

Engines & Empires

# WORLD OF GAIA

CAMPAIGN SETTING



BY JOHN D. HIGGINS

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**WORLD OF  
GAIA  
CAMPAIGN SETTING**

**JOHN D. HIGGINS**

**R•E•G**

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Second Edition: 2020

First Edition: 2017

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# PREFACE

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I came up with the idea for Gaia while I was sitting in a criminalistics class, with a forensics professor at the head of the room lecturing about the physics of blood-splatters and broken glass. You must understand, it wasn't that I had my head in the clouds because the class was boring (as my undergraduate career meandered from major to major, I eventually passed on forensics, but I still wound up a plain old physics major in the end); it's just that I was then and still remain an inveterate, obsessive world-builder. On this particular occasion, I was trying to come up with a suitably Narnia-like setting, a world entirely populated by demihumans — elves and dwarves, centaurs and fauns — ideal for dropping a human hero from modern-day Earth into. The idea was to write a fantasy novel in the “stranger in a strange land” or “portal fantasy” genre, starring a main character who followed in the grand tradition of Alice, Dorothy Gale, John Carter, Flash Gordon, the Pevensie siblings, Buck Rogers, and John Crichton — a character trapped in a fantastical world whose chief goal was to leave it behind and get back home to friends and loved ones as quickly as possible. (That novel never did get finished, although a year or so later I turned it into a screenplay for a screenwriting class wherein I happened to meet the love of my life, and now my wife, Sarah. The point is, as frivolous as fantasy and world-building can be at times, in my case these things are also deeply intertwined with the best of times and memories.)

This was back in the fall of 2006; anyone who knows anything about the Old-School Renaissance should be well aware that it was just starting to take off around then. *Castles & Crusades* was two years old at that point, *OSRIC* and *Basic Fantasy RPG* came out that year, and *Labyrinth Lord* was yet a year off. For my part, I was just rediscovering old-school gaming myself, and the nascent idea of a steampunk old-school game — *Engines & Empires* got its title long before anything else about it took shape — was too exciting to ignore. But if I wanted the rules to be legitimately old-school, a published book would have to be a setting for others' rules more than a rulebook of its own, and the fantasy setting on the forefront of my mind at the time was Gaia; and so I coopted it from myself, altered it considerably, and thus did a fantasy-novel “magical land” with no humans and no technology have its timeline advanced a couple thousand years into the future — into a “Fourth Age of Gaia,” when humans and science were becoming ascendant over the old Fair Folk and their magic. The original setting of that fantasy novel became a figment of Gaia's ancient past, the Second Age, when an empire of evil elves ruled the world, and a single, now-forgotten, nameless human hero appeared and helped to topple it all to the ground.

*Engines & Empires* (with Gaia as its “baked-in” setting) went through several iterations — a simplified d20-based game that got lost in a hard-drive crash before it could ever near completion; a short and generic “module” format that went up on *Dragonsfoot.org* in 2007; a five-level “basic set” for *Labyrinth Lord* in 2008; and finally the full *Campaign Compendium* in 2009. Since then, quite a bit has changed with respect to my opinions on what makes a good game and a good fantasy setting. I now have very different views on “gamist” vs. “narrativist” rules; on imitation of the good Professor Tolkien and other sources of fantasy in popular culture; and on the value of old-school gameplay as the OSR has attempted to reconstruct it. That said, the vast majority of this book's text has been little changed from the latter half of the *Campaign Compendium*; I've only tweaked things where strictly necessary to bring everything into line with the new edition of the *E&E™ Core Rules* and with my present-day sensibilities. The *World of Gaia* setting has been decoupled from the core rules as a matter of simple convenience: over the years, I've found myself running a great many *Engines & Empires* games, but not always in the same setting; and whenever I didn't run a game set in Gaia, I found myself lamenting the fact that fully half the rulebook was useless deadweight. By giving Gaia its own book, I can “take or leave it” at need, and so can anyone else who finds this setting and its ideas intriguing enough to run with.

—John D. Higgins  
July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RULES

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**T**HE WORLD OF GAIA is the original and presumably the default campaign setting for the *Engines & Empires*<sup>™</sup> gaslamp fantasy tabletop adventure game. This first section serves as an introduction to the setting and an overview of the book, which is admittedly limited in scope – like so many game supplements that purport to describe a campaign “world,” this one really only details a single sub-continent, called Arcadia, which is in many ways a perfectly typical “fantasy Europe analogue” – but with one major exception. Instead of the standard medieval fantasy milieu, Arcadia is well into its Age of Steam (with the overall esthetic being somewhere between the Napoleonic and the Victorian).

## The Rules of the Game

Gaia is a campaign setting intended for use with the *Engines & Empires* TTAG, but it need not be so exclusively. Only this first chapter details any game rule information; the rest of the book is pure setting detail and devoid of any specific game mechanics. The first part of the book describes the rules needed to play *E&E* games in Gaia, which really just amounts to a description of the Fair Folk – all the sundry demihuman kindreds (and other, more unusual nonhumans) that inhabit this strange-but-familiar world. Theoretically, any adventure game or role-playing game with rules that support a 19<sup>th</sup> century level of technology and a good mix of magic and fantastical nonhumans should be able to handle this setting with perfect adequacy.

Incidentally (if there should happen to be any OGL enthusiasts reading this), since only Part One of this book has any rules, that’s the only part of the book that contains any Open Game Content (and all game rules and mechanics are hereby designated as such); the rest of the book has only Product Identity.

At any rate, with this book and the *E&E Core Rules*, referees should have all they might need to run dungeon and wilderness adventures set anywhere in Arcadia. Part Two of the book includes an overview of the world of Gaia as a whole, a history of the setting in broad strokes, and some notes on Arcadian religion and culture. Part Three, by far the largest of the book’s sections, details the nations of Arcadia.

## The Fair Folk

Playing an *E&E* campaign set in Gaia requires no alteration to the core rules beyond the addition of several nonhuman kindreds and species which are already all present in *E&E*’s own monster section. Another detail that makes Gaia at least a little bit unique when compared to most fantasy settings is this: the humans don’t rule the world.

Most settings take a page from Tolkien and his many, many imitators and describe humans as ascendant, soon to replace an old order of fading and diminishing fairykind. Or they go all-in on human-centric swords & sorcery worlds where nonhuman races are barely a consideration. Gaia leans closer to the former style, as there are elves and dwarfs and goblins aplenty – but they are not

dying out to make way for some foreordained Age of Man. In fact, in a great many places throughout Arcadia, it is the fairy-folk who “rule the roost,” so to speak, with humans as second-class citizens. This is mostly the case in Arcadia’s northern nations: the kingdoms of Asgard and Pohjola, which are ruled by the goblins and elves respectively; the fay-dominated Avalonian Empire; the republic of Utopia, mostly controlled by gnomes; and the island of Tirnanog, the homeland of a little people called the hánfolk. It is chiefly in the south, where the vestigial remains of great fallen empires of antiquity yet struggle to form strong and independent nations in the modern age, that the human race has managed to carve out a niche for itself – in the lands of Hesperia, Illyria, and Elysia. And in between, throughout the central regions of Arcadia, one can find innumerable smaller kingdoms, duchies, and principalities populated by a bewildering mixture of humans and demihumans. Some of these demihuman peoples might be rarer than others, but none are truly in decline.

## The Kindreds of Gaia

In the core *E&E* game, only human characters are playable by default. Nonhuman characters are optional. But in Gaia, a great many nonhuman species (known generally as “the kindreds”) are assumed to be playable. Human characters may belong to any one of *E&E*’s five standard character classes – fighter, rogue, scholar, mage, or tech – and they may rise as high as the 10<sup>th</sup> experience level in that class. All of the other kindreds belong to special character classes of their own, and most are limited to a lower maximum experience level – 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> level at the highest.



The vast majority of playable humanoids in the world of Gaia are *demihumans*, which is to say, they are similar to (and likely related to) humans. Most demihumans – elves, fays, goblins, ogres, gnomes, háin, centaurs, fauns, arachnes, harpies, lamias, merrows, and scyllas – are also related to the Fae, spirits that come from the ethereal Realm of Faerie. For this reason, all of these kindreds are known variously as Fair Folk, fairy-folk, or fairies. Three other kindreds – the drachen, the wilder, and the leshonky – are demihumans, but they are not fairies; they have no Fae blood and no connection to Faerie. Finally, there are six varieties of sentient constructs and automata – three types of mechanical robots (auto-mechs, clockwork men, and replicants) and three kinds of the magically-animated effigies known as “made men” (straw men, tin men, and wicker men).

*Prime Requisites:* Most nonhuman characters have at least two prime requisite attribute scores. All prime requisites must be at least 11 or greater for a character to qualify for a nonhuman class. If *all* prime requisites are 16 or greater, the character receives a +10% bonus on all XP earned.

Fairy Demihuman	Prime Requisites	Max Level
Arachne	Fortune, Wits	8 <sup>th</sup>
Centaur	Valor, Wits	8 <sup>th</sup>
Elf	Valor, Presence	7 <sup>th</sup>
Faun	Valor, Fortune	8 <sup>th</sup>
Fay	Fortune, Presence	7 <sup>th</sup>
Gnome	Fortune, Wits	7 <sup>th</sup>
Goblin	Valor, Wits	7 <sup>th</sup>
Hán	Valor, Fortune, Wits	6 <sup>th</sup>
Harpy	Valor, Fortune	8 <sup>th</sup>
Lamia	Valor, Wits	8 <sup>th</sup>
Merrow	Presence and any one other	8 <sup>th</sup>
Ogre	Valor	8 <sup>th</sup>
Scylla	Wits, Presence	8 <sup>th</sup>

Other Demihuman	Prime Requisites	Max Level
Drachen	Valor, Wits	8 <sup>th</sup>
Leshonky	Valor, Presence	8 <sup>th</sup>
Wilder	Valor, Fortune	8 <sup>th</sup>

Automaton	Prime Requisites	Max Level
Auto-Mech	Valor, Wits	7 <sup>th</sup>
Clockwork Man	Valor or Fortune, Wits	7 <sup>th</sup>
Replicant	Valor, Fortune, and Wits	6 <sup>th</sup>

Magical Construct	Prime Requisites	Max Level
Straw Man	Wits, Presence	7 <sup>th</sup>
Tin Man	Valor, Wits	7 <sup>th</sup>
Wicker Man	Fortune, Presence	7 <sup>th</sup>

*Level Limits:* Nonhuman characters can only reach the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> level in their class.

## Fays

The world of Gaia exists in a Physical Universe very much like our own — but the walls of Gaia’s Universe are weaker than ours. From time to time, perhaps no more than once in a World-Age, it so happens that the boundaries between realms may be ruptured. Not just pierced, as when a mage opens a gateway or a portal, but torn wide-open so that a tide of matter from another reality may wash onto the “shore” of Gaia. And just like any other Physical Universe, the nearest plane of existence whence this otherworldly “stuff” may come is the Etheric Plane — or, more specifically, the sub-plane of the Inner Ether known as Faerie.

Long ago (or so the legends say), Gaia’s first inhabitants came from Faerie. These were the Sidhe, the Lords of the Fae, immortal and magical. None know how the Sidhe came to be on Gaia, whether it was intentional or accidental, or even what magic made this come to pass. But arrive they did, in great numbers, in a land far to the west — the continent of Lemuria. There, the Sidhe found themselves the possessors of a new and untouched world, lush with plant and animal life, but empty of people. Moreover, unlike the realm they had just left, Faerie, a realm of perfect youth and eternal stasis, this new world was mortal — dynamic and changeable.

The Sidhe built a great civilization and ruled Gaia for ten-thousand years. But decadence, corruption, and a love of sorcery eventually wiped them out. The fall of the old Sidhe civilization left the world changed. A mighty magic had been wrought, and a vast tide that touched the edges of many worlds brought all of the other kindreds into Gaia — the elves, the goblins, the centaurs, and all the rest. And as for the Sidhe, the descendants they left behind after the disaster that ended their rule were greatly diminished: like them in form but weakened in power, they were now a mortal fairy-kindred which are today called “the fay.”

Fays are humanoid in appearance, tall and slender, with pale skin (almost grayish in tint). Their ears sweep back to long, sharp points. Their eyes are solid black, with no sign of an iris or a pupil unless one looks very closely (in which case a hint of violet or rose may be seen). Fays have a great love of magic, especially the art of sorcery

(i.e. spirit-channeling), almost as if they enjoy the dangerous game of gambling with one’s very soul or bargaining with otherworldly powers. The magic burns in their blood, a siren-call that no fay can resist. Further, they are arrogant and aloof, with manners that humans find distant and disturbing, practically alien.

As a rule, fays are hedonistic in the extreme, seeking at all times to live lives of base pleasure: leisure, song and dance (preferably of the high-society ballroom variety), masquerades, operas, courtly intrigues, and so forth. Especially within the borders of the Avalonian Empire, where the fay kindred very nearly constitutes the entire noble class, they have been able to keep this fanciful dream-life going for many centuries. But the times do change, and every day more power falls into the hands of modern industrialists, financiers, and business tycoons — until even the “old money” of Avalon’s fayish aristocracy may begin to run low. Thus has it come to pass in this day and age that the younger sons and daughters of storied fay families are apt to find themselves “down on the ancient luck” and more willing than ever before to





live lives of high adventure. Those who are brave or desperate will take up rapier and grimoire and seek out their own fortunes.

FAY EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Apprentice–Medium	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,500	9	+1	7	Journeyman–Seer	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7,000	12	+1	7	Tradesman–Conjurer	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	14,000	15	+1	7	Expert–Wizard	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	28,000	18	+3	9	Specialist–Enchanter	10
6 <sup>th</sup>	56,000	21	+3	9	Agent–Warlock	11
7 <sup>th</sup>	112,000	24	+3	9	Fay Lord	12

**Game Rule Information**

Fay characters can advance as high as 7<sup>th</sup> level in the fay class, which combines the features of the rogue and mage classes and has two prime requisites, Fortune and Presence. Fay characters have the following special abilities:

- Jack of All Trades:* As the rogue ability.
- Ace in the Hole:* As the rogue ability.
- Deuce’s Own Luck:* As the rogue ability.
- Intuitive Magic-User:* As the mage ability.
- Deep Magic:* As the mage ability.

*Illusionist:* All fays automatically know the Glamour cantrip and the Masked Image spell in addition to their usual starting cantrips, spells, and ritual. Moreover, a fay is able to cast Masked Image as if it were a 1<sup>st</sup> level ritual, without expending mana. By performing the hour-long ritual (for which the only required material component is a reflective surface, e.g. a mirror or still water, which is never destroyed by the ritual), the fay can appear to be someone else (though they cannot mimic another specific person), and the duration persists until the next sunrise or until the fay chooses to dismiss the effect.

**Elves**

In the wake of the Great Tide that brought all of the other demihumans into Gaia, one kindred stood head and shoulders above the rest: the elves. The High Elves who lived in those days were also Faerie Lords, the equals of the Sidhe in their magecraft and their immortality – but far surpassing them in both their wisdom and their ruthlessness. The High Elves very quickly rose to dominance and built an empire of their own that would endure for nearly five-thousand years, in a time now called “the Second Age of Gaia” (the



First Age having been the rule of the Sidhe). And though the Elfin Empire is also gone now, its fall was no world-shattering catastrophe. There are yet some High Elves in the world. They prefer to hide themselves away in remote places, however, and to let their children – the Sylvan Elves – work their will for them out in the wider world. The Sylvan Elves, or *alfar*, are the mortal descendants of the High Elves (or *eldar*). It is the Sylvan Elves which are a playable kindred. Älfar and fays can both live for upwards of 300 years.

The *alfar* are more humanlike in appearance than fays are, showing more range and variation in skin tone, hair and eye color, and so forth. Sylvan Elves tend to be a bit shorter than humans on average, but also slender, graceful, and beautiful. Their ears are delicate, leaf-shaped, only slightly pointed (rather than the exaggerated sweep of the fays’ ears). And, whereas the fays all seem to be pleasure-seeking hedonists, the elves are perhaps best described as thrill-seeking adventure-addicts. They live to explore, to *experience* – anything that they can. Danger and excitement, to be sure, but also carousing, swashbuckling, tramping over that next hilltop, sailing over that next billowing wave, stealing that next kiss from a smitten human paramour. In short, the stereotypical elf wants to be a

hero — and not the kind that stays in one place for very long. This does, of course, saddle elves with a bit of a dodgy reputation: in the communities of humans and other shorter-lived peoples, an elf is a welcome sight when trouble is afoot; but otherwise, these wandering rakehells are going to be viewed with caution and suspicion.

In the lands of Arcadia, the elves have several noteworthy homelands. The High Elves — who are both royalty and progenitors to the whole elvish kindred — still live in the land of Pohjola. Many Sylvan Elves also dwell in the land of Midjard, in several of its small kingdoms and principalities; and, to a lesser extent, this same lineage (i.e. älfar of Midjardisch extraction) makes up a sizeable fraction of the population of the Republic of Utopia, especially in the region of Lutinny.

### Game Rule Information

The elf character class is described on page 96 of the *E&E Core Rules*.

## Goblins

The goblins of Gaia are of a somewhat different character to the goblins described in the *E&E Core Rules*. They are more honorable, more bellicose, less conniving, and less avaricious. Oh, to be sure, they still lust for gold and silver and precious gems; but they primarily desire the fruits of their deep mines and tunnels in order to keep their forges lit and their smiths turning out the world's finest arms and armors. Since the olden days, beneath the mountains and snow-swept plains of Asgard, the goblins have stood a long and vigilant watch, keeping the forces of Chaos that dwell in the Deep-Under — shadowspawn, hobgoblins, and things more nightmarish by far — from swelling up onto the surface-world and overrunning all that there is. They are a beleaguered and set-upon people, eternally fighting a war of defense — and suffering tremendous attrition down through the centuries for their trouble.

Goblins stand about four feet tall, with broad, powerful frames and spindly arms and legs that belie strength at least equal to that of a man. They have ruddy, earth-toned skin (sometimes with a bit of a greenish tint), comically large noses, and pointed ears. Older male goblins are very often completely bald on the tops of their heads, but they keep full beards in elaborate braids which they are very proud of. They are skilled miners,

engineers, and smiths, with a deep and abiding love for elaborate machines and advanced technologies. They are perhaps not as interested in pure science as the gnomes are; but when it comes to creating weapons of all sorts — from swords and axes to guns and bombs — goblins are unmatched.

### GOBLIN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Veteran-Tinker	4+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,500	9	+1	7	Swordsman-Wright	5+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7,000	12	+1	7	Duelist-Crafter	5+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	14,000	15	+3	7	Hero-Machinist	6+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	28,000	18	+3	9	Swshbklr.-Mechanic	6+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	56,000	21	+3	9	Knight-Technologist	7+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	112,000	24	+6	9	Goblin Lord	7+3

### Game Rule Information

Unlike the goblin class described in the *E&E Core Rules*, Gaia's goblins are a combination of fighter and tech. Goblins may advance as high as 7<sup>th</sup> level in the Gaian goblin class, and their two prime requisites are Valor and Wits. Gaian goblins have the following special abilities:

*Stone Sense:* As the goblin ability described on pg. 97 of the *E&E Core Rules*.

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability.

*Research & Development:* As the tech ability.

*Skilled Craftsman:* As the tech ability.

## Ogres

Ogres hold a less prominent place in Gaia than do the goblins. They too have long warred with the 'spawn, but mostly on the surface-world, in the Chernobog Mountains which sit along the edge of the blighted land of Tuonela. The ogres have been a nomadic people for time immemorial, roaming the eastern steppes that serve as the hunting grounds for the clans. On occasion, when truly desperate, these clans have come together to form a horde that rides against civilization, raiding and pillaging; but it is far more common to see the shadowspawn of Tuonela form such a horde, and for the ogres to be the first line of defenders standing against them.

Ogres are taller and stronger than humans. They have prominent tusks, green skin, and up-turned noses. An ogre is said to be the best brother-in-arms a warrior could hope for: they are unfailingly steadfast and loyal to their allies. But

they are also a temperamental and hot-headed people, prone to outbursts of sudden, uncontrollable rage and even violence.

In some of the more industrialized parts of Arcadia – the smoggy streets of factory-cities in Avalon and Utopia, for example – ogres are for the most part stuck on the bottom rungs of urban society. They scrape by as factory-workers, dock hands, or hired muscle, exploited by the tycoons and other members of the moneyed classes. It's no coincidence that socialism and even anarchism are becoming commonplace among the "city-ogres."

Ogre adventurers are drawn from the ranks of a tribe's barbarian warriors, or from those city-ogres who still keep their cultural traditions alive: hunting, fighting, and honoring the old, shamanic ways of their revered ancestors.

#### Game Rule Information

The ogre character class is described on page 97 of the *E&E Core Rules*.

## Gnomes

Gnomes are sometimes known as the "Hidden People," so named because of the means they used to survive the great wars of the Second Age. When the Elfin Empire spread across all the lands, the gnomes retreated to tunnels and underground halls and hid from the world. And when they emerged from hiding in a later Age of the World, they found that they had become by far the most scientifically and technologically advanced of all Gaia's people. The gnomes are a small people, essentially dwarfkind; but there is also something more than a little goblinlike about them. They are not the peace-loving, pastoralist dwarfs described in the *Engines & Empires Core Rules*; rather, they are Gaia's most gifted inventors, an entire kindred of short-statured technophiles.

In game terms, gnomes essentially function as a combination of rogue and tech. Physically, they are dwarfs – demi-humans who stand about three feet tall – with some goblinlike features, notably the same large noses and sharply-pointed ears. Gnomes can sometimes be difficult for humans to interact with, if only because their keen minds move so quickly, and their mile-a-minute speech more or less keeps pace. A gnome is the cleverest and most inventive soul one is ever likely to meet, but the only ones who can appreciate it are those who can follow their harebrained twists of logic

and understand their oftentimes obsessive personalities.

#### Game Rule Information

Gaian gnomes actually use the goblin character class described on page 97 of the *E&E Core Rules*, with the following changes:

*Level Title:* A 7<sup>th</sup> level gnome is a gnome lord.

*Special Abilities:* Gnomes do not possess the goblin's Stone Sense ability. In its place, they have the dwarf's Small Size and Unseen by Big Folk traits, as well as a +1 bonus on saving throws.

## Háin (Leprechauns)

Gaia's other dwarfish kindred, the leprechauns – or, as they call themselves, the *háin* – are closely related to the gnomes. In the speech of Tirnanog, the hánnish homeland, the word "háin" means simply "the folk" or "the people." The singular form, "a person," is *hán*, hence the other common name for this kindred out in the larger world, the hánfolk. Note that referring to the hánfolk in their own tongue as *leipreacháin* ("the little people") is regarded as a mild insult. From their own perspective, the háin aren't little at all – it's everybody else who's too big!



Háin are more or less identical to dwarfs as described in the *E&E Core Rules*: they stand between three and four feet tall but otherwise look very much like humans. They are not terribly magical (although they can be adept occultists), and they would much prefer to lead quiet lives of peace, farming and shepherding on the emerald plains of Tirnanog. But the history of Gaia has not been kind to the háinfolk. Oppressed and degraded by the inhabitants of the neighboring island of Avalon since the days of the Elfin Empire, hard necessity has forced them to become warriors: silent, stealthy, using the land to their advantage. In short (and certainly with no pun intended), the háin are the world's greatest snipers and guerillas.

Háinfolk are known to be sensible and plain-spoken, a simple and earthy folk who place great value in honesty and hard work. But they can also be somewhat rustic and naïve compared to the more cosmopolitan peoples of the world. A háin adventurer is likely to be a youth straight off the farm, chasing tales of dragon-gold and elf-magic. That said, the háin of Tirnanog specifically also have a certain reputation for silver-tongued politesse which might manifest itself as either the honest gallantry of a háinish soldier-scholar, or as the fast-tongued blarney of a rover with his eye on your coin-purse.

### Game Rule Information

Háin use the dwarf character class described on page 98 of the *E&E Core Rules*— they can only rise to the 6<sup>th</sup> experience level, but they act as a triple-classed combination of fighter, rogue, and scholar.

## Fauns

Strictly speaking, Gaia's fauns don't have any one homeland, although they're most likely to be met within the borders of Elysia, Illyria, and Sylvania. Faun society is both nomadic and clannish, with groups of faun families wandering from place to place and only ever settling down temporarily. More sedentary communities, as one might guess, have tended to regard fauns with suspicion because of this, sometimes slandering them as little more than roving bands of brigands or thieves; but this is, of course, base prejudice.

Physically, fauns resemble Wood Elves, to the extent that they stand about a head shorter than the average human and have pointed ears and youthful, fae-like facial-features. Of course, they

are also covered in fur from the waist down, with the legs and hooves of goats; and small horns grow on the tops of their heads. Fauns are superbly agile, with a great gift for leaping and climbing. They are friendly enough when they don't feel threatened, but trouble makes fauns skittish.

### FAUN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Faun Runner	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,000	9	+1	7	Faun Strider	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,000	12	+1	7	Faun Scout	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,000	15	+1	7	Faun Courser	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	16,000	18	+3	9	Faun Tracker	10
6 <sup>th</sup>	32,000	21	+3	9	Faun Pathfinder	11
7 <sup>th</sup>	64,000	24	+3	9	Faun Ranger	12
8 <sup>th</sup>	125,000	27	+3	9	Faun Warden	13

### Game Rule Information

Faun characters can advance as high as 8<sup>th</sup> level in the faun character class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Fortune. Fauns have the following special abilities:

*Jack of All Trades*: As the rogue ability.

*Ace in the Hole*: As the rogue ability.

*Deuce's Own Luck*: As the rogue ability.

*Quick March*: As the fighter ability.

*Goat Hooves*: Thanks to their hooves (and horns), fauns inflict 1d3 damage on a hit when fighting unarmed. When outdoors, fauns are able to scale near-vertical rock walls without needing climbing gear or having to make Athletics rolls. A faun cannot benefit from magical boots or shoes.

## Centaur

The centaurs' story is one of oppression and rebellion. During the Second Age, the centaurs were conquered and subjugated by the Elfin Empire. It would not be accurate to say that they were enslaved; but they were forbidden by Elfin law to practice any professions aside from farm-labor and service in the Empire's cavalry. The elves, of course, maintained that they were doing the centaurs a great favor by "civilizing" them; but the centaurs' resentment over their treatment at the hands of the elves hasn't waned much in all these many centuries. After the Elfin Empire fell at the very end of the Second Age, the centaurs largely remained subjugated until humans from the south (new arrivals on Gaia, thanks to another of the mysterious interplanar "Tides")—namely, men



from the Empire of Elysium – became their allies and fought for the centaurs’ freedom. From then on, the neighboring land of Illyria became the centaurs’ home country, and the centaurs living there now still consider humans to be their blood-brothers. In the present day, centaur knights fight tirelessly to defend the country of Illyria from the invading forces of the Sultanate of Amarna.

Centaur look pretty much like you’d expect, being approximately human-shaped from the waist up and having the four-legged body of a horse below. *E&E*’s centaurs are a fairy breed, of course, and so it’s worth pointing out that their “human” upper halves actually look more like those of elves, with pointed ears and sharp features. Their equine halves are smaller too, being pony-sized (such that a centaur could perhaps carry a hán or a gnome on his or her back, but a human-sized rider would be awkward and overly cumbersome). Centuries of serving as knights and cavaliers have ingrained the tenets of chivalry into centaur culture: they tend to dwell in the largest of

Arcadia’s cities, preferring the company of all who fought against the elves in the Second Age, viz. the hán, the goblins, and especially the southern humans whom they now call neighbors and allies.

#### CENTAUR EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Centaur Gallant	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,000	12	+1	7	Centaur Keeper	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,000	16	+1	7	Centaur Protector	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,000	20	+3	7	Centaur Defender	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	16,000	24	+3	9	Centaur Guardian	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	32,000	28	+3	9	Centaur Chevalier	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	64,000	32	+6	9	Centaur Justiciar	7
8 <sup>th</sup>	125,000	36	+6	9	Centaur Paladin	8

#### Game Rule Information

Centaur characters can advance as high as 8<sup>th</sup> level in the centaur class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Wits. Centaurs have the following special abilities:

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability.

*Horse Hooves:* Instead of attacking with a weapon, a centaur can kick with his rear hooves for 1d4 points of damage. Centaurs cannot benefit from magical boots or shoes (other than horseshoes). Because they are quadrupeds, centaurs move at a base Speed of 50’ (150’), and they can carry an extra 12 kg of gear before their speed is reduced to 40’ (120’) by encumbrance. (A centaur carrying 12 kg or less is considered *Unencumbered*. A centaur carrying 13 to 24 kg is treated as Lightly Encumbered, just like any other character carrying 0 to 12 kg.) Depending on the situation, a centaur may have difficulty negotiating narrow spans, steep stairs, or other situations involving balance or climbing.

*Lance Charge:* A centaur wielding a lance who moves at least 20’ straight at an opponent before attacking gets an extra +2 bonus on the to-hit roll.

*Stargazing:* A centaur of 4<sup>th</sup> level or greater can Augury (as the 4<sup>th</sup> level ritual) once per week by reading the stars.

## Merrows

Merrows are merpeople, and they’re actually one of the more widespread demihuman kindreds on Gaia. Just about any shoreline is apt to have a merrow community somewhere in the shallows, herding fish and farming the seabed. The mer-

rows of different seas tend to adopt the languages and cultures of nearby lands, e.g. merrows of the Illic Sea will speak either Elysian or Illyrian, merrows living in the Boreic ocean will speak either Avalonian or Asgardish, etc. Merrows are known to be extremely outgoing and friendly, but also vain and flighty, to the point of self-absorption. From the waist up, they resemble humans or elves (like most Fair Folk, they have the usual pointed ears and elfin features), but with green hair and visible gill-slits in their necks. From the waist down, merrows have long, scaly tails like those of sea-serpents, finned for swimming but also strong enough to support their weight if they should slither up onto dry land.

Despite being fairies, merrows have a strong spark of humanity about them, perhaps because they are for all intents and purposes the humans of the sea. Unlike most demihumans, merrows may select a character class and advance in that class much as a human does, albeit with an extra prime requisite and a level limit. Many merrow adventurers are roguish sorts – buccaneers and pirates, wandering bards – while others are scholarly or even scientifically-minded treasure-seekers who focus on salvaging sunken valuables from the sea-floor (be they sunken chests of pirate-gold or Ancient, antediluvian technologies left behind by lost civilizations of the distant past).

### Game Rule Information

Unlike other demihumans, merrows may select a character class. They may be fighters, rogues, scholars, or techs. They cannot ever be mages. Whichever class they pick, merrows always have two prime requisites: the usual one for their class, and Presence as well. A merrow may advance up to the 8<sup>th</sup> experience level in their class. Merrows have the following special abilities in addition to those they receive from their character class:

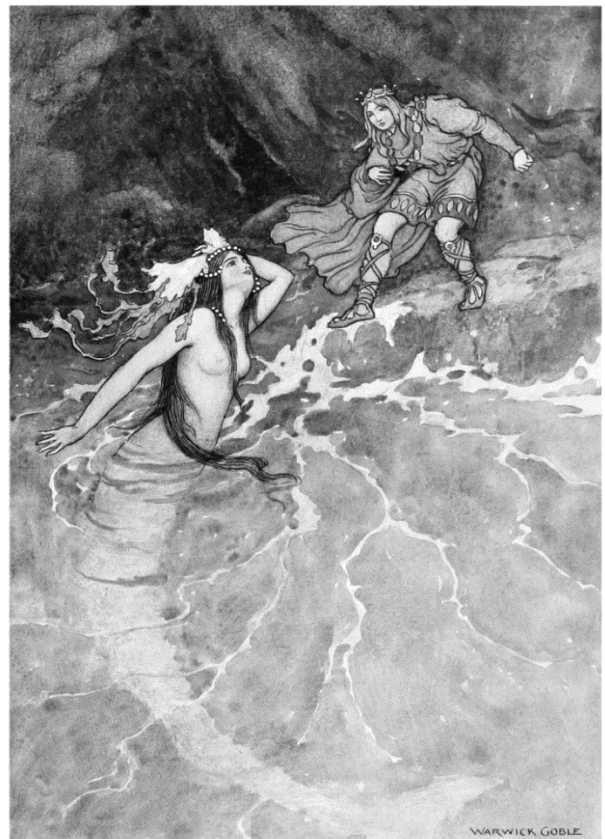
*Aquatic:* Merrows are able to breathe water and air with equal ease and swim at a Speed of 60' (180'). Merrows can live on dry land indefinitely but need to drink twice as much water as a human when doing so.

*Tail-Walking:* Merrows have the tails of finned sea-serpents in place of legs, so they can never wear magical boots or shoes. On land, merrows move about by balancing and slithering on their tails, but this is slow and awkward – Move Speed 20' (60') – and it can damage their scales. To get around this, all adventuring merrows know a

simple 1<sup>st</sup> level White Magic ritual for creating a minor enchanted item called a *cohuleen druith*. This is a piece of clothing or jewelry which, when so charmed, protects the merrow's fish-scales from scrapes and minor hurts and enhances the merrow's balance and coordination so that they can slither at a Speed of 40' (120'). Without a working *cohuleen druith*, a merrow is treated as Moderately Encumbered while carrying 0–12 kg of gear and Severely Encumbered when carrying 13–24 kg.

## Harpies

Harpies are a half-avian fairy-kindred. They are human-shaped above the waist, except for a pair of great osprey- or eagle-wings that grow out of their backs. (Harpies' wings are in addition to their arms, not in place of them!) Harpies are feathered from the waist down, with birds' legs ending in sharp talons. They mostly dwell high up in the mountains, where they can fly freely in the open air. Their eyries are cut into the stone faces of cliffs, or up on high mountainsides which are normally unreachable by those without wings.





In Arcadia, significant populations of harpies can be found in both the mountains of Asgard and in the Valk Mountains. Both harpy-tribes are warlike: fierce defenders of their mountain homes. But the harpies are also insular, cautious and thoughtful, always reluctant to get involved in affairs “down below.” Never hasty, but always armed (just in case), the harpies have a long view of history and an even longer memory. They hold fast to old friendships and alliances (particularly with the gnomes and ogres of Utopia, who once both marched to the defense of the harpies of the Valks in a great war long ago); and they hold grudges against any who have wronged them in the past (notably the humans of Sylvania, who drove the harpies into the mountains in the first place; and the goblins of Asgard, always relentlessly tunneling and prospecting under the roots of the world’s greatest mountains in an endless search for metals to feed their forges). Gaia’s harpies are slow to forget slights, slow to forgive, slow to trust or make new friends, and slow to make decisions. They always carefully weigh every option and try to foresee each outcome before taking any action.

HARPY EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Harpy Airman	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,500	9	+1	7	Harpy Armiger	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5,000	12	+1	7	Harpy Scutifer	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	10,000	15	+3	7	Harpy Esquire	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	20,000	18	+3	9	Harpy Lancer	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	40,000	21	+3	9	Harpy Hussar	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	80,000	24	+6	9	Harpy Banneret	7
8 <sup>th</sup>	150,000	27	+6	9	Harpy Dragoon	8

**Game Rule Information**

Harpies are able to advance as high as 8<sup>th</sup> level in the harpy class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Fortune. Harpies have the following special abilities:

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability.

*Deuce’s Own Luck:* As the rogue ability.

*Flying:* Harpies have wings and can fly at a Speed of 50’ (150’) when Lightly Encumbered. Every 12 kg of gear carried reduces a harpy’s Flight Speed by 20’, so a Moderately Encumbered harpy flies at 30’ (90’), a Heavily Encumbered harpy flies at 10’ (30’), and a Severely Encumbered harpy cannot fly at all. A harpy’s base walking Speed on the ground is 40’ (120’), like a human.



*Hollow Bones:* Harpies have fewer hit points than other fighter-types.

*Talons:* Harpies have talons, so they cannot benefit from wearing magical boots or shoes. A harpy can scratch for 1d3 damage when fighting unarmed.

*Dive Bomb:* If a harpy wielding a lance, pike, or spear attacks from the air and can dive down at least 20’ before attacking an opponent, the to-hit roll gets an extra +4 bonus to hit (but the harpy must end that round engaged in mêlée with the target, even if using a reach weapon).

**Scyllas**

Scyllas are the deep merfolk, pale and black-eyed (like the fays), with the bodies of octopuses below the waist. They are a reclusive kindred that rarely comes to the surface. Those that do are very similar to the merrows to whom they are related, except that they are less friendly and more apt to be either shy and introverted or hot-headed and confrontational.

Whereas merrows cannot be mages (because they have no Black Magic-using tradition to speak of in their culture), scyllas are *always* witches.

SCYLLA EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	4	+1	7	Scylla Medium	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,500	6	+1	7	Scylla Seer	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5,000	8	+1	7	Scylla Conjurer	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	10,000	10	+1	7	Scylla Wizard	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	20,000	12	+1	9	Scylla Enchanter	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	40,000	14	+3	9	Scylla Warlock	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	80,000	16	+3	9	Scylla Sorcerer	7
8 <sup>th</sup>	150,000	18	+3	9	Scylla Archmage	8

Game Rule Information

Scyllas are able to rise as high as 8<sup>th</sup> level in the scylla class, which has two prime requisites, Wits and Presence. Scylla characters have the following special abilities:

*Intuitive Magic-User:* As the mage ability.

*Deep Magic:* As the mage ability.

*Aquatic:* Scyllas can breathe water and air with equal ease and swim at a Speed of 50' (150'). A scylla can live on dry land indefinitely but then needs to drink twice as much water as a human.

*Tentacles:* Scyllas have eight tentacles in place of human legs. Scyllas can grasp and handle several objects at once with their tentacles, although they cannot use them to carry extra weapons or to make extra attacks while fighting. While grappling or wrestling, scyllas roll eight-sided dice (like fighters) rather than four-sided dice (like mages). Scyllas can never wear magical boots or shoes. Like merrows, scyllas move at a Speed of only 20' (60') on land, unless they enchant for themselves a *cohuleen druith* (something all scyllas know how to do) or otherwise procure such an item, in which case the scylla can move at a Speed of 40' (120') on land.

*Ink:* A scylla can produce ink, exactly like an octopus, although this is generally only useful underwater where the ink can become an opaque, obscuring, 20' wide cloud. Unless, that is, the scylla is a writer (or a frequent scribe of magic scrolls).

*Deep-Dweller:* Scyllas can see in absolute darkness with perfect ease out to 30' and can perceive objects dimly out to 60'. They are sensitive to bright light, including sunlight, which can easily dazzle a scylla. In brightly-lit conditions, scyllas are -1 on all to-hit rolls.

Arachnes

Relatively rare in most parts of the Arcadian continent, arachnes are a kindred that remind one of centaurs, except that their upper bodies are like those of fays (pale and with very long, pointed ears), while their lower bodies are those of huge spiders, typically black widows or tarantulas. In most parts of Arcadia, the arachnes keep to themselves, living in the deepest and darkest parts of forests like the Great Sylvan Woods of Sylvania, the Bilderwald in Midjard's Dämmerung Kingdom, the Agrios Forest in Elysia, and parts of the western forests of Pohjola. Arachnes tend to be a shy and reclusive people for the most part, preferring to hunt in peace and solitude.

The Kingdom of Avalon is the exception to the rule: in the capital, Annwn, the arachnes are held in high esteem by the tailor's guild, where their silk (to say nothing of their skill at weaving it) produces the world's finest gowns, much to the endless delight of the fay nobility. Adventuring arachnes, however, are no mere artisans. They put their natural aptitude for hunting and their ability to scale walls and ceilings effortlessly to good use as burglars (or, when the situation calls for the judicious application of a bit of venom, assassins).

ARACHNE EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Arachne Apprentice	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1,500	9	+1	7	Arachne Footpad	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	3,000	12	+1	7	Arachne Robber	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	6,000	15	+1	7	Arachne Burglar	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	12,000	18	+3	9	Arachne Cutpurse	10
6 <sup>th</sup>	25,000	21	+3	9	Arachne Sharper	11
7 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	24	+3	9	Arachne Pilferer	12
8 <sup>th</sup>	100,000	27	+3	9	Arachne Master Thief	13

Game Rule Information

Arachnes can rise as high as the 8<sup>th</sup> experience level in the arachne class, which has two prime requisites, Fortune and Wits. Arachnes have the following special abilities:

*Jack of All Trades:* As the rogue ability.

*Ace in the Hole:* As the rogue ability.

*Deuce's Own Luck:* As the rogue ability.

*Wall-Crawler:* Arachnes have the lower bodies of spiders. They can climb sheer walls and even move across ceilings at the same Speed with which they walk on the ground normally, i.e. 40' (120') when Lightly Encumbered. Arachnes can-

not ever wear magical boots or shoes.

*Web-Shooter:* An arachne has abdominal spinnerets which can produce webs. This mimics the effects of the Web of the Spider spell and can be done once per day by a 1<sup>st</sup> level arachne, twice per day at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and thrice per day at 7<sup>th</sup> level.

*Spider-Bite:* Arachne have claws and fangs, with which they can inflict 1d3 damage when fighting unarmed. An arachne's bite is venomous: anyone bitten must save or become sluggish and mildly nauseous from the poison, -1 on attack rolls for 1 turn or until the poison is cured.

## Lamias

The lamias are even rarer than the arachnes, at least in the West. They are superficially similar to merrows in appearance, elflike above the waist, but with the tails of great constrictor-snakes in place of legs. They are quite common in the lands of Amarna, Shambala, and far-off Jianghu; but in Arcadia, they are only commonly encountered in the Kingdom of Lu Sing, in central Midgard – a country inhabited by immigrants and refugees from Jianghu. The lamias living there are likewise of Jiangese ancestry, having accompanied their human countrymen from the Far East. There are also some lamias of Amarnan extraction dwelling in the nation of Illyria.

Wherever they go, the lamias carry with them their fighting traditions. They are practitioners of the martial arts, in particular a kung-fu discipline known as *she quan*, a boxing-style that focuses on snapping hand-attacks that mimic the movements of a striking cobra.

LAMIA EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Lamia Novice	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,500	12	+1	7	Lamia Initiate	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5,000	16	+1	7	Lamia Acolyte	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	10,000	20	+3	7	Lamia Adept	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	20,000	24	+3	9	Lamia Disciple	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	40,000	28	+3	9	Lamia Immaculate	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	80,000	32	+6	9	Lamia Master	7
8 <sup>th</sup>	150,000	36	+6	9	Lamia Grand Master	8

### Game Rule Information

Lamias can rise as high as the 8<sup>th</sup> level in the lamia class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Wits. Lamias have the following special abilities:

*Cobra Strike:* As the fighter's "Quick March."

*Breath of Qi:* As the fighter's "Soldier On."

*Flow Like Water:* As the rogue's "Deuce's Own Luck."

*Martial Artist:* Fantasy Martial Arts (*E&E Core Rules*, page 37) exist in Gaia. Lamias automatically begin the game having mastered one secret style, *she quan*, and so they inflict 1d4 points of damage when fighting unarmed.

*Serpentine:* Lamias have the lower bodies of huge snakes. They can climb trees and most other rough surfaces with ease at the same Speed with which they move on the ground normally, i.e. 40' (120') when Lightly Encumbered. Lamias quite naturally make excellent grapplers: they roll twelve-sided dice instead of eight-sided dice when attempting to grapple, wrestle, or pin. A lamia cannot ever wear magical boots or shoes.

*Snakebite:* Lamias have fangs. A lamia's bite is venomous: anyone bitten by a lamia must save or else become sickened for 1 turn, -1 on attack rolls from the distracting pain and nausea that results.

## Drachen

Gaia's other reptilian kindred, the drachen, are demihumans; but they are not fairies as the lamias are. They have no Fae ancestry, and so they cannot be classified as Fair Folk. The drachen (pronounced DRAHK-en) are dragonmen, though it is not known whether they are some ancient mage's magical creations or the literal descendants of dragons. They are warriors who dwell chiefly in the Drachendorn Mountains between Midgard and Pohjola. Their culture is highly regimented and militaristic; as a people, the drachen keep to themselves and are said to be stoic and taciturn. The typical drachen is covered head to toe in red scales, like those of a fire Drake, with a reptilian face and eyes, clawed hands and feet, and vestigial wings which are basically useless. They do, however, have the ability to breathe fire!

DRACHEN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	10	+1	7	Drachen Veteran	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,200	14	+1	7	Drachen Ensign	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,400	18	+1	7	Drachen Lieutenant	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,800	22	+3	7	Drachen Commander	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	17,000	26	+3	9	Drachen Captain	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	35,000	30	+3	9	Drachen Major	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	70,000	34	+6	9	Drachen Colonel	7
8 <sup>th</sup>	140,000	38	+6	9	Drachen General	8

**Game Rule Information**

Drachen characters are able to reach 8<sup>th</sup> level in the drachen class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Wits. Drachen characters have the following special abilities:

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability.

*Dragon Toughness:* Drachen get +2 extra hp.

*Fire-Breathing:* A drachen is able to breathe fire, once per day at 1<sup>st</sup> level, twice per day at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and thrice per day at 7<sup>th</sup> level. Fire-breath mimics the effects of a Burning Hands spell.



**Leshonkies**

The leshonkies are the children of the leshies, those great and treelike forest-dwelling spirits that shepherd the very woods themselves; if a fully-grown leshy can reach up to the treetops, a young leshonky is a mere sapling only and rather better-suited to interacting with creatures of human size. As they age, the leshonkies slowly grow to ever-taller heights and become more and more *treeish* with each passing decade. Their skin becomes more like bark; their hair increasingly resembles leaves and moss; and the leshonkies themselves become slower, more deliberative, and less hasty.

**LESHONKY EXPERIENCE LEVELS**

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Leshonky Sapling	4+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,000	12	+1	7	Leshonky Grower	5+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	6,000	16	+1	7	Leshonky Gardener	5+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	12,000	20	+3	7	Leshonky Cultivator	6+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	25,000	24	+3	9	Leshonky Forester	6+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	28	+3	9	Leshonky Watcher	7+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	100,000	32	+6	9	Leshonky Observer	7+3
8 <sup>th</sup>	200,000	36	+6	9	Leshy Tree-Herder	8+3

**Game Rule Information**

Leshonkies are able to reach the 8<sup>th</sup> level in the leshonky class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Presence. Leshonkies have the following special abilities:

*Young and Hasty:* As the fighter’s “Quick March.”

*Woodland Vigor:* As the fighter’s “Soldier On.”

*Forester:* A leshonky receives a bonus skill pip in Outdoors at each of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> levels.

*Botanical Biology:* A leshonky can draw nourishment from sunlight, soil, and mineral-rich water and does not otherwise need to eat.

*Animate Plants:* A leshonky has the remarkable ability to bring plants to life and command them to fight for him. At any given time, a leshonky can have a number of 1 HD bush-blights or 2 HD spite-saplings (see the *E&E Core Rules*, pg. 165) animated whose total number of hit dice do not exceed twice the leshonky’s level. The leshonky must be in a forest to use this ability. The bush-blights or spite-saplings are unfailingly loyal to the leshonky and will even fight to the death for him, but they will not ordinarily leave a forest or go down into a dungeon except at times of terribly great need (meaning, specifically, to contend with something that directly threatens the forest). A full leshy who has reached the 8<sup>th</sup> experience level can animate up to two 8 HD wroth-trees (*E&E Core Rules*, pg. 167).

**Wilder**

The wilder (pronounced VILL-der) are anthropomorphic wolfmen. They are not werewolves or skin-changers, but they are often mistaken for them. The wilder have a tribal society based on pack-hunting. A few wilder packs can be found in out-of-the-way corners of Midjard, Sylvania, and Pohjola, but they are also known to brave the Tuonelan Steppes where otherwise only shadow-spawn can dwell. The wilder are known to be downright gregarious when encountered, but they can also be dangerously wild and unpredictable.

**Game Rule Information**

Wilder are able to reach the 8<sup>th</sup> experience level in the wilder class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Fortune.

WILDER EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Wilder Howler	4+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,000	12	+1	7	Wilder Chaser	5+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,000	16	+1	7	Wilder Pursuer	5+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,000	20	+3	7	Wilder Prowler	6+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	16,000	24	+3	9	Wilder Stalker	6+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	32,000	28	+3	9	Wilder Hunter	7+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	64,000	32	+6	9	Wilder Ravager	7+3
8 <sup>th</sup>	125,000	36	+6	9	Wilder Baron	8+3

Wilder have the following special abilities:

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability.

*Wild Hunter:* Wilder have teeth and claws, so they can inflict 1d4 points of damage when they fight unarmed. A wilder can scent prey just like a bloodhound. At each of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> levels, a wilder receives a bonus Outdoors skill pip.

*Berserker Blitz:* An 8<sup>th</sup> level wilder, known as a wilder baron, is uncannily fast. When a wilder baron uses his Quick March ability, he receives 5 Moves that round instead of 3 or 4.

## Awakened Automata

When techs build automata and outfit them with clockwork brains, each automaton is usually given just enough autonomy to perform its programmed functions. Rarely does an inventor ever set out to create a sapient robot intentionally. After all, a free-willed automaton would somewhat defeat the purpose of owning a mechanical servant that never questions orders! But it can happen on rare occasions that a freak turn of the gears and cogs within an automaton’s head will cause a clockwork creation’s machine thinking to *change*. The robot will look up one day and start asking itself *questions* about the nature of its own existence and whether or not it is alive. At that point, the curious automaton is said to have become “awakened” – it has spontaneously achieved sentience.

The sentient automaton is a venerable fantasy trope, and it belongs nowhere better than in the genre of gaslamp fantasy. There are four playable types of awakened automaton: auto-mechs, clockwork soldiers and servants, and robot replicants.

## Auto-Mechs

Auto-mechs are short (3’ tall), barrel-shaped automatons that move about on three treaded legs.

They have no arms other than a few simple manipulators and no visible face apart from a set of optical sensors on one side of their (typically dome-shaped) head. Auto-mechs are created to service and maintain other, larger machines, most especially locomotives, steamships, and airships. They do not speak and are only capable of communicating with mechanical whirrs, clanks, and clicks that other automata can understand. Thanks to their many limitations, auto-mechs can be a real challenge to play; but these little robots are widely beloved for their courageous and “spunky” personalities.

AUTO-MECH EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	4	+1	7	Mech Tinker	4+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,200	6	+1	7	Mech Wright	5+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,400	8	+1	7	Mech Crafter	5+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,800	10	+1	7	Mech Machinist	6+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	17,000	12	+1	9	Mech Mechanic	6+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	35,000	14	+3	9	Mech Technologist	7+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	70,000	16	+3	9	Mech Engineer	7+3

### Game Rule Information

Auto-mechs are able to achieve the 7<sup>th</sup> experience level in the auto-mech class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Wits. Auto-mechs have the following qualities:

*Automaton:* An auto-mech is not a living thing and does not need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. Instead, an auto-mech burns 1 lb. of coal each day that it functions. Auto-mechs are immune to gas-based attacks, poison and disease, and any kind of sleep, charm, mind-affecting magic, life-draining magic, or instant-death magic. An auto-mech cannot drink potions and cannot be affected by any kind of healing magic, nor can it heal through rest; if damaged, it must be repaired.

Because of its shape, an auto-mech cannot use armor or any kind of wearable magical item. Because of their small size and tiny manipulators, auto-mechs face the same weapon restrictions as dwarfs. Auto mechs move at a base Speed of 40’ (120’) and always have an Armor Class of 5 thanks to their metallic outer plating.

*Research & Development:* As the tech ability.

*Repair Drone:* As the tech’s “Master Craftsman” ability.

*Integrated Inventions:* An auto-mech can build up to 8 kg worth of gadgets, inventions, weapons, or tools into its own body.



## Clockwork Men

Clockwork men (which can be constructed as either soldiers or servants) are exactly what they sound like — automatons made in the general shape of a human being. Their personalities can be as varied as their programming, but clockwork soldiers tend to be both practical and brave, while clockwork servants are apt to come off as fussy and overly prim. Most clockwork servants are originally created to serve as valets, butlers, cooks, chambermaids, and the like; but an awakened clockwork servant may become an expert in some field or craft, perhaps even an artist or a diplomat.

### Game Rule Information

Clockwork men can advance as high as the 7<sup>th</sup> experience level in either the clockwork soldier or the clockwork servant class, depending on how they have been built and programmed. A clockwork soldier has Valor and Wits for its prime requisites; a clockwork servant has Fortune and Wits. All clockwork men have the following special qualities:

### CLOCKWORK SOLDIER EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Clockwork Veteran	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,500	12	+1	7	Clockwork Swordsman	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5,000	16	+1	7	Clockwork Duelist	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	10,000	20	+3	7	Clockwork Hero	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	20,000	24	+3	9	Clockwork Swshbcklr.	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	40,000	28	+3	9	Clockwork Knight	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	80,000	32	+6	9	Clockwork Champion	7

### CLOCKWORK SERVANT EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Clockwork Apprentice	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,000	9	+1	7	Clockwork Journeyman	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4,000	12	+1	7	Clockwork Tradesman	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	8,000	15	+1	7	Clockwork Expert	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	16,000	18	+3	9	Clockwork Specialist	10
6 <sup>th</sup>	32,000	21	+3	9	Clockwork Agent	11
7 <sup>th</sup>	64,000	24	+3	9	Clockwork Operative	12

*Automaton:* A clockwork man is not a living thing and does not need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. Instead, a clockwork man must be wound up at the start of each day by someone else, which takes about half an hour (1 turn each to wind up the clockwork man's three basic internal systems: motion, thought, and speech.) Clockwork men are immune to gas-based attacks, poison and disease, and any kind of sleep, charm, mind-affecting magic, life-draining magic, or instant-death magic. A clockwork man cannot drink potions and cannot be affected by healing magic, nor can it heal with rest; if damaged, a clockwork man needs to be repaired by an auto-mech or a mechanic.

Clockwork men cannot wear armor sized to fit a human — their bodies are too bulky. A player character clockwork man moves at a base Speed of 40' (120') and has an unarmored AC of either 6 (clockwork servant) or 4 (clockwork soldier) thanks to its metallic exterior.

*Clockwork Soldier:* A clockwork soldier has the "Quick March" and "Soldier On" fighter abilities.

*Clockwork Servant:* A clockwork servant has the "Jack of All Trades," "Ace in the Hole," and "Deuce's Own Luck" rogue abilities.

## Robot Replicants

Robot replicants are unusual for automata, in that they are not entirely mechanical. Like a clockwork man, a replicant is a machine that is intended to look human, but a clockwork man only resembles



a living thing superficially while still being very obviously a machine. A replicant, though, has an exterior that perfectly mimics the human form — because its exterior really is living flesh, with blood and skin and hair overlaid on its metallic endoskeleton. Replicants are created to act as spies, infiltrators, or assassins, but they can also serve as protectors and bodyguards. Unlike other automata, replicants have the full range of organic sensation — they can *feel*. In the strictest sense, a replicant is actually a cyborg and not a mere automaton, robot, or android.

ROBOT REPLICANT EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8+2	+1	7	Replicant Plant	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,000	11+3	+1	7	Replicant Mole	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	6,000	14+4	+1	7	Replicant Spy	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	12,000	18+4	+3	7	Replicant Sleeper	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	25,000	21+5	+3	9	Replicant Infiltrator	10
6 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	24+6	+3	9	Replicant Terminator	11

Game Rule Information

Replicants can advance as high as 6<sup>th</sup> level in the replicant class, which has three prime requisites: Valor, Fortune, and Wits. Replicants have the following special qualities:

*Organic Exterior:* A replicant is made with a layer of living flesh concealing a metallic endoskeleton. They are automata, but they are also partly alive. Replicants need to eat, drink, and breathe just like humans, but they do not sleep. Replicants have two separate hit point pools: one for their mechanical parts (80% of their hp total) and one for their organic components (the remaining 20%). Damage to a replicant is always deducted from a replicant’s organic hit points first, as flesh tears away and the metal skeleton beneath is revealed. A replicant’s mechanical hit points cannot be damaged by poison, gas-attacks, or life-draining magic. Replicants are immune to sleep, charm, mind-affecting, and instant death magic. Only a replicant’s organic hit points can be replenished by any sort of healing magic, including potions. A replicant’s mechanical hit points, if lost to damage, cannot be healed with magic or rest and must be restored by a mechanic making repairs.

*Quick March:* As the fighter ability.

*Soldier On:* As the fighter ability. Replicants can use this ability to heal both their mechanical hit points (jury-rigged self-repairs) and their organic hit points (normal first aid).

*Jack of All Trades:* As the rogue ability.

*Ace in the Hole:* As the rogue ability.

*Deuce’s Own Luck:* As the rogue ability.

## Made Men

The final category of playable characters in the Gaia setting is also by far the rarest. Made men are magical constructs, brought to life — *true* life, in that they have souls and free will, despite their lacking any internal biology — either intentionally by the work of a wizard or spontaneously through some freak magical accident. There are three types of made man: straw men, which are soft-bodied constructs like scarecrows or cotton-stuffed patchwork dolls; tin men, made from metal; and wicker men, whose frames are constructed from wood and bark.

STRAW MAN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	6	+1	7	Straw Collegiate	4+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,750	9	+1	7	Straw Baccalaureate	5+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5,500	12	+1	7	Straw Master	5+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	11,000	15	+1	7	Straw Doctor	6+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	23,000	18	+3	9	Straw Fellow	6+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	45,000	21	+3	9	Straw Professor	7+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	90,000	24	+3	9	Straw Emeritus	7+3

TIN MAN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	8	+1	7	Tin Veteran	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,000	12	+1	7	Tin Swordsman	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	6,000	16	+1	7	Tin Duelist	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	12,000	20	+3	7	Tin Hero	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	25,000	24	+3	9	Tin Swashbuckler	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	28	+3	9	Tin Knight	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	100,000	32	+6	9	Tin Champion	7

WICKER MAN EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Lv	XP	HP	THB	ST	Level Title	Skill Pips
1 <sup>st</sup>	0	4	+1	7	Wicker Medium	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,000	6	+1	7	Wicker Seer	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	6,000	8	+1	7	Wicker Conjurer	5
4 <sup>th</sup>	12,000	10	+1	7	Wicker Wizard	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	25,000	12	+1	9	Wicker Enchanter	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	14	+3	9	Wicker Warlock	7
7 <sup>th</sup>	100,000	16	+3	9	Wicker Sorcerer	7

Game Rule Information

All made men are *living magical constructs*. They do not need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep, and they cannot drink potions, nor can they heal hp

damage with rest or be healed by magic. If damaged, a made man must be physically repaired, which will require fresh stuffing for a straw man, the work of a tinsmith for a tin man, or some new wooden limbs to be whittled and fresh bark to be woven for a wicker man. Dispel Magic will not destroy a made man, but Break Enchantment certainly can. Made men are immune to poison, disease, gas-based attacks, and sleep, charm, mind-affecting, life-draining, and instant-death magic.

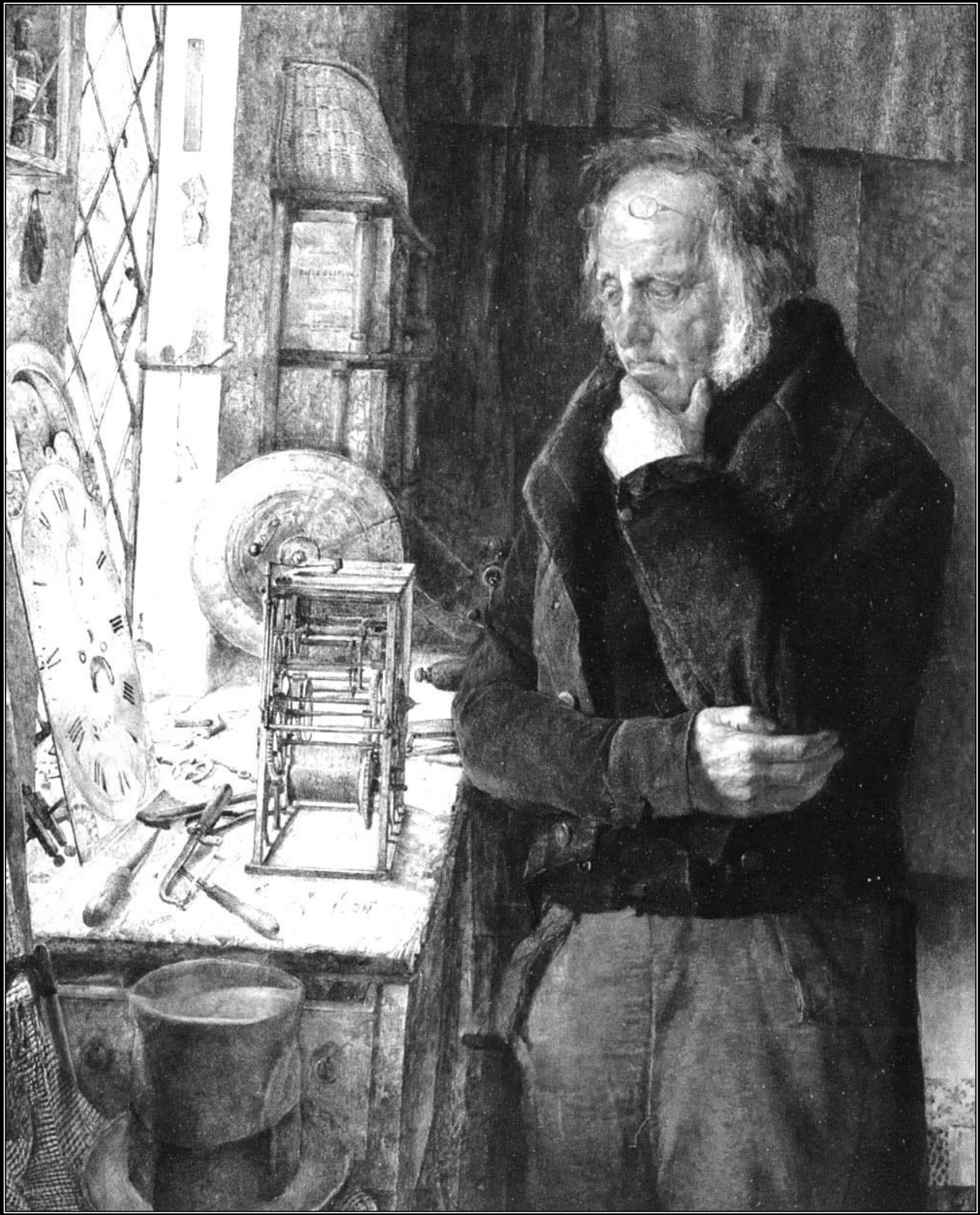
*Straw Men:* Straw men can advance as high as 7<sup>th</sup> level in the straw man class, which has two prime requisites, Wits and Presence. Straw men advance as scholars: they have the scholar's "Hermetic Magic-User," "Linguist," and "Learned in Lore" class abilities. Straw men are thinkers, not fighters: because they're stuffed, they're too weak and clumsy to wear most kinds of armor (a straw man is AC 10 naturally), and they inflict only half damage with any weapons that they themselves wield. On the other hand, straw men also *take* only half damage from non-magical weapons. Unfortunately, straw men are highly flammable, suffering a -4 penalty on all saves vs.

fire and taking double damage from flame.

*Tin Men:* Tin men can advance as high as 7<sup>th</sup> level in the tin man class, which has two prime requisites, Valor and Wits. Tin men advance as fighters: they have the fighter's "Quick March" and "Soldier On" abilities. Tin men cannot wear armor, but they have AC 4 naturally. Tin men are extremely durable, taking only half damage from fire and non-magical weapon attacks; but they have a weakness. If a tin man is exposed to moisture for a turn or more, even in the form of mist or snow, he may rust and become paralyzed until someone oils his joints!

*Wicker Men:* Wicker men can advance as high as 7<sup>th</sup> level in the wicker man class, which has two prime requisites, Fortune and Presence. A wicker man advances as a mage: wicker men have the mage's "Intuitive Magic-User" and "Deep Magic" class abilities. Because they are made from wood, wicker men take 1 fewer point of damage per die from cold and from hits with non-magical weapons. However, they are -2 to save against fire and increase the amount of damage they take from flame by 1 point per die.





# PART TWO: OVERVIEW OF GAIA

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TO DESCRIBE an entire world, consideration must be given to such diverse topics as history, geography, astronomy, and culture. In the limited space available here, only the barest outline of the world called Gaia can be presented. It will be up to referees to make this world their own and to breathe some life into it!

This chapter provides a framework on which to base a campaign set in Gaia, but the gaps which need filling in are many and vast—hopefully, they leave plenty of room for your own creativity. And, of course, the material found here can always be used as nothing more than inspiration for your own, entirely different gaslamp fantasy settings.

We shall begin, then, by treating the most vital subject first: the lengthy and oft-hidden ancient history of the world called Gaia.

## The Elder Days (before 25,000 years ago)

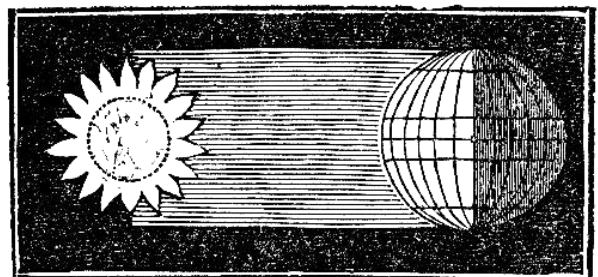
Although scientists prefer to use a word like “pre-history” to describe these distant times, the elves and the fays still speak of them as the “Elder Days,” or as the “Time Before the Counting of the Ages.” Yet, the fact remains: none who now live on Gaia were alive to witness this era. Even the fays, who call themselves Gaia’s first children, cannot reach so far back into their kindred’s ancient memory.

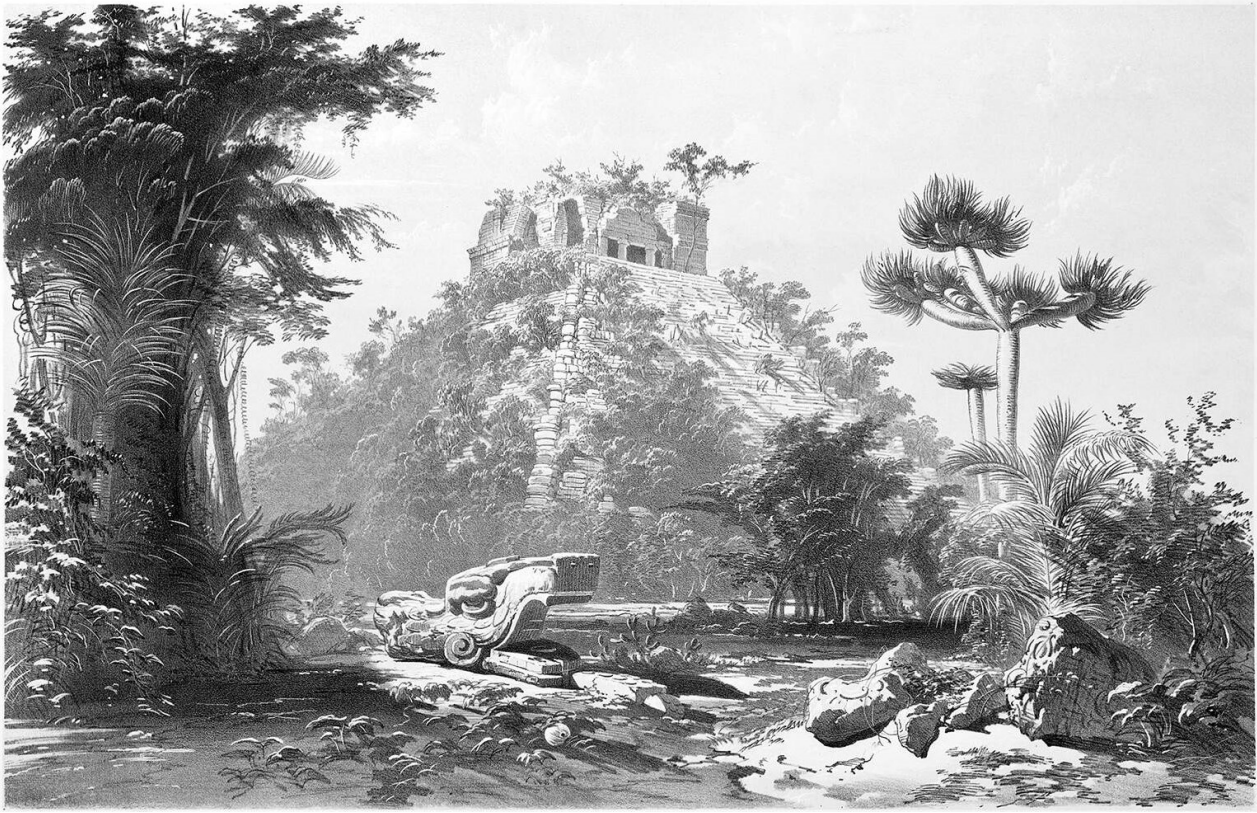
Archæologists have only been able to piece together a bare skeleton of the story. They have accomplished this much by translating stone

inscriptions, hieroglyphs, and ancient Sidhe texts of unspeakable antiquity. The best estimates of sages and scientists have placed the earliest surviving inscriptions at thirty thousand years of age, but they may very well be twice that old or more.

Pictographs and hieroglyphs depict a race of people, very similar in form to men, elves, and fays; but even the best-preserved pictograms are never detailed enough to discern much more than that. Nobody knows just what these people might have properly called themselves, but for the sake of simple convenience, scientists label them “the Ancients.” Nobody knows where the Ancients came from or for how long their civilization persisted, but it seems likely to have spanned all of Gaia at its peak.

The very earliest glyphs, those which might be as old as fifty to sixty thousand years, depict a sort of sundering or division of the Ancients into two tribes: those who remained on Gaia and those who left Gaia. The pictograms seem to show the departing Ancients traveling away in a saucer-shaped vessel, heading towards a distant sun or star. Whether this is myth or fact, none can tell.





But after this time, the Ancients who did remain to dwell on Gaia blossomed into a widespread and very advanced civilization.

The Ancients built what we might call an enlightened civilization. Magic and science were as one to them. Over thousands of years, they came to control matter and energy, time and space, and even life and death. But then something terrible happened. At a date which we can estimate to be perhaps twenty-five thousand years ago, one of the Ancients took it upon himself to create the mightiest life-forms imaginable, and he went too far. The Ancient texts only refer to this scientist by the name of "Zudos."

Zudos, it seemed, was a maker of weapons. At first, he built automata which were entirely mechanical. Then he engineered mutated monsters which were entirely biological (including one reportedly horrid species which the Ancient texts do not describe in any sort of detail, but which they name "Trrskw"). This Zudos may very well be responsible for the existence of most creatures which are nowadays called "monsters." But his most unforgivable crime was to create something

unstoppable, something which was neither machine nor beast, but partially both. This cybernetic horror was called the Weapon of Zudos, though some surviving Ancient writings also call it the Weapon of Mu. The Weapon rampaged uncontrollably across the face of Gaia and caused untold destruction.

The other Ancients banded together to fight against the Weapon. Eventually they did succeed, but the Weapon of Zudos had been created from indestructible stuff. All that the Ancients could hope to do was seal the Weapon away for all time, and this they did amidst the devastated ruins of the great center of their civilization. The Weapon was banished beneath the land of Mu (hence the Weapon's other name, and hence the fact that Mu remains, to this day, an uninhabitable wasteland populated only by diseased and mutated monsters). The whole face of Gaia had been burned and blasted by this war, but the Ancients' favored land of Mu had fared the worst. Its loss marked the fall of their once-mighty civilization.

To pay for his vile crimes, Zudos had to be imprisoned. (Perhaps the Ancients were a people

too enlightened to execute one of their own; but then again, perhaps it simply wasn't possible for them to end Zudos's life.) To accomplish this feat, a sealing of far greater difficulty and magnitude, the Ancients created a second moon in orbit around Gaia. Gaia already had one natural satellite: a lifeless rock called Phoebe. The Ancients created the moon Selene, which to this day circles the planet in a wider orbit than Phoebe's, and which looks like a smooth and featureless orb of blue when seen through a telescope from the surface of Gaia. The Ancients did this for the sole purpose of imprisoning Zudos, who now languishes within the lunar core. Then, to guard the prison, the Ancients created a life-form called the "Behemoth": an immense and platinum-scaled dragon that lives upon Selene and is said to guard the seal of Zudos to this very day.

After that, the Ancients left Gaia. They broke free of the bonds of the terrestrial world and went... *elsewhere*. Nobody knows if they joined their brethren who had left Gaia at the dawn of the Ancients' civilization. But the fact remains that they disappeared entirely, leaving few marks of their civilization behind except for a scant few inscriptions and artifacts; and the moon Selene, along with its guardian, the lunar Behemoth.

## The First Age (24,000–13,000 years ago)

On Gaia, life slowly recovered. The green, growing things spread back across the land. Everywhere except the blasted and irradiated land of Mu, things returned to normal. And then, about twenty-four thousand years ago, a new people arose — living first on the continent of Lemuria, and then spreading everywhere else. These folk were the Sidhe. They had come into Gaia by accident from another dimension on the Etheric Plane, the realm of Faerie; but after they settled Lemuria, they quickly came to forget their true origins and now believed themselves to be the heirs (either the direct descendants or the special creations) of the Ancients. The transplanted Sidhe led a primitive existence at first: simple lives in harmony with nature, lacking any sort of advanced technology. As millennia passed, the Sidhe made many discoveries, and chief among these was the magical art of sorcery. This practice catapulted the Sidhe from

barbarism back into a state of civilization, but it would prove their undoing.

For ten thousand years, the immortal Sidhe ruled Gaia alone. But Zudos still watched his old world from within the depths of the blue moon Selene. His body was bound within the lunar core, but his mind could still reach out to the people on the planet below. As the Sidhe grew in power and sought more and more Ancient knowledge, Zudos sensed that his time would soon be at hand.

There arose among the Sidhe two great wizards. One, Myrddin, was a good sorcerer who sought the knowledge of the Ancients to keep his own people from repeating the Ancients' mistakes. The other, Namtar, was weak-willed and power-hungry. He was the ideal pawn for Zudos, and so the mind of Zudos took him, possessed him, corrupted him, and bent him utterly to his will. Namtar listened as the very knowledge of Zudos was whispered directly into his mind, and he began to experiment.

First, he played with life and death. He created many foul monsters, both living and dead. Namtar came to hold a particular fascination with death and disease. He created the first undead monsters — all kinds, from ghouls to vampires — and he invented new and cursed diseases, like mummy rot. As his knowledge grew, he sought to create greater beasts, and this led him to even deeper depravity. His own wife, a Sidhe witch named Lilitu, he took and transformed into a six-armed, serpent-tailed devil-beast — the Marilith. Another Sidhe, a follower of his by the name of Dagon, he changed into a gigantic sea-monster with the form of a great squid — the Kraken. At last, when Namtar felt that his knowledge was complete, he sought to create a life-form that could even rival the Behemoth or the Weapon in power — and he created the seven-headed dragon-fiend called Tiamat. But this undertaking, this feat of evil, was so draining that even the immortal life of a Sidhe was consumed by it. And so, in order to preserve his existence, Namtar had to give himself over into his most beloved invention — undeath — and he became the first Lich Lord.

The Four Fiends — Namtar, the Lich-King; Lilitu, the Marilith; Dagon, the Kraken; and Tiamat, the Dragon with Seven Heads — rose up and led Namtar's monstrous and undead legions on a rampage across the face of Gaia. The other Sidhe, led by Myrddin, fought back. But it soon



became apparent that they could not defeat the Four Fiends on their own. So they turned to their sorcery for help. First, the Sidhe tried to create their own allies. They awakened the trees to create the spirit-beings known as leshies, and these were mighty allies indeed, but still they were no match for the Four Fiends. So Myrddin enacted a great spell which was meant to call for help – to call out beyond the bounds of the world. It was Myrddin’s great hope that his spell would reach the ears of gods themselves, the lost Ancients, wherever they were, and bring them back to Gaia to save its people in their hour of direst need. But this did not happen.

Instead, other folk began appearing on Gaia, transported through mysterious Gates that the Ancients had left behind, Gates unwittingly awakened by the magic of Myrddin. The High Elves came first, and then the goblins and the ogres, the gnomes and the háin, and also the fauns and centaurs and harpies and merrows. The Fair Folk appeared, angry and confused at first; but soon enough, they witnessed the plight of the sorely-pressed Sidhe and their leshy allies, and they agreed to join the fight. With all of this combined might, now the Allies at last posted a real threat to Lich-King and his Fiends. The elves, in particular, were something new and special. They possessed a kind of magic which was not sorcery. Indeed, they were able weave the ether directly, and this white wizardry was like a bane to all of Namtar’s unnatural monsters.

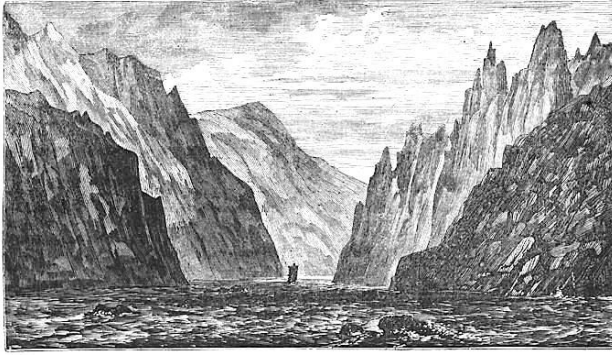
Namtar grew fascinated with the elves; he captured a great many of them. He worked his evil experiments upon them, and thus from the elves came the draugish species and the Dark Fae called the “Sluagh.” Leshies, too, he captured and combined with living stone, creating the first trolls. Then, by breeding all of these new species together in his horrid genetic experiments, from trolls and draugs and common beasts he created the many breeds of shadowspawn.

The Great Alliance now fought back against Namtar’s hordes on an almost even footing, and the monsters were pushed eastward, altogether out of Arcadia, all the way to Tuonela in the east. It was around this time that Myrddin discovered a new kind of artifact left behind by the Ancients, something called “Fingers of Light.” Myrddin joined forces with the leader of the High Elves, a warrior-queen called Nimuël, along with her

twelve bravest knights; and he led them on a long and arduous quest to recover the Fingers of Light. Nobody alive today knows precisely what the Fingers of Light were, let alone how they worked. But once they were assembled, the Fingers summoned forth something holy and mighty, and Namtar and all his ilk were finished. They were banished from the face of Gaia and cast deep into the planet’s core, sealed within the deepest place of the world, just as Zudos had been banished to the core of the far moon.

The war left Gaia broken once again, and the time of the Sidhe was truly over. Now the world was irrevocably changed. The Sidhe had to share their planet with leshies, elves, goblins, gnomes, ogres, hánfolk, centaurs, merrows, shadowspawn, trolls, draugs, and others. Each kindred wanted its own piece of the world to live in, and they all vied for dominion. More war was inevitable.

But Myrddin had more pressing concerns. He worried that Namtar and his three fiendish cohorts might one day break the bonds of their prison and escape. Therefore, to prevent this, he used all of his great knowledge of the Ancients and their works to create life. He engineered a being which would rival the Behemoth in power and goodness. This was the Leviathan, which Myrddin placed in the ocean’s deepest trench as an eternal guardian over the tomb of the Four Fiends. But as with Namtar’s creation of Tiamat, this was a feat beyond the ken of any one Sidhe, and it drained Myrddin’s immortal life away completely. Moreover, Myrddin was no Ancient, whose power was like unto the gods; he was a mere Fae, a spirit from Faerie. Lacking the wisdom of the Ancients, he knew not what fate his spells and rituals would bring about – and he never would. The very act of creating the Leviathan caused Myrddin to fall into a deep and unbreakable slumber (within a Crystal Cave in the Uttermost West, according to legend), where he would be compelled to sleep outside of time itself for the rest of eternity. But as for the rest of his people – the whole of his kind, every last Sidhe on the face of Gaia – they were affected too. Their immortality was drained away, thereby reducing them to their present state of mortality. Their lifespans still numbered in the centuries, but they were no longer truly Sidhe. Now they had become something else: the kindred which today calls itself “the children of the Sidhe.” They had become the fays.



## The Second Age (24,000–13,000 years ago)

The *eldar* — the High Elves — believed themselves to be the wisest and fairest of all the beings now living on Gaia, and they very quickly rose to dominance. They made fast friends of the goblins, but the other kindreds did not fare so well under elfin dominion. The centaurs and the hánfolk were practically enslaved, and the fays were especially blamed for all the evils of the past Age. As the elves swept across Arcadia, the fays were forced to flee into the Uttermost West, to the remote lands of Lemuria and Tollan. In Arcadia, the elves built a mighty empire, and all the other peoples of Gaia were beholden unto them.

The Second Age, the Age of Elvendom, was relatively peaceful. But for the odd rebellion or uprising, nothing could have challenged the power of the elves. For a full five thousand years, the elves and goblins and other kindreds remade the world in their image. (The elves, the goblins, and all the other kindreds were named “fairies” by the fays — because they are “fay-like” but foreign. In Arcadia, this word carries with it roughly the same sense that “humanoid” holds for us.)

But then, about eight thousand years ago, something strange happened. In the year 4,327 of the Second Age, one of the Gates of the Ancients opened at random, and a new being came through, one unlike all of the others.

The Old Elfish texts are difficult to read on this subject, because they are many and conflicting. According to some accounts, the man who appeared was called “The Urther,” while others say he was called “the Terran.” At least one text (believed to be of gnomish origin) names him “Bill,” although this text is probably apocryphal. But all

the writings are clear on one point: the newcomer belonged to a new kindred called “human,” and he claimed to have come to Gaia from another world called “Urth.” (The famously suspect Old Gnomish text says that the human came from strange and mysterious universe called “Shikagau.”)

The mysterious Urther first appeared in Avalon, and he became a great hero there. He led the uprising against Meliora, the Empress of the Elves, and he helped to topple her tyrannical reign over Arcadia. What was more, he traveled into the Uttermost West and brought back the fays, including their chieftain of old, Myrddin — whom he somehow managed to awaken from a slumber that should have been eternal. Eventually, the heroic Urther of Shikagau disappeared, but in his wake he left behind a changed Arcadia. The Elfin Empire was broken; and a fay woman, Morrigan by name, became queen in Avalon. Within another scant couple of centuries, the Age of Elvendom would come to an end for good.

## The Third Age (6,000–1,900 years ago)

Several centuries after the disappearance of the human hero called the Urther, many more of his species appeared on the continent called Atlantis. These humans seemed to be a different breed. Whereas the Urther had been a noble hero of unfathomable strength, a wise scholar, and a mighty magician, these new humans were naught but barbarians. They sailed forth into many realms and conquered all that they could with primitive weapons of bronze and iron. They became strongest in the lands south and east of Arcadia, where they built many vast but short-lived empires that seemed to rise and fall as quickly as these short-lived humans could be born and die.

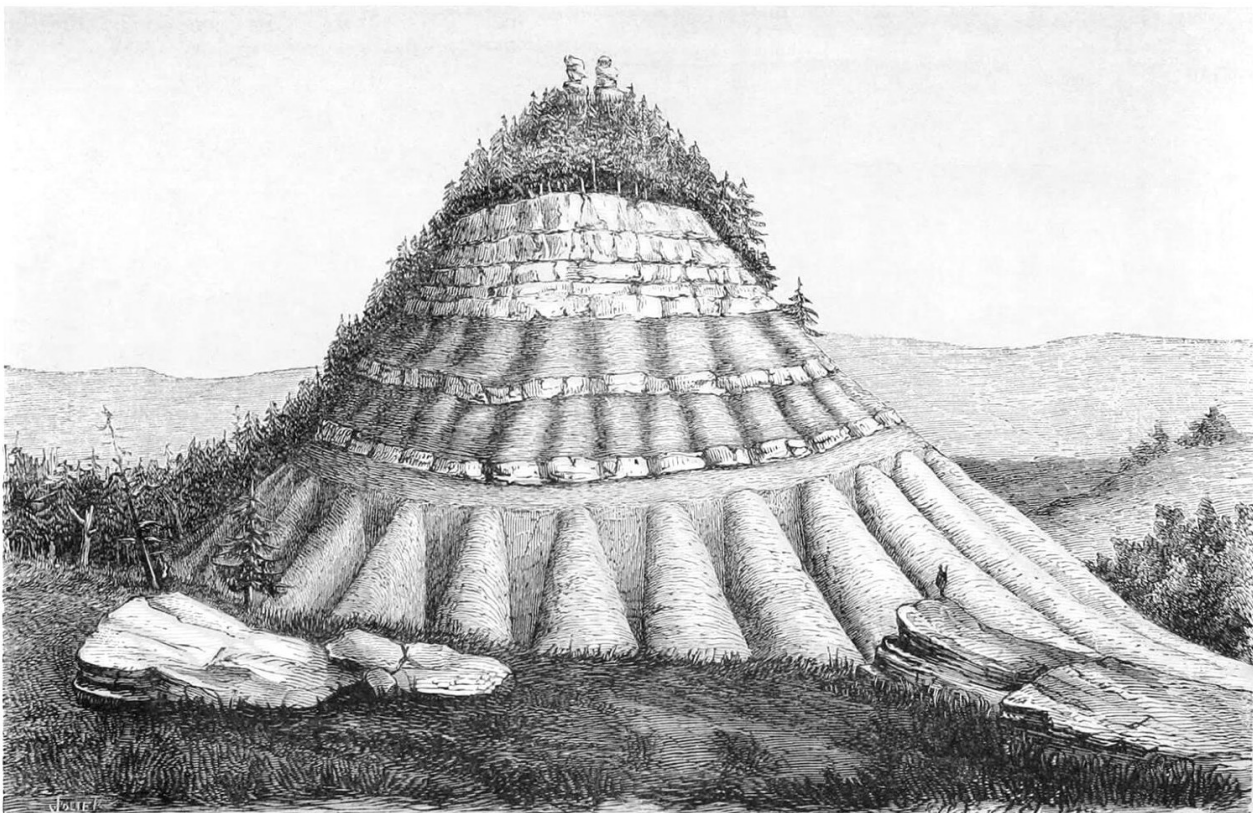
It was in this era that Zudos once again sensed an opportunity, for the humans practiced sorcery, and they were easily corrupted. From their own realm, wherever that had been, the humans had brought a new kind of magic — “faith” — which seemed to flow from their belief in distant, invisible gods. But the humans could also learn wizardry and sorcery, and they sought power above all else. This stroke of unlikely good fortune pleased Zudos greatly.

In the country of Mephret, now a part of the land of Amarna, there arose a great magician called Apep, or Apophis. He became so powerful that he deposed the Pharaoh and took command of all the armies in the land. The shadowspawn and the trolls once again multiplied in Tuonela, and they came south to answer the summons of Apophis, who was indeed possessed by Zudos. Apophis sent emissaries into the north, into the kingdoms of Arcadia, to try and sway fairy rulers to join his side. Some accepted; others refused. The great fay wizard Myrddin (for indeed, though restored to life, he was now a mere mortal) wandered everywhere in those days to try and work against Apophis – sometimes in fairy lands, and at other times in human lands, where he would often disguise himself as an old human by the name of Ambrose. Myrddin tried to prevent the lords of the fairies and the humans from accepting the cursed gifts of Apophis’s evil emissaries, warning that they would bring only misfortune and evil.

Then Apophis sought to do the unthinkable: he tried to rouse the Four Fiends from their prison within Gaia. Fortunately, the Leviathan proved too great an obstacle for even Apophis overcome;

but still he was not to be dissuaded. Though the Fiends’ bodies were trapped deep within the world, the spirit of Namtar was only bound to its physical form by black magic, for he was a lich. Apophis used dark spells, whispered from the far moon by Zudos, to transfer the consciousness of Namtar into a mummified human corpse, thereby freeing the Lich-King from his prison. For his due reward, Apophis was promptly slain and made into a lich himself, a mere puppet in Namtar’s thrall. So too were all of Apophis’s lesser acolytes then murdered and made into mummies and *sah-hotep* mummy-priests. And as for all those lords and warriors who had accepted gifts from the foul sorcerer, they were suddenly transformed into spectres and revenants.

The armies of the Lich-King marched against Arcadia, and all seemed lost. But Myrddin gathered friends together and forged a great alliance between elves, goblins, ogres, centaurs, and men. The Second Great Alliance beat back Namtar once again. Apophis’s magic had required a phylactery to keep Namtar’s spirit alive in his new body, and when this item was destroyed, the Fiend was cast back into the depths, never again to rise in living



memory. But he left behind a foul legacy: Namtar had created the more advanced species of 'spawn, like the durlocks and bugganes, some of which could be made not to fear the sunlight as trolls and lesser shdaowspawn do.

Peace returned to the world once more, for another five thousand years. In the millennia that followed the Second Great War, a new empire rose to ascendancy: a human empire, ruled over by a conqueror named Alexander. The lands of Illyria, Amarna, and Eden were united under his mighty banner and administrated from his capital at Olympia. It was an empire the likes of which Gaia had not seen since Elvendom in Avalon. But the Alexandrine Empire was not to last forever — nothing ever does — and its fall marked the end of the Age.

## The Fourth Age (1,835 years ago to present)

Approximately 1,850 years ago, on the peninsula of Elysium, a general who went by the name of Julius Dracus — history says that he claimed to be the son of a fire Drake — united his homeland into single state, and then he spread outward from there and steadily began conquering neighboring lands. One by one, surrounding countries fell to the march of Dracus, who then declared himself Emperor of Elysium. Eventually, even the great city of Olympia fell, and the Alexandrine Empire was thereby absorbed into the new and growing Elysian Empire. This new empire was to last for five centuries, although it did eventually collapse under its own weight. This collapse left most of Arcadia reeling in darkness and ignorance.

But during the Ninth Century of the Fourth Age, a minor renaissance of a sort took place in the gnomish country of Utopia. A feudal lord of gnomes called Carolus Minor (that is, "Charles the Small") began uniting various duchies and principalities into a single kingdom. This would one day become the nation-state of Utopia, and it would set the standard for other lands throughout the medieval period of the Fourth Age. In the Twelfth Century, Avalon united under the crown of the fay King Tristram, whose daughter Maeve (who would herself ascend to the throne in the Sixteenth Century) was to become the greatest monarch in all of Arcadian history. Other lands followed suit, and by the time the Nineteenth

Century arrives, even the fragmented countries Midjard and Elysia now seem ready to unite into modern, centralized nation-states...

## The Geography of Gaia

Gaia is the third planet out from a star called Helios. The Helion System is structured similarly to our own: there are four rocky inner planets and four gaseous outer planets. The inner planets, moving outward from the sun, are called Hermes, Aphrodite, Gaia, and Ares. The outer planets are Zeus, Chronos, Uranos, and Poseidon. Until very recently, Chronos was the most distant planet known to Gaians, since that is the farthest planet which can be seen with the naked eye. Uranos and Poseidon were both discovered and named by modern astronomers just within the last century, due to the invention of the telescope during the Elysian Renaissance of the Fifteenth Century.

All of the planets from Gaia outward have satellite bodies of their own — moons. Gaia herself has two moons, which are called Phoebe and Selene. Phoebe, the nearer moon, is all but identical to Earth's moon in the real world: clearly lifeless, it shines silvery-yellow in the night sky but displays lowlands, mountains, and craters when observed through a telescope. Selene, the farther moon, resembles a tiny version of Uranos, blue in color, but perfectly smooth and featureless. Whereas Phoebe both rotates and revolves at the same speed, and therefore always presents only one face to Gaia at all times, Selene's period of rotation cannot be determined from observing its unmarked surface. Selene's revolutionary period is also significantly longer than Phoebe's: Selene completes a full orbit about Gaia precisely once every 91 days, while Phoebe will go through all of its phases every 28 days (which is of course the basis of the Gaian month). A year on Gaia is exactly 364 days (and there are no leap years). Thus, in the span of one year, Phoebe orbits Gaia precisely thirteen times and Selene completes four orbits in perfect sync with both Gaia and Phoebe.

The planet Ares is only known to have one moon, which is called Thanatos. Thanatos is likely to be nothing but a small and lifeless rock, but scientists are not so sure about Ares itself. When observed through a telescope, Ares appears to be blue and green and swirled with white cloud-cover. The possibility is quite strong that life thrives there!



In between the orbits of Ares and Zeus, there are a small number of “minor planets,” all of which share approximately the same orbit and revolve about the sun at about the same speed. There is no diffuse belt of asteroids beyond the orbit of Ares: just three or four known minor planets. “Three or four” is the number most often cited, because the fourth such body discovered by modern astronomers may or may not be counted as a planet at all. The first three objects, known as Hera, Demeter, and Hestia, are all clearly small planets of solid, rocky constitution and spherical shape. But the fourth object, which is called the Athena Cloud, is a cluster of rocks and debris which are all gravitationally bound together, and which therefore orbit the sun as a single body—a mass of incoherent planetary matter spanning some twenty-thousand miles in diameter. It is probable that the Athena Cloud was once a solid minor planet which was then obliterated by a collision with a comet or some other body.

The four “gas giant” outer planets all have some dozens of moons, and ring systems of ice and dust as well. The natures and characteristics of these outer bodies are largely a mystery to Gaian folk. Speculation is also rampant about what might exist beyond the orbit of Poseidon: is there a mysterious ninth planet which remains to be discovered? Nobody knows. But astronomers have been able to determine, at least, that the

strange, elliptical orbits of comets do take them far out beyond Poseidon’s orbit. Comets, therefore, are the most distant objects in the Helion System known to Gaian astronomers.

Beyond the Helion System, the people of Gaia are now for the most part aware that the other stars which are visible in the night sky are distant suns which might have planets of their own orbiting them. However, the state of astronomy on Gaia is not yet sufficiently advanced that they have deduced the shape or character of the galaxy to which Helios belongs, let alone the notion that other galaxies exist in the universe. These discoveries are, however, likely to be less than a century away.

Returning, then, to Gaia herself, she is what one might call an utterly typical “M-Class” planet: nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere, three-quarters surface water, and overall ideally suited for carbon-based life as we know it. The surface of Gaia is dominated by four oceans (the Dysic, the Notonic, the Anatolic, and the Boreic) and by five major landmasses: the continents of Mu, Atlantis, Tollan, Lemuria, and Edenia.

Mu covers much of Gaia’s southern hemisphere. This barren, irradiated wasteland might be considered uninhabitable, but for the mutated monsters that dwell there. Adventurers who make the attempt to explore this continent only seldom return to tell about it.

Atlantis is a peculiar continent, shaped like a swirl or a spiral, set almost precisely on the equator in the middle of the Dysic Ocean. Legends still persist that Atlantis is composed of three concentric rings of land, but these legends are false: it is a single landmass which happens to have a shallow, spiral-shaped channel of seawater cutting into the center of it. The inhabitants of Atlantis are human, highly advanced, and extremely isolationistic. They tolerate no visitors; brook no contact with the outside world; shoot before asking questions; take no prisoners; and give no quarter. Therefore, Atlantis is an unknown quantity to outsiders. Airships from Arcadia do not survive flying near its well-defended coastlines.

Tollan might be considered a jungle continent: it is almost completely covered by rain forest, though grassy plains are present on its southern edge, and high, rocky mountains run along its northern shore. For nearly four centuries now, the whole continent of Tollan has been under the control of the Hesperian Empire, and the native peoples – which are mainly fays and humans – have been subjected to the rule of Hesperian humans.

Lemuira is a continent which was once almost entirely peopled by fays – at least, prior to the incursions of the elves during the Second Age. During that time, the Elfin Empire established several colonies on the eastern coast of Lemuria, but these were all destroyed in the wars that brought about the end of the Second Age. After that, in the Third Age, when humans came to power in Arcadia, Lemuria was mostly forgotten. Late in the Fourth Age, though, a great movement for exploration swept through the Arcadian peoples, and Lemuria was rediscovered. What they found was a lush, verdant continent of forests and plains and majestic mountains, inhabited by various tribes of all kindreds, including humans, though all of them subsisted at an approximately Stone-Age level of technology. Avalon and Utopia were quick to plant new colonies here, and Avalon once again came to control the eastern coast of the continent, just as it had done two Ages ago. Utopia, meanwhile, managed to secure much of the continental interior, especially in the north. But during the Eighteenth Century of the Fourth Age, Avalon's Colonies determined that they wanted independence and self-rule. They petitioned the Parliament in Annwn, and to avoid a war, Queen Maeve of Avalon granted the colonies formal independence – although they do remain a Dominion under the

protection of the Avalonian crown. This region is known today as the Lemurian Federation, and it is made of up several small political entities which are nominally republics. As for the Utopian territories, which have been named “Arborea,” they remain firmly under the control of Utopia's dictatorial Emperor, François Biendit.

Edenia, the largest single landmass on Gaia, is divided into several smaller subcontinents. Arcadia is the focus of this text; it is generally said to include the attendant islands of Hesperia, Avalon, and Tirnanog. The other regions include Tuonela (a wilderness controlled by the 'spawn); Amarna (a desert region which has characteristics of our Egypt and Arabia); Eden (a crossroads of a land which resembles Turkey and Persia, and which in ancient times was called “Edenia Minor” – it has lent its name to the larger continent of Edenia); Shambala (which culturally resembles our India and Tibet); Jianghu (which means “the land of rivers and lakes,” and which resembles Imperial China); and last but certainly not least, the mysterious region called Draconia. “Draconia” is merely a shorthand for this country's proper name, which is “Draconia Gæa Vomica,” or the “Cursed Land Draconia.” Draconia is surrounded on all sides by mountains so high that no airship can fly over them. These mountains are said to be inhabited by the fiercest dragons imaginable: the black-scaled, acid-spiting murkwyrms. What lies beyond, none can say, though most people imagine that it must be a terrible, blighted country if it is indeed ruled by these evil dragons.

Apart from the continents, there are also several large islands of note. On the southern shore of Lemuria, an archipelago of islands sweeps out around the Caliban Sea. The Caliban Islands have long been a prime haunt for pirates, buccaneers, swashbucklers, and other salty sea-dog types. On the other side of the world, between the Anatolic and Dysic Oceans, there sit two large islands, one just about on the equator and the other south of it. The southerly island is called Mana Island; its people are said to be among the happiest and friendliest in the world, and their home is beautiful and bountiful. The northerly island is called Tabu Island; it is rumored to be a truly terrible place, haunted by some of the strongest monsters in all the world, and it is believed to hide some horrible secret. Lastly, there are three large islands in the north Dysic Ocean, set between Lemuria and Arcadia. The largest of these is Jötunheim, the

home of the stone giants. The centermost island is Muspellheim, the home of fire, a land of cinders and volcanic ash. And shaped like a five-pointed star is Neifelheim, the home of frost, a strange and frigid island where the cold wells up from the very ground beneath.

## Arcadia in the Fourth Age

The history of Arcadia since the start of the Fourth Age has been strangely parallel to that of Europe. The first Emperor of Elysium, Julius Dracus, was a great conqueror: he not only subdued the entire Elysian peninsula, he also brought most of Utopia and Illyria under the thumb of his empire. But his son and successor, Octavius Dracus, was the greatest of the Elysian emperors, and the start of his reign marks the year 1 of the Fourth Age. Under Octavius, the Empire expanded to include the rest of Utopia, much of Amarna and Edenia Minor, and Hesperia as well. The third and fourth emperors, Tertian and Thadrian, were also perfectly respectable expansionists: Tertian subdued Sylvania and tried to do the same in Midjard (but never succeeded), while Thadrian made inroads into Avalon but never managed the foothold on Tirnanog that he'd wished for.

During the reign of the First Four Emperors, the power of Elysium was unchallenged, and these imperial monarchs ruled from their capital city, Cælestium (which is today called Celesce in the modern parlance of Elysia). But after the reign of Thadrian, the empire began to decline. There were good emperors and bad emperors; but for the most part, the empire was simply too big to maintain, either militarily or financially. And then, during the Fifth Century, the whole thing collapsed altogether.

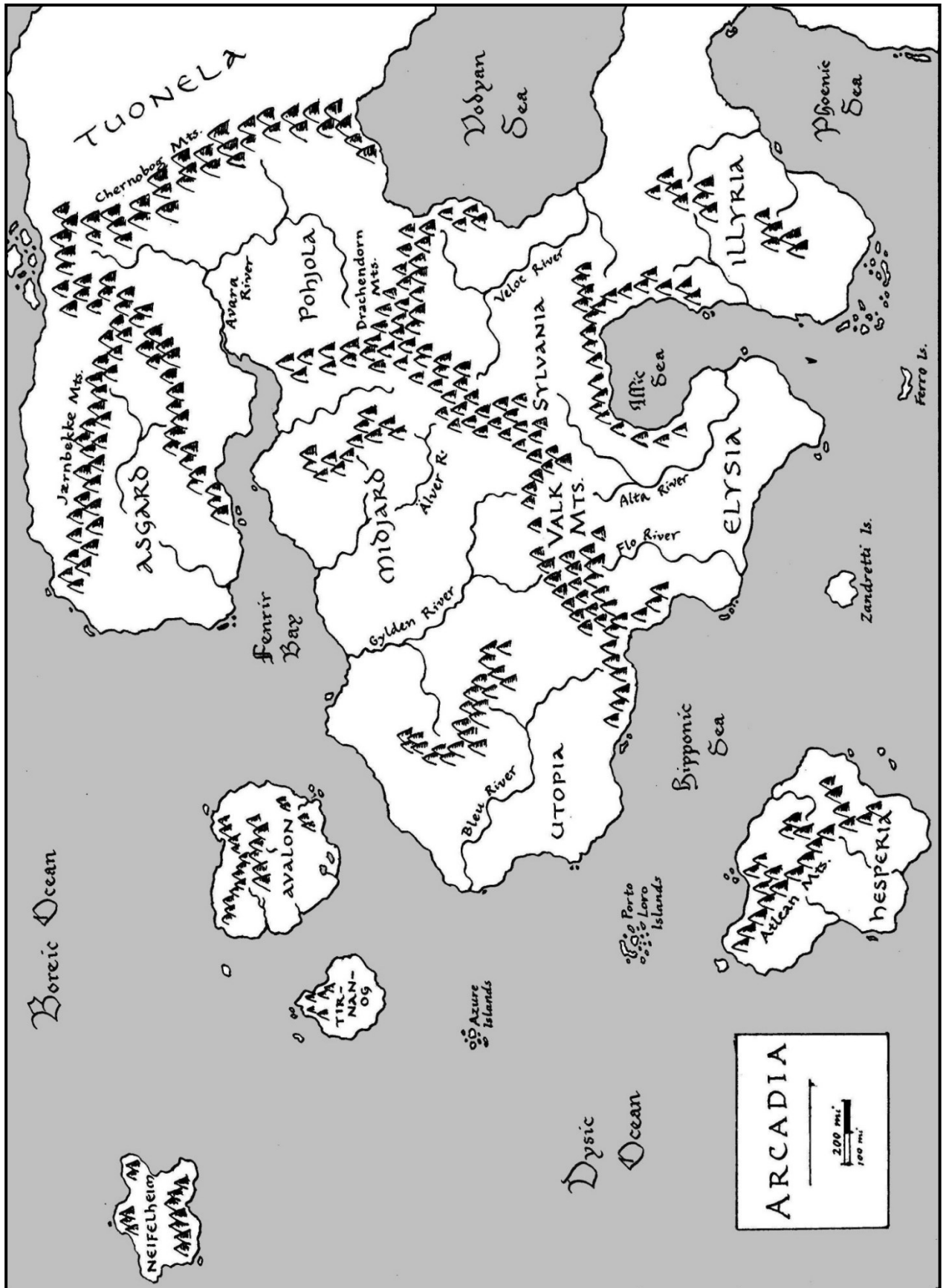
In the era that followed – now commonly known as the Dark Ages – fairy folk from the northern kingdoms swept south and conquered most of the former Elysian provinces; but in doing so, they also came to lord over vast numbers of human subjects, and the fairy peoples began to absorb and imitate human models of culture, law, and government. There was also rather a lot of intermarriage between humans and fairies during this time, and in most of the southern kingdoms, it wasn't very long at all before some human son or grandson of an elfin or goblin king would inherit the throne. Humans inevitably returned to power in the south again, simply because there were so

many more of them. Nevertheless, to this day, royal families in Hesperia and the Elysian principalities still proudly point to elves or fays or goblins in their ancestral genealogies.

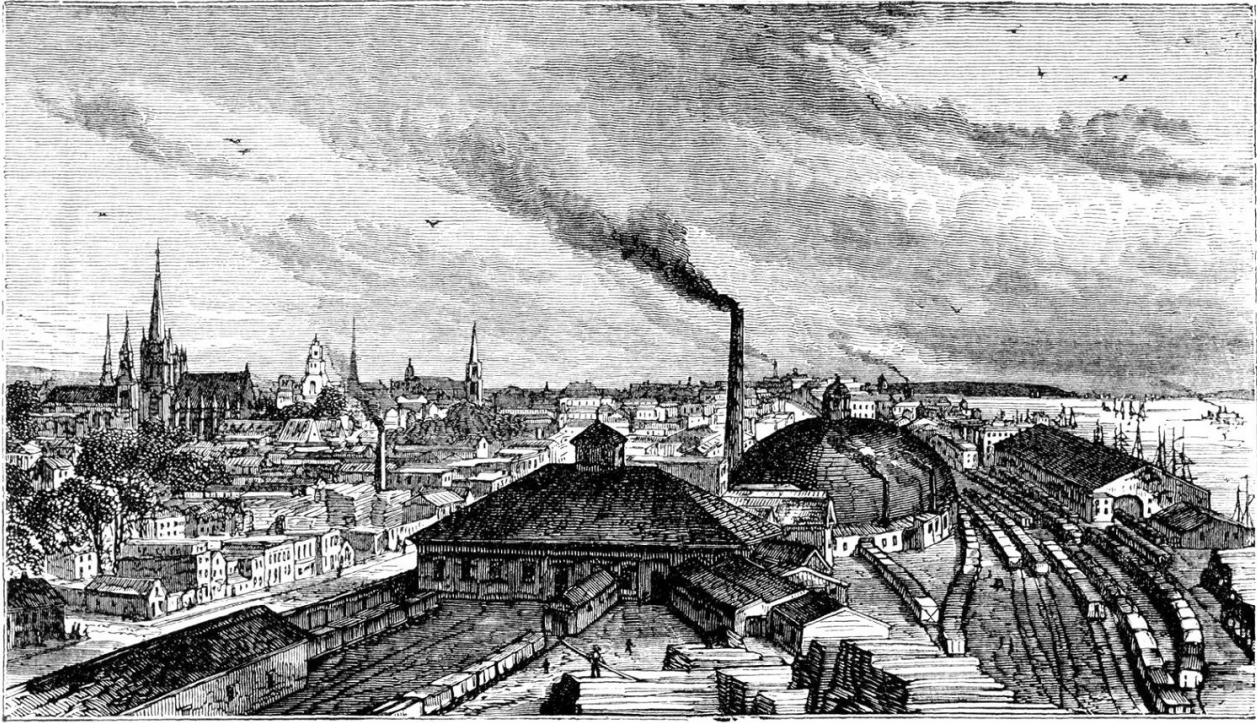
During the Dark Ages, Arcadia was divided up into innumerable small kingdoms, but a movement occurred in the Ninth Century under the auspices of the gnomish king of Rolandeaux, a region in northern Utopia. This king, by the name of Carolus Minor (or, as the modern Utopians nowadays remember him, Charlemin), managed to unite many small Utopian duchies and kingdoms into a single feudal entity – the very first inkling of a modern nation-state. In the Twelfth Century, a fay king by the name of Tristram managed to do much the same thing on the Island of Avalon. This period – the height of the Middle Ages – was marked by the tumultuous practice of state-building, as the most powerful monarchs in each land scrambled to conquer or win the fealty of their neighbors. Some kings and queens were very successful; others, in places like Elysium and Midjard, weren't so much.

The Fifteenth Century could be said to mark the end of the Middle Ages, since this is when the many and sundry little duchies and republics of Elysium began to show signs of a second great rebirth of culture, a Renaissance. Art, philosophy, magic, and scholarship all saw a great resurgence in this time. Over the next few centuries, authors and artists created the greatest works in history; natural philosophers observed nature and laid the groundwork for modern science; and wizards and sages rediscovered many powerful magical rituals which had been lost since the Third Age. During this time, Arcadians also began to explore the world with sailing ships, laying the foundations for future empires.

In the Eighteenth Century, an Age of Enlightenment took hold and brought true science at last to Arcadia. In this era, humans, gnomes, and goblins finally rediscovered the scientific method, and their ideas gave rise to modern chemistry, physics, biology, and all the other sciences. An inkling of democracy was also born in this era, when the Lemurian Federation sued for independence from Avalon and had their petition (for the most part) granted. The Lemurians came to govern themselves by a set of high ideals: liberty, self-rule, and the equality of all men and fairies. The Lemurian nation came to be greatly admired by many in Arcadia, but it was also a source of worry and







paranoia, since many monarchs feared that it might inspire revolution in their own lands.

This proved all too true in Utopia. In the Thirteenth Century, a dynasty of *älfar* (i.e. Sylvan Elf) kings had succeeded that of Charlemin, and they reigned until the end of the Eighteenth Century, when gnomes, ogres, and humans all rose up to rebel against the elfin King Lénou II. Following a series of bloody civil wars and bureaucratically ineffectual interim governments, power came to rest in the hands of a single gnome by the name of François Biendit—a brilliant general who rose to distinction while fighting for the revolutionaries during the civil war. François still rules Utopia.

Now, in the early decades of the Nineteenth Century, Arcadia is undergoing an Industrial Revolution. Technology is changing life for everybody. The world has become more comfortable and convenient, but also quicker of pace and more impersonal. Many old ways and customs might have even been lost for good, were it not for the exceedingly long memories of the elves, fays, and goblins. The governments of the most powerful states—Avalon, Utopia, and Hesperia—have projected their power around the world and created vast colonial empires on foreign shores. Midjard

and Elysium, meanwhile, are still struggling toward statehood, threatened as they are by the power of Utopia on one side and Sylvania (the seat of a vast, budding land-empire) on the other. As for Illyria, that country has its own entirely different set of problems: more than four centuries ago, it was conquered by Amarna, and it has only lately won its independence from the sultan of that land.

## Religions of Arcadia

One important topic yet to be covered is religion: what are the faiths of Arcadia like? What of its churches and priesthoods and holidays? One fact which must be stressed before anything else is that religion in modern Arcadia is by and large a local affair. There is no single continent-spanning, capital-C “Church” with a pope or a patriarch whose authority extends across national borders. Rather, each individual faith community is only as politically influential as the state or region that backs it. This influence can be considerable in a fully-developed nation-state like Avalon or Hesperia, but it is far less so in (for example) one of the minor principalities of Midjard or Elysia.

### The Old Faith

Long before any humans came to Gaia, the fairy folk practiced their own religion, now known as the “Old Faith” or “Old Ways.” It is a combination of Druidry and Spiritism, particularly veneration of local nature-spirits and the ancestors of one’s own family. It is quite common to hear a demihuman of any kindred, when confronted by great surprise or joy or distress, to swear “by the Spirits” or “by the Ancestors.” (Both phrases mean roughly the same thing to most fairy-folk these days. But it was the case in earlier Ages that the longer-lived fairies, like elves and goblins, put more emphasis on spirit-worship, while shorter-lived fairies, like centaurs and funs, tended to prefer ancestor-veneration.)

The more intellectual practitioners of the Old Faith may very well acknowledge that there could be a Great Spirit or a single cosmic intelligence at the heart of everything. But followers of the Old Ways have little interest in such a being. Anything so vast and distant is unlikely to take notice of mortal goings-on. It is far more practical to make sure that you placate the spirits who are actually watching you. Your ancestors care what you’re doing, and so do the spirits living in the well you draw water from every day, the forest on the edge of your land, and the mountain that looks down over your home.

The priests of the Old Faith are called druids, marked for all by the robes of plain white that they wear. A druid does not necessarily need to be a mage or to have any fair-folk blood, but it is certainly more common to meet a fairy druid than a human one, if only because the Old Faith is more commonly practiced in the north, where there are more fairies than humans. And it is also the case that druids with magic are ranked above members of the order who don’t have it. Properly speaking, a mage is a full druid, while a non-mage is accorded the lesser title of “ovate.”

The druid order as it now exists is believed to have been founded early in the Third Age, by a fay known as Midir of Ailleacht, who wanted to counter the proselytizing of the humans from the south. Midir is something of a mysterious figure to modern fairy folk: history records little about him. Fairies do not regard him as a prophet or any great religious leader, but they respect him simply as a priest who founded a priesthood (the way a real-world Catholic might think of St. Francis or St. Augustine). Some have speculated (though

without evidence – it is a fringe theory only) that Midir may in fact have been another of the many disguises of that famed wandering wizard, none other than Myrddin Ambrosius himself.

Followers of the Old Ways do not build for themselves churches or temples of stone: rather, they gather to worship in natural places – groves, grottos, valleys, caverns. The druids will conduct rites in such places on holy days both to gratify the *genii locorum* and to honor the ancestors. The holiest times of the year to the druids are the equinoxes and the solstices – most especially the solstices – and the Arcadian calendar reflects this, with two weeks set apart from the ordinary progression of the lunar months to mark the summer solstice (Sol), and two more to mark the winter solstice (Yule). Among the fair folk, Sol is a time of somber reflection, penitence, and reverence for the ancestors; while Yule is more of a wild celebration of the natural world and continued life.

Reverence for life is perhaps the central tenet of the Old Faith. Followers are bidden to respect nature, do no harm to others or to the world, and to honor those who have come before. The after-life is referred to simply as the “Spirit World,” and it is believed to be a vaguely ethereal realm from which both the ancestors and the spirits of natural places can watch the physical world of the living. Ancestors must wait in the Spirit World for some indeterminate length of time – maybe hundreds of years – for the opportunity to be reincarnated and live new lives. (True Fae like the Sidhe and the High Elves are immortals and factually known to reincarnate after they die. They even retain the memories of their past lives. So it is little wonder that the lesser fairy-folk have also come to believe in reincarnation. But fairies, like humans, are *not* born into the world with memories of having lived any previous lives. So there is no way to demonstrate the truth of this belief empirically – or at least, not to the satisfaction of any skeptics.)

The Old Faith was on Gaia for thousands of years before any humans ever showed up. It is totally ingrained in fairy society and holds a central place in all the cultures of Arcadia. It has had a strong influence on human religions, which have adopted certain fairy practices (the holidays in particular) and outward trappings. In the north countries especially, humans who wish to get ahead in society have oftentimes been compelled to abandon human religions altogether and follow only the Old Ways.

### Ashavism: The Way of Law

The humans now living on Gaia are descended from those humans who first arrived in Atlantis at the dawn of the Third Age. They built their own civilizations and founded their own religions there, even as they spread out to Amarna and to the Tollan continent, and thence throughout the world. At first, the early human city-states and empires worshipped pantheons of local gods, with each tribe or nation having its own patron deities; but late in the Third Age (although still many centuries before the rise of the Alexandrine Empire), there arose in the land of Edenia Minor (the country between Amarna and Shambala) a new religion, led by a teacher or prophet now only known as “Ashavan,” which means roughly “law-giver” or “truth-bringer.”

Ashavan taught that the universe is a battleground in an eternal war between two cosmic forces, Oromazeus – the supreme God of creation, goodness, light, and Order – and Arimanius – the opposing principle of evil, darkness, destruction, and Chaos. The universe was born from the will of Oromazeus and shall continue for as long as He and His followers can stave off the end times and prevent the final victory of Chaos. According to the Lawgiver’s teachings, mortals can assist in this holy work by adhering to the Law outlined in the sacred text of the religion, the *Asha* (the Book of the Law) and by doing good deeds and avoiding evil deeds throughout one’s life. After death, souls are judged according to how they lived, with the good sent to reside with Oromazeus in Paradise and the wicked sent to torment in the Inferno with Arimanius. Both the good and the wicked souls are destined to fight for the fate of the universe when the end of days arrives, and the eschatology of Ashavism teaches that the side with the larger army when that day comes will win – but the outcome is uncertain, and neither Oromazeus nor Arimanius is guaranteed to triumph in the end.

Some four centuries after the time of Ashavan, the Illyrians under Alexander conquered the lands of Edenia and Amarna. They imposed the Illyrian pantheon on the people of those lands in the usual manner expected of a conquering empire; but in a twist of historic proportions, Alexander, who held himself up as a philosopher-king, took a personal liking to the teachings of the Ashavist faith and incorporated its beliefs into his own. A generation later, one of Alexander’s own younger sons – a

prince named Evander, whose mother had been a princess of Edenia Minor – took up the mantle of a prophet and carried the *Asha* and the Law back to Illyria.

The Ashavist faith spread slowly across the Alexandrine Empire throughout the rest of the Third Age, but it would only really take off in the early part of the Fourth Age, after Dracus and the Elysian Empire took it over. In the First Century of the Fourth Age, another prophet by the name of Mehrus rose to prominence in the eastern part of Edenia. Mehrus was an apocalyptic preacher who warned that the end times were near and encouraged resistance against the Elysians. Mehrus was quickly caught and executed for the crime of inciting unrest, but his followers dispersed into small cults that traveled throughout the Empire, preaching and converting. They taught that Mehrus had become enlightened upon the instant of his death and carried up to Paradise by the right hand of Oromazeus Himself. They carried as their holy symbol the image of Mehrus’ face, youthful and curly-haired, surrounded by radiant sunbeams – the sign of the Unconquered Sun.



Julius Dracus found it politically convenient to proclaim the orthodox form of the Ashavist religion to be the official religion throughout the eastern half of his vast new empire – i.e., the part of it that had once been the Alexandrine Empire, where Ashavism was already widespread. But “the Dragon of Elysium” had no tolerance for the “Mehrusian” cult that might subvert his rule. He

persecuted the Mehrusians relentlessly, as did the second emperor, his son, Octavius Dracus. Even still, the religion continued to spread into the western empire, and there was nothing that the third emperor, Tertian, could do about it. Finally, the fourth of Elysium's early "Good Emperors," Thadrian, became a convert himself and was thereafter known to the Mehrusians as Thadrian the Great. From that point forward, Ashavism – and the Mehrusian sect in particular – became the *de facto* official religion of the all the human lands in the southwest of Arcadia: Hesperia, the south of Utopia, Elysia, and what is now Sylvania. In the east, in Illyria, orthodox Ashavism remains the dominant religion.

This might also have been true of Amarna and Edenia, except that in the Seventh Century of the Fourth Age, yet another religious leader appeared and rose to prominence. A prophetess – Manaat was her name – came to power as a preacher and war-leader among the nomad tribes of Amarna's deserts. Her followers formed a new sect of the Ashavist religion, now called Manaatism, which taught a stricter form of adherence to the Law of *Asha*. This movement very quickly spread across Amarna and Edenia, though it never penetrated into Shambala or Illyria very far. And while there never were, for example, any crusades or wide wars fought between the Mehrusians and the Manaatists on a large scale – certainly nothing that would cause any truly dire ill will between the two sects – the Manaatists did make a rather bold statement to differentiate themselves from the Mehrusians. In opposition to the sign of the Unconquered Sun, they adopted for their own holy symbol a waning crescent moon.

Irrespective of the specific sect – orthodox Ashavist, Mehrusian, or Manaatist – all of these religions have certain things in common. Their followers believe in the cosmology described above, and they worship Oromazeus as the one true God of the Universe. (It is more common for laypersons to refer this deity as God, the Lord, the Creator, or the Lawgiver than to blaspheme by pronouncing the holiest of names aloud.) Likewise, they believe that Arimanius is the proper name of the Archdevil himself, the ultimate source of all Chaos and evil, whose works and minions are to be opposed at any cost.

Priests of all three religions are commonly known as *clerics*, and they are very often scholars



by training. The highest ranks of archclerics will have a variety of different titles, depending on the local culture. In the nations of Arcadia, priests of such eminence are usually known as canons, bishops, prelates, or vicars. It is worth repeating here that each major nation practically always has its own independent hierarchy, usually only beholden to the ruler(s) of that state and not to some higher religious authority.

Ashavism is thoroughly dualistic, teaching that the Lawgiver and the Archfiend are locked for all time in a war waged via intermediaries: angels that serve Oromazeus, devils that serve Arimanius, and mortals who choose to do good or evil. There is no widespread belief in any form of predestination or foreordination: the outcome of the end-times battle is always uncertain and must at always be fought for. Also, despite all three of these religions' heavy emphasis on the idea of Law and Order being equated with justice, truth, and goodness, there is actually very little in the way of moral philosophizing. Following the Law for a follower of Ashavism means adhering to the ritualistic and religious tenets described in the sacred text, the *Asha*; but doing good works in the world is the province of the private individual, the conscience, and free will.

### The Gnostic Reformation

There is a long tradition of philosophy among the humans of Gaia. In the lands of Arcadia, much of it begins with the philosopher-king, Alexander, who believed in a school of “Formal Idealism,” which holds that the physical world is a flawed illusion, a reflection of higher Mind or Form, and that the true reality must be those perfect absolutes which can only ever exist as pure thought. In a later Age, a philosopher by the name of Cenico, who served Julius Dracus and tutored the young Octavius, promoted Rational Empiricism, which argues that truth is best discovered by using reason and the senses. Cenico’s philosophy, derived from the idea that the truth can be known from observation and experience, wasn’t terribly popular in its day and was all but lost after the fall of the Elysian Empire.

The next major development that rocked philosophy and religion in Arcadia took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in the city of Friedvoll, in the kingdom of Dreiseen in central Midjard. There, a group of scholars came together to form a “Society of Freethinkers,” which aimed to rethink both modern religion and classical philosophy (and perhaps to merge the twain). The leader of the Society, a laconic and acerbic old scholar named Erasmus Kirke, began to teach a new philosophy which has come to be known (depending on who you ask) as either the Gnostic Reformation or the Gnostic Heresy.

Kirke believed that the Ashavists had gotten everything all mixed up – that the early followers of the Lawgiver had been blinded by their faith and unable to see what seemed painfully obvious to him. The world is full of evil, he taught; it is fallen and imperfect. Therefore, it cannot be the creation of a perfectly good God. Rather, the physical universe must be the work of a Demiurge who is himself imperfect or ignorant or possibly even malevolent; and the true, benevolent God must be distant or inaccessible. The only way to find out, Kirke surmised, was to study everything: study the world, magic, angels, demons, anything and everything that might help answer his questions about the true nature of the divine. A full century before the Scientific Revolution, Kirke and the Freethought Society brought about a Reformation: they embarked upon the world’s first project to study magic and divinity empirically.

Their studies led them into all manner of esotericism: hermetic magic, numerology, searching

for secret knowledge within the very text of the *Asha*, golem-crafting, and alchemy. Traditional Ashavists and Mehrusians sneered derisively at these “Kirkean” knowledge-seekers, but the Freethinkers preferred to call themselves “Gnostics” after the very knowledge that they sought.

There are two major differences between the Gnostic and the earlier forms of the Ashavist faith, one theological and the other something of an accident of geography and politics. First, because the characteristics (or even the very existence) of God cannot be demonstrated empirically, the Gnostics tend to place a greater focus on lesser spirits, the angels and the demons and even the nature spirits and ancestors revered by the Old Faith. Gnostics collectively refer to all of these different spirits as “Æons.” They have invented more than a few elaborate systems for counting, ranking, and classifying Æons; but they mostly all agree on the notion that the top-ranked Æons (what an Ashavist would call archangels) number seven and oversee different aspects of reality: mind, truth, justice, matter, magic, and so forth. Secondly, the Gnostics took the opportunity in founding a new human religion to incorporate several widespread fairy customs, including an emphasis on ancestral and nature spirits and many of the druidical trappings of Old Ways. This turned out to be quite the political expedient, both for the sake of winning fairy converts and for making their practices more socially acceptable in those northern countries where the Reformation first took place (namely, Midjard and Asgard). It is almost needless to say at this point that the Gnostic faith is not terribly popular in southern Arcadia; but it has found great favor in the Republics of Lemuria.

Gnostics generally eschew the elaborate trappings of priests and fancifully decorated temples, favoring instead simple stone meeting-houses or lodges and a slightly more egalitarian atmosphere. Gnostic priests are called “masons” and they use as their holy symbol a draftsman’s compass, to symbolize the intellectual work that must go into acquiring true knowledge. Their teachings emphasize two main behaviors: the search for true knowledge, both practical and spiritual, through study and introspection; and avoiding the sins and evils of the world through self-restraint and self-discipline. These two tenets have conspired to lend to the Gnostics a reputation for strictness and asceticism that may not be wholly deserved, but which is widespread nonetheless.

### Minor Cults

In case it has not yet been made clear, religion in Arcadia is anything but monolithic. The major religions described above are widespread and backed by the secular governments in nations where they are entrenched. But there also exist innumerable minor cults throughout the whole of the continent. Religious practice in Arcadia is highly varied and idiosyncratic, and the average Arcadian probably doesn't think it very strange if the neighbors down the street start worshipping some new god that nobody they know has ever heard of before.

## The Arcadian Calendar

Gaia may be a different world from ours, but its cultures and its history are coincidentally similar. On that account, there is little reason to deal in fictional names for the months of the year and the days of the week. Instead, presume that the so-called "translation convention" is active and in full force. Just as the players gathered around the table will speak in English and not Avalonian, the

ordinary words for days and dates can be used throughout the progression of a campaign.

Thus, even though a week in the real world has seven days because the ancients were able to see seven visible celestial bodies in the night sky (five planets, the sun, and the moon), and Gaia's sky has eight such bodies on account of its second moon, a week on Gaia is still only seven days long. There is no day of in a Gaian week to represent the moon Selene (but if it really bugs you, you can imagine that Monday on Gaia was once originally called *Moons' Day*). Likewise, even though there was never an Emperor Augustus in Elysium, the eighth month of the year might as well be called August. It's merely an expedient simplification, meant to make playing in the setting easier to deal with.

The Gaia setting does make use of the lunar calendar found in the back of the *E&E Core Rules*. In keeping with fairy custom, there are two intercalary or "half-month" periods, each lasting for the two weeks leading up to the solstices: Sol in the summer and Yule in the winter. Even the humans in the south follow this custom, though they term the winter festival "Noël" and dedicate the time to celebrating the birth of Mehrus. A copy this calendar has been placed on the following page; it has been revised so that it gives the lunar phases of both Phoebe *and* Selene.

## Arcadian Currency

One final note of interest: the currencies of Arcadia go by many names – crowns, marks, florins, shields, pounds, and too many others to even begin to count – but with most of the trade and finance having long been the particular specialty of the Guildermen of southern Asgard, their own currency has become the international standard. They use the **iron bit** (i.B.), the **copper guilder** (c.G.), the **silver thaler** (s.Th.), and the **gold ducat** (g.D.) for their accounts. Of course, in the cities and towns of Arcadia, paper currency for the larger denominations is just as common as metallic coinage, if not more so.



# REFEREE'S LUNAR CALENDAR

In each column, the lunar phases for Phoebe (Gaia's near moon) are given to the right of the days with no extra markings, while the phases for Selene (Gaia's far moon) are on the left of each column and are underlined.

JAN		FEB		MAR		APR		MAY		JUN		SOL	
1	Sun ● v3	1	Sun ●	1	Sun ●	1	Sun ●	1 ☾ Sun ●	1	Sun ●	1	Sun ●	
2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon
3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue
4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed
5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu
6	Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	6 ☾ Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	
7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat
8	Sun ☾	8	Sun ☾	8	Sun ☾	8	Sun ☾ ☽	8	Sun ☾	8	Sun ☾	8	Sun ☾
9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon
10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue
11	Wed	11	Wed	11 ● Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	
12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu
13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	☾ Fri
14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat
15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾	15	Sun ☾
16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon
17	Tue	17 ☽ Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	
18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18 ● Wed	18	Wed	
19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu
20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri
21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat
22	☾ Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽
23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon
24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24 ☽ Tue	24	Tue	
25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed
26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu
27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri
28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat

Sol is an intercalary month leading up to the Summer Solstice (☽), set between June and July.

“☽” marks the Spring Equinox.

JUL		AUG		SEP		OCT		NOV		DEC		YUL	
1	Sun ☽ v3	1	Sun ☽	1	Sun ☽	1	Sun ☽	1 ☾ Sun ☽	1	Sun ☽	1	Sun ☽	
2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon	2	Mon
3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue	3	Tue
4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed	4	Wed
5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu	5	Thu
6	Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	6 ☽ Fri	6	Fri	6	Fri	
7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat	7	Sat
8	Sun ☽	8	Sun ☽	8	Sun ☽	8	Sun ☽ ☽	8	Sun ☽	8	Sun ☽	8	Sun ☽
9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon	9	Mon
10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue	10	Tue
11	Wed	11	Wed	11 ● Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	11	Wed	
12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu	12	Thu
13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	Fri	13	☽ Fri
14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat	14	Sat
15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽	15	Sun ☽
16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon	16	Mon
17	Tue	17 ☽ Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	17	Tue	
18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18	Wed	18 ● Wed	18	Wed	
19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu	19	Thu
20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri	20	Fri
21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat	21	Sat
22	☽ Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽	22	Sun ☽
23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon	23	Mon
24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24	Tue	24 ☽ Tue	24	Tue	
25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed	25	Wed
26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu	26	Thu
27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri	27	Fri
28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat	28	Sat

Yule is an intercalary month leading up to the Winter Solstice (v3), set between June and July.

“☽” marks the Fall Equinox.



# PART THREE:

## NATIONS OF ARCADIA

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**N**OW OUR ATTENTION must turn to the lands of Arcadia and to all the nations that make up this remarkable subcontinent. There are ten countries to be found in Arcadia: Asgard, Avalon, Elysia, Hesperia, Illyria, Midjard, Pohjola, Sylvania, Tirnanog, and Utopia.

### ASGARD

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Asgard is Arcadia's largest country but also its sparsest in population. Much of Asgard is still wilderness, chiefly forest and tundra. The northernmost reaches of Asgard are sometimes called the "Frozen North": these latitudes never thaw. That region sees midnight suns in the summers and noontime darkness in the winters. Elsewhere, great mountain ranges stretch across the rough and wild country: the Jærnbekkes divide those northerly tundra regions from the forests that cover the rest of the land; and the Englenfjærs run from the southwest to the northeast, bisecting the central regions with a high and jagged range of mineral-rich peaks. The Chernobogs bound the country on the east, separating Asgard from the 'spawn-occupied territories of Tuonela.

The dominant kindreds in much of Asgard are the *gruwrår* (goblins) and the *ûrkō* (ogres). Only these folk have been hardy enough to withstand

her rough terrains and climes, and they have done so since their arrival on Gaia at the dawn of the First Age of the world. Asgard is held to be the ancestral homeland of all Gaia's goblins (whereas the nomadic ogres have wandered further afield down through the millennia, into Pohjola and Tuonela and even Utopia). But other kindreds dwell in Asgard too, and humans are particularly well-represented in the southwest of the country, along the Guilden Coast. Gnomes and elves live among the goblin-folk, in the mountains and the forests; and merrow-folk dwell in great numbers in the shallows along all of the coastlines, most especially in the waters of the great Fenrir Bay. But regardless of kindred, all the people of Asgard are ruled by the King-Under-the-Mountain, the lord of the goblins who dwells in the ancient and storied city of Nidhavellir (or "Niðavellir," as it is usually spelled locally). This also includes the lesser goblin-kings, each of whom rules their own separate mountain-holts; and the human burgo-masters of the Guilden cities.

The language of Asgard is called *Asgartsk*, also commonly rendered as "Asgardish." It is descended directly from the Old Goblisch tongue, which was spoken by the goblins in past Ages of the world. Other folk living in Asgard, including the Guildermen and the merrows of Fenrir Bay, speak in their own dialects of Asgardish. Linguis-

tically, the goblins' tongue was closely related to that of the Wood Elves, and so modern Asgardish is very similar to its close relative, Midjardisch.

Asgard's goblins are first of all miners and soldiers, of course, but every other pursuit – notably hunting, trapping, fishing, and logging – is vital to their economy. The gnomes, elves, and merrows dwell among the goblins in significant numbers, with the gnomes and goblins being nearly equal in terms of engineering knowledge. Asgard's elves are expert at forestry, and the merrows at seacraft. A sort of centuries-old symbiosis has grown between these fairy-folk, traditions that the goblins consider sacrosanct. The humans, meanwhile, are primarily traders, sailors, or (in partnership with the goblins) financiers. The humans' homes along the Guilden Coast grant them easy access to some of the best shipping lanes in the region, with their most conspicuous contribution to Arcadia at large having been their stable currency, the guilder. In fact, guilders are even more widely-circulated in Asgard than the goblins' own native currency, the krøne (crown).

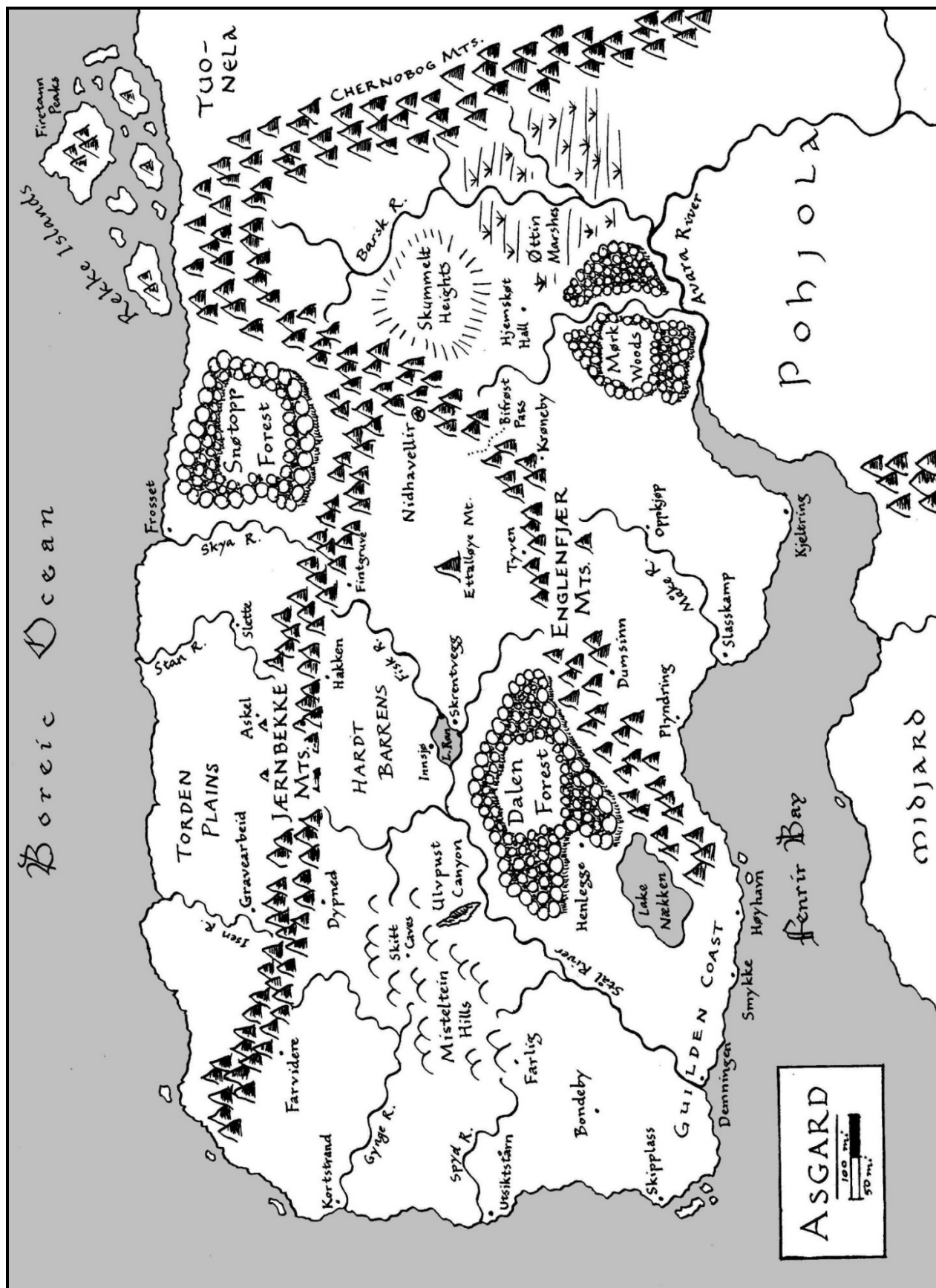
The Kingdom of Asgard first began with the coming of the goblins into Gaia, at the twilight of the First Age. During the war between the Great Alliance and the Four Fiends, the Lich-King Namtar had given his northernmost stronghold over to one of his underlings, some Infernal creature whose name has been forgotten by history. This diabolical entity filled the mountains of the northlands with all manner of shadowkind, undead, and devilry, and this army of evil terrorized everything within reach. But the goblins, led by the great Goblin Lord Dvalinn Járnhamarr the First, swept into the land of Asgard and drove out all the 'spawn. With help from the Alliance – from the elves and the storied Sidhe wizard Myrddin – the mysterious fiendish Power that drove the shadowspawn forth was cast back into the depths and sealed away. The goblins went deep into the mountains and blocked off the passages that led to the Deep-Under, whence the skavers and gruuchs and trolls and such had welled up from. Then they expanded the upper tunnels, and they strengthened and beautified them (for, as Chaos rots the earth from within, so does the great skill of the goblins heal and improve it). Dvalinn Járnhamarr took for himself the former Fiend fortress, and he remade it into a goblin-holt. This place came to be called Niðavellir, and Lord Dvalinn ruled there as King-Under-the-Mountain. Thus

was born the Kingdom of Asgard.

All throughout the Second Age, the goblins kept up their ceaseless war with the Chaos-spawn. Though the power of the Four Fiends had been broken, the 'spawn themselves remained a formidable force in their own right – especially in the Deep-Under beneath the surface of Asgard, and also in the Chernobogs and in that cursed land called Tuonela. Old King Dvalinn was slain in the early 'Spawn Wars of the Second Age, but one of his descendants always lived to take up the crown. In those days, while the Járnhamarr kings still ruled, the elves who dwelt in neighboring lands were close allies to the goblins and always ready foes of the shadowspawn.

But the Second Age was also the Age of Elvendom, when a mighty Elfin Empire arose in Avalon. The goblins were always sorely pressed by monsters from below; and eventually, it came to pass that Asgard relied on Avalon more and more for aid and defense. In time, the goblin-kingdom owed a debt so heavy that it became a province in all but name, and the power of Old Dvalinn's crown became dependent on Avalon's imperial authority. Over the centuries, the goblins came to chafe and grumble at having to pay tribute to their elfin neighbors over old wars long since fought and old alliances long since honored. In those days, near the end of the Second Age, the king was called Andvari Járnhamarr, and he was but a pale shadow of his ancestor, First Dvalinn. It was Andvari who allowed Asgard's weakness to fester, simply because it was easy to rely on the elves. All the while, the might of Avalon kept him in power over his fellow goblins.

Then came the Time of the Hero, when the one called the Urther, the first human, appeared on Gaia. The Urther made a dire enemy of Avalon, and so he also became an enemy of King Andvari. When the Hero's travels brought him through Asgard, the shrewd but cowardly king of the goblins pretended friendship, all the while plotting murder. But the poisoning plots and assassination attempts all failed, and the Urther eventually brought about Avalon's fall. When this happened, Andvari also lost power in Asgard, and the throne of the goblin-kingdom came to rest upon the head of none other than a traveling companion of the Urther's, a wise warrior-goblin named Ørjan Thrymjabrandr. King Ørjan ruled well, and he brought his people into the Third Age with renewed strength and courage.



After the fall of Meliora (the elfin empress of Avalon), the fays returned to that land; and one of their number, Morrigan, became the new queen there. Morrigan shared a cordial friendship with King Ørjan of Asgard, but as the Third Age wore on, Ørjan's descendants became wary of repeating past mistakes. Later kings in the Thrymjabrandr line, acceding to the will of their goblin subjects, withdrew from the world and guarded the shorelines and borders of Asgard jealously. They allied with nobody, not even with the elves of Midjard and Pohjola, who had never mistreated them. They refused to trade with the human civilizations that arose in the far south, ever keeping their finely wrought arms and armors to themselves. (Even in those days, when men first came into the world, the secrets of goblin smithcraft were much prized and sought-after.) It was only near the end of that Age, when High Priest Apophis of Mephret joined with the shadowspawn of Tuonela and summoned vile Namtar back into the world, that the goblins of Asgard were finally so threatened that they once again opened up to the world. Spurred by the reappearance of Myrddin of old, they joined the Second Great Alliance, although they were the last to do so—and they fought most bravely in the war that ended that Age. But when it was over, Asgard, like much of Arcadia, was ruined. The kingdom was plunged into an age of want and ignorance.

The rise of Elysium in the south marked the dawn of the Fourth Age. During this time, humans arrived in Asgard and settled along the Guilden Coast. These people practiced the way of "viking," i.e. seasonal sea-voyages to trade and raid and pillage other coasts. Although they were wary of each other at first, the goblins and humans soon came to understand each other, and their cultures became strongly integrated. Nowadays, the idea of an Asgard *without* the Guildermen is all but inconceivable.

The Thrymjabrandr kings died out during the Second Great War at the end of the Third Age; so at the beginning of the Fourth, Asgard was divided and leaderless. The goblin clans warred with each other, they warred with the newly arrived humans, and they warred with neighboring elves and gnomes. Indeed, it seems that the only people the goblins didn't fight with in those days were the 'spawn, and that was because those had all but disappeared after the end of the Second Great War. Mogrels and gruuchs and such became the

stuff of old legends, and so did the notion of a unified Kingdom of Asgard that paid homage as one to the King-Under-the-Mountain. It was a long, slow road to travel to restore Asgard back to civilization and the glory of old—but at last it did happen, around the year 1520 of the Fourth Age. All throughout the medieval period of the Fourth Age, numerous lords, chieftains, and petty kings vied for supreme power. But in the 1520s, a goblin-lord named Olaf Hreimdar was crowned monarch over all of Asgard and came to rule at Nidhavellir. For the first time in sixteen centuries, Asgard was once again united under a single monarch. The 16<sup>th</sup> Century saw the beginning the modern-day Kingdom of Asgard. Olaf's descendant, King Gustav Hreimdar, rules Asgard now.

Modern Asgard faces many hurdles. Asgard's people are generally technophilic and quickly adapt to the newest inventions. The goblins are quite keen on railroads and telegraph wires, and only the northernmost reaches of the country (mostly ogre territory) still lack both. Domestically, Asgard is firmly a monarchy, but its people tend to be forward-thinking and open to new ideas. A more democratic form of constitutional monarchy might very well sit on the immediate horizon. Internationally, Asgard's closest allies remain Midjard, Phojola, and Avalon. However, just as it was in ancient times, Avalon is now a powerful empire, and that alliance tends to be somewhat one-sided. (Queen Maeve has ruled Avalon for as long as the whole line of Hreimdar kings has ruled Asgard, after all.) The country of Utopia has a somewhat brazenly antagonistic relationship with Asgard: indeed, if Emperor François ever thought that he could conquer the goblins without incurring Avalon's swift wrath, he would probably try to do so at once. Worst of all, though, is Tuonela. The shadowspawn and trolls and fouler things mostly vanished from the world following the end of the Third Age. But late in the Fourth Age—in the 1500s to be precise, just as the Renaissance was taking hold in Arcadia—dark, Chaotic things began creeping back into the world. It started small, with isolated pockets of skavers or mogrels hiding away in holes and caves; but the rumblings in the East have grown stronger in recent centuries, and now it seems as if the Deep-Under is ready to burst open once again. The Hordes of Chaos have spewed forth from their holes and reappeared in Tuonela, and they are multiplying. Nothing concerns the people of

Asgard more than this fact, for they know all too well that their own land is connected to the Deep-Under by tunnels and passages too numerous to count. If some dark Power unites the shadowspawn and sends them forth to do battle, Asgard will be the first front in a Third Great War.

**Dalen Forest:** This vast tract of woodland is wild, but it is not especially monster-infested. Attercops and giant wood spiders dwell in some of the darker parts of it, but for the most part Sylvan Elves and arachnes live in these woods. The humans of Henlegge freely harvest timber for sale to the goblins. Legends persist of a huge monster of some kind, perhaps a giant or a dragon, that sleeps in perpetuity beneath Dalen Forest.

**Englenfjær Mountains:** Not as blessed with mineral wealth as the Jærnbekkes, the goblins abandoned most of the Englenfjær mines many centuries ago. The cities that remain here have been overtaken by humans, with the exception of Krøneby, which is an important fortress (and a second palace) for Goblin King Gustav. The Bif-røst Pass, which is the quickest way between Niðavellir and Krøneby, is frequently snowed in and must be cleared out in the wintertime; it is the storied site of many ancient battles. The cities of Tyven and Dumsinn are some of the roughest in all of Asgard, populated mainly by humans and all but run by their respective thieves' guilds.

**Ettaløye Mountain:** There are no goblins living in the stronghold of Ettaløye. This is the home of the Valkyr, a warlike tribe of harpies who long ago delved their city – Valhalla – deep into this lonely mountain. The Valkyr are said to call their home the Holy City Valhalla; goblins name it the Hidden City, and few indeed are the outsiders who have ever set eyes upon it. The Valkyr keep to themselves, allying with no one and paying no heed to events that transpire in the outside world.

**Fenrir Bay:** Friendly merrows live in the shallows of the Fenrir, and those that make their homes off the coast of Asgard consider themselves to be Asgardish. The cities of Plyndring and Kjeltring also have large numbers of merrows who live on dry land. Plyndring is an old human city, once home to fierce pillagers and pirates, but now a quiet fishing port. Kjeltring, meanwhile, still houses the Order of the Bågskyttar, an ancient fraternity of warrior elves and merfolk who make it their purpose to guard the coast from ill-intentioned interlopers.

**Guilden Coast:** The Guilderlands include everything south of the Spyd River and west of the Dalen Forest and the Englenfjær. The city of Bondeby is a central market-city, surrounded by pleasant farmlands and numberless sleepy villages. Høyhavn, Smykke, and Demningen are all bustling ports. Demningen, on the mouth of the Stål River, is famous for trading the diamonds that come all the way south from the Jærnbekkes. Skipplass is where the Guildermen's primary shipyards can be found, and Utsiktstårn is a city where humans and goblins have joint control over shipping and trading rights.

**Hjemskøt Hall:** This lonesome city has been the site of generations of tragedy. In times past, attacks from monsters – the great rock-trolls of the Øttin Marshes, the ghouls of the Mørk Woods, and scheming draugr and risr warlocks – have nearly destroyed Hjemskøt. Rumors persist to this day that the place is cursed. An old and very aristocratic family of goblins, the Hjemskøtr, still dwell in their ancestral hall there.

**Jærnbekke Mountains:** This range is said to be the great jewel on the crown of Asgard. The mineral wealth to be found here – in gems, iron, gold, silversteel, and orichalc – is unfathomable. Unfortunately, the deeper that anyone digs, the greater they run the risk of breaching the Deep-Under and unleashing a tide of shadowspawn and demons. Fintgruve, Hakken, and Askel are primarily known for their metal mines (mostly iron, tin, and copper; some silver, gold, and rarer metals); and Dypned, Gravearbeid, and Farvidere for gemstones.

**Lake Nækken:** This lake is perhaps one of the most dangerous places in all of Asgard. Nobody really knows exactly what dwells beneath its placid surface. But people who come here have a tendency to disappear mysteriously, a fact which has defied explanation for millennia.

**Lake Ran:** The Fisk River, which flows down out of the Jærnbekkes, empties into Lake Ran via its mightily roaring waterfalls. Merrows dwell within the lake, and goblins inhabit the lakeshore towns of Innsjø and Skrentvegg. Of these two towns, Skrentvegg has always been the more prosperous, if only because of Innsjø's violent history. Multiple times in the past, Innsjø has been destroyed utterly by dragon-fire – whenever it has come to pass that some raging red-scaled drake or another has come sweeping down out of the

Hardt Barrens—only to be rebuilt over the ashes of the old town. Since this hasn't happened in nearly four-hundred years, though, the folk of Innsjø have grown lax in their vigilance, and most would be skeptical that any danger still exists.

**Nidhavellir:** Though it began as a 'spawn-fortress and a base for the Fiends' attacks on the Sidhe late in the First Age, the goblins quickly took this stronghold for themselves and remade it into a glorious hall-under-the-mountain. For close to twelve millennia, Niðavellir has been the center of goblin-dom on Gaia. To this day, the city beneath is said to be the most beautiful goblin-palace in the world, a glorious fortress of sparkling jewels and rainbow-polished stones. It makes a fitting home for the reigning monarch of Asgard, King Gustav Hreimdar.

**Misteltein Hills:** These hills are said to be haunted by shadowspawn which have broken through to the surface-world through the Skitt Caves (a network of natural caverns and long-abandoned mineshafts which are little more than gravel pits now). The 'spawn are a constant threat to the city of Farlig, and by extension, to trade in Utsiktstårn and Kortstrand.

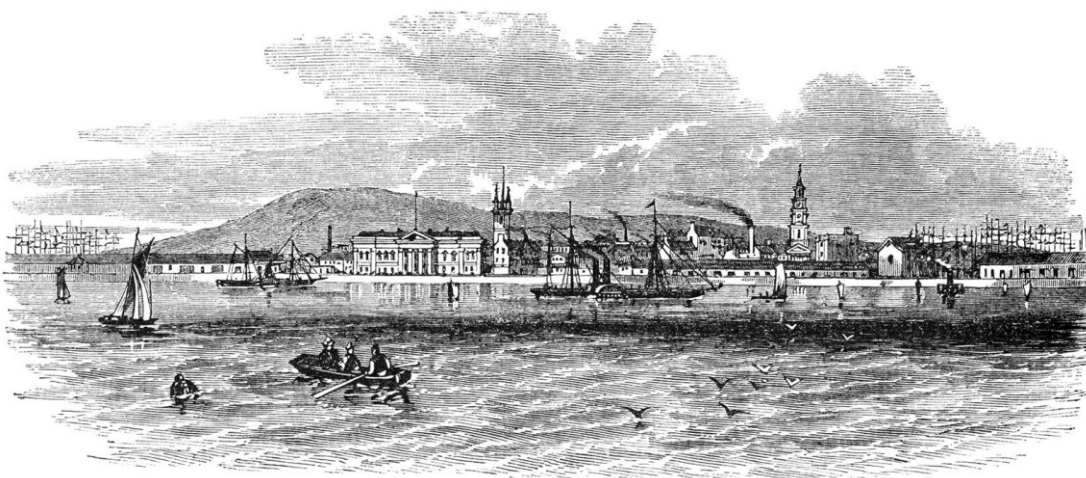
**Rekke Islands:** These far northerly islands are sometimes connected to the mainland by ice shelves. They are barren and inhospitable, because the Firetann Peaks are actively volcanic. Only an especially barbaric and warlike breed of hill gigas is known to dwell here year-round; though it is the case that ogres from Torden will sail this way in the summertime on whaling expeditions.

**Snøtopp Forest:** These coniferous woods thrive in the coldest reaches of Asgard's northlands. They are believed to be protected by snow sprites and ice nymphs.

**Skummelt Heights:** This is an elevated, barren wasteland with no known inhabitants. The Heights overlook the marshy Barsk River valley, which flows through the Øttin Marshes and empties into the mighty Avara.

**Torden Plains:** In the summertime, this tundra teems with wildlife and blooms with wildflowers. In the winter, the marshy and muddy ground becomes permafrost, and cold, dry winds bring harsh lightning storms to the plains. Ogres of five tribes—Bear, Wolf, Eagle, Cat, and Serpent—have lived and hunted on these plains since the end of the First Age. There are only two permanent settlements here: Frosset, a village of men and goblins eking out a perilous and meager existence based mostly on fishing and walrus-hunting; and Slette, an ancient stone forest where the ogre clans' chieftains gather to hold moot and to teach the children of chiefs and shamans how best to follow the old ways.

**Ulvpust Canyon:** Perhaps the oddest natural feature in all of Asgard, the Ulvpust (i.e. "Wolfsbreath") Canyon is constantly blowing with chilly, violent, howling winds—well in excess of hurricane force—which appear to come from deep beneath the very earth. The inner walls of the canyon are lined with myriad caves, but none have ever explored them and lived to tell about it, first and foremost because nobody has ever successfully managed to conquer the strange, supernatural winds and descend into the canyon. (A local legend dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century does, however, speak of a strange, purple-skinned man who was found unconscious near the canyon one day; this man claimed to have come from the planet Ares and had somehow traveled between the two worlds via the canyon.)



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## AVALON

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Avalon is a large island positioned less than two-hundred miles off the northwestern coast of Arcadia. Surrounded by tall cliffs and covered by forests, fens, and highlands, Avalon is a rugged country but by no means an inhospitable one. The south is home to gentle meadows and still, glassy lakes. The north half of the island, by contrast, is dominated by mountains, misty bogs, and rocky wilderness. Three mountain ranges – the Tynged, the Ffawd and the Cysgod – stretch across the landscape of Avalon and divide the pleasanter south from the rougher north.

Avalon's people are many and varied, but the history of the island has chiefly been determined by fays, elves, and men. The Sidhe were the first inhabitants of Avalon, and it was here that they built the first great civilization seen on Gaia since the departure of the Ancients. But the Sidhe kingdom was built with sorcery, and by sorcery it fell – at the hands of villainous wizard Namtar and the ravages of his Fiends. Then the elves came out of the east, from the mainland, and they overtook the island. More warlike than the Sidhe that preceded them, the elves built a vast empire from their capital at Annwn (called *Annüven* by the elves of old). But the elves ruled that empire with a heavy hand, and then the Hero – the legendary Urther – came into the world, and it was he who led the rebellion that broke the power of the elves. In the wake of the Elfin Empire's defeat, the fays – the last descendants of the fallen Sidhe – at last returned to rule their homeland of old. But the past glory of Annwn waned to nothing, and the island kingdom fell into darkness and ruin. Not long thereafter, humans from Elysium arrived. The coming of humans changed Avalon forever, spurring both its imperial ambitions and its technological advancement into the modern age.

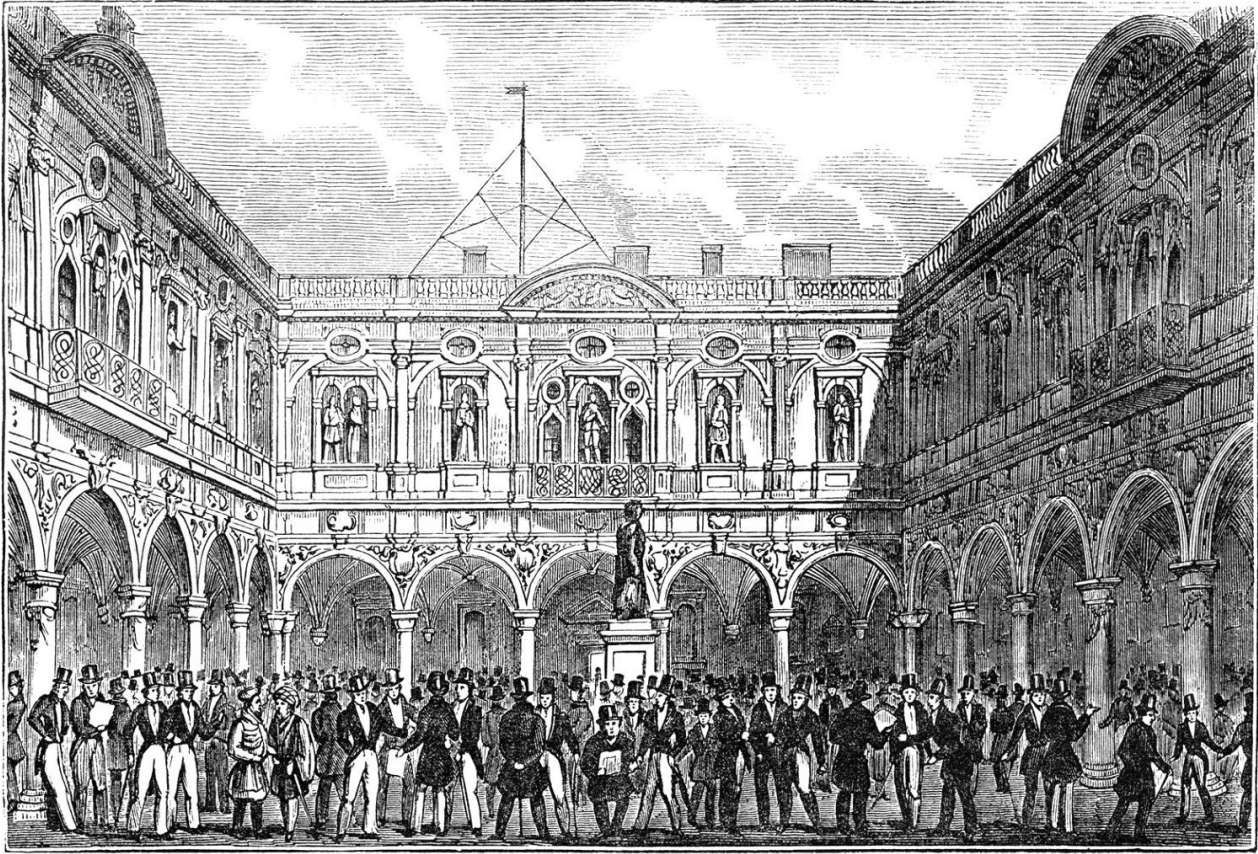
The Avalonian language, as befits the history of the island, is something of a hodgepodge – a pidgin of the tongues spoken by Avalon's chief inhabitants. Most of the places in Avalon still bear their ancient names, which are given in the Old Sidhe speech. But the present-day Avalonian language is actually descended from a dialect of Midjardisch, since it is from Midjard that the Wood Elves came when they first conquered and deposed the fays. Finally, the humans, who came from southern Arcadia, brought with them a cer-

tain dialect of Cælestine (that was the old Common Tongue of the men of the south) which has had a profound and transforming influence on the tongue of Avalon. In short, Avalonian has come from a melding of the Midjardisch and Cælestine languages, with the major place-names and a few common words kept from the Old Sidhe.

By now, it should be readily apparent to the gentle Player that the history of Avalon is linked closely with the counting of Gaia's Ages. Many of the events which have marked the twilight of one Age and the dawn of the next have transpired on this most celebrated of all islands. The First Great War with Namtar's Fiends, a tale already recounted in the previous chapter, began in Avalon. In the aftermath of that war, when the elves came here from the mainland and drove the Sidhe into the Uttermost West, they took Avalon for their own and made it the seat of their new kingdom. So began the Second Age and the ascendancy of Elvendom, when a dynasty of High Elf kings – descendants of Nimuël, the warrior-queen who helped Myrddin seal away the Four Fiends – then began to project their military power back onto the Arcadian mainland. The Second Age saw the whole north of Arcadia – Asgard, Midjard, Tiranog, and Utopia – come under the sway of Avalon, whether directly by force or indirectly via its political machinations. By the end of the Age, when Elf-Queen Meliora came to power, the old Avalon was at the peak of its imperial might.

The Urther, it is said, first appeared in Gaia when he mysteriously and inexplicably walked out of the mists of the Cynoswr Coedwig, the Great Forest of the Ancients. Legends say that the Urther came upon a battle between knights in the service of Meliora and a ragtag group of rebels gathered from throughout the empire. For reasons now forgotten by history, the Urther sided with the rebels and accompanied them to their hideout in the Caves of Diasbad. After that, fleeing from the pursuit of Meliora's knights, they escaped by flying over the Dysic Ocean in an airship and visited Lemuria and Tollan – where they met the exiled fays, whom they then brought back to Arcadia. After several years' travel on the Arcadian mainland, the Urther finally brought an allied force to Avalon that dethroned cruel Meliora and ended the Elfin Empire. Then... the Urther simply disappeared; and a wise fay-woman by the name of Morrigan became Queen in Avalon.





Following those events, Avalon was a shadow of its past self. Broken by war, the kingdom was weak, and the Lady Morrigan was a soft-hearted queen. Perhaps she was too soft-hearted to rule a kingdom which had just lost its empire and which still incurred the resentment of all Arcadia. But to her credit, Morrigan did manage to hold the kingdom together, and her descendants ruled Avalon as it was slowly rebuilt over the course of the Third Age—the Age when men came into the world in great numbers and rose to power in the far south.

Avalon, during this time, had much healing to do. For as long as the Elvish Empire had lasted, there had been three classes of citizens in Avalon: *eldar* (High Elves) on top, *älfar* (Sylvan Elves) in the middle, and everybody else very much on the bottom. Goblins still bore some nominal respect in that era, if only because Asgard was technically an ally and not a province; but *háin* (leprechauns) and centaurs were little better than bonded serfs, and fays—still blamed for the First Great War—were actually murdered on sight. The Third Age, then, brought a radical change, since the fays re-

turned to Avalon and lived openly there, and one of them even sat upon in the throne. The *háin* regained independence for their beloved Tirnanog and severed ties with Avalon, hoping to rule themselves again at last, as they had done before the days of the Empire. And as for the centaurs, they too were declared free of all obligations to the crown. But they remained on the bottom rungs of Avalonian society; and history has a tendency to repeat itself. For the rest of Arcadia, the Third Age was tumultuous, especially with the Second Great War raging on the mainland. Avalon was little touched by this war, except for the fact that large numbers of human refugees were driven to her shores to escape the onslaught of Apophis and the reborn Namtar. By the time they arrived, Avalon had developed a rigid social hierarchy based on kindred, with fays the ruling class (royals and nobles), *älfar* the middle class (the landed gentry), and everybody else in servitude. The human immigrants fell into this last category.

So the Third Age came and went, human empires rising and falling in the south, little affecting Avalon. But then Elysium came to power, and the

Fourth Age began. The armies of Julius Dracus spread over the land, unstoppable. Northward they marched, taking Utopia, and then fighting on the borders of Midjard. Eventually, they came to the shores of Avalon. Over the course of decades, the Elysians took much of the island, though they never managed to win any territory north of the Ffawd Mountains. Many humans and centaurs living in Avalon welcomed the Elysians as liberators, and they fought for Dracus's side as mercenaries against the old order of elves and fays.

The kingdom of Avalon and the rule of the fays had to retreat north of the mountains, where it existed in a diminished state for as long as the human foreigners remained. But the lives and memories of the fays are long, and when the Elysian Empire eventually pulled out of Avalon (which it had to do, to consolidate its defenses on the mainland), the fay rulers, exiled from Annwn for upwards of four centuries, returned and resumed their rule as if nothing had happened. In those days, there came to be a new king in Avalon, a fay descended from Morrigan, whose name was King Agravain. When he returned to Annwn, he had the personal ambition to unmake all the changes wrought upon the land by the Elysian invaders and even to restore Avalon to the heights of power that it had enjoyed under High Elvish rule. King Agravain is still remembered fondly in modern Avalon as the founder of the nation, since he began the process of uniting the sundered kingdom into a single state. Nevertheless, this king reinstated many of the policies which had made the Elfin Empire hated: he reconquered Tirnanog and brought the háin under the authority of the Avalonian crown. He treated humans and centaurs as peasants, allowing only elves and fays to own land.

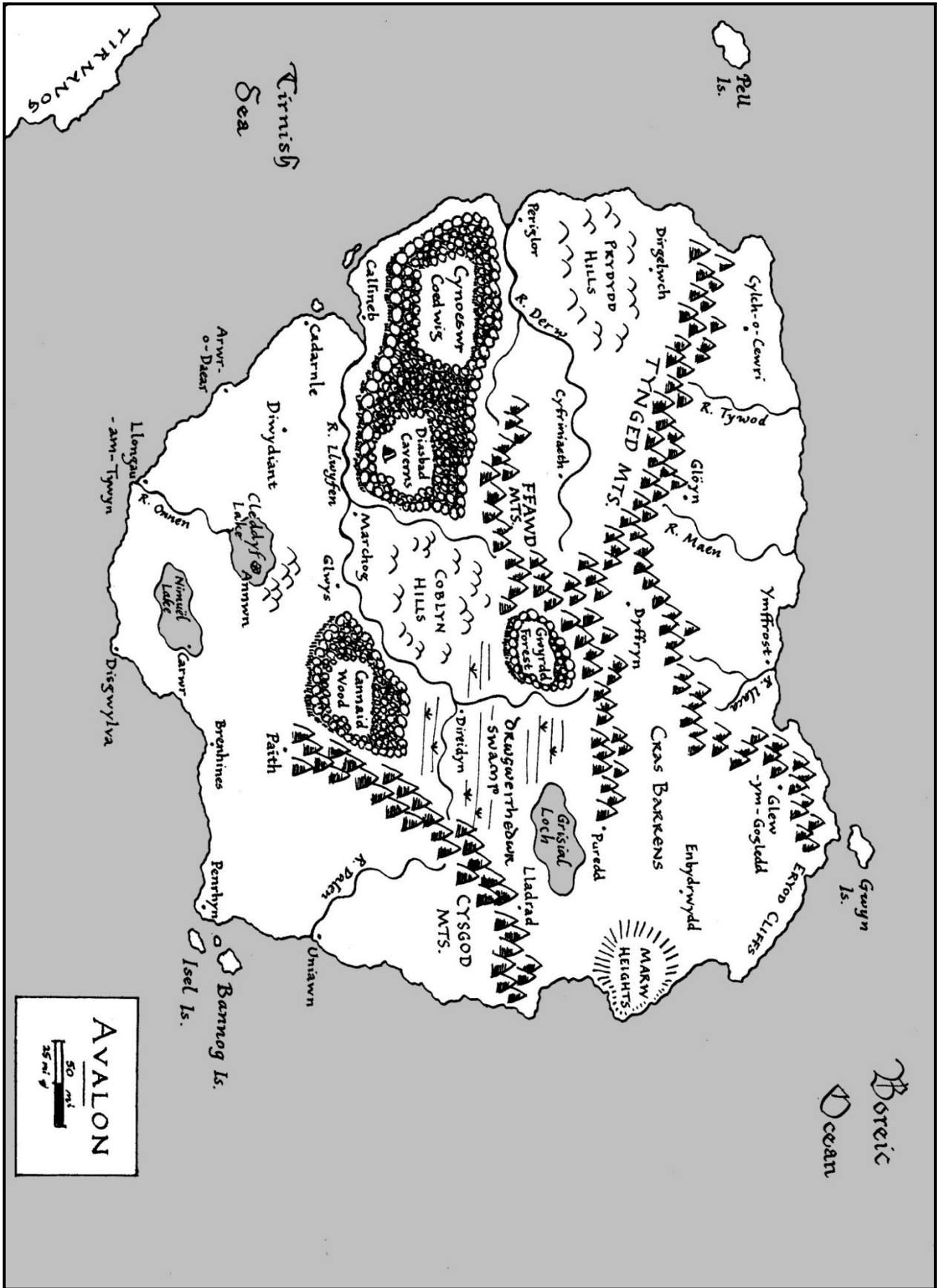
It was Agravain's grandson, the fabled King Tristram (a fay whose mother had been human) who finally united all of Avalon, around the year 1230 of the Fourth Age. Tristram ruled until the early 1500s, when the aged king was unexpectedly assassinated by a spy from Hesperia. Tristram's daughter, Maeve, came to the throne in the middle of a crisis. The kingdom of Hesperia, glutted with gold from its recent conquest of Tollan, had decided to try its hand at empire-building, and Avalon appeared to be a prime target. So, an armada of conquest was sent – but the Hesperians never suspected the power of Avalon's young sor-

ceress-queen. Maeve single-handedly conjured up a windstorm that destroyed the invading fleet utterly, and the Hesperians accomplished nothing more than to arouse the ire and the ambitions of Maeve. Indeed, it is said that because of this incident, Maeve made it her purpose to build Avalon into the greatest empire the world had ever seen – one that spanned the globe.

Under the auspices of Queen Maeve, the people of Avalon became great shipbuilders: they built sailing ships for the sea and magical airships to fly the skies, and they explored – traveling to Lemuria, Shambala, Jianghu, and other distant lands. Avalon was a prime mover in the Age of Exploration. Avalon also advanced socially in this era: after centuries of having lived under a feudal and then an autocratic government, the humans and hánfolk and centaurs were as restless as ever, and it looked as if the elves might even wish to join them in opposing the fays. But shrewd Maeve instituted a policy of common law and liberties for all citizens, and this diffused much of the ill will that the lower classes might have otherwise held for her.

Today, Avalon is a very different country than its turbulent history might suggest. The mark of a social class based on kindred is still very strong, since the fays tend to be wealthiest, the elves somewhat less so, and the other kindreds least of all. Hánfolk tend to be the most belligerent population, since Tirnanog still chafes under Maeve's rule. But the elves, humans, and centaurs living in Avalon are for the most part happy with the rights they have – namely, all the citizens, regardless of their kindred, are allowed to own land in Avalon (which they could not the olden days) and to redress any grievances with the Queen by sending representatives to the Parliament, a legislative body that now has considerable say in how the country (and the empire) is governed.

Avalon has an overseas empire, which consists of a great many dominions and protectorates scattered around the world. Tirnanog, the island immediately to the west of Avalon, has been its province for centuries. The eastern shore of Lemuria, across the Dysic Ocean, also remains a dominion of the crown, even though the Lemurians are mostly left to govern themselves democratically. In two short but bloody wars, all of Shambala and Mephret (a desert territory in the land of Amarna) came to be under Maeve's direct rule. Many large



port cities on the coast of Jianghu are effectively controlled by Avalonian trading companies. In summary, Avalon today rules more of the world than any other nation in history.

**Annwn:** A city built upon an island in the middle of Cleddyf Lake, Annwn has been the capital of Avalon since the early days of the Elfin Empire. Today, it is a city of cobblestones and smokestacks, dedicated to trade and industry. It is one of the financial capitals of the world and the seat of imperial power for Queen Maeve (whose complete and formal title is “Queen of Avalon and Tirnanog, Empress of Shambala and Mephret, Protector of Lemuria, and Defender of the Realm.”) Maeve’s home, the Iron Palace, is considered one of the most splendid in the world.

**Cannaid Wood:** This mysterious place is a true “fae forest,” a place haunted by sprites, nymphs, leshies, and other nature spirits. The Cannaid Wood is only dangerous to people who venture into it.

**Cleddyf Lake and Nimuël Lake:** These two majestic lakes sit in the center of Avalon’s gently rolling lowlands. Both are populated by merrows. The lakes are encircled on all sides by the cities, villages, farms, and railways of the Avalonians. Annwn itself is situated on an island in Cleddyf, while the town of Carwr (a popular retreat for citizens of Annwn looking for some peace and quiet) sits on the shores of the Nimuël. The River Onnen runs from Cleddyf Lake down to the sea, where the city of Llongau-am-Tywyn is the busiest port in the whole of the Avalonian Empire.

All of the cities in this region are connected by a relatively new but very well-managed system of railways. In a matter of mere hours, one can travel from the University at Cadarnle to the factories in the city of Diwydiant, or to the naval harbor at Arwr-o-Daeor. One could just as easily take a train up the coast from the shipyards at Disgwylva, to the city of Brenhines (famous for several nearby ruins of old Elfin castles and Elysian fortresses), all the way to Penrhyn (where the local plains and coves are known to hide many Ancient and Old Sidhe artifacts).

**Coblyn Hills:** Near the very center of the island, the Coblyn Hills are a wild place. Goblins once lived and mined here, but now the shadowspawn are known to haunt the long-abandoned caves and tunnels beneath the hills. It is believed that the ‘spawn have dwelt here quietly since the

past Age, only recently becoming more active and bold enough to attack nearby villages. The towns of Marchog and Glwys, otherwise peaceful cities resting on the banks of the Llwyfen, are troubled by the evil inhabitants of the Coblyns.

**Cras Barrens:** A particularly dry and rocky stretch of highlands, the Cras Barrens were shadowspawn territory in olden times, but nowadays it is just a sparsely inhabited wilderness. Glewym-Gogledd is a mining town, still somewhat successful; but Enbydrwydd is almost entirely given over to a handful of struggling mills and manufacturing plants. Further up into the mountains, the city of Dyffryn is home to a fraternal order that styles itself the Knights of Justice. These knights (mainly centaurs, humans, and a few goblins and háin) hold no allegiance to the crown of Avalon. Indeed, they publicly support the continued rebellion of Tirnanog and are themselves just a hair shy of open sedition (or as some might call it, treason).

On the eastern edge of the barrens sit the Eryod Cliffs and the Marw Heights. The Cliffs look out over one of the most dangerous sailing lanes on the Boreic Ocean: caves here hide uncounted numbers of sirens, who will readily use their songs to draw unwary ships onto the rocks. The Marw Heights, meanwhile, are little more than a giant barrow-mound. Delved into the cliffs and crags is an impossible network of crypts and tombs dating back to the Sidhe of the First Age.

**Cynoeswr Coedwig:** The so-called “Great Forest of the Ancients” is believed to hold many secrets from the Elder Days before the counting of the Ages. Many parts of this forest are haunted by giant spiders, ghouls, and even fouler things. The Diasbad Caverns are almost certainly held by the shadowspawn even now. The city of Callineb, protected from sea-attack by its natural and extremely defensible harbor, is nonetheless endangered by its proximity to the Cynoeswr Coedwig. Callineb remains an important port, however, because trains can go no further north and west than this: any travel or cargo heading for Periglör must either be borne by airship, or it must come from Callineb by watercraft.

**Cysgod Mountains:** These mountains are rich with coal, much to the benefit of the mining city of Paith. In other parts of the mountains, most of the ore gets shipped down the River Dalen, to Uniawn. Lladrad, meanwhile, is a younger city that

grew up around a gold strike that was made there some four-hundred years ago; but the gold is long since dried up, and now the local thieves' guild is the most prominent business there.

**Drwgweithedwr Swamp and Gwyrdd Forest:**

These two regions are tightly linked by the fact that neither has ever come under the direct control of Avalon's crown. They have always been dark places, controlled by dark Powers. Nobody really knows precisely *what* lurks in Gwyrdd Forest, though stories and rumors abound. And as for the Drwgweithedwr Swamp, it is at least certain that trolls and undead dwell here, and that the dead city of Direidyn (once a stronghold of Fiendish evil and Chaos, now an abandoned necropolis) hides somewhere within its borders.

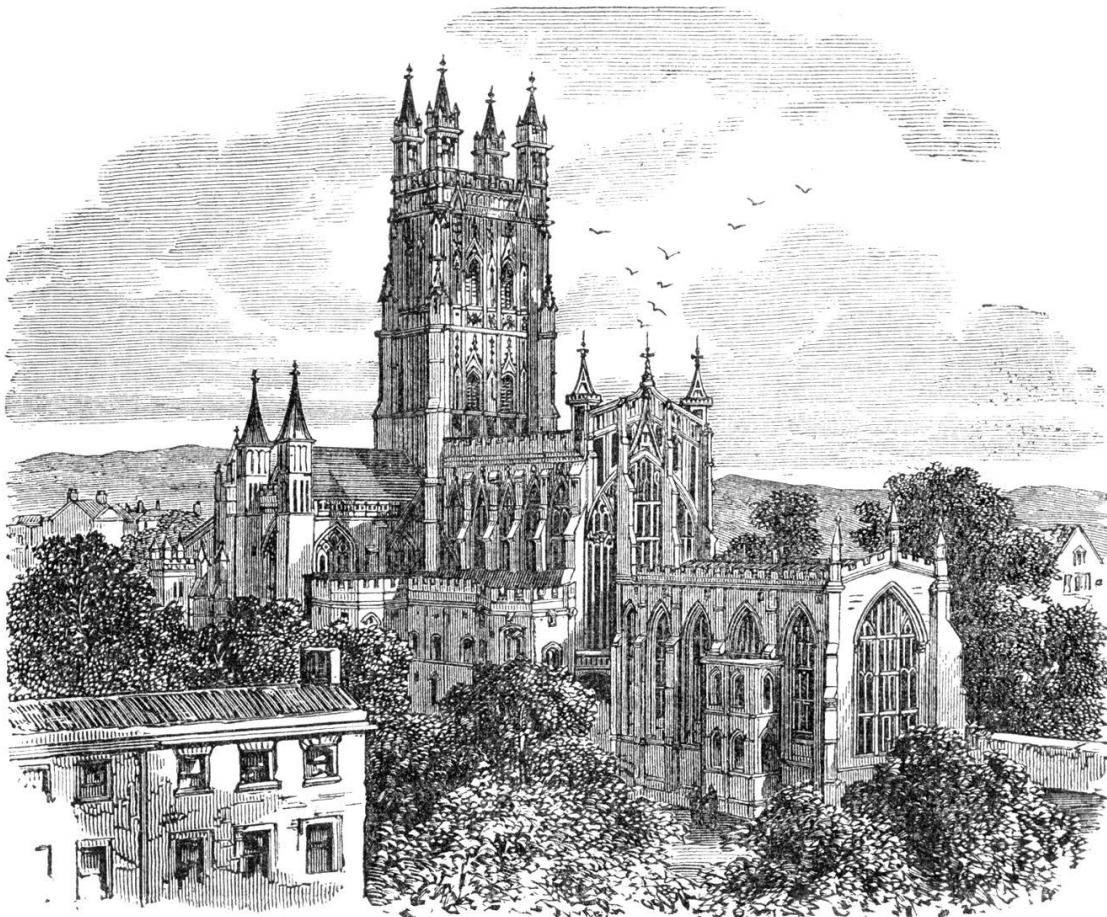
**Ffawd Mountains:** This range runs right through the center of Avalon. The cities of Cyfriniaeth and Dyffryn are both central to mining and manufacturing operations in the Ffawd Mountains region.

**Grisial Loch:** Those who live in the town of

Puredd believe that the loch is an evil place. A dragon or monster of some kind is said to dwell beneath its surface.

**Prydydd Hills:** These green, rolling hills are home to many shepherds and farmers. Of the two major cities in the region, Periglor and Dirgelwch, Periglor is relatively large (perhaps even the largest city north of the Ffawds) and busy, while Dirgelwch is little more than a local trading hub.

**Tynged Mountains:** These tall and rocky mountains cut off the rest of Avalon from its northernmost highlands. The towns of Ymffrost, Glöyn, and Cylch-o-Cewri all enjoy relatively pleasant (if frequently gloomy and rather soggy) weather. The people in this region much prefer to be left out of any world-shaking politics. Their main concern is that monsters might come down out of the Tyngeds and attack them (and although this hasn't actually happened in a few centuries, the people do remember old stories well). It is mostly elves, fays, and goblins who make up the bulk of this region's population.



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## ELYSIA

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Elysia was once the center of the greatest human empire in the known world. Today, it is a fragmented patchwork of independent duchies, principalities, and city-states. This nation covers the large peninsula that juts out from the south of Arcadia, between the Hipponic and Illic Seas. The north of the country is bounded by the lofty Valk Mountains, which gird the whole of the Arcadian subcontinent through the middle. To the east, the Strega Mountains run along the coast of the Illic Sea. The gap between the Valks and the Stregas leaves open the way between Elysia and Sylvania, but to travel elsewhere by land – into Utopia or Midjard – high and dangerous mountain passes are the only option; and no railway has yet conquered those white-capped Valkine peaks. Three great rivers run through Elysia’s lowlands: the Alta, the Flo, and the Quirino. The former two of these begin in the high country and then gently run their course down onto the peninsula; but the Quirino comes off *lo Schermo*, the raised tableland in the center of the country.

Although folk of nearly any kindred can be found in Elysia, humans rule this land. (There is no single monarch to be found here; rather, each city-state has its own duke, prince, or ruling senate.) More harpies live in the Elysian Valks than goblins, and more fauns rove its forests than elves. In fact, fauns were Elysia’s original inhabitants.

It seems that when humans first came to this land, they took upon themselves much of the fauns’ culture – and in those ancient days, the fauns who lived in Elysia dwelt in cities and had kings, quite unlike the roving bands of today. The Faunish language, too, was passed onto the humans, and it eventually became Cælestine, the Common Tongue of the South. Cælestine is the direct ancestor of many modern languages – Sylvanian, Hesperian, Utopian, and of course modern Elysian.

The fauns probably arrived in Elysia sometime during the Second Age, but no written records are left of their history. Legends place the arrival of humankind more definitively, around the year 750 of the Third Age. Stories say that the humans – whether they came via Hesperia or directly from Atlantis, none can guess – had among them a great chieftain called Æolus. When the

humans first appeared and settled along the banks of the Quirino, so the legend goes,

Æolus demonstrated such bravery and prowess in battle that two princesses of the fauns, each from rival kingdoms, fell in love with him. One, Didania by name, was the daughter of a king who ruled lands along the Flo; the other, called Lavinia, was the daughter of a king whose people lived by the Alta. The two kings even went to war over the right to claim the foreign prince for one of their daughters, but the fighting ended in a stalemate. At last, Didania could stand no more waiting, and so she arranged to have Æolus kidnapped. Lavinia would not tolerate this, however, and so she went into the city of her enemy, but not as herself – she went disguised as a simple shepherdess. Princess Lavinia came to Æolus and visited him in secret, and in so doing she won the human’s love. Then, escaping together, they fled back to the country around the Alta, and there the two were wed. This forged a firm alliance between the newly arrived humans and the fauns of the Alta country, who now went to war with those in the Flo country and defeated them soundly. Thereafter, Didania’s people were forced to pay a stiff tribute to King Æolus and Queen Lavinia, who built their own kingdom where the humans had settled, along the Quirino River. Many generations later, descendants of Æolus and Lavinia would found a city at the mouth of the Flo: none other than the great city of Cælestium.

Whether or not this myth has any basis fact, it culminates in the founding of Cælestium (the modern city of Celesce) for good reason. Cælestium, in its heyday, was the capital of the Elysian Empire, the greatest human empire that that the world has ever known. Though ruled by kings at first, the royal line was broken during the strife of the Second Great War, and the city had become a republic by the end of the Third Age. Then there came to power a great general, Julius Dracus, perhaps the most famous (or infamous) military leader of all time. Dracus claimed to be the offspring of a human woman and a fire Drake. He was also exceedingly ambitious: he saw the glory of the neighboring Alexandrine Empire, and he hoped to recreate it in his homeland of Elysium. In his campaigns of conquest, Dracus subdued all the rest of Elysium and much of Utopia, but his chief concern was to do the impossible: he wished to conquer Illyria and thereby take control over the whole of the Alexandrine Empire. Dracus actually succeeded in this endeavor and then declared himself Emperor in Cælestium. History says that he lived long and ruled well, and on his deathbed, he passed his title down to his only son, Octavius Dracus – and so began the Fourth Age.

Emperor Octavius was even more expansionistic than Julius had been. He conquered the rest

of Utopia, and also all of Hesperia, Amarna, and Edenia Minor. The reign of Octavius wasn't peaceful, but it was very long and very stable for the empire. His own son and successor, Emperor Tertian, conquered Sylvania but was never successful at making any inroads further north: Midjard and Pohjola remained untouched by the military might of Elysium. The last of the First Four Emperors, Thadrian, sent ships to Avalon and managed to displace the fay-kingdom they found there. At its peak, the Elysian Empire stretched as far east as Edenia Minor and as far into the north as Sylvania, Utopia, and Avalon.

After the First Four Emperors, there came to power a number of lesser rulers. Some were good and just, some were wicked and dangerously incompetent, and a few of them were downright insane. But in any case, the empire had grown too big to be governed effectively, and it strained under its own weight. Eventually, even mighty Cælestium was easy pickings for tribes of fairy-folk from the north. It was sacked repeatedly in a series of raids and eventually destroyed, and northerners—elves and goblins and gnomes and harpies—took over the Elysian peninsula and divided it amongst themselves. Thus, Elysia was fragmented into a country of independently ruled cities, and it has remained so ever since. The rest of the empire, meanwhile, plunged into a Dark Age for nearly five centuries.

Fairies did not rule Elysia for too very long, of course. Many of the elves, goblins, and such who came south took human wives and therefore had numerous human children as well as offspring belonging to their own kindreds. Inevitably, one by one, the various city-states fell back into the hands of human rulers, albeit very aristocratic humans who remained quite proud of their fairy lineages. All throughout the middle of the Fourth Age, and even to this very day, most of the princes and senators that rule Elysia consider elfin or goblin ancestry to be a strong mark of nobility.

Ever since the Elysian Renaissance, when many of these princes and nobles became patrons of art and learning, they also looked jealously to the north and the west, where the kingdoms of Hesperia, Utopia, and Avalon had grown united and strong. Thus began a period of sporadic wars for dominance among the various city-states and merchant-princes, all vying for the right to become the center of a new and unified Elysian state. But this has not yet happened, even now.

Elysia is peaceful at the moment, if only because Emperor François of Utopia poses far too great a threat for Elysia to bother with infighting right now. But any one of the city-states may soon be powerful enough to subdue its neighbors. Right now, the strongest of the Elysian dukes is Dante di Ghibellini of Orsini-Saleria, a very wealthy merchant-prince who would like nothing more than to see his duchy become a proper kingdom.

**Alta River:** This river flows out of Sylvania and the Valks before passing into the Satyrline Forest. The cities of Lucci and Benvolia are uneasy allies against the power of Malvolia, a particularly militaristic city-state governed by a wizard-prince, the Duke di Malini.

**Celesce:** The fabled “Heavenly City” of old is now a port city of only secondary importance. Its chief boon is the fact that much trade must still pass down the Flo River, which enables Celesce (Che-LAY-shay) to benefit from tolls and tariffs. Many ancient ruins remain here, some on high cliffs overlooking the modern city, and many in layered tunnels beneath it. Celesce is a republic, ruled by a senate of hereditary oligarchs.

**Flo River and Grigio Fields:** This region contains a number of small and not especially wealthy principalities. Most of them fall under the influence of the Duchy of Amlesce, ruled by a ruthless but ultimately well-intentioned duchess named Claudia d'Amlesci.

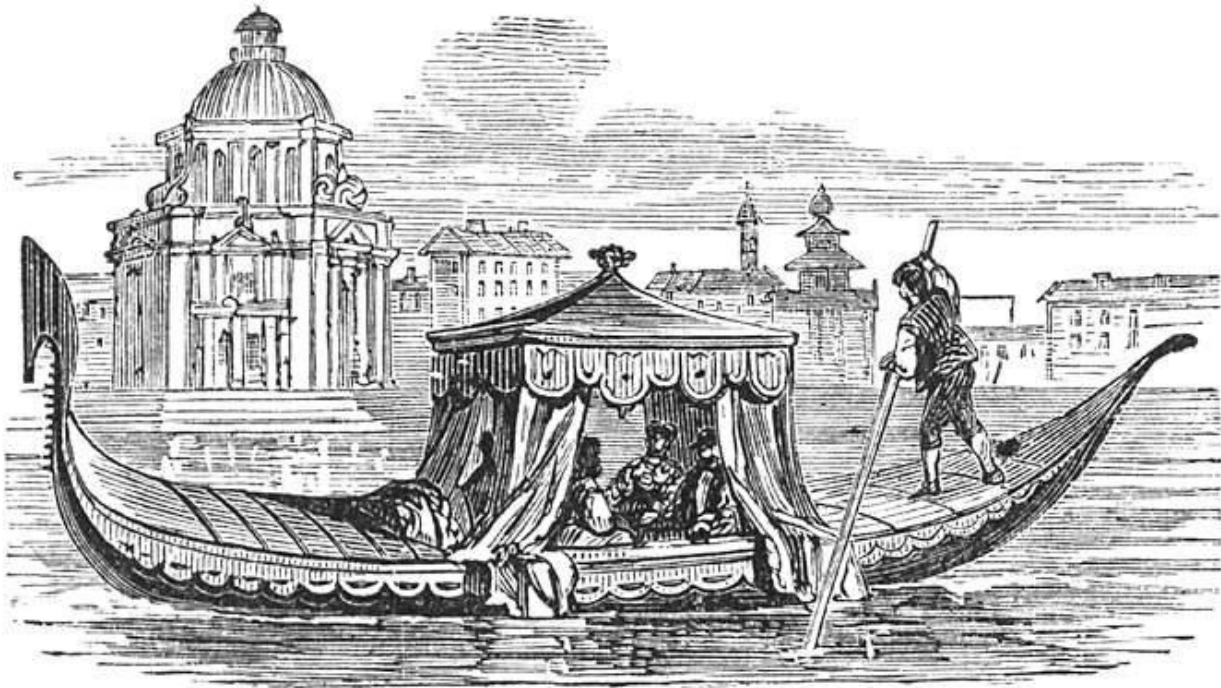
**Lo Schermo (“The Shield”):** The high country in the center of the Elysian peninsula is famous for its mild, sunny climate and its fruitful vineyards. The city of Mercutia is world-famous for its wine.

**Lupine Forest:** In ancient times, the city of Bianca was beautiful and prosperous, but this is no longer true. The Lupine Forest, a dark place if ever there was one, has cast a pall upon the White City. Hexbeasts, werewolves, and dire wolves haunt the woods, and they behave as if some evil will were exerting its influence over their actions. In recent decades, Bianca has become depopulated and dilapidated. Misery and violence are destined rule here, unless some group of heroes can solve the mystery of Lupine.

**Mount Mulciber:** An active volcano that stands taller than its sibling peaks, Mount Mulciber overlooks the cities of Ceneri (famous for its ancient crypts and catacombs) and Orologia (which is famous for its finely crafted clocks, watches, and other clever mechanical implements).







**Quirino River:** The country around the Quirino River is now known as the Duchy of Orsini-Saleria, and it is ruled from Orsini by the infamous and ambitious Duke di Ghibellini. The city of Orsini was built on a lake that connects to the river, and in many places it has canals instead of streets.

**Satyrline Forest and Strega Mountains:** For the most part, the forest is faun territory. The fauns of the Satyrline are happy to entertain visitors who come in peace and goodwill, but they want nothing to do with the politics of the human cities. The fauns are reluctant to approach the mountains, though, because a race of fay-folk dwell there, who are known as the Witches of the Stregas. The Witches' motives are mysterious and almost certainly malign. The city of Sycoraccia is ruled by the Lady di Parca, who claims to be nothing more than a very successful merchant; but rumors persist that she is one of the Witches, and stories circulate that good-looking young men who come near her city tend to disappear.

**Valk Mountains:** These mountains are named for an Old Elfin word meaning "white," and white they certainly are throughout the year. The Valks pose the most challenging barrier to any conquest of Elysia from the north. (That doesn't mean that the Emperor of Utopia won't at some point make the attempt, though.) The city of Polonia guards the pass between Elysia and Utopia. An order of harpy dragoons, known as the Valkine Knights, is based here.

**Zandretti Island:** This island is known to house many old ruins of mysterious origins. Some might even date all the way back to the First Age or earlier. Rumors persist of a fountain of immortality to be found here (although the locals laugh that off as a myth for the foolish). An order of human, merrow, and scylla warriors, the Knights of Zandretti, is dedicated to the protection of certain ruins (although nobody outside of the order can say why) and to the total eradication of piracy in the region.

## HESPERIA

Hesperia is one of Arcadia's three island nations. Some three-hundred miles south and west of the mainland, Hesperia is a very large island (perhaps twice the size of Avalon), with a tall mountain range—the Atlean Mountains—covering much of its northern half. The south of the island is mainly dominated by plains country, with a few pockets of dense woodlands to be found spread here and there throughout the island.

Like Elysia, Hesperia is a human nation of great antiquity. Given the fact that Hesperia is the closest of all the Arcadian countries to the continent of Atlantis, it is highly probable that this is where humans (discounting the famous Hero of the Second Age, the Urther) first set foot on Arcadian soil. From Hesperia, then, these earliest tribes of mankind would have spread eastward—to Elysia, Illyria, Amarna, and then onto Edenia, Shambala, and eventually Jianghu. Even to this day, Hesperia is primarily populated by humans, and the men who live in Hesperia today tend to be particularly distrustful (if not outright superstitious and afraid) of Fair Folk. Despite this, fairies do live here, though they tend to live in small and out-of-the-way communities, primarily north of the Atlean Mountains. Here, small villages of goblins, elves, gnomes, and fays can be found. Typically, fairies in Hesperia go to great lengths to say out of the way of humans.

Whatever tongue was first spoken by Hesperia's aboriginal settlers has been lost to history. It is a fact, however, that when the Elysian Empire overran this island at the start of the Fourth Age, the Elysians brought their language (Cælestine) with them, and this is the tongue that displaced the old one to become the direct ancestor of modern Hesperian. Curiously enough, the older human tongue which has been otherwise lost and forgotten *did* leave behind some inscriptions. Here and there, especially along the coasts of the island, there are ancient ruins bearing hieroglyphs: picture-writings that tentatively connect the ancient Hesperians to the people of Mephret, in Amarna (and, by logical extension, to their ancient ancestors from Atlantis as well).

Until the ancient glyphs are deciphered, then, the history of Hesperia must begin with the early human myths and legends that describe the settlement of the island. There is a popular folktale

still recounted in some Hesperian villages that goes like this:

A great fleet of men came sailing out of the west. Fierce warriors they were, looking for a land to pillage before returning to their homes. What they found instead was a great island, green and wild, completely untouched by the hands of man or fairy. All thoughts of war and treasure left them, so enchanted were they by the beauty of this pristine land. They decided to stay here for all of their days, even though they were adventurers and had but few women among them. These warriors were led by three captains, brothers by blood as well as by deed in battle. Their names were Caspar, Salazar, and Yasser. They decided that the island would be divided among the three of them by drawing lots. Caspar drew best and took the plains in the west. Salazar drew second and won the woodlands in the east. Yasser, who was the youngest brother, drew shortest and was given the mountains in the north. Not to be dissuaded, and wary that his envy might spur him to rash action against his brothers, Yasser calmly gathered his men and marched them boldly north, into the high and hilly country.

Crossing the mountains, these Men from the Uttermost West came at last to a pleasant and cool country with fields, forests, and villages. The villages were inhabited by a beautiful race that the men had never seen before: elves, colonists from the far northern island called Avalon. The elves were troubled because a great giant, a ferocious one-eyed cyclops, terrorized them with impunity. He ate their sheep and cattle, enslaved their children, and killed any warrior that stood up to him. Yasser boasted before his men and before the frightened elves that he would slay the cyclops. And so he led his men back into the mountains, and he tracked down the monster. Thinking to lay an ambush, he hid his men above a ravine and then went to meet the cyclops in person. He struck up a conversation with the creature and distracted it with puzzling riddles. Then, when the cyclops became angry and looked as if it were about to attack Yasser, that young captain gave the order—and his men revealed themselves and shot flaming arrows into its eye. Blinded, the cyclops raged and roared, but it could not see the humans, and so it could do them no harm. Then Yasser took javelins and he hurled them at the cyclops, one by one, until one of his darts pierced its heart. The battle won, Yasser returned to the pleasant north-country and claimed kingship over his third of the island. He took an elf-maid for his queen, and they built their home amidst a field of golden apple orchards, where now stands the city called Manzanas de Oro. Meanwhile, the spot where the giant was slain became the site of another city, Hombros del Titan.

The story goes on to tell how the other two brothers each founded their own kingdoms on the island—kingdoms which stood independent of each other all throughout the Third Age of the world. (Like Avalon, Hesperia was too remote to have been affected much by the wide war that came to Arcadia during that time.) Indeed, these kingdoms of Old Hesperia lasted until the Elysians came and overran the island, adding it to their Empire.

While the Elysian Empire lasted, Hesperia was part of the center of human civilization on Gaia. Governorship over the island was a highly coveted position, second in wealth and power only to the Elysian Emperor himself. But when the Empire collapsed and the Dark Ages began, all of Hesperia was once again broken up into tiny, inconsequential kingdoms. Slowly but surely, while the Middle Ages wore on, these kingdoms joined together and grew. Then, late in the Fifteenth Century, a fortuitous marriage of state joined together King Roderigo (who ruled all the land north of the Atlean Mountains) and Doña Arabella (who stood to inherit the lands surrounding the Lluvioso Plains). This created the Kingdom of Hesperia, one of Arcadia's first true nation-states.

Roderigo and Arabella were ambitious in more respects than just state-building. Exploration and colonization were also great concerns of theirs. They sent some of the first explorers back over the Dysic Ocean, to chart the continents of Atlantis, Tollan, and Lemuria. The Hesperian explorers were never permitted to visit Atlantis, and they never managed to gain much of a foothold on the Lemurian continent, but Tollan was a different story. Here, the Hesperians were all too successful in their bid to conquer a land populated by fays and humans that they considered magically and technologically primitive. In a short time, much of Tollan fell under Hesperian rule, and silver and gold began to flow across the ocean and into the coffers of the royal treasury at Manzanas de Oro. This caused all kinds of problems, especially rampant piracy in the Caliban Islands, but it also formed the foundation of the modern Hesperian Empire.

Today, the new Empire is ruled by King Roderigo VII, who, much like his forbearers, has ruled prudently enough to keep Tollan firmly pinned to the Hesperian crown. Since the days of the early explorers, Hesperia's holdings in the Far West have expanded to include all of Tollan and some of the southwestern Lemurian continent. These imperial possessions are not the great source of wealth that they once were, but they still do much for the prestige of the Hesperian crown. Hesperia is not as strong as it once was, however, and it faces a grave threat from the military posturing of Utopia. King Roderigo is quite convinced that Emperor François is plotting to make

Hesperia the site of his first major conquest in Arcadia. Considering the cold and ruthless ambition of the gnomish emperor, the Hesperian king may just be right.

**Atlean Mountains:** The landscape of Hesperia's rugged north country is dominated by the Atlean Mountains, which still contain considerable mineral wealth. Elves, goblins, and men all dwell in these mountains in mining villages. The most successful of these is Los Enanos, a goblin community in the far northwest of the country. Unfortunately for the goblins, that city has recently come under the control of a cold-hearted royal official, the Don Juarez de Miraz, who seems to be intent on taxing the local miners into poverty. Notably, only the goblins seem to be bearing the brunt of this burden. It's just the sort of circumstance that could use some discreet investigation by a clever group of adventuring heroes.

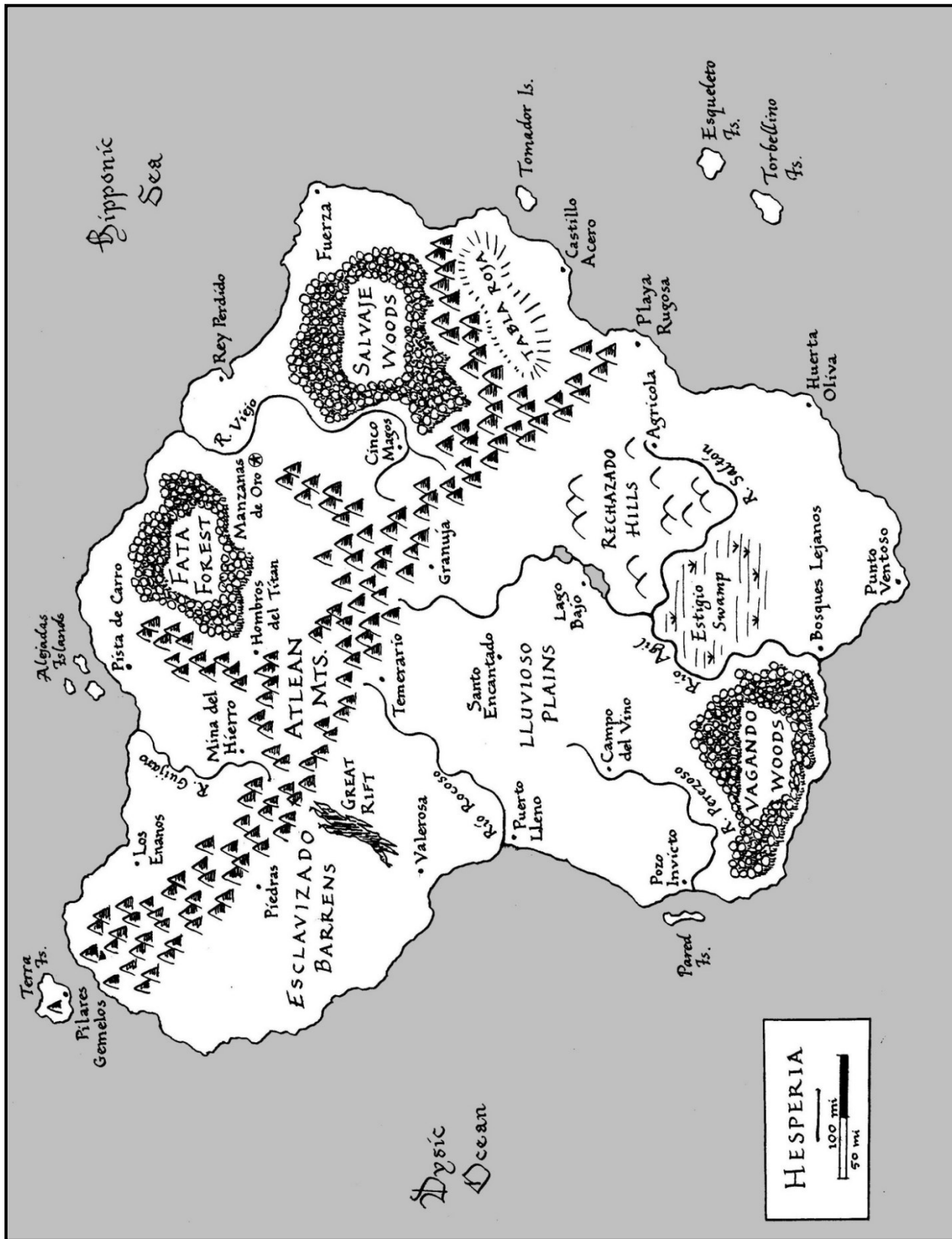
**Esclavizado Barrens:** This rough country is known to be a home of trolls, minotaurs, and hill giants. If it weren't for the massive iron strike found in the Atlean Mountains a few decades ago, few people would risk traveling through here, and the city of Piedras probably wouldn't exist.

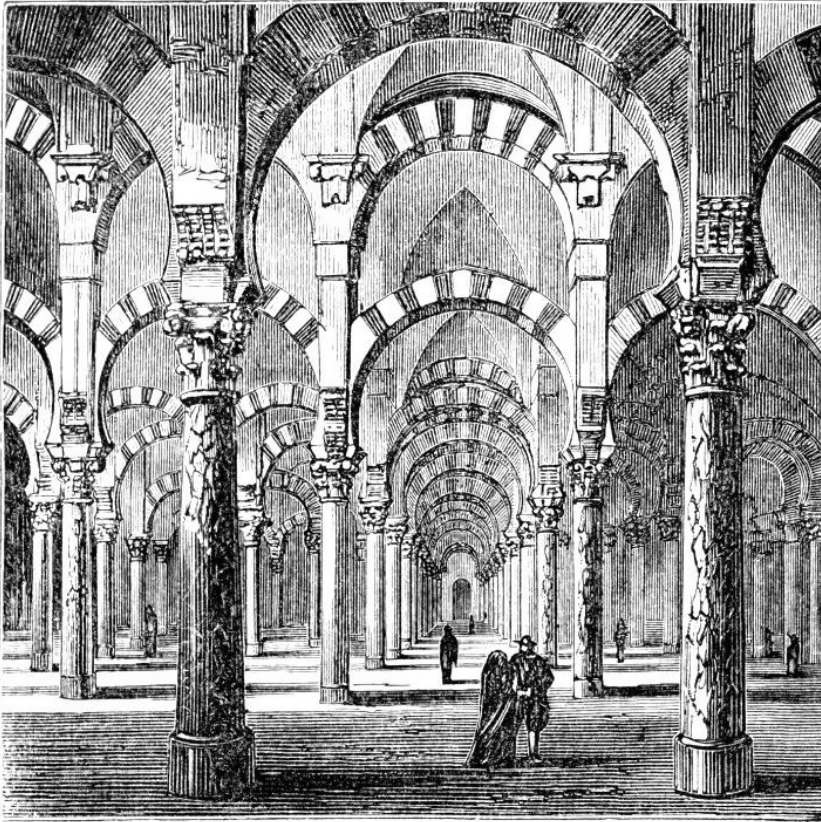
**Estigio Swamp:** This place is rightly considered evil and haunted. Phantoms, specters, and fouler things are rumored to exist here.

**Esquelito and Torbellino Islands:** These islands are known hideouts for pirates who strike out at the Hesperian and Elysian coasts.

**Fata Forest:** Fays have always lived here, but humans are reluctant to enter the place. They consider it evil, unlucky, and enchanted. Only exploring the forest firsthand can reveal the truth.

**Lluvioso Plains:** This broad, green flatland is heavily populated, mainly by humans. Most of the cities in the region are quite prosperous, but Santo Encantado still suffers from an ill reputation. This place is home to a large, abandoned monastery and cathedral which were the site of several grisly murders many centuries ago, and which have now cast a pall upon the whole city. At sundown, apparitions can be seen emerging from the city's old clocktower; then they wander freely through Santo Encantado's empty streets. The images do not seem to be capable of harming anyone, and they do not respond to exorcism by clerics or Banishment by spellcasters; but nonetheless, the city is widely avoided and practically abandoned.





**Manzanas de Oro:** The capital of Hesperia, an enormous palace stands here which dates all the way back to the Third Age and the first arrival of humans in Arcadia. The catacombs beneath the palace run very deep and have never been fully explored. The palace is also famous for its gardens, tended all these centuries by a small and secretive lineage of elves who claim descent from King Yasser of old. The Hesperian Gardens are said to be the most enchantingly lovely in all the world.

**Pozo Invicto:** This city, which stands at the mouth of the Río Perezoso and is protected by the tall cliffs of Pared Island, is the home of Hesperia's major naval base and shipyards. The Hesperian Navy has the same respect in this country that many knighthood orders command in other lands.

**Rechazado Hills:** These hills are somewhat wild, populated by beasts and animals of all sorts, but nothing especially evil or supernatural is known to live here. Hunters and trappers often strike out into the hills from the town of Agrícola.

**Salvaje Woods:** Fauns are known to skirt the edges of these woods, but they never venture very deep into them. Whatever dwells in the center of this forest is very magical and very frightening, though whether it be undead, fae, or something else entirely, nobody can say. Locals speak of strange and unearthly howls that can sometimes be heard from the forest's borders.

**Tabla Roja:** A red and rusty shelf-country that extends south and east of the Atleans, this highland overlooks the old fortress located at Castillo Acero, a place known for ruins that date back to the Elysian conquest.

**Terra Island:** This island has an odd story connected with it. It is said that in the Second Age, after the Urther escaped from Avalon with a group of rebels, he flew over

the Dysic Ocean and met with fay-folk in Lemuria and Tollan. Then, somehow, he found the place where the one and only wizard Myrddin was supposed to be sleeping forever – and he did the impossible by waking him up. Myrddin and the Hero then joined forces and brought many fays back across the ocean, hoping to depose Queen Meliora and end the Elfin Empire – but they didn't sail straight for Avalon. Instead, they crossed the ocean from Tollan to Hesperia, and it was here that they first put ashore. Some years later, after the fays again came to rule Avalon, a group of elves sailed south and founded a city where Pilares Gemelos now stands.

**Vagando Woods:** This forest is known to hide a gang of thieves who make it their business to rob all that they can from the royal coffers of the governor of Bosques Lejanos. If the rumors are true, and the thieves are actually "Robin Hood" types who give all of their profits to the poor, the royal authorities here have done a fine job of suppressing this information.

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## ILLYRIA

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The land of Illyria is a cultural crossroads, the spot where Arcadia comes into contact with the rest of the continent of Greater Edenia. The country itself is nestled between three seas: the Illic, the Phoenic, and the Vodyan. A mountain range, the Barikôn, cuts north-to-south through the middle of the country, but the rest of the land is still rough and rugged, all the way down to its seaside cliffs. Dozens of rocky islands sit just off the southwestern coast. To the east, the vast Alati Desert separates Illyria from Amarna.

Illyria is a kingdom peopled by roughly equal numbers of humans and centaurs. The centaurs came to settle this place early in the Second Age. The civilization that they built here was simple and pastoral, a few villages scattered throughout the land, unified only by a common culture and language. Over time, the centaurs' civilization became increasingly complex, until a number of independent city-states covered the Illyrian peninsula and islands. Governments included democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy; but all of the city-states were relatively militaristic, and wars between them were not uncommon. Except for these occasional conflicts, the Second Age was a relatively peaceful and stable time for Illyria.

Things changed when the Third Age dawned and the humans arrived. Like all of the humans that settled in the south of Arcadia, these people came out of the west, ultimately from Atlantis. The humans who settled in Illyria, though, were quick to adapt to the centaurs' language and customs. (Modern Illyrian comes directly from the ancient Illyrian spoken by the centaurs in antiquity.) The king of one of the ancient Illyrian cities, a centaur named Chiron, became particularly fast friends with a human chieftain named Cheops. Myths handed down from the Third Age, still recounted in Illyria, relate many heroic deeds and adventures attributed to Chiron and Cheops, who slew monsters and claimed treasures and fought together in war.

Famous heroes arose in later generations, too, when Apophis of Mephret resurrected Namtar the Lich-King and brought about the Second Great War. Illyria was the first country attacked by the armies of Apophis, and it was almost destroyed. The shadowspawn captured the northern half of the country and used it as a corridor into Arcadia;

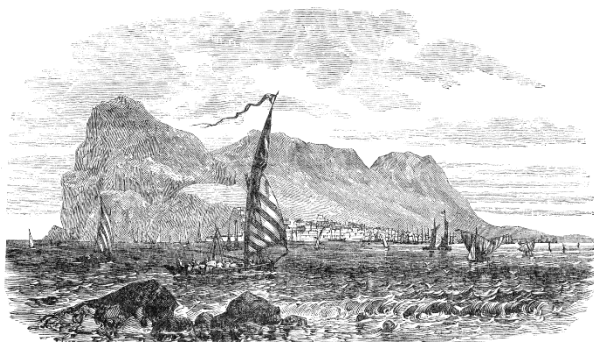
but Illyrian warriors, who had been pushed west of the Barikôn, held firm there and were never defeated. A battle at Naos Lofos, near the end of the war, was a great turning point for the forces of good and Order.

In the era that followed, humans consolidated their foothold across the south of the continent, and they built new empires upon the ashes of those kingdoms which had been destroyed by the forces of Zudos. The greatest of these began in Illyria, under the rule of the philosopher-king, Alexander of Olympia. Driven by a desire to make sure that nothing like the Second Great War could ever happen again, Alexander united all of the Illyrian rulers behind a common cause: conquering the land of Amarna, where Apophis had arisen and caused the war. It was only after this conquest had been completed that Alexander was made king over all of Illyria and emperor of Amarna as well. But his success spurred his ambition: sweeping eastward, Alexander went on to add Edenia Minor to his empire. But when he reached the borders of Shambala, he realized that his campaign could proceed no further. He only stayed in the region long enough to make firm his hold on the eastern border of his empire; then he returned home to Illyria, where he ruled until the end of his days. The Alexandrine Empire lasted until the very end of the Third Age, when conquest by Elysium ushered in the beginning of the Fourth.

After Elysium fell, Illyria — unlike much of the rest of Arcadia — avoided a Dark Age. The institutions of civilization remained intact here, and kings in the city of Alexandria (which had been built in the days of Alexander's empire, to honor that great conqueror) assumed all the authority once held by the Elysian imperial governor. In effect, it was as if the Empire never fell for Illyria. Instead, it persisted, albeit in a diminished form, all the way up through the end of Medieval Period, during which time Illyria developed a reputation for brutal and backstabbing internal politics. Then, in the Fifteenth Century, a sultan of Amarna named Akbar V marched westward over the Alati Desert and captured Alexandria. Illyria thus became a province under the subjugation of the new Amarnan Empire — and so it remained, nearly up into the present day. But during the early 1800s, an unlikely alliance between Avalon, Elysium, and Illyria came together to fight for Illyrian independence from Amarna. The bitter campaign was







ultimately successful, largely thanks to Avalon, which also took the land of Mephret away from Amarna and made it a colony. Illyria has become free, but that freedom is tenuous; very little stands between Illyria and a campaign of reconquest and revenge by Amarna. For that matter, Amarna would have an easy time taking Sylviana, too.

**Agrios Forest:** This forest is heavily populated by leshies and elves. Dwarfs, distant kin to the hánfolk, live in the nearby city of Dentra. Aëtoi is another city, built high upon a hill, inhabited by harpies.

**Alexandria:** Once the capital of Illyria, this city is now mostly famous for its temples, libraries, and universities. Also found here is a technical academy called the Archimedeon, dedicated to modern science and technology.

**Barikôn Mountains:** This dangerous range is inhabited by chimeras, manticores, griffons, hippogriffs, nekrozons, and all manner of dangerous hybrids. Friendly creatures (like pegasi) can also be found here occasionally. A few sphinxes and gorgons are even said to dwell here.

**Dolos Cliffs:** These high cliffs overlook the Vodyan Sea. Caves in the cliffs (not to mention the sea itself) are known to hide all kinds of hideous sea-serpents and other aquatic monsters. The humans of Gkremos make their living off of this sea, despite the pervasive danger.

**Kentauropolis:** The center of centaur civilization in olden days, this city is still important to centaur (and Illyrian) culture. Centaur philosophers and astronomers still congregate here. Also based in this place is an order of centaur warriors known as the Knights of Ixion, who have made it their duty since the early days of the Fourth Age to protect Illyria from outside conquest. These knights played a key role in Illyria's battle for in-

dependence from Amarna, and now they will stop at nothing to preserve that hard-won freedom.

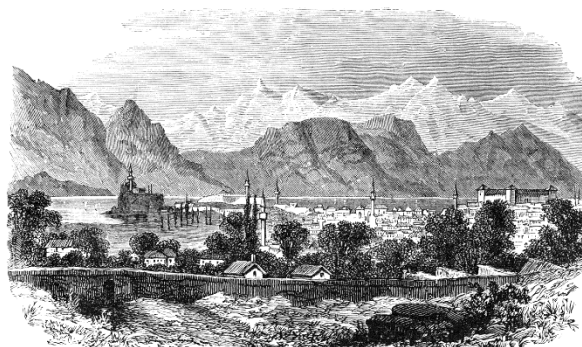
**Lake Iremos:** Old legends say that this lake has no bottom, and that it in fact leads all the way to the underworld. These are only stories, of course; a lake without a lakebed would be quite impossible. Still, there are many deep caves and tunnels in this region, so there might be a grain of truth to the myth. Nobody knows what might be found at the bottom of Iremos.

**Lapithai Hills:** In ancient days, human barbarians lived in these hills. The hills were abandoned during the Second Great War, when they were overrun by the shadowspawn. Ever since then, the hills have been considered cursed. Now they are thought to be haunted by geists that dwell in ancient barrows beneath the hills.

**Olympia:** Made the formal capital of the newly independent Illyria just a couple of decades ago, Olympia is still better known for its ancient ruins than anything else. The country is presently run by a provisional government, headed by a regent named Jolanda Sophia. Until either a proper monarch is elected or the Regent Jolanda is herself crowned queen, Illyria's government will remain in a state of only tenuous stability.

**Pepromeno Coast:** A region of high cliffs, crags, and sea-caves, this coastline overlooks the many islands south of the Illyrian mainland. The most interesting city in the region is Amphitria, because it is a merrow city and completely underwater.

**Silenoï Forest:** Fauns inhabit the Silenoï Forest in large numbers. There are also nymphs and satyrs to be found here, ruling over the fauns. The nearby city of Chalasmata is famous for its great library, which has unique historical records dating back to the Second Age.



## MIDJARD

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The land of Midjard, as its name implies, covers a vast area in the very center of the Arcadian subcontinent. All of the lands east of the Gylden River and west of the Drachendorn Mountains, south of the Fenrir Bay and north of the Valk Mountains, are part of Midjard. The east of Midjard is rough and hilly. A mountain range called the Schwärtzesten dominates the landscape there. To the south, Midjard seems almost entirely woodlands, and so it is fitting that the people who have dwelt here for three Ages of the world are the Wood Elves. Further north and west, Midjard is a country of varied terrain: plains and hills, forests and bogs, lakes and rivers. Indeed, because Midjard is so large and so varied, and because it is home to nearly every kindred known on Gaia, it makes an ideal location for nearly any sort of campaign game that the referee might wish to begin—especially for players new to Gaia and to gaslamp fantasy.

Though mostly united by a single culture and language, Midjard is divided into a number of independent kingdoms: eight of them, to be precise. These are called Gyldmark, Handelstad, Spielberg, Afblände, Dämmerung, Dreiseen, Älfheim, and Lu Sing. With the notable exception of the Kingdom of Lu Sing, the language spoken everywhere throughout this country is Midjardisch, a tongue descended from the old speech of the älfar who dwell primarily in the Kingdom of Älfheim. Strangely, the Wood Elves' language bears a much closer resemblance to the Old Goblisch speech (the tongue of Asgard) than it does to the Old High Elvish (spoken in Pohjola). Historians and linguists have not yet been able to discern why this is so.

While Sylvan Elves rule the kingdom of Älfheim, their neighbors to the north in the Kingdom of Dämmerung are fays. Goblins live in Afblände and the lands between the Schwärtzesten and Drachendorn ranges. The rest of the kingdoms are populated by a bewildering mix of humans and demihumans.

Lu Sing is without doubt the most peculiar of all the Midjardisch kingdoms, because it does not resemble any other land in Arcadia. Culturally, the people of Lu Sing are related to the distant Empire of Jiganhu: they speak a similar language and share many of its customs. It seems that at

some time very early in the Fourth Age of the world, Lu Sing was founded by refugees fleeing some terrible misfortune taking place in their original homeland in the Far East.

It is possible that Dämmerung is the oldest kingdom in Midjard, but no records survive from the First Age to corroborate such a theory. The Great War which ended the First Age so ravaged Midjard that the shape of the land was altered considerably, destroying much of what came before. If the gentle Player desires surer history than mere speculation can provide, that certainty can only be found in books and scrolls left behind since the start of the Second Age, shortly after the elves came into Midjard (very likely from Pohjola) and founded the Kingdom of Älfheim.

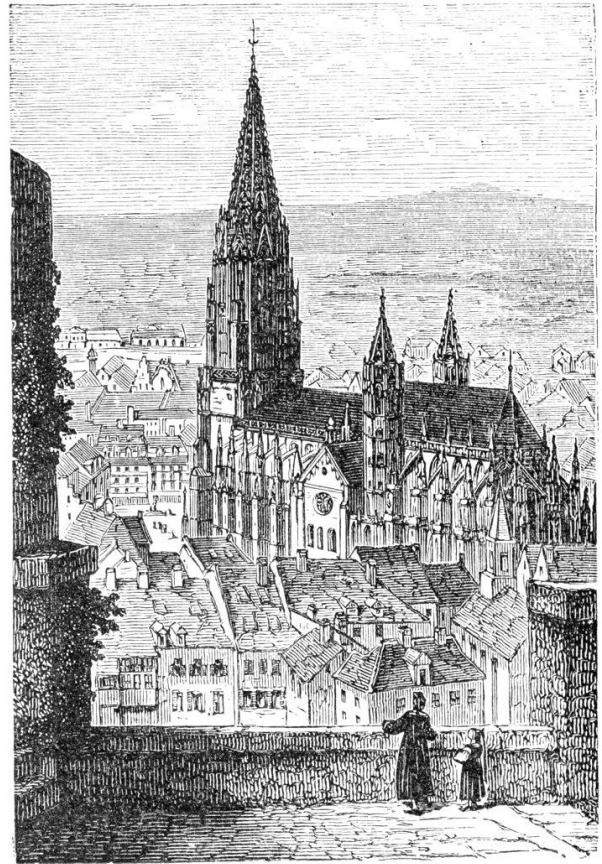
Old books left behind by these early kingdoms indicate a great rivalry between the elves of Älfheim and the fays of Dämmerung. As it was in Avalon during the Second Age, ill will toward the fays was pervasive, as their kind was blamed for the Great War. But the fays never fled from their kingdom here; instead, they ensconced themselves deeper, hid themselves away with charms and enchantments, and allowed the elves to rule the land. When soldiers of Avalon came to declare their rule over all of Midjard, the elves of Älfheim met them as friends and honored the emissaries of the faraway monarch by presenting them with a most kingly gift: a sword wrought from purest *mythril*, called the *Strahlendklinge*. But on the very day that the two tribes of elves were to meet, the silversteel blade disappeared mysteriously—it is likely that magic was involved—and so, naturally enough, the elves suspected the fays. War broke out between Älfheim and Dämmerung, with Avalon remaining strictly neutral, and neither kingdom won. In the end, all that came out of the incident was a lasting bitterness built on old grudges between the two countries. Meanwhile, other folk came to settle in the north and west of Midjard: centaurs, goblins, gnomes, and ogres. Near the end of the Second Age, when Avalon fell, many hánfolk also had come to dwell in Midjard, mostly in the region of the Betrug Forest.

The Third Age, then, brought the rise of early human empires in the far south—and also the Second Great War, fought between the Free Folk of Arcadia and the great Enemy in the East. The shadowspawn in those days overran Sylvania and established a fell stronghold at Dol Drachenham, a beachhead whence they struck out at Midjard.

Fleeing before the 'spawn came human refugees who would eventually settle in Midjard to create barbarian kingdoms. Meanwhile, Midjard's fairy-folk fought back against the armies of evil and drove them back into Sylvania, where the tide turned, and the Enemy was at last driven back into the East once again. The very end of the Third Age in Midjard saw frequent but minor border-skirmishes between the Midjarders and the armies of Julius Dracus from Imperial Elysium.

In the early centuries of the Fourth Age, Midjard was constantly harassed by the Elysian Empire. By the Fifth Century, though, Elysium had become so weak that the Midjardisch tribes and kingdoms were able to come together and launch a series of counter-attacks that ultimately destroyed Cælestium and brought down its whole empire. Midjardisch kings then came to rule over the shattered pieces of the Elysian Empire, and their shared culture came to influence much of mainland Arcadia. Meanwhile, the eight kingdoms known in modern Midjard began to take shape. Elves still lived in Älfheim and fays still dwelt in Dämmerung; but now goblins came together to form the kingdom of Afblände; men created the kingdoms of Dreiseen and Spielberg (and also Lu Sing, although these were humans from much farther away); men, ogres, and háin came together and founded Handelstad; and men and centaurs settled the Gyldmark. (Incidentally, the men of the Mark are very close kin to the Guildermen of Asgard – they are of the same lineage, but by historic accident they settled on opposite shores of the Fenrir Bay.)

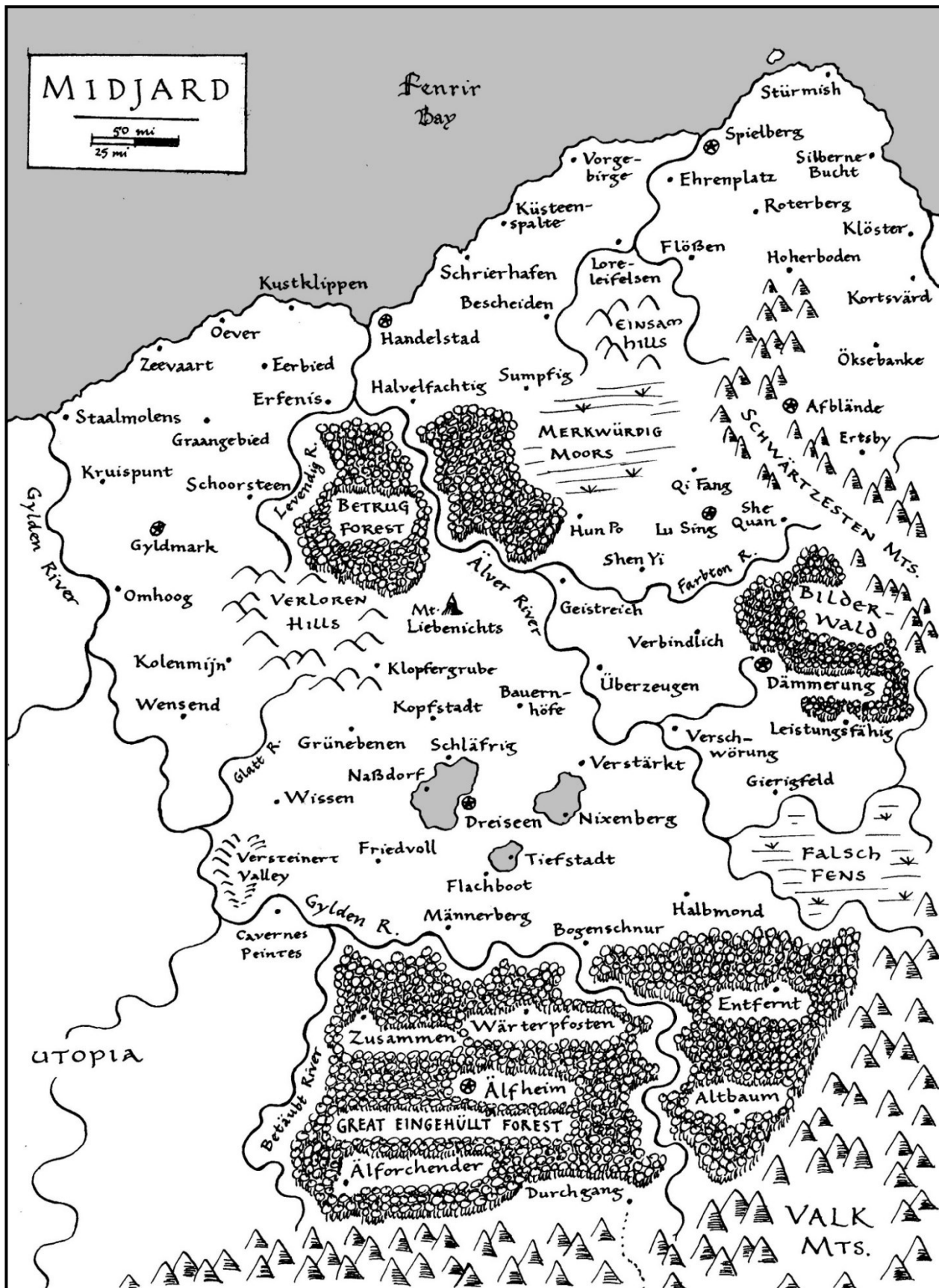
At present, Midjard is strong but still divided. The Midjardisch people are very keen on science and more than adept with modern technology. Industry, travel, and communication are as advanced here as they are in Utopia and in the south of Avalon. But the Midjardisch kingdoms are by no means equal in the distribution of power and wealth. Handelstad and Afblände are among the richest and best industrialized of the kingdoms. Spielberg and Gyldmark each enjoy strong military superiority. Älfheim and Dämmerung remain magical forces not lightly dismissed. Several charismatic kings also make Midjardisch politics interesting. For centuries, Älfheim has been ruled by Elf-King Alberich, while Dämmerung has been ruled by Fay-King Sternlicht. The Kingdom of Spielberg, ruled by an ambitious human named



Johannes von Spielberg, is in the best position of all the kingdoms to eventually dominate all of Midjard (not unlike Prussia in real-world Germany) and build a nation-state worthy of competing with the likes of Utopia and Avalon.

**Dol Drachenham:** This dark tower, built deep in the mountains where the Valks meet the Drachendorns, was once a stronghold of evil and Chaos, the northern outpost of the risen Lich-King during the Second Great War. Although the shadowspawn were driven out of these lands long ago, Dol Drachenham itself was never assaulted or destroyed. Presumably, it still stands today.

**Kingdom of Afblände:** All of the country in between the Schwärtzesten Mountains (which are exceedingly rich in iron, tin, copper, and coal) and the Nisse River belong to a race known as the Black Goblins. These goblins are more insular than those that live in Asgard, but they nevertheless conduct a great deal of trade with the other Midjardisch kingdoms, especially Spielberg. The Drages Desolation, a blighted land that runs from the river to the foothills of the Drachendorn, is by



no means under the goblins' control. This country is ruled by dragons and shadowspawn that dwell in the mountains. The far-off stronghold of Forsamlinghalle, once a great goblin-built fortress in

communities of Männerberg and Durchgang. The city of Wärterpfosten is home to the Eingehüllt Rangers, a band of älfar warriors and foresters who defend the elf-kingdom from monsters.

#### Kingdom of Dämmerung:

The kingdom of the fays surrounds a forest called the Bilderwald, place of strange illusions and colorful tricks of the light. The fays employ the magical properties of the Bilderwald to keep their business hidden from the world; but they avoid the Falsch Fens, which are haunted by the undead.

**Kingdom of Dreiseen:** This country is home to humans and some gnomes, and also to merrows living in the three large lakes that give the kingdom its name. The monarchy of Dreiseen is old but not particularly autocratic. Rather, the authority of the king here (the ruler of Dreiseen is named Gunter IX) is limited by a constitution, a document called the Compact of Friedvoll, which establishes a council of barons who hold the power to overrule certain of the king's decisions. The Vorsteinert Valley in the far west of the kingdom is a famous archaeological dig-site, well-known for the discovery of artifacts that predate the First Age. Dreiseen is perhaps best known as the home of the Society of Free-thinkers, who were the founders (some would say perpetrators) of the Gnostic Reformation.

#### Kingdom of Gyldmark:

This flat country is dominated by wide expanses of plains, broken up by occasional hills or bluffs covered in heather and scrub. A well-traveled railway line begins in Kruispunt and passes all the way through the north of Midjard, into the Kingdom of Afblände. Gyldmark itself is a busy hub of local trade and the home of a group called the Ritters of the Gyldmark, human and centaur knights dedicated to defending all of Midjard. (Most of the time, though, the Ritters



the Drachendorn, was destroyed many centuries ago. Now Forsamlinghalle is held by the 'spawn, and Orkberg (on the northern coast) is in the possession of draugs — making these places two of the strongest outposts of Chaos on the continent.

**Kingdom of Älfheim:** The mighty kingdom of the Sylvan Elves, Älfheim covers all the lands around the Great Eingehüllt Forest. Leshies dwell east of the Gylden River, and humans live in the



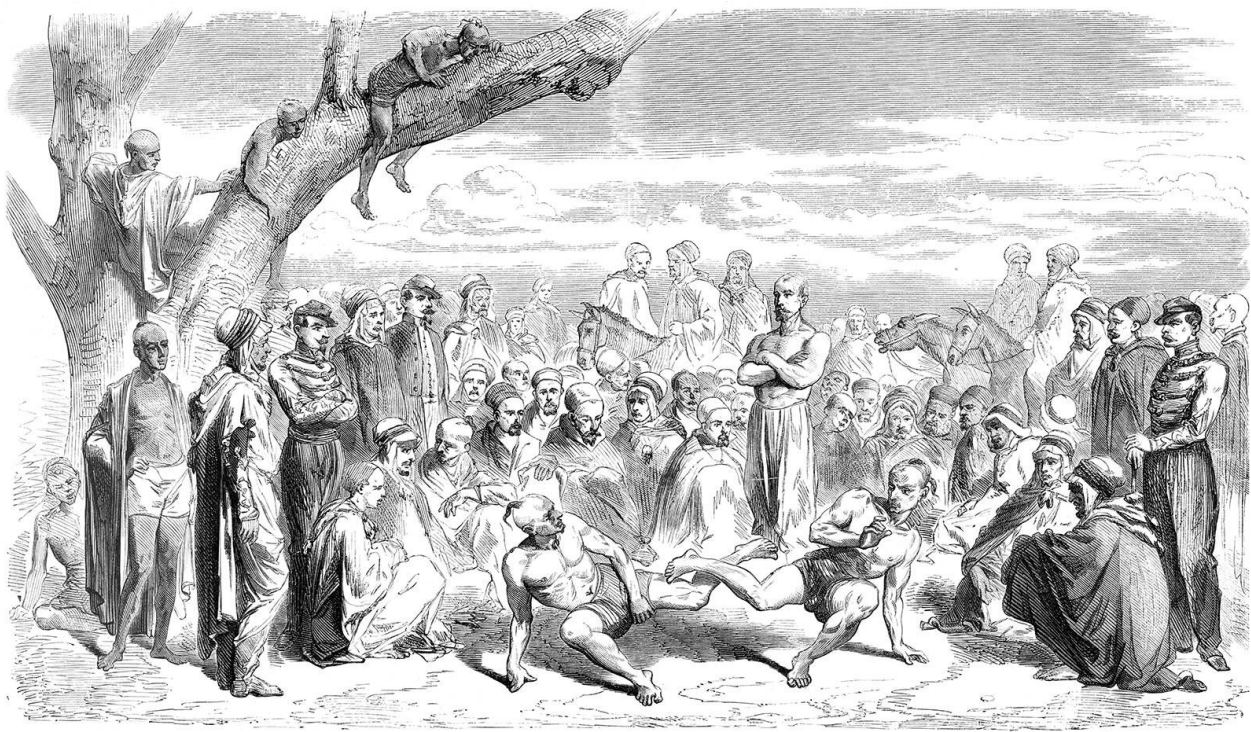
have their hands full just keeping the trolls and ettins confined to the Verloren Hills.) The people of Gyldmark are close allies of the Guildermen of Asgard, who are their kin.

**Kingdom of Handelstad:** This kingdom stretches from the mouth of the Älver River to the lone peak called Mount Liebenichts. Both humans and ogres alike live in the coastal lowlands around the city of Handelstad proper, while the Betrug Forest houses countless many hánfolk. The hán of Betrug are always war-ready, given that their homeland is flanked by the dangerous Verloren Hills on the one side and the cursed Merkwürdig Moors on the other.

**Kingdom of Lu Sing:** At some point very early in the Fourth Age, a large band of humans from faraway Jianghu traveled west to escape some widespread misfortune that befell that land. Whether it was a plague, a conquest, or something worse, only the sages and historians in Lu Sing know for sure. The people of Lu Sing are not as Isolationist as their Jiangesese counterparts in the Far East; indeed, they are more than happy to trade and mingle with their Midjardisch neigh-

bors. The language and customs of Lu Sing are different enough that this kingdom has remained culturally distinct from the rest of Midjard. At the celebration of each new year, a great fighting tournament is held in Lu Sing, which includes both armed and unarmed competitions. But only the best warriors in Arcadia are invited to compete with local *gongfu* masters, who nearly always win the tournament.

**Kingdom of Spielberg:** The northernmost kingdom in Midjard, Spielberg is closely allied with Aflände and Gyldmark. A mix of low foothills, rolling plains, and open woodlands, this is one of the more peaceful kingdoms in all of Arcadia—and yet, its people are very militaristic and aggressive in their political posturing. It is no secret that King Johannes von Spielberg wants to make his kingdom the center of a united Midjardisch Empire. The Spielbergers might just get more than they ever thought they could bargain for, though, because the shadowspawn and the black dragons are multiplying in the Drachendorn. A unified Midjard could be their only hope to withstand the inevitable onslaught.





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## POHJOLA

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The Kingdom of Pohjola stretches all the way from the Drachendorn Mountains in the west to the Chernobog Mountains in the east. The Avara River, white and rapid, separates Pohjola from Asgard in the north. To the south lie the black and foreboding waters of the Vodyan Sea. Pohjola is a land of enormous, dense forests, thick with ancient growth and mystery. Despite the country's temperate latitude, it is cold here for much of the year, because a chill wind always blows off of the Jäätynyt Plains, only broken when it reaches the high treetops of the great Vanhin Forest where the last of the High Elves have made their kingdom. Within the forests, the climate is always warm and pleasant, thanks to some little-understood elfin magic. Elsewhere, the country is at the mercy of the elements and that ill wind that blows down from the north.

The High Elves built their kingdom in Pohjola at the beginning of the Second Age, and then they did everything in their power to cut themselves off from the rest of the world and its problems. They wanted no part in the affairs of Gaia after the First Great War was over: it was enough that such a disastrous incident had brought them unwillingly into Gaia in the first place. Their kin, the älfar (i.e. Wood Elves or Sylvan Elves) who settled in Midjard and eventually moved onto Avalon, were considered a lesser breed: barbaric and warlike, fit only to serve the aims of the High kingdom. The Wood Elves even spoke in the tongues of the goblins and sought to conquer, to dominate, and to win retribution from the fays. The High Elves of Pohjola took the noble road of peace: they only wished to left to their own devices.

But ever has Pohjola lived beneath a shadow, stuck as it is between the Drachendorns and the Chernobogs. The Drachendorns weren't always such an accursed place: in ancient times, goblins and elves mined tunnels into those mountains in search of orichalc and other riches. But then darkness came to that land, and the vile stronghold at Dol Drachenham was built, and it became a home of dragons and shadowspawn. After the Second Great War, the darkness in the Drachendorns waned, but over the centuries this darkness has slowly and quietly returned. The Chernobog Mountains, meanwhile, have never known peace. Ever have those fell and dire peaks cast an evil

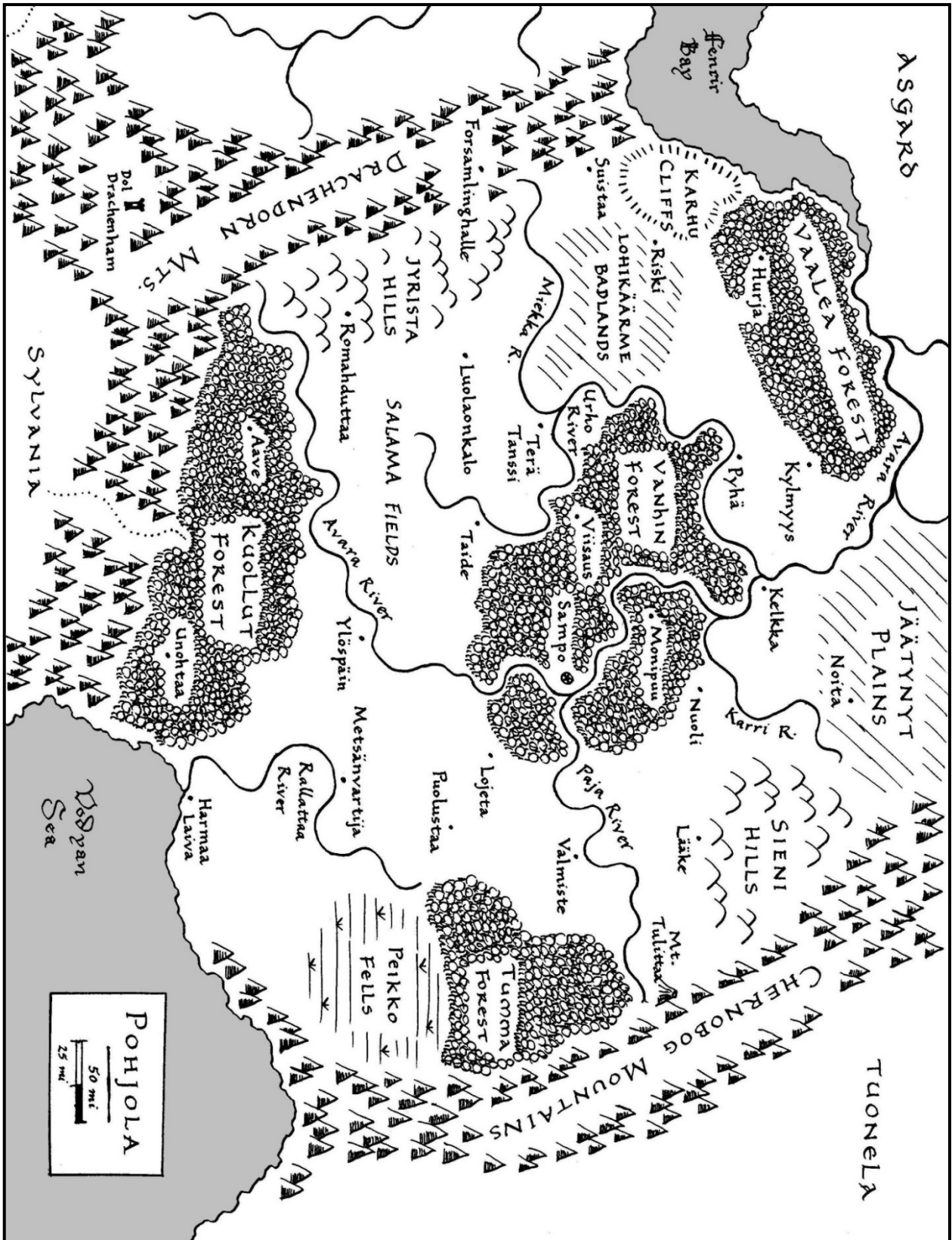
shadow upon the land of the High Elves, for they separate Pohjola from Tuonela, the country of the 'spawn. The very name of Tuonela is taken from the Old High Elfish (it means "Land of Death"), that place in the east which has always been the possession of the Great Enemy.

The modern Pohjolan language is descended directly from the Old High Elfish. It bears no discernible relationship to the Wood Elves' language (Midjardisch), but it does share some features and vocabulary with the Sylphic language still spoken by harpies in northern Sylvania.

Once the Second Age had begun, and the High Elves had decided that they would settle in this country betwixt the mountain ranges, they cultivated the forests (many of which also became home to leshies) and wove their elf-spells around them, filling these woods with light and life. A Tree of Life was planted in the center of the forest called Vanhin, and this became the site of the city of Sampo, the true capital of Elvendom on Gaia. All who dwelt within the light of this tree were said to be blessed with wisdom and skill, and so it has remained for an Age.

When the Third Age came along and humans enabled the start of the Second Great War, the elves of Pohjola did not rush out to meet the evil headlong as the folk of Midjard did. They honored their old alliance with the goblins of Asgard and fought against the enemy along the Chernobogs, but otherwise they merely defended their borders and made sure that nothing could enter Pohjola from over the Drachendorns or from across the Vodyan Sea. This has been the way of the High Elves ever since: aloof, apart from the world, and concerned only for the good of their own.

The story of Pohjola in the Fourth Age, then, is one of a kingdom teetering on the brink. Evil closes in around them from all sides. A dark power grows in the East, and from afar it strengthens whatever foulness still lurks under the Drachendorns. Even if this new darkness is defeated, however, Pohjola will have to face something even more insidious: change. The rest of the world is learning, growing, progressing, and advancing. The High Elves would like nothing more than to see everything stay exactly the way it is, and yet they know this to be impossible. Science is forever altering the world, and the true challenge for Pohjola will be to adapt to this change – which it must do if it is to survive.





**Avara River:** This mighty flow comes down out of the Drachendorns, winds its way across most of Pohjola, and finally empties into the Fenrir Bay. The city of Sampo was built on the banks of the Avara, as was the city of Kelkka, famed for its master shipwrights.

**Drachendorn Mountains:** North of the Avara River, the Drachendorns form the border between Pohjola and Midjard. Here, the mountains are evil and utterly infested with dragons and shadowspawn. South of the river, though, the mountains are less foreboding. The branch of the Drachendorns between Pohjola and Sylvania is mainly inhabited by harpies, who fight constantly to keep their beloved peaks and heights free from incursions by the 'spawn.

**Jäätynyt Plains:** These lands are always frozen. The elves believe that some evil spell was cast upon them long ago. Fearsome snow-monsters (yetis) are said to stalk the far northern reaches of the region. In the city of Noita, the elves raise hardy sled-dogs for transportation.

**Jyrista Hills:** The foothills leading up to the Drachendorns, these were filled with goblins in the days when Forsamlinghalle was alive and glorious. Now the dreary hills are abandoned by all but shadowspawn and the occasional dragon that wanders out of the mountains.

**Karhu Cliffs:** These high bluffs make it impossible to reach Pohjola from the Fenrir Bay, or

vice versa, without traversing either the Vaalea Forest or the Avara River – both of which are well-guarded by elfin marchwardens.

**Kuollut Forest:** The elves and leshies who dwell within this wood are friends and close allies to the harpies that live immediately south of them, in the more benign southern branch of the Drachendorn Mountains. Often must these three folk come together to fight the monsters of the north Drachendorns.

**Lohikäärme Badlands:** This place was the site of a great battle at the end of the First Age, when many elves were slain while contending with Fiendish forces. Since that day, the land has been blighted, and nothing grows here. The greater undead (revenants and animi) haunt this place. Even the elves are reluctant to disturb its restless evil.

**Peikko Fells:** Something truly evil lives and hunts in these moors. Whatever it is (and nobody knows, because none who risk to enter the Fells ever return), it is probably allied with the evil in the Chernobog Mountains.

**Salama Fields:** These plains are the breadbasket of Pohjola. Those elves who choose to pass their centuries as farmers live in this region. It is a pastoral, even idyllic existence – so long as nothing foul comes storming out of the Jyrista Hills.

**Sampo:** Capital city of Pohjola, the elves that live here are primarily concerned with guarding the great Tree of Life. This tree is believed to be

the source of immortality for all of the High Elves who live on Gaia. Should something ever happen to the Tree, all High Elves everywhere would become mere mortals, just as the Sylvan Elves already are. The Tree-Keepers, then, are Pohjola's most elite warriors and magicians, for their duty is the most solemn. Sampo is also home to the King of the High Elves, Ukko Ilúvatar, who has ruled this country for quite literally thousands of years.

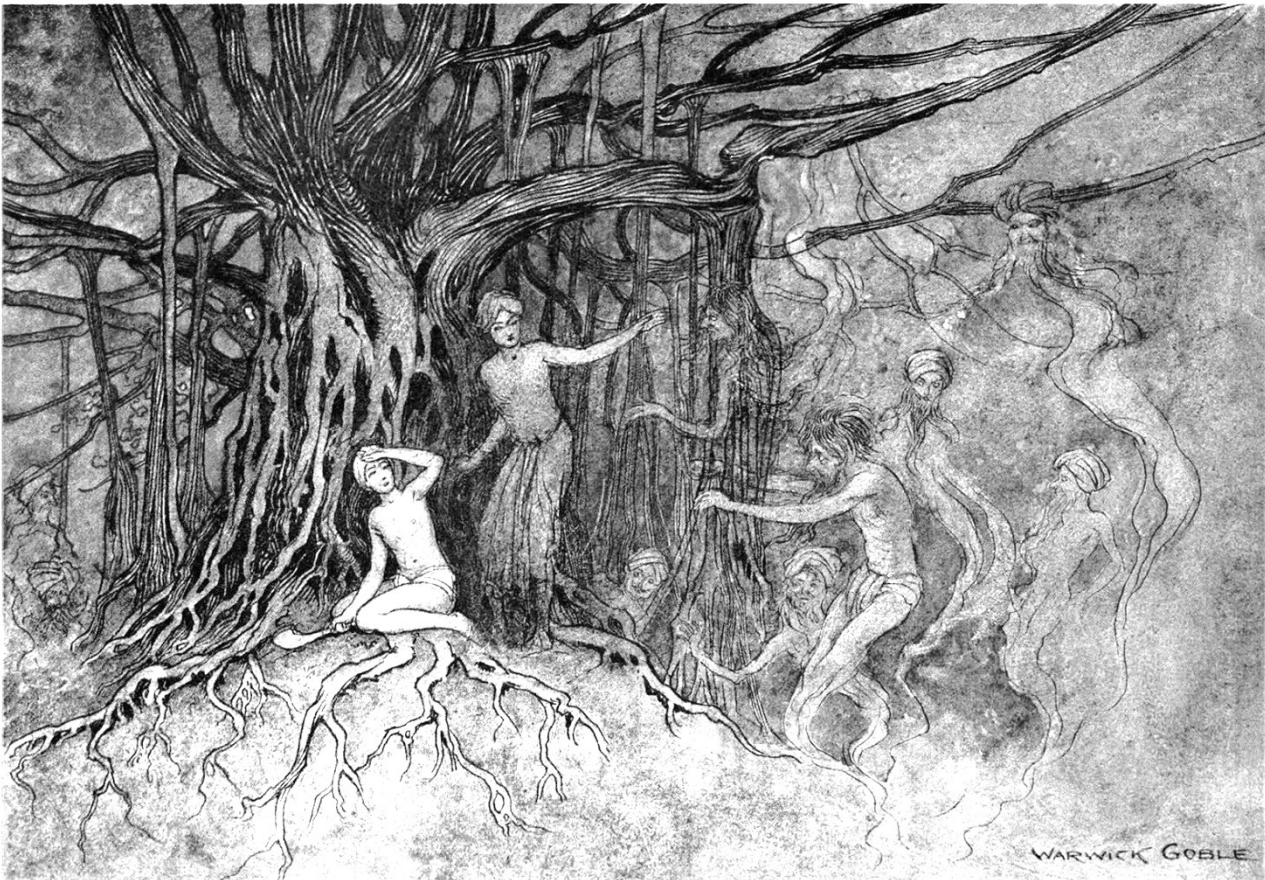
**Sieni Hills:** The city of Lääke was built up around a fortified watchtower, set here long ago to ward the hill-country, which is now inhabited by ogre tribes and packs of dire wolves. The ogres are on friendly terms with the elves of Lääke — they help them to patrol the region and hunt the wolves. There are also wilder living here, but the wilder keep to themselves (and they also leave the dire wolves alone).

**Tumma Forest:** The only forest in the country that the elves do not inhabit, *nothing* seems to live here except for the trees themselves. Not birds, not beasts, not monsters, not insects. It shouldn't be possible, but it is so. Nobody knows why. North

of the forest, Mount Tulittaa once contained a shadowspawn stronghold, but it has been abandoned for centuries. From time to time, a patrol of elfin Bow-Knights explores this place to make certain that nothing foul has taken up residence here.

**Vaalea Forest:** The city of Hurja, nestled high up in the treetops in the deepest part of the wood, is home to the Order of Bow-Knights, elfin archers of peerless reputation. They ward the north of the country from all excursions, suspicious of everyone (even their nominal allies, like the Asgardish goblins).

**Vanhin Forest:** This whole wood seems to be enchanted, a far-reaching effect of the Tree of Life that grows in Sampo. Those who enter Vanhin find that weariness and despair quickly fly from them. It never seems to be night or day here, nor does this place know winter from summer — it is ever a cool twilight in Vanhin. The passage of time itself seems slower, and yet the days are happier, howsoever many may pass. Those that dwell all their lives in Vanhin can be considered blessed, if it is peace and not excitement that they seek.



## SYLVANIA

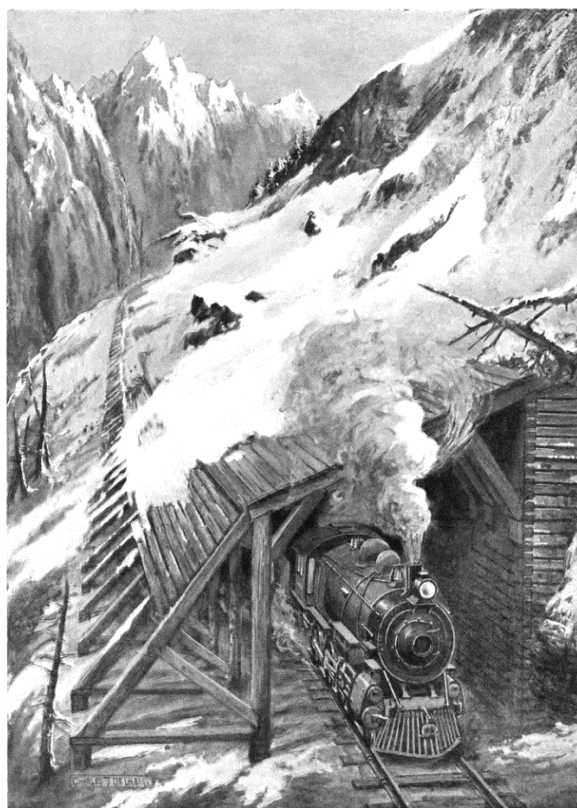
Sylvania is the country which sits east of the Valks and south of the Drachendorns. A very ancient kingdom, it was founded long ago by the Sylphs, an ethnic group of harpies. Today, Sylvania is a kingdom of two cultures, that of the Sylphs (who reside mainly in the north) and that of humans descended from commingled Elysian and Illyrian stock (who dominate the south). The eastern shore of Sylvania is formed by the Vodyan Sea, although the only easy access to this shore can be found at the mouth of the Veloc River. That river is the primary waterway throughout Sylvania: it flows out of the Valks; and the Varcolac, Gyors, Búbáj, and Orpheon Rivers all empty into it. To the south, Sylvania touches Elysia (which begins where the Desfäta Hills end), the Illic Sea (though the Strega Mountains all but cut it off from the rest of the country), and the land of Illyria (which is separated from Sylvania by the Orpheon and the Veloc rivers). Much of eastern Sylvania is wasteland, poorly cultivated but populated nonetheless. In the center of the country, conditions are far better: around the Principality of Fredonia, the people are prosperous and the land is productive. The Sylvanian monarchy has managed to amass great wealth in recent decades, and the country's standing army is well-trained and now of a considerable size (mostly as a reaction to the posturing of the Utopian Empire).

The closer one comes to the mountains in the north of Sylvania, the more one is apt to encounter the Sylphs. In the mountains proper, these harpies have many strongholds carved into the sides of the highest peaks. In these places, the primary tongue spoken is Sylphic, a language related to the Old High Elvish (and modern Pohjolan). Everywhere south of the Great Sylvan Woods and the Agyar Wastes, though, is primarily human country, and the tongue spoken here is Sylvanian, a modern dialect of the old Cælestine common tongue. Humans rule all of the lands south the Veloc and Varcolac Rivers, including the central Principality of Fredonia. The queen who rules from Fredonia, Katrina I, is also the monarch of all Sylvania.

After the wars of the First Age, when harpies and all the other fair folk were summoned into the world, the Sylph tribe chose to settle in the Valks and the Drachendorns. Eventually, they also

passed south of the mountains and settled the rough country that they found beyond the foothills there. During the Second Age, the Sylphs were warlike and independent. There were many small Sylph kingdoms, and these warred amongst themselves and against all of their neighbors — except the High Elves of Pohjola, who always had the utmost respect and friendship of the birdfolk. Stories handed down from the late Second Age tell of a great hero, a Sylph named Mikhail the Bold, who united the warring tribes into a single kingdom that came to be called "Sylphania." The stories that speak of Mikhail's deeds are many and conflicting, clearly having been embellished in the intervening millennia. Old tales also mention that at the end of the Second Age, Sylphs joined the Urther's rebellion against Avalon.

At the beginning of the Third Age, the united Sylph kingdom was strong, but geography was against it. While humans came into Elysia and Illyria and slowly began to settle those lands, the power of the shadowspawn grew in the east, in Tuonela and on the waters of the Vodyan. Then came the rise of Mephret and the Second Great War, and the onslaught of Apophis and the risen





Lich-King. While the armies of Illyria were pushed aside by the forces of Apophis, shadow-spawn sailed over the Vodyan and won the eastern shore of Sylvania. Then the men from Mephret linked up with the 'spawn, and this combined force swept westward across the country and razed it practically to the ground. A great alliance came down out of Midjard and halted the march of Chaos, turning it aside as a stone breaks a wave; but Sylvania became the site of the heaviest fighting in that war, and it ultimately broke the Sylphic kingdom utterly. When the war was over and the armies of Apophis were defeated, Sylvania was in ruins.

Then, late in the Third Age, humans quickly moved up from the south and settled in the depopulated lands. Alexander's empire took parts of Sylvania under its control; and later, when the Elysian Empire came to power, it conquered the rest of the country. Early on during the Fourth Age, Sylvania was an important province in the Elysian Empire and close to the heart of human civilization, much like Hesperia. After the fall of Elysium, the country came back under the control of Illyria, until Illyria fell to Akbar of Amarna in the Fifteenth Century. Sylvania might have fallen as well, if not for another hero that arose in the eastern part of the country, a warlord named János. In order to repel the invading Amarnans, János formed a society of knights called the Order of the Dragon. The Order was modeled upon the traditions of János's Sylphic countrymen and their famed dragoons. János and his knights managed to hold the Amarnans at the banks of the Veloc: they never won into Sylvania, and they never conquered any lands north of Illyria.

A descendant of János I still rules the east country in Sylvania: Prince János VI, Archduke of Agyar. The sixth János is not as well-beloved as his ancestor: his country is a wasteland, and his people are poor. There are even rumors that János himself is a nosferatu and a sorcerer, and that he has drained these lands of their vitality. The prince rarely leaves his castle at the city of Praf, although from time to time he does make conspicuous trips to Fredonia to press his suit of marriage with the queen.

The ruler of all Sylvania, Katrina Beldenberg, distinguished herself as a warrior and an adventuress before she came to the throne as Queen Katrina I. Unlike past human rulers of Fredonia, Katrina has been intent on keeping all of Sylvania

united, and this includes making sure that the Sylphs have their say in her government. Though her autocracy is absolute, Queen Katrina does her best to hear grievances and take advice from local rulers of border-provinces. Even still, some Sylphs that live in the Valks would prefer to be completely independent of a human monarch, and whispers of imminent rebellion are widespread. This is the last thing that Queen Katrina needs: Emperor François of Utopia, in his thirst for conquest, girds his country for wide war. In response to this imminent threat, Katrina has seen to it that Sylvania now marshals its own defenses. The only thing that this audacious soldier-queen will *not* do is accept the marriage proposal of Archduke János, even if that would greatly increase her political power and allow her to declare Sylvania a proper empire. The archduke's reputation is simply too besmirched by foul rumors for Queen Katrina to ever consider such a match.

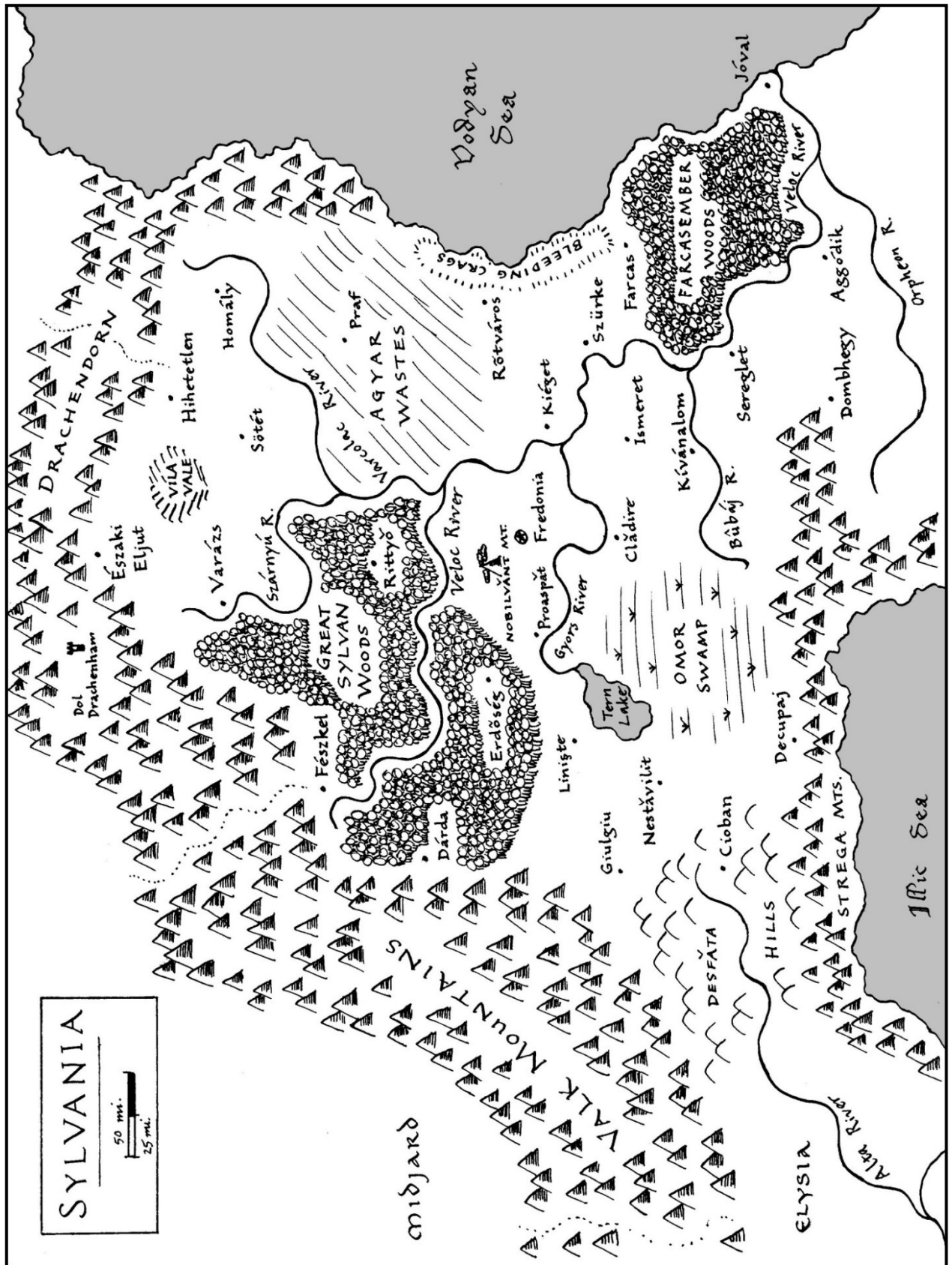
**Agyar Wastes:** This is the country ruled by Archduke János VI from his castle at Praf. The land here is gray, as if all the life has been drained from it. Vampires are said to stalk the nights with impunity here. Rumors also persist that János himself is a vampire-lord, but there is no proof to support such accusations. The fact of the matter is that János has been seen publicly in the daytime, which cannot help but cast considerable doubt on any such superstitious hearsay.

**Bleeding Crag:** A region of high seaside cliffs and narrow canyons, ancient tombs are dug into the crags. The tombs predate human settlement of the region and are probably of Sylphic origin.

**Desfăta Hills:** This hilly country is sparsely populated but peaceful. The southwestern edge of the hills forms the border between Sylvania and Elysia. Recently, Queen Katrina has started to discreetly move soldiers into the hills. She does not want to provoke a response from any of the Elysian city-states, but she nonetheless feels the need to guard this border in case Utopia ever invades.

**Farcasember Forest:** These woods are thought to be haunted by hexbeasts and werewolves. The town of Farcas on the north edge of the woods is a strange place, quiet and dolorous during the day, but with mad music and wild celebrations on a nightly basis. Visitors do not stay long, for they eventually come to suspect that the people of Farcas are under some sort of odd spell.

**Great Sylan Woods:** This vast expanse of woodlands in the center of the country is home to





a great many harpies and humans. The cities of Dárda and Fészkel are the centers of some of the most strident opposition to Queen Katrina's militaristic rule.

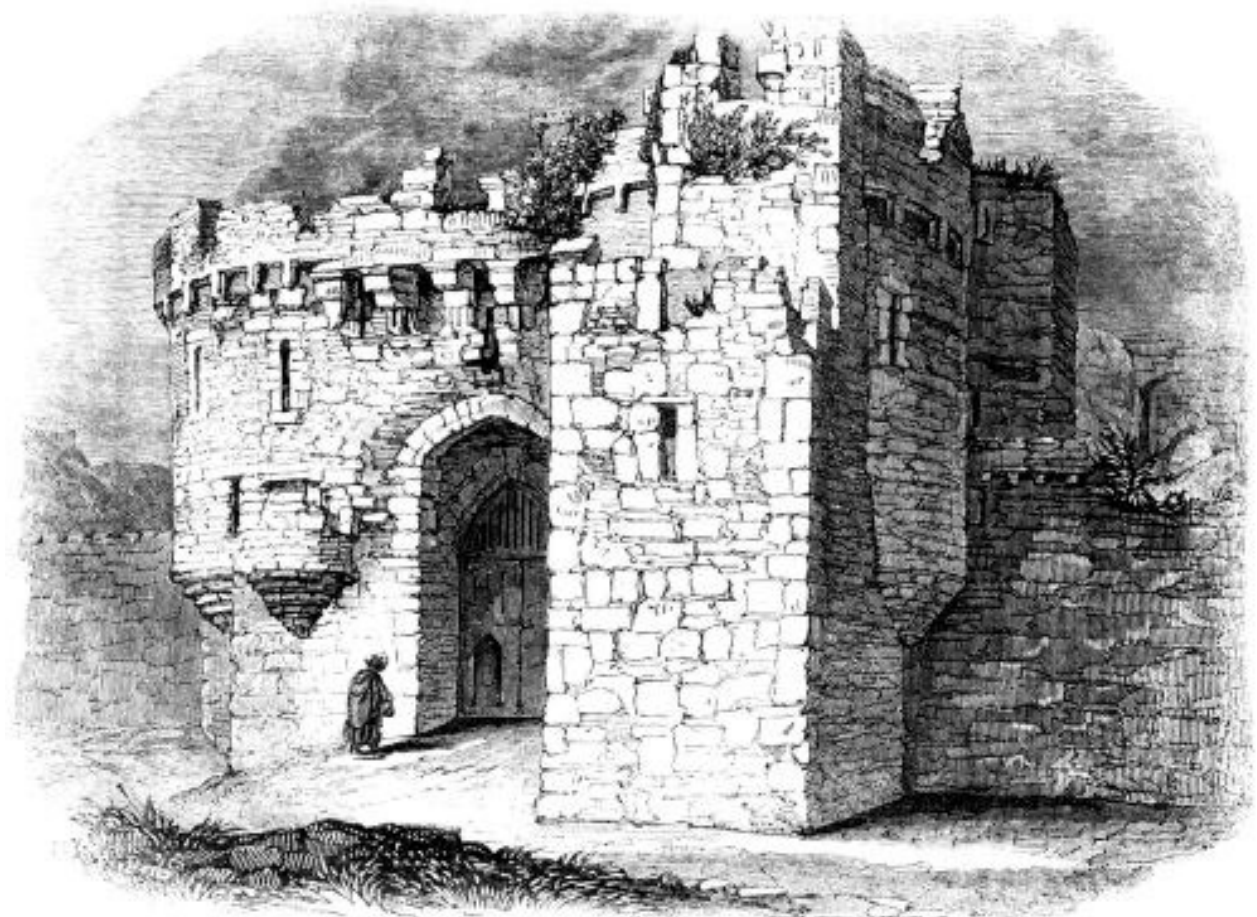
**Fredonia:** The capital of Sylvania sits at the southeastern foot of Nobilvánt Mountain. Harpies yet live within the mountain, whereas the humans prefer to live in the city. The royal palace of Queen Katrina is more than just a splendid mansion: it is also a center of culture and the arts. The Sylvanians are great lovers of music, sculpture, and painting, and all of these endeavors are well-supported by the royal treasury. Fredonia is famous for its museums, conservatories, theaters, opera houses, academies, and a famous school called the Illuminari University. The Scholars of Illuminari are some of the world's finest physicians, surgeons, philosophers, and magicians.

**Omor Swamp:** South of the Tern Lake and the Gyors River, this large wetland area is difficult to navigate, but that doesn't stop people from living

here. Wandering faun and humans bands are its primary inhabitants.

**Veloc River:** Most of Sylvania is a part of the Veloc's river-valley. In the parts where the river flows through the Great Woods, humans make their living as loggers and ferrymen. Farther south, the cities rely on the trade plied up and down the Veloc and its tributaries: Proaspăt and Clădire on the Gyors; Kívánalom on the Búbáj; and Kiéget, Szürke, Sereglet, and Aggódik on the Veloc itself. At the mouth of the river, the city of Jóval is Sylvania's only real naval port, charged with defending the country's eastern shore against all threats – not just the shadowspawn of Tuonela, but the Amarnan Empire as well.

**Víla Vale:** This narrow, densely forested valley is said to be a home of capricious nature-spirits. People who enter Víla Vale do not come out. Whatever it is that lives here, none can tell whether it is truly evil or merely a danger to the unwary and the foolish.



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## TIRNANOG

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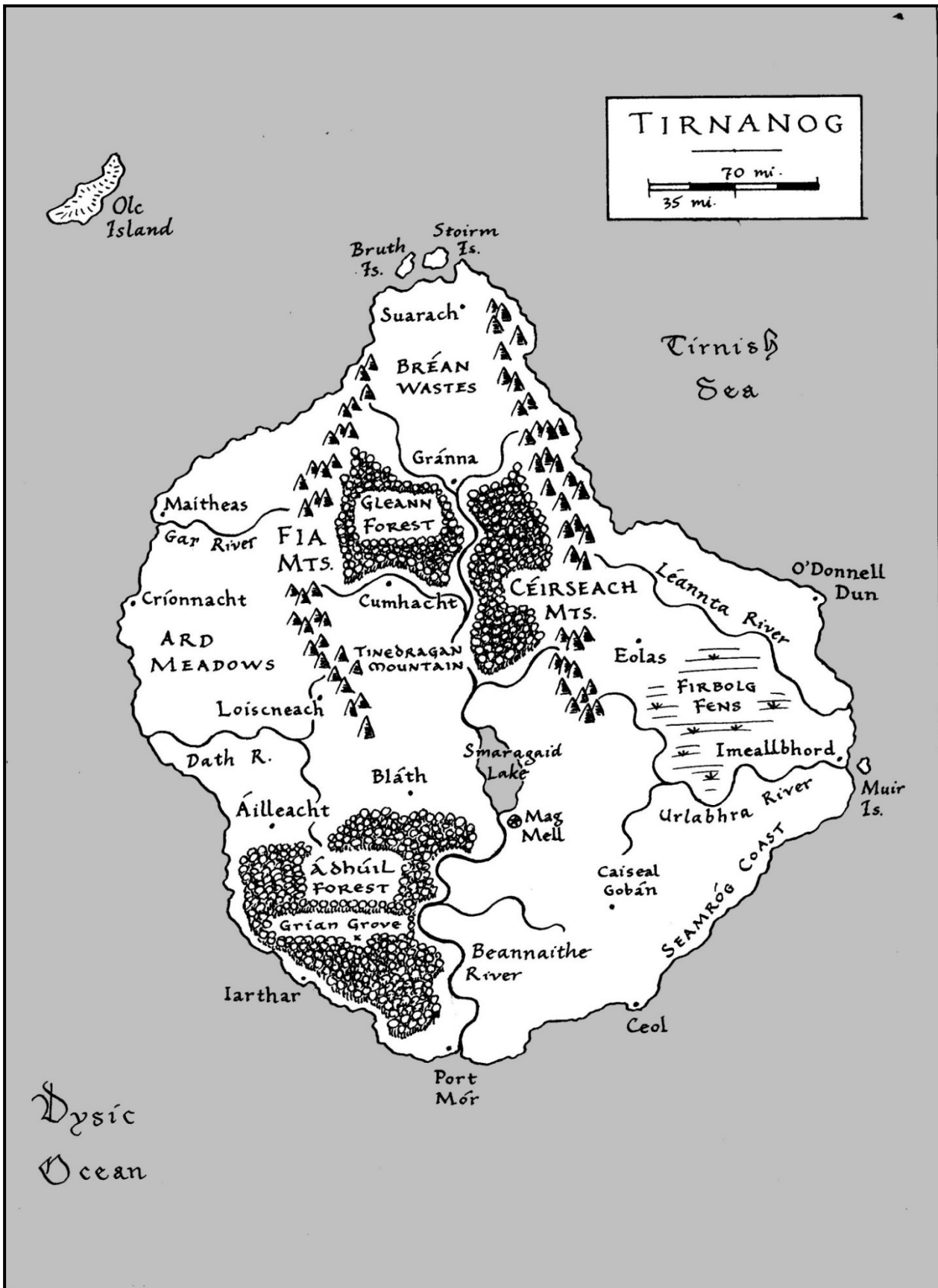
Tirnanog is an island which sits approximately one-hundred and fifty miles west of Avalon. Of the two islands, Tirnanog is considerably smaller, covering perhaps one-third the area Avalon does. Much of Tirnanog is highlands, but there are also rolling meadows, fens, woods, and heaths. The island is roughly divided into three regions by the two mountain ranges that run north-south through the middle of it, the Fia and Céirseach Mountains. East of the Céirseachs, the native háin (also known as háinfolk or leprechauns) and merrows mingle with men and elves of Avalonian descent. This part of the country is more or less directly under the control of Avalon, a fact not likely to change soon. West of the Fias, the Ard country is peopled almost entirely by háin, and fiercely nationalistic ones at that. Proudly patriotic, these lands are the heart of the háin rebellion against the Avalonian Empire. The center of the country, then, is the region that the two sides are fighting over. Whoever controls Mag Mell and the river-valley of the Beannaithe will control the greater part of Tirnanog. And yet, the country between the mountains – the Gleann Forest and the Bréan Wastes – is wild and fearsome, home to spirits and monsters. No mortal rules over *this* place – not Avalon and not rebels.

The very first inhabitants of Tirnanog were not the háin, but the Sidhe. Those that dwelt here in the First Age built a kingdom called the Daoine Sidhe country. It was greatly weakened by the First Great War with the Four Fiends, but it was not destroyed. That did not happen until the Second Age, when dwerrow-folk (primitive dwarfs, the ancestors of the háin) first came to the island. These little people, when they originally appeared in Gaia, were war-like and barbaric. Although the fays named them *leipreac-háin* (“the little folk”), the dwerrows were fierce enough that they were able to push the Daoine Sidhe clear off their own island. This was a slow process, though, only accomplished over centuries. During that time, the háinfolk learned from the Sidhe, and they even picked up a dialect of their language, which is why Old Fay so closely resembles Old Hánnish, the ancestor of the modern Tirnish tongue. Eventually, the háinfolk came to call themselves by what is now their traditional name as a people and a nation, the háin (a plural form that means

“the folk”; one leprechaun is called a *hán*). The fays who were descended from the Daoine Sidhe, meanwhile, were driven all the way back to the Ard country in the west of Tirnanog. At last, they built ships and joined their brethren in fleeing across the Dysic Ocean, into the Uttermost West (Lemuria and Tollan), where they then dwelt all throughout the Second Age.

The háin burrowed a city into a great earthen mound at a place called Mag Mell. Here dwelt the High King of the háinfolk, who was lord over all of the lesser háin-kings that ruled the many tribes throughout Tirnanog. But the Elfin Empire that grew up in Avalon proved superior in war, and after a few centuries of freedom, Tirnanog came under the thumb of Avalon. The High Kings were forced to pay dear tribute to the Emperor at Annwn, although they resisted all throughout the Second Age. In the days when Meliora came to rule in Avalon, there lived at Mag Mell two princes, Darby and Dermot of the clan O’Donnell. As the old legends tell it, Darby was the elder brother and the rightful heir to the throne – but both brothers were cruel and conceited, and neither was worthy of the crown. Their father, the old High King, knew this to be true and died without naming a proper successor. The throne then would have fallen to Darby, but for the fact that Dermot made a pact with Meliora to betray his brother. The elf-queen intervened and had Darby exiled from Tirnanog. In this act, she made a dire enemy. Plotting his revenge all the while, Darby secretly went to the Forest of the Ancients in Avalon, and there he helped to found a rebellion against Meliora. This was the famous rebel army that clashed with Meliora’s knights when the Urther walked out of the mists and found them. Somehow, Darby convinced the first human Hero to join the rebellion, an act that made history. In the war with the Elfin Empire, Dermot is said to have been killed; and Darby, made wiser and kinder by his years of hardship as a rebel, was installed on the throne as High King. Thus did Tirnanog enter the Third Age.

The háin kingdom remained strong, even as humans arose in the south. The Second Great War did not touch Tirnanog at all, so remote was the island from the rest of Arcadia in those days. But after Elysium built its empire at the very end of that period, the fourth Emperor of Cælestium, Thadrian, embarked upon a campaign to subdue



it. Thadrian had great success in Avalon, where he drove the rebuilt fay kingdom north of the mountains; but in Tirnanog, he never won a beachhead. The háin were simply too swift, too silent, and too sure of aim to be defeated by the relatively big and clumsy humans. Indeed, the hánnish kingdom persisted well into the Fourth Age, though it did so under a new dynasty, the O'Brien line, which had replaced the O'Donnell kings late in the Third Age.

Then, still early in the Fourth Age, Elysium retreated from Avalon, and King Agravain came to power in Annwn. That king of fays hungered for the glory of ancient times long past, and he vowed to build a new Avalonian Empire. He began with Tirnanog. The united skill of fays, elves, and men in Avalon proved the hánnish's undoing. In the centuries of war that followed, much of Tirnanog was pillaged and destroyed, and the royal O'Brien line was exterminated. With the High Kingship broken, Tirnanog came firmly under the rule of Avalon, a protectorate of the new Empire. But the háin have a history of rebellion that dates back to the O'Donnell kings, to Darby the Great who was friend of the Urther. They do not brook foreign rule lightly, and the spirit of resistance burns hottest in the west country, as it has for much this past Age of the world. The háin have only risked open war sporadically, whenever the time has felt right. The Eighteenth Century was comparatively peaceful, and so far, the Nineteenth Century has not seen any major conflagrations. Many patriots are restless, though, and soon more violence may come to the land of the Little Folk, the onetime isle of the Daoine Sidhe.

**Ádhúil Forest:** Since the later days of the Third Age, this forest has been home to an order of wizards (including a few human mages from the south) who were the first Druids, following in the tradition of the fay preacher, Midir. It was, however, believed that Midir's original cult had mostly died out by the time King Agravain had conquered Tirnanog. But now a secretive society of men and fairies once again dwells here, at the old forest stronghold called Grian Grove. Avalonian soldiers suspect that the Grove has become a rebel stronghold, but it's also possible that these humans are trying to bring back the first Druid Order in Ádhúil—entirely for their own mysterious purposes, whatever those may be.

**Ard Meadows:** The west country is gentle in

both climate and terrain, an emerald-green grassland that reflects in the bejeweled eyes of the hánnish folk. This part of Tirnanog foments the direst opposition to Queen Maeve and Avalon. The surest way to get oneself grievously injured in this part of the country is to duck one's head into a pub in Críonnacht or Loiscneach and shout, "Long live Queen Maeve!" or "For the glory of the Empire!"

**Beannaithe River:** This river flows between the Fia and Céirseach ranges. Near the source of the river, the land is wild; more civilization is to be found as the waters course south. By the time the Beannaithe empties into the Smaragaid Lake, it is a mighty flow indeed. (The Smaragaid, incidentally, is home to a large community of merrows, and a powerful merrow witch is said to dwell there among them and protect the lake.) Then, leaving the lake, the Beannaithe continues down to the sea, where the storied city of Port Mór becomes Tirnanog's chief seaport and its gateway to the rest of the world. The Avalonian Navy has firm control of Port Mór, but it holds a less certain grip on the cities upriver (including Mag Mell). The Beannaithe is in fact navigable by ship all the way up to Smaragaid Lake.

**Bréan Wastes:** This country is rocky and bare, with naught to break up the sight of it but scraggly scrub and ancient stone cairns. The old city of Suarach was a Sidhe fortress during the time of Daoine Sidhe, but it was taken by shadowspawn at the end of the First Age. The 'spawn held onto it for millennia, but they were driven out of the region in the later part of the Third Age. Five or six hundred years before the present day, Suarach came alive again—and it drew to itself many evil wizards, both human and fay. Shadowspawn and trolls have also returned to the Wastes. There are even rumors of dragons. Bréan is without doubt the deadliest part of all Tirnanog.

**Caiseal Gobán:** This fortress was built by the O'Brien kings at the start of the Fourth Age, but it was quickly taken by invaders in the name of King Agravain. It has been a stronghold of Avalon ever since.

**Céirseach Mountains:** These low and round-topped mountains stretch through the eastern part of Tirnanog. They are known chiefly for the bluish fog that rolls off their eastern slopes and down to the sea, a perfectly natural occurrence that makes the streets of Eolas look haunting and mysterious at both dawn and dusk.

**Fia Mountains:** These brown, jagged mountains divide western Tirnanog down the middle. Located in the southern part of this range, Tine-dragan Mountain is said to be the lair of a huge and ancient fire-drake which has slept on a vast treasure-ward these past thousand years.

**Firbolg Fens:** A tribe of ogres live in the fens. They mostly keep to themselves and rarely visit the cities. Of late, though, they have been growing restless – and since this part of the country is quite solidly under the control of Avalon, the foreign soldiers will naturally suspect that the ogres have been incited by rebels from the west.

**Gleann Forest:** Except for the brave háin that dwell in Cumacht, most people do not go into Gleann Forest. This is only prudent. Gleann is a dangerous place. The trees of Gleann, so say the locals, do not take kindly to visitors.

**Mag Mell:** The capital city of Tirnanog, Mag Mell was seized from the rebels by Avalonian soldiers over two hundred years ago, and the rebels have not yet dared the attempt to recapture it. The city is still rocked by violence from time to time, though: usually this takes the form of a bomb planted at a government building by insurgents. The Mound of Mag Mell, the old palace of the O'Donnell kings, still stands here. From the outside, it looks like an earthen mound covered in

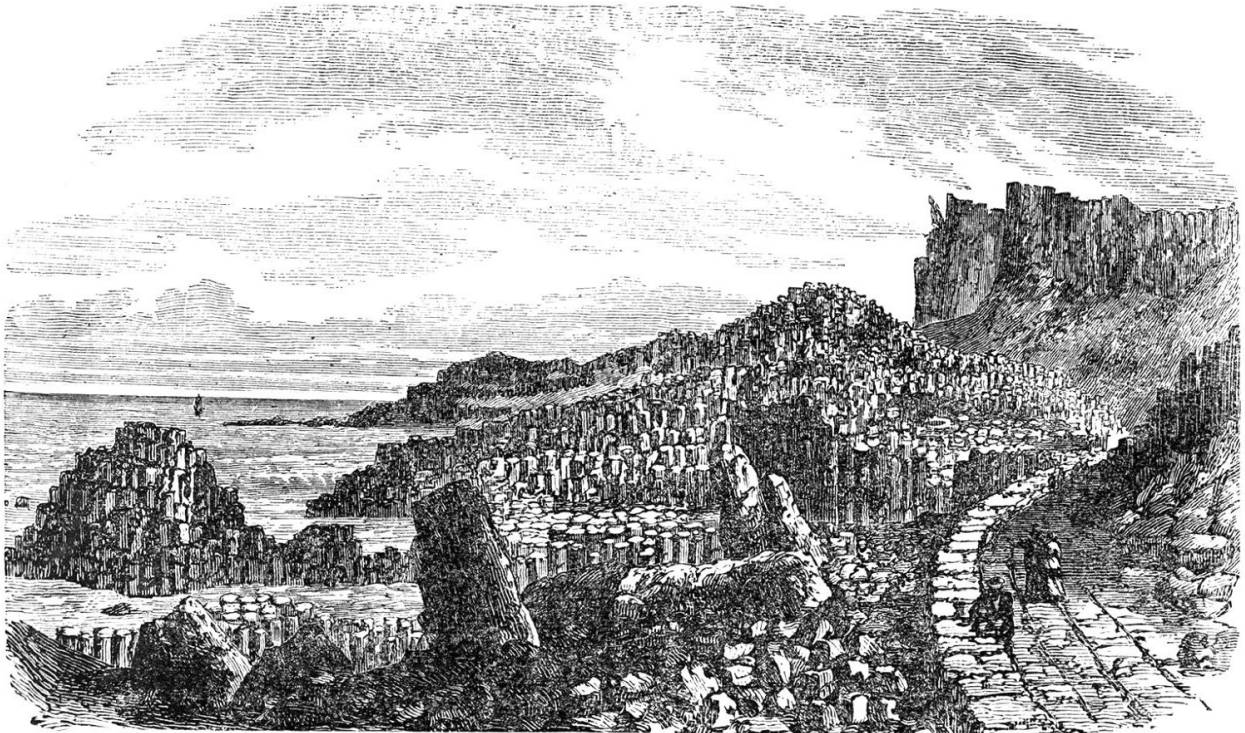
emerald grass. From within, it looks just like any other stone castle, but much cozier.

**Muir Island:** This island sits before the mouth of the Urlabhra River, across the strait from the port city of Imeallbhord. (When pronouncing the name of either the river or the city, note that the “bh” sounds like an English “v.”) Imeallbhord is an important naval base for Avalon, and Muir Island itself is the site of a famous sea-battle in which the forces of King Agravaín defeated the háin sea-farers defending the island.

**Olc Island:** This northern island is a strange place for a shadowspawn stronghold, but such it is. The mountains here house hordes of loathsome ‘spawn, who ply the north Dysic like pirates.

**Seamróg Coast:** This region is populated by far more humans and merrows than háin. A great many of the humans living this region are more likely to think ill of the Críonnacht rebellion than of Imperial Avalon. But there are plenty of sympathizers here too. In short, for all of its emerald hills and shining beaches and other idyllic scenery, this place is a bloody powderkeg waiting to go off.

**Tirnish Sea:** The merrows that live in this sea invariably think of themselves as Tirnish, not Avalonian. To wit, they would much sooner side with háinnish rebels than with the Imperial soldiers, should the rebels ever think to ask for their help.



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## UTOPIA

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The country of Utopia (which is nowadays called the Utopian Empire) covers the enormous region in western Arcadia situated north of the Valk Mountains and west of the Gylden and Wunder Rivers. Like a great peninsula, most of Utopia juts out into the Dysic Ocean, although the southern coast of the country is actually formed by the Hipponic Sea, the shallow body which separates Utopia from Hesperia. Most of Utopia is plains country, although hills and mountains do make some parts of it more rugged. The many rivers that wind through its lowlands serve as the major travel-routes, even in this day and age when railroads crisscross the whole nation. Utopia is far and away the most technophilic of all Arcadia's nations, not least because it is the homeland of the gnomes. Humans dwell here in great numbers too, and many Sylvan Elves make their home in the northeastern part of the country, a region called Lutinny, which is culturally much closer to Midjard than to the rest of Utopia.

The Utopian language is descended from a dialect of Cælestine (since the whole country was once a province of the Elysian Empire), but it is more distinctive than modern Elysian or Hesperian. The Utopian tongue has been heavily influenced by the harsh sounds and particular vocabulary of Old Gnomish, a speech distantly related to Old Fay and Old Hánnish and now long extinct from the region. Two other major languages, Alfo-Lutin and Úkyar, are spoken in the more provincial reaches of Utopia. Alfo-Lutin is the tongue spoken by the Wood Elves in the northeast; it is very closely related to Midjardisch. Úkyar, meanwhile, is the language of the ogres who dwell in the southeast of Utopia, in the Heights and the Desolation. Their language is actually quite similar to modern Pohjolan.

During the First Age, the land now called Utopia was sparsely settled by scattered little communities of primitive Sidhe. (Some of their archaic farm-villages have actually been uncovered by human and gnomish archaeologists, much to the excitement of Utopia's vibrant scientific community.) Later in that period, when the first fairy-folk were summoned into the world, gnomes settled these same lands in great numbers, but they didn't dwell on the surface. Instead, they tunneled under the ground and lived in subterranean halls. (These

too are well-documented by archaeologists and historians.) In the Second Age, when elves came to power in Avalon, the gnomes avoided conquest by simply hiding underground. Though elves colonized the surface of Utopia, the gnomes were never seen. In those days, they were known as the "Hidden Folk," and the elves were actually skeptical of their very existence.

Near to the end of the Second Age, the underground cities were ruled by a single Gnome King, a great engineer called Calcasterix the Wise. This ruler became a friend of the Urther after that famed hero returned from over the sea with Myrddin and the exiled fays. He even helped the human to build machines of war, to aid in the defeat of Meliora. It is said that the gnomes learned much of science and engineering from the Urther, who was wise beyond the ken of any fairy in the application of Natural Law; and ever since, the gnomes have been a people fascinated by technology, a fact which now holds true for all the Utopian people, regardless of their kindred.

When the Third Age began, the threat once posed by the Elfin Empire was now gone, and the gnomes moved onto the surface of their country. But humans also came into the world *en masse* in this time, and a great many of them appeared out of the west from over the sea. They mainly settled in the far south, in the countries which were then called Elysium and Illyrium. For most of the Third Age, humans did not bother the gnomes directly; but they did play their part in bringing about the Second Great War, which caused much strife for the gnomes when the fighting finally reached the borders of Utopia. This war weakened the gnome kingdom considerably, such that when Elysium arose in the south, centuries later, Julius Dracus and his son Octavius were able to conquer the whole region in only two generations.

Early in the Fourth Age, Utopia became a province of Elysium. Many humans came and settled there, mostly in the south country. Gnomes remained dominant in the north, where they were treated as full citizens of the Empire. The region of Lutinny, meanwhile, was still independent. In those days, it was still considered a part of Midjard, and it was never taken by Elysium. When the Empire did finally fall, Utopia was hit hard by the Dark Age that followed. Most of the country then fragmented into warring tribal states, tiny kingdoms of men and gnomes and elves.

Things began to change in the Medieval period of the Fourth Age, when a gnome king named Charles the Small rose to power in the western kingdom of Rolandeaux. Charles was a gifted general and a shrewd politician, and he managed to unite many kingdoms under his banner. Eventually, most of the other lords of Utopia swore fealty to him, and so Charles the Small came to be known as Charlemin, King of Rolandeaux and Emperor of all Utopia. He reigned from 846 until the year 1187 of the Fourth Age, when he was succeeded by his son, Charles II. The second Charles ruled Utopia less ably than his father had, though he managed to subdue the elves of Lutiny and add them to the empire. But the elves ultimately won the upper hand in that transaction, because after Charles II was assassinated in 1265, a bit of political maneuvering on the part of an elfin warlord by the name of Lénou placed him upon the throne in Rolandeaux. King Lénou I was a good ruler who treated the gnomes and humans as well as he did his own people, and he worked to spread learning and wisdom throughout Utopia. But, just as Charlemin had done before him, Lénou eventually passed the kingdom down to his son.

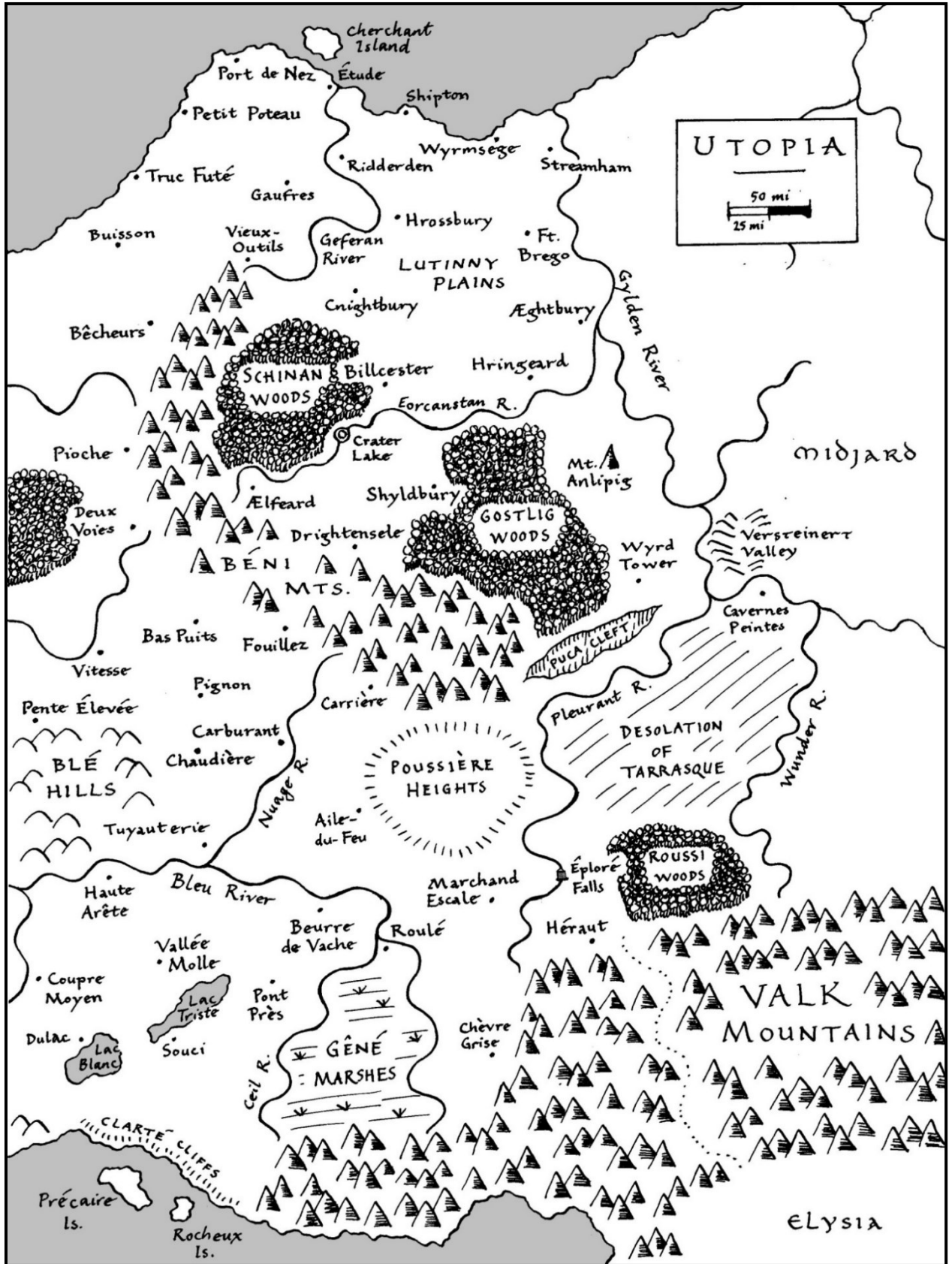
Lénou II, who came to power in 1544, was a very decadent king. He built for himself and his court an enormous pleasure-palace at the city of Jardin; he squandered the money in the treasury on frivolous wars; and he seemed more interested in building an empire in far-away Lemuria than in seeing to the welfare of his own people, who grew poorer by the day. Eventually, the people could

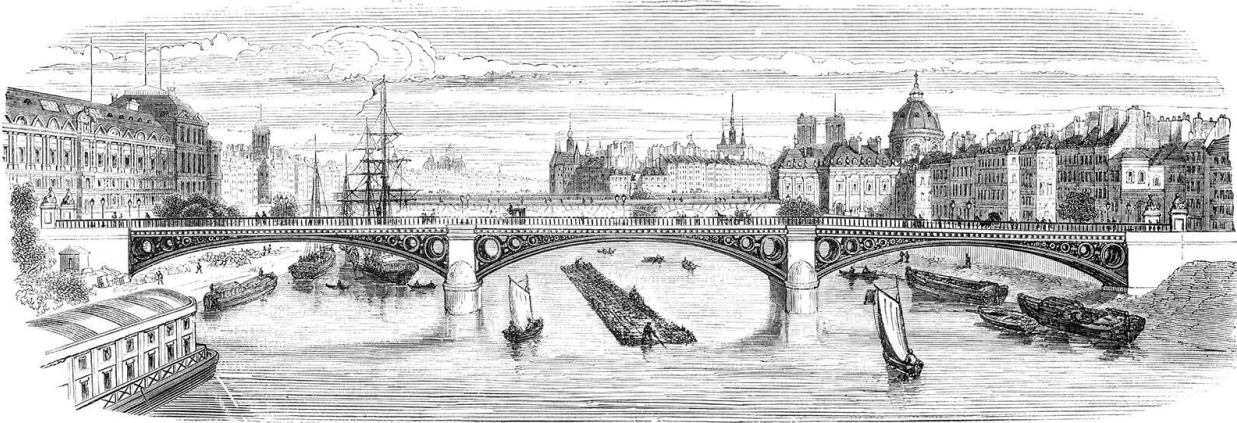
stand it no longer, and cries of *révolution* rang out in the streets of Rolandeaux. Lénou II lost his head to the guillotine in 1789.

Following a decade of bloody civil war, the infamous Utopian Revolution climaxed with the ascendancy of the brilliant general and all-around military genius, François Biendit. This gnome is the best tactician that the world has seen since Julius Dracus. François was made the president of









Utopia's revolutionary government, only to have himself declared emperor once his power had been consolidated. He now rules Utopia autocratically, with a General Assembly of elected leaders serving only to rubberstamp the laws that he enacts. François is also a brilliant scientist in his own right, and he has done much to promote the advancement of science, technology, and learning in his new empire. He continues his predecessor's exploration of northern Lemuria, racing with Avalon to expand Utopia's colonies overseas (namely New Vinchamps on the east coast of Lemuria and also vast western expanse known as Arborea). But François is a dictator and a ruthless nationalist, and the very instant he sees the opportunity to strike out at neighboring countries, he will take it without hesitation. On that day, Arcadia will be plunged into wide war the likes of which have not been seen since the Second Age of the world.

**Béni Mountains:** These old, eroded peaks serve to separate the region of Lutinny from the rest of Utopia. Everywhere north and east of the Béni Mountains is Wood Elf territory. Many cities along these mountains (especially Pioche, Deux Voies, and Drightensele) and are still active and relatively lucrative mines.

**Blé Hills:** This pleasant, hilly prairie country is home to great numbers of farmers, but it yet remains one of the most provincial regions in all of Utopia. The town of Pente Élevé is home to a key military garrison and school where officers in the Utopian army are trained. Many of the cities to the immediate east of the Blé Hills are highly industrialized factory-towns: Pignon, Carburant, and Chaudière are all well known for the mass-production of various mechanical parts and tools.

**Bleu River:** The main river-valley running through Utopia, a number of rivers empty into the Bleu: the Chanson, the Vite, the Nuage, and the Ceil. The capital, Rolandeaux, is located where the Chanson meets the Belu. At the mouth of the river, the city of Les Ondines (founded long ago by merrow-folk) is a major port and naval base, well known for its raucous annual springtime festival.

**Cavernes Peintes:** This site is home to a number of caves, the walls decorated by paintings of absolutely indescribable antiquity. Not far from the Versteinert Valley, these two sites taken together seem to point to a time that doesn't just predate the Sidhe civilization of the First Age — it actually harkens back to a long-lost and totally primitive time from even before the Ancients.

**Clarté Cliffs:** The perilous waters that flow between these cliffs and the islands of Précaire and Rocheux are home to all manner of dangers, from sirens and hydras to vicious pirates.

**Cuivre Hills:** Gold, iron, and copper mines are found here. North of the hills, the city of Meruelles is both an important trading port and a major center of art and culture in Utopia.

**Desolation of Tarrasque:** This wasteland has been barren and dead throughout all Four Ages of Gaia. Whatever caused it to be so happened during the Elder Days, the time of the Ancients. Now only a few scattered ogre tribes dwell here.

**Étant River:** The Étroit River empties into the Étant, and here the city of Jardin was built. Jardin is a city surrounded by an immense and sprawling hedge-maze (of course, one does not need to navigate the maze in order to enter the city; a wide highway cuts through it and leads straight up to the city gates). Within the walls of Jardin

there lies the infamous Garden Palace of Lénou, one of the most richly appointed and decadent mansions ever built. The city is also home to an odd order of scholars called the Green Men, who are chiefly known for publishing a witty, satirical newspaper called *Le Pomme aux Jardin*.

**Géné Marshes:** Old stories say that cu sith and cait sith stalk these swamps. Whether those stories are true or not, dire rats most definitely do live here. Perhaps hexrats do as well.

**Gostlig Woods:** Many hearth-tales told in Shyldbury involve the horrors of the Gostlig Woods. A great battle was fought in this forest long ago, and now it is infested with ghouls.

**Lac Blanc and Lac Triste:** These two peaceful lakes are heavily fished by the nearby human settlements. Most prosperous among these is Dulac, which also happens to be the home of a centuries-old brotherhood of knights, the Order of the Lance and Flower, whose creed is to promote peace (even if violence is sometimes required to achieve a greater and more lasting peace).

**Lutinny Plains:** This low, grassy country is inhabited by Wood Elves which are famous for their horsemanship. Once an autonomous kingdom akin to those in Midjard, it has been a part of Utopia for centuries. A legend connected with the city of Wyrmsege says that Lutinny was actually founded when the elves, coming from the east out of Midjard, slew an entire family of evil dragons there and decided to stay in commemoration of those warriors they lost in the battle.

**Maudit Forest:** This wood is said to be cursed.

The animals in Maudit are extremely vicious and belligerent. This is true of *any* animal that enters the forest, even domesticated steeds.

**Rolandeaux:** This is the capital of Utopia, where the old palace of Charlemin still stands — now the private and personal home of Emperor François. This is also where the General Assembly meets to ratify laws decreed by the Emperor. The Rolandeaux *Académie des Sciences* is perhaps the finest technical institute in the world.

**Poussière Heights:** This wild highland region is still home to a number of hill giants and ogres. Wizardly hermits are known to wander into these heights on arcane pilgrimages that can last for months. The Heights must conceal some magical secret known only to a few very learned mages.

**Puca Cleft:** This eighty-mile-long gash in the ground is an open wound in the very surface of the earth, a place where shadowspawn and other Chaos-beasts can crawl up from the Deep-Under. The Wyrd Tower set north of the cliff is home to a very old, very evil wizard named Zoltar

**Roussi Woods:** This forest is slowly but surely growing northward, inch by inch reclaiming the Desolation on its doorstep.

**Schinan Woods:** All who enter these blessed woods feel their spirits lifted and their fatigue wiped away, especially after they drink a draught from any of the forest streams that empty into the Eorcanstan River. Without a doubt, leshies must dwell deep in the Schinan. The nearby Crater Lake seems to have been formed by a massive meteor impact, tens of thousands of years old.



## FURTHER ADVENTURES

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The world of Gaia is bigger than just Arcadia. For that matter, it's bigger than just the planet Gaia. Not only are there other continents to explore; other dimensions and other worlds also await any adventurers willing to brave the farthest frontiers that one can reach with modern technology and ancient magic.

### Other Continents

Provided on the following page is a partial map of the east coast of the continent of Lemuria and the large northern island of Jøtunheim, home of the stone giants. (Note that ifrits live in Muspellheim and marids in Neifelheim — the locals call them “fire giants” and “frost giants,” but these are planar beings, powerful and magical elementals.)

Developing these new lands is left up to the creativity and ingenuity of individual game referees who will run their own *E&E* campaigns. The broad idea of a world was presented in this book, but the fine details remain the responsibility of the referees who will actually portray this world and bring it to life at the game-table. Likewise, should the players ever venture to more distant shores — to the jungles of Tollan, the wastelands of Mu, or the far-off cities of Imperial Jianghu — the referee will have to develop these settings as well.

### Other Planes

The world of Gaia has the same simplified metaphysics as the *E&E Core Rules*. The wider Cosmos starts with the Center of Being, and the other planes wrap around it in concentric layers: the Astral Sea, the Inner Etheric Plane, the Physical Universe(s), the Outer Etheric Plane, the Surface of Limbo, and lastly the Void of Chaos (which spawned all of the other planes spontaneously in the first place, but which also longs to swallow them back up again).

The Physical Universe encompasses multiple dimensions — alternate versions (or timelines) of the same “Prime” Material Plane. Our Earth, Solar System, and Milky Way could very well reside in one such as these, but the possibilities are really limitless. A technologist intent on exploring the implications of the so-called “many-worlds” interpretation of quantum mechanics might even be able to invent a device that enables travel between such realities.

There are places within Gaia itself which could best be described as “pocket-dimensions” or “demi-planes.” Shadowspawn and trolls swarm up onto the surface of Gaia from a place called the Deep-Under, which is not by any means a natural underground

space. Rather, it is an entirely separate netherworld, with its own continents and countries, seas of magma, and skies of stone. (Deep dungeons might reach all the way down to this place.) There is also a Sky Realm, a number of floating continents created by the Ancients that hover above the very clouds (where the titans and shenlongs live). These miracles of magitech float high above the lands of Draconia, Atlantis, Mephret, and Tollan. They are not ordinarily visible from the ground and must be discovered by accident. (In Draconia, there exists a Crystal Tower that reaches all the way up and into the Sky Realm, but climbing it is not easy: high-tech Ancient robots called war-mechs patrol its many, many levels.) Wondrous are the treasures that may be found in the Sky Realm, possibly including ships or teleporters capable of sending characters to other planets in the Helion System — or even to the stars.

### Other Planets

At least two other celestial bodies in the Helion System are capable of supporting life: Gaia's far moon, Selene; and the planet Ares. Selene has on its surface a great Crystal Palace, the home of the Lunar Behemoth which guards the sealed spirit of Zudos. The Behemoth is a great platinum dragon, terrible to behold, but steadfastly Order-aligned and very good-hearted. The Behemoth will greet heroic adventurers cordially but will never under any circumstances allow anyone to try and descend into the Lunar Core. (The Sky Realm's floating continents and the Crystal Tower in Draconia share the same Ancient architecture as the Behemoth's Lunar Palace.)

On Ares, there exists a warlike, primitive species of purple-skinned humanoids called the Rubians. Their civilization was once much more advanced than it is today and seems to have some mysterious connection to the departed Ancients. Many pyramids and other ruins of unspeakable antiquity dot the surface of Ares. Then there is the mystery of the Athena Cloud to consider: if one entertains the supposition that it was not a natural occurrence, what manner of cataclysm could possibly have reduced the planet Athena to a cloud of rubble?

Travel beyond the Helion system is not possible with ordinary Gate magic or rocket engines. But it is certainly within the bounds of possibility that a clever and very high-level mage or tech could devise some means of faster-than-light or wormhole travel and then build a starship that makes use of it. At this point, the referee will be obliged to decide just how strongly he or she wants to focus on the mystery of the Ancients, and what kind of life may be discovered on the planets in systems near Helion.



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