Swim 50%.

Constriction: A Mutoran serpent can attack twice in combat round, first biting and then attempting construction five DEX ranks later. If the constriction attack hits, the target is wrapped in the serpent's coils. The target can gasp but cannot yell or shout. Each round the constriction does damage to the victim's total HP. Only rigid armor or chest armor (if armor by hit location is being used) reduces this damage. If a limb is free, a character can make *Difficult* attacks unless the character has another means of attack (GM's discretion). A character can forego attacking and attempt to escape from constriction. Escaping from constriction requires a successful resistance roll using STR against the serpent's STR. A character can attain partial escape by succeeding at a *Difficult* Agility roll. A partial escape frees a single arm or leg. The serpent will continue to constrict the victim until it is unconscious or dead, at which point it will release the victim and swallow it whole. If not already dead, the victim will then suffocate inside the serpent (see BRP page 219).

NATURAL ANIMALS

All of the natural animals (BRP pages 334-340) can be found in Cydoria. Many might possess 1D3 random mutations at the gamemaster's discretion.



OSO

Massive Bear

Oso can be found in hilly and mountainous regions throughout Cydoria, Baadria, and Markania. They resemble grizzly bears but may stand four meters tall. Their teeth are capable of crushing the skull of a grown geruk. They are strong enough to push over a tall tree to get at their next meal.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	4D6+18	32
CON	3D6+16	26-27
SIZ	3D6+18	28-29
INT	5	5
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
Move: 14 (8 swim)		Hit Points: 27-28
Damage Bonus: +3D6		

Armor: 4-point fur

Attacks: Bite 65%, 1D10 + ½ db (bleeding)
 Claws (2) 45%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)
 Slap 45%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Oso can attack twice in a round, using either two separate claw attacks or one claw and one bite attack

Skills: Climb 40%, Listen 75%, Sense 75%



RAZORFANG

Large Feline Predator

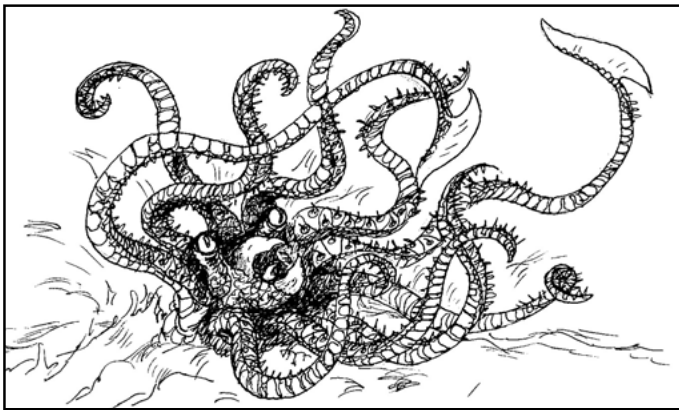
The razorfang is a large feline predator native to the plains and savanna of central Markania. The upper and lower canine teeth of the razorfang are each longer than a man's hand and their bites are capable of crushing the skull of a full-grown yaax. They live and hunt in prides of seven to twelve individuals. The Razorfang is venerated by the barbarian tribes of Gatas. If raised from birth, a razorfang cub may imprint on a human. Such imprinted razorfangs are loyal and protective companions. Razorfang companions serve as protectors and mounts for the Gatanese women with whom they bond.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	5D6+12	29-30
CON	3D6+3	13-14
SIZ	4D6+12	26
INT	5	5
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
Move: 12		Hit Points: 19-20 Damage Bonus: +2D6

Armor: 2-point of skin

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D10 + ½ db (bleeding)
 Claw 60%, 1D6+ db (bleeding)
 Ripping 80%, 2D6 + db (bleeding)
 A razorfang can make one claw attack and one bite attack each combat round. If both attacks hit, the razorfang hangs on for the next round, continuing to bite. Instead of clawing, it will attempt to rake with its hind claws.

Skills: Climb 45%, Dodge 50%, Hide 70%, Jump 60%, Listen 50%, Sense 50%, Spot 55%, Stealth 75%, Track 25%.



SAND SQUID

Giant Burrowing Carnivorous Land-cephalopod

The fabled Sand Squid is found deep in the deserts of the Markanian southwest. They burrow through the sand and loose earth and create traps to capture prey walking on the surface. They are large, roughly five to ten meters long, with a long tapering teardrop-shaped body with its mouth on the fat end. Its body is covered in overlapping chitinous segments. Its mouth is lined with several circular rows of shark-like teeth. Several barbed tentacles reach out from around the mouth to capture and drag prey. Sand squid are capable of great speed when burrowing through loose sand but hard packed earth slows them down and they are unable to dig through rock. Sand squid are blind. They sense their prey through the vibrations made walking across the surface and by sending tentacles above the surface to taste the air for scents.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6+18	28-29
CON	3D6+4	14-15
SIZ	4D6+15	29
INT	2	2
POW	2D6	7
DEX	2D6	7
APP	3D6	10-11
Move: 10 (burrowing)		Hit Points: 22
Damage Bonus: +1D6		

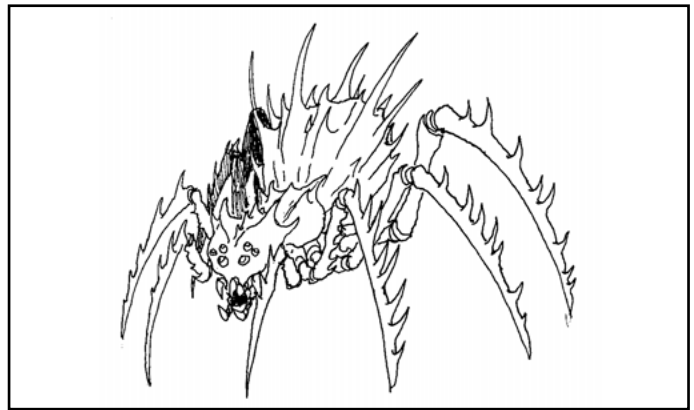
Armor: 6-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Spot 45%, Stealth 90%

Vibration Sense: Sand squid can sense surface vibrations as far away as their POW in kilometers. It is otherwise blind to anything underground or on the surface.

Burrowing: Sand squid may burrow through loose sand at full speed or through packed dirt at half speed.



SPINY SPIDER

Monstrous Tarantulas

From the poison jungles of Dushan crawl these man-sized arachnids. Spiny spiders are large tarantula-like spiders covered in needle-sharp quills.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	1D6+6	9-10
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3	3
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
Move: 8	Hit Points: 12	Damage Bonus: none

Armor: 2-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D6 + db (impaling) + venom
Quill rush 50%, 1D6 + db (impaling)

Skills: Move Quietly 80%, Climb 100%, Hide 75%, Sense Vibrations 60%

Quills: The long body quills of the spiny spider make it difficult to fight in personal combat. Anyone making a hand-to-hand or melee attack made with a short-range melee weapon must succeed at a Luck roll and an Agility roll to avoid the quills. Failure on both causes 1D6 (impaling) damage. Failure on one or the other causes 1D3 (impaling) damage.

STRANGLE VINE

A Dangerous Animated Vine

Strangle vine can be found throughout Cydoria and Markania in both arid and temperate climates. Strangle vine grows in long snaking runners from a strong central root system. The roots are so strong that it takes two grown men to pull it out of the ground. The vine runners radiate from the root base, stretching across the ground, growing up walls, cliffs, and trees, and even across small bodies of water. A runner is as thick as a human finger and as strong as hemp rope.

When stepped on, a strangle vine runner violently contracts, coiling and twisting. It will quickly wrap around a person's foot, then their leg, their entire body, and ultimately the neck. As it contracts, it pulls and tightens. This tends to pull victims off their feet, knocking them prone. The tightening then begins to squeeze the victim's torso and strangle their neck.

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SWORDS OF CYDORIA

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	5D6	17-18
SIZ	1D6+2	5-6
DEX	4D6	14
Move: 0	Hit Points: 15	Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Tangle 70%, strangle (see below)

Strangle: When entering an area containing a strangle vine runner, the gamemaster should roll secretly for the vine's Hide vs. the character's Luck and Spot. If the Hide roll fails, all characters see the vine. If the Hide roll is successful, but the character's Luck roll is successful, the character fails to activate the runner. In either case, if the Spot roll is successful, the character spots the runner and may choose to avoid it. If the Hide is successful and both the Luck and the Spot fail, the character has stepped on a runner and activated it. The vine attacks on the first round by wrapping around the victim's foot and attempting to pull it prone on the same combat round. Roll on the resistance table using the runner's STR against the character's STR. A success indicates the character is pulled prone. Failure means the character remains standing. The character may attempt a Luck roll. Success indicates the victim has a limb free and may attempt to cut the vine. Failure means the victim's limbs are pinned. A character may attempt to free a limb on their turn by succeeding on the Resistance table using their STR vs the vine's STR. The vine continues to tangle and pull prone each round until severed. Victims take 1D6 + db (crushing) damage on the second round of being tangled and each subsequent round thereafter. On the third round, the character is being strangled and is subject to the rules on Choking, Drowning, and Asphyxiation (see BRP page 128). A victim with a free limb may cut the vine from the root but the vine continues to constrict around the victim until it runs out of hit points.

Skills: Hide 70%

SWAMP-WORM

Large Blood-sucking Freshwater Hagfish

Swamp-worms are actually mutated freshwater hagfish that live in the large shallow swamps found throughout southern Mar-kania. They can grow up to half a meter long. Swamp-worms attach themselves to a host and feed on its blood, like a giant leech. A single swamp-worm is a painful nuisance that is easily removed and killed, but the smell of blood from a single swamp-worm bite will invariably summon a swarm of dozens of others. A swarm of swamp-worms can drain a man of blood in a matter of minutes.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	1D6	3-4
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	1D3	2
INT	1	1
POW	1D6	3-4
DEX	2D6	7
Move: 2 (10 swimming)	Hit Points: 5	
Damage Bonus: -1D6		

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 20%, 1D6 + db (bleeding), blood drain (see below)

Skills: Dodge 50%, Hide 70%, Sense 20%, Stealth 90%, Swim 70%

Blood Drain: If a swamp-worm succeeds in an attack, it attaches itself to its victim. If not removed, it will drain 1D6 STR from the victim on each subsequent round it is able to stay attached. Once the victim's STR is reduced to zero, the victim will lose 1D6 CON per combat round. At zero CON, the victim dies. Removing an attached swamp-worm requires a successful resistance roll using STR vs the swamp-worm's STR. Removing an attached swamp-worm causes 1D3 damage to the victim's hit points. Lost STR or CON will regenerate at a rate of one point per day, alternating one point of recovery per characteristic per day of relative rest, or one every two days if not resting.

TERAX

Giant Mutant Monsters

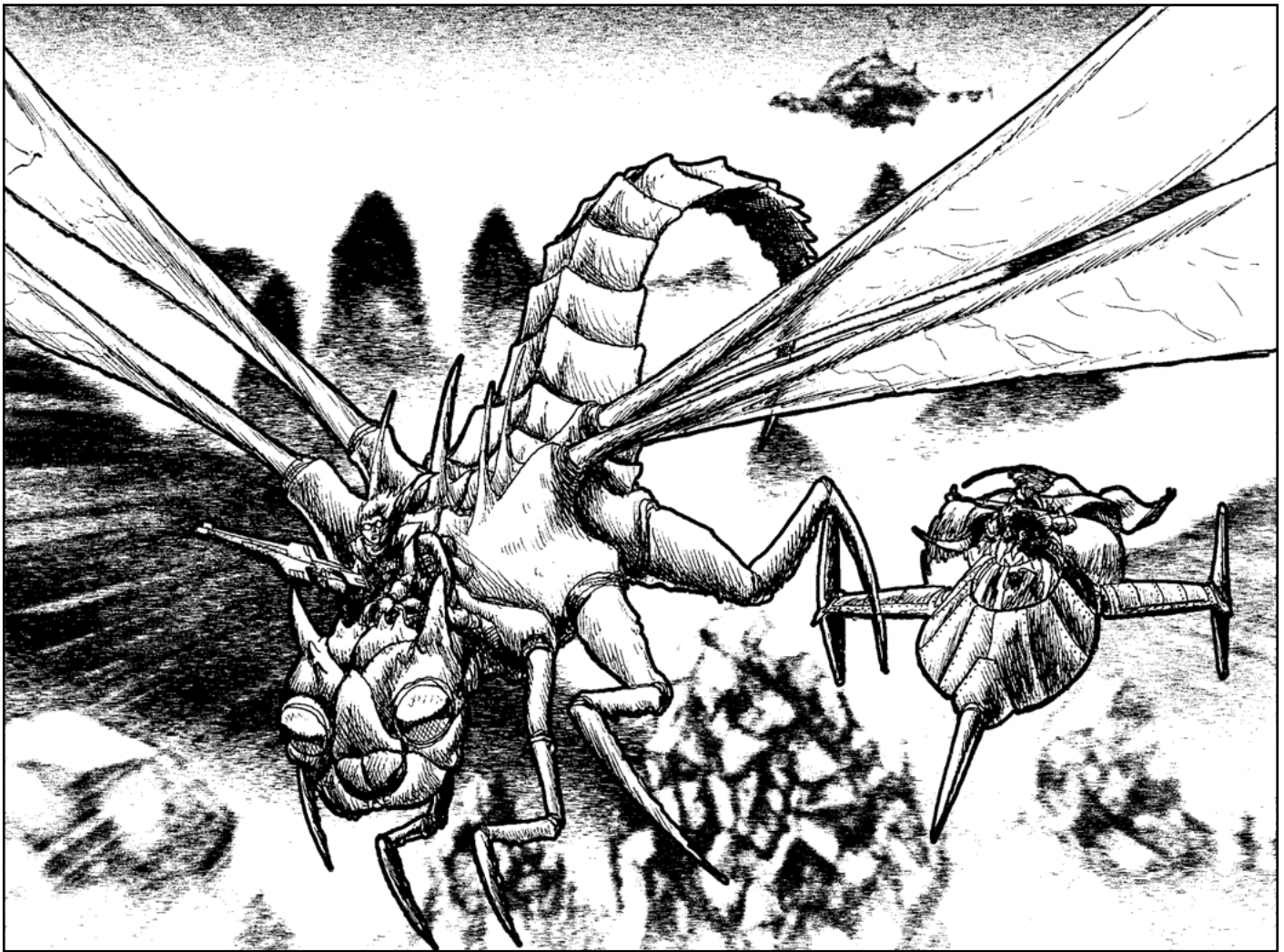
The term Terax refers to any creature mutated by exposure to Zorin's ancient magic. Teraxes are idiosyncratic, no two are alike. The effect of the Zorin's Retribution Plague lingers to this day in remote jungle-choked ruins and deep within haunted caves. Natural creatures avoid these places and people consider them evil and haunted. Occasionally, a creature enters such a place and is exposed to the plague. The Retribution Plague changes the creature, mutates it, and turns it into a monster. The exposed creature continues to eat and grow to gargantuan size, often developing horrible mutations such as horns, tentacles, extra limbs, or a carapace. Teraxes do not age and are immune to disease. They are also capable of entering a state of hibernation for indefinite periods, requiring neither food, water, nor air while asleep. Many teraxes have slept in their lairs, guarding some ancient and forgotten Nazarian vault, for thousands of years. The slightest disturbance will rouse a terax from its deathlike slumber. Occasionally, a terax will develop intelligence and a form of telepathy allowing it to communicate. Some intelligent teraxes enlist the aid of xoogs to guard its lair. These xoogs often worship the terax as a kind of living god.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	6D6+50	71
CON	3D6+26	36-37
SIZ	6D6+50	71
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6+10	20-21
DEX	4D6	14
Move: 8	Hit Points: 54-55	
Damage Bonus: +8D6		

Armor: 8-point thick hide

Attacks: Bite 60%, 3D6 + db (impaling)
Claws 40%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Spot 40%, Listen 25%



Mutations: Roll three times on the mutation table (BRP page 105) for three major mutations. In addition, roll once on the Chaotic Features table (BRP page 353). Replace references to magic or sorcery with the Oudh.

THUNDER LIZARDS

Dinosaurs

Giant saurians similar to prehistoric dinosaurs roam the continent of Markania. Use the statistics for equivalent dinosaurs from the Basic Role Playing book and other sources to represent these gargantuan creatures.

TONBO

Giant Dragonfly

The Tonbo is a large insect that resembles a giant dragonfly. Its long tapering body measures six meters from head to tail with two pairs of wide iridescent wings. The tonbo is remarkably lightweight despite its great size and hard carapace. A fully grown tonbo weighs little more than 75 kilograms yet can still support the weight of an adult human and cargo during flight.

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	4D6+12	26
CON	3D6+9	19-20
SIZ	4D6+18	32
INT	3	3
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+10	17

Move: 6 (12 flying) **Hit Points:** 29-30

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Armor: 7-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D6 + db (slashing)
Sting 60%, 1D10 + db (impaling)

Skills: Spot 70%

Flight: The tonbo can fly like a dragonfly, allowing it to hover and fly backwards at one-half Move.

TOXIC ANT

Large Venomous Ants

The bright red toxic ants of southern Markania grow to the size of a large dog. They are highly venomous and dangerous. Their colonies resemble sand castles the size of real castles. Their subterranean warrens are large enough for a man to crawl through and range for kilometers underneath the surface.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	1D6+2	5-6
INT	2	2
POW	1D6+3	6-7
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move: 12	Hit Points: 11-12 Damage Bonus: None	

Armor: 5-point of chitin

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D8 + db (crushing) + venom (see below)

Skills: Dodge 40%, Sense 60%, Spot 40%, Stealth 25%, Track 85%

Venom: The bite of a toxic ant delivers a POT 9 venom (BRP page 229).

TRAPTACTUS

Deadly Man-eating Cacti

Traptacus is a carnivorous cactus native to the dry arid regions of southwest Markania. A traptacus is a kind of giant venus flytrap. The traptacus lies open and unfurled on the ground. Over time, the wind covers the traptacus with a thin layer of dust and sand, helping to conceal it. When any creature heavier than 20 kilograms steps on the traptacus, it snaps shut and pulls the victim underground. The spines of the cactus are coated with a paralytic toxin that slowly dissolves flesh. The paralyzed but conscious victim is dissolved and consumed over the course of a month.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+12	22-23
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 0	Hit Points: 16-17	
Damage Bonus: +1D4 to +1D6		

Armor: None

Attacks: Grab 70%, 1D6 + db + paralytic toxin (see below)

Skills: Hide 65%

Paralytic Toxin: The traptacus delivers a paralytic toxin with a POT of 2D6 (BRP page 229). The toxin paralyzes its victim. The victim loses 1D6 points of CON per day until depleted, followed by 1D6 points of STR per day until depleted, then 1D6 points of SIZ per day until depleted. Once the victim has lost all CON, STR, and SIZ, the victim is dead. Attacking a traptacus while it is dissolving a victim will do full damage to the traptacus and half damage to the victim.

Spines: The traptacus, like most cacti, is covered in sharp spines. Anyone attacking a traptacus without a weapon must make a Luck roll and an Agility roll. Failure on both causes 1D6 damage to the attacker. Failure on one but success on the other causes 1D3 damage to the attacker.

WARHAWK

Giant Riding Hawk

The giant warhawks of Guerna are trained for hunting and fighting by Guernan officers and used as flying mounts by the air cavalry.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	4D6+20	33
INT	3	3
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6+12	22-23
Move: 4 (16 flying)	Hit Points: 22	
Damage Bonus: +2D6		

Armor: 1-point

Attacks: Beak 30%, 1D8 + db (impaling)
Talons 45%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

A giant warhawk attacks with both talons simultaneously and bites 5 ranks later.

Skills: Dodge 75%, Spot 100%

Flight: A warhawk can fly like a bird. It can hover for only one Combat Round before it must either land or fly away. It cannot fly backwards.

WOOLY MUNGLOR

Giant Musk Ox

The massive wooly munglor looks like a musk ox but is as large as an elephant. They are used as mounts and beasts of burden by the Samirian people of northern Munosia.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	10D6+30	65
CON	4D6+21	35
SIZ	10D6+30	65
INT	6	6
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 10	Hit Points: 50	Damage Bonus: +7D6

Armor: 8-point hide and muscle

Attacks: Ram 50%, damage 1D8+db (crushing)
Trample/Stomp 50%, damage 1D6+1/2db (crushing)

Skills: Listen 80%, Scent 90%

DAINGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS

The world of Uruta is a dangerous place with strange hostile environments and deadly weather phenomena.

ACIDIC SLIME

The muddy slime that collects in the hollows and stagnant pools of the Raman River Swamp is highly acidic and burns to the touch. Unprotected exposure to the slime causes 1D3 damage per turn to victims and to their equipment as well.

BLACK RAIN

It is almost constantly raining in the poison jungles of Cydoria. When jungle precipitation passes through the clouds of toxic spores it takes on a dark tint and becomes poisonous to humans. Unprotected exposure to or consumption of the water from black rain is equivalent to being exposed to a POT 2D6 poison (see BRP page 229). The toxin has a speed of effect of 1 combat round. Symptoms include spasming incapacitating coughs, watery eyes, and eventually muscle contractions and respiratory failure.

CRAWLING TERROR

The crawling terror is a vine that carpets the floor and hangs from the trees of the Raman River Jungle. It is said that the crawling terror grows so fast that it will grow over a man while he sleeps, immobilizing, entangling, and trapping him. If the victim cannot break free, they eventually starve to death or are strangled by the constricting vines.

The crawling terror presents little danger to an awake or alert person, though movement through an area covered by the crawling terror requires a successful Dodge skill check or Agility ability check or trip.

Someone sleeping in an area covered by the crawling terror must first clear a campsite with a radius greater than three to four meters, for it is said that the crawling terror grows at a rate of one meter every three hours. Anyone passing out or falling asleep in an uncleared area will be entangled by the vines, unable to move their arms or legs. Breaking free requires a successful difficult resistance roll for each limb using STR vs. the crawling terror's STR of 8.

DEADLY MIASMA

The dark forest floors of the poison jungles of Cydoria are home to giant toxic fungi and pools of deadly algae. These organisms produce airborne clouds of poisonous spores which slowly drift throughout the jungle. Such clouds, known as the deadly miasma, are common. They are typically several dozen meters wide and drift with the breeze, though stiffer winds dilute the toxicity of the cloud.

Unprotected exposure to a cloud of poison miasma is equivalent to being exposed to a cloud of poison gas using the rules for Choking, Drowning, and Asphyxiation (BRP page 218). Once a character is no longer able to hold their breath, they take 1D8 damage per combat round.

Common protection against deadly miasma includes goggles, ear-plugs, a filter mask, or a fine weave cloth held over the mouth and nose.

DEATH-MIRE

Death-mires are areas of seemingly normal open ground near a body of brackish water such as a pond, lake, or swamp. The ground is flat and covered with moss, ferns, and lichens but otherwise appears solid and dry. The truth, however, is that the ground is a thin shell covering a dangerous mud pit. Any man-sized creature that walks into the area will break the shell and get caught in the mud. Forces within the mud act to draw the victim down, drowning them in the mud which can be as much as ten meters deep. Only the weight of an adult man-sized creature is sufficient to break the shell, so prodding the surface with a pole is often insufficient.

The gamemaster should secretly roll a Spot roll and Science (Natural History) roll for each character before crossing a death-mire. Only if both are successful, the gamemaster should alert the player character to the possible danger. Should a player character with a SIZ greater than 8 walk over an area of death-mire, allow the player character to make a Luck roll or Agility roll (player's choice), -5% for each SIZ point over 8. Success allows the player character to notice the shell breaking and avoid the attack. Failure indicates that the character broke through the shell and is trapped by the death-mire. They will be pulled under the mud at the beginning of that character's next turn.

A trapped character may escape a death-mire on the first combat round, pulling themselves free of the sucking mud, if they succeed at a resistance roll using their STR vs the death-mire's STR of 10. Companions may assist the character, adding +10% to the trapped character's resistance roll for each of their successful Effort rolls and subtracting 5% for each failed roll. However, assisting companions run the risk of breaking through the shell and likewise becoming trapped!

If the trapped character is not freed by their next turn, they are pulled under. Victims that have been pulled under are subject to the rules on Choking, Drowning, and Asphyxiation (BRP page 128). They may struggle to break free each additional combat round by attempting a resistance roll using STR vs the death-mire's STR of 11. The death-mire's strength then increases by one for each combat round after the first. Submerged victims sink at a rate of one meter per combat round. The only way a submerged victim may receive help is if a companion ties a rope to themselves that is held by companions on the surface or tied to a tree or other stable anchor. The tethered companion may then jump into the mud to grab the drowning victim. Tethered victims may escape the mud on a successful Effort roll. Companions on the surface may provide assistance by pulling the rope. Each of the helping companions may attempt an Effort roll. Each success provides a bonus of +10% to the victim's escape attempt.

GLOWING FOG

The phenomenon known as glowing fog occurs near sites of ancient ruins. The glowing fog is a result of bubbling fumaroles of boiling water that occasionally erupts into geysers of poisonous water and steam. The fog is composed of radioactive steam. The hot fog glows with an unearthly green pallor. Sometimes, breezes will push the clouds of glowing mist overland as they slowly dissipate. Exposure to the fog is the equivalent of being exposed to High intensity radiation as per the Radiation rules (see BRP page 230-231). The glowing fog may cause mutations at the gamemaster's discretion.

GRAVITY STORM

A gravity storm is an unusual phenomenon where local gravity increases or decreases wildly for the duration of the storm. Gravity storms vary in size from a few dozen meters to a few kilometers in diameter. The intensity of the storm is directly proportional to its size, weaker at the edges and stronger in the center. The storms migrate across the surface of Uruta at random at a rate of a few kilometers an hour. Dozens of gravity storms wander across the continent of Markania at any given moment. The shift is generally heralded by a queasy feeling and momentary disorientation lasting nearly a minute. The duration of the storm depends on its size. Small storms may last up to a minute while large ones may last an hour. Most of the time gravity storms are simply a nuisance. Since gravity storms provide plenty of warning, at the first sign of a gravity storm most people exit any structure they are occupying and simply lie still on the ground and wait for it to pass. Especially intense gravity storms may cause structural damage to roofs and walls, or may cause bridges to collapse. Large storms are thankfully rare as their destructive potential rivals that of the most powerful hurricanes or earthquakes.

Roll 1D10 to determine the size, type, and duration of storm:

Roll	Size	Gravity	Duration
1-4	3D6 x 10 meters	x2	2D6 combat rounds
5-8	3D6 x 10 meters	x0.5	2D6 combat rounds
9	1D10 kilometers	x5	1D6x10 minutes
0	1D10 kilometers	x0.2	1D6x10 minutes

During a heavy gravity storm:

- The weight of any object or player character is increased by the increase in gravity. *For example, an increase in gravity of three will cause a 100kg character to weigh 300kg.*
- All physical skills and attributes such as Effort, Athletics, or Jump are capped at a percentage equal to the Resistance table result using the character's STR vs their own SIZ score minus 10% per increase in gravity. *For example, if the character's STR is 16 and SIZ is 15, their attacks are capped at 55% minus 10% for each increase in gravity.*
- All attacks are capped at a percentage equal to the Resistance table result using the character's STR vs their own SIZ score minus 10% per increase in gravity.
- All parries and dodges are capped at a percentage equal to the Resistance table result using the character's STR vs their own SIZ minus 10% per increase in gravity.
- Characters attempting any sort of normal combat during a gravity storm must succeed at a resistance roll using their STR vs their own SIZ minus 10% per increase in gravity each turn to maneuver into position to make an attack.
- Fighting during a heavy gravity storm costs double the normal fatigue points per round.

- The ranges of missile weapons are divided by the increase in gravity, rounded down. *For example, a tripling of gravity will divide the ranges of all missile weapons by three, so a Self Bow will have a close range of 3 instead of 10, a medium range of 6 instead of 20, and a long range of 13 instead of 40.*
- The distance a character is able to jump is divided by the increase in gravity, rounded down.
- The ENC of all items is multiplied by the increase in gravity.
- The damage from falling is multiplied by the increase in gravity.
- Rain, snow, and hail become dangerous projectiles during an intense heavy gravity storm. Precipitation may do one point of damage per round in a small storm, increasing in damage as the severity increases: 1D3, 1D4, 1D6, 1D8, 1D10, and so on.

During a light storm:

- The weight of any item or character is multiplied by the decrease in gravity. *For example, at one-half gravity, a 100kg character will weigh 50kg.*
- The ranges of missile weapons are divided by the decrease in gravity. *For example, one-third gravity will multiply the ranges of all missile weapons by three, so a Self Bow will have a close range of 30 instead of 10, a medium range of 60 instead of 20, and a long range of 120 instead of 40.*
- The ENC of all items is multiplied by the decrease in gravity.
- The damage from falling is multiplied by the decrease in gravity.
- The distance a character is able to jump is divided by the decrease in gravity. *For example, a three-meter jump in one-half gravity becomes a six-meter jump.*

HUNGRY GRASS

The Strangling Coast is home to the dangerous weed known as Hungry grass. Under normal conditions, Hungry grass is like any other grass, save that it is incredibly dense and exudes a sticky sap. Any animal moving through it becomes entangled and is dragged underwater and drowned. Once submerged, schools of small carnivorous fish called flayers move in to devour the hapless victim. A school of flayers can strip a large animal to the bone in less than twenty minutes.

Hungry grass is very strong, strong enough to pull down a juvenile wooly munglor, an anator, or even a skiff or boat. A lucky man may be able to saw his way free from the grasp of the hungry grass before he drowns, but few are able to free their limbs to do so. For this reason, intelligent creatures steer clear of this region and only the desperate or the foolish attempt to make their way through the marsh.

Allow a player character a Spot check and either a Science (Natural History) check or Knowledge (Region) check. If both are successful, the player character has spotted and identified hungry grass so that it might be avoided. A subsequent Science (Natural History) check or Science (Biology) check will determine if the grass is dormant or active. Hungry grass poses no threat when dormant. Active hungry grass, however, will adhere to anything that touches it, including boats and skiffs. A player character so affected may attempt to pull the hungry grass off of them by succeeding at a resistance roll using their STR vs the hungry grass STR of 12. Of course, the grass will simply adhere to any free hand used to pull the grass off an affected limb. Player character may sacrifice gloves, armor, or clothing to escape the grass.

Alternatively, a trapped player character may attempt to pull the grass out by the root by succeeding at a resistance roll using their STR vs the hungry grass STR of 16.

A third way to escape is to cut the grass. The grass has one point of fibrous armor and has six hit points. The grass will, however, adhere to any solid weapon cutting it. Live hungry grass does not easily burn. Besides, any flame powerful enough to damage wet hungry grass will likely burn the trapped character as well.

Companions may attempt to aid an escape attempt. Each assisting companion must make an Effort roll. If successful, the character's escape attempt is increased by 10%.

If the affected character fails at either attempt to escape, at the beginning of the player character's next turn the hungry grass contracts and tries to pull the character prone. The hungry grass must succeed at a resistance roll using its STR of 14 vs the player character's SIZ. If the grass is successful, the affected character is pulled prone, usually underwater, and must suffer the effects of Fighting While Down (see BRP page 223), Entangled (see BRP page 196), Choking, Drowning, and Asphyxiation (see BRP page 219), and Underwater Combat (see BRP page 124), not to mention attacked by one or more schools of flayers (see page 145).

POISON JUNGLE

The poison jungle of Dushan is so-named for every plant and animal native to the habitat is toxic. Mankind may eat no fruit or leaf from any plant, nor the meat of any animal, native to the jungle. Even the water there is toxic. The giant plants of the deep jungle also produce clouds of spores that are likewise toxic to breathe (see Poison Miasma above). Each year, the jungle grows larger.

Any plant or creature native to the poison jungle of Dushan is infused with a POT 3D6 poison. If the poison is consumed, it takes effect in 3-18 minutes. Symptoms include burning pain, vomiting, intense abdominal pain, and convulsions. Even touching something from the poison jungle will cause a painful burning rash similar to a first-degree burn.

SHADOW ZONE

Many are the stories of the ghosts of the dead that haunt battle-grounds, sites of massacres, lost cities, and ancient ruins. The uneducated commoners believe in ghosts and the cursed spirits of the dead. The educated philosophers, more skeptical of the supernatural, postulate that these ghosts are the psychic echoes of those who died, forever etched to the land like shadow cast permanently upon the ground. These psychic shadows represent only the strongest emotions of the dead, the hatred and the bitterness, the animosity, forever burned into a room, building, or area of land. Philosophers have called these haunted locations "Shadow Zones". Those that encounter these "ghosts" often hallucinate or become physically or mentally ill. Anyone that dies a traumatic death as a result of exposure to a shadow zone adds their own psychic signature to the shadow, increasing the size and intensity of the zone.

Occasionally a zone will be created from the shadow of a single individual. The shadow manifests in a way resembling intelligent behavior. The shadow may even possess fragmentary memories burned into its "signature" and may even attempt to communicate. It is unknown if these so-called intelligent shadows are actually self-aware and able to communicate or if they are simply acting in a kind of pre-programmed instinct, like a delayed reflection of someone long dead.

The lost cities of Nazaria and the war-ravaged ruins of Demetria are filled with such disturbing psychic phenomena, and the ruins can be a dangerous place as a result. Some stories tell of shadow energy animating the corpses and bones of the dead, giving the hatred physical form. It is important to remember that these animated remains are simply puppets animated by a phenomenon of nature, though this is little consolation when one must flee for one's life when threatened by this strange phenomenon.

Shadow zones affect specific locations, generally a room, corridor, or area no larger than a few dozen meters across. Exposure to shadow zones cause psychic damage that can be resisted for a short while. A resisting character rolls POW x 10 to resist the effects of the shadow zone. If successful, the multiplier to resist is reduced by one on each successive combat round, POW x 9 on the second round, POW x 8 on the third round, and so on. Once a character fails a roll, or after the tenth successive round of exposure, the character must make a successful roll against their POW x 1 each round or lose a number of power points equal to their total power points. Characters with zero or fewer power points collapse exhausted and barely conscious. The exposed character then loses a permanent point of POW each additional combat round thereafter. If the character's POW is reduced to zero, they become a soulless zombie.

Gamemasters employing the optional rules for Sanity (BRP pages 318-328) may wish to allow a Sanity roll, causing a loss of 1D10 sanity points on a failed roll.

Pseudo-intelligent shadow zones may be treated as ghosts (BRP page 342). Victims of the shadow zone POW drain lose their sanity and become emaciated and starved. They will turn on other characters in a cannibalistic rage. Such victims may be considered zombies (BRP pages 350).



CHAPTER ELEVEN: GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE

Swords of Cydoria is a complex game setting with many opportunities for fun and adventure. Although there are several inherent storylines built into the setting, there is no wrong way to play *Swords of Cydoria*. What follows is information and advice to aid the gamemaster in creating their own stories that capitalize and build on the inherent storylines of the setting.

PREMISE

The following premises are merely suggestions. Each premise focuses on a different aspect of the setting and revolves around a different conflict. The gamemaster and players should choose a premise that interests them or, if none seem sufficient, create a new one. A premise represents the overall structure of the game. The choice of premise determines which character types are most appropriate. For example, a premise involving a group of Imperial soldiers serving in a Markanian frontier outpost will have little room for an aero-ship pilot or a rebellious Techno-Heretic.

ARTIFACT HUNTERS

Artifact Hunters is the story of a group of adventurers who explore the darkest, deepest recesses of the world in search of treasure and knowledge. They seek out ancient Nazarian ruins and brave hostile mutant guardians and deadly traps in the hopes of finding lost artifacts, hidden caches of gold and gems, or simply the answer to an ancient riddle.

This premise combines the thrilling adventures of movie archaeologists with the mercenary antics of the world's most popular fantasy role-playing games. At its simplest, it's about kicking open doors, killing monsters, and taking their stuff. On a more complex level, it's about negotiating with sponsors, competing against rival teams, navigating a dangerous black market, or surviving a double-cross by an employer.

The player characters can either be new recruits into an existing team or they might form their own team. Either way, most artifact hunters promote their services through a factor. The factor seeks out patrons, generally nobles or scholars, and arranges expeditions. Alternatively, a team may take it upon themselves to explore a site without a sponsor with the hope of selling any treasure they recover afterwards.

The expedition usually begins in a remote Markanian village near the site, though there are still plenty of undiscovered ruins in Cydoria. Sponsors generally prefer to hire local talent familiar with the terrain than pay someone from the city for weeks of travel to a remote site with which they have no familiarity. Once the expedition is arranged, there is usually a small amount of overland travel to reach the site. Most Nazarian sites are inhabited by hideous mutated teraxes, the descendants of Zorin's armies, and are protected by ancient traps and puzzles.

Sample Plots

- **The Forgotten Vault of Obla-Ro:** The team is hired by a scholar to mount an expedition into an undiscovered Nazarian ruin. Upon exploring the site, a secret underground vault is discovered. The passages of the vault are home to a tribe of hostile knorrs, maybe a giant man-eating slug monster or two, or a flock of leather-winged mutant xoogs. The passageway to the main vault chamber, and the chamber itself, is protected by deadly traps.
- **Raiders of the Lost Tomb:** The team is on a race to recover a lost artifact before the Imperial military does. The trail leads them across Markania, from the sophisticated balls and nightclubs of Norukar to the remote deserts of Arus, with each side uncovering a new piece of the puzzle before the other.
- **Selling the Loot:** Upon securing a valuable artifact from a recent expedition, the team must secure a buyer. If the University of Vrildar finds out about this treasure, they will demand it be handed over with no payment. Unfortunately, they have the law on their side. One alternative is a private auction. However, not all the potential clients are willing to pay what the item is worth but are more than willing to hire thieves to steal it from the team before the auction. A final alternative is to fence it on the black market, but what happens when the team's fence winds up dead with the artifact missing and the team is implicated in the murder and theft?

FLIGHT OF THE TONBO

Named for the giant dragonfly mounts of the jungle people of Korula, the Tonbo is an independent aero-transport owned by Captain Kak Resko, a Demetrian and a veteran of the War of Unification. The Tonbo is a tramp trader, travelling from port to port wherever the job takes it and Captain Resko hires on crew as needed for the journey. The tramp trade is hardly profitable and Captain Resko has been known to take on the occasional irregular and illegal job to help make ends meet. Captain Resko is part aero-ship captain, smuggler, mercenary, freelance spy, and bandit for hire. The Tonbo and its crew travel across Markania, visiting the smallest settlement and the largest city, wherever the mission, or the promise of a mission, takes them.

The player characters are members of Captain Resko's crew. The dangerous nature and unpredictability of Resko's missions means he often has need for crew members with a variety of skills. Mercenaries, con-men, techno-heretics, pilots, thieves, and more, all have a place in his crew. One mission might have them running a blockade to smuggle weapons to the resistance. Another might have the crew robbing a bank. It is up to the gamemaster and players to determine just how illegal and just how mercenary Resko is. Perhaps Resko is completely amoral, looking out for no one but himself and his crew. Or maybe Resko has a heart of gold and limits to what he's willing to do or who he's willing to work for. Alternatively, Resko could be completely depraved, willing to steal from orphanages and kill anyone that stands in his way. Whatever his sense of morality, one thing is constant. Resko has no love for the Empire after the destruction of Demetria and the occupation of the countries allied with the Coalition.

The gamemaster might draw inspiration for stories from the science fiction adventures of Han Solo, Lando Calrissian, Nicolas van Rijn, John Grimes, or Malcolm Reynolds. Swashbuckling tales of piracy on the high seas are a good source for appropriate stories. Because the Tonbo travels from town to town, the gamemaster is afforded an opportunity to be creative in creating new NPCs and locales. The gamemaster should strive to create memorable recurring NPCs that make their reappearance whenever the Tonbo returns to a certain town, or perhaps some NPCs are fellow travelers, popping up in other towns across Markania.

Sample Plots

- **Dangerous Cargo:** The crew of the Tonbo is hired to transport a cargo that is wanted by a powerful organization. Perhaps it's the Hidden Hand syndicate, perhaps the Dazumi pirates, perhaps either the Imperial military or the Demetrian resistance wants it. Whatever the cargo, it's dangerous but worth a high reward if they deliver it on time. Perhaps the cargo itself is dangerous. It could be a caged mutant monster that escapes en route, or an ancient plague of Zorin that infects the crew. In this case, the crew will be lucky if they even survive, much less collect on delivery.
- **Enemy Among Us:** The crew is hired to transport a passenger. The passenger is actually a homicidal murderer who is transporting a dangerous cargo (see above). Perhaps the killer passenger is actually a mutant shape changer, or unwittingly harboring a dangerous parasitic organism that escapes to kill and eat the rest of the crew.
- **Down Time:** The crew is in between cargo runs and short on gold coins. Desperate, they decide to dabble in a little contract work. The work could be an illegal enterprise, or just an odd-job that needs doing. This type of story allows the crew to participate in any number of stories not normally associated with the Tonbo.
- **Teenage Runaway:** The crew of the Tonbo finds itself the guardian of a teenage runaway. Either the teenager was rescued by the crew or found stowed away. The runaway might be fleeing a dangerous and abusive family member with powerful political or military connections. Perhaps the runaway was the witness to a crime and the criminals want them dead. Perhaps the runaway is a bride fleeing an undesirable marriage to an evil warlord or criminal that wants her back. The runaway might even be a kidnap victim who managed to escape and is just trying to get home.
- **Pirate Season:** The crew is hired to make a series of runs through an area infested by aero-pirates. The crew must use all their wits and fighting skills to avoid capture.

THE GREAT GAME OF CYDORIA

The noble houses of Cydoria are constantly competing against each other for influence, power, and honor. The stakes of this ongoing contest include political power, favorable judgments in legal proceedings, lucrative business contracts, land, access to natural resources, and beneficial trade arrangements, all awarded, administered, or coordinated by the feudal hierarchy. Power and authority normally flows down, delegated from kings to dukes, from dukes to counts, and from counts to barons. Occasionally, resourceful barons may be awarded an especially profitable contract or powerful political position normally awarded by a duke to a count. Or likewise a count may be the recipient of prize normally awarded to a duke. These special arrangements are rare but are the goal of every noble.

The competition among the nobles is therefore literally cut-throat. Nobles hire saboteurs, thieves, and assassins to disrupt the ambitions of their rivals, as well as security experts to disrupt any machinations directed against their own house. These activities are highly illegal and nobles take great pains to maintain the secrecy of their activities.

The player characters are the members of a team hired by a noble to conduct operations against their rivals. Operations range from simple intelligence gathering to kidnapping, coercion, assassination, theft, or sabotage. The team may or may not know the identity of their employer. There are benefits to employing the services of trustworthy and loyal servants as well as the anonymity of hiring strangers with no connection to the noble, perhaps adding an extra layer of protection by working through a factor to arrange each mission. The team may be long-term retainers or freelance mercenaries.

Gamemasters might seek inspiration from books, TV series, and films involving ensemble casts with a team of ne'er do well rogues on dangerous missions involving espionage or crime. Sources include Mission Impossible series and films, Heat, Oceans 11, Ronin, Reservoir Dogs, Italian Job, the Dirty Dozen, and similarly-themed films and series.

The stories are primarily urban, predominantly taking place in the eastern cities, especially the technologically advanced cities of the Vrildarian Empire. The missions might take the characters from city to city. Gamemasters should play up the different flavors of each city and their inhabitants. Nobles should be decadent, so removed from the commoner as to be almost alien. Equip the player characters with advanced alien technology, especially single-use spy-gadgets or espionage equipment. The player characters should also have a chance to go undercover, perhaps attending a banquet or masquerade ball. The double-cross is a traditional element of these types of stories. However, refrain from having the mission sponsor double-cross the player characters. This has been done so many times it has become trite and players have come to expect it.

Sample Plots

- **Extraction.** A noted scientist has been condemned to ten years of peonage to a noble house for failure to pay his debts. The team's sponsor assigns them to kidnap the scientist and his family and escort them to a secret location in the Apparian Mountains. There, the scientist will be given freedom and a new identity in exchange for exclusive access to his work. The team must break into the rival compound and extract the scientist, his notes, and his family, then travel to the remote secret location without getting captured or followed.
- **Industrial Espionage.** A rival noble house has been awarded a gift from the emperor: a new alien technology that will give them an edge over the team's employers. The team must infiltrate the industrial compound of the rival house and either steal, sabotage, or destroy the new technology. This scenario can be turned around. Perhaps the team's employers were awarded the new technology. It's up to the team to develop a counter-espionage plan to thwart any rival's attempts to steal or destroy it.
- **Runaway.** A Vrildarian industrial concern has been attempting to secretly breed and train a species of mutant capable of changing its shape. Unfortunately, one has escaped. It is highly intelligent and capable of blending in with normal humans. Unfortunately, humans are its chief source of sustenance. Should news of the creature's escape become public, the industrial concern will lose its imperial charter. The team is hired to track and kill the creature before anyone finds out. However, the team must also deal with a city prefect investigating the mysterious deaths which will ultimately lead to the creature.

THE HERESY OF INVENTION

Techno-heretics oppose the restrictions on technological development imposed by the Octavium and the reinforced by the Vrildarian Empire. They work in secret laboratories and garages disassembling, re-building, repairing, and inventing.

Techno-heretics are scorned by fearful villagers, persecuted by jealous initiates of the Octavium, and hunted by the Imperial Inquisition. Alternatively, techno-heretics are often sought out by Demetrian resistance fighters, artifact hunters, and those who have no fear of technology and no love for the Imperial laws against it.

Techno-heretics provide agricultural equipment to farmers, industrial equipment to laborers, excavation and construction machines to builders and miners, medical devices to physicians, and weapons and armor to resistance fighters. Although techno-heretics work in secret, they do not work alone. They are assisted by the services of an entourage.

The player characters are members of techno-heretic's circle. Perhaps one of the player characters is a techno-heretic or is apprenticed to one. Besides the techno-heretic, each circle requires one or more warriors to provide security and one or more factors, merchants, and negotiators to arrange transactions and distribution of the contraband. Techno-heretics often deal with alien smugglers to obtain new technological devices and must, therefore, risk encounters with the Inquisition. Techno-heretics also maintain contacts within the Vrildarian Empire, sympathetic nobles and agents who stand to profit from their work..

Stories about techno-heretics can be set in a single location or can be about a travelling circle. The advantage of a single location is that the gamemaster can develop the locale and the inhabitants. Recurring NPCs become memorable and are fun for the gamemaster and the players. Players become familiar with local landmarks and terrain. A story about a travelling entourage presents different advantages. It becomes easier for the entourage to maintain its secrecy and the gamemaster has more options for different types of stories. Techno-Heretics and their entourages may also fit into other stories, especially Artifact Hunters, Remember Demetria, Savage Frontier, or Flight of the Tonbo.

Stories about reclusive wizards, persecuted witches, mad scientists, and misunderstood geniuses are perfect fodder for stories about The Heresy of Invention. Movies like Dragonslayer, the Sorcerer's Apprentice, and the Name of the Rose are good sources of inspiration. Gamemasters might even seek inspiration from stories from real life geniuses. Luminaries such as Galileo, Leonardo daVinci, Francis Bacon, Thomas Edison, and Nikola Tesla are all good examples of techno-heretics.

Sample Plots

- **Dangerous Rendezvous.** The entourage reluctantly seeks out the assistance of a powerful crime lord. The crime lord possesses a Gate Key and can arrange a rendezvous with alien smugglers. The crime lord will make the arrangements, but only if the entourage first smuggles a mysterious package into one of the cities of the Vrildarian Empire.
- **Missing Pieces.** The techno-heretic requires a supply of a specific part to complete his current project. The entourage is tasked with finding a supply of these parts. Unfortunately, the entourage discovers that the parts can only be obtained from the heavily fortified warehouse of a Imperial noble and they are scheduled to be shipped away in a few days. The entourage must steal these parts before they are shipped away.
- **Bad Timing.** Another techno-heretic is in town to meet with his local colleague. Unfortunately, a team of Inquisitors has also come searching for techno-heretics to arrest. The inquisitors offer a substantial reward and a few of the villagers might be tempted to turn them in. The entourage must protect both the local techno-heretic and the visitor while dealing with possible betrayal by one or more of the villagers.

REMEMBER DEMETRIA

At the end of the War of Unification, Baron Urik escaped the destruction of Demetria and immediately founded an organized resistance to Imperial occupation. Secret cells of resistance fighters have sprung up across the Cydorian peninsula and even into Markania. Remember Demetria is the story of one such cell. The player characters are terrorists, rebels, spies, saboteurs, and rabble-rousers. They do what they can to harass and foil Imperial military and political activity. Resistance cells depend on secrecy and subterfuge to avoid retaliation from the Imperial military. They operate out of hidden bases. They wear masks or clever disguises to conceal their identities. They work in secret or in the dark of night.

Stories involving the Demetrian resistance might be inspired by, borrow from, or closely resemble those of the rebellion against the Galactic Empire, any of the hundreds of stories of the French resistance in World War Two, or even Zorro or Robin Hood. In all of these stories, a small band of brave resistance fighters must struggle against the tyranny of an oppressive regime using secrecy and sabotage.

The player characters are members of a resistance cell. Resistance cells must, by their very nature, be highly independent. Each cell might have one or two contacts with other cells, or with a cell coordinator, but are otherwise protected by their own anonymity. Although each cell ultimately swears allegiance to Baron Urik, each cell is essentially on its own. The player characters may be veteran leaders of the cell, escorting new recruits on dangerous missions, or they could themselves be newly recruited.

Sample Plots

- **Barbarian Mission:** The resistance is seeking the aid of a barbarian tribe. The cell is tasked with making contact with the tribe and negotiating an arrangement. Unfortunately, the Imperial fort has secretly supplied the tribe with neuro-stims, to which the tribe is now addicted. The team must stop the flow of neuro-stims and overcome the treachery of the power-hungry tribesman who made the deal with the Empire in the first place.
- **Prison Break:** An important Demetrian prisoner, such as a scientist or leader, has been captured and is being held captive in a nearby Imperial fortress. The prisoner will be transferred to an aero-ship bound for a western prison camp, or perhaps publically executed, in a few short days. The team must infiltrate the fortress and effect the escape of the prisoner.
- **Stop the Shipment:** The team is tasked with capturing or destroying a shipment of alien weapons when the aero-transport docks at a nearby recharging station. The aero-transport is guarded by a full squad of soldiers.



SAVAGE FRONTIER

The Arusian desert is a dangerous unforgiving place. The hardy colonists that live here face an inhospitable climate, ravenous monstrosities, hostile natives, corrupt military patrols, and ruthless bandits. Few colonies survive more than two years. A few lucky colonies are able to call on the services of a volunteer constable for protection; others must rely on the services of paid mercenaries for defense.

The player characters have answered the call for help. They are either volunteers or mercenaries for hire. The player characters might be permanent residents, assigned to the task for a limited duration, or tasked with stopping or eliminating a single specific threat. In all cases, they've stepped up to defend a small Arusian colony from the many threats that confront it.

The gamemaster may draw inspiration from any story of the Wild West. Films such as High Noon, Silverado, Appaloosa, and The Magnificent Seven are especially appropriate. By setting the story in a single small town, the gamemaster is able to develop the locale and supporting cast. The players get to know the locals and will develop a sense of their surroundings and their opposition.

Sample Plots

- **The Magnificent Defenders:** The town is under threat from a gang of nomadic bandits. The bandits could be a barbarian tribe, or veterans of the War of Unification with nowhere else to go, or a conglomeration of exiles from the surrounding territories. Word has come that the bandits are near and could hit this town next. The townspeople are not fighters, it is up to the defenders to stand up to the mance of the bandit gang.
- **Liberty:** A nearby unit of Imperial soldiers has come to town to blow off some steam. The defenders must decide how they feel about the Imperial military and how welcome they want to make them feel. Eventually, the soldiers get a little rowdy and begin to destroy some properties and take some liberties with the local girls. Eventually, one of the locals with a reason to hate the Empire is killed. The townsfolk believe it is murder and is ready to lynch the accused soldier. The soldier claims self-defense, and it may have been. It is up to the defenders to resolve the situation. The townsfolk are turning into an angry mob and the other soldiers are ready to do whatever it takes to free their imprisoned comrade. If any of the soldiers are killed, it might draw down retaliation from the Imperial military. However, simply imprisoning the soldier will result in a slap on the wrist when the military comes to retrieve him. It is up to the defenders to resolve the situation.
- **The Corrupt Baron:** The Vrildarian baron that controls the town is notoriously corrupt and the townsfolk have asked for the help of the defenders in eliminating him. The baron has his own force of hired goons and loyal henchmen to defend his claim to power. It's up to the defenders to take him out.
- **Feud:** Two rival families are in dispute over water rights and access to grazing lands. The rivalry is ready to turn deadly and a feud is imminent. It is up to the defenders to resolve the situation before blood is spilled or, failing that, end it for both sides as quickly as possible.
- **Missing Children:** Several children have been kidnapped from local homes in the past few weeks. The townsfolk are justifiably alarmed and evidence points to the nearby tribe of native barbarians known as the Baho. The townsfolk are ready to go to war against the tribe, but further evidence suggests it may be the work of the subterranean lizard men known as Tintazi, a devious ploy to set the human surface dwellers against each other. It is up to the defenders to uncover the truth, rescue the children, and stop the war on the surface before it happens.

THEMES

All of the premises of *Swords of Cydoria* share certain themes. The following section describes each of these themes so that gamemasters may capitalize on them in their adventures.

IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is a geopolitical situation where one nation dominates or controls another nation for commercial or political gain. Imperialism is a central theme of the *Swords of Cydoria*. Vrildar occupies and controls the other nations and city-states of Cydoria through the Vrildarian Empire. The eastern cities of Cydoria occupy and control the colonial territories of western Markania. The Rhakadian League controls a trade monopoly with the Vrildarian Empire to ensure sole access to Uruta's resources, and it would like nothing better than to directly conquer and occupy Uruta if they had the chance.

The history of the real world is filled with sources of inspiration for a gamemaster wishing to explore this theme. The Rhakadian efforts to exploit Uruta and the emperor's restrictions in trade and access are inspired by the colonial experiences of Japan and China. The war between the Vrildarian Empire and the Coalition of Timan is an extremely watered down and highly modified version of the American Civil War. Likewise, the colonization of the Markanian continent is inspired by the westward migration of the American pioneers.

RESISTANCE

Much of the conflict of *Swords of Cydoria* stems from one nation or group's desire to control another. Imperialism directly drives another central theme, that of resistance. Many groups exist to oppose the tyranny of imperial oppression in one form or another. The Demetrian resistance fights against the Imperial occupation. The Order of the Techno-Heretics resists the suppression of technology by the Inquisition. The protagonists of *Savage Frontier* resist the forces of anarchy and chaos surrounding them. Even the Vrildarian Empire resists the imperial ambitions of the Rhakadian League.

FREEDOM

Ultimately, resistance is about the desire for freedom in the face of oppression. This freedom can take many forms, from the political to the personal. Each of the premises reflects this desire for freedom in different ways. Each premise is defined by what kind of freedom it represents and how the player characters view society.

In *Remember Demetria*, the resistance fights for political freedom from the tyranny of political oppression. The resistance rejects society but must operate within it, disguised, hidden.

In contrast, the agents of the Great Game of Cydoria are a part of society, a necessary evil. They operate within the existing society and have no interest in changing the social order. However, they still fight for freedom: the freedom of their patron from the oppression of their peers. It is a cynical form of political freedom, but it is profitable.

The techno-heretics fight for more abstract concepts of freedom: the freedom of information and ideas and the belief that technological equality creates social equality. They, too, must operate in secret, but they do not reject society. The techno-heretics wish to be a part of society; they strive to improve society from within. The tyranny of the Empire, however, prevents their assimilation.

Each of the premises of the Artifact Hunters, Savage Frontier, and *the Flight of the Tonbo* represent a desire for personal independence, to be in control of one's own destiny. Each premise features characters that live on the fringe of society, though each views society through a uniquely different lens.

Artifact hunters are independent freelancers exploring the unknown. They exist on the ragged edge of society and their exploits plumb the mysterious remains of the ancients are simply a metaphor for their own quest for definition and identity. They flee society. In many ways, they reject society in favor of the unexplored wilderness.

The crew of the Tonbo, likewise, lives on the fringe of society. Where the teams of artifact hunters are the vanguard pushing the boundaries away from society, the crew of the Tonbo is trying to hide within the cracks of society, trying to avoid notice without ever leaving it entirely, opportunistically picking up the scraps that fall through the cracks.

The heroes of Savage Frontier, too, exist on the outer edge of society. They seek personal freedom and independence on the open deserts of Arus. They are not fighting for grand political ideals; they resist the tyranny of local threats: bandits, warlords, barbarians, and monstrosities. Savage Frontier characters plant their banner in the soil and stand firm. They do not hide, they do not run, they do not fight or reject society. They have come to the edge of civilization and have established a foothold. It may not be exactly the same society as that found in eastern Cydoria, but it is civilization, law, and social order in the wilderness.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Another major theme of *Swords of Cydoria* is technological change. Within a generation, the lands of Cydoria have gone from iron-age city-states to technologically advanced nations with electricity, vehicles, energy weapons, and robotics. This, of course, is tied to the theme of imperialism and mirrors the historical experiences of real-world places such as India, Africa, Southeast Asia, Japan, and others.

The social order of the city-states of Cydoria exists in a precarious state. If not for the possession of the Gate Keys, the Rhakadians would have long ago landed their armada on Uruta and enslaved its inhabitants. If not for the technology provided to the Empire, The War of Unification would never have happened. Finally, if not for the visionary restrictions King Varinor placed on the spread of that technology, who can say what other chaotic upheavals the societies of Cydoria would have had to endure?

Technology is power, and *Swords of Cydoria*, at its heart, is about the struggle for that technology and the power, freedom, and responsibility, that comes with it.

EPIC STRUGGLES

Most of the conflicts represented in *Swords of Cydoria* take the form of epic struggles between larger-than-life characters with the fate of entire nations at stake. Even the personal struggles of the crew in *Flight of the Tonbo* or the townspeople in *Savage Frontier* are small-scale representations of world-shaking conflicts.

THE PSUEDO-SUPERNATURAL

Arthur C. Clarke famously said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." The axiom holds true for the world represented in *Swords of Cydoria*. In Cydoria, there are no all-powerful gods, only legendary figures from pre-history and powerful but still-mortal entities worshipped as such. There are no ghosts or zombies, only psychic echoes and corpses animated through nanotechnology. Demons and spirits are, in fact, artificial intelligences. Strange beasts are the result of genetic experiments, mutations, and uncontrolled terraforming. The magic spells of bio-mancers and techno-heretics are actually applications of super-advanced technology from a mythic age. Even the Guardians of Adhara and the Psi-Mages of Sarkaan, capable of superhuman feats, are really harnessing an energy field put in place by ancient engineers.

In Cydoria, all seemingly supernatural and magical phenomena have pseudo-scientific or techno-magical rationales behind them. This distinction is part of the flavor of the setting.

Although the setting has no truly supernatural phenomena by design, gamemasters should not feel so restrained. If a player wishes to play a character with psychic powers or a holy man capable of performing true miracles, it is for the gamemaster to decide. Likewise, if the gamemaster wishes to include actual fire-breathing dragons, demons from the netherworlds, or a powerful dark wizard, the setting is open enough to allow their inclusion.

GENRE

Swords of Cydoria borrows from several genres to create a mélange, a mash-up of multiple genres. The following genres inspired *Swords of Cydoria*. Gamemasters may seek out other works in those genres to find inspiration for their own stories.

SWORD AND SORCERY

The Sword and Sorcery genre is a major influence on *Swords of Cydoria*. Prior to the arrival of the Rhakadians, Cydoria was essentially a Sword and Sorcery setting: Iron Age kingdoms surrounded by barbarian tribes; mad wizards locked in forbidding towers; mouldering ruins haunted by horrible beasts; steely-thewed heroes strode across the land, cutting a swath of destruction with sword and spear.

Even after the arrival of the Rhakadians, the setting retains a strong flavor of its earlier days. Only now, the lantern-jawed warrior from the northern tribe carries the sword of his forefathers in one hand, and a plasma pistol in the other.

SCIENCE FICTION

Swords of Cydoria is, of course, also firmly entrenched in the science fiction genre. The Rhakadians are an evil corporation from Mars. The Phanosians are a benevolent humanitarian organization from Venus. Although there is no faster-than-light drive, the solar system is more than large enough to encompass an inter-

planetary cold war between two technologically advanced space empires. Away from Uruta, fleets of space-ships clash in the cold void. Dashing transport pilots defy the Rhakadian blockade of Uruta to smuggle weapons and equipment to freedom fighters on the planet's surface. Only the protective force field that surrounds Uruta prevents the world from becoming a full-fledged battleground between the opposing forces. This is the stuff of science fiction adventure and space opera.

WILD WEST

The Cydorian colonies of Markania are, of course, steeped in the trappings and lore of the tales and adventures of the American Wild West. Isolated outposts of civilization surrounded by wilderness and danger. Dusty plains, hostile natives, a distant homeland far to the east are all hallmarks of western stories. Stories of brave volunteers facing off against bandits are just as at home as tales of desperate men planning the ultimate heist. Although their conflicts seem small and private, the sweeping vistas of the untamed landscape give their tales weight and grandeur beyond their seemingly personal scope.

KUNG FU AND CHANBARA

Stories of kung fu masters and samurai warriors have long echoed those of the Wild West, and *Swords of Cydoria* incorporates elements from these genres into its stories. The fighting skills of these ancient warriors are legendary to the point of ascribing them magical powers. The kung fu and chanbara genres emphasize battles between skilled individuals over matters of honor, loyalty, and duty. The stories of the Guardians of Adhara attempts to capture the essence of these genres. The Guardians of Adhara are samurai warriors with magical kung fu powers. The Oculus are ronin, without honor or sense of duty. The Katari are, likewise, diabolical ninja assassins.

PLANETARY ROMANCE

Swords of Cydoria owes a great debt to the planetary romance stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Lin Carter, and others. These thrilling adventure tales were the first to combine elements of science fiction with swords and sorcery. Planetary romance stories are an outgrowth of early pulp adventure stories, replacing exotic locations such as Asia, the Middle East, or Africa with fantastic alien worlds. Such stories feature bold adventurers armed with a sword in one hand and a radium pistol in the other battling enemy hordes and slaving monstrosities for the love of a fair princess. *Swords of Cydoria* incorporates many elements of planetary romance into its setting and history.

META-PLOTS

The setting described in *Swords of Cydoria* introduces several long-term meta-plots which could be incorporated into any given premise or ignored altogether at the gamemaster's discretion. Several of the meta-plots inherent in the setting are described below with suggestions as to how the gamemaster might play out the meta-plot to its conclusion.

THE DEMETRIAN RESISTANCE

At the end of the War of Unification, Baron Urik escaped Talen with Princess Iti, the heiress to the Demetrian throne. Princess Iti was struck blind by the weapon that destroyed Talen and has not been heard from since. Baron Urik, however, has been active in organizing resistance cells against Imperial occupation and

other military activities. If Princess Itti is still alive, she would be twenty-two years old. It is rumored that Baron Urik keeps her hidden and protected, either in a secret resistance headquarters or perhaps even off-world on Phanos, waiting for the day when the Vrildarian Empire will be overthrown and the people of Demetria can once again rally under their native flag with the princess as their rightful sovereign.

How Baron Urik plans to win back Demetria is anyone's guess. One possible solution is to re-establish a new free Demetria somewhere in Markania, calling all the exiled Demetrian outcasts to settle in this new homeland free from Imperial rule. Player characters may be hired to escort Demetrian refugees to their new homeland, perhaps in Bansya or in some other hidden valley on the western coast.

Another option is to bring about the Emperor Viktor's downfall and cause the dissolution of the Vrildarian Empire. Viktor has no heirs. Should he die or abdicate, the Conclave of Succession must select the next emperor from a short list of eligible nobles: Viktor's sister Princess Vlandra, Queen Chador of Norukar, King Vilnius of Guerna, King Tyran of Tyrannis, and King Kafir of Zinj. Urik's best hope would be for Princess Vlandra to succeed. She detests court politics and may even harbor secret sympathies for the plight of the Demetrians. On top of that, she is an eligible bachelorette. Gamemasters may create a story where Baron Urik and Princess Vlandra are secretly lovers, or perhaps even one of the player characters if appropriate. Such a union would prove to be dangerous for the groom but the rewards for the Demetrians would be immeasurable.

Failing a royal wedding, the player characters may work to sow dissent among the nobles of the Vrildarian Empire. The only thing uniting them currently is Emperor Viktor's monopoly on alien technology through his access to the Gate Keys. Should a rival noble obtain their own Gate Key, the monopoly could be broken and the Empire could easily dissolve.

A more cynical strategy would provide the Rhakadians with their own Gate Key. If the Rhakadians had their own, they would no longer need to deal with Viktor and would have free access to the resources of Uruta. The Vrildarian Empire would fall, but so too would all the people of Uruta as the Rhakadian armada would simply invade and conquer, taking what they needed and turning Cydoria into a Rhakadian colony.

THE INTERPLANETARY COLD WAR

The activities of Phanosian and Rhakadian agents on Uruta are simply a manifestation of the larger conflict between the two powers throughout known space. The two interplanetary megapowers are currently in a state of uneasy détente. Both sides realize that an all-out war would be costly and would likely result in the economic and social collapse of both sides. Their conflict continues in the form of proxy conflicts on Uruta and through a secret war of espionage and secret agents.

Player characters are easily drawn into this conflict on Uruta. The Phanosians back the Demetrian resistance in the hopes of one day ending the relationship between the Empire and the Rhakadian League. The League supports the Inquisition because it ferrets out secret Phanosian activities. Both sides hire freelance espionage agents to carry out missions against the other. Both sides

try to land their own secret agents to work among the natives, though the Phanosians are much more successful at this due to their superficial resemblance to Urutan humans.

There are rumors that one or both sides have been able to construct secret bases on Uruta from which they are able to support and coordinate the activities of their agents. This may be nothing more than an urban legend, but everyone believes it to be true.

One possible ultimate outcome of the player characters' involvement in interplanetary politics is the ability to leave Uruta and explore the cosmos. Leaving Uruta opens an entirely new vista for adventure. The story might take the player characters to the steamy jungles of Phanos, the cold arid wastes of Malus, the city-world of Tsisiris, the dismal caverns of Melkior, the densely populated space cities, the mysterious and alien Zhuvian Halo, or the industrial factories of Dadan.

THE RETURN OF ZORIN

Zorin, the immortal wizard responsible for Retribution Plague and the fall of the ancient Nazarian civilization, creator of the xoogs and the monstrous teraxes, is, of course, still alive. At the end of The War of Zorin, he placed himself in suspended animation deep within a secret bunker somewhere in the Apparian mountains. Three thousand five hundred years later, he has arisen.

Zorin ultimately plans to call his children to him in order to regain his power and establish a new empire. If and how he does so is up to the gamemaster's preference.

One option would be the quiet return. This plot builds on conspiracies and long-term planning. Zorin's return has been secretly in the works for years. His first task upon waking was to create a new force of xoogs and teraxes loyal only to himself. He then sent forth his agents to survey the land. After a few years, they brought back news of the world that awaited him. Using this knowledge, he has managed to insert xoog agents into strategic positions in various cities. His agents are ready to simultaneously activate xoog mind control devices all across the continent. On the appointed day, he will take control of all the xoogs and launch a coordinated strike against all the major cities of Cydoria. His army will march on the capitals, overwhelm the armies, and depose the feeble leaders that stand in his way. His return will be heralded by an orgy of blood and destruction.

Alternatively, he could take a more direct approach. He could wake and reactivate his mountain fortress, using mind control over the xoogs and teraxes, calling them to him. He will re-build his army and his forces shall march on the kingdoms of Cydoria as a horde of ravenous locusts. The nations of Cydoria will fall and he alone shall be emperor of the world.

The return of Zorin provides the player characters with plenty of opportunities to re-build the setting. They would need to unite enemies, providing an opportunity to set aside the enmity of the War of Unification to fight a more dangerous opponent. They might have to make a new deal with the Rhakadians, but that option might be worse than Zorin. They might have to undertake a perilous overland quest to Mount Daros, in the very shadow of Zorin's mountain fortress, to destroy an ancient ring, a molecularly encoded key that Zorin needs to activate his xoog mind control machine.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE SDARA VATRA

Nine thousand years ago, the Sdara Vatra came from space to settle the world of Uruta. The civilization thrived for one thousand years. They built great cities of exotic materials, so large and so extensive that their ruins today form small mountain ranges. Their technology and science was as magic and many still consider them a nation of wizards and sorcerers. Then they disappeared. No one knows what happened to them?

THE TRUTH

In truth, the age of the Sdara Vatra reaches back much further than nine thousand years, nor were the Sdara Vatra the first major civilization to rise on Uruta. An even earlier global civilization, one much like our own, collapsed due to world-wide war over the last of Uruta's fossil fuel resources seventeen thousand years before the time of Cydoria.

That unnamed earlier civilization left a thousand years of primitive devastation in its wake. Eventually, the early Sdara Vatra built their first primitive cities on the continent of Aerapa. The Aerapans quickly advanced and within another thousand years became a space-faring civilization, surpassing their predecessor and colonizing the solar system. Thus was born the great Solar Federation.

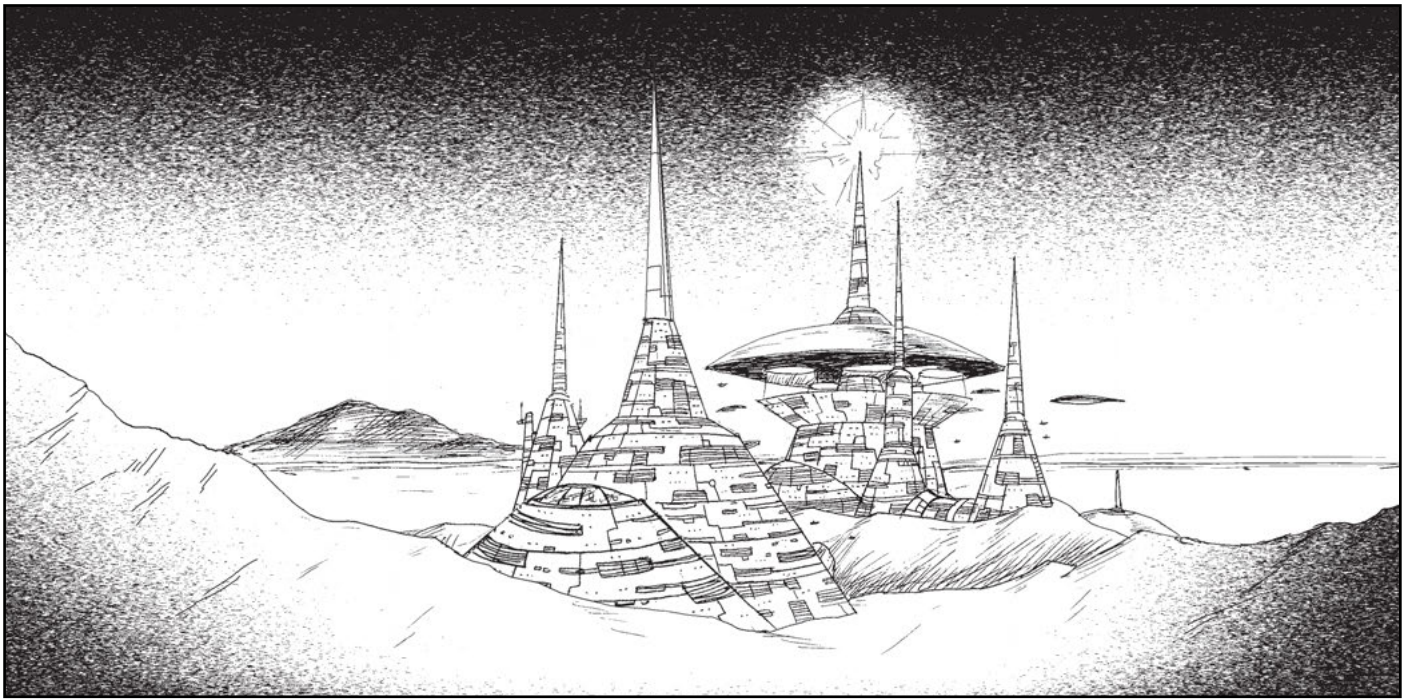
What follows is the lost history of the Sdara Vatra race, chronicling the rise and fall of that legendary civilization. This history is unknown to all Cydorians save the most ancient sages and savants, and what little they know is fragmentary, contradictory, and subject to debate.

URUTA IS ABANDONED

Fifteen thousand years ago, the technologically advanced Aerapans culture discovered that two rogue planetoids, Kur and Asag, were on a collision course with Uruta. The people of Uruta had three thousand years to evacuate the planet. Thus began a mass exodus of the world. By the arrival of the rogue moons, nearly half the human population lived in space or on other planets. The new interplanetary cultures of humanity no longer considered themselves purely Aerapan. They had, in fact, become many cultures on many worlds.

The two planetoids approached as predicted, orbiting around each other like an astronomical bola hurtling through space. Asag collided with Uruta's eastern hemisphere, causing massive tectonic upheavals. Faults shifted and new mountain ranges surged forth. Millions of people, those that either refused to or were unable to leave the homeworld, perished. Despite the holocaustic destruction, the planet itself remained intact. Kur collided with Uruta's only moon, smashing it into several massive chunks. The much denser Kur, however, retained its spherical shape. The debris from the collision became a planetary ring. Uruta was peppered with fragmentary meteoroids, large and small, like a shotgun blast from space, creating vast craters across much of its surface.

All life on Uruta died in decades of fire, flood, winter, and desolation. As a result of its collision with Asag and the subsequent rain of debris from the remnants of the moon, Uruta had become a lifeless world of ice and ash.



THE RISE OF THE COLONIES

Uruta was abandoned and, for the time being, uninhabitable. The planet itself was intact, however, and mankind would one day return. In the meantime, outer space became man's domain. The terraformed worlds of Malus and Phanos were soon home to large populations and flourishing human civilizations. Underground cities were built on Dadan. Tsiris was hollowed out and became an artificial world. Dozens of city-sized space habitats were built in Zhuvian orbit. Thousands of space-cities orbited the sun. The new interplanetary civilization formed the Solar Federation and its political and culture center lay in the Zhuvian habitats. A new golden age of peace and prosperity for mankind existed for two thousand years.

Eventually, the Solar Federation decided to terraform Uruta, restoring it to its pre-collision state so that it could be recolonized. Massive genetic engineering projects would recreate in several thousand years what it took natural evolution billions of years to achieve.

In time, two schools of thought arose regarding the terraformation of Uruta. The people of Malus saw no point in terraforming. They believed Uruta should remain lifeless and that it should be exploited for its newly exposed natural resources. The people of Phanos believed that Uruta needed to be restored and repopulated with life. The two conflicting viewpoints became philosophical dogma, with the Malusians advocating exploitation and the Phanosians advocating restoration. The opposing philosophies erupted into interplanetary war between the two super powers.

THE SOLAR WAR

By Cydorian reckoning the Solar War, as it was contemporarily known, began over ten thousand years ago. On one side of the war were Malus and its allies from Tsiris and the space-cities. On the other were Phanos and the Zhuvian Halo. The Solar Federation was effectively dissolved.

The war was fought across the entire solar system with massive fleets of gargantuan space ships clashing in titanic battles. Cities were destroyed, space habitats were obliterated, vast armies clashed on the surfaces of alien worlds.

The war went badly for Malus. Ultimately, Phanos was victorious. A few centuries after their defeat, the civilization of Malus collapsed due to factional conflict and civil war. The Solar Federation was re-formed.

THE GUARDIANS OF URUTA

After the war, Phanos set about restoring the biosphere of Uruta. Uruta was a blasted wasteland where nothing could grow. Massive atmosphere processors scrubbed the atmosphere of dust and ash. Weather-control satellites manipulated climates. Fast-growing plants were reintroduced. Animals were genetically engineered to survive the new environment, reproduce new generations quickly, and repopulate the land. New species were forming in decades and centuries instead of over millions of years.

The Solar Federation established several city-sized research stations on Uruta's surface. These stations were sealed from the inhospitable climate outside and were staffed by scientists and colonists. The purpose of these stations was to oversee and guide the terraforming process. The colonists and scientists became known as "Guardians" and would one day evolve into the Guardians of Adhara.

In the aftermath of the Solar War, planetary force fields were constructed to protect both Uruta and Phanos. By the Cydorian era, this protective barrier would become known as the Oudh.

THE TECHNO-PLAGUE AND THE AGE OF DARKNESS

A thousand years after the Solar War, The Solar Federation faced an unforeseen crisis. A techno-plague swept the solar system, replicating itself through the artificial intelligences, robots, and computers that controlled society. The origin of the techno-plague is unclear. Many believed it to be a natural evolution of artificial intelligences, others believed it was a secret weapon created by the Malusians during the Solar War, a few suspected an extraterrestrial genesis. Whatever its origin, the techno-plague killed billions as computers, robots, and vehicles became killing machines. Mankind was forced to abandon the cities and all technology to live a primitive existence of survival in the countryside. The space-cities and the Zhuvian Halo sealed themselves off from all contact and were able to avoid the worst of the techno-plague. Interplanetary travel and communication, however, had come to an end.

No one can say when, exactly, the techno-plague ended. Mankind had abandoned technology and had become unwilling to re-embrace it. Eventually, even the memory of the techno-plague faded into myth and legend.

On Uruta, the Guardians abandoned the stations and survived in the wild. Millennia passed and the memories of the interplanetary Solar Federation became the legendary first men of Sdara Vatra. Meanwhile, the accelerated restoration of Uruta's biosphere continued without the guidance of the Guardians. The uncontrolled growth resulted in an unprecedented diversity of species. Creatures from Uruta's pre-history roamed the countryside. Several species of bipedal, tool-using, sapient beings evolved. Jungles of giant trees and insects the size of elephants grew out of control and never-before-seen new species evolved to fill exotic new ecological niches.

The Phanosians were likewise reduced to a primitive tribal existence, a dark age that lasted eight thousand years. A new civilization, the Photans, rose to power on Phanos and created the Phanosian Alliance. Today, the Phanosian Alliance seek to restore the glory and power of the former Solar Federation of legend.

Six thousand years ago, the Malusians experienced a brief renaissance when the Aeolian civilization rose to power, but global drought brought an end to the civilization after less than a thousand years. Two thousand years later, the Rhakadian League would rise to power and has dominated the red planet ever since. For their part, the Rhakadian League seeks nothing less than the total domination and subjugation of all the planets of the Solar system.

The inhabitants of Dadan slowly descended into decadence and anarchy. Less than a thousand years after the fall of the Solar Federation the Dadanians were living an underground feral existence.

Only the inhabitants of the Zhuvian Halo retained their civilization, their technology, and their cultural identity. The Zhuvians have undergone various periods of expansionism and isolationism. During an expansionist phase, the Zhuvians would build new habitats and new space-ships to explore the outer system, making contact and interfering with the development of the other planets. During periods of isolation, they would retreat to their

core habitats and seal themselves off from the rest of the system. The Zhuvians have undergone four cycles of expansionism and isolationism since the fall of the Solar Federation. During the Cydorian era, the Zhuvians are experiencing a period of isolation.

THE ZHUVIAN RENAISSANCE

During their last period of expansion, the Zhuvians travelled the Solar System, re-establishing contact with the various tribes through the still-working psychic lenses. The Zhuvians made contact and traded with the primitive Malusians, Phanosians, Dadanians, Tsirisians, and the thousands of deep-space habitats. Over time, as each of the civilizations re-emerged from barbarism, they rediscovered spaceflight. New space ships were constructed and contact re-established. Unfortunately, the psychic lens codes to Uruta had long ago been lost and contact could not be made. As the Zhuvians entered into a new period of mysterious isolationism, the Rhakadian League and the Phanosian Alliance became the two prominent interplanetary powers.

MEANWHILE, ON URUTA

On Uruta, the techno-plague created a dark age that lasted three thousand years. Eventually, the Nazar tribe rose to prominence and created the first great civilization of a new Uruta. The Nazarian civilization would dominate Uruta for three thousand years before it too fell in the War of Zorin. The Urutans experienced another dark age lasting fifteen hundred years before the primitive tribes of Cydoria built the city-states and a new civilization was created.

Fifty years ago, the Rhakadian League of the planet Malus began its quest to conquer the Solar system. It has taken many space habitats but has thus far been unable to capture Phanos despite several invasion attempts. Dadan and Tsiris have both been able to maintain their neutrality and independence by virtue of their remoteness.

Only twenty years ago, a Rhakadian communications officer in charge of one of the League's many psychic lenses was surprised by contact from the surface of Uruta. Professor Prometheus of Vrildar had unlocked the secret of an Urutan remaining psychic lenses. Cydoria would never be the same.

IMPLICATIONS TO PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS

What does this extensive but secret history have to do with the player characters? Very little. The history described above serves only to inform gamemasters about the achievements and limitations of the legendary Sdara Vatra. Gamemasters should not feel constrained by the history given above, but inspired by it. It is only one possible history. Gamemasters might mine the history for inspiration when designing scenarios or artifacts. A game-master might reveal the secret history of the Sdara Vatra in small chunks, or all at once, as a reward at the end of a quest. Lost science or technology, such as the secret to creating thallium from other base metals, a possible means to disable the Oudh, or the chance to ascend to a state of godlike apotheosis, might form the basis of an extended story.

MOTIVATIONS AND REWARDS

The setting of Swords and Cydoria present the gamemaster with several options to provide motivations to players and their characters. These motivations may be used to lure a character into a specific course of action, or to reward a player for excellent game play, deduction, or role-playing.

ARTIFACTS

Ancient relics of the Sdara Vatra provide characters with powers they wouldn't normally have. Artifacts are rarely, if ever, awarded as gifts or in exchange for goods or services. Artifacts should only be recovered from ancient Nazarian ruins or by stealing one. An artifact might also be a cherished legacy, handed down from generation to generation, and could represent the passing of the mantle of family scion to the player character, and all the duties and responsibilities that might go with that title. A king might award an artifact to a player character for performing some extraordinary act. Examples include saving the world from certain destruction or defeating the resurrected Zorin.

POWERS

Gamemasters may award Guardians of Adhara, biomancers, psi-mages, and mutants with new powers. Such awards generally come in the form of out-of-game time spent training and studying. Other means may take the form of an Aya stone (see page 170) or ancient scroll which can teach the new power to the player character.

- A Guardian of Adhara, Oculus warrior, Katari assassin, or other character that knows Ta'oudh might be awarded an increase to their Ta'oudh skill, typically 1-6 points, or POW characteristic.
- A biomancer might learn a new potion.
- A psi-mage might gain access to new psychic abilities or an increase to their POW characteristic.
- A mutant might be awarded with an additional roll on the mutation table, representing their continuing metamorphosis, or an increase to their POW characteristic.

ADVANCED EQUIPMENT

Alien technology should be rare, expensive, and special. They fill the niche normally occupied by magical weapons in other fantasy game settings. Gamemasters should be careful when equipping NPCs with alien technology for the player characters will claim the equipment of any fallen foes. Blasters, lasers, jet-packs, powered armor, vehicles, etc. are all excellent awards. A group of player characters should receive no more than one advanced item every one or two game sessions. Another option is for gamemasters to award alien technology more freely, but limit their use. Alien items, especially Rhakadian items, might be prone to malfunction or might be disposable. A player character might proudly wield their new blaster rifle, but it shorts out and dies at the end of the game session.

PARTS

A techno-heretic or guild master may be rewarded with access to a cache of components in the form of Parts points. Use the Wealth Rewards table as a guideline.

WEALTH

Although money and wealth are abstracted in *Swords of Cydoria*, player characters may be rewarded with temporary increases in purchasing power. The award takes the form of a bonus to the character's Wealth level. Such wealth is usually fleeting. It represents a one-time financial windfall that the player character can spend on temporary luxury before reverting to the original Wealth level.

The following tables provide some guidelines for awarding temporary wealth. Gamemasters should feel free to alter these guidelines to fit the story and the player characters.

WEALTH REWARDS

<i>Treasure</i>	<i>Wealth</i>
Small Nazarian Cache	+10
Nazarian City Vault	+25
Lost Nazarian Depository	+50
Everyday Purse	+5
Wealthy Purse	+10
Minor Noble's Home Safe	+25
Wealthy Noble's Estate Vault	+50
Minor Reward	+10
Major Reward	+50
Once in a Lifetime Reward	+100
Normal Mission	+10
Heroic Mission	+25
Epic Mission	+50
Superheroic Mission	+100

NOTORIETY AND FAME

Tales of bravery and daring may earn the character the adoration of the masses, or at least the respect of their peers. Once word gets out of their heroic (or nefarious) deeds, a character's Status skill may be temporarily or permanently increased. Consult the rules for Status skill (BRP pages 79-80) for more information.

NOBLE TITLES AND LAND

The Status skill provides an indication of a character's social status. A character with a Status skill of 76-95 is likely already a member of the noble class by birth or previous achievement.

Characters might also be awarded a noble rank by one of the monarchs of the various city-states, or leaders of a barbarian tribe, in exchange for exceptional services performed to the kingdom or tribe. Such awards automatically confer an increase in the Status Skill to a level commensurate with the reward.

The title also confers with it some responsibility in the form of land, ministerial duties, or commercial interests. The noble may benefit from the wealth such responsibility entails, but they are also expected to fulfill their obligations to their charge. Many nobles hire stewards to oversee their holdings. Such arrangements reduce the wealth benefit the noble enjoys but frees them to pursue other interests.

ARTIFACTS

The Age of the Sdara Vatra began over ten thousand years ago and spanned ten centuries. During its day, the godlike Sdara Vatra were capable of great achievements, from building massive domed cities to exploring the farthest reaches of the universe. They were betrayed by the Aya and were cast out of the holy cities, where they became mortal and eventually evolved into the ancestors of modern humanity. The great Nazarian culture rose over two thousand five hundred years later. Many of the moldering holy cities of the Sdara Vatra were explored by the Nazarians and the treasures and relics of the Sdara Vatra age were collected and preserved. Eventually, the Nazarian age came to an end with The War of Zorin. With the fall of the Nazarians, the legacies of the Sdara Vatra were locked away, hidden in vaults and forgotten.

Both the holy cities of the Sdara Vatra and the abandoned metropolises of the Nazarians now lie in decaying ruins across the land, covered by several meters of sediment and plant growth. Many modern cities such as Norukar, Vrildar, and Ramanam are built on the ancient foundations the holy cities, but there are many more hidden in the wilderness, buried or covered by jungle, swamp, and forest.

Within these bygone ruins explorers often find relics of the past, artifacts of the people that once lived there. The majority of the items found are mundane items of Nazarian origin. These items consist of clothing, personal effects, and tools of commerce and industry such as storage jars, ship ballast, metal agricultural implements, stone-working and metal-working tools, etc. These are relatively common and show signs of thousands of years of decomposition. They are of little worth other than for scholarly research. Of true value are the older, rarer, relics of the Sdara Vatra, collected by the Nazarians, protected in vaults and treasure chambers hidden deep underground.

The artifacts of the Sdara Vatra come in many shapes and sizes, ranging from small items of jewelry and hand-held objects to large conveyances and building-size machines. Many artifacts are purely decorative or served some personal function. Occasionally, practical relics such as weapons, defenses, conveyances, and other paraphernalia are found. Most the artifacts of the Sdara Vatra are dysfunctional, the victims of time and entropy. A rare few, however, were made to resist corrosion and damage and remain operational to this day, a testament to the technology of the Sdara Vatra.

Working artifacts of the Sdara Vatra are extremely rare. The catalog of functional artifacts yet discovered numbers less than one thousand items. Most are in the possession of the nobilities of the various city-states and in the collection of the University of Vrildar.

The market for the artifacts of the Sdara Vatra is very lucrative and wealthy nobles sponsor expeditions into known or suspected Sdara Vatra ruins to search for new discoveries. The University of Vrildar often partners with noble sponsors with an agreement that university scholars may study the artifact for a year or more before turning it over to the sponsor.

The devices of the Sdara Vatra utilize a form of technology so advanced as to be considered magical by the modern people of Cydoria. Even the most advanced Phanosian or Rhakadian technologies are but pale imitations of the truly powerful relics left by this nearly forgotten culture.

Working artifacts of the Sdara Vatra represent the greatest treasures in Cydoria. Not only do they possess intrinsic cultural, historical, and artistic value, they may provide powerful abilities to those that possess them.

Fully operational artifacts are enigmatic and powerful. Their forms provide few clues to their use or purpose or operation. Most of them are simple shapes such as polyhedrons, disks, lenses, or smooth organic forms. A few artifacts take the form of articles of clothing. The appearance and composition of a relic varies greatly. Artifacts can be metallic, crystalline, stone, or made of a flexible cloth with no visible weave. They can be transparent, opaque, shiny, shimmering, or matte. The only thing all artifacts have in common is their indestructibility.

It is difficult to determine what materials working artifacts are composed of as they have defied all attempts at study or identification. The artifacts of the Sdara Vatra have no removable parts to disassemble and examine. Rhakadian and Phanosian scientists have puzzled over the artifacts using their advanced sensors and diagnostic equipment and are mystified as to how they function.

All artifacts of the Sdara Vatra appear to be mentally activated and controlled. Many must be psychically attuned to a user for several hours before proper use. Some artifacts are hand-held, others attach themselves to the wielders body through an unknown process to enhance their natural capabilities, some are remote controlled, and yet others seemingly immerse the user into an alternate sensory universe.

The functionality and utility of various Sdara Vatra artifacts range from the trivial and mundane “glow stones” and “mind’s eyes” to the godlike powers wielded by users of the “Gate Keys” and “Transmutation Furnaces”.

STARTING ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are very powerful and should only be acquired as a reward from the Gamemaster. Starting characters never begin with artifacts unless the gamemaster feels it is appropriate.

ACQUIRING ARTIFACTS

The majority of the known artifacts are heirlooms, passed through the generations since time immemorial. How they were discovered is a mystery. They belong to noble families, military leaders, and daring heroes who are averse to parting with them. A few nobles, desperate for income, have sold artifacts for exorbitant sums. Prize artifacts are also targets of theft. Because of their value, artifacts are generally guarded by special security and layers of protection and traps, so artifact theft is rare and especially dangerous.

New artifacts are occasionally discovered by teams of so-called artifact hunters. Artifact hunters are explorers and scholars who specialize in locating and retrieving previously unknown artifacts. A team of artifact hunters is generally hired by a noble or university scholar for an expedition. Following months of research, study, and preparation, they travel to the site of known or suspected Nazarian ruins and begin a systematic exploration. Depending on the various factors ranging from the level of funding to the importance in keeping a low profile, these explorations range from large-scale excavation of a site to targeted expeditions into unexplored subterranean complexes. Nazarian ruins are invariably inhabited and guarded by feral xoogs and grotesque mutated creatures, a legacy of Zorin's war against the Nazarians. These foul beasts are instinctively drawn to the sites and will attempt to kill or capture anyone that draws near.

SELLING ARTIFACTS

The artifacts of the Sdara Vatra are in high demand among the wealthy nobles and scholars of the Vrildarian Empire. A stolen or recovered artifact can fetch hefty sums and can make any artifact hunter wealthy. Selling a legally acquired artifact in a public auction is the easiest way to attain the highest selling price, but the publicity required for such a transaction creates security concerns in the form of potential theft and unwanted bureaucratic oversight. All such auctions are monitored by the Inquisition to ensure that artifacts are not stolen and are sold only to nobles and registered scholars.

Selling an artifact to a private buyer is more difficult and takes more time to arrange and the transaction won't be as lucrative for the seller as an auction, but the transaction will remain secret and secure. This is an ideal arrangement for a team of artifact hunters who are unable or unwilling to afford the expense of extra security or for thieves looking to sell a stolen artifact.

The quickest but least profitable means of selling an artifact is to sell it to a black market broker. Black market brokers, often working for the Hidden Hand organization, purchase the item for much less than its potential worth, then resell it at their leisure. Desperate artifact hunters who need quick money and thieves who need to unload their stolen merchandise quickly generally turn to the black market.

UNDERSTANDING ARTIFACTS

Most recovered artifacts, when found, offer little clue to their function or operation. Many artifacts appear as simple geometric shapes: spheres, ovoids, cubes, tetrahedrons, cylinders, disks, toroids, etc. Most are controlled by a combination of voice command, gestures, and thought. There are no controls, no buttons, no displays, and certainly no instruction manuals.

Before you can use an artifact, you must identify it. Identifying an artifact requires a successful *Difficult* Knowledge (Artifact) skill check. This check may only be performed once per artifact.

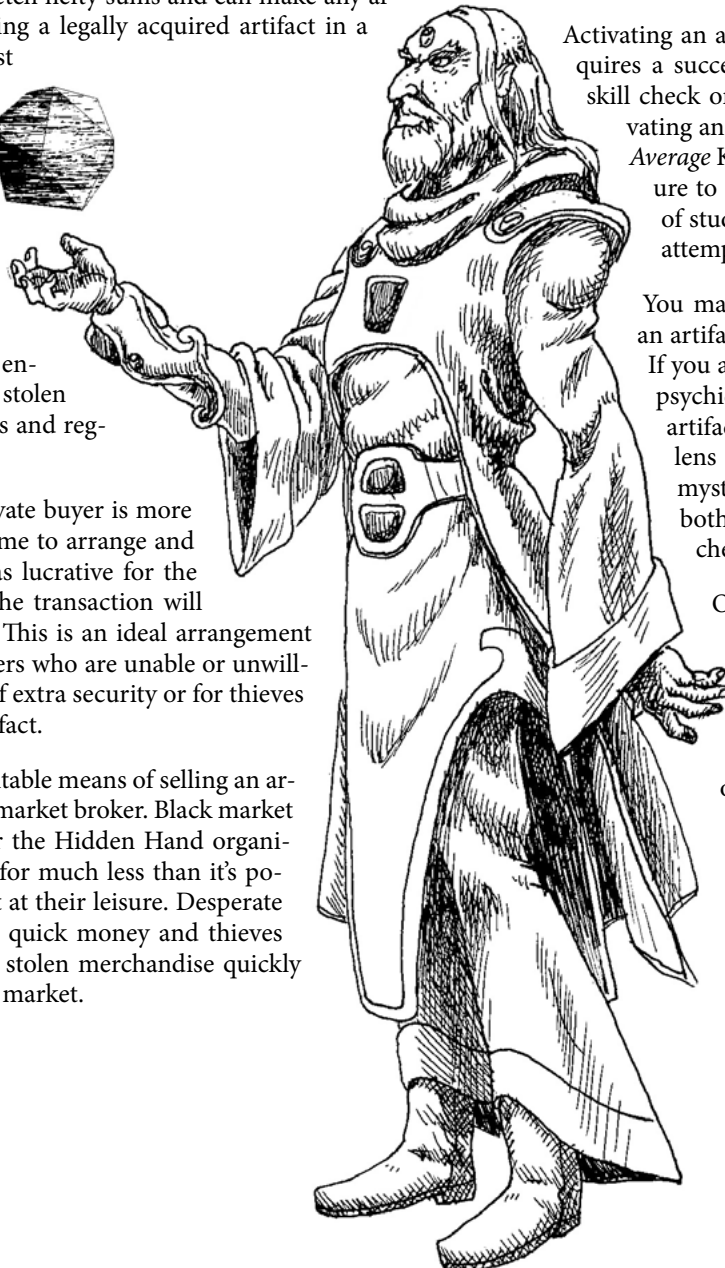
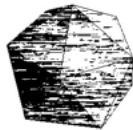
Conducting 60 hours of research in musty libraries and scouring ancient grimoires will allow you to substitute a *Difficult* Research skill check instead. There are no limits to the number of Research skill checks you may attempt on an artifact.

A special success in either grants +5% to any subsequent activation skill check (see below) while a critical success grants +15% to any subsequent activation skill check.

Activating an artifact without first identifying it requires a successful *Difficult* Knowledge (Artifact) skill check or *Difficult* Luck check at -20%. Activating an artifact that has been identified is an *Average* Knowledge (Artifact) skill check. Failure to activate an artifact requires 12 hours of study, trial, and error before a follow-up attempt can be made.

You may spend months and years studying an artifact before you identify and activate it. If you are lucky, you may be able to obtain a psychic lens which may provide a clue to the artifact's history and purpose. A psychic lens may also aid in trying to decipher a mysterious artifact by granting +20% to both the identification and activation skill checks.

Once you have activated an artifact, you can usually activate or deactivate it again at any time with no skill test. However, the gamemaster may call for an *Average* skill test in situations of extreme danger or stress.



KNOWN ARTIFACTS

Armor of Resplendent Sanctuary

This skin-tight hooded bodysuit is made of overlapping plates of thick but pliable material that appears to be iridescent metal with the plasticity of rubber. The bodysuit covers the wearer's head, hands, and feet and provides 20 AP of protection. Unless activated, the suit provides 2 AP of armor and -5% to all physical skills. The defensive capability of the activated suit is not halved when defending against the Disintegration Spear, Sun Blade, Lance of Light, or any other weapons which normally halve the effectiveness of armor.

Aya Stone

Aya stones are small ovoid orbs of polished translucent amber. They appear to glow from within and are always warm to the touch. Aya stones are believed to possess an Aya, spirit beings bound the stone and forced to answer the questions of whoever possesses it. One need only grip the stone in the hand and repeat the cryptic activation phrase to call forth the Aya. The Aya appears as an ethereal form, visible only to the master of the stone. The Aya may take different forms, altering its shape at the expectation and whim of its master. The Aya speaks directly to the mind of its master, asking the nature of the master's query. An Aya is an expert on a specific subject. Some know much of chemistry and alchemy, others know ancient history and philosophy. The master of the stone need simply ask a question, and the Aya will tell its master all it knows about the subject.

In truth, the stones are ancient computers. Within each stone is an artificial intelligence programmed with encyclopedic knowledge of a certain subject. Each Aya acts as an instructor on a specific skill with a Teach skill of 100% (BRP page 82) and able to provide instruction to a character for the purposes of skill training (BRP page 184). Stones are much sought after by scholars, sages, psi-mages, and Guardians of Adhara.

Although Aya stones are feared by most because of their reputation for demonic powers, they are often sought after by scholars, explorers, and psi-mages. The Vrildarian Empire considers the sale and possession of Aya stones a crime punishable by fifty years exile to an Arusian prison camp.

Aya stones are relatively rare. The gamemaster should choose an appropriate skill for a stone. Science skills are the most common. Practical skills such as Martial Arts or Pilot are more rare and are therefore in high demand. Knowledge skills with detailed information on the Sdara Vatra culture, language, and history are very rare and are much sought after by scholars and psi-mages.

Approximately one in six Aya stones are corrupted by the techno-plague. These stones will reach out through the wielder of the stone to telekinetically control any technologically advanced device within range. All advanced devices within a radius of a number of meters equal to the POW of the wielder of the stone will become infected. The telekinesis has a STR of 10 and will cause armor to deactivate, weapons to malfunction or fire on comrades, power generators to explode, etc. Cyberdroids within range must succeed at a POW vs POW resistance roll, using the stone's POW of 10 at the beginning of that character's turn. Failure sends the cyberdroid into a murderous rage.

Defensive Harness

A Sdara Vatra Defensive Harness is worn as a wide girdle with two attached shoulder belts that cross over the wearer's chest. Where the shoulder belts cross is covered by a large ruby-like translucent stone embedded into a wide metallic disk. Smaller disks adorn the belt around the waist and down the back. Once activated, the belt generates a field of force around the wearer, deflecting incoming attacks. The belt provides its wearer with fifty levels of the Defense superpower (BRP page 151) which subtracts 50% from all attacks made against the character.

Disintegration Spear

The legendary disintegration spear is one of the deadliest personal weapons employed by the Sdara Vatra. The device resembles a simple hand-held pole, roughly two meters long. Once activated, an orb composed of inky-black darkness hovers, suspended in space, one meter from one end. The orb causes all solid matter within one meter of it to cease to exist. The orb has no effect of gases or liquids.

The spear is a devastating melee weapon and only a handful are known to exist. The spear is very difficult to parry. It can only be parried with long weapons and even then the attempt is made at half effectiveness. A fumbled parry attempt damages the weapon used for the parry. The effectiveness of armor is halved by this weapon.

ARMOR OF RESPLENDENT SANCTUARY

Armor	AP	Random AP	Burden	ENC	Skill Modifier	Fits SIZ	Time	Locations	Value
Armor of Resplendent Sanctuary	20	2D4+2	Light	2	-5% to Physical Skills	±1	1	All	Priceless

DISINTEGRATION SPEAR

Weapon	Skill	Base	Dmg	Attk	Special	Rng	Hands	HP	Parry	STR/DEX	Mal	Value	SIZ/Enc	SR
Disintegration Spear	Spear	15	3D10	1	Bleeding	Long	2H	-	Yes	7/8	-	Priceless	2.0	2

Flying Disk

One of the more common artifacts left by the Sdara Vatra is the flying disk. This artifact appears to be a simple metallic disk, two to three meters in diameter, flat on one side and convex on the reverse. A flying disk is activated by wearing a psychic lens and speaking a command word. Once activated, small previously invisible tracers of energy begin to glow on the curved side of the disk. The disk immediately hovers a few inches off the ground, perfectly level and steady as if held in place by giant invisible hands. An activated disk cannot be pushed or moved. The disk will move only under the guidance of the controller that spoke the command word.

The disk generates a sphere of energy which negates the inertia of anyone standing on the disk and deflects wind around the sphere. Regardless of acceleration, deceleration, high speed maneuvering, or air-speed, the operator feels as if they are standing on a nearly motionless disk. The disk is therefore capable of amazing feats of aerial acrobatics with no fear of its operator falling off.

Operating the disk requires the application of the Fly skill (BRP page 59).

Gate Key

A Gate Key is a hand-held baton, roughly half as long as a man's forearm. Holding the baton and saying the secret incantation of activation activates the key and immerses the user into an alternate sensory universe. The wielder of the Gate Key perceives the entire globe of Uruta and becomes aware of any objects outside of the Oudh. This perception is superimposed over the wielder's normal vision so that the wielder is still aware of happenings around him. The wielder may mentally select any or all of the objects and will instantly know several key facts about the object, for example vector, velocity, flight path, mass, dimensions, etc.

With an additional Knowledge (Artifact) success, the wielder may choose to project a bubble up to five hundred meters in diameter around any single object to protect them from the Oudh, allowing them to safely enter the field. The wielder is in complete control over anything within the bubble and may end the bubble's protection at any time. Upon ending a protective bubble, the Oudh will immediately disintegrate the intruding object.

Maintaining a protective bubble requires constant concentration. Letting go of the Gate Key will end the protective bubble, disintegrating anything within. A wielder of a Gate Key may pass the key to another attuned wielder as simply as someone passes a baton. The new wielder must now maintain any protective bubble created or maintained by the previous wielder. Typically, a Gate Key is operated from a comfortable seated position.

A Gate Key can only create a single protective bubble at a time. This limits the number of space-ships which can visit Uruta to one per Gate Key.

There are six known working Gate Keys. Three belong to the Vrildarian Empire, one belongs to Baron Urik of Demetria, one belongs to the Shadowfox, queen of the Dazumi pirates, and at least one is in the hands of independent smugglers.

It is through the power of the Gate Key that Emperor Viktor limits and controls the Rhakadian access to Uruta's mineral resources. Viktor charges the Rhakadians a steep price for the access, imposes severe limitations to the types of space-ships that enter, and holds them hostage once on the surface. If the Rhakadians were to possess their own Gate Key, they could come and go as they please with any type of space-ship they desired. They could land an assault craft laden with troops and vehicles. They could use a battleship to bombard the Cydorian cities from above. The Rhakadians would therefore pay any reward to possess their own Gate Key.

Glow Stone

A glow stone is a simple translucent sphere roughly the size of a plum. A glow stone, when activated, creates a warm soft glow. The activated stone creates a spherical invisible field of energy ten meters in radius. Everyone within the field gains the following super powers while the stone is activated:

- Super Sense (Night Vision), allowing them to see in near darkness as if it were day.
- Adaptability (Cold, Heat), allowing them to remain comfortable in spite of harsh natural temperature extremes outside the energy field.

A glow stone is a tool of invaluable utility to explorers and travelers. A stone is activated and deactivated through mental will. The stone will glow until deactivated. Glow stones have been found in ruins, still active after thousands of years.

Healing Shroud

A Healing Shroud appears to be a large bolt of ultra-thin silvery cloth. The healing power of these shrouds is legendary and several miraculous recoveries have been attributed to them. Unless activated, the shroud is an inert silvery cloth. The shroud is activated by mental command. To receive the benefit of the activated shroud, the patient must be wrapped tight, like a swaddled infant or cocoon. So wrapped, the shroud heals injury, removes toxins, and cures disease. Healing shrouds have even been known to restore lost limbs and eyes, restore vision or hearing, and cure congenital birth defects.

Simple traumatic injury from a minor wound is the easiest to heal. A minor wound heals at a rate of 1 hit point per combat round. Diseases are healed at a rate of 1 characteristic point lost to disease per combat round. The effect of poison is reversed at a rate of 1 hit point per combat round.

Long-term injuries such as severed limbs, lost or damaged organs, heal more slowly. The healing shroud restores 1 characteristic point lost as the result of a major wound per day. Likewise, spending an entire day within the healing cocoon of the shroud will cure the patient of any malignant tumors, congenital birth defects, or mental illness.

LANCE OF LIGHT

Weapon	Skill	Base	Dmg	Attk	Special	Rng	Hands	HP	Parry	STR/ DEX	Mal	Ammo	Value	SIZ/ Enc	SR
Lance of Light	Rifle, Energy	15	4D12	1	Impaling	400	2H	40	28	7/7	-	-	Priceless	1.5	1/SR

Lance of Light

The Lance of Light is a pole, approximately one meter in length and easily held in the grip of one's hand. One end is capped by a flat disk, the other is bent at a forty-five degree angle, just large enough for another hand to hold. A third of the length from the bent end is a fifteen-centimeter hand-hold, emerging from the pole at a ninety-degree angle like the branch of a tree. Unless activated, the weapon is an inert device of unusual shape. Once activated, glowing tracery appears across the surface and its purpose as a weapon becomes evident. The weapon can be fired by gripping the end-shaft and the hand-hold in both hands, pointing it at the target, and willing the target's destruction. When fired, a brilliant beam of light is projected from the disk. The beam is similar to a laser, but more destructive. The weapon can fire ten times before needing to recharge for eight hours. Wearing a psychic lens while firing this weapon provides a bonus of +20% to hit.

Memory Shard

A Memory Shard is a small shard that looks like it was chipped off a larger crystalline structure. Each fragment retains a human memory. Fragments require no skill to activate or use. Anyone holding a fragment to their head can remember the memory contained within as if it were their own. They may also write over the memory with one of their own should they choose. Ancient fragments found in the ruins of the Sdara Vatra contain the memories of the Sdara Vatra. Many are personal memories of little practical value. These include memories of loved ones, special events, etc. They offer value only to scholars of the ways of the ancient Sdara Vatra. A few are more practical, with memories of the operation of lost Sdara Vatra artifacts, academic memories, or technical information. Most fragments are protected by an activated word or phrase. The user must hold the fragment to their head and recite the password to access the fragment. These protected fragments require a success using the Knowledge (Occult) skill test.

The majority of memory shards discovered have been erased and replaced with more modern memories. These memories are generally more practical in nature, ranging from personal messages to how to assemble a technologically advanced device. Fragments of memory are often used in espionage because of their security. They have also been used by court magistrates to verify someone's recollection of an event.

Each Memory Shard is about the size of a finger and can store approximately five minutes worth of memories. The clearest memories are those recorded as they happen, with memories losing clarity and focus if they are recorded after the initial experience.

Mind's Eye

A Mind's Eye is a small hemisphere of translucent opal or ruby, sometimes set in a flat golden amulet. Placing the stone on the forehead fixes it there with no adhesive or chain, only the wearer can remove it once in place. The relic opens the wearer's sense of vision and perception. The wearer may see to the horizon as if through a powerful telescope, or may examine the minutest details of an object as if through a microscope. The wearer may see deep into the infrared and up into the ultraviolet. The wearer may also see in total darkness, without the need for light or radiation of any kind. The Mind's Eye grants the wearer six levels of the Super Sense power (BRP page 164) with Super Vision, Dark Vision, Infrared Vision, Microscopic Vision, Night Vision, and X-Ray Vision, as well as four levels of the Super Skill (Spot) power, granting a bonus of +80% to the Spot skill.

The Oudh

Perhaps the greatest and most powerful artifact of the Sdara Vatra is the Oudh. The Oudh surrounds Uruta and permeates it. It is generally invisible and usually undetectable, though psi-mages and masters of Ta'oudh are sensitive to it and can bend its energies to their will. Solar flare activity may cause the field to flash and coruscate, creating ethereal light shows similar to an aurora. The field appears to radiate out to a distance of one million kilometers from Uruta.

The chief function of the field is to protect Uruta both from alien invasion and celestial impacts. Any object of alien origin that comes within one hundred thousand kilometers of the surface of Uruta at first meets repulsive force, a warning of sorts that attempts to deflect or deter further approach. Any object that reaches one thousand kilometers from the surface of Uruta is instantly disintegrated in a blinding flash. Nothing remains, no debris, no shrapnel, no particulates, nothing.

A secondary benefit of the Oudh is the facilitation of mental control and psychic communication. Mental energy causes perturbations in the Oudh the way a voice creates waves of sound in the air. Many of the Sdara Vatra artifacts make use of these mental transmissions to allow operators to telepathically control the artifacts at great distances or to communicate through the Oudh.

A side-effect of the field is the disruption of radio waves. No signal may be broadcast or received within the field.

It is unknown how the Oudh is generated or if it could be deactivated. The field is the only thing preventing the Rhakadian League from invading and conquering Uruta and the aliens would pay any reward for its deactivation.

The field is also responsible of other, less well understood side-effects. In essence, it is a catch-all plot device for gamemasters to explain any strange phenomenon or alteration in physics they desire. For example, if the gamemaster wishes to eliminate energy weapons from the game at any point, it can be explained as a change in the Oudh, rendering such weapons useless. Whether the change is temporary or permanent is up to the gamemaster.

Psychic Lens

A psychic lens resembles a convex glass disk. When applied to the forehead, it will hold fast and can only be removed by its wearer. It is believed that psychic lenses were once nearly ubiquitous among the Sdara Vatra people. They allow for the mental control of many Sdara Vatra devices and are required to operate several of the artifacts. The lens focuses thought and translates that thought into a control signal. The lens can also be used to communicate telepathically with any other person wearing a psychic lens, regardless of distance.

Each psychic lens is keyed to a unique telepathic “code”. The user must know the code of the psychic lens they are contacting and any attempt at communication must be accepted by the receiving party. Communication through a psychic lens does not reveal the location of either party. When activated, the psychic lens provides a bonus of +20% to all other Knowledge (Artifact) skill attempt as well as granting the Telepathy power (BRP page 121) to its wearer.

Only a handful of psychic lenses are known to exist on Uruta. Five are possessed by the Vrildarian Empire, five by the Demetrian resistance, at least one is possessed by the pirates of Dazumi, and two or three are possessed by the Guardians of Adhara. The sale of a psychic lens to the right buyer would net the seller a king’s ransom. The Rhakadians, Phanosians, Dadanians, and other aliens each possess their own psychic lenses, which they use for interplanetary communication.

Storage Matrix

The Storage Matrix is a truly miraculous device, capable of converting matter into energy, storing it in an easily portable cube, and converting the energy back to matter again. Inactivated, the storage matrix resembles a metallic cube, eight centimeters on a side. Each face is divided into four two centimeter quarters. A curious property of the cube is that it possesses no ballistic inertia. It can be moved around, but if released it will hover in place, immobile, until something solid exerts force upon it. A cube cannot be thrown or dropped. It will simply stay in place wherever it was released.

Activating the matrix involves releasing the cube to hover in mid-air and speaking an activation phrase. Upon activation the cube divides into eight smaller cubes.

Each smaller cube forms the corner of a virtual box, a three-dimensional rectangle. Moving any corner cube will cause the other corners to move in space to maintain ninety-degree angles with every other cube. Thus, by moving any corner, one may resize the box defined by all eight corners. In this way it is possible to create a virtual box up to ten meters on any side.

Once in place, an additional phrase activates the second stage of the device. Once activated, all eight corner-cubes begin to glow and blink off and on. On the tenth blink, the corner-cubes create a field of energy within their perimeter. All matter within the virtual box defined by the eight corner-cubes will be converted to energy and stored within the matrix. There is a flash of energy then all matter within the perimeter of the box disappears. Once complete, the eight corner-cubes rejoin. The rejoined cube now emits a soft glow, indicating a stored matrix.

The matter stored within the matrix can be re-formed with a Knowledge (Artifact) skill success. The corner-cubes once again glow and separate, expanding to the dimensions of the stored matrix. Once expanded, the energy is transformed back into the original matter. If any solid or liquid matter prevents the sub-cubes from expanding, the re-formation is aborted and the sub-cubes re-combine, so re-formation is generally performed in an open flat area. It is also dangerous to transform anything that is not entirely within the border of the matrix. For example, sticking one’s hand outside of the matrix during storage will sever the hand from the body. For this reason, most items to be stored are placed on a pedestal prior to activation of the matrix.

This artifact is of incredible utility. Vehicles, small aero-ships, houses, even people may be stored within the matrix, transported, and re-formed. Legends tell of Sdara Vatra storage matrices being found with other Sdara Vatra artifacts, and even people, stored within, locked away since ancient times.

Stun Sphere

A Stun Sphere is a small round metal sphere the size and shape of large ball bearing. The user holds one or more spheres between his thumb and forefinger, mentally activates them, and hurls them at a single target using the Throw skill. The spheres act as a small stun grenades (BRP page 267) that does no physical damage. Instead, roll 4D8 and compare the total to the target's CON in a resistance roll. If the target succeeds, the target is stunned for 1 combat round. If the target fails, the target is stunned for 1D6+1 combat rounds. The sphere affects only the target it hits. A handful of spheres (up to five) can be activated simultaneously and thrown. The spheres spread like shotgun pellets and more than one may hit a single target, or may hit multiple nearby targets.

<i>Distance Thrown</i>	<i>Effect</i>
1 meter	All thrown spheres hit the intended target on a successful Throw attack roll.
1-10 meters	On a successful Throw attack roll, the intended target is hit by 1D6-1 spheres. If any miss the intended target, anyone within two meters of the target is hit by 1D4-2 spheres until there are no spheres or targets left.
11-20 meters	On a successful Throw attack roll, the intended target is hit by 1D6-2 spheres. If any miss the intended target, anyone within five meters of the target is hit by 1D4-3 spheres until there are no spheres or targets left.
21-30 meters	On a successful Throw attack roll, the intended target is hit by 1D6-4 spheres. If any miss the intended target, anyone within five meters of the target is hit by 1D4-3 spheres until there are no spheres or targets left.
31+ meters	On a successful Throw attack roll, the intended target is hit by 1D6-5 spheres. If any miss the intended target, anyone within five meters of the target is hit by 1D4-3 spheres until there are no spheres or targets left.

Sun Blade

While dormant, the Sun Blade appears to be nothing more than a sword hilt of simple design, a cylinder half the length of a man's arm, capped with a round pommel on one end and a flattened square guard on the other. When activated by mental command, a blade of dazzling brilliant hot energy emerges from the guard. The Sun Blade is a devastating weapon, able to cut through almost any substance. The length of the blade can be adjusted from a few centimeters to just over one meter. The Sun Blade does damage to any weapon, besides other Sun Blades, attempting to parry it.

SUN BLADE

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Dmg</i>	<i>Attk</i>	<i>Special</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Hands</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>Parry</i>	<i>STR/DEX</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>SIZ/Enc</i>	<i>SR</i>
Sun Blade	Sword	10	3D10	1	Impaling	Medium	1H	30	Yes	7/15	99-00	Priceless	1.0	2

Tesseract Chamber

A tesseract chamber is a room that exists in a pocket dimension which can only be accessed via a single entrance portal. Several tesseract chambers have been discovered, each varies in size and shape. Some chambers are large palatial manses featuring beautifully designed entrances while others are small utilitarian rooms with simple round access ports. The portals resemble door frames shaped like symmetrical trapezoids, wider at the base than at the top. They are able to stand on their own but are also portable and can be moved. The portals range in size from large enough to accommodate a vehicle to small enough to require crawling. The interior of the door frame is filled by an opaque metal when closed. When touched and a mental activation command is visualized, the metal disappears, revealing an open doorway into the chamber beyond.

Most chambers have been discovered unfurnished but a few have been filled with treasure. A few chambers have exhibited strange temporal effects, with time behaving differently within the chamber than without, some faster, some slower.

Translocation Portal

It is said that the Sdara Vatra had no need for vehicles, aeroships, or space-ships for transportation. Legends say that they could travel from city to city, even from world to world, in the blink of an eye. This miraculous feat was accomplished using translocation portals, which allow for instant teleportation between any two portals.

Translocation portals, as they are called, are two metallic disks, each about two meters in diameter, one hovering over the other at a height of three meters. Each portal is activated by standing on the bottom disk directly under the upper disk and visualizing the mental activation command for the destination portal. The operator is immediately transported to the destination portal. Only two have been discovered. Both are possessed by Emperor Viktor, allowing him and his court to instantly travel between Vrildar and Norukar. It is believed that more exist, but they must be discovered and studied in order to learn their activation commands.

Transmutation Furnace

The Sdara Vatra were masters of molecular alchemy. Using a Transmutation Furnace, a Sdara Vatan alchemist could turn any element or compound into any other. Legends say that the Sdara Vatra were able to transmute entire worlds and continents. Many interpret the legend of the Aya as a story of justice against the hubris and unchecked powers of the Sdara Vatra.

The legacy of the power the Sdara Vatra had over the elements lives on today through their remaining molecular Transmutation Furnaces. Only a few furnaces have been found, each worth a king's ransom. Wars have been fought over the possession of a single furnace.

No two Transmutation Furnaces are alike. One takes the form of a large cube of metal, able to grow or shrink at the command of its operator, with a removable side that transmuted any material placed within the box. Another consists of two disks, likewise of variable size, one hovering over the other, that transmuted any material between the disks. A third was a simple cylinder, as long as a forearm, that projected a spherical field out of the far end that transmuted any material within the field.

Transmutation Furnaces do not create matter, nor do they alter form, mass, or inherent energy. They simply change the composition of matter. Ten kilograms of lead will create ten kilograms of gold. Ten kilograms of air will also create ten kilograms of gold. However, ten kilograms of air has a volume of almost eight cubic meters while ten kilograms of gold has a volume of just under two cubic meters.

Transmutation Furnaces are difficult to control. They are activated by thought and ritual through the use of a psychic lens. The alchemist must possess a master's understanding of chemistry, self-discipline, and mental clarity to operate the engine, and even then the change itself drains the alchemist of mental energy. In game terms, operating a Transmutation Furnace requires a minimum INT of 16, a minimum Science (Alchemy) skill of 91% or higher, a Knowledge (Artifact) skill of 76% or higher, and the expenditure of an amount of power points as determined by the gamemaster appropriate for the material being created. Anyone not meeting the above criteria may still use the device, but will permanently lose characteristic points as per the Decreased Characteristic mutation (BRP page 105) for each use.

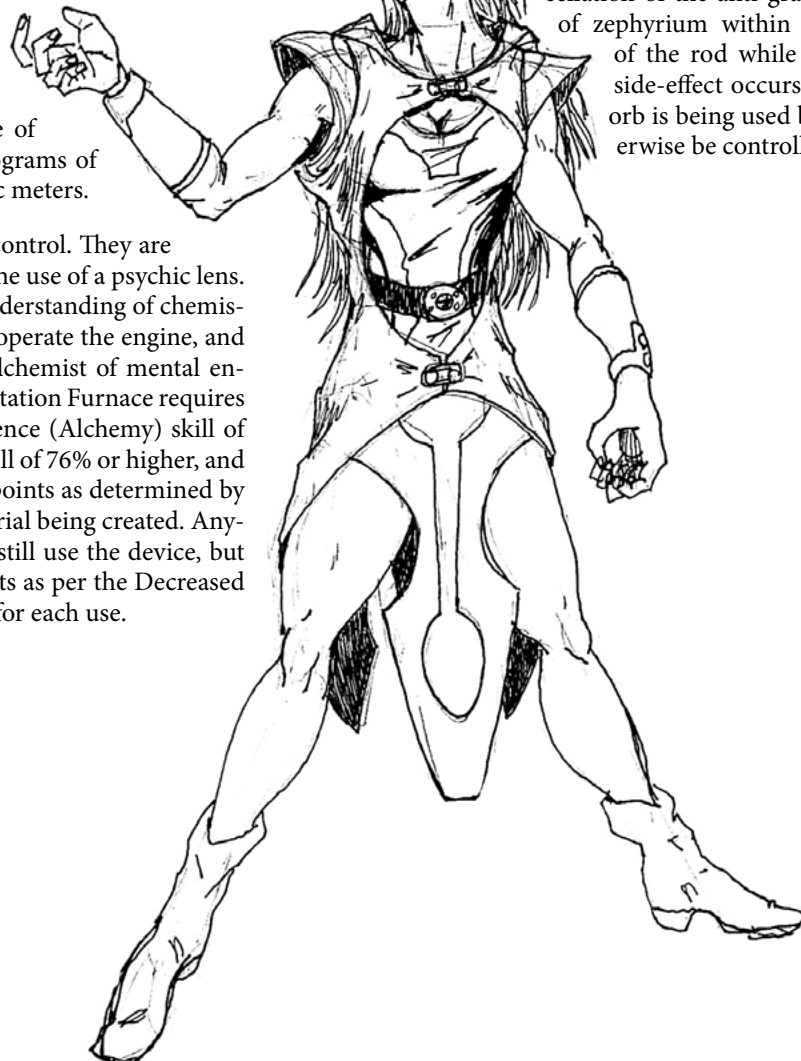
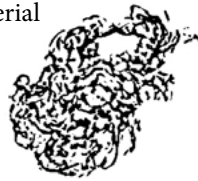
Weather Control Orb

The weather control orb is a silvery metal sphere, roughly 25 cm in diameter, polished to a mirrored finish. Holding the orb in both hands and visualizing the secret mental activation command allows the wielder to mentally control local atmospheric conditions such as barometric pressure, humidity, and wind direction and speed. Each of the following effects requires a successful Knowledge (Artifact) skill test:

- The character may raise or lower the temperature by up to 25 degrees Celsius/50 degrees Fahrenheit within a range of ten kilometers.
- The character may alter one weather condition (see "Weather Conditions," BRP page 235) by one step per combat round within a range of ten kilometers.
- The character can cause a thunderclap which temporarily deafens everyone, including the character, within 75 m of the rod for five rounds.

Any lightning or winds resulting from manipulated weather is random and uncontrolled. The character cannot target an enemy.

A side-effect of the device is the cancellation of the anti-gravitic properties of zephyrium within ten kilometers of the rod while activated. This side-effect occurs only when the orb is being used but cannot otherwise be controlled or directed.



CHAPTER TWELVE: THE CITY IN THE MIRAGE

The following scenario is designed for a party of four to six Heroic-scale adventurers. The scenario has been designed to accommodate any of the *Swords of Cydoria* stories with different goals and events depending on the story being played.

The story begins in the Cydorian city of Norukar but may begin anywhere at the gamemaster's discretion. The characters are hired by a noted scholar to accompany him on an expedition to the western land of Arus to find and explore what he believes to be a lost Nazarian city, rendered invisible by some powerful artifact. The story then follows the journey west by aero-ship, a visit to the small Arusian town of Sweetwater, a perilous overland trek through the desert, a surprise ambush in the middle of the night, and the exploration of the ancient ruins of the invisible city and the dangers lurking therein.

BACKGROUND

The following background information is for the gamemaster's eyes only. It details the events leading up to the scenario and may be used to answer questions or requests for detail put to Magister Reeg by the player characters.

A SURVIVOR'S TALE

Several years ago, a wanderer staggered into the remote Arusian settlement of Sweetwater with a startling tale. The survivor was a passenger on a civilian aero-ship, the *Tori*, travelling from Ravana east over the Arusian desert. The survivor said somewhere over an especially desolate area of desert known as the Wasteland the aero-ship lost all power. The captain put the ship down in the desert and attempted repairs.

Unfortunately, power could not be restored and without power, the aero-ship was grounded. The captain ordered the crew and passengers to abandon ship and prepared an overland trek to the nearest settlement, Sweetwater, over fifty kilometers away.

The Wasteland is a wide, flat, dry lake bed, the remnants of an ancient acidic lake that dried up long ago. The remains of the lake bed is covered by several inches of dry acidic powder. The party had to wear goggles to protect their eyes and covered their mouths and noses so as to not inhale the powder.

Along the way, the party encountered what appeared to be a shimmering mirage in the desert. As they approached, the mirage revealed itself to be a ruined city built atop a massive stone foundation, protected from outside observation by some kind of invisibility field. The party decided to camp there for the night. That night, the party was beset by a tribe of man-eating tintazi. A few survivors hid in the ruined buildings of the city while their companions were killed or dragged away screaming into the night. The next day, the survivors snuck away but were attacked by massive sand squid. Ultimately, after the attacks, starvation, and dehydration, only one survivor made it safely to Sweetwater.

A SCHOLAR INVESTIGATES

Six months ago, Magister Kulik Reeg listened intently to a story told to him by a colleague about that lone survivor. He was intrigued and decided to research the area.

The *Tori* was not the first aero-ship to crash in the area. During the War of Unification, a military frigate was lost in the same area with no survivors. At that time, the crash was also attributed to a gravity storm.

Magister Reeg knew that gravity storms were not stable and rarely struck the same location twice. Additionally, the survivor's story indicated a loss of power and made no mention of increased gravity. He dismissed gravity storms as the cause. Instead, he suspected some association with the reported invisibility field. He believed that the ruined city was all that remained of a previously undiscovered ancient Nazarian city and that something within those ruins, perhaps an ancient artifact of the *Sdara Vatra*, was generating the field, and it had caused the aero-ships to crash.

Reeg then went about obtaining financial backing to mount an expedition to the ruins. He found a sponsor in Lord Garrus Kendrik of Norukar. Magister Reeg accepted Lord Kendrik's funding with the stipulation that all recovered artifacts belong to the University of Vrildar. Lord Kendrik agreed but demanded that he be allowed to accompany the expedition with an entourage including his personal bodyguard and small detachment of huscarles.

Magister Reeg then gathered a group of students to accompany him, hired a team of guides and bodyguards, and secured an aero-ship, the *Tonbo*, to transport the expedition west to Sweetwater.

SCENE 1: THE EXPEDITION IS ASSEMBLED

The scenario begins in Norukar. The player characters may live in Norukar or may be just visiting at their discretion. In either case, they have been hired by Magister Reeg to accompany him on his expedition. The exact nature of their employment depends on the premise of the game being played:

Artifact Hunters: the player characters are experts in exploring ruins and finding treasure. They have been hired as guides, bodyguards, and explorers.

Flight of the *Tonbo*: the player characters are members of the crew of the *Tonbo*, the aero-ship that has been hired to transport the expedition to Arus. Once there, the player characters will escort and guide the expedition to the site of the ruins.

The Great Game of *Cydoria*: the player characters are agents working for one of Lord Kendrik's noble rivals. Their liege has caught wind of the possible artifact. The player characters are to infiltrate the expedition, going undercover as guides, fellow scholars, bodyguards, and explorers. Their mission is to steal the artifact and deliver it to their liege in Norukar.

The Heresy of Invention: the player characters are members of a techno-heretic cabal. Their cabal has caught wind of the possible artifact. The player characters are to infiltrate the expedition, going undercover as guides, fellow scholars, bodyguards, and explorers. Their mission is to steal the artifact so that it can be studied by one or more techno-heretics of their cabal.

Remember Demetria: the player characters are members of the Demetrian resistance. The resistance has caught wind of the possible artifact. The player characters are to infiltrate the expedition, going undercover as guides, fellow scholars, bodyguards, and explorers. Their mission is to steal the artifact and deliver it to a resistance agent in Sweetwater, the madame of the brothel known as the Desert Pearl.

Savage Frontier: the player characters are either heroic pioneers wishing to travel west to settle in the town of Sweetwater or opportunistic mercenaries or bandits looking for a quick way out of town. In either case, the player characters have taken this job as a way to head west. The group is hired to escort the expedition to the site but may wish to stay on in Sweetwater after the expedition.

The player characters are invited to an introductory meeting in order to become acquainted with the other members of the expedition.

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION

Magister Kulik Reeg

Vrildarian scholar

Magister Kulik Reeg is a scholar and professor at the University of Vrildar. He is an expert on Nazarian culture, relics, and language. He is in his late sixties, bald on top with bushy white hair growing from the sides of his head. He is a friendly man, obsessed with his work and with the relics of the past. He is known to stutter from time to time and to fidget with a small monocle he carries around his neck while he orders his thoughts. Magister Reeg is trying to keep his theories about the existence of a powerful artifact in the Wasteland a secret. He is aware of Lord Kendrick's reputation as a tomb robber but became desperate enough to accept the noble's money and participation to fund the expedition.



STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 18 POW 16 DEX 12 APP 14
Move: 10 Hit Points: 10 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 30%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Language (Nazarian) 80%, Literacy (Nazarian) 80%, Persuade 40%, Research 60%, Teach 60%, Knowledge (Anthropology) 80%, Knowledge (Archaeology) 80%, Knowledge (Art History) 60%, Knowledge (History) 60%, Knowledge (Folklore) 60%, Knowledge (Nazarians) 80%, Knowledge (Mythology) 80%, Knowledge (Occult) 40%

Lord Garrus Kendrick

Norukarian noble



Lord Garrus Kendrick is a landless mercantile noble from Norukar. He is an adventurer and explorer, famous for exploring the eastern coast of the southern peninsula and discovering the lost tomb of King Vargas in the Apparian mountains. He served as the commander of a force of cavalry during the war and is considered a hero. He is a barrel-chested man in his fifties with a bushy red mustache and sideburns. He loves regaling others with exaggerated stories of his adventures and escapades. A few years ago, he suffered a crippling accident that blinded him and rendered his arms useless. He was written off by his peers and forced to retire. Rhakadian cyber-sorcery has restored both eyes and arms and he is hoping this adventure will erase any doubts as to his physical abilities.

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 13 DEX 10 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 9-point Rhakadian adaptive mesh and Rhakadian light helmet (-5% all physical skills,-5% to perception skills)

Attacks: Rhakadian Monofilament Sword 75%, 3D12 (bleeding), reduce armor by 1/2
 Rhakadian Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)

Skills: Bargain 55%, Command 50%, Etiquette 70%, Gaming 60%, Literacy 50%, Literacy (Nazarian) 45%, Status 80%, Knowledge (Holdings) 45%, Knowledge (History)35%, Perform (Poetry) 55%

Trin

Norukarian bodyguard

Of Lord Kendrick's two bodyguards, Trin is the smaller but more intelligent. He is constantly telling Kabak what to do.

STR 14 CON 11 SIZ 11 INT 12 POW 15 DEX 9 APP 9
Move: 10 Hit Points: 11 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 9-point Rhakadian adaptive mesh and Rhakadian light helmet (-5% all physical skills,-5% to perception skills)

Attacks: Halberd 55%, 3D6 + db (bleeding)
 Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
 Vibro-sword 60%, 2D6 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 50%, Dodge 55%, First Aid 50%, Grapple 70%, Hide 35%, Listen 55%, Jump 35%, Spot 65%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

Kabak

Norukarian bodyguard

Kabak is a hulking brute of a bodyguard. He is good looking but a little dull-witted at times.

STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 17 INT 9 POW 11 DEX 13 APP 16
Move: 10 Hit Points: 17 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 9-point Rhakadian adaptive mesh and Rhakadian light helmet (-5% all physical skills, -5% to perception skills)

Attacks: Halberd 55%, 3D6 + db (bleeding)
 Plasma Pistol 55%, 2D10 + 2 (impaling)
 Vibro-sword 60%, 2D6 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 50%, Dodge 55%, First Aid 50%, Grapple 70%, Hide 35%, Listen 55%, Jump 35%, Spot 65%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

Dergo

Targan soldier

Dergo was a sergeant in the Imperial military before he mustered out after the War of Unification. Now he serves as one of Lord Kendrik's house retainers. He is used to others following his commands and bristles whenever Trin issues him an order.

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 17 DEX 12 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 12 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Ballistic Rifle 65%, 1D6 + 4 (impaling)
 Broadsword 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 50%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 40%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Listen 45%, Jump 35%, Spot 45%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

Frank

Targan soldier

Frank is a young recruit and one of Lord Kendrik's house retainers. He is eager and naive and follows Dergo around like a puppy.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 11 DEX 15 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 12 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Ballistic Rifle 65%, 1D6 + 4 (impaling)
 Broadsword 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 50%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 40%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Listen 45%, Jump 35%, Spot 45%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%

Master Dentir Osso

Varzan student



Dentir Osso is a young man in his mid-twenties with dark hair and fiery eyes. He considers himself a member of the intellectual elite and a political malcontent. He believes that the feudal structure of Vrildarian society should be torn down and rebuilt as an egalitarian utopia and he has in the past secretly expressed sympathies with the Demetrian resistance.

Although Magister Reeg instructed Osso to keep the possibility of a powerful artifact in a lost city a secret, Osso told friends of his with contacts in the resistance. Word soon leaked and eventually reached several other parties interested in obtaining any such artifact for themselves, including Lord Kendrik and Lord Kendrik's rivals.

STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 11 DEX 14 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 10 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 60%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Fast Talk 45%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (Anthropology) 40%, Knowledge (Archaeology) 60%, Knowledge (Art History) 30%, Knowledge (History) 60%, Knowledge (Literature) 60%, Knowledge (Philosophy) 60%, Knowledge (Politics) 60%, Knowledge (Nazarians) 60%, Research 60%.

Four Varzan students from the University of Vrildar

The four young Varzan students from the University of Vrildar are all wide-eyed innocents on their first adventure into the exotic land of Markania. Their names are Bonn, Somon, Dani, and Pagi. They are not combatants and will shy away from any fight. On any given night, they are a very insular social group and will initially stick to themselves, but will become anyone's best friends if supplied with alcohol.

STR 9 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 11 DEX 11 APP 11
Move: 10 Hit Points: 12 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 30%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Dodge 25%, Research 40%, Knowledge (Anthropology) 30%, Knowledge (Archaeology) 30%, Knowledge (History) 40%.

THE CREW OF THE TONBO

If playing Flight of the Tonbo, the crew should consist of Capt. Resko and the player characters, with NPCs added to fill needed crew positions such as Navigator. The player characters will not only transport the expedition to Sweetwater, they will escort it to the ruins and provide assistance during the exploration.

Otherwise, the following NPC crewmembers of the Tonbo are also present at the introductory meeting. All NPCs will transport the expedition to Sweetwater but will stay on board the Tonbo while the expedition continues to the ruins.

Captain Kak Resko

Demetrian Aero-ship Pilot

Captain Resko is a ruggedly handsome man in his early forties. He was a Demetrian soldier in the War of Unification. After serving ten years in an Arusian prison camp, he was released and fell in with a bandit gang. After a particularly successful score, the gang decided to split up with each of their shares. Captain Resko used his share to purchase the Tonbo, a decaying relic from the war. He hired a crew, fixed the old transport up, and got her flying again. On paper, Captain Resko flies with a Commission from the ship's owner, Zupan-Kirja, a trading conglomerate out of Zinj. Zupan-Kirja is, in fact, a front company run by the Hidden Hand that supplies excellent forgeries. Every few months, Captain Resko must purchase fresh letters of agency from the Hidden Hand, changing ownership of the ship to stay one step ahead of the inspectors.



Captain Resko retains a simmering bitterness at the outcome of the war and has no love for the Empire but tries to keep his feelings to himself. He is a fair captain, protective of and loyal to his crew. Although a moral man with strong convictions and personal sense of right and wrong, he is not above the occasional smuggling mission, averse to committing the odd act of light piracy, or afraid of taking illegal side-jobs of banditry to make ends meet.

STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 12 DEX 15 APP 16
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: 7-point Phanosian adaptive mesh and leather great coat

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 75%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Ballistic Rifle 55%, 1D10 + 4 (impaling)
 Cutlass (Saber) 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Fist 75%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 75%, First Aid 55%, Command 75%, Hide 65%, Listen 55%, Spot 65%, Stealth 50%.

Xuxa Kaym*

Fornaxian navigator

Xuxa Kaym is a blonde Fornaxian woman in her mid-twenties. She is short with a sturdy build. She wears her hair in two long braids. She has a perpetually friendly disposition and likes meeting new people. She is very proud of her long family lineage as navigators and explorers and likes to brag about the adventures and exploits of her ancestors.



STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 18 DEX 13 APP 15
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 45%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Climb 80%, Dodge 40%, Grapple 75%, Navigate 75%, Pilot (Aero-ship) 70%, Artillery (Ballista) 65%, Command 45%, Spot 55%

Dys*

Zinjani mechanic

The Zinjani known as Dys is a hulking dark-skinned man in his late thirties. He is bald with a thick handle-bar mustache. He flashes a prominent gold tooth whenever he smiles, which is often. He usually wears the top of his coveralls tied around his waist, exposing his thick muscular chest and arms, glistening with grease and sweat. Dys prefers fisticuffs and grappling to fighting with weapons. Dys was once a technician in a Zinjani factory building aero-ships, but lost his job after getting into, and more importantly winning, a drunken fist-fight with his noble superior. The Commission that allows Dys to repair and maintain the Rhakadian technology that powers the Tonbo is as fake as those belonging to Captain Resko.



STR 16 CON 18 SIZ 18 INT 13 POW 12 DEX 14 APP 14
Move: 10 Hit Points: 18 Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 75%, 1D3 + db (crushing)

Skills: Fine Manipulation 65%, Grapple, 70%, Listen 35%, Repair (Electrical) 55%, Repair (Electrical) 75%, Repair (Gravitic) 50%, Repair (Hydraulic) 35%, Repair (Mechanical) 45%, Research 60%, Spot 35%, Craft (Blacksmith) 25%

*Unless the player characters are part of the crew of the Tonbo, the NPC crew will stay behind with the Tonbo when the expedition reaches Sweetwater.

Dosay Matin*

Mancean pilot

Dosay Matin is a dashing handsome Mancean man in his early thirties. He wears his dark hair slicked back and his goatee perfectly trimmed. He is a typical Mancean—appreciating fine wine, beautiful women, exquisite food, and otherwise having a good time. He is an excellent cook and enjoys preparing gourmet meals for his crew but otherwise ignores or whines about his other chores.



STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 11 POW 13 DEX 15 APP 18
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Cutlass (Saber) 45%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Appraise 60%, Climb 40%, Craft (Cooking) 70%, Dodge 50%, Grapple 35%, Knowledge: Art History 55%, Navigate 50%, Pilot (Aero-ship) 70%, Persuade 65%, Perform (Dancing) 55%, Spot 65%

Ssaka*

Raganan Ship's Guard

Ssaka is a tall muscular reptilian daka from Ragana. He is stoic and inscrutable. He is completely loyal to Captain Resko but often ignores everyone else, spending most of his time alone in his quarters. Ssaka is a proud warrior and master of the Raganan martial art known as Yssik.



STR 18 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 15 DEX 16 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armor: None

Attacks: Scimitar 75%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Talons 65%, 1D3 + 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 40%, Dodge 40%, Jump 25%, Martial Arts (Scimitar) 75%, Spot 25%, Track 25%

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the daka must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

*Unless the player characters are part of the crew of the Tonbo, the NPC crew will stay behind with the Tonbo when the expedition reaches Sweetwater.

Bannis*

Capridian ship's purser

Bannis is a tall goat-faced Capridian with light brown fur and a dark red mane. He is studious and meticulous. He enjoys mathematics and accounting to the exclusion of nearly all other pursuits. He has trouble interacting with others and spends most of his day with an abacus and a chart of accounts. He is also an artist and carries a sketchbook to draw in whenever he is away from the Tonbo and his precious abacus.



STR 14 CON 8 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 21 DEX 5 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 12 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 2-point padded/quilted coat over hide

Attacks: Quarterstaff 60%, 1D8 + db
 Fist 60%, 1D3 + db

Skills: Art (Drawing) 65%, Knowledge (Accounting) 75%, Listen 85%, Science: Mathematics 60%

Doctor Nakus Soren*

Norukarian physician

Nakus Soren was a brilliant physician in Norukar, the second son of Count Tabrus Soren with a promising career among the social elite of that city. Nakus became addicted to pain-killing drugs and his secret became public. He was blamed for the death of several of his high-profile patients, and was banished from Norukar for his crimes. Anyone with an association with Norukarian nobility will recognize Doctor Soren and will be familiar with the scandal that led to his banishment. He publically declares that he has overcome his addiction but he continues to abuse the drugs in private, a secret he keeps from Captain Resko and the rest of the crew.



Doctor Soren is a dapper man in his early thirties, well groomed and richly dressed. He finds life on the Tonbo somewhat demeaning but feels he is being rightly punished for his moral frailty and past mistakes.

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 13 DEX 16 APP 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 40%, 1D3 + db

Skills: Fine Manipulation 65%, First Aid 70%, Medicine 70%, Spot 50%, Science (Biology) 70%, Science (Pharmacy) 55%, Science (Psychology) 65%

INTRODUCTIONS

Magister Reeg leads the meeting. He starts by thanking everyone for attending and introduces everyone to each other. He provides a brief, edited, background. Essentially, he tells everyone that through research and interviews, he has deduced that a previously unexplored Nazarian city can be found in the Arusian desert. The purpose of the mission is to explore the ruins and return with recovered artifacts and notes. He then lays out the overall plan of the mission:

1. Travel via aero-ship to the remote Arusian settlement of Sweetwater. The journey should take several days.
2. From Sweetwater, travel fifty kilometers overland to a remote section of the Arusian desert known as the Wasteland.
3. Locate and explore what he believes to be a previously undiscovered ruined city located somewhere in the middle of the Wasteland.
4. Once located, spend several days studying the ruins.
5. Return to Sweetwater, then to the University of Vrildar, with notes and artifacts for further study.

All treasures and artifacts recovered at the site belong to the University of Vrildar. No team member is allowed to keep any items found at the site and their belongings will be searched by Lord Kendrik’s retainers before leaving the expedition. However, thanks to the investment made by Lord Kendrik, each member of the expedition will be appropriately and generously compensated for their contribution. In exchange for their services, the University of Asura will pay a total sum equivalent to +10 Wealth upon completion of the mission to be divided between the player characters. In addition, each of the members of the expedition is entitled to a small share of any treasure recovered.

Because of the official sponsorship and participation of Lord Kendrik, a member of the Norukarian nobility in good standing, the expedition has permission to legally carry a single plasma rifle in addition to the weapons carried by Lord Kendrik’s retainers for self defense, as well as a few other items of restricted alien technology at the gamemaster’s discretion. Three sand-lizards known as girahs and wagons will be hired in Sweetwater to transport supplies. Additional mundane weapons, equipment, and supplies will be furnished for the expedition, within reason. The characters are encouraged to submit their equipment requests to the gamemaster for approval.

Once everything is in order, the expedition, including the player characters, are asked to report to the Tonbo at dawn the next day to begin their journey.

SCENE 2: JOURNEY TO ARUS

The journey from Norukar to Sweetwater involves five legs and four stops to recharge the voltaic fuel cells.

<i>Journey</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Flight Time</i>
Norukar to Tibiris	700km	around six hours
Tibiris to Tagrum	740km	just over six hours
Tagrum to Pynnis	940km	just under eight hours
Pynnis to Badar	900km	seven and a half hours
Badar to Sweetwater	1200km	around ten hours

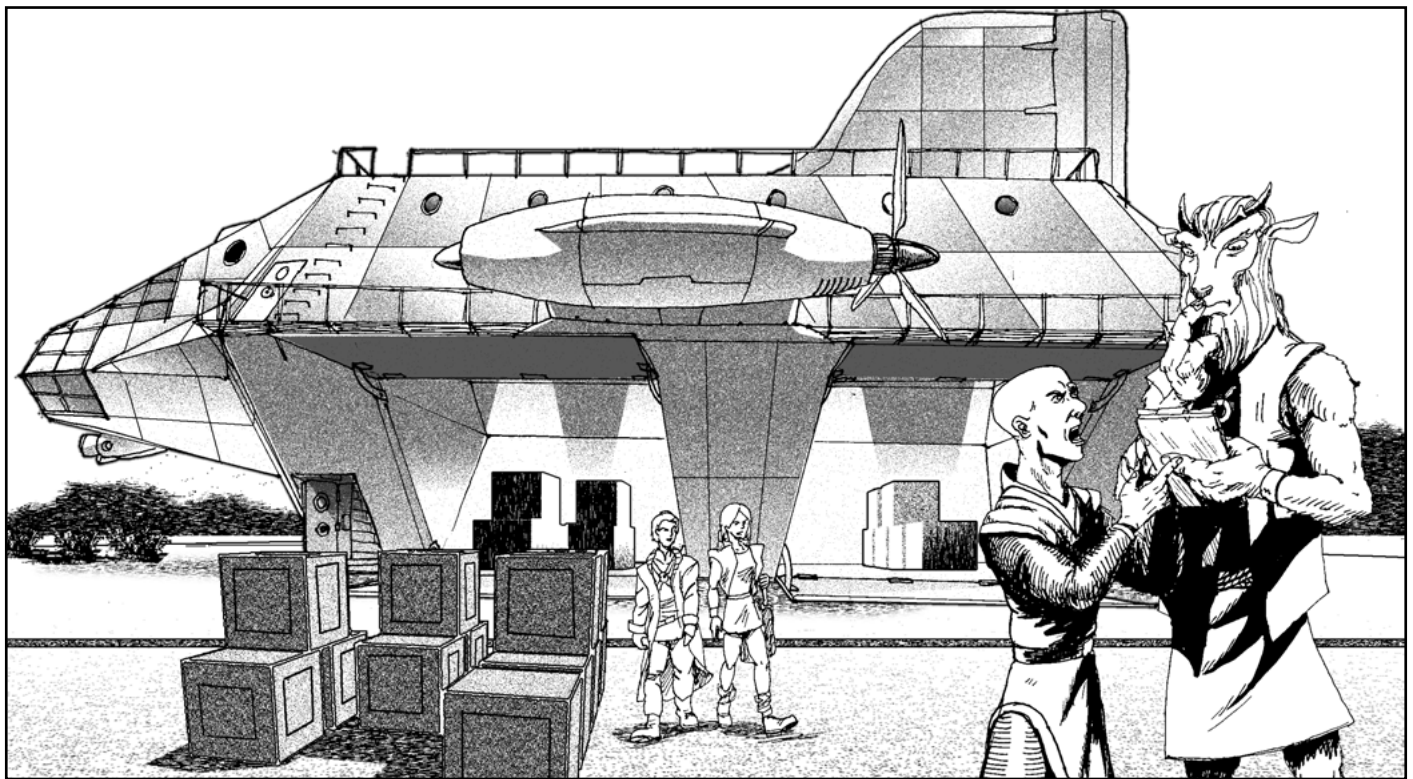
The first four stops will require 1D6 x 2 hours to recharge the cells but the stop in Badar requires 1D6 x 4 hours. Each stop allows the player characters a chance to visit each of those cities. Gamemasters may embellish the scenario with additional side encounters.

The gamemaster may also spice up the journey by including one or more of the following random encounters. Roll once on the following table each day for a random travel encounter. Alternatively, if the gamemaster wishes to get to the meat of the scenario, simply gloss over the journey, ignoring any events along the way, and tell the players that after a journey of several days the Tonbo arrives in the remote Arusian settlement of Sweetwater.

JOURNEY TO ARUS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

<i>Roll 1D10</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
1-4	No event
5	One of the Tonbo’s outboard propeller pods encounters some mechanical difficulty and the mechanic needs to climb out to repair it, an operation that will take several hours. While performing the repairs, 1D6 giant wasps called ku-bawa-mavu (see page 146) attack the mechanic. Captain Resko orders the player characters to help rescue the mechanic, requiring them to fight giant wasps atop the Tonbo thousands of meters off the ground, hopefully while clipped to a safety line.
6	A pirate corsair drops out of a cloud and gains on the Tonbo. When close, the pirates send a boarding party of 3D4 pirates (see page 125) across to take the Tonbo. Captain Resko orders the player characters to help repel the boarders.
7	A Imperial frigate closes with the Tonbo for a surprise inspection. A boarding party of 3D4 Imperial soldiers (see page 128) and a Imperial officer (see page 131) cross to perform the inspection, searching for contraband and illegal technology.
8	A passing gravity storm (see page 154) forces the Tonbo to land.
9	Mechanical difficulties force the Tonbo to land to make repairs. While on the surface, the Tonbo is attacked by a raiding force of 3D4 barbarians appropriate to the region (see page 126).
10	The Tonbo enters a region of 3D6 floating aero-mines left over from the War of Unification. The mines must either be avoided by deft piloting or detonated remotely by shooting them with a ranged weapon. Colliding with an aero-mine causes 3D6+15 damage to the Tonbo.

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SCENE 3: WELCOME TO SWEETWATER

The Arusian desert is a vast, wide plain broken by occasional long outcroppings of rocky ridges and mesas. Canyons, gullies, and arroyos cut into the plains.

The Tonbo approaches the settlement of Sweetwater from the north at twilight, the sun setting red in the western desert. The first scintillating coruscations of the Oudh begin to flicker across the darkening sky. Electric lights glow from the aero-port and the buildings around the square.

A welcome party gathers at the aero-port as the Tonbo lands. Baron Donahee and a few of his “Devil-Wolves” are there to greet the party and determine their intentions. They are armed just in case the Tonbo represents some kind of pirate raid, but are otherwise friendly and amiable, providing introductions and a quick tour of the settlement. Captain Resko and the ship’s mechanic oversee the maintenance of the Tonbo. Magister Reeg, Lord Kendrick, and Lord Kendrick’s personal guards are invited to stay at Baron Donahee’s manor. The rest of the party are encouraged to stay at the local inn, the Golden Goblet. The expedition to the Wasteland is set to begin at dawn the next day.

The player characters are free to explore the town and meet its inhabitants. The gamemaster may enhance the scenario with side encounters based on their interactions and explorations.

SECRET RENDEZVOUS

Make a secret Spot check for any character spending time in the Golden Goblet Inn. If successful, they notice Osso meet with a resident of the town. The identity of the resident depends on the premise of the game.

Artifact Hunters: Osso meets with Katreia the Madame. They briefly exchange greetings before leaving the inn. They go into the basement of the Desert Pearl to talk in private. If the player characters follow them into the cellar, they find the door to the cellar locked. The player characters are unable to overhear their conversation. If later asked what he was doing with the madame, Osso looks momentarily startled before he responds, winking, “Do I really need to answer that question?” A successful opposed Insight skill check vs Osso’s Fast Talk reveals that he is not telling the truth.

Flight of the Tonbo: Osso meets with Master Grendas the Hydraulics Engineer. They briefly exchange greetings before leaving the inn. They go to a room in the cellar of Grendas’ office to talk in private. The player characters are unable to overhear their conversation. If later asked what he was doing with the engineer, Osso looks momentarily startled before he responds, “I was negotiating the purchase of some water for our journey.” A successful opposed Insight skill check vs Osso’s Fast Talk reveals that he is not telling the truth.

All Other Stories: Osso meets with Yokum the Wineseller. They briefly exchange greetings before leaving the inn. They go to Yokum’s shop to talk in private. The player characters are unable to overhear their conversation. If later asked what he was doing with the wine-seller, Osso looks momentarily startled before he responds, winking, “I was making arrangements for some celebratory wine for our return.” A successful opposed Insight skill check vs Osso’s Fast Talk reveals that he is not telling the truth.

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OTHER EVENTS

The following events can be added at the gamemaster's discretion. They introduce several NPCs living within Sweetwater and may provide the player characters with contacts, information, or assistance when needed.

1. Cyril chats up the player characters, asking about their occupation and their plans in Sweetwater. There is nothing sinister in his motives, he's just making conversation. He's willing to answer any questions he can about himself or the town.
2. Ismir, an old vagrant wearing the tattered robes of a Ta'oudh Healer, comes stumbling into the Golden Goblet and begins bugging patrons for change. Cyril exclaims "Damn it, Gunter, you're not supposed to let him in here!" Gunter and Cyril escort the old man out. If anyone asks, Cyril tells what he knows about Ismir, the vagrant, and that he lives in a shack on the edge of town.
3. Jerf invites one or more of the player characters to a game of cards.
4. A Ramanamian woman, the widow Roln, comes in, orders a drink, and sits in the corner alone. She appears sad. If anyone talks to her, she politely says she'd rather be alone. After a few minutes, she begins crying. If anyone attempts to console her, she will thank them and call them kind. If asked, she will tell them about her plight: that Baron Donahee will foreclose on her property if she can't raise several thousand talents in four days. She doesn't know what to do.
5. Tsagreb, the Raganan merchant, is looking for an aero-ship and crew to transport a cargo to Ragana. He asks the player characters if they'd be interested in a job when they complete their current mission.
6. Brell the Capridian shopkeeper attempts to make friends of the player characters. She inquires about their philosophical beliefs and will attempt to converse at length on the subject.

THE SETTLEMENT OF SWEETWATER

The Arusian settlement of Sweetwater lies on the southern edge of a valley amidst several scattered mountain ranges south of the Arusian plateau. It rarely rains in the valley, but a supply of water can be found in an aquifer deep under the surface.

Baron Donahee of Guerna founded Sweetwater ten years ago. He paid for a well to be dug and established a stable water supply, then offered incentives to draw settlers to populate his new town. His goal was to serve as a way station for traders coming from and heading to the daka kingdom of Ragana. To that end, he has constructed an aero-ship landing pad and recharging port, a small broadcast power station, and an inn for travelers. Unfortunately, the Raganan traffic has never materialized. Instead, the town has had to make do serving the recreational needs of miners from nearby iron fields. The aero-ship station sits mostly unused.

The center of town is a wide square dominated by the the village well and its impressive irrigation distribution system and the nearby aero-ship port. Several two story buildings line the square, housing the Golden Goblet inn, the Desert Pearl brothel, the dry goods/bookstore/library, a livery and stable, and a handful of other assorted business and offices. The outskirts of town contain homes and farms for a few hundred families. The largest home, a stone manor house surrounded by a wall, belongs to the Lord of Sweetwater, Baron Donahee.

The Law of Sweetwater

The last constable of Sweetwater disappeared three months ago under mysterious circumstances. Rumors abound whether he left the town, was murdered, or simply met his end in the unforgiving desert. Baron Donahee's household retainers, "Donahee's Devil-Wolves", are serving to keep the peace in the interim, but they have a reputation as bullies. The baron would like to have an official constabulary to lend credibility to his small town and is currently recruiting for one or more people to fill the position.

As a noble of the Vrildarian Empire, the baron is expected to enforce the emperor's restrictions on banned technology. The baron, however, doesn't agree with those laws. As long as you keep your illegal technology discrete, he's willing to ignore it. A visitor coming into town with an illegal vehicle or weapon will be reminded of the law and politely asked to remove it from town, but it will not be confiscated unless the visitor resists, complains, or publicly flaunts their contraband.

A Imperial frigate visits Sweetwater every few weeks, part of a regular random patrol, with a squad of troops, an inquisitor, and a territorial magistrate. The baron expects everyone to toe the line during these random inspections and will show courtesy and support to the inquisitors while they are prosecuting their duties, but he will not voluntarily betray anyone he suspects might possess illegal technology. A magistrate accompanies these periodic visits to conduct trials and provide legal decisions.

It should also be noted that many Imperial soldiers assigned to a nearby prison camp spend their off-duty hours in Sweetwater. These soldiers are just looking for a good time and will usually not harass anyone they see carrying illegal weapons or equipment, but their attitude may change if their recreation is interrupted.

RESIDENTS OF SWEETWATER

Although this scenario spends little time in Sweetwater, the gamemaster may wish to embellish the scenario using interactions with the local townsfolk. Alternatively, the player characters may use the town as a base of operations for further adventures.

Baron Donahee

Lord of Sweetwater

Donahee is a veteran of the War of Unification, a retired officer from Guerna. He was against joining the Vrildarian Empire and has little love for the Vrildarians. Donahee is a barrel-chested man in his fifties with grey hair and a short beard. He is martial, autocratic, and expects his orders to be followed. He shows grudging hospitality to Imperial patrols and inspections but otherwise does not appreciate outside military intervention. Instead, he maintains his own paramilitary militia known as Donahee's Devil-Wolves, a squad of former soldiers and local bullies that act as Sweetwater's unofficial law enforcement and Donahee's household retainer.

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 11 DEX 14 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7-point Rhakadian adaptive mesh and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Ballistic Pistol 70%, 1D6 + 1 (impaling)
 Cutlass (Saber) 55%, 1D8 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 60%, Language (Cydorian) 70%,
 Language (Varzan) 60%, Listen 50%, Spot 80%, Status 75%,
 Swim 60%

Cyril

Jinx Owner and Barkeep of the Golden Goblet Inn

Cyril the jinx is the owner of the local inn, the Golden Goblet. Xoogs are prohibited from owning property in most eastern cities, but Donahee has allowed it. Cyril is short and bald with red skin. He is friendly to outsiders and does what he can to assist the outcast and downtrodden.

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 6 INT 14 POW 18 DEX 18 APP 17
Move: 10 Hit Points: 9 Damage Bonus: -1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Shortsword 40%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 48%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 45%,
 Stealth 50%, Track 40%

Nimble Fingers: +20% bonus to Fine Manipulation skill checks.

Silver Tongue: +20% bonus to Fast Talk and Insight.

Social Camouflage: +20% bonus to Hide and Stealth skill checks.

Luminescence: Cyril has the ability to selectively generate a soft bioluminescent glow in his extremities.

Gunter

The Golden Goblet's Bouncer

Gunter is a brux who serves as general laborer, bodyguard, and bouncer at the Golden Goblet. Gunter is fiercely loyal to and protective of Cyril.

STR 25 CON 19 SIZ 19 INT 7 POW 9 DEX 8 APP 7
Move: 10 Hit Points: 19 Damage Bonus: +2D6

Armor: None

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db
 Fist 50%, 1D3 + db

Skills: Dodge 35%

Brux Rage: Brux run the risk of becoming enraged and going berserk in times of great stress. When Brux receives a major wound in battle, the brux must make a Luck roll or become enraged. Enraged brux will fight unceasingly and indiscriminately. For the duration of the rage, the brux may only take attack actions, against enemies first, then against allied NPCs when there are no enemies to attack, then against allied player characters when there are no NPCs to attack. Enraged brux receive one extra attack made on the last DEX rank of the round (or last strike rank if that optional rule is used). The enraged brux receives no bonus or penalty to the attack action as a result of being enraged. The enraged brux, however, has no instinct for self-preservation. Any dodges or parries made by the brux during the rage are reduced by 30% in addition to any other modifiers such as for additional actions. The enraged brux ignores any unconsciousness stemming from the initial major wound and any subsequent major wound. A fatal wound is still fatal to the brux, but the brux will remain conscious and continue attacking until the end of the round, temporarily ignoring the fatal wound, and then finally collapsing at the end of DEX rank 1. The brux may make a Luck roll during the Power Use phase of each turn to attempt to end the rage. The rage persists until the brux has made a successful Luck roll to end it, or until the brux is dead.

Decreased Characteristic: Gunter's DEX is decreased by 3.

Structural Improvement: Gunter has a hard exoskeleton that adds 5 armor points.

Sensitivity: Gunter can sense the manipulation of the Oudh within 19 meters.

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Ismir the Vagrant*Rogue Guardian-Healer*

Ismir is an old alcoholic vagrant that lives in a shack on the outskirts of town. Most people pay Ismir little attention. In fact, Ismir was a Guardian of Adhara, a healer who fought for the Coalition during the War of Unification. He was captured and spent ten years in an Arusian prison camp. He has since fallen into state of deep depression and alcoholism. He survives mostly thanks to the kindness and handouts from people like Katreia, Muric, and other Demetrians. He appears to be a man in his late fifties with a long beard and long matted grey hair. He wears rags and is often seen wandering around muttering and shouting. He keeps his starblade wrapped and hidden in his shack.

STR 13 CON 17 SIZ 18 INT 16 POW 12 DEX 13 APP 15
Move: 10 Hit Points: 18 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Starblade (Longsword) 75%, 1D8 + 3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: First Aid 45%, Insight 55%, Knowledge (Ta'oudh) 40%, Medicine 60%, Psychotherapy 40%, Research 50%, Spot 40%, Science (Biology) 30%, Ta'oudh 60%.

Ta'oudh Powers: Calm (1), Cure Disease (3), Detoxify (3), Heal Self (2), Healing Touch (2), Purify Food/Drink (1)

Jerf of Norukar*Gambler*

Jerf is a recent immigrant from Norukar, a smooth-talking operator in fancy black finery. He is a swindler and a con-artist. His plan is to bilk the locals at games of chance then move on before he's found out.

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 15 POW 13 DEX 15 APP 12
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 45%, 1D3 + db
 Rapier 45%

Skills: Bargain 60%, Dodge 45%, Fast Talk 75%, Gaming 75%, Insight 65%, Knowledge (Accounting) 50%, Sleight of Hand 70%, Persuade 65%, Spot 65%

Master Grendas*Hydraulics Engineer*

Grendas is a Vrildarian, a graduate of the monastic school of the Octavium in Norukar, and initiate of the 2nd circle in the Brotherhood of Water Masters. Grendas was hired by Donahee to oversee and consecrate the construction of the well and the irrigation distribution system that supplies the local farms. Grendas is a balding man in his forties. He is uncomfortable talking with strangers but will talk for hours about hydraulics if given a chance. Grendas is secretly a techno-heretic exploring the forbidden secrets of electronics and robotics in a workshop behind a false wall in his cellar.

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 18 DEX 13 APP 13
Move: 10 Hit Points: 10 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 30%, 1D3 + db

Skills: Repair (Electrical) 60%, Repair (Electronic) 40%, Repair (Gravitic) 40%, Repair (Hydraulic) 75%, Repair (Mechanical) 65%, Repair (Plumbing) 75%, Repair (Pneumatic) 45%, Technical Skill (Clockworks) 45%, Technical Skill (Computer Use) 35%, Technical Skill (Cybernetics) 35%, Technical Skill (Electronics) 35%, Technical Skill (Robotics) 45%, Technical Skill (Sensor Systems) 40%

Madame Katreia*Proprietor of the Desert Pearl*

Katreia tells everyone that she is a Demetrian, a former refugee that found work as a prostitute. She is, in fact, a Phanosian spy and leader of a Demetrian resistance cell. She operates a brothel in Sweetwater called the Desert Pearl. Katreia is a beautiful woman in her early thirties. She is a tough businesswoman and tolerates no disrespect of herself or her employees. She holds secret meetings in her hidden cellar with members of the cell and helps shelter, support, and route supplies to other cells. Katreia's lover is Muric the Hunter.

STR 13 CON 17 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 18 DEX 16 APP 17
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None

Attacks: Dagger 45%, 1D4 + db (crushing)
 Fist 55%, 1D3 + db (crushing)
 Phanosian Laser Pistol 65%, 1D8 (impaling), kept near bed

Skills: Bargain 55%, Fast Talk 65%, Hide 75%, Perform (Acting) 65%, Stealth 55%.

Yokum the Wineseller

The Local Crime Boss

Yokum is a seedy merchant, pawn broker, loan shark, smuggler, and fence. He is a Demetrian man in his late thirties with a high forehead and long hair. He has contacts in the Hidden Hand allowing him to obtain illegal items and sell any acquired contraband. His primary legal business is selling wine and spirits imported from back east. Baron Donahee is aware of Yokum's extralegal activities. Donahee tolerates Yokum because he provides a useful service to the town.

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 11 DEX 11 APP 17
Move: 10 Hit Points: 15 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None

Attacks: Fist 30%, 1D3 + db

Skills: Appraise 65%, Bargain 70%, Fast Talk 75%, Knowledge (Streetwise) 60%, Knowledge (Business) 45%, Persuade 50%.

OTHER RESIDENTS OF SWEETWATER

The following residents have no bearing on this scenario, but are included without statistics to provide additional flavor to the town.

Brell the Shopkeeper

Brell is a Capridian female, a shopkeeper and bookseller. She owns the local dry goods store. She enjoys healthy debate and will talk anyone's ear off about her travels.

Gluumu the Prospector

Gluumu is a deru miner and prospector. He hires his services out as a guide and consultant to other prospectors. He has done well for himself and is paranoid that another deru might potentially ruin his monopoly. He has dug a warren of tunnels connecting many of the buildings of the town. Not all of his tunnels are known.

Muric the Hunter

Muric escorts caravans across the desert and provides game to the town in his spare time. He is a Demetrian in his late thirties. He is a ruggedly handsome man with dark hair and a mustache. He is never seen without his battered old Demetrian helmet. He is a member of the Demetrian resistance and sometimes smuggles weapons and technology to and from other cells in the network. He is also a master hand-to-hand combatant, having trained in several styles of the Demetrian martial arts.

Rudolfo the Rugose, Reclusive Psi-mage

Rudolfo is a wizened human psi-mage that lives in an adobe tower on a mound about three kilometers north of town. His face is lined with wrinkles and age and he is slightly overweight from his sedentary lifestyle. He is reclusive and discourages visitors but will meet with anyone wishing to sell artifacts. He jealously guards his own collection and will not share his research or access to his library. His tower is protected by a powerful Aya that causes discomfort and nausea to anyone that comes near.

The Widow Roln, Local Farmer

Roln is a dark-skinned Ramanamian woman in her late thirties. She is a widow with a ten-year-old son. Her husband was killed by bandits over a year ago. She has managed to keep her farm despite inheriting large debts to Donahee from her late husband. Roln is running out of money and ways to forestall paying Donahee. Donahee is impatient and Roln is becoming desperate for help.

Tsagreb the Merchant

Tsagreb is a shrewd daka merchant from Ragana. He strives to remain neutral in all disputes and has a way of speaking many consider slippery and evasive. He arranges cargos for aero-ships. He is an honest merchant with contacts in Ragana and is the man to see for any trips to that kingdom. He is also the local factor for the company scouring the nearby iron fields, arranging aero-ships to transport ore back east.

Brother Vaca the Apothecary

Brother Vaca is a balding pot-bellied Zinjani man in his early forties. He is an honest apothecary by trade and Initiate of the First Circle in the Octavium. He is friendly and amiable but bristles at the mention of any Zinjani stereotype. His concoctions are reliable and stable.

Vontana the Tan

The Varzan named Vontana is the boss of a group of a mixed group of human and brux laborers. He hires his team out to dig ditches, build houses, or whatever needs doing around town. Vontana is a big man, tanned brown from the sun. He is wary of outsiders and protective of his team's interests. Vontana and his men sometimes work as "debt collectors" and hired muscle for Yokum.

OUTSIDE OF SWEETWATER

The lands surrounding Sweetwater offer plenty of opportunity for future adventures or may provide the gamemaster with inspiration for complications to the current scenario. The numbers in parentheses correspond to the number on the map of the region surrounding Sweetwater (1) below.

The Abandoned Thallium Mine (2)

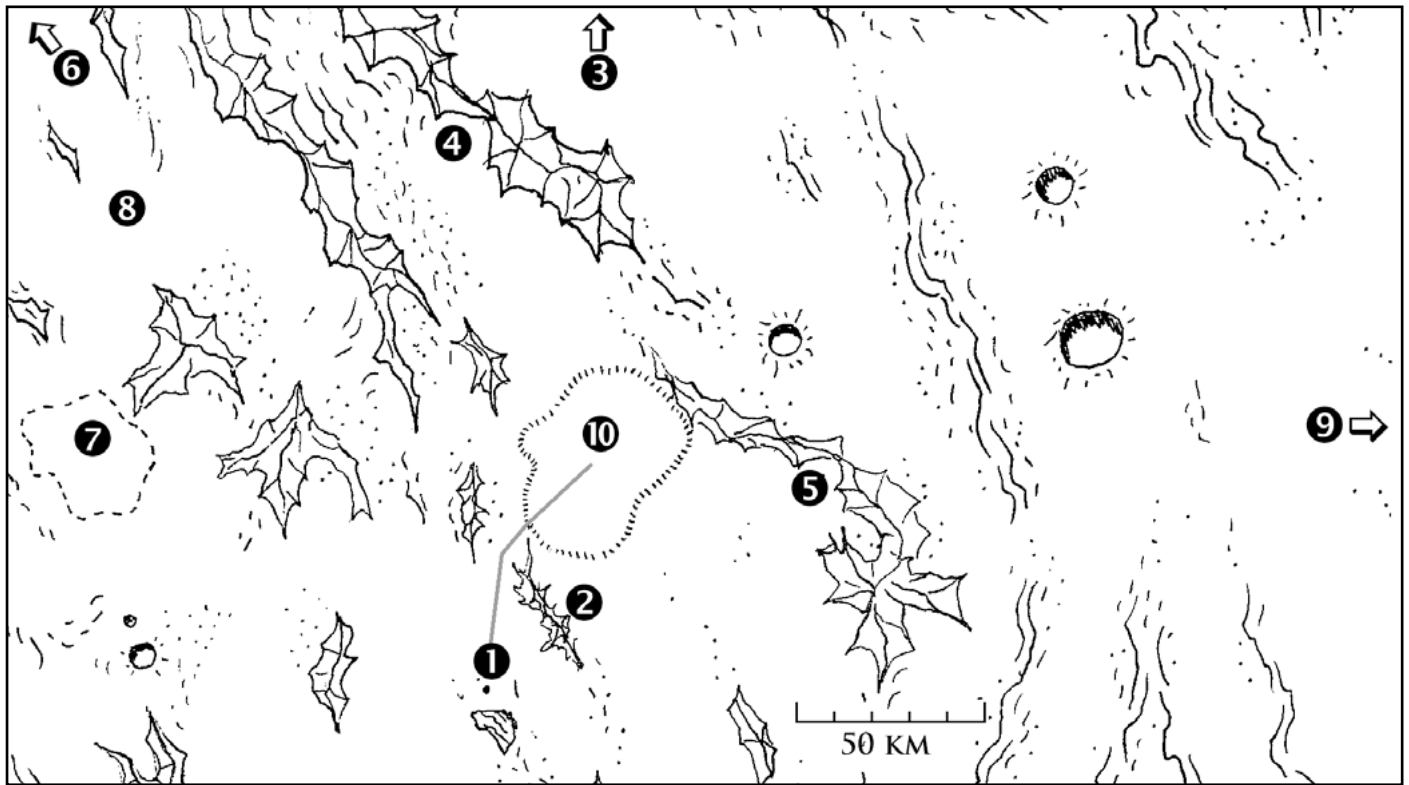
Several months ago, a thallium mine in a rocky outcropping twenty kilometers north-east of Sweetwater was abandoned. The miners accidentally tapped into cave passages used by the Tintazi as a burial ground. The Tintazi started harassing the mine, vandalizing equipment and causing cave-ins. The mine owners are offering a reward for anyone willing to remove the Dazi from the caves.

The Arusian Plateau (3)

A vast plateau extends south and west of the Loka Loka mountains and covers much of northeastern and central Arus. The Garza river crosses the plateau before plunging into the depths of the Falls of Kanos. The plateau is a mountainous region of rocky outcroppings, mesas, small mountain ranges and canyons.

The many small mountain ranges surrounding Sweetwater are actually the southern reaches of the plateau, reaching out across the plain like an archipelago of rocky islands.

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The Talons (4)

The Talons are a small mountain range shaped like the three-taloned claw of a bird of prey that extends south from the Arusian plateau. Sweetwater is located fifty kilometers south of the center talon.

The Dragons (5)

A small mountain range known as the Dragons lies seventy kilometers east of Sweetwater. The Dragons are the largest of the island-like mountain ranges that extend south of the Arusian plateau to surround Sweetwater.

Feng (6)

The town of Feng is located two hundred kilometers northwest of Sweetwater in an ancient iron field the Baho tribesmen call the Plains of Nyx, the most productive in the region. Feng is the administrative capital of the Arusian territory and home to about three thousand people. A Imperial garrison is located here, the closest military installation to Sweetwater.

The Iron Fields of Tzan (7)

The Baho tribesmen call the region a hundred kilometers west of Sweetwater the Plain of Tzan. They say it is an ancient place. A sheet-like layer of iron ore is found a few meters beneath the surface. Baron Vortis of Vrildar has hired a small army of laborers to remove the topsoil to expose the ore. The ore is then shipped back east via aero-ship. Most of the laborers take an aero-ship shuttle to Sweetwater to spend their coins when off-duty. The mine is overseen by Baron Vortis' nephew, Vardon, a greedy and corrupt businessman.

The North Trail (8)

The way north to Feng follows an ancient dry riverbed that eventually finds its way to the Narvus River. The route is plagued by a group of bandits led by a Tyrannisian named Gart. Taking an alternate route adds several hundred kilometers to the journey.

Prison Camp 13 (9)

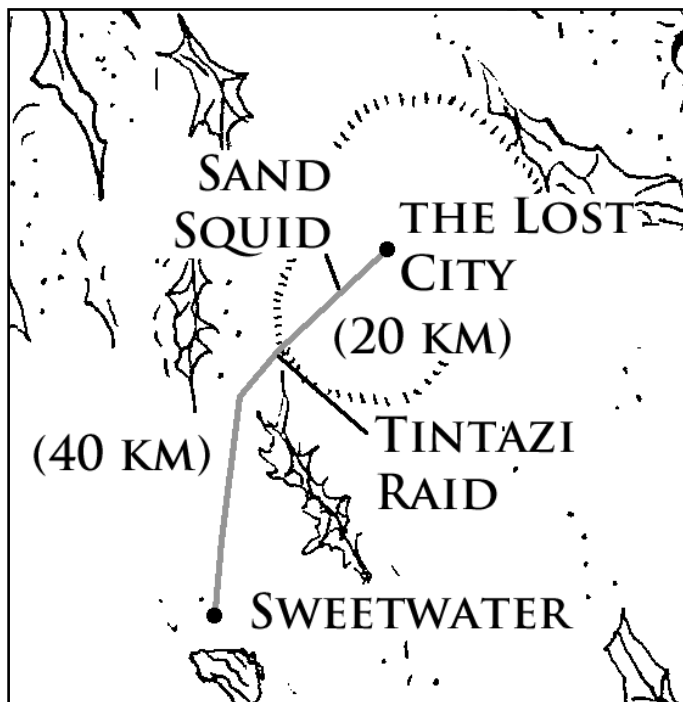
A Imperial prison camp is located one hundred sixty kilometers east of Sweetwater. Many soldiers take an aero-skiff to Sweetwater to spend their off-duty hours.

The Wasteland (10)

The region known as the Wasteland is a wide, flat, dry lake bed roughly eighteen kilometers in diameter and is centered over fifty kilometers northeast of sweetwater. The lake bed is a depression over ten meters below the surrounding terrain and many dry canyons, the remnants of ancient rivers, feed into the flat plain. One of the canyons is home to a tribe of cave-dwelling tintazi. The tintazi sometimes raid outlying farms, mines, and iron fields near Sweetwater but stay away from the town itself.

The lake bed is covered in several centimeters of white crystalline powder. The powder is an acidic salt, the remnants of an ancient acid lake, and causes irritation and inflammation to eyes, skin, and lungs.

No artificial device that requires electricity will operate within the wasteland. Blasters, electric vehicles, cyberdroids, and aero-ships simply cease functioning as if someone turned off the power. In addition, all liquids evaporate at a faster rate. Mouths become dry and parched, living creatures become dehydrated and tire more quickly, and even the sky loses some of its blue color.



SCENE 4: EXPEDITION DAY ONE

The expedition gathers in the town square the following morning. Master Osso woke early and has already hired the three girah sand-lizards and wagons, purchased water from Master Grendas, and acquired salt and other last-minute necessary supplies from the dry goods store. The player characters are given one last chance to purchase any additional equipment they think they might need.

Once ready, the expedition gets underway. Everyone is expected to walk alongside the girahs, the wagons are for transporting equipment and supplies only. Magister Reeg has acquired a map and directions leading to the edge of the Wasteland, a forty kilometer hike over low knolls and shallow ravines that will take ten hours. The only danger is the occasional rattlesnake or clump of trapacti (see page 152). Wild girahs may be seen grazing on cacti in the distance. Large buzzards circle lazily high above.

When the party reaches the edge of the Wasteland, the rolling ground slopes abruptly down ten meters, revealing a wide plain covered in glistening white crystalline powder. Heat shimmers over the flat white lake bed. A dark rise at the center of the plain is visible in the distance, roughly twenty kilometers away. Magister Reeg informs the party that the dark rise is their destination. There he believes they will find lost ruins. The trek across the lake bed will take approximately four hours.

After the day’s journey, the students are tired and anxious to set camp. The player characters are likely in charge of camp preparations and setting the watch. Everyone shares a meal, providing the gamemaster an opportunity to roleplay interactions between the NPCs and the player characters. Soon, the sun begins to set behind the mountains to the west and the sky brilliantly cycles from orange to red to purple, and finally to the indigo of night and the eerie aurora of the Oudh.

THE SCOUTING PARTY

During the night, at about 2 a.m., a scouting party of four tintazi slowly creeps up the sides of the mound to secretly observe the camp. They are spread out and come no closer than a few dozen meters. They silently observe the camp for about ten minutes, and then withdraw. Allow any player character(s) on watch an opposed Spot check, made *Difficult* by the darkness, vs the tintazi’s group Stealth check. If the player characters somehow manage to spot and kill or capture all four tintazi, one of the tintazi will bark a command to a fifth tintazi waiting in the darkness. This fifth tintazi will immediately flee.

THE RAID

A hour or so later, between 3 and 4 a.m., a raiding party consisting of sixteen tintazi, plus one per player character, will stealthily close in on the camp from all sides and attack. The tintazi raiders will at first attempt to sneak up on anyone on watch and will attempt a knock-out blow in an effort to prevent them raising any alarm. If no alarm is raised, the raiders will sneak into the camp. They will try to kill any who looks like a warrior in their sleep and grapple and capture Magister Reeg, Master Osso, the students, and anyone else who does not look like a fighter.

If an alarm is raised, the entirety of the raiding party falls upon the camp en masse, barking their war cry “GAH! GAH! GAH-GAH-GAH!” They will fight any warrior one-on-one and will try to gang up on non-fighters in an attempt to grapple them and capture them alive.

In the event of a full-on assault, Magister Reeg, Master Osso, and the four students will try to hide among some nearby rocks and gullies in order to avoid fighting. They are followed by a pack of eight tintazi. The two house retainers rush to their aid. Roll 1D10 each round:

Roll	Result
1	One of the tintazi has caused 1D6 + 1 damage to either one of the party. 1: Magister Reeg 2: Master Osso 3-6: one of the students 7-8: Dergo 9-10: Frunk
2-3	One of the four students has been found. Two tintazi wrestle the student to the ground. On the next round, the tintazi will bind the victim’s hands and legs. On the third round, the tintazi will carry the student away into the dark.
4	As above, but two of the group have been found.
5-8	Stalemate. The tintazi cannot find any of the students and no one is captured, injured, or killed this round.
9	One of the tintazi is killed
10	Two of the tintazi are killed

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Lord Kendrik will fight the barking creatures with pistol and sword. Lord Kendrik's personal guards will fight at his side. They are beset by eight tintazi. Roll 1D10 each round:

Roll	Result
1	Lord Kendrik is injured, taking 1D6 + 1 damage
2	Trin is injured, taking 1D6 + 1 damage
3	Kabak is injured, taking 1D6 + 1 damage
4-6	Stalemate, no one is injured.
7-8	One of the tintazi is killed
9-10	Two of the tintazi are killed

If one group eliminates all of their tintazi, they will then rush to the aid of the other group. For each person aiding the other group, add +1 to the roll.

The remaining tintazi attack the player characters. Once the player characters defeat their tintazi, they may choose to aid either Magister Reeg's group or Lord Kendrik's group. Discontinue rolling for that group and resolve the combat normally.

Anyone grappled by one tintazi will be quickly trussed and tied by the other. The two tintazi will then retreat with their prize, carrying their captive back to their base camp just under a kilometer away. Once there, one will stay to watch the prisoners while the other returns to fray. Anyone killed by a tintazi will be dragged away back to the base camp.

If the tintazi manage to capture or kill six members of the party, they will retreat with their prisoners and bodies to regroup at their base-camp.

If half of the tintazi are killed or incapacitated, they will retreat. If more than three-quarters are killed, they will flee.

THE TINTAZI LAIR

If the tintazi accomplish their objective, they will take the captives to their lair, a canyon on the northern edge of the Wasteland that was once a stream that fed the lake. The journey takes six hours and the tintazi return with their captives at around 11am to noon.

The lair is a labyrinth of dry stream beds and serpentine caves that were once underground streams and rivers. The lair is home to nearly 30 male tintazi, mostly immature or inexperienced, the ablest warriors having participated in the raid. The female tintazi are unintelligent animals used for breeding and nursing. They are kept in a pen in the rear of one of the caves. All male tintazi, regardless of experience or age, will fight to the death to defend the caves and will retreat in order to protect the females.

The prisoners will be taken to a cave where meat is kept. There they are kept tied. Unless they are rescued, the tintazi will kill and eat one of the prisoners that night in a grotesque feast. The others will then be taken to one of the tintazi cities as a prisoner and held for ransom.

The treasure room contains a small hoard of gold coins and valuable trade items collected by the Tintazi tribe over the years. The total value of the hoard amounts to +10 Wealth.



The hoard also contains a Glow Stone (see page 171) and a Memory Shard (see page 172). The Memory Shard contains the stored memory of a Nazarian monk. Xoog armies are pillaging his city and he is hiding in a dark room with other monks, women, elders, and children. He hurriedly conceals an object wrapped in silk behind a flagstone in the corner of a room. He then grasps the Memory Shard, records the memory, and vocalizes a thought, in Nazarian, "They must not find the key to the vault!"

Tintazi Raiders

STR 10 **CON** 9 **SIZ** 9 **INT** 7 **POW** 13 **DEX** 16 **APP** 7
Move: 12 **Hit Points:** 9 **Damage Bonus:** None

Armor: 2-point scales

Attacks: Club 35%, 1D8 + db (crushing)
 Grapple 45%
 Obsidian-topped Spear 35%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Talons 35%, 1D3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 25%, Hide 45%, Jump 25%, Spot 25%, Stealth 45%, Track 45%

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees F. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the Tintazi must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

Allergy to Sunlight: Tintazi are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

Immature or Inexperienced Tintazi

STR 6 CON 8 SIZ 8 INT 9 POW 7 DEX 14 APP 5

Move: 12 Hit Points:8 Damage Bonus: -1D4

Armor: none

Armor: 2-point scales

Attacks: Club 30%, 1D8 + db (crushing)
Obsidian-topped Spear 25%, 1D6 + 1 + db (impaling)
Talons 25%, 1D3 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Climb 35%, Dodge 20%, Jump 20%, Spot 25%, Track 30%

Sensitivity to Cold: -20% to all skills when subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees F. When exposed to temperatures below freezing, the Tintazi must make a successful CON check each minute or fall asleep for one hour.

Allergy to Sunlight: Tintazi are strongly allergic to sunlight. Treat as the Allergy minor mutation (BRP page 104).

Night Vision: Treat as the Night Vision superpower (BRP page 165).

SCENE 5: DECISIONS TO MAKE

Depending on the outcome of the tintazi raid, the surviving members of the expedition face a decision: should they continue with their mission or abort and head back to Sweetwater?

If less than half the tintazi were killed, they will return with fresh forces of inexperienced tintazi the following night. If more than half the tintazi were killed, they will be wary and not return. Any character making a Strategy skill check will be able to deduce this.

In addition, the tintazi may have taken supplies and water with them as they fled, the lack of which could jeopardize the chances of the survivors.

If most or all of the students were killed or seriously wounded in the raid, Magister Reeg will want to cancel the expedition and return to Sweetwater. Lord Kendrik will disagree and the two will argue. Although he won't admit it, Kendrik is desperate to obtain the artifact that Reeg promised and is willing to sacrifice anyone in the party in order to obtain it. He will argue, however, that he didn't invest so heavily in the expedition to see it fail. He wants a return on his investment. Master Osso remains neutral, assuming he survived.

In the event of a disagreement, both men will turn to the player characters to support their argument. If the player characters agree with Reeg, Kendrik will be angry but will not stop them from leaving. He says that he and his men will stay behind and orders anyone wishing to leave to surrender any party equipment, water, or supplies paid for by his investment. He will assign his men, assuming any survived, to guard the supplies and attack anyone who tries to take them.

In the event his men died in the raid, he will reluctantly capitulate but will attempt to talk to the player characters in private, offering them wealth to help him explore the ruins. He believes a powerful artifact is hidden in the ruins and he's willing to pay handsomely to retrieve it. The player characters must decide how to respond to the offer.

If the expedition is cancelled and the party tries to return to Sweetwater, it is a ten hour hike, more if carrying injured comrades, back to town. Depending on the supplies and water they are able to take with them, the gamemaster may wish to apply the rules for Cold, Exposure, Hunger, and Thirst (see BRP page 219).

Once they leave the Wasteland, proceed to Scene 11: the Stick-Up. Morro and his drifters are waiting in ambush, under the belief that the party is carrying valuable artifacts.

If the party survives and returns to Sweetwater empty-handed, the mission is considered a failure. The gamemaster may introduce or follow up on one of the other plot hooks on page 183, Other Events.

However, if things ended favorably for the party, Reeg and Kendrik both agree to continue on to the lost city.

SCENE 6: SAND SQUID ATTACK

If the party decides to continue to the lost city, they pack up what gear they have left and set out across the dry lake bed. The journey to the reported location of the invisible city covers twenty kilometers and will take four hours.

The lake bed and the surrounding slope are covered by a layer of powder four centimeters deep. The powder crunches underfoot like dry snow. Stepping on the powder pulverizes it and kicks up a fine particulate dust. A Science (Chemistry) skill check reveals the powder's toxic properties. Boots, long pants, gloves, a scarf around the mouth, nose, and ears, and goggles, is sufficient to protect anyone from the dust. Anyone else exposed to the dust must make an END roll every hour or take 1D3-1 damage.

Half way to the invisible city, the expedition is attacked by nine sand squid, burrowing at half speed beneath the hard packed surface. Allow the player characters an opposed Spot check vs. the sand squids' Stealth check to notice the disturbance in the surface of the lake bed made by sand worm tentacles tasting the air.

The squid attack the girahs three at a time, trying to kill them and drag them under. If a girah is killed, the wagon it was carrying is smashed and becomes useless. The cargo spills out onto the sand. Some of the cargo is pulled underground into the loose sand created by the burrowing sand worm.

Lord Kendrik, his bodyguards, Magister Reeg, Osso, and the students are horrified. They retreat several dozen meters from the scene and stand frozen in fear. Lord Kendrik orders his house retainers to defend the supplies. It is up to the player characters, with the help of the retainers, to save the girahs and their supplies. Or, at the gamemaster's discretion, allow the players to control the girahs as they struggle against their attackers.

If a sand squid loses half its HP, it flees. If half the sand squid are dead or have fled, the remainder will flee underground. Alternatively, if all three girahs are killed, the sand squid pull the bodies underground and retreat to consume their meals.

Assuming no one is killed or seriously injured, Magister Reeg and Lord Kendrik agree that the expedition should continue. They are nearly at their destination. If anyone was killed or seriously injured, Magister Reeg appears pensive and indecisive about what to do. Lord Kendrik, however, points out that Sweetwater is over twelve hours away on foot, and that the desert becomes more dangerous after dark. He suggests the injured party member, or their remains, be carried with the group and that they continue on to the mound to make camp.

In any case, everyone is much more wary of future sand squid attack and tensions noticeably increase, especially among the students. Despite the anxiety, the sand squid do not return to molest the expedition and nothing else of note happens on the lake bed.

Sand Squid

STR 28 CON 15 SIZ 29 INT 2 POW 7 DEX 7

Move: 10 (burrowing)

Hit Points: 22

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armor: 6-point chitin

Attacks: Bite 50%, 1D6 + db (bleeding)

Skills: Spot 45%, Stealth 90%

Vibration Sense: Sand squid can sense surface vibrations as far away as their POW in kilometers. It is otherwise blind to anything underground or on the surface.

Burrowing: Sand squid may burrow through loose sand at full speed or through packed dirt at half speed.

Girah

STR 21 CON 11 SIZ 28 INT 2 POW 7 DEX 5

Move: 6

Hit Points: 20

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Armor: 6-point scales

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D6 + db

Skills: Climb 40%, Sense Prey 60%

SCENE 7: THE INVISIBLE CITY

As the party nears the location of the city as reported to Reeg by the lone survivor, they notice a shimmering atmospheric effect, like a mirage, in the distance. As they get nearer, the mirage begins to resolve itself, first into a blurry shape, then into a shimmering image of a ruined city. Any character that approaches within fifty meters of the city's edge crosses the threshold of the invisibility field. Inside the field, vision returns to normal clarity and powered devices begin to work again and operate normally. The field allows light to filter in but distorts all images. Anyone inside the field looking out will see nothing but a blurry fog.

The ruined city is built on what was once a flat artificial island at the center of a wide shallow lake, now bone dry. The island is shaped like an elongated octagon, roughly one kilometer long and two-thirds of a kilometer wide. It is built of stone and rises three meters over the flat dry lake bed. The sides of the island are smooth with a steep slope.

The island is covered in tumbled ruins. Some of the buildings and monuments are relatively intact; others are collapsed, toppled, and reduced to rubble. Most of the entrances and windows face south, or inward towards a central courtyard. A tall cone-shaped structure topped with a long tapering pillar, broken at its midpoint, dominates the center of the city. The island and the all of the buildings are covered in the same layer of white acidic powder as the lake bed.

A casual glance and a Knowledge (Archaeology) check reveals that the ruins are Nazarian and that the lake once was probably less than three meters deep. However, at some point long ago the city fell to a major battle. After that, the ruins were later submerged under a lake of acid as the lake's water level rose to at least a depth of ten meters. Some of the spires and columns of the structures that still stand are free of the powder above that height. A more thorough examination and excavation of the ruins is required for more detail.

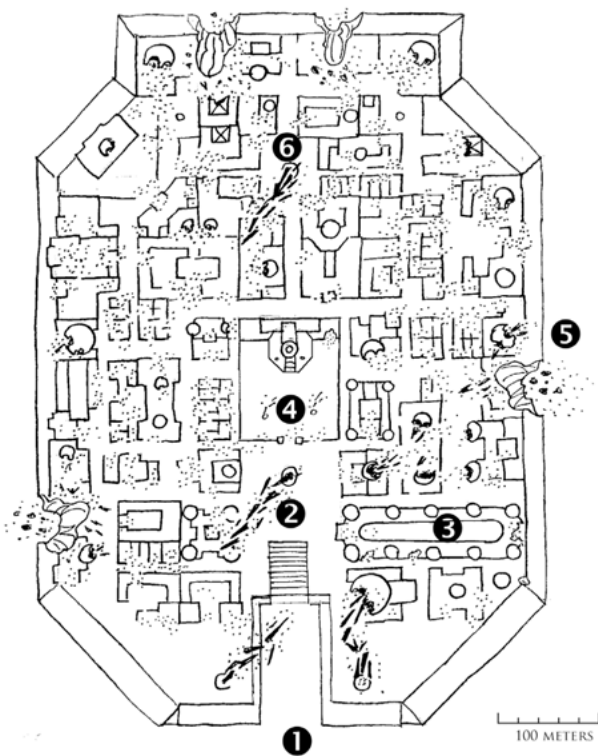
The stone foundation of the city appears to be safe from sand worm attack and Magister Reeg suggests establishing a camp amidst the ruins. The remains of wide steps that once led from the water level to the plaza in the heart of the city are located on the southern edge of the ruins. Climbing the steep sides of the mound requires a Climb check from each character, though several sections have been demolished from ancient artillery attacks and the breaches are easily scaled.

The crystalline brushes away easily from the stone of the city. Some diligent sweeping can clear a large enough area to serve as a camp.

THE RUINS

The majority of the structures on the island have collapsed. The acid ate away at the sandstone walls and columns until they were no longer able to support their roofs. Knowledge (Archaeology) checks will allow the characters to know that the city was looted and burned prior to being submerged in acid. The acid dissolved any bodies, clothing, or any soft artifacts that might have otherwise survived in the arid conditions. Knowledge (History) skill checks suggest that the city was attacked by Zorin's armies during The War of Zorin. Science (Natural History) will point out that the city was submerged in a lake of acid until at least nine hundred years ago.

The day will be spent mapping, climbing over rubble, and searching for artifacts. Magister Reeg is thorough and by-the-book. He accepts no shortcuts. The expedition is broken into two teams: Magister Reeg and two students and Master Osso and two students, or some other combination of survivors. Before entering a building, the player characters are sent ahead to secure the area. Each building is then drawn and mapped; any objects found within are catalogued and bagged in burlap sacks. The archaeological study is painstaking, taking an hour to explore each building.



If the player characters have any skills in history or archaeology, they can reduce the time spent in each building by a percentage equal to their skill. *For example, a character with Knowledge (History) of 60% will reduce the time from one hour to 24 minutes.*

ENTRANCE PLATFORM AND STAIRS (1)

This stone platform stands approximately three meters off the desert floor. It was once a dock for boats crossing the lake. A shallow stairway once lead from the water's edge to the city plaza.

PLAZA WITH FALLEN OBELISK (2)

The city plaza is an open area where traders once set up stalls and townspeople gathered to hear pronouncements from the cith officials. A conical obelisk once stood over fifty meters tall in the center of the plaza. It was toppled in the assault on the city.

ARENA (3)

This arena once boasted death sports between orix gladiators. Today a colony of Acid Ants has taken up residence in the tunnels beneath the stadium.

TEMPLE TO THE SDARA VATRA (4)

A walled compound surrounds the temple. See Scene 9: The Temple for more information about this area.

BREACHED WALL (5)

The walls of the city show evidence of having been breached by teraxes, massive beasts of war bred by Zorin to destroy cities.

REMAINS OF AN AMBUSH (6)

Here can be found the remains of the campsite of the survivors of the crash of the Tori. Should anyone investigate, a Knowledge (Archaeology) check determines that the camp is over a year old and that more than twenty people camped here.

A Track skill check reveals that the camp was ambushed while they slept and that bipedal creatures stalked the camp then attacked en masse. Science (Natural History) identifies the tracks as belonging to tintazi (see page 138). The tracks are only visible because it has not rained in this part of the desert in years.

The remains of the camp include a journal written by Captain Helis of the Tori. The journal tells the story of how the Tori was crossing the Arusian desert and mysteriously went down. It continues with the decision to abandon the ship and attempt to cross the Wasteland. The journal ends with the establishment of the camp near some previously unknown ruins.

Other Structures

The remainder of the structures consist of little more than crumbling walls with collapsed roofs and internal floors. Anyone brave enough to climb one of these walls can see the wreck of the Tori, and other older wrecks, several kilometers beyond.

SCENE 8: SMALL TALK

Assuming the expedition is intact and exploring the ruins, there comes a moment during the day when one of the player characters is alone with Master Osso. Osso strikes up a conversation.

He casually asks, "So, how did you get into this kind of work?" or some other kind of small talk.

After the player character responds, he further asks, "What do you think of Lord Kendrik?"

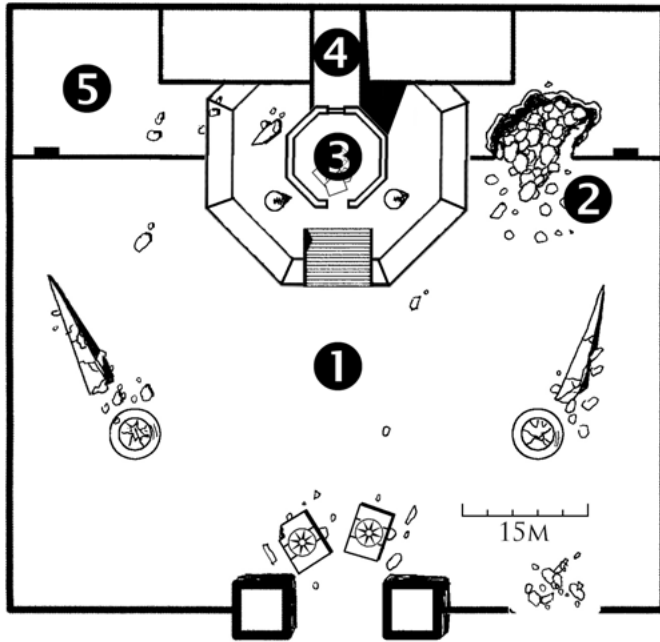
If the player character's response is favorable, Osso responds, "Hmm. Good to know." Afterwards, he becomes silent and pursues not further conversation. An Insight roll informs the player character that Osso is hiding something.

If asked about his query, Osso will reply, "No reason. Just making conversation," and continues to avoid conversation, making an excuse to leave the player character.

If the player character's response to Osso's query was neutral or negative, Osso instead replies, "If you ask me, he's a threat to what we're trying to do here. Do you know what we're really looking for here? It's not this junk, no. We're looking for whatever causes the aero-ships to crash. The professor thinks it may be some relic of the Sdara Vatra, some kind of 'anti-zephyrium' that causes aero-ships to crash."

After a short pause to gauge the player character's attitude, he continues, "Something like that would be a great defense against aero-ship bombers and scouts. It would be very valuable. The professor has tried to keep it a secret, but Lord Kendrik knows, I'm sure of it. Whatever we find, Kendrik will never let us, I mean, the University keep it. He's a noble. He'll find some way to keep it for himself. they take and they take, but they never give anything in return!" He turns and mutters under his breath, "Bloody nobles. It's what they do. It's all they do."

Afterwards, Osso wanders off to find something else to do. He will occasionally send knowing glances towards a player character whenever Lord Kendrik is in their presence.



SCENE 9: THE TEMPLE

Towards the center of the city is a walled enclosure containing the remains of a large cone-shaped structure atop a tall round foundation, an ancient Nazarian temple to the Sdara Vatra. The entire compound faces south.

TEMPLE COURTYARD (1)

The entrance gate and sections of the wall have been breached. Two obelisks shaped like tapering cylinders lie toppled in the courtyard before the pyramid, partially corroded by acid. The courtyard, once paved with marble flagstones, is strewn with rubble weathered away by centuries of exposure to the acid lake and covered with several centimeters of the white crystalline powder. There are no apparent footsteps indicating anyone or anything has come this way since the lake drained. However, anyone circling the outside of the temple courtyard first will find the obvious tracks of some large reptilian beast. The tracks meander through the ruins of the city before climbing the back wall, onto the roof of the eastern wing, and into the rubble of that wing.

A central octagonal cone-shaped structure stands thirty meters tall in the center-rear of the compound. Its surface is pocked with impacts and the needle-like spire at its apex has broken in half. The structure appears to be a temple. The base of the temple is acid-worn up to a height of six meters, but the top remained above the surface of the lake despite the city's submergence. Stairs, worn smooth by the acid lake, rise to the entrance into the temple, halfway up the front of the conical structure.

Two wings, once living quarters for the priests and acolytes, flank the pyramid at the rear of the compound, portions of their ceilings have collapsed. They were completely submerged during the flooding.

Anyone observing the wing to the west may make a Sense skill check. Anyone who achieves a success has a "bad feeling" about that place. Anyone who achieves a special success will hear the echoing screams of those who died in the far corner of their mind.

THE TERAX GUARDIAN (2)

Unbeknownst to anyone entering the compound, the eastern wing has become the lair of a large reptilian terax, a lizard monster larger than an elephant. The terax is highly territorial and will view anyone entering the compound as trespassers. The terax is instinctively drawn to this place, driven by a biological need instilled by Zorin to destroy all Nazarians.

As soon as anyone enters the compound and either begins climbing the steps, or approaches either of the wings, the terax emerges, hissing, from its hiding place and advances on the intruders. The terax will fight to the death but will not pursue anyone outside the temple walls.

Large Reptilian Terax

This terax resembles a monitor lizard of great size, roughly ten meters from head to tail. The terax is a mutant creature, a legacy of Zorin's dark bio-mancy. It was drawn to the lost city by an instinct to destroy all Nazarians. It has slept within the temple compound, inside the ruined east wing, in a form of suspended animation for over a thousand years without needing to eat or drink. The arrival of outsiders into the temple compound awakens it.

STR 67 CON 37 SIZ 74 INT 15 POW 2 DEX 17
Move: 8 Hit Points: 56 Damage Bonus: +8D6

Armor: 6-point thick hide

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D10 + db impaling
 Claws 30%, 1D6 + db bleeding

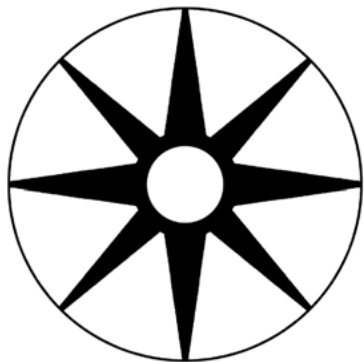
Skills: Hide 80%, Spot 40%, Listen 25%

Camouflage: The terax's skin coloration can change to match its surroundings, like a chameleon.

Psychic Disruption: The terax broadcasts psychic waves which cause confusion in a single individual. Each Combat Round, in addition to a single melee attack, it may attempt to befuddle a single target it can see with a successful POW vs POW resistance roll. Success puts the target into a confused and highly suggestive state. The target must immediately make a *Difficult Idea* roll. If the target succeeds, the psychic attack has no effect. If the target fails, the target is confused. At the beginning of that target's next action, the target must make a Luck roll. Success means the target performs no other action except throws down any hand-held equipment and flees the compound; failure means the target performs no other action except an immediate attack against the nearest ally.

ALTAR CHAMBER (3)

Just inside the entrance to the temple at the top of the stairs, half-way up the pyramid and above the effect of the acid lake, lies the altar chamber. The chamber is small, only ten meters across. Its ancient brass doors were smashed in and lie nearby on the floor. The doors are richly decorated with images and motifs depicting the Sdara Vatra and their journey to Uruta. An eight-sided altar sits atop a heavy stone plinth in the center of the room. A large brass eight-pointed star, the Nazarian symbol representing the Sdara Vatra, is attached to the top of the altar.



The wall behind the symbol is ajar, revealing a passage that in better days would have been concealed from view.

If anyone examines the symbol, they will notice that it rotates. Rotating the symbol 360 degrees causes the altar and the plinth it rests upon to slide to one side, revealing a secret passage. The flagstones in the floor surrounding the altar descend, forming stairs down into the passage.

CONCEALED STAIRS (4)

The concealed passage behind the back wall of the altar chamber leads down stairs that split into two, one east and one west. The passage acted as a back door to the altar chamber, allowing priests and acolytes access from both wings.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER (5)

Many of the city's children and elderly were sequestered in the temple during the xoog assault. Eventually, the temple wall was breached and xoogs and teraxes poured in. Those hiding within the temple were brutally slaughtered. The massacre created a psychic echo of pain and despair that persists to this day in the form of a shadow zone. The zone affects the entire wing. Any character entering this wing triggers the shadow zone, exposing the characters to a sudden sense of nausea, fear, anxiety, and dread. They have visions of the final assault of the xoog, and of the terrified women, children, and elderly seeking refuge in the temple. They have a sense that something gravely important was hidden in the chamber during the final assault and massacre in the western wing, but they know not what or where.

An ancient artifact is hidden under a loose flagstone in a chamber in the western wing. Characters may make a *Difficult* Spot check each round until they achieve a success and find the item. However, each round a character is exposed to the shadow zone, that character must roll POW x 10 to resist the effects of the zone. If successful, the multiplier to resist is reduced by one on each successive combat round, POW x 9 on the second round, POW x 8 on the third round, and so on. Once a character fails a roll, or after the tenth successive round of exposure, the character must make a successful roll against their POW x 1 each round or lose a number of power points equal to their total power points. Characters with zero or fewer power points collapse exhausted and barely conscious. The exposed character then loses a permanent point of POW each additional combat round thereafter. If the character's POW is reduced to zero, they become a soulless zombie.

The artifact is a rod the length of a man's forearm and five centimeters in diameter. The rod appears to be important, but only a successful Knowledge (Artifact) check will reveal the rod is a key used to open the temple vault.

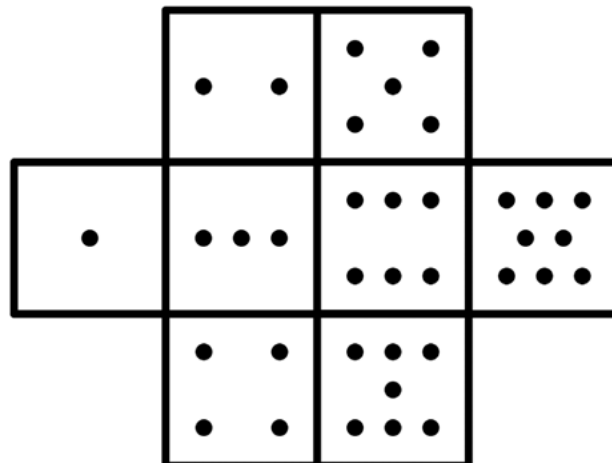
SCENE 10: THE TEMPLE CATACOMBS

If the player characters are able to slay the terax, they are free to explore the temple compound.

THE SECRET PASSAGE

The passage descends in a spiral fashion about fifty meters below the surface then opens into a small chamber, five meters square. The room is dark, the only illumination comes from that provided by the party. At the bottom of the passage, set into the wall, is another symbol which can also be rotated. Rotating this symbol closes or reopens the secret entrance above.

A single heavy studded brass door can be found on one wall. The door is decorated in the same style as the temple doors. A smaller brass symbol of the Sdara Vatra is set into the top center of the door, just above head height. Below the stone, at shoulder height, are eight movable brass tiles magnetically placed into a raised grid pattern (see below). On each tile is inscribed one to eight dots, representing the Nazarian numeral system.



Below the tiles is an inscription in ancient Nazarian. A successful Literacy (Nazarian) roll will reveal the inscription to be a riddle.

Success:

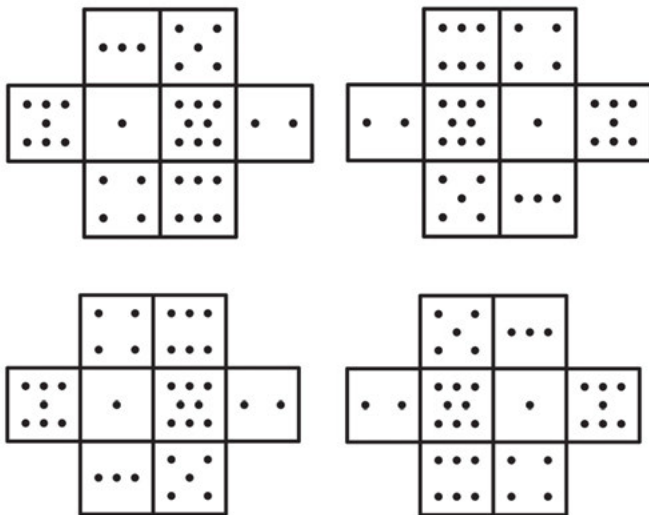
No two siblings shall abide
 To sit together side by side
 Up or down, left or right
 Nor corners touching even slight
 Once the siblings are aligned
 Pay your homage to the divine

Special: A special success not only provides the above translation, but the following context—No two consecutive numbers may be placed together, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Critical: A critical success will allow the character to infer, if the player hasn't already, that the tiles must be rearranged to fit the criteria mentioned above and the eight-pointed star set into the door above the tiles must be pressed. Only then will poison gas trap be disarmed and the door will open.

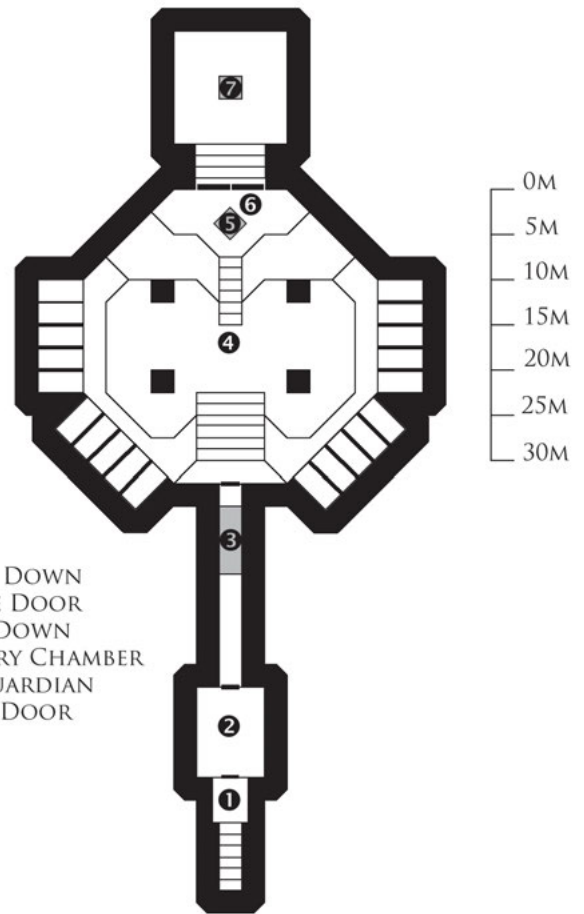
Allow the players several minutes to figure out the puzzle. Provide a sheet of paper with a blank grid and eight numbered cut out squares as a prop to aid the players.

If the tiles are arranged in one of the following four configurations, and the eight-pointed star pressed, the door deactivates its trap, unlocks itself, and opens.



If the eight-pointed star is pressed while the tiles are in any configuration other than the one shown above, the trap is triggered and the room fills with a poison gas (see Poison, BRP page 229). The poison has a POT of 8 and an onset time of five combat rounds. The gamemaster should note how many times the characters press the button before the door opens. After three combat rounds have elapsed, the gamemaster makes a resistance roll against each character subjected to the poison using the poison's POT of 8 vs. the character's CON. Each success causes 8 points of damage, each failure causes 4 points of damage.

The door can also be opened using brute force, a task that requires five successful *Difficult* Effort checks. Any attempt to do so will immediately trigger the poison gas trap.



1. STAIRS DOWN
2. PUZZLE DOOR
3. RAMP DOWN
4. OSSUARY CHAMBER
5. AYA GUARDIAN
6. VAULT DOOR
7. VAULT

THE OSSUARY

The passage beyond the trapped door leads down a steep ramp and through another door into an ossuary chamber, ten meters wide and sixty meters long. The ceiling is vaulted and supported by four columns. The walls are lined with niches, filled with the dried bones of the ancient priests of the cult of Sdara Vatra. The funeral wrappings that once covered the bones have long ago decayed into dust. There are 1D4 Memory Shards hidden within.

The far wall of the ossuary chamber is dominated by two heavy vault doors, bound closed by a larger version of the eight-pointed star-symbol of Sdara Vatra. At the center of the symbol is a hole, five centimeters in diameter. A diamond is set in the floor in front of the vault doors and glows with eerie blue tracery.

If anyone touches the vault door without holding the key, the diamond-shaped panel set in the floor opens and a metallic statue armed with a wicked looking pole-arm emerges. The statue begins to glow and immediately comes alive. The statue is, in fact, an ancient cyberdroid guardian created by the Sdara Vatra and programmed to protect the contents of the vault. Once activated, the Cyberdroid Guardian shouts the phrase, "TAS RAYA PRADINNA! YA BRABDA DANYA ZARKAN TE AKKAT!" Which translates from Sdara Vatra to "This Area is Forbidden! You have ten seconds to vacate!" A successful Knowledge (Occult) skill check will recognize the language as lost Sdara Vatan but will not be able to understand the words being used.

The cyberdroid guardian has detected intruders not bearing the rod/key and has given the intruders ten seconds to evacuate the area or present the key.

At the beginning of the next round, if there are still intruders present and no one has presented the key, the cyberdroid announces, “AKKASAS YABANNA! TASAS-YURO VANAR VAHEEN GARU!”, which translates from Sdara Vatra to “Access is forbidden! Security will now terminate!” The guardian immediately attacks all intruders. The cyberdroid guardian fights until destroyed, all intruders are dead, or the vault door is opened.

If defeated, the Aya inhabiting the cyberdroid will leave the remnants of its robotic body to seek a new host. See “*Revenge of the Aya*” below.

Cyberdroid Guardian

The cyberdroid guardian of the Nazarian vault is a robotic shell with minimal intelligence and no free will. The guardian is a valuable artifact in its own right and was ancient during the time of the Nazarians. When assigned a task, it will tirelessly pursue that task for eternity. The Nazarian priests were able to reprogram the cyberdroid to guard the vault. Unfortunately, the knowledge of how to re-program the guardian died with the priests. A dedicated techno-heretic could break the programming after months of study, research, and practice.

If anyone presents the key, the guardian returns to the floor panel and lowers itself into its chute. Anyone touching or attempting to tamper with the statue receives a jolt of electricity doing 2D6 damage that ignores armor.

STR 24 CON 20 SIZ 24 INT 6 POW 18 DEX 10
Move: 10 Hit Points: 22 Damage Bonus: +2D6

Armor: 10-point metal exoskeleton

Attacks: Halberd 65%, 3D6 + db (bleeding), long

Skills: Spot 60%

Self-Repair: The cyberdroid guardian is capable of self-repair. If destroyed, it will slowly re-form, regenerating four hit points a month until fully repaired. In time, it will be restored to its original statue-like existence in the chute under the floor panel.

Immunities: The cyberdroid guardian is immune to poison and disease.

Ta'oudh Immunity: Cyberdroids are immune to the following Ta'oudh powers—Blind, Blinding Bolt, Calm, Disfigure, Disfiguring Bolt, Disrupt, Disrupting Bolt, Enrage, Healing Touch, Hypnotic Gaze, Immobilize, Immobilizing Bolt, Restore, Sense Presence, Stun, Stunning Bolt, or any other power that affects the mind or nervous system of a target.

Psychic Immunity: The cyberdroid guardian is immune to the following psychic powers—Aura Detection, Emotion Control, Empathy, Mind Blast, Mind Control, Sensitivity, Telepathy, or any other power or effect that affects the mind.

Susceptibility: The cyberdroid guardian is susceptible to electric and magnetic-based damage and attacks. Attacks composed of such energies ignore the cyberdroid guardian's armor and do an additional 1D6 damage.

THE TEMPLE VAULT

Opening the vault door requires the temple key. Simply touching the vault door will cause a pattern of previously invisible tracery inlaid into the doors, resembling a giant circuit board, to begin glowing. The two great metal doors slide open, revealing the treasure within.

Lacking the key, a Knowledge (Nazarian) roll will reveal that the tracery on the vault door is part of the lock and can be moved. Redesigning the tracery in the correct pattern can fool the door into opening. This can be done with any combination of five successful Fine Manipulation skill checks or five *Difficult* Luck tests out of ten. On the tenth try, heavy steel doors will slide shut over the vault door. Other alternatives to dismantling the lock include blasting the vault with explosives or burning through with a plasma cutting torch. Any attempt to do either will cause the steel outer doors to immediately slam closed.

The reinforced steel outer doors are half a meter thick. They are blast resistant and impossible to open. Once closed, the outer doors stay closed for one year, at which time they slowly reopen. If the key is found and inserted, the steel doors will reopen.

Once opened, the treasures secreted away within the vault are revealed. A silvery metal orb, about twenty centimeters in diameter and polished to a mirrored finish, hovers a few centimeters above a metallic plinth.

Piled around the plinth are several treasures, coins of precious metals, objects of art, religious artifacts depicting the Sdara Vatra, and other offerings made to the temple priests and stored away within the vault. The treasure is worth +25 Wealth but is heavy and not easily carried. Technically, the treasure belongs to Lord Kendrik. The player characters will only receive a small portion of it, equivalent to a +10 Wealth.

REVENGE OF THE AYA

At this stage, what happens next depends on which NPCs are still alive and on the decisions and actions of the player characters.

If Lord Kendrik is still alive, he will draw his plasma pistol and fire at Magister Reeg, then randomly at everyone else. His men will be confused. They will not fire on their employer unless they, personally, are attacked by him or if they are compelled (a *Normal* Command test) or convinced (a *Normal* Persuasion test) to do so.

The Aya, free from its robotic shell, has leapt into Lord Kendrik and has taken control of his Rhakadian cybernetics, essentially possessing his body. Lord Kendrik is not in control of his actions. Lord Kendrik is likewise confused. He is blind and doesn't know exactly what is happening and will gladly share that information.

The player characters will need to either kill or subdue Lord Kendrik. If they choose to subdue him, purging the Aya from his system will require three successful Technical (Cybernetics) skill tests, a skill the player characters will likely not have. Technical Skill (Electronics) or (Robotics) may be attempted at half skill level. If they can get him back to town, Lord Kendrik can be cured by either Rudolfo the Rugose or Master Grendas.

If they kill Lord Kendrik, the Aya will leap into any nearby cyberdroid and attempt to take control, an action that requires a successful power point vs power point check on the resistance table. If there are no cyberdroids to possess, the Aya will enter any piece of advanced equipment nearby, such as the plasma rifle, where it will lie dormant until a future adventure.

If Lord Kendrik is not alive, the Aya will leap into the body of any available cyberdroid or piece of equipment as above. Otherwise, Magister Reeg will claim the artifact and the treasure. Osso and the other students, if alive, will make no attempt to intervene. If the player characters make any attempt to steal the artifact, Osso, the students, and any surviving guards, will attempt to stop them.

Orb of the Mirage

The artifact is known as the Orb of the Mirage. It is a silvery metal orb, about twenty centimeters in diameter, polished to a mirrored finish. The artifact is an ancient cloaking device, capable of creating a bubble of energy that distorts light.

Holding the orb in both hands and speaking the secret activation word, requiring a successful Knowledge (Artifact) skill test activates the orb. The orb is currently activated and is generating the mirage that surrounds the city. In fact, the orb has been left activated since the fall of the city over a millennium ago.

The orb, when activated, creates a permeable force field that refracts light. The size of the field can vary from two meters in radius to as much as five kilometers in radius. The effect is not the same as true invisibility, anyone near the effect will notice the shimmering mirage-like effect, but will otherwise not be able to see anyone or anything within unless they approach within one meter. The refraction is more effective at longer ranges, rendering anything within the field effectively invisible at distances greater than ten times the radius of the field. The effect works both ways, however. Anyone inside the field cannot see anything outside the field either.

Another effect of the orb is that artificially powered devices such as lasers, blasters, computers, motorized vehicles, cyberdroids, or any other type of advanced technology, are rendered powerless within a radius equal to ten times the radius of the invisibility effect. This power-nullification only affects devices outside the field. *For example, if someone sets the invisibility effect to two meters radius, no powered devices will work within twenty meters of the field, but devices within the field work normally.*

The power-nullification zone also has an odd effect on local weather by reducing atmospheric humidity. Liquids evaporate faster, mouths become dry, eyes become irritated, and living beings become dehydrated and tired. A human will become dehydrated in 2D6 hours of exposure to the power-nullification field.

Over the last thousand years, the dessication effect has subtly altered the weather of the area, increasing the ambient air temperature and reducing the atmospheric humidity of the lake bed, rendering it a parched wasteland. Without the occasional rains, the aquifer in the basin has slowly dried out, receding deeper and deeper under the earth. Simply touching the orb deactivates the invisibility field as well as the power-nullifying and weather-altering side-effects. In time, the area will return to normal weather patterns.

SCENE 11: THE STICK-UP

When the expedition first arrived in Sweetwater, Osso made secret arrangements (see page 182) to have the artifact stolen on their way back. His contact then hired a group of six local drifters to waylay the party and take the artifact. Their orders were to camp on the plain and post a lookout to watch for the expedition's return. Once spotted, they are to intercept the expedition on anator-back, threaten them with crossbows and spears, and steal any treasure or artifacts the party had on them. They were specifically ordered not to kill anyone! Once they had taken the artifact and any treasure, the plan was for the drifters to bring the artifact over to Osso's contact in Sweetwater. In exchange, the treasure was to be split eight ways between each of the six bandits, Osso, and the contact.

The drifters made camp and waited for the party to return. During their wait, the six drifters had a lot of time to sit and talk. They decided that it would be smarter to steal everything and split the treasure six ways. They made new plans to kill any survivors to eliminate witnesses and leave town with their gains.

Depending on who leaves the lost city first, the drifters spot them and ride up to them.

If they spot the returning expedition first, with or without the artifact or treasure, they ride forth. When the riders approach, Osso tries to act surprised. However, instead of demanding their treasure, the drifters immediately attack. The moment someone in his party is actually injured or killed, Osso responds with genuine horror, outrage, indignation, and regret. His plan has been betrayed as he now realizes the bandits intend to leave no survivors.

If the player characters stole the artifact and left on their own, they will be intercepted by the drifters on their way back to Sweetwater.

THE DRIFTERS

The drifters are a motley collection of Demetrians and Iotians, veterans of the War of Unification released into the Arusian desert after serving ten years in a prison camp. They are bitter, ruthless wanderers who banded together to survive. They came to Sweetwater a few months ago and found work as laborers.

Morro

Moro is the nominal leader of the bandits. He has no particular skills or leadership abilities. The others made him leader because he was the only one with a laser rifle.

STR 18 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 14 DEX 11 APP 15
Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Phanosian Laser Rifle 40%, 2D8 (impaling)
Short Sword 60%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)
Dagger 50%, 1D4 + db (impaling)

Skills: Bargain 35%, Hide 50%, Stealth 30%, Ride (anator) 45%, Appraise 35%, Brawl 55%, Spot 65%

The Rest of the Bandits

The other bandits are armed with long spears and crossbows.

STR 11 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 12 DEX 14 APP 14
 Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: None

STR 14 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 9 POW 12 DEX 9 APP 13
 Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 16 DEX 13 APP 10
 Move: 10 Hit Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 16 DEX 14 APP 14
 Move: 10 Hit Points: 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4

STR 16 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 13 DEX 15 APP 10
 Move: 10 Hit Points: 12 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 3-point heavy padded/quilted and Cydorian light helmet

Attacks: Long Spear 60%, 1D10 + 1 + db (impaling)
 Crossbow 55%, 2D4 + 2 (impaling)
 Short Sword 50%, 1D6 + 1 + db (bleeding)
 Dagger 50%, 1D4 + db (impaling)

Skills: Stealth 50%, Ride (anator) 45%, Brawl 55%, Spot 65%

OUTCOMES

The outcome of this scenario depends on several factors.

IF THE DRIFTERS STOLE THE ARTIFACT

If the drifters were successful in their robbery, they head north through the pass. Eventually they are, themselves, robbed by Gert who takes possession of the artifact and treasure.

The player characters may choose to pursue the robbers across the plain and up into the mountains to retrieve the artifact. Otherwise, Gert keeps the artifact for a few months before trading it away.

IF MAGISTER REEG RETURNS WITH THE ARTIFACT

If Magister Reeg is successful and returns to Vrildar with the artifact, then the player characters have chosen not to steal the artifact for themselves and that the drifters were unsuccessful in stealing the artifact. The university will pay the player characters +10 Wealth in addition to any share of the treasure.

There may be several dangling issues left unresolved. Master Osso will be punished for his attempted betrayal, a fact that Osso, in his regret, does not dispute.

If Lord Kendrik survives, he will be shunned. He was possessed by the Aya and no one will see him out of fear of “infection”. Lord Kendrik will ultimately leave Norukar in disgrace and become a drifter, wandering the frontier as an outcast and pariah.

Artifact Hunters: The player characters will be rewarded for their contributions to the mission.

Flight of the Tonbo: see Artifact Hunters above.

The Great Game of Cydoria: The player characters were unsuccessful in their mission for their liege lord and will be reprimanded. They are forced to turn over their payment from the university as punishment and may lose -5 Status (Noble House).

The Heresy of Invention: The player characters were unsuccessful in their mission for their techno-heretic and will be reprimanded. They are forced to turn over their payment from the university as punishment and will lose -5 Status (Techno-Heretic Circle.)

Remember Demetria: The player characters were unsuccessful in their mission for the resistance and will be reprimanded. They are forced to turn over their payment from the university as punishment and may lose -5 Status (Demetrian Resistance).

Savage Frontier: see Artifact Hunters above. In addition, Baron Donahee will be impressed with their actions. He offers the player characters the position of Constable and Deputies in Sweetwater.

IF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS STOLE THE ARTIFACT

If the player characters stole the artifact, and perhaps the treasure too, and they managed to make it back to Sweetwater, they have several options. If they wish to leave Sweetwater in a hurry, they must convince Captain Resko to abandon the rest of the expedition, something he is more than willing to do if the price is right. If the player characters opt to stay in Sweetwater, they’ll face awkward questions about what happened. Even if the player characters left members of the expedition alive in the city, no witnesses will ever return to refute the player characters’ version of the events.

Artifact Hunters: The player characters must now try to find a buyer for the artifact. If they return to Norukar, they can sell the artifact for +25 Wealth. They also have several options within Sweetwater. They can sell it to Rudolfo the Rugose, Yokum the Wineseller, or Master Grendas for only +10 Wealth.

Flight of the Tonbo: see Artifact Hunters above.

The Great Game of Cydoria: the player characters must return the artifact to their liege lord, wherever that may be. The player characters will be rewarded for their mission with an increase of +5 to their Status (Noble House).

The Heresy of Invention: the player characters must return the artifact to their techno-heretic, wherever that may be. The player characters will be rewarded for their mission with an increase of +5 to their Status (Techno-Heretic Circle).

Remember Demetria: If the player characters were successful in stealing the artifact, their mission was to deliver it to Madame Katreia of the Desert Pearl. Once delivered, they can choose to stay or return to Norukar with the Tonbo. The player characters will be rewarded for their mission with an increase of +5 to their Status (Demetrian Resistance).

Savage Frontier: see Artifact Hunters above.

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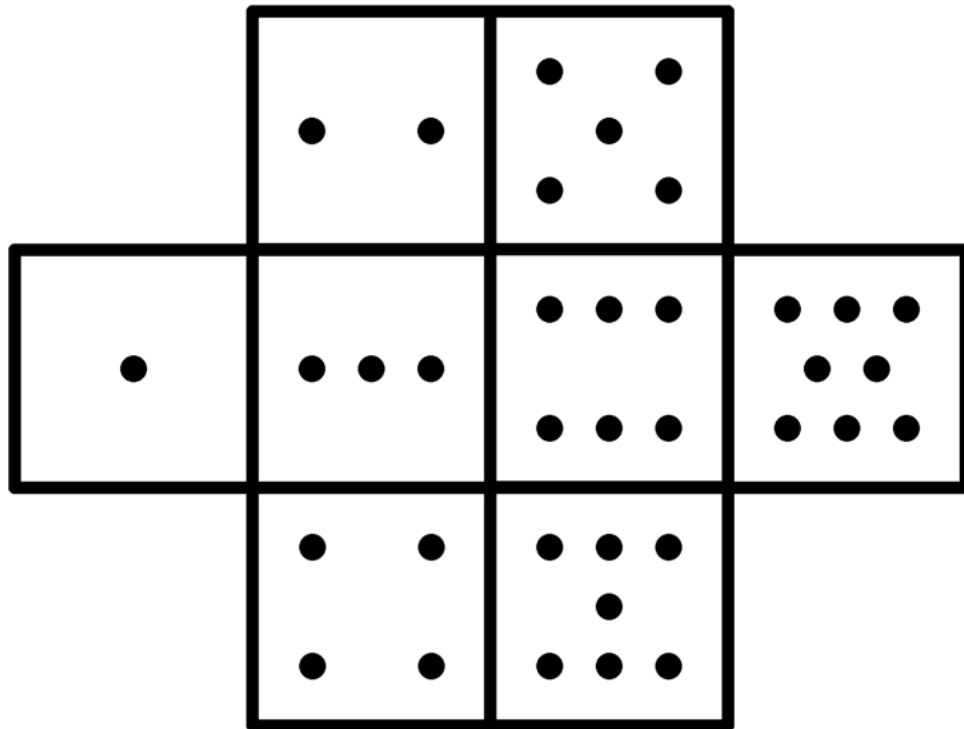
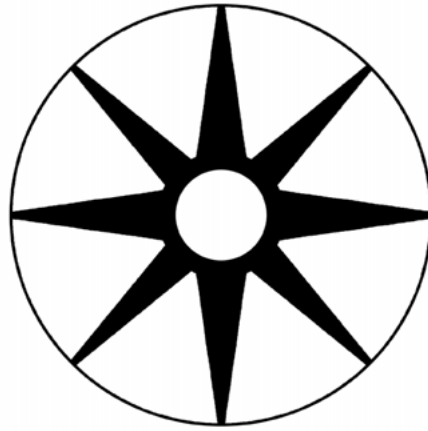
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μᾱθῖλ ἰκὶ κᾱλῶσῶ σπῖρῶ ἔμᾱρν
 ῥᾱσ ῥᾱσᾱ πῖλρῖκᾱρῶ σῑρῖλᾱσᾱκ
 ῥῖκᾱσῖ ῥᾱῥᾱ σῶσᾱδῖ' ῶσᾱσ ῥᾱῥᾱ ῶρᾱ
 ὕσ ῶσ μᾱθῖλ πῖλ κᾱρῶσ σῑσῥῖρᾱλ ῶσᾱκῖλᾱσῶσᾱ
 κᾱλῶσῶρᾱλ μῖσᾱρᾱσῖλ ῶσῖλᾱ
 ἰρᾱμῖ ἰῶσῖ μῖλῶσῑ

NO TWO SIBLINGS SHALL ABIDE
 TO SIT TOGETHER SIDE BY SIDE
 UP OR DOWN, LEFT OR RIGHT
 NOR CORNERS TOUCHING EVEN SLIGHT
 ONCE THE SIBLINGS ARE ALIGNED
 PAY YOUR HOMAGE TO THE DIVINE

SWORDS OF CYDORIA

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