

# Secrets of the Alubelok Coast

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## Introduction

On the coast of the Kalamaran Sea, midway between Bet Urala and Bet Kalamar, lie the mires of the Alubelok Swamp and the islands of the Alubelok Archipelago. That the islands of the latter bear the name of the former is no coincidence - scholarly debate continues even to this day as to which islets and atolls belong to the island chain and which to the mire. This region is collectively known as the Alubelok Coast, a region of great opportunity and greater peril. Trade here can make a pauper wealthy or beggar into the mightiest merchant house in mere days, though this is not the greatest concern for most travelers here. By and large, they rightfully reserve their attentions for the physical dangers, pirates, brigands and unwholesome creatures that plague this region, as they do nowhere else on Tellene. Travel through the straits, passages, bogs, mires and channels of the Alubelok Coast is not for the poorly armed or faint of heart.

There are no completely accurate maps of the coast, though cartographers know the islands slightly better than the fens. This is partly due to the inherent difficulty of accurately charting such a region, and also to do with the fact that the terrain often changes. Rivers alter their courses, paths shift, mud flats are pushed sometimes leagues in one direction or the other, while sandbars and banks are raised or drowned by the vagaries of storms both inland and at sea.

In the Alubelok Archipelago, the three largest islands (Bosinela, Remeter and Rokalel) and their kindred islets have been correctly mapped for navigation. Travelers should be warned, however, that scores of smaller islands, some no more than singular rock formations less than a few paces across, remain uncharted. To the best of any scholarly knowledge, no map accurately details these.

As has been noted, there is little clear distinction between the swamp's coast and the archipelago's boundary. Wise folk typically regard the two as one and the same. Silt-laden river water mixes with the salty stuff of the Kalamaran Sea, and the boggy effluvia of the swamp muddies and fouls all of it. Creatures rightfully belonging to the swamps have been seen farther south than the southernmost island of Rokalel, while sea creatures have been discovered many miles into the swamp itself.

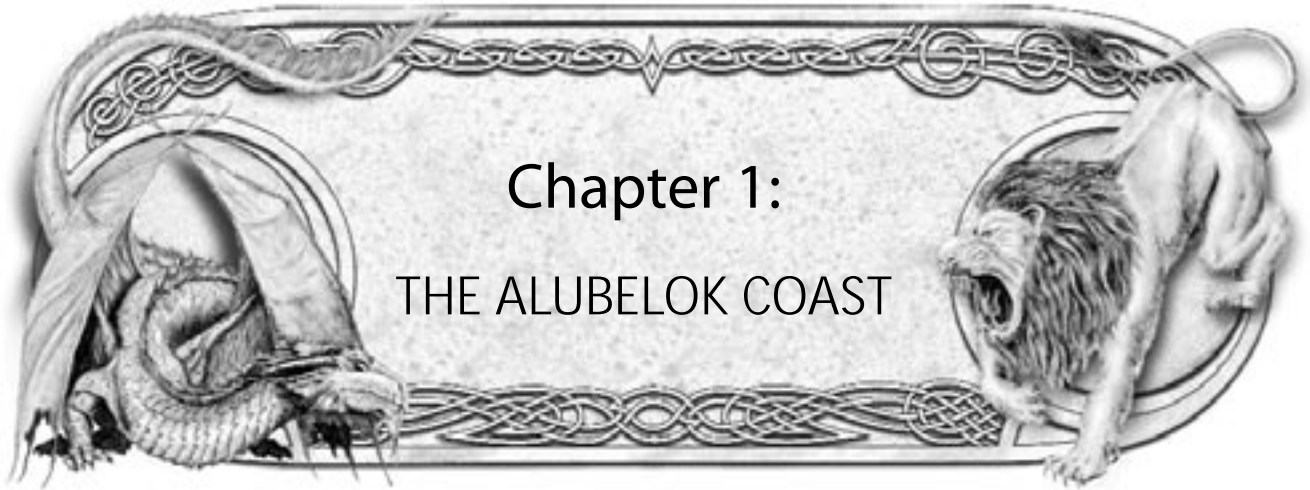
Because of this intermingling, travelers must be wary of perils normally expected in swamps, as well as hazards usually found at sea. Water beetles (large enough to prey upon galleys) skim across the water, while crocodiles large enough to be mistaken for great wyrms have eaten more than one hapless mariner. Harpies inhabit cliff-sides, and both sea trolls

(see *Dangerous Denizens: Monsters of Tellene*) and scraggs abound. Bullywugs and grippli (see Appendix A: Monsters) often range south from the fens in small boats, while lizardfolk congregate here in great numbers.

Though ships continue to disappear or lose their crews to the area's predatory occupants, travel and trade continues. Basiran frigates and Kalamaran galleys do their best to tame the area, but their efforts do little more than reduce the risk to a generally acceptable level. Without their efforts, and the ever-present sojourns of adventurers and daring explorers, travel here would be suicidal at best.

### What You Need to Play

This campaign resource assumes that you own the three core rulebooks of the *Dungeons & Dragons*® game: *The Player's Handbook* (PHB), the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG) and the *Monster Manual* (MM). This product uses updated material from the v.3.5 revision of the D&D® rules. As this book is compatible with the *Kingdoms of Kalamar*® fantasy campaign setting, it is also useful to have the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting sourcebook and the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide* (KPG). Some magic items included herein also make reference to powers or spells described in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design Handbook* (VDH). Feel free to substitute other powers for those items if you do not own that book.



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REGION

The Svimohzish Isle, scholars say, was the cradle of human civilization. Arguments abound over the veracity of this, or at least over the extent of its accuracy, but one thing is not argued. Tribes of early humans crossed from the island to the main continent at some point, and whether they were newcomers or latecomers, they came through the area known as the Alubelok Coast to get there.

The bounty of the Alubelok Swamp, its wild rice and plentiful foods, its wild honey and waterfowl and game creatures, supported the clansmen when they arrived and allowed them to thrive. A variety of perils faced them, but one thing they never needed to fear was hunger.

Kalamarans were the first racial group to settle the Alubelok Swamp in any numbers. Doubtless there were Deji tribes there ahead of them, but not in sufficient strength to prevent the warlike, red-haired people from taking control of the region. It was from a strong, untroubled foundation in the region that King Inakas founded the kingdom that would eventually become the greatest single monarchy on Tellene.

Kalamarans claim they brought civilization to the continent, though the elves and dwarves (and even the Brandobians) had long-standing kingdoms that were centuries old before the Kingdom of Kalamar was even established. Brandobians - Eldorans specifically - claim to be the oldest monarchy in the Sovereign Lands. Naturally, most sages dispute this (though very carefully, both in Eldor and the Empire). There is strong evidence that powerful Deji kingdoms of great size existed and fell long before any tribe ever crossed the "land bridge" believed to have once existed between Svimohzia and the main continent. Ruins deep in the Khydoban Desert, Elos Desert and

others far out to sea on islands a week's journey west of Vrandol support this idea.

What many do not know is that a very few unthinkably ancient ruins have been discovered deep in the heart of the Alubelok Swamp (one of the most singularly inhospitable places in all of the Sovereign Lands). The history, origins and purpose of these ruins remain unknown. One legend attests that an entire city lies buried below leagues of vile, suffocating mud somewhere in the swamps. The truth of this cannot be told with any accuracy, but enough mysteries and

## THE COLOSSUS OF MOANING ROCK

Solitary, forbidding and somehow lonesome, the Colossus has stood atop the low, rugged island of Moaning Rock since time immemorial. No one knows who built it or why—it has always just been. This grim sentinel has been a familiar site and landmark for navigators since before the human clans ever crossed to the continent and the only mariners were elves. At that time it stood on the shore staring out at the storm-tossed sea.

The island of Moaning Rock is a mile due south of the southernmost point of Rokalel Island. It is little more than 1,500 feet across, a mostly bare expanse of rock inhabited only by seabirds and jutting just twenty feet up out of the sea. The Colossus stands 60 feet tall, a golem-like figure of massive proportions. No one has ever seen it move, though one or two scholars have shown ancient (and a few not so ancient) drawings that indicate it has not maintained its exact posture over the years. What has caused it to adjust its stance or alter the direction of its gaze is unknown. Not in living history, however, has it stirred significantly, been altered or changed in any way. The gigantic statue is as permanent and unchanging as the mountains, keeping an eternal watch over what is now called the Kalamaran Sea. It appears to be wrought of bronze, but its strength belies this. A legion of discoloration mars its surface, and it is covered in mosses and even barnacles on its feet. It is crafted in the semblance of a man in an archaic breastplate, unarmed, with one hand shading its eyes. What it is watching for no one seems to know - no loremaster, no sage and no scholar. It is an icon of vigilance and perpetuity.

strangeness exists in the region – such as the ancient Colossus of Moaning Rock - to make any sage or scholar gnaw his lip and wonder.

### PEOPLES

The majority of the inhabitants of the Alubelok Coast region are, unsurprisingly, of Kalamaran ancestry. With few exceptions, however, this lineage is mixed and intermixed with the blood of virtually every race or ethnic group accessible by land or by sea. Their hair and skin color remain every conceivable hue and shade, reflecting this mixture.

The population of the area is surprisingly small and scattered. At least 75% of the region is uninhabited, an extremely high percentage of land to be untenanted in an established kingdom, particularly one where so much of that land is arable. An accurate measurement of the population density is impossible, but at least a third, perhaps as much as half, of the inhabitants of the Alubelok Coast reside within or nearby the walls of Sobeteta.

There is a strong Dejy influence among the isolated clans living in the swamp, more predominant than any other racial influence. Likewise there is fairly strong Dejy influence among the people living on the islands on the western end of the Archipelago. In Sobeteta and settlements further west, however, the people are from such a thoroughly intermingled ancestry that singular ethnic distinctions are virtually unseen.

Only one 'people' in the swamp seem ethnically unique, and that is the people of the clans that live in and around the swamp. This warlike group appears to be a unique and distinct intermingling of an aggressive Dejy tribe and the descendents of the first, most warlike Kalamaran tribes. Numbering just a few thousand, and living in scattered villages rising from the swamp in huts built on tall poles, these people are quiet but

vicious fighters that have adapted well to life in that inhospitable place.

The Dejy blood that runs in their veins is that of the Sethome, a tribe that was probably most closely related to the Simay or Kakado. In their Kalamaran blood holds true all of the great strengths that helped that race conquer a continent, with few of the weaknesses or drawbacks. They still call themselves Sethome and regard themselves as distinct from any of the other inhabitants of the swamp, and from their distant Kalamaran kin in Sobeteta and the Empire. They are not a xenophobic people, nor necessarily inhospitable or hostile to traders or travelers, but they have no tolerance for foolishness or anything they regard as a slight. They are fiercely independent and self-sufficient; their warriors and hunters possess skills that shame lizardfolk clans, and their shamans, rangers and barbarians are said to command the obedience of massive crocodiles. Much of their folklore revolves around those scaly beasts, in fact, and many say their strongest warriors, chieftains and holy men are actually were-crocodiles.



Where many peoples rightly fear crocodiles, and regard them as a malignant and evil-natured beast, the Sethome venerate the creatures and believe them to be descended from the gods. It is a familiar picture or character in their artwork and is prevalent in their rituals and customs. The tribesmen respect the crocodile's ability to hunt and fight both in water and on land, its silence and strength and stealth. They believe that crocodiles are descended from a breed of creature first put on Tellene to defend the world against both mortal and supernatural evils. They believe that the Alubelok Swamp was originally formed by the weeping of a massive and ancient legendary crocodile, saddened at the death of a mate and brood killed during one of the many battles between The Traveler and The Storm Lord (hence the phrase "crocodile tears"). Criminals, prisoners and persons accused of heinous crimes are bound and put in crocodile-infested waters to be judged. If they are not killed and/or eaten, they are considered to be innocent (and, for inexplicable reasons, this seems to be a practice that holds truer than one might expect from such a primitive custom).

An exact reason for the successful nature of their "relationship" has long baffled scholars and learned folk, but it is clear there is indeed some unusual and mystical truth to it. Certainly Sethome tribesmen are able to swim unmolested by the creatures, and are able to travel the swamps untroubled by them.

There are other races living in the swamp, of course. Lizardfolk and grippli (see Appendix A: Monsters) are the most numerous of these, but there are also goblins, orcs and other, fouler creatures too.

## GEOGRAPHY OF THE ALUBELOK COAST

As previously mentioned, the Alubelok Coast is a region of geographical confusion. There are the vast bogs, fens and mires of the Alubelok Swamp to the north, and the many varied islands and islets of the Alubelok Archipelago to the South. The area can be generally divided along a line roughly paralleling the branch of the Ridara River ending in what is now called the Readywatch Passage.

To the west of this line lies the Kingdom of Basir, the naval power of the Kalamaran Empire, ruled by the House of Kadana. Most of the ships found in and around the Alubelok coast originate in Basir.

To the east of this line lies Kalamar, the once-kingdom that is now the seat of the Empire bearing its name. Most of the coast on this side of the "border" belongs to the Duchy of Sobeteta, its inhabitants owing fealty to Duke Sorabek II, who rules that city. The border continues north along the course of the Ridara River, all the way to the city of Birirelido. The

Duke of Sobeteta, though primarily concerned with the governance of that city, is the highest ranking Kalamaran official in the region. As such, the duke holds sway over all the human settlements of the three major islands of the archipelago (though in practical terms they are mostly left to administer their cities autonomously).

There is no accurate map of the area to be found anywhere in the Empire. Such a thing would be impossible to accurately render, regardless of the skill of the cartographer. Part of the difficulty in accurately charting the region is the ever-changing nature of the terrain itself. Although the Ridara remains true to its course, its offshoots and lesser paths often shift. Paths change with the sodden movements of the bogs or disappear entirely. Sandbars, banks and islets in the swamp and at sea as well are uncovered or submerged by the whims of the weather and the tides - there are even those who say that some of the islands of this abominable place move on their own.

Imperial and Basiran ship captains have long plotted their courses using reasonably accurate charts drawn in the first days of the Empire and constantly updated in the long years since. However, no navigator has ever been able to chart the place in its entirety or with complete accuracy. Rokalel, Bosinela and Remeter Island are solid and unchanging. Equally predictable are the majority of the smaller islets that surround these three. There are, however, great numbers of tiny islets scattered among their larger kinsmen and mixed into the various estuaries and small bays of the swamp. The majority of these have been charted, but that still leaves scores that have not. Some of them are as big as a house, others just a few paces across, and others still nothing more than isolated rock formations thrusting up from the water (or the mud). Some of them are solid and are considered to be "dry land." Others are nothing more than slightly firm bits of saltwater marsh. Across the coast, landmarks and specific areas are annotated on maps and charts, but many are referred to with nothing more concrete than vague notations of distance or uncertain estimations of location.

There is little to divide where the swamp ends and the archipelago begins in most places. The muddy water of the river "thick enough to walk on in places" as one Birirelidan merchant once described it, washes many leagues out into the sea. The waters are dark and murky even in places where ships cross.

While any character can wade in relatively calm water that is not over his head (a potentially serious problem for Small-sized characters), wading in the mud and muck will present additional dangers - the clinging of the mire will slow characters down to a pitiable pace, and will greatly affect exhaustion and



encumbrance. The preponderance of vines and heavy vegetation makes travel even more difficult. The mud and water of the Alubelok Coast and other boggy places of the Alubelok Swamp is always of varying, often unpredictable, depth. There are vast tracts of the swamp proper that can be waded, particularly in areas away from the main Ridara River channels. There are other places that must be swum, and others still that are comprised of such clinging mud that any travel must be done (somehow) on the surface. The danger becomes worse when one considers the fact that some watery areas are actually standing on anywhere from 2 to 10 feet of mud or more, occasionally as deep as 25 feet, and none of these can be predicted. There are also areas of quicksand and treacherous currents, and in certain places—such as the Settlemaw Flats—the muck is rumored to be hundreds of feet deep, with vegetation-clogged water lying over that!

Not until a traveler actually achieves the open water of the Girdsword Strait or Remeter Bay can he be certain that he has left the marshes behind. This imprecise mingling of swamp and sea has led to the migration and movement of both swamp and sea-dwelling predators in both directions. Small islands are home to shambling mounds and massive crocodiles, while mudflats and mires may play host to sharks, adding to the perils that menace shipping here.

### THE TRADITION OF RICE AND THE FOUNDATION OF A KINGDOM

Rice is intimately involved in the culture as well as the food and economy of tribes and towns of the Alubelok Coast, Sobeteta notwithstanding. No description of the region, however vague, could make due without mention of the grain.

Legends, myth, tradition, folklore and ritual all speak of rice, and why not? It was wild rice that fed the first people crossing the land bridge from Svimohz to the main continent, and it is no idle claim that rice was the staple that kept the first Kalamarans from starving before they ever began to build their great empire. In that respect, it was the cultivation of this grain that permitted early civilization to flourish, and so is the agricultural cornerstone of Sobeteta.

Scholars have noted early maps bearing the canonical works of Rotak the Voyager that make reference to rice fields, wetland tracts girding the land bridge before it was broken. At least one copy of *The Endless Journey* (the Canon of the Temple of the Stars) kept in well-protected veneration in the Voyager's temple in Sobeteta speaks of the provisioning of several explorers (now saints) before setting off south along

the coast or east into the mountains. Rice was foremost among the staples they carried with them. Indeed, a colloquialism among rural and remote denizens of this coast (and other places) is, "Do you have your rice?" This phrase asks, in effect, if someone is properly prepared and equipped before leaving on a journey.

Dejy folk of the area have long passed down the tradition that Shanydefyn, the Raiser, led the first Dejy to the wild rice fields of the area. Most accept that she returned after the sundering of the land bridge and the beginning of more troubled times to teach them to cultivate it in paddies and fields. Most worshippers of the Field Mother in this region sacrifice sacks of rice instead of bushels of grain, and use a bowl of rice for her symbol. They look to birds, cranes and coots in particular, instead of deer as her animal. In their imagery she is often portrayed as a smiling woman standing ankle-deep in water with wetland birds taking flight behind her.

Rice cultivation and use is described in great detail in many copies of the Blessings of the Land. A few past High Field Masters (speaking alternately of Shanydefyn, Regorike, Ehsiwhomnesh or even Gavdever and Dolkagh-Naz-Kelgar) mention rice instead of wheat or barley or rye. Friends of the Fields adhering to this particular manifestation of the Raiser will throw a handful of blessed rice (effectively the same as the holy water of other faiths) at their foe when employing their Preserve Life power (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide, Chapter 10: Magic).

Across the width and breadth of the Alubelok Coast, rice is regarded as a symbol of plenty and domesticity, and tradition holds that "the most precious thing is neither pearls nor silver, but rather the First Grain" (the latter being, of course, rice). Bet Uralans can sell their pearls—but they cannot eat them.

Wild rice is what originally supported the majority of the tribes and clansmen that crossed the land bridge, long before there was Kingdom of Kalamar (much less an Empire). It was spread and planted as they moved and settled, as important as a food source for wild fowl and other game as for a gathered food source itself. Wild rice is an annual grass that depends on seeds to propagate itself from year to year (this has never, in recorded history, been a problem along the Alubelok Coast - even during the Age of Great Anguish, when localized famines afflicted many regions). It grows in shallow water (up to 4 feet deep) in slow streams and rivers and in vast tracts of freshwater marshland. In short, it grows anywhere there is a soft silt or mud bottom.

Shallow bends or waterways, below sandbars, in protected coves and shallow bays of open stretches

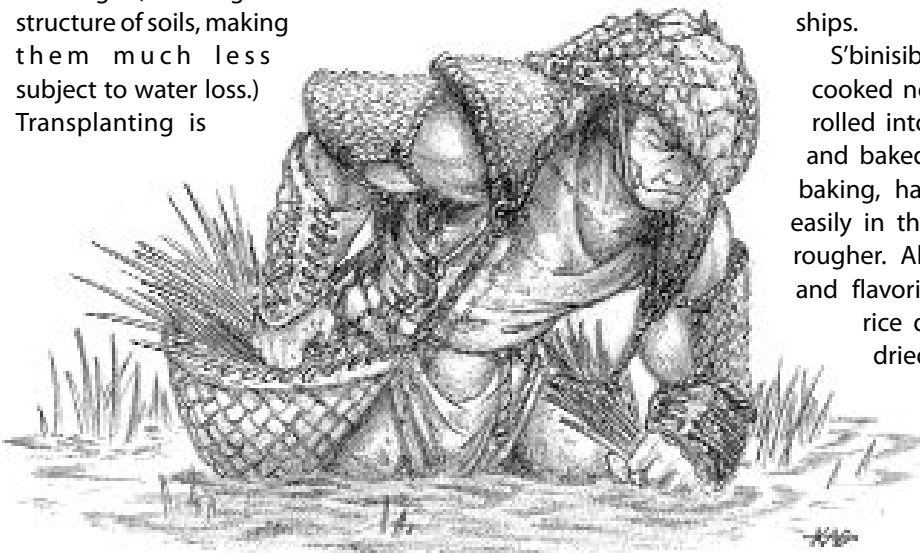
of water is an excellent place for the grain, which is usually found near cattails and water lilies. About the only place it will not grow is along open shorelines exposed to strong waves or strong currents, in heavy shade or amongst dense swamp vegetation. Humans are not the only ones who have realized the opportunities for hunting wild game that stands of wild rice provide. Humanoid bands use them for the same thing, and many monsters have long since learned to wait for humans coming to harvest...

In natural stands, and in stands well established after planting, enough seeds usually drop into the water each fall to give a good crop the next year. In good stands, the plants often grow so closely together that they keep out other water plants and form such dense masses that it is difficult for harvesters to reach them by boat.

Wild rice must be planted using fresh seed. Such seed is available for sale or trade anywhere more than one or two families gather along the coast. It is difficult to store the seed during cold weather, but the temperate climate of the coast combined with traditional methods of storing the seed in cool and wet conditions ensure there is no shortage of the grain. Wild rice is planted by hand, from a boat, even thrown in packed mud out into the water. It typically takes just one or two seasons of planting for a stand to flourish and perpetuate itself.

Rice cultivation is a well-developed skill along the coast. Rice farmers here have crop yields that harvesters in other regions would require divine assistance to duplicate. The natural soil fertility and climate, together with an extensive and well-developed irrigation network, allow for two, sometimes even three crops per year. Rice cultivation is labor intensive but very efficient.

Most farmers of the region cultivate rice in paddies, using the processes of puddling soil and transplanting seedlings. (Puddling breaks down the internal structure of soils, making them much less subject to water loss.) Transplanting is



the planting of seedlings into standing water, to give them a head start over a vast range of competing weeds, which leads to higher yields. The farmers stagger their cropping cycles, to keep demand for water and labor constant. Wet rice agriculture requires a great deal of cooperation between farmers in order to time the offset of planting, flooding and draining different fields. Rather than work in those fields that belong to the Duke, as was once the tradition, local taxes are paid in a small tithe of grain from each crop. The Duke's fields, once planted by farmers paying their taxes through labor, are now leased out to different landowners.

Farmers of the region are very canny and take the best possible advantage of whatever is presented them. They will grow crops on the soil between paddies, and keep fish in the flooded fields. They also collect frogs, shellfish and snails, as well as hunting the plethora of game birds that come to feed there.

There are many different kinds of cultivated rice, and innumerable ways in which it is put to use. White rice, chewy brown rice and red rice are the three most common. Rice is brewed into tea and its bran oil used as a high quality cooking oil. Rice flour is used in baking, rice hulls are burned as fuel or mulch, and rice starch thickens sauces and desserts (or can be used to make a syrup). Sticky sweet rice is used for rice dumplings and cakes, and puffed or popped rice is used for cereal and snack food. Rice can be caramelized, molded with jelly into cakes and baked into breads in place of wheat (common breads of the region include c'pati, which is flat, light and round, and gunaj, which is darker and harder and made in a square loaf).

Dry, flat rice cakes are a staple in the shipboard diet of mariners hailing from this region. Likewise, rice milk (which is used in many towns and settlements as a substitute for animal milk and milk powder) is often carried to sea in the provisioning of ships.

S'binisib is a cracker-like snack made of cooked non-waxy rice flour kneaded and rolled into sheets, cut, dried, dried again and baked. Alarare expands more during baking, has a soft texture and dissolves easily in the mouth. Senbei is harder and rougher. All kinds of variants, seasonings and flavorings are used to mix with the rice dough, including sesame seeds, dried seaweed, pickled eel, pulverized shrimp, goat cheese and every spice known.

Even the lizardfolk of the Alubelok Swamp utilize rice flour, baking it (although,

admittedly not a lot of it) into hard cakes with fungi and strips of smoked meat. These long-lasting, nutritive cakes are stored against need, or carried by hunting and war parties into the bogs and marshes of their home. (The more daring and/or foolish adventurers, explorers and travelers who have traded with or spent time among the lizardfolk have long extolled the virtues of ghrsh, and seek out the rare merchant who has it for sale.)

Sobetetans (and other coastal denizens) do more than bake rice—they ferment it, with the same skill and inventiveness of any human vintner or dwarf brewer. Taverns, fine inns, portside swills and every kind of establishment in between offer a wide variety of rice wines, beers and other drinks (n'miris, for instance, is a clear, gin-like beverage made by distilling a particular kind of rice wine) in every variety of quality and palatability.

Wet-grown rice is not the only crop of the Alubelok Coast of course, just the most prevalent. Dry fields, on the islands throughout the archipelago and delta, are used to grow a few aromatic strains of rice in addition to tea, corn, cabbage and even tobacco (though typically the yield of tobacco in this region is fairly poor). The dry fields are not as easy to cultivate, and generally only produce one good crop per year. Small plots near village houses or city gardens (the latter much encouraged by Church of Life's Fire) are used to grow other vegetables and spices, including plantain, copra, pepper and cloves. Within the last decade or so, several smaller merchant houses and firms have begun trading in an unusual pipeleaf (called k'terek) made with a mixture of tobacco and clove. It is an acquired taste, but brings an excellent price in Sobeteta's Harbor District, and the increasing number of foreign visitors growing to like it would seem to indicate a great potential for export in the future.

### Commerce and Coins Along the Coast

The nature of trade along the Alubelok Coast make it likely that the coins of almost any nation can be seen changing hands, though naturally Duke Sorabek does what he can to encourage the use of Kalmaran currency (including exchange rates that heavily favor Imperial Kalamaran Arus, Denarus, and Seseters over the coins of other realms. Despite this, the coins of Svimohzia and the Young Kingdoms are common as curses along the docks. Ahznomahni Bards are as common as Prompeldian Goodpieces, and even such oddities as Giilian Goldcoins and Eldoran Sovereigns may be given in trade or change. The only currency unique to the area are the orichalcum "golems" once minted by Sobeteta (they are no longer made, nor have they been for many years, but are still considered valuable by merchants native to the City on the

Rock). Probably crafted in imitation of the Colossus of Moaning Rock, Sobetetan Golems are nearly as big as the metal trade ingots used by many lands to transfer large amounts of wealth. Heavy and featureless, they are wrapped in bands of silver and set with two small chips of peridot mined in Dakelvail for eyes. A whole Golem is worth 150 gp; a "headless" Golem, which lacks the two gems, is worth far less (usually just 20 gp, though this may vary depending upon how much of the torso was taken when the head was chopped off). A "starved" Golem has been split down the middle, bisecting the eyes and the torso, and is worth 75 gp. There are very few Sobetetan Golem trade-bars still in circulation, but they are still used occasionally to transfer large amounts of money.

### SAILING THE COAST

There are many different ships plying the waters of the Alubelok Coast, but the larger ships often seen in other waters do not sail as commonly here because of the difficulty of navigating the passages further west. Larger ships are also slow moving and so much more vulnerable to the pirates that continue to plague the area despite the best efforts of the Basiran fleets, the Imperial navy and the few but well-crewed and heavily armed vessels of the Assembly of the Water Corner. These difficulties have led to the construction of small, swift sloops that are quickly dominating maritime trade.

Other vessels common to the coast are the cog, a square-rigged merchant vessel used in many areas of Tellene, and the outrigger, a small but swift little sailing boat used by Dejoy fishermen. There are also caravels, galleys of every stripe and single-masted sloops in great numbers.

The Alubelok Coast has two high tides and two low tides each day. Tides in this region are mild, thankfully, or navigation would become that much more difficult. Tide tables for the region are only completely accurate with regards to the three larger islands and most of those on the southern edge of the Archipelago. The numerous smaller inlets are a different story. High tide along the southern edge is just two to three feet, depending on how close the moons are in conjunction. High tide along the swamp is even less than that.

### THE TEEMING COAST

The waters of the Alubelok Coast are as rich and varied with life as the marshes that hunker to the north. The brackish estuaries and silt-laden bays harbor a variety of marine and crustacean life, as well as numerous plants, all fed by the nutrient rich runoff pulled by the tides out of the Alubelok Swamp. Further out, the water clears (the bottom can be seen



near the more southerly islands of the archipelago) but is no less fecund.

There are many coral reef formations through the islets, cays, islands and spits of the archipelago, but few of them are at sufficient depth to provide a threat to navigation (thankfully; there are enough of those already). In the waters swim tarpon, mullets, mackerel and grouper in great number, and every possible kind of smaller fish. These are netted, hooked and even speared in great numbers but they never diminish.

There are also huge beds of kelp along the bottom, probably spread here from the colder waters of Elos Bay. Through these nodding aquatic forests wander nomadic clans of locathah, and myriad other creatures. Sahuagin war parties prowl through them on occasion, sometimes falling prey to larger, more dangerous predatory creatures. The kelp canopy can reach heights of thirty feet or more; some of it rising against coral cliffs, mimicking beneath the sea what grows on land. The stalks of kelp can be as big around as a man's arm, and can grow as fast as two or three inches a week. However, the constant wave action erodes them, creating vast amounts of detritus upon which countless organisms feed below. One thing of particular interest in the kelp is the sallet snail. Unique to the area, it can grow as large as a man's head. Their shells, properly treated and crafted, are as strong as metal (often providing the locathah and merfolk with armor). Their meat is considered a delicacy by many; a netful brought to harbor by locathah traders will bring many hundreds of gold pieces worth of trading material.

Pilikar, a small but tasty fish, swims the islands of the archipelago in great numbers. A floating shoal of pilikar may be a half a mile or more across, like glimmering silver stains on the sea surface. Fishermen consider crossing paths with a shoal of pilikar great fortune, for they can fill the holds of their ships within minutes. Where pilikar run, porpoises and sharks and sea birds follow. Fishermen and sailors will watch to see if the shoal moves at all. If it remains stationary too long they will immediately put up canvas and sail for other waters; that kind of swimming banquet will soon attract creatures large enough to make a meal of entire ships were they to grow weary of fish.

## SAILING THE CHANNELS

The Ridara is said to be the longest river on Tellene, and carries an incredible amount of traffic in the form of boats, barges and even small sailing ships. Above Birirelido the river is deep enough to support relatively deep-hulled craft. Below that city it becomes progressively shorter, until, through the last fifty or so miles it is navigable only by shallow-hulled craft. The river is many leagues in length, running

from the Shynako Hills to the Alubelok Swamp, from which point it breaks up into many channels flowing towards the Kalamaran Sea. Before this breakup, its long, meandering course flows through or near several provinces; thus Doderan, Tokite and even Pari traders will be found plying its waters, often going all the way to Sobeteta to conduct their business.

On average, the Ridara itself can be considered to have a move of 15 feet. Once the river diverges into different channels, its current slows. The main channel widens here somewhat, but still maintains a move speed of about 12 feet. Other smaller channels, particularly the shallow ones that twist and loop and wend their way into the swamp, may have a movement rate as slow as 5 feet or less.

The Ridara River is traveled by an array of craft just as great as the coastline itself, though the best merchant craft are flat-bottomed cogs, keelboats and longships. This is because sandbars, mudbanks and shoals plague all the channels, varying in frequency and severity. The main channels are least afflicted, though by no means free of them. The smaller channels becoming lost in the marshes are worst. A boat that runs into a sandbar or mudbank becomes stuck in place. To be freed of the obstacle, it must first be undamaged enough to move. Moving the craft off the sandbar can be difficult and tricky, depending on the situation. In some cases, one can await the coming of the tide and just float the boat free, or remove some of the cargo until the craft's draft depth decreases sufficiently to push her free. Maneuvering a boat off of an average sandbar or mudbank will take 3d10 minutes and a successful Profession (sailor) check (DC 15). Moving a ship off such an obstacle will be more difficult, taking 5d10+10 minutes and requiring a Profession (sailor) check of DC 20. Rough seas, storms, flooded waters and other factors may make these checks more difficult.

Although the main channels are navigable by most small craft, many of its other courses and side-channels are not. In these places it is often necessary to pole the boat, usually by thrusting the pole down into the riverbed at the bow of the craft and walking it all the way back to the stern. Unfortunately, poling a boat is exhausting and difficult, and possible only in relatively shallow water.

In the swamp's worst places, vessels must be tracked, or hauled along with ropes by people on the shore. This is the most exhaustive and difficult way to move a boat, but in some of the Alubelok's worst places this is the only way to do so. This can be a dangerous undertaking, particularly for those whose job it is to swim or wade up to the next solid landing or tree and fix the ropes.

### SPECIFIC WATERWAYS AND ENCOUNTERS

#### Defiles Course

The swiftest channel is the one that becomes the Defiles Course. By the time its poisonous waters come rushing out of the hills they are swift indeed, with a move rate of 30 feet. If a boat or small craft is traveling with the current, it effectively adds the current's speed to the craft's move rate. If traveling against the current, its speed is slowed by the same amount.

Little is known of the Defiles Course, which begins without preamble, carves through an odd stretch of solid ground in the midst of the swamp, then ends again just as unexpectedly. The Course itself is twisting and steep-sided, a series of sharp-edged gorges and river-scoured passages that writhe through a length of bleak hills as rough and barren as any to be found north or west of Elos Bay. Here the waters enter somewhat sluggishly, even sullenly, but begin to rush and race within a league, until they are a torrent. With each league the waters pass southward they grow ever darker and fouler, until they are black as pitch when they exit the Course and reenter the Swamp.

Drinking from the water at the southern end of the Course is tantamount to death—if the drinker's belly doesn't burst with pain he is sure to die of fever within days, if not hours. No one can explain how this rugged hill country came to appear in the midst of a swamp wider than most countries. It can be stated with certainty that secretive and well-armed bands have sought the Defiles Course on numerous occasions since the earliest days of the House of Bakar.

#### Girdsword Strait

The Girdsword Strait begins immediately west of Rokalel Island, running between it and the mainland swamp. It is aptly named, for travelers here must brave any number of wicked and dangerous creatures that call the islands and the Alubelok Swamp home. Although it is narrower than the passage which skirts the island to the east, a vagary of the prevailing winds and an offshoot of the West Current allows most ships to travel at a much greater speed (x1.25) within the Strait. This often shaves as much as two day's sailing time from the northern tip of the island to the Kalamaran Sea. For unfathomable reasons of geography, the East Monsoon Winds also seem to trouble this area less than other places, making it less dangerous to transit when storms are upon the region. Ship captains, despite the number and variety of unwholesome beasts to be encountered here, often cross the Strait for this reason.

Almost any predatory creature that can be found in a bog or at sea seeks prey along this channel, including giant crocodiles, goldfins, lizardfolk, sahuagin, and so on. However, the greatest danger to ships in the Strait is Carstanaughir the Black. Carstanaughir is an ancient Black Dragon who lays claim to all of the brackish water and murky bogs between Defiles Course and Girdsword Strait (players, see below in *Wyrms of the Alubelok Archipelago*; DMs, see Appendix A).

#### Keelshiven Shoals

The Keelshiven Shoals ("Kupirisa Remikal" in Kalamaran) are a particularly dangerous place for ship traffic, as the numbers of rotted hulks lying on the bottom there can attest. The remains of ships of all nationalities lie here, once piloted by adventurers



seeking fortune and fame against the monsters and brigands living deep within the swamps. Furthermore, monstrous sea birds and odd, sea-loving wyvern-like creatures nest atop the masts and spars that can be seen spearing up through the waves, and entire parties of undead heroes, brigands and monsters wage war upon one another in gruesome remembrances of the rivalries they had when still alive.

#### Readywatch Passage

The aptly named estuary called the Readywatch Passage ("Marog'Li Gelofa") sees very little traffic, as it crosses through the territory of Carstanaughir the Black. It was also here that the first mate of the Basiran galley Matamor's Whimsy was snatched off the forecastle of his ship and carried away by a giant insect similar in form to a massive dragonfly but as long as the vessel itself. Travel on Readywatch Passage is virtually unheard of, for obvious reasons, but it is occasionally used by groups of unwary explorers in search of adventure, or foolish merchants seeking a faster passage to Remeter Island.

#### Remeter Bay

Remeter Bay may be the fastest route to travel from the coast of Basir to the city of Sobeteta (rather than passing along the western side of Remeter Island), but it is not without its perils. Brigands and tribes of bullywugs and grippli are prominent here, and often assault passing ships – particularly if they pass too near their coastal or island homes. Remeter Bay is also said to be haunted by Long Lankin (see below), and is often crossed by pirate craft that know to expect merchant ships and barges here.

#### Settlemau Flats

A vast stretch of mud, quicksand and boggy rot, the Settlemau Flats are home to strange, stinking creatures like sharks overgrown with fungus, wide-footed and sharp-toothed predatory birds, mud-men and other things less recognizable and far worse. League upon league of treacherous quagmire and depthless, sucking muck comprise the majority of the flats, but rumors of a sunken citadel (enchanted enough to have produced the aforementioned mud-men by the legion) often draw foolish adventurers to it.

Stories that not just a castle, but an entire city, lies buried under the Settlemau's muck are not totally discounted, for travelers there (the few who survive to brag of it) often bring odd relics and weaponry of strange, unrusting metals with them when they emerge. The depth of this unwholesome area has never been reckoned, but the lizardfolk and bullywugs thereabout maintain that the mud reaches deeper here than any of the waters off the coast...

## DANGERS OF THE WATERWAYS

### Long Lankin

Long Lankin is the source of more than one child's nursery rhyme in Sobeteta. The most common goes something like "Long Lankin walks the foul bog shore, her hut is bones and nothing more." Long Lankin is a powerful sea hag, known by some as the Alubelok Crone, and by gray-haired old salts as Auld Lannie. Her lair is somewhere near the estuary where the Ridara meets the sea, on the northern tip of Ridara Bay. She prowls the sea and the banks of the river alike, hunting amongst the river traffic coming from Birirelido or upriver from Sobeteta and Tovidio. She rarely strays far from the river, and has been seen as far as thirty leagues north of the coast. On occasion she has preyed upon sea-going vessels, but is most often seen close in to shore. Long Lankin, so named because of her height, is the bogeyman (woman) of many mothers in fishing villages thereabouts. "Hush child, or Auld Lannie will hear you!" Whether her hut is truly made of bones or not remains a matter of conjecture.

### The Mermaid's Promise

The Mermaid's Promise is a ship of the dead, a pirate craft of rotted wood and long-deceased crew, captained by a skeletal master who brings her forth only at night and only in the thickest fog. Such is her reputation that many sailors will not put forth to sea if a mist is laying about or looks to be coming in. The vessel takes her name from the figurehead at her prow, that of a bare-chested mermaid with her bosom thrust forth provocatively and a beckoning arm extended. Verdigris discolors the brass of the ships fixtures and dead barnacles mottle its hulls—nothing lives for any length of time when in contact with her planks. When seen by her prey (and only a very, very few have returned to describe her) there will be numerous dead fish floating about her and flotsam adrift in her wake. This trail may extend for over a mile in the water behind her and may, for a fortunate few, provide a warning to turn back. Fey lights dance and flicker amongst her masts and fixtures, and will o' wisps dance about the ships lanterns. Only tattered remnants of sail and billowing fragments of hawser remain of her rigging, but she moves with the speed of a warship under full sail.

Skahdal Breaktroth, captain of the Mermaid's Promise, appears only occasionally, but death and misery are sure to follow when he does. Breaktroth is a skeleton, though doubtless more powerful than any simple created undead, and is certain to have many dread powers. A pirate in death as he was in life, he lost his left arm (whilst still counted amongst

the living) to a captain of the Kalamaran navy over two hundred years ago, said captain hewing the limb off with a blade thought to be called Shiveneth. This weapon was either a cutlass or scimitar (tales vary) of surpassing sharpness whose edge held more than its share of enchantment (and could not be blunted, even on stone). Breaktroth subsequently slew the Captain despite his injury, then butchered the crew and fed them in pieces to the sharks.

Breaktroth still bears Shiveneth, having taken it from the captain after losing his arm, and captains a crew that is unwaveringly loyal - their undeath tied to his, their will his own. Much of his original crew has been destroyed over the years. However, his boarding parties never fail to bring back fresh 'recruits' in the form of zombies, skeletons and wights from amongst the crews and passengers that are his victims. The treasure amassed aboard the Mermaid's Promise must surely be great, if bloodstained, but it is doubtful that any of it will ever fill anyone's coffers.

### Sahuagin's Grieve

There are many ruins to be found in the Alubelok Archipelago, most originally of Kalamaran construction, some predating the Empire by centuries. In the days of Kolokar, when the Barrier was constructed and fortress building at its zenith, scores of small watchtowers were built throughout the islands. These watchtowers varied in size and were garrisoned by anywhere from a dozen to a hundred marines and/or infantry. They served as bases and supply ports for patrolling ships. This attempt to subdue the Archipelago failed as a matter of course, and most of the campaniles now lie in various states of ruin (though they are not necessarily unoccupied).

Sahuagin's Grieve was a full-sized fortress, with its own harbor and garrisoned by several hundred troops. Sometime during the Age of Anguish, when Imperial attentions along the Empire's borders were at their ebb, a host of Sahuagin of unheard of size rose up from the waters and attacked the fortress. The garrison was able to drive the creatures off, albeit with great loss and the Sahuagin tribes were devastated (and have never recovered). This battle probably occurred sometime after IR 150, for records indicate that the place was still hale, if undermanned, as late as IR 140, but naught is mentioned of it in an Imperial naval reckoning conducted by Thedorus in the first season of his reign. The fortress was abandoned shortly thereafter, but the name remains. Who or what now occupies the grim place is not known, but several explorers and adventurers bound for there have not returned.

### Three-Eyes

Three-Eyes is the name by which a particularly loathsome denizen of Sobeteta goes, as no one is certain of the creature's real name (nor if it truly exists). Somewhere beneath Sobeteta, in a subterranean lair connected to both the sewers and the harbor, is said to be an old and wicked Aboleth that may or may not be the master of slave ring stretching from Pel Brolenon to Tarisato.

Three-Eyes, if tales are to be believed, has agents among the more squalid areas of Wharftside, and may have truck with the most unsavory elements of the city. It is known for certain that several pirate vessels do business with some kind of monstrous creature that purchases and sells slaves. At least two prominent villains of the area met a grisly end beneath the docks, their skin turned to slimy mucus and their mouths filled with stinking, gray-colored slime.

Puter Spew, once the captain of the Triton's Fancy (and one of the two villains mentioned above) is said to have been overhead in a tavern discussing his business dealings with Three-Eyes. In this alleged conversation he mentioned traffic with more than one unwholesome, slime-covered creature 'like a cross between a slug and a fish' at different islets of the archipelago. If this is true, then Three-Eyes, if it is indeed an Aboleth, may not be the only one of its kind about.

### Wavehunger

Wavehunger is another pirate vessel of ill repute, and the fear generated by rumor or her sailing may actually be greater than that of the Mermaid's Promise. Wavehunger is crewed at least partially by lycanthropes as cunning with their maritime skills as they are black-hearted and ravenous. Little is known as to who or what captain is master of this vile vessel, but its acts have caused horror and woe as far west as Vuramathatido and as far east as Fewidu (and once even raided the docks of Hinsvahni, on the northern coast of Mezh-Vowmi Isle).

The crew of Wavehunger employs a number of tactics and ruses to gain the trust of their prey or get aboard - assuming they do not simply storm aboard in a bloodthirsty frenzy and slay everyone they find. They have been known to put a few of their number adrift in a dinghy, claiming to be survivors of a wreck, or to act as though they have been stranded on some lonely shore awaiting rescue. Several of their numbers have, in the past, even hired onto other ships as new crewmen to work their mischief from within. Their lair, if they have one, remains unknown, but they are thought to have originally called Sobeteta their home port.

The master of *Wavehunger* is clever. He has yet to lose a fight, though his crew has suffered casualties in the past. It is thought that at least one or two of his crewman are in fact were-rats, working with others of their ilk in the sewers along the docks to track the comings-and-goings of choice victims and the destinations of different ships. At least one winged creature was seen in a particularly bloody skirmish one evening off the Ubikokeli Highlands – most believe it was a werebat, employed by the ship's master as a scout and lookout. Such a collection of vicious lycanthropes is without precedent in the naval annals of any maritime nation, and if true is a peril to shipping unmatched by any other danger known in the Sovereign Lands, save perhaps some of the vessels that ply the Sea of the Dead.

The crew of *Wavehunger* is thought to occasionally enter Sobeteta (and perhaps other harbors) in disguise, aboard captured ships. The recent slaughter of a troop of Harbor Watchmen on Sobeteta's wharves has been attributed to these creatures.

#### The Wreck of the Brine-Bear

In IR 89, during the first months of the Kalamaran Civil War, the wizard Verun traveled south from Baneta en-route to Bet Kalamar at the behest of the warlord there. Originally hailing from Cosolen, Verun had been one of the founders of the College of Magic in Pekal. Not being one of the nicest wizards around (he never seemed to stop being the child who pulled the wings off flies), he had been asked by his associates to leave the school. Unwilling or unable to fight several mages nearly as strong or stronger than he, Verun gathered all of his treasures and relics (as well as several of those rightfully belonging to the College) and complied. Unfortunately for Verun, he chose to journey during the monsoon season. All of his magicks were unable to keep the *Brine-Bear* afloat in the face of a tempest of unimaginable fury and the ship went down. The exact location of the shipwreck is unknown, though earnestly sought after.

Occasionally, rumors surface that the *Brine-Bear* was actually destroyed by creatures summoned and then inadequately controlled by the mage himself. Further, more dire rumors hint that Verun is still alive (in a manner of speaking) and continuing his research in the *Brine-Bear*'s watery grave.

#### Wyrms of the Alubelok Archipelago

At one time, several dragons were thought to dwell in the Alubelok Archipelago. Some small, some large and of varying ages, they have come and gone over the centuries. Now, only one clearly dominates.

Carstanaughir the Black is a venerable black dragon of cruel disposition and vile demeanor. This evil drake claims the entirety of the land between Girdsword

Strait and Defiles Course as his domain, though the fact that he holds no legal right to the land is an unimportant distinction to the hapless or foolish travelers the wyrm encounters. Carstanaughir lairs somewhere in the grimmest bogs of the area, revered as a god by native bullywug tribes and served by many foul swamp creatures who become his minions or are quickly destroyed. Carstanaughir is seldom seen away from the mires of his home, but he is one of the great terrors that give Girdsword Strait its name. (DMs seeking more information on Carstanaughir can refer to Appendix A.)

Two other dragons are thought to dwell in (or to have visited) the Archipelago. The first is an adult bronze dragon said to have dwelt on eastern Bosinela Island. Rumormongers claim that the wyrm met his end in some watery place while hunting for sunken treasure, perhaps even in whilst in search of the wreck of the *Brine-Bear*. The truth of this remains unconfirmed, but many have gone hunting his supposedly abandoned lair.

The last dragon believed to dwell in the area is an aquatic dragon (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar: Dangerous Denizens) of rather largish size. Its name unknown, this drake has been seen poking its head above the waves near the eastern isles. This wyrm's disposition and background also remain unknown, though the abbot of Deeping Abbey is said to have had a dragon as an honored guest within the past few months.

#### The Chuul-Skin Orc Clan

Amongst the hundreds and hundreds of orc tribes across Tellene, there are generally considered to be only fifteen gnoghagak (major orc tribes). These include such tribes as the Black Hand and the Wolves of P'Rorul; huge tribes numbering in the thousands with names and symbols not only recognizable but often feared by human, elven and dwarven kingdoms. The Chuul-Skin tribe is rarely counted as belonging in this company, largely because of the vast, fen-choked wilderness in which they live and their relative lack of notoriety. Away from the cities along the swamp, few people have heard of them. This would probably not be the case if they preyed more upon the Ridara river traffic that flows through their domain, but for a variety of reasons the tribe does not typically prey upon it. Some orcs of the tribe hire out in small bands (ranagran) as guards for boats and barges traveling downriver, but do so with sufficient infrequency that few of the merchants that pay them become aware of just how big the tribe really is. Note that the Chuul-Skins are only the largest of the orc clans in the Alubelok Swamp. There have been as many as a dozen others, much much smaller in number,



identified by reliable Kalamaran scholars. (Note: For more on the major orc tribes of Tellene, see *Fury in the Wastelands*, pg. 61.)

**Tribal Symbol:** A Chuul pincer over a clawed green handprint. Leaders and successful hunters have bits of Chuul chitin grafted to their skin. At least thrice a year large hunting parties head out into the swamp in search of the massive and cunning chuul, perhaps the most dangerous (and intelligent) predators in the swamp. Orc fighters fight for the right to accompany such an expedition and it is considered a great honor to lead one (not surprisingly black orcs are accorded this right more often than not). Occasionally a few more intelligent and powerful orcs hire out as mercenaries on the Ridara, float south nearly to the estuary where that river empties into the sea, then hunt chuul as they return home on foot. Few hunts are successful since as many as one in three hunting parties return empty-handed, and nearly an equal number never return at all. But when they do return with their quarry, the meat from inside the chuul pincers is eaten raw, as a delicacy, and their tentacles taken back to the aanugh of the tribe (mostly adepts and shamans, but including a few clerics and sorcerers as well) as spell components and trophies. It is the hard shell of the chuul that is the greatest prize, however. Surviving members of the hunt have the right to take small pieces of the chitin and sew them onto their flesh (from which the tribe gains its name). The process is long and painful, as the small patches of insect-crustacean shell are first crudely sewn onto the orcs' back, arms, hands and even faces. Over the course of time, if they do not become infected, the plates eventually become part of the orcs' hide. Combined with the great number of scars the orcs have, mostly gained from the constant scratching and tearing at innumerable insect bites, these pieces of chitin give them an ugly and horrifying look indeed.

**Territory Controlled:** If the Alubelok Swamp, which is roughly triangular, was an arrowhead, the Chuul-Skins would claim the northernmost fifty miles or so that form the point. Their settlements are widely scattered across these northern fens, but tend to be more heavily concentrated in the eastern bogs, along the Kalamaran side, than those that border Basir. They continue to slowly expand, however, and the pole-mounted, fetish-adorned skulls that mark the area of the swamp they control (control being a relative term) are found a little further south each year.

The various Chuul-Skin settlements are all built above ground, as the muck of the bog and the high water table generally prevents them from delving underground (though a few small, naturally occurring caves lie beneath one or two, mostly either filled with water or at least requiring the ability to swim

to reach). Villages are constructed in a circle, usually atop patches of solid ground but occasionally on large raft-like structures anchored in place. Villages are surrounded by one and sometimes two rude palisade walls, well camouflaged to blend into the surrounding swamp and often built around patches of quicksand or treacherous ground as an additional defense. The three spawning pits controlled by the tribe are well-defended and are often guarded by trolls that are unaware of their importance.

**Numbers:** The Chuul-Skins number some 2,500 orcs. They are not as big a tribe as many others, but life in the Alubelok has made them hard. They are scattered across at least ten or more lairs, though there is one central lair that holds the bulk of the tribal leadership and 20% or so of their numbers (along with two of their kughagrun spawning pits). Fully 8% of the tribe are black orcs; the rest are of common stock. Chuul-Skin guruk-vra half-breeds are looked down upon less than those of other tribes, and can attain positions of rank and influence (though they must still fight to prove themselves against the full-bloods). There are several trolls (one in four are actually scrag) in the central and larger settlements, as many as the various ugokh ruling over those places feel they can adequately control. There are small bands of okogn warriors who function as "troll tenders", as it were. It is their responsibility to keep the giant creatures pointed in the right direction and from eating too many members of the tribe. In addition to trolls, the tribe has control of two small goblin clans and a tribe of grippli (though the latter do not fare well under orcish rule). As recently as a decade ago there were lizardfolk and bullywugs still in the area, but the former have finally been pushed out and the latter have largely drifted south (many into the dragon's domain). A few may remain, but if so they remain deep in hiding.

Though the tribe does a fair job of dominating the area in which they dwell, complete control of it is impossible. There are far too many predators living in the Alubelok for that, and the ever-present lizardfolk, while far fewer in number, are both canny and strong. They also lose more than a few tribe members in their periodic Chuul hunts in the deeper swamp. When the casualties are counted, the Chuul-Skins suffer as many casualties in the swamp as they do in their frequent raids across the Ridara.

**Resources:** The only resources readily available to the tribe are the unique Alubelok herbs, creatures and items that are found nowhere else on Tellene. Such things are not easy to trade, and are difficult to harvest and transport, however the tribe's small but effective network of half-orc "merchants" enables it to engage in some commerce with select Kalamaran



## Chapter 2:

# ISLANDS OF THE ALUBELOK COAST

towns and cities (usually some of those north of the swamp). Food, livestock and slaves are taken in numerous raids, and a surprising amount of income is earned by Chuul-Skin mercenaries that hire out to unscrupulous merchants for the barge-ride down the Ridara to Sobeteta.

**Religious Bias:** There are, of course, large numbers of Chuul-Skin orcs that follow Garg. Other orcish deities have their followers, but interestingly worship of Grurg, Garg's son is not tolerated. There are a few black and common orc ka'ago'ghugh rangers who know a surprising number of the tenets of the god Bushnak the Bear, but this is not worship or adulation in the traditional sense, and they are rumored to see him as a massive boar instead of a bear in any event.

**Raid Targets:** Chuul-Skin orcs are constantly hunting (or being hunted by) the creatures of the swamp and other humanoid clans in particular. The most lucrative and dangerous raid targets, however, are the Kalamaran towns located just across the river. The tribe raids eastwards more often than to the north (both because they trade there through half-breed agents and are wary of the strong garrison at Bugido), and have pillaged outlying human settlements as far away as Sethido and Fefido. On one or two particularly daring raids the town of Hithido saw orcs in the streets and once, just five years ago, half the Basiran town of W'wido was burned to the ground by orcs thought to be Chuul-Skins.

**Current Events:** Within the last several years no less than ten orcs and half-orcs of the tribe have achieved a notoriety and even fame as gladiators fighting in Gor Lisadera, the great arena of Sobeteta, and several more (all guruk-vra) have slipped into Kalamaran towns to enlist in Emperor Kabori's legions. This has not been an intentional exodus, but the skills brought back to the tribe by the half-dozen or so that returned have the current garak considering whether or not

an intentional scheme of sending his fighters into human society might benefit the tribe militarily.

There are some troubling events that have concerned the tribe while this is going on, however. The first has been the advent of a massive tendriculos that has recently begun preying upon orcs on the Basiran side of the swamp. Several large parties have sought the creature thus far without success and numerous warriors were lost in the effort.

Of even greater worry, however, are the recent sightings of Castanaughir the Black by orcs traveling or patrolling the southern reaches of their "realm" and more recent skirmishes with strong bands of bullywugs. Traditionally the bullywugs have been unable to stand up to the Chuul-Skins in combat, and have been all but driven out of the northern third of the swamp. These new skirmishes would seem to herald a change in the status quo, and coupled with the sighting of the dragon have the orcs concerned that the drake is looking to expand his "kingdom" northwards. The sting of this, however, has been alleviated somewhat by a sound thrashing delivered to a mercenary company within the sight of Rilefido by a strong band of Chuul-Skin black orcs and trolls. This victory, less than a fortnight old, yielded much arms, armor and plunder.

Though the flow of the Ridara River splits the Alubelok coast into many different "islands," only three are considered as such. These are the southernmost islands: Bosinela Island, Remeter Island, and the most prominent – Rokalel Island, where we find the city of Sobeteta.

### ROKALEL ISLAND

Originally a barren and unappealing place, certain parts of it have long since become cultivated, terraced and irrigated. All along the eastern coast are innumerable rice fields and paddies. It is rugged and broken on the interior, climbing to just under 500 feet above sea level at tip the island spears up and out of the water into what is called the North Prow (though there is no Southern Prow or any other similar promontory to distinguish it – that is simply what locals call it). Thrusting over the waters of the Bay like a ship's ram, the North Prow is the second-highest point on the island, and allows the watchers in the tower built there to see for miles in every direction. This tower is officially called Stone Beak but referred to by almost everyone as just "the Beak." Stone Beak is manned by a permanent but small garrison of the Sobetetan City Guard, occasionally relieved by a unit of Harbor Watch marines or Imperial troops, all of whom share that duty.

Though the majority of dangers in this region lie in the waters and the swamps, anywhere there are people to provide victims there will be criminals and bandits to prey on them. These are rarely if ever any huge threat on Rokalel Island (there being a far more lucrative criminal career available in piracy or smuggling) but they can be troublesome. These bandits and brigands (never in any great numbers, but a nuisance nonetheless) have long used the broken and rocky region of the central island to hide in, preying upon smaller settlements and isolated homesteads.

Brigands are not the danger on the island of course. Adventurers and soldiers from Pekal once created a stir on the northern end of the island by burning crops, destroying the roads in the region and razing all the buildings outlying Stone Beak (killing the better part of the garrison as they did so). Though more of a distraction than a true invasion, it was still an attack on Sobetetan soil. While there was a great deal of damage done, the Pekalese took no real action against the poor folk and peasants, instead confining their efforts to military targets and soldiers.

Nevertheless, the principle of the act (not to mention its brazen execution) outraged both Colonel Pateris and the Duke. It is unlikely that any force could reach the island in great strength without first a warning being sounded, but this fact failed to

mollify the Kalamarans, whose reaction to the raid was far greater than the actual damage should have warranted. (Sorabek, no fool, is well aware that Kabori will not take kindly to any real damage being done to his most profitable port by his enemies, and that his position - as well as his life - hinges on making sure such a thing is not allowed to occur). It is for these reasons that the Sobetetan military troops mount frequent, periodic patrols across the island, sweeping different areas in turn. Sobetetan Watch-galleys, which vigorously patrol all around the island from the city and a small dock below Stone Beak, also beach themselves occasionally, allowing strong parties of marines to strike inland at random.

### THE BLACK WOUND

The Black Wound is an ominous looking place, a black and noxious hole plunging down into the rock of Rokalel Island. Strange sounds issue up from it periodically, and obscene creatures have been known to crawl forth. The Black Wound was formed in 443 IR when the deep gnomes of Dakelvail repulsed an attack of fish creatures from the labyrinthine tunnels and dark caverns beneath their city. The creatures were not defeated, they were simply turned aside - much like a swarm of ants forced to alter their path by a physical barrier. The day after the battle with the deep gnomes, the fishy horde spewed forth from the ground through a pit that several scores of them perished to dig out. Once loose upon the island devastation ensued.

The destruction and bloodshed visited by the horde upon the gnome and halfling settlements in the hills left entire towns empty. The same happened to numerous human villages. Sobeteta itself very nearly fell, with City Guardsmen and citizens alike hunted and harried through the streets and platoons of the Watch besieged in stone buildings.

Two days after they emerged from the pit they withdrew again. Days later still, mythar and Sobetetan scouts encountered one another as they scouted the place. The hole was black and noxious, with odious smells and strange sounds issuing up from it. The stone around the pit had been blackened by filth and worn smooth by the passage of countless bodies. It looked, as the mythar captain put it, "like a black wound in the earth." The name stuck.

Since that time a watch has been maintained upon the Wound. A strong company of mythar soldiers maintains this guard, augmented by a platoon of the Sobetetan City Watch. Several thick obelisks have been raised around the hole, from the top of which archers and spellcasters can rain death down upon any emerging creatures. A permanent bivouac has been built nearby as a billet for the troops. However,

no walls or towers or permanent fortifications have been constructed. The original intention was to ring the place with battlements. However, repeated eruptions gave wise heads pause. If we wall the Wound off, thought they, or sealed it up, might not the fish creatures come forth somewhere else? Better to know whence they will come and not be caught completely unprepared...

## DAKELVAIL

Population: 9,000 mythar (deep gnomes)

**At a Glance:** The people of this underground fortress city are truculent and unfriendly to the few outsiders that are ever allowed below. Strangers are rarely able to approach the place undetected. There are several cunningly concealed watchposts in the rocks out and away from the gates, accessible only from within the city itself. Keen-eyed mythar sentries watch from inside these trapped and warded clefts; the narrow passages often drip with (and smell of) leaking saltwater. Worse yet, many passages leading to private chambers and homes are gnome-sized often and viciously trapped, frequently splitting into confusing dead-end tunnels that end in spiked pits or deadfalls.

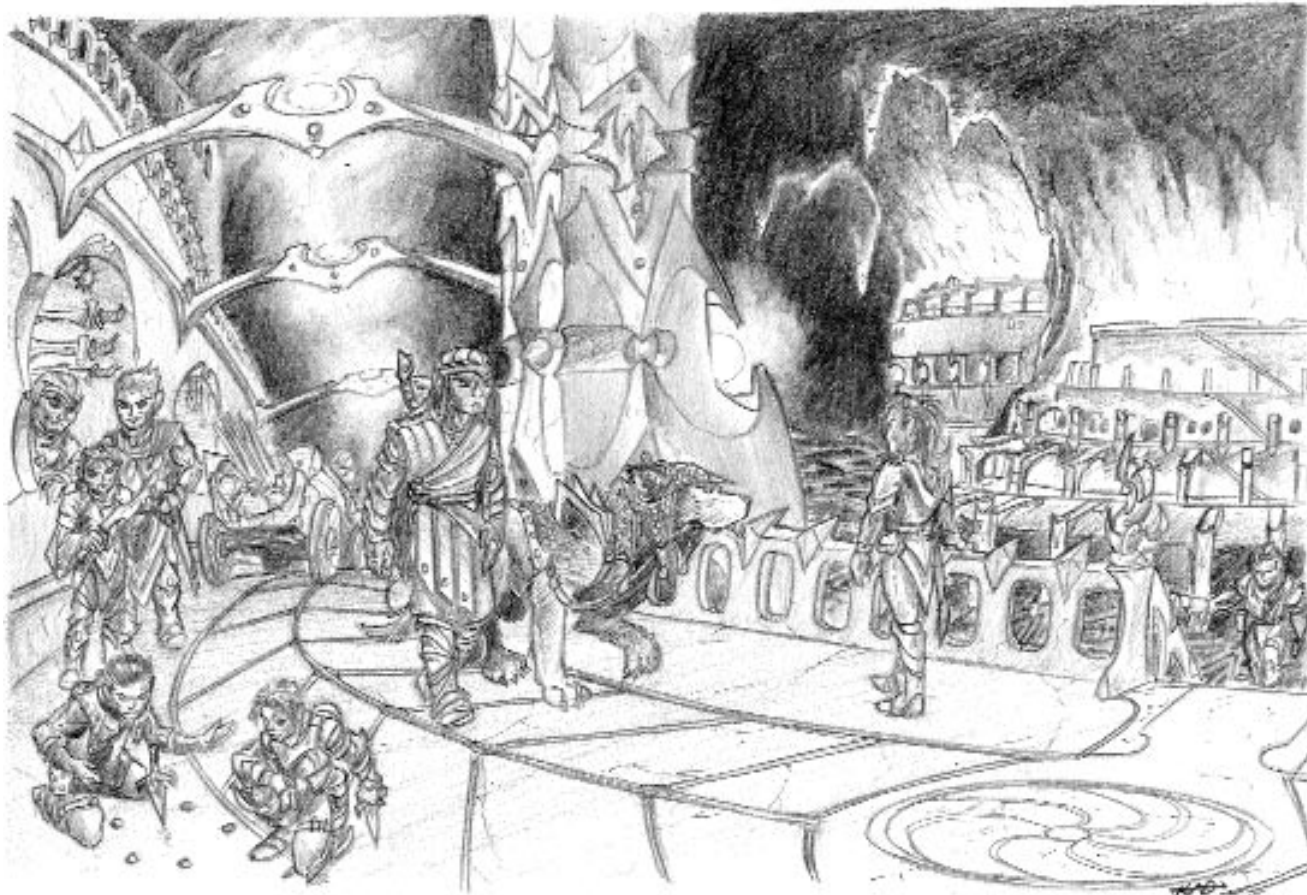
Inside the city itself, visitors can expect to be greeted with sullen silence and unfriendly, harshly

measuring looks. Dakelvail has been a city at war for generations; its citizens have little time for frivolity or levity, and may be even dourer than their kinsmen of other lands.

The ongoing conflict in the twisting caverns and plummeting wells beneath their city has been virtually the sole occupation and focus of these deep gnomes for generations. How the mythar came to Rokalel Island is unknown, though they claim their city predates that of the Kalamarans.

In the month of Renewal, in 433 IR, the mythar were nearly destroyed. A stinking horde of mysterious, fish-like creatures burst in upon the lower levels of their city without warning and ran rampant through the halls. The butchery that ensued was horrific. The mythar soldiery were skilled and capable, but unprepared and too few. In the end, barely a quarter of Dakelvail's folk, the Dakelvailgrim, were still alive when the creatures were driven away. Now, over a century later, they have yet to recover.

A decade to the day after this attack the fish creatures came again. The gnomes, however, had not been idle during the intervening ten years, and the surging tide of filthy humanoids died by the hundreds on traps, in pits and under deadfalls; on spikes and choking to death on poison and burned in torrents of flaming pitch. Even in the face of all that they came



through, but the mythar soldiers were ready for them and repulsed them after a bloody fight that began and ended in darkness.

What followed after that battle is a tale better told in the history of The Black Wound (see above). The gnomes reset their traps and rebuilt their defenses and continued to muster their strength, occasionally rebuffing lesser forays of fish creatures from the depths, or clearing their mines of troglodytes and hunting the monsters of the chasms.

The reinvigoration of the Kalamaran Empire posed a problem for the Dakelvailgrim. A vigorous new Duke, fresh from the campaign to retake Tokis, felt it only reasonable that the mythar share in the burden of guarding the Black Wound. Sages had discerned what had occurred in 443 IR - the Duke's stance was that it was the deep gnomes who had driven the fish creatures to the surface, and that they therefore bore at least some responsibility for the damage that had been cast. He felt that Dakelvail should bear the burden of standing watch over the hole. Several battalions of infantry bivouacked on the hills near the city were there to make his position known to the gnomes.

The Dakelvailgrim's attitude was predictable, but they were in a quandary. They possessed barely sufficient strength to hold the periodic assaults of fish creatures at bay. They could not afford a two-sided battle; however, their trenchant pride would scarcely allow them to meekly surrender to the Duke's demands. However, they were not unaware of what had happened to the dwarves of Karasta, nor were they ignorant of the tenuous position of the elves of Douathanorian. A compromise seemed unavoidable, though they were loath to make it.

In the end, the lord of Dakelvail agreed to a treaty whereby he was ennobled in their eyes of Kalamar - he is now the equivalent of a Kalamaran count, and is so formally addressed by Sobetetans and other Kalamarans. He holds Dakelvail semi-autonomously as a fief, with the Duke of Sobeteta as his liege.

Dakelvail is too large a city for its current population, which has not yet fully returned to its former strength. Large sections of it remain untenanted and echo hollowly to the tread of constant patrols marching their way over rock and small pools of leaking water. It is built for defense, however, with successive rings of redoubts and bastions and strong points as its roads and stairs climb closer to the surface.

Government: Lord Count Brunthal Obalik is the unquestioned master of Dakelvail. He is blunt, straightforward and anything but intemperate. He cares for nothing except the preservation of his city and his people. It is an all-consuming obsession of his considerable will and strategic genius. Anything that

threatens the survival of the Dakelvailgrim is dealt with ruthlessly. The city's population is ruled with a military efficiency that is unhindered by cumbersome bureaucracy. Officials have titles and rank commensurate with their position and responsibility; those that need it are assigned aides and a small staff.

Lord Duke Obalik has no liking for his position in the Kalamaran nobility. It is said he uttered his oath of fealty through gritted teeth. He is also well aware of Duke Sorabek's past deeds, his slaughter of gnomes and dwarves in particular. Though neither he nor his subjects bear any particular like or dislike for rock gnomes, the fact that they were butchered out of hand galls him greatly.

None of the mythar cares for the current state of affairs, but they are a pragmatic and obdurate folk and see no options available to them. There are no subversive groups or political malcontents in Dakelvail. They are too busy fighting or training to do so to indulge in such pointless and disloyal machinations.

Economy: The mythar trade some with the rock gnomes and halflings of the hills, exchanging precious stones and well-crafted tools and implements with them for agricultural products, goat's milk and honey (their one indulgence). Their artisans, when they can spare the time, create incredible sculptures and other artwork from stone. These bring a high price in Sobeteta when, on rare occasion, mythar travel there. Their weapons are equally valued and are sold to Sobetetans and other island inhabitants, but are only carried abroad in small numbers and so are usually purchased only by collectors or those wealthy enough to afford them. Typically, these are just knives, daggers, small swords and the like. They have also been known to sell flavorful mushrooms and other delicacies from the caves in order to purchase other items unavailable to them.

Military: Every gnome old enough to carry a weapon in Dakelvail does so. The martial nature of the city insures that artisans, craftsmen and even scholars can wield a blade or swing a mace. The actual military force of the mythar numbers a thousand. Soldiers are tough and strong, skilled with a variety of melee weapons, particularly the flail, which many Dakelvailgrim prefer. Missile support is provided by crossbows or volleys of envenomed darts, usually hurled from behind a covering rank of armored gnomes bearing shields. A few mythar fighters, and many rogues, fight two-handed with the vicious haerthach (see Chapter 5: Equipment).

Their sorcerers prefer spells that will augment and support the ranks of their soldiers. Their wizards, even fewer in number than their sorcerers, specialize in either conjuration or evocation, the better to either



summon monsters into battle or create barriers and devastating enchantments for use against their foes. It is not just accepted that mythar mages will take part in the defense of the city, it is expected. There are a few deep gnomes who care for and fight alongside war dogs bred over the years by clergy of The Old Man. They are short at the shoulder and heavily muscled, and wear mail crafted by gnome armor-smiths.

**Temples:** There is but one faith followed in Dakelvail - the Order of the Pike. Captain Gulpin Tagazi leads the clergy of the Order of the Pike, and oversees the breeding of the squat, powerful war dogs that fight alongside the Dakelvailgrim. There are a total of eleven clerics of Sergeant, Elite and Regular rank aiding Captain Tagazi in his services and his training. They work ceaselessly to hone the fighting skills and decision-making abilities of the mythar soldiery, and have turned the use of traps of ambush into an art. None of these clerics of Serabel would be of any use in a cavalry battle or establishing pike drill, but they are unmatched in their mastery of savage tunnel warfare.

**Mages & Sages:** Habamel Shywright is skilled mythar wizard who toils constantly to improve her mastery of skills and runes. She has several copies of her spell books, sharing her conjuration spells freely with her apprentices and with several fighting mages who seek to learn at least some ability with magic to help their comrades in battle. She scribes scroll after scroll to be carried by them, and her apprentices, when they accompany patrols into the deep.

**Herjam Natassi** is an excellent conjurer who lost his hand to a grick in his youth. He has had to modify many of his spells with somatic requirements to accommodate this loss. The creatures Natassi has summoned forth in the past have turned the tide of more than one bitter fight. He keeps several potent magic items on his person, and would still go "down below" with the mythar soldiers if he was spry enough to do it. Age has taken its toll on the old gnome, but he remains a priceless asset to the city.

**Underworld:** Though there are rogues in Dakelvail, they are not practicing thieves. They are scouts or masters of ambush, practicing their skills to strike fish creatures or illithids unexpectedly, from out of the darkness. The punishment for thievery in the city is ritual dismemberment, beginning with the removal of the offender's hands, but this sentence has not been necessary in living memory.

**Interesting Sites:** The Black Wound is the most notable site in or near Dakelvail, of course, but there are others of interest. One of these is the Cave of Pikes, a large open-mouthed cave one league north of the city. Inside the cave is a huge chessboard

carved in the stone of its floors. The pieces are over a foot tall - deep gnomes and war dogs on one side pitted against a variety of subterranean creatures on the other. Seawater trickling from a small crack feeds a pool in the cave, around which chairs and other furnishings are placed. In the Cave of Pikes the Dakelvail clerics of The Old Man entertain other faithful of the Order of the Pike from distant lands and cities for discussion (even they are only allowed into the city at times). What no one outside the city suspects, not even Duke Sorabek, is that the tunnels below Rokalel Island may actually connect with The Grottoes in the Ubikokeli Highlands. Recently Lord Obalik has received a petition from a scholar in far-off Anowhizh requesting permission to come investigate that possibility.

**Special Notes:** The mythar will probably never completely adjust to their status as Kalamaran citizens, but neither will there ever be a danger that they might revolt. Colonel Herit, commander of the mythar military, believes that they can use it to their advantage, however, for if they are Duke Sorabek's vassals, is he not duty-bound to aid them? He would no more welcome human soldiers in the city than any other gnome (not that they'd be able to stand upright), but weapons and armament and other assistance could be gained. He has yet to bring this to the "Count's" attention, but he intends to.

## ROPIDU

Ropidu is a tiny coastal town on the western shore of Rokalel Island just a few leagues west of Tovidó, connected to that town by a road that cuts across the narrow waist of the isle. Ropidu has no harbor to speak of, just a few small piers suitable only for berthing small fishing craft and similar vessels. Ropidu is governed in Duke Sorabek's name by a military appointee known as the Warden. Though his power is similar to that possessed by the Barons of other towns, the Warden is a strictly professional post without any patent of nobility attached. The current Warden of Ropidu is Fasamir P'Mara, a former Captain of the Kalamaran legions who served Duke Sorabek in his campaigns in the mountains prior to his appointment as Duke of Sobeteta. Though the Warden's former military rank was lower than several of the soldiers currently serving the Duke, his position and the strategic value of the watchtower high on a ridge above the town, give him power and prestige normally accorded to men of greater rank (or richer blood). All able-bodied men in Ropidu are required to maintain some sort of missile weapon in their home or business due to the large numbers of avian monsters coming out of the Alubelok Swamp, and

all public businesses have racks of pole-arms, arrows, quarrels or slingstones near the front doors.

### TOVIDO

**Population:** Tovidó's resident population is comprised of 1,407 humans, predominantly Kalamarans, but at any given time there may be half again as many people from other lands filling local inns and hostels. There are often several score or more doughty fighters from all over (including even Brandobians and Reanaarians!) who come here to fight alongside the Tidesmen. In addition to these human folks, there are perhaps 300 or more halflings dwelling in cliff homes hewn out of the rock high above the town.

**At a Glance:** Tovidó, a small walled town of some 1,407 persons, is an outpost of humanity sitting on the road between the tiny town of Ropidu to the west and the port of Sobeteta to the eastern side of Rokalel Island. It is a physically small place, built tall rather than wide in order to improve ease of defense, so that it looks like the town is huddled up against the cliffs. The local bogs have been filled in out to a distance of a half a league all the way around the town and the harbor has been warded by sunken ships with stone-filled hulls and huge lengths of chain. Despite all these precautions, creatures from the Alubelok Swamp often make a meal of Tovidans, who are watchful and wary as a matter of course. Difficult shoals and wicked, rocky cliffs line the shore for leagues in either direction, making Tovidó's small harbor of little use for any traffic traveling east of Rokalel Island to or from Sobeteta.

**Government:** Tovidó has been actively and efficiently ruled by Baron Pul'Har Gu'Lap Tovidó since he was granted the Barony by Duke Sorabek's predecessor. A lean and restless veteran of the Tokite Civil War, Baron Tovidó spent over a year in the Militocracy of Korak, where his sound advice and unflappable demeanor made him nearly as important to the Koraki General as the Council of Six (some say Baron Pul'Har's attitude towards the Alubelok Swamp mirrors that of the Koraki General's view of the hobgoblin menace). The halflings in the cliffs above Tovidó are also beholden to Baron Tovidó, though they largely administer themselves.

**Economy:** Though Sobeteta is a far larger port, and far more frequently visited by river traffic, the commerce traveling down the Ridara River has tremendous impact on Tovidó. Many traders who do not wish to make the larger city a port of call (for whatever reason) conduct their business in Tovidó (among these is the well known, if not notorious, Golden Alliance ivory merchant Zeba Mastera). There is also some overland traffic with Dakelvail, for the

Mythar rarely care to travel as far away as Sobeteta, when they venture away from their city at all. There is but one narrow road switching back and forth from the plateau above down to the town, but crafty Tovidans have constructed vast winches on the edge of the cliffs, devices large enough to raise and lower platforms bearing fully-laden wagons.

**Military:** There is a handful of Sobetetan infantry on detached duty here, plus the Baron's household troops (about forty or so), the town militia (known as the Tidesmen) and great number of halfling slingers, who rival those of P'Bapar in skill. The Baron's household troops patrol the plateau and act as a constabulary, often accompanied by halfling slingers; the Tidesmen are rarely home for long.

**Major Temples:** Though several deities have strong representation in Tovidó, none have as many worshippers as The Holy Mother. The Valiant is also widely followed (not surprisingly, given the great temple in Sobeteta). The Raconteur has a small but very vocal following, and there is an unassuming chapel of The Eternal Lantern there, supporting a small but very active sect of the Kalenal Gali, the Order of the Slayer.

**Mages & Sages:** There are several minor sorcerers, wizards and even druids in Tovidó. The best known of these is Halavan Sapetir, a red-haired Kalamaran as tall as a Fhokki who is said to keep a small octopus or cuttlefish in a massive tank in his home as a familiar.

**Underworld:** Gortrean Relloi, an unsavory Prompeldian, is probably the most disliked man in Tovidó. He is a smuggler and a slaver and a trafficker in all manners of goods, but he has never been caught in the act and so continues to flaunt his wealth in town. Relloi (probably an assumed name) is also a well-known dealer in strange monsters and oddities, creatures he markets quite ingeniously to various gladiatorial arenas throughout the Vast Empire. His current stock includes a massive female crimson worm (See *Dangerous Denizens: The Monsters of Tellene*) taken by trappers in the Alubelok Swamp, and, if rumors are correct, a Crawling Head being kept in a massive, soundproof vault underground. Another fellow often eyed askance by Tovidans is Marazzhak the Scowler, a huge sil-karg bounty hunter who, along with several dubious henchmen, use Tovidó as a base from which to hunt wanted criminals and other... targets...that travel the Ridara River.

**Interesting Sites:** Three small tunnels have opened in the cliffs above Tovidó within the last several months, higher than the town but below the halfling cliff-dwellings. No one knows who or what created these openings, which have been explored as deeply as several leagues into the earth, but the Baron is taking no chances. Fearing that these might be

stemming from the Black Wound, he has ordered each one collapsed in on itself as soon as it appeared, and strong patrols have been ordered all along the bottom of the cliffs.

**Special Notes:** The area is principally known for the great numbers of different bird life that live along the cliffs here (they also give the town its Merchant's Tongue nickname, "Terntide"). Terns, gulls, cormorants, ospreys and other species all frequent the coastal rocks, making their nests on the rocky heights that deny shipping any sanctuary. Sighting them is considered good fortune for the smaller craft coming from the river, as it is a sign that the harbor is near. Many of these birds, in particular the ospreys (which are of unusual size) are tamed for use by the Tidesmen, most of whom have bonded with one in the same fashion that some folks train hounds or domesticate other creatures. Using them in much the same way that falconers do their birds, the Tidesmen patrol the coast in sculled craft, or guard the harbor and nearby waters in sloops and small brigs. Though few in number, the Tidesmen are doughty fighting men and often sought for assistance with a particular problem or foe. They have cleared out particularly troublesome nests of grippli in the mires north of their town, and are said to have once driven away the ship Wavehunger (an action for which the ship's captain is sure to bear them a grudge). Though most wear mail and carry spears and blades as the tools of their craft, there are rumored to be magic-wielding folk numbered in their company as well.

## BOSINELA ISLAND

As well as being the headquarters of the Knights of the Breaking Wave (see Chapter 4: Orders and Organizations), Bosinela Island offers the following sites.

### RETHIDO

**Population:** 1,211 Kalamaran humans, most of pure stock but a few show the features and darker skin of the Svimohz. There is a small but unique segment to the town's population that has only been settled in Rethido for about a decade. A little more than ten years ago, a large contingent of Tokite soldiers, veterans of the war with Pekal, all settled here and have since become respected and valued residents of the town.

**At a Glance:** The small fishing town on the southern coast of Bosinela Island is relatively peaceful and quiet. Things are stirred up here only a few times a year, when the regattas of Sobeteta bring great numbers of small craft to her docks for a brief period. If it were not for the giant crabs that seem to congregate in the shallow waters here, only the retired soldiers of

the town militia would make the place remarkable at all. The prime crabbing waters stretch for at least thirty leagues in either direction of the little town's small harbor. Interestingly, it is only the brief stretch of deeper water where the docks are built that is free of the huge creatures (the claws of which can slice through mail as easily as the silk of milady's gown).

**Government:** Baron Rethido is as gray-haired as he is fat and good-natured. He is an anomaly in the current politics of the Vast Empire in that his family has ruled over Rethido since anyone can remember (though the current line is a distaff branch of those who ruled here before), all of them competent and none of them (almost unbelievably) ever growing ambitious or supporting the wrong faction. He pays the taxes he must to Duke Sorabek and makes sure that both the constables and militia are ready for the troublesome boat races and regattas that will never go away. The Baron is neither outspoken nor greatly charismatic, but he somehow manages to keep the loyalty of the citizens he rules and that is no mean feat. Other necessary governmental functions are conducted by the town council, headed by Rethido's granddaughter (nearly as mild as he is and twice as shrewd) and a retired Tokite mercenary colonel.

**Economy:** The economy of Rethido is almost exclusively centered around her fishing fleets and crabbers, though some trade is conducted with small villages and scattered farms on the hills of the island's interior.

**Military:** There is a surprisingly strong and skilled militia in Rethido, largely due to the training and influence of the soldiers who retired here. Though not as well disciplined or used to the keeping of formations as professional units, they have by dint of long practice become adept at using their pole-arms to fight large aquatic monsters and more than a few of the town's younger lads have been welcomed into service on the warships of Truetide Bight because of that skill. There are also some fifteen constables in town, all of them skilled riders (though not trained to fight as cavalry). In addition to watching over Rethido, they are used as post and dispatch riders between Rethido, Satirido and the numerous small settlements not large enough to have their own constabulary.

**Major Temples:** There are no major temples in Rethido. The Raiser is worshipped by some, Bright Eyes by others, and of course there are a few that pray to Wave Crusher. Most of the population that actually attends services does so in the Baron's Great Hall, where worship of the Lord of Silver Linings is conducted. (Note: it has been rumored that the Baron wanted to enter the Church of Everlasting Hope as a young man and would have done so had the death of

## Chapter 2: Islands of the Alubelok Coast

his older brothers in battle not required him to remain and rule.)

**Mages & Sages:** The only mage of any real note in Rethido is actually the Baron's illegitimate son, B'Rogis Rethido. B'Rogis is no great wizard by any means, but he is proficient. He recently returned from a trip to Balelido, where he earned a great deal of money working as cook for several wealthy families there. He has recently toyed with the idea of attempting to animate the remains of the giant crabs with some kind of necromantic spell, figuring that an exoskeleton should be subject to the same sorcery as an endoskeleton. He hasn't really put much work into though.

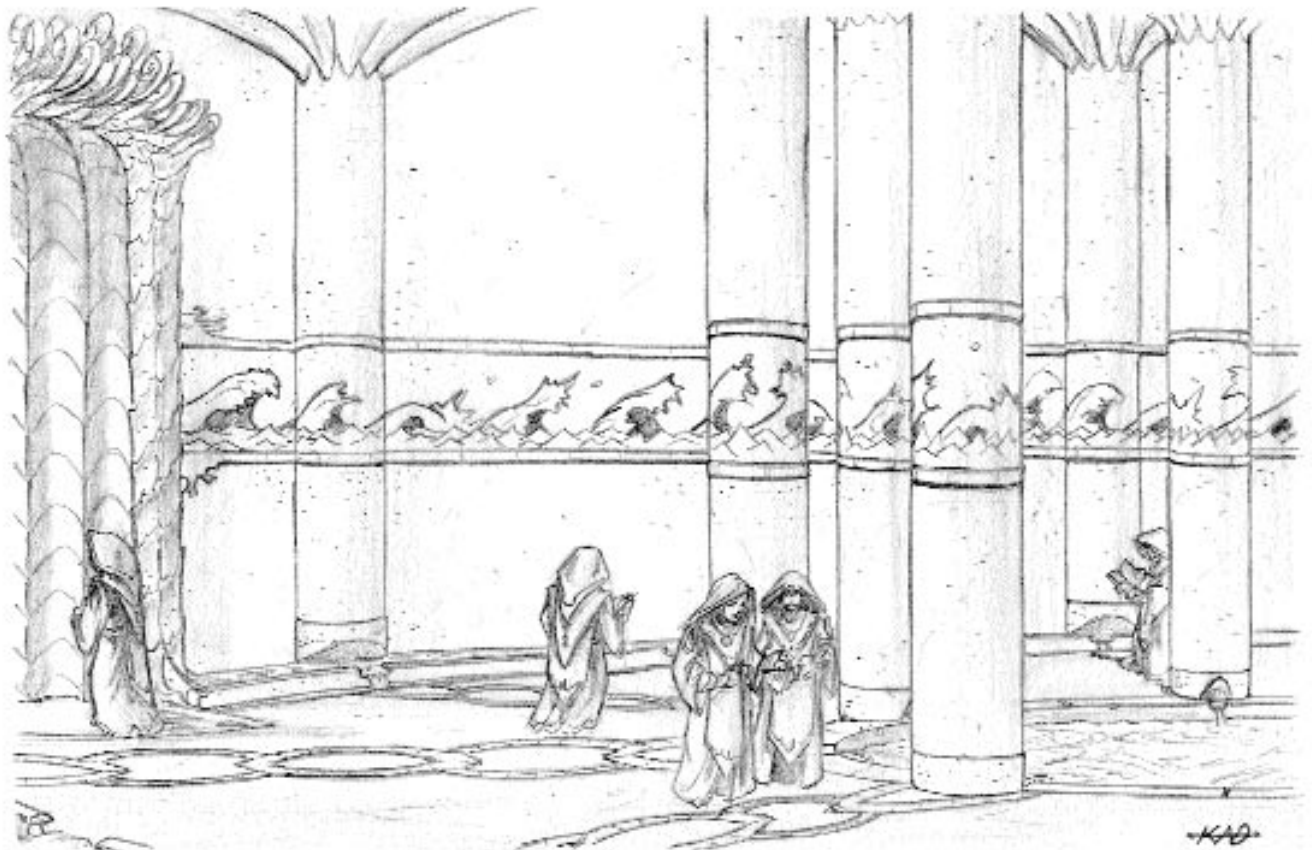
**Underworld:** Other than a few petty thieves, pickpockets and smugglers, there is no real underworld to speak of in Rethido. The constables are irritable when provoked into action and tend to make sure sailors or visitors toe the line.

**Interesting Sites:** A day's ride southwest of Rethido is a large abandoned manor rumored to be haunted, inhabited by humanoids or worse, generally avoided by the locals (who know better than to tarry anywhere near the place). What most folk do not realize is that the place was once home to a Tarisatan wizard who maintained close contacts with numerous unpleasant fellows that traded along and in the Obakasek Jungle. The wizard brought a large number of humanoids of many different species into the labyrinth of tunnels

beneath his home. The place is now thick with mongrelmen, though they take great care not to reveal themselves. Baron Rethido is aware of the situation, but is content to let the pitiful creatures alone as long as they keep to themselves. The lure of a dead mage's treasure, however, may eventually force his hand.

**Special Notes:** The majority of the old Tokite soldiers that settled in Rethido were pikemen, very good ones, all members of a company commanded by one Lakaran Dilomas. Approximately twenty in number, they were the core band of a unit that had followed Colonel Dilomas for years. Dilomas himself was an experienced mercenary with a good reputation, who'd helped to establish the pike drill for Emperor Kabori's Sixth Legion. Dilomas hailed originally from Rethido and wished to retire there to live out his days. Such was the loyalty he commanded from his troops that a score of them, mostly landless and tired of fighting, came with him. Their skill with pikes, halberds and glaives became a valuable talent when it came to harvesting the giant crabs (before their arrival, killing one was a chancy, if lucrative business).

Dilomas is not a man who could be recognized as a soldier of such reputation and background. He dresses like the rest of the men of the village and is not one to put on airs. His organizational ability and the experience of his men has changed the village forever—they've trained the other men (and some





of the women) in pike drill, and take large numbers of giant crabs for sale or trade. This has kept many of the villagers alive, and led them to a surprising and entirely unexpected prosperity. It has also made the ordinary little place a very dangerous target indeed for pirates, something at least two unsavory and unsuspecting crews have learned to their chagrin.

### SATIRIDO

Satirido, hardly any larger than Melidu, is actually beholden to Baron Rethido of Rethido. It was once the center of a Barony in its own right, but its most recent liege corresponded with the wrong nobleman in Emperor Kabori's court, and the Emperor had him removed, in pieces. For the last five years the town and its surrounding villages and thorps have grown to look wistfully upon their larger neighbor to the south; Baron Rethido, however, is careful not to encourage their overtures of fealty. He has no desire to rule any larger a fief than he does already, nor does he want anyone above him to suspect he has plans for "improvement". Other than these goings-on, there is little of significance in Satirido to distinguish it from any other small harbor along the Alubelok Coast. It is dangerous, stinking and hot. However, there is one notable "inhabitant" of the area. Along the northern shores of Bosinela Island and through the southern banks of the great swamp, swims a giant crocodile that is regarded almost affectionately by the folk of Satirido. The locals call this almost-mascot King Snaggletooth, and assume he hails from the mires of the Sethome Deje to the north. King Snaggletooth is big enough to have been mistaken for a small wyrm in the past, and is known to have dragged a buccaneer's sloop beneath the water once during a particularly wet spring.

### DEEPING ABBEY

Deeping Abbey, some 5 miles west of Rethido, refers to both a particular section of coastline there and a huge temple of Lisar, the Mother of the Elements. The Abbey is one of the largest such churches to be found anywhere on Tellene, and is certainly the greatest to be found on the shores of the Vast Empire. Here at Deeping Abbey, Lisar is honored in her incarnation as Wave Crusher, the patron of the Cult of the Water Corner of the Assembly of Four Corners. A naturally occurring deep harbor fronts the Abbey, which is a fortress in its own right. Coral-walled watchtowers as strong as any wrought of stone guard both the harbor entrance and the road that approaches the place from the eastern side. There are catapults on the landward side towers, and catapults and wooden piles employed seaward. The latter are well placed to batter any ships foolish enough to come thither. The harbor itself is a small bay that can be reached only through a narrow channel, a passage wide enough to allow the movement of but two large vessels at a time (indeed, the biggest ships have been known to scrape hulls as they pass). Its depth is sufficient to allow ships of the greatest draft. A second, smaller Inner Harbor lies further in from the larger one. Only ships captained and manned by servants of Wave Crusher are allowed into the Inner Harbor.

A Guardian of the Water Corner (Tebom Febidu, a Basiran hailing from a long line of fishermen) administers the Abbey. Guardian Tebom was taken from the deck of his uncle's small craft when he was still a boy and he was impressed into imperial service aboard a trireme out of Bet Kalamar. His aptitude and ability astounded a young acolyte aboard the vessel and he was quickly transferred from the deck to the chapel. His accomplishments since then have been remark-



able, and if he still harbors some ill will towards the imperials he takes care not to allow it to interfere with his duties. There are sixteen other clerics serving in the Abbey, including ten Servants and Initiates and another half dozen of higher status. In addition to these clergy there are a score and a half commoners and lay folk tending to the day-to-day needs of the clerics and temple grounds, plus an equal number of sturdy men-at-arms. Not surprisingly, a former naval officer commands this contingent. The Guardian's personal guard (which he decries the need for but his followers demand) of six are all men who served in the navies of Basir, Pekal or Eldor.

A village nearly the size of a small town has risen up around the temple to serve the needs of the clerics and travelers who come here seeking trade or shelter. Lawlessness is not abided, and trouble is virtually unheard of. There is a school of navigation located here which draws students from places as close as Bet Kalamar to cities as far away as Cosolen, Vrandol, Shyff and even Narr-Rytarr. The fishing village of Satirido and the town of Rethido lie within several hours walk of the Abbey. The Abbey leaders claim that these peoples are under their protection, though nominally they are actually the vassals of Count Rethido.

Deeping Abbey is home port to several warships crewed by clerics and lay worshippers of Wave Crusher. They often roam abroad hunting monsters, pirates or anything else that threaten the sailors, fishermen and other mariners who worship Lisar. The number of these ships is rarely great, but all manner and kind of craft may be encountered, from Basiran frigates to Kalamaran biremes and sloops, to even junks and suvarzha (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar supplement, Salt & Sea Dogs) from faraway lands. These ships serve to defend the Outer Harbor and patrol the surrounding sea lanes in times of need, but there are rarely more than a few of them actively doing so. Such vessels typically do not tarry in port, being eager to venture once more out on the sea to perform Lisar's work.

The clergy of Deeping Abbey are sincere and strong in their faith. They have long since mastered skills maritime, and know water miracles unknown anywhere else. They keep company with numbers of aquatic beasts and are said to have traveled to "the seas of other worlds." The veracity of this last statement is debated, but it is claimed that the Inner Harbor is warded by a massive water elemental called Trammelswurl, a creature of prodigious strength and size. It is further claimed that, in the early years of Emperor Kabori's reign, the elemental slew a huge dragon turtle with contemptuous ease. Regardless of the true story, a giant polished shell remains atop a tiny island in the Inner Harbor and is now a chapel

for the private vigils of the priesthood. The surmised existence of this creature, and its traditional friendship with the Guardians of Deeping Abbey, lend credence to local rumors that the Inner Harbor is in fact some sort of gateway or crossing place to the Elemental Plane of Water.

Though he has always guided the clergy of the Abbey in their efforts against pirates, sea-wreckers and those who would make the seas unsafe, recently Guardian Tebom's thoughts have strayed westward, to the Defiles Course (or, as it is sometimes called, the Blackwater Rush). The bitter waters of that turgid waterway have long befouled many leagues of the Alubelok Swamp, as well as certain small estuaries of the Basiran end of the Girdsword Strait. Lately the black water has even begun to kill off much of Basir's rice crop in the region. Increasingly the Guardian has wondered what is to blame for the killing river and is beginning to feel as though Lisar is calling upon him to end that defilement.

Recent attempts by certain Purgers of the House of Scorn to discredit the Deeping Abbey have come to naught, much to the relief of the Guardian and his staff. Certain followers of the Despiser had tried to blame an attack on Sobeteta by a host of water elementals on a conjectured, fictional Keeper of the Water Corner (or perhaps Guardian Tebom himself). Though none of the worshippers of Lisar were worried they would be held to blame for the attack, having the accusation made at all was infuriating. Too, the Guardian's well-known background lent at least some credence to the claims. However, the Purger who began the accusations caught the eye of Resemer the Unholy as a result of his efforts. This put a swift end to said efforts.

### REMETER ISLAND

Aside from the village of Kalido and the following two locations, Remeter Island is said to have little to interest travelers.

### KALIDO

Far to the west of any other Alubelok town, Kalido was once (a long time ago) argued about and even fought over. Powerful noblemen of Basir claimed the little walled port, which most Kalamarans consider to be beholden to the Duke of Sobeteta. This squabble has long since been forgotten as the war with Pekal heated up. With the increasing number of fleet actions out on Elos Bay, the well-protected harbor at Kalido has begun to see naval vessels with more frequency, and Princess Dela of Basir has recently agreed to put a company of armored crossbowmen ashore there to help keep the town safe in the event

of Pekalese or privateer attack. Kalido has a population of 957, mostly Kalamarans with familial ties both in Basir and Sobeteta. Baron T'Poru Loritu Kalido has ruled here for just a few years, being awarded the title some time after Duke Sorabek was installed in Sobeteta. He was granted the rights to the Barony by Emperor Kabori himself for his role in some unknown intrigue involving the Duke of O'Par. Of utmost concern to Baron Kalido, right now, and even more so than worries over what Pekalese warships might do, is a gang of Vrocks that have been savaging the small settlements of herders and farmers furthest out from Kalido. How these extraplanar creatures came to leave the abyss and trouble Remeter Island the baron does not know, but to say that he is worried about them would be a gross understatement.

## MELIDU

An unprepossessing village of barely 400 people on the southeastern tip of Remeter Island, Melidu is noteworthy for just one reason. One particular citizen of the town, the formidable Asa Vitilar, is far more than she seems at first glance. Still a hale and attractive woman, though now nearing her sixtieth year, Asa was a Basiran Dancer (and a powerful one) for many years before settling here. She was riding on the stern of a Basiran frigate that foundered in a storm in the waters nearby, and a local fisherman pulled her from the sea more drowned than alive. A widower, he nursed her back to health and eventually helped her return to Bet Urala. She remained there for just a season before her heart led her back to him, to settle down in Melidu permanently. That was fifteen years ago, and though her husband's health failed last year she has remained there. She is not quick-tempered, nor easily given to violence, but she will tolerate nothing that might bring harm to the village or its inhabitants—and her abilities as a mage are still very much to be reckoned with. At least once or twice a year she receives visitors at odd hours—mages, some of them, and more than one dangerous looking man in rune-covered armor. In the absence of a Baron (the actual House Melidu died out many decades past, and no one has ever taken or been given the town or title to rule it), Asa Vitilar acts as a sort of “headwoman”, with several prominent townsfolk to help her “govern” (such as she does). Duke Sorabek rarely troubles the place, and if he was aware that it is in need of a Baron it would be very surprising. Were he so informed, it is doubtful he would take any action. Vitilar keeps trouble from brewing, and Saltheart would probably balk at an official Sobetetan presence anyway.

## THE SALT HEART KINGDOM

The Saltheart Kingdom is a mostly aquatic region claimed by Saltheart Spraystrider (the Merchant's Tongue rendering of his true name), a reef giant of astonishing size and strength. “Kingdom” is a relative term and not one of specific political implications - neither Princess Dela of Basir nor Duke Sorabek II of Sobeteta acknowledge the sovereignty of the kingdom, though they do recognize the practicality of its “ruler's” mastery of the area.

Saltheart's kingdom comprises a chain of numerous small islands to the south of Remeter Island (and, depending upon the giant's mood, much of Remeter's southern coastline as well). Technically falling within the borders of the Kingdom of Basir, its eastern periphery is considered to be one of the boundaries of the Girdsword Strait (and is, in fact, one of the reasons that channel earned the name). Spanning nearly 100 miles of water, the kingdom is home to a variety of aquatic creatures, humanoid clans, small numbers of lesser giants and even several tiny human fishing villages. All of them acknowledge Spraystrider as their sovereign, or they do not last long. A surprising number of pirate ships also pay fealty and a tribute of their plunder to the giant in return for permission to ply his waters.

Only a few decades after the demise of Emperor Fulakar, an overweening Kalamaran admiral felt the giant's ire, losing several ships to the self-proclaimed ruler's wrath. Because of this, most believe the giant is several hundred years old at least. Saltheart Spraystrider is known to have great treasures hoarded in his sea manor, the exact location of which is unknown. More than one adventurer has met his end hunting for it, and at least one, the Captain known as Baragir the Osprey, was pursued all the way to Sobeteta harbor by the giant's hunting pack of sea cats and there devoured. One fabled treasure thought to be in his possession is the Reef Lord's Pearl, a priceless gem reputed to be as large as a man's head.

Spraystrider is not unreasonable, but he is temperamental and quick to anger. Merchants or sailors wishing to pass through Girdsword Strait in his waters do well to pay the tithe he demands, and even royal Kalamaran warship captains are known to pay their toll.

There is no capitol of the Saltheart kingdom, per se. There is only the Reef Lord's aquatic mansion, somewhere below one of the larger islands in his territory. In this manse dwells the giant himself, along with a few guests of various races. The cave and mansion is guarded by a variety of marine creatures, including sea-lions and giant eels. There are usually at least forty or fifty merfolk warriors defending the home of their liege, possibly alongside several locathah

**Population:** Varies. Perhaps 2,000 humans, several hundred merfolk and locathah, a few score hill and reef giants, unknown numbers of lizardfolk and assorted other aquatic creatures.

**Government:** Saltheart Spraystrider is a desultory ruler. In reality, he rarely bothers his "subjects" so long as they abide by his claim to authority. Each tribe, village or band within his realm rules itself virtually autonomously, rarely troubled by the outside world. Village headmen are the authority in the various human and humanoid villages.

Gelruh is the chieftain of a powerful and well-established tribe of lizardfolk dwelling in the salt-water marshes of one such isle off the southeast coast of Remeter Island. He is physically powerful and very intelligent, leading a tribe of several hundred with the assistance of several druids and shamans. The members of his tribe are accomplished fighters and masters of ambush, defending their island from intruders with a labyrinthine network of snares and traps.

Pisaladh is the locathah barbarian who rules the largest of the several semi-nomadic locathah bands that dwell in the kingdom. Pisaladh has led several groups to Sobeteta in the past, and continues to do so on occasion, braving that human port more often than his counterparts in the other clans. Pisaladh is said to carry Edaro's snarling trident (see Appendix B), a powerfully enchanted weapon once borne by a Basiran ship captain and since handed down from chieftain to chieftain in his tribe.

**Economy:** The economy of the kingdom is self-supporting and simple. Beyond what is necessary to sustain its inhabitants, the fishermen of the island occasionally export certain parts of their catch. They often claim salvage rights to the cargo and surviving remnants of ships that sink in the nearby waters and then wash ashore. Usually this salvage is traded for manufactured goods unavailable to the villagers (and later traded by canny merchants for a tidy profit in Sobeteta or Bet Urala). Gelruh's tribe of lizardfolk has carefully established trade relations with a few discreet and honest merchants, much to the benefit of both sides. In addition to rare herbs found in the marshes, Gelruh's folk provide these merchants with cloaks and capes woven with unsurpassed skill—these garments, which will keep out virtually any rain and offer surprising protection from the cold, are much sought after in Sobeteta and sell for a tremendous price.

Because their relationship with the lizardfolk give them a virtual monopoly on such raiment, these merchants take great pain to maintain good relations with the tribe and can be counted on to assist Gelruh if he is in need. (The tribes of the Alubelok Swamp trade

similar garments, but without any consistency and in no great numbers.) There is a small (but thriving) pirate economy in the kingdom as well. Saltheart pays little heed to the laws of man, and requires only that a tithe from any transaction involving plundered goods be paid to him or to the peoples he rules. It would be impossible to determine how exactly this plunder is allocated to the different villages and bands, because there is no prescribed method. The giant appears to give it away in a whimsical, unpredictable fashion. Likewise, certain human villages have made agreements with independent naval captains (predominantly Basiran), helping them to track down and destroy these pirates. In these cases Saltheart's mandate is the same. A percentage of goods or monies recovered must be given to the village that provided the information, and a percentage of that goes into his coffers.

**Military:** There is no "standing" military as such in the kingdom. Saltheart is very powerful in his own right, and is known to have several score locathah warriors guarding his hold. In addition to these fighters, and the adepts and shamans that advise and assist them, he keeps a large hunting pack of sea lions and dire sea lions the way certain human nobles keep hounds. A few humans from the villages of the kingdom dwell in air-filled caves in his mansion, and (or so rumor has it) so do a few very powerful gray elves.

**Temples:** Any of the known churches can be found represented amongst the various peoples of the kingdom, though there are no formally established temple structures of the kind common to human kingdoms to be found there. Among both humans and merfolk of the area, the most commonly worshipped deities are Wave Crusher, The Raiser, The Emperor of Scorn, or The Bear (or The Balancer as it is known underwater); respectively known as Ambomorphsys, Reagoor, Peasorta, and Banasquata by the merfolk. Amongst the Zek'Ira (lizardfolk) of the area, The Holy Mother holds sway almost exclusively. There are followers of The Old Man among them in small numbers and a very few adherents to The Way of the Berserk (although they tend not to advertise their faith, and often leave their home and make their way into the Alubelok Swamp). These lizardfolk worship the Battle Rager in his incarnation as Turacg, a maniacal lizardfolk warrior bearing a stone-axe and riding an immense dire crocodile as large as a dragon. The sahuagin of the region worship several deities like the merfolk, but lean more towards the



## Chapter 3:

# SOBETETA, THE CITY ON THE ROCK

The City on the Rock sits on Rokalel, the large, rock-rimmed island at the southern end of the Ridara River delta. The city is large, sprawling and noisome, its own smells and odors often overwhelmed by the putrid stench of the nearby Alubelok Swamp. Summer is the favorite season for Sobetetans, because the constant breezes from the south and southwest bring a welcome relief from the stink. The Elos Breeze is particularly welcomed, though rarely felt in any strength. This wind also seems to curtail the visits of avian predators from nearby islands and marshes, though anyone who travels beyond the city's archer-paced walls (ranchers, farmers and sailors) will always keep a wary eye on the sky. Giant vultures, eagles, harpies and stirges are among the many flying creatures that menace the region.

Traffic to and from Sobeteta typically sails along the outside periphery of the Alubelok Archipelago, for reasons that are abundantly clear. However, as with all such perilous places, there are those who brave its dangers for the benefits to be gleaned from doing so. Among these are improved sailing time gained by taking the channels through the islands, commerce with scattered, hidden communities in the islands or along the shores of the swamp, and trade with the humanoid clans of the bog, who harvest rare plants, spices and, on occasion, even more rare creatures. Lastly, of course, are those who venture into the islands and the swamp to actually hunt those creatures—the Alubelok boasts unwholesome creatures unheard of in other places.

Sobeteta is a disproportionately busy place, even for a city her size. She is one of two primary end ports of the Reanaarian Run, and is located on a crucial point along the trade routes of the Kalamaran Sea. For instance, at least one vessel in four that visits her harbor is traveling the Merchant's Run. Sobeteta is visited by all manners of merchants and their craft. The flags of many nations can be seen flying in her

harbor, Ahznomahn and Ozhvinmishii in particular (the so-called City on the Rock does a brisk business with wine shipped out of Ashoshani ports of call). Ships putting in at Sobeteta may be bound for ports as close as Bet Kalamar to as far away as Cosolen! The warehouses along the wharf hold everything from locally grown rice to korit'sa sausage from Lidareta, brilliantly hued feathers from the Delnondrian Islands and slaves out of Pel Brolenon. During monsoon season the port grows even busier, for most craft will stay closer in to shore to avoid those storms.

Sobeteta is the most cosmopolitan of all the Kalamaran cities. Languages from a dozen lands are spoken on her streets, and likewise the coins of at least as many places are spent. Thieves, assassins and cutthroats abound, but so do scholars, sages and philosophers. If you want it, it can be found in Sobeteta, but staying in the city can be as dangerous as getting there.

One other interesting facet of Sobeteta is the unique structure of her walls and higher buildings. There are wires strung from spires and poles to fend off aerial monsters from the swamps, and many battlements are spiked for the same reason. Although the walls are not covered this way, all watchtowers are, and most are not open-topped. They have a peaked roof that slopes out over the turrets to protect them from above. Arrow slits are open in these, with stepped platforms below, so crossbowmen can shoot up at flying attackers as well as over the battlements towards the ground. Soldiers and constables alike have long since learned to tread carefully if the mandates of their post carry them to a high place. More than one has been snatched up and carried away.

### POPULATION

Sobeteta is composed of 56,300 humans, nearly all Kalamarans. Indeed, many of the noble houses of

the city take great pride in their ability to claim nearly 'pure' Kalamaran blood.

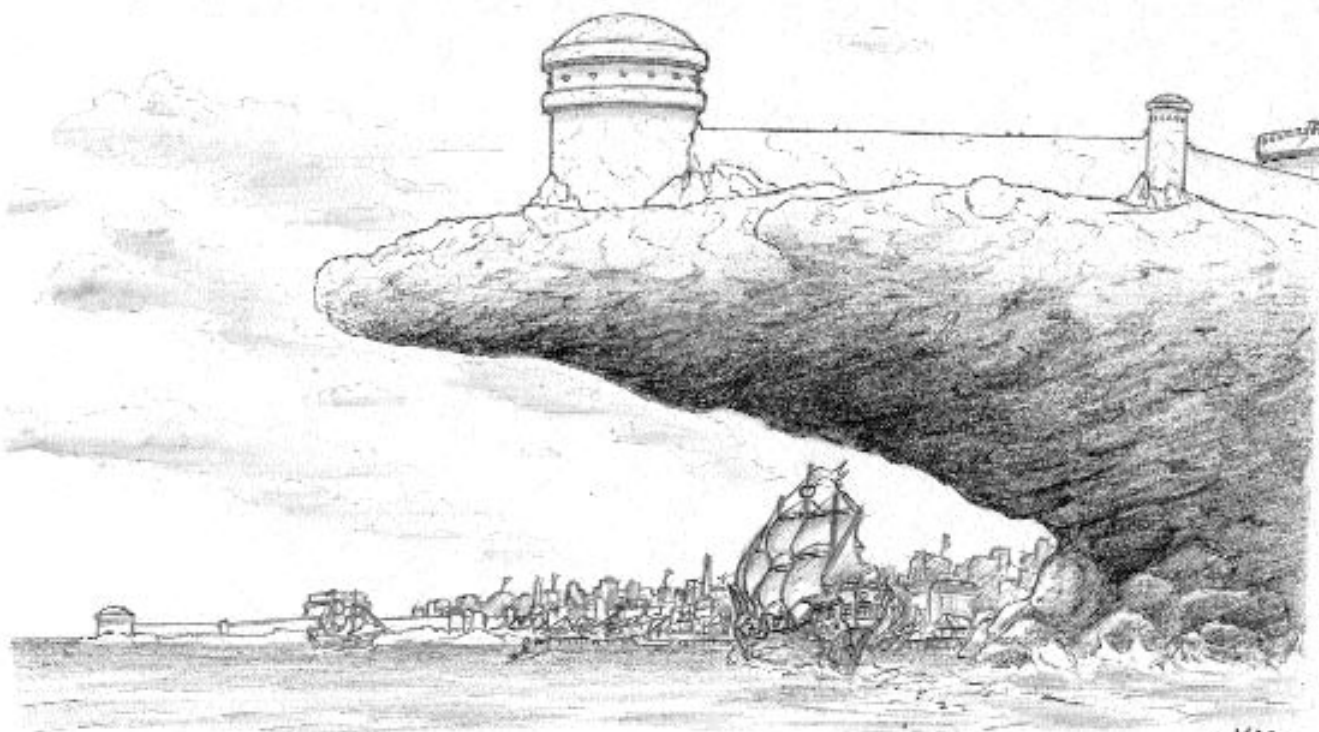
As can be expected of a maritime populace, other races come from any number of backgrounds, brought hither by trade, conquest or slavery. These include Deji from the tribes in the nearby swamps to as far away as the sands of Elos; Brandobians from Mendarn, Cosdol or even Pel Brolenon; Reanaarians from the maritime cities of the Bay, and Svimohz from the northern and eastern coasts of that region. The largest concentration of non-Kalamaran humans is two thousand or so second-generation Zazahni who immigrated to the city over the last two decades, fleeing the ongoing internecine conflicts there. Recently, dangerous-looking Deji of the Simay tribe have been seen in the company of certain merchants, ritually tattooed and showing filed teeth. The presence of these exotic bodyguards, recruited from the verdant depths of the eastern Vohven Jungle, has quickly become a mark of status and prestige. They have proven to be a worthwhile and deadly investment, as several thieves, racketeers and even pirates have learned to their dismay.

There are relatively few humanoids making their home in Sobeteta (though this cannot be said of those whom travel and commerce bring through). There are a few score lightfoot halflings and rock gnomes, primarily craftsmen or adventurers (inside the city) or farmers and herdsman (outside the city). High elves are a rarity that will draw the occasional curious look from Sobetetans, though their appearance in the city as visitors from ships is common enough that few will

remark upon it. Gray elves may be seen at times as well, with a stronger (though not hostile) reaction. This far west, away from the immediately overseeing eyes of Imperial Kalamar, dwarves can also be seen. Half-hobgoblins, half-elves and half-orcs all make a home in the city, but not in any great numbers. There are probably less than two score hobgoblins living in the city. Those that do are almost all adventurers, swords-for-hire or gladiators (one of the former is thought to be a Restorer of Kruk-Ma-Kali. See the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide for more information on the Restorers.).

There are a few deep gnomes in Sobeteta; they are typically emissaries, adventurers or young adults undergoing their surface-travel rite of passage. These mythar all hail from the buried fortress-hold of Dakelvail (see page 16), deep beneath the barren rocks of western Rokalel Island. There is never more than a handful of the dour and unfriendly gnomes in the city - at times there are no more than the ambassador to Duke Sorabek II and his small contingent of bodyguards. Sobetetans have learned through hard experience not to trouble or molest the trenchant deep gnomes—most will ignore any they see (the safest overture to make).

There are some that say Sobeteta is more Basiran in her attitudes and personalities than Kalamaran, and certain parallels can be drawn to support this. Basiran ships are the greatest naval assets of the Empire, and her greatest cities are all ports. Both are removed geographically and socially from the Kalamaran heart





of the Empire and both have a value disproportionate to their size for the Emperor.

This interpretation, however, is incorrect - Sobetetans do not particularly identify with Basirans. In fact, if the truth were told, they do not particularly identify with any Kalamaran region or state. Sobetetans regard themselves with a certain proud distinction - land, water, marsh and decades of custom distance them from any of their neighbors. Emperor Kabori controls the various fiefs of Kalamar and Tarisato, the Kingdom of Basir, the Kingdom of Tokis and the Duchy of Dodera, but gives the Sobetetans a surprising amount of latitude.

When making a list of Imperial provinces (Basir, Tarisato, etc.), Sobetetans tend to add and the City of Sobeteta (at least in their own minds) as a separate entry at the bottom of that list. Some folk have said in the past that the islands of the Archipelago should be declared its own duchy, like Dodera, these observations being made despite that fact that nearly half of the island chain and a third of the swamp belongs to the King of Basir.

The fact that the position of Duke has been an appointed position for the last several decades is one reason this has never happened. There is no filial line or tradition tied to the city or any of its territories. Common sense on the part of successive appointed Dukes, who can be removed as quickly as they were installed, is a second reason.

## GOVERNMENT

Sobeteta is a vital commercial city, as well as a strategic location for the Imperial and Basiran navy. Because of its importance to the Empire, the Emperor's most trusted duke governs Sobeteta. This is not a hereditary position—this duchy does not come as part and parcel of someone's inheritance (or at least it no longer does). The current Duke of Sobeteta is Sorabek II, an energetic and driven man who proved his loyalty to Kabori during the annexation of the dwarven kingdom of Karasta after the Battle of Kadir Ridge. There he ordered the massacre of a gnome village that had been harboring dwarf dissidents and survivors of the battle. What many believe to be the scariest aspect of the man is that he regarded the deed as necessary and did not hesitate. This was not out of malice, as he harbored no particular enmity towards dwarves or gnomes beyond recognizing them as the enemy. He simply did what he believed needed to be done. Sorabek has a reputation in more than one province as a "hatchet man," a man who fixes problems - permanently. His solutions require a ruthless and merciless dedication to results; he harbors no doubt that the end justifies the means. The Duke of Sobeteta is nominally the liege lord of

### HISTORY OF THE BANNER

The symbol of the city was, centuries ago, simply a racing war galley with sea foam piling up under its prow. However, sometime during the first few confusing years after Emperor Kolokar's death, the kraken was added and the galley changed somewhat. No Sobetetan now living can explain how or why this happened, nor can any histories account for nearly four months during that desperate time. No records anywhere to be found can account for any activity during those four months, and details of a season on either side of it are sketchy at best. It is thought that the changes to the flag were made during this lost period. Whatever the provenance of the new flag, it has long since come to be accepted by the populace of the city and flown with great pride.

Once a rather foolish scholar wrote a treatise to the effect that he believed the nature of the flag had something to do with the rumors of a god-like creature of the deep named G'Tiru. His opinions were met with derision and he eventually vanished.

the seven larger towns and cities of the islands and all of the smaller settlements throughout the archipelago, but he is typically too concerned with events in his own city itself to spare much thought to the others.

Working for the Duke to ensure functioning of the city is the Privy Council. Several important officials sit upon the council, offering advice or counsel (much of it necessary because the Duke is not actually from there). Major decisions regarding policy or military action are always discussed there. Sorabek rarely fails to attend a meeting, and the members are savvy enough to know which decisions require his presence to finalize and which can be made in his absence. They do not bandy words or try to manipulate him, as he has little patience for sycophants or bureaucrats.

Among the councilmen are the Duke's Registrar, who records and registers births, deaths, and deeds of property. He spends most of his time supervising tax collection and accounting or city revenue and expense. Works closely with the local clergy of The Hall of Oaths in the signing and witnessing of promissory notes, contracts, etc. It is also the job of a part of his overworked office to record the sentencing of criminals as High Esquire Minon, Chief Magistrate of the City, hands down his punishments. The Prefect of the City Guard sits on the council, as do other important figures. The Prefect rarely attends meetings, however, except to advise or answer questions at need. There are usually three or four other prominent citizens on the Council, appointed by the duke for terms of one year. Often these are merchants, but in the past they have included craftsmen, shipwrights and once even the formidable mistress of a bordello.



The Banner of Sobeteta: The official emblem of Sobeteta is a lean war galley with a high prow, in profile (facing sinister). It has a single mast but no sail, and all of its oars are swept to the rear, as though driving it forward. Rising out of the water behind it is a massive, stylized kraken, its tentacles uncoiling from the water both fore and aft. It is this emblem that adorns the walls of the towers of the City Guard and the face of the Ducal Seat, and likewise it is this emblem flown from the flags of Sobetetan military vessels. Interesting, most native Sobetetan merchants show their civic pride by flying the emblem as well. (Sobetetans are notoriously prickly, and known in every port on the Kalamaran Sea for their allegiance to their home city.)

The kraken-and-galley sigil is the arms of the city, not the Duke or any other noble family, but only the Duke is allowed to fly his colors higher. Anyone else flying the Sobetetan flag must place it higher on the staff or mast than any other colors flown, or risk the seizure and impoundment of the property (typically a ship or building) whereupon the flag is flown. Unless, of course, they are flying the colors of Kalamar itself which would necessarily take the superior position.

### ECONOMY

The largest single export Sobeteta provides to the Empire (and to the world) is the omnipresent crop, rice. Rice grown virtually everywhere there is a human settlement in the Archipelago, on the Basiran side as well as the Kalamaran side. Sobeteta also trades with Svimohzia, the cities of Reanaaria Bay and virtually every other major maritime interest in the Sovereign Lands. Sobeteta may not be as busy as Svomahni, or as cosmopolitan as Zoa, but it is a place of endless opportunity and activity, nonetheless. The city certainly handles a much wider variety of cargoes, sees stranger wares and hears more different languages than many other ports on the Kalamaran Sea, with the obvious exception of Bet Kalamar.

Sobeteta is an ideal commercial and naval port, from several points of view, with excellent harbor installations (including cranes, sling-hoists and the best lading apparatus available along the coast. Along the harbor are several wide, roofed pavilions to facilitate trade. There are shipyards, but not many - most ships are actually constructed in Basir or Bet Kalamar itself. There are ship-sheds in several places to shelter naval and Harbor Watch vessels, with a few that are privately owned for wealthy merchant ship owners.

The harbor at Sobeteta is a bustling, crowded place in any season. Ships of every stripe sail or row towards and away from the docks at all hours. Docks and piers ranging in size from those that moor

small fishing boats to those that can accommodate the looming Kalamaran triremes march for over a league along the water. The wharves throng with fishermen, sailors, merchants, travelers, deckhands, laborers, constables, soldiers and wide-eyed visitors who have never seen (or smelled) anything like what is to be beheld there. Dray animals, carts and wagons wend back and forth from the wharves, loading or unloading cargo in a stream that ends only when the last vestige of daylight has been chased from the sky. For voyages or cargo of great or time-pressed importance, huge lamps can be lit along the quays (though this is done with frequency only during the busiest times of the year).

In addition to her great importance as a harbor, Sobeteta marks the end point of trade floating down the Ridara River. An entire industry has grown up around transport up and down this river, perhaps the longest on Tellene. Boats and barges, skiffs and coracles and keelboats of all kinds can be seen plying the waters of the Ridara, from as far north as the Kakapela Hills to the vast delta of the Alubelok Swamp - nearly 300 leagues of navigable water. Such a natural highway sees a tremendous amount of traffic. The natural destination of goods being shipped abroad is the City on the Rock.

Naturally, these two sources of trade (and revenue) make Sobeteta a wealthy city. This, in turn, generates large sums of money in the form of taxes, tithes and tariffs. Sorabek for his part is justly proud of his post, as well as a loyal noble of the Empire. He is motivated, energetic and capable (unfortunately for his enemies and political malefactors).

Amongst the various products and resources supporting the thriving Sobetetan economy are, first and foremost, its numerous rice products. Rice wine and rice beer are popular here and available for export, as is rice flour and even "rice porcelain", in which grains of rice are pressed into the paste before firing. They disintegrate and form tiny translucent windows in the (usually) white or blue dishes—decoration of such porcelain has become an art form in its own right, resulting in beautiful (and expensive) pieces of art. Rice powder of great purity is also available in Sobeteta. This stark white powder is sold in small cakes and used by mimes, courtesans, thespians and other professionals to color their skin white. Brewer's rice for fermentation is shipped abroad, as is virtually every other rice-derivative product. Many different spices and vegetables are cultivated in city gardens and cliff-side terrace fields, all of which bring a good price to merchants and sailors coming in from a long sea voyage (and a sailor's diet of bland foods). The recent introduction of k'terek, a pungent clove-and-tobacco pipeleaf worth 1 cp per pinch, has

proven immensely popular. Supply will not keep up with demand and several merchants and growers are attempting to develop other similar tobaccos to suit different tastes.

In addition to the rice and other agricultural products, wool is available from the rocky island highlands and honey as well. In the Harbor District Sobeteta sees far more money change hands for the repair and refitting of ships than their construction or purchase, but there are always ships, boats and various types of small craft available along the docks for sale. This lends itself to the manufacture and trade of all manners of nautical paraphernalia and minutiae - sailcloth, rope, tarpaulins, pitch and the like.

A tremendous variety of products are hunted, gathered or cultivated in the bogs and deltas of the Alubelok Swamp. The great majority of it makes its way to the markets of Sobeteta. At least three different breeds of wild rice are gathered there, along with rare plants, unusual spices and unique herbs. Also found there are feathers from the vast numbers of waterfowl, saltwater clams dug from shallow, muddy beaches, freshwater clams from river courses and mussels from the marshes. Alongside these are rare plants, spices, rare creatures (or parts of them), medicinal herbs, unguents and balms.

In addition to all of these products, there is, of course, a vast amount of fish brought to the docks. The waters of the Kalamaran Sea are known for their largesse in the shoals and straits and passages of the Alubelok Archipelago. Only rarely will a fishing craft return from open water empty handed. Fishing is a common and respected trade in Sobeteta, and the city's fishermen are good at their craft. Despite their skill, however, they are no match for the nomadic bands of aquatic creatures who occasionally emerge from the harbor looking to trade. In particular, bands of locathah coming to Sobeteta often bear unusual catches up onto the wharves.

There are other things taken from the sea, of course. Ink from cuttlefish and squid, pearls (though none to match those of Basir), shrimp, oysters and clams. Sobeteta is known for selling great amounts of wetur, or "shamblefish," (see Chapter 5: Equipment). Eels are particularly well liked in Sobeteta. Most that are caught wind up being consumed locally. People of the city have a variety of favorite recipes revolving around eel (and, predictably enough, rice). There are a variety of eel species in the waters of the archipelago, some of them large enough to make a meal of the occasional incautious fishermen.

Other things traded at market include wool from the upland farms (there is not much of it, but it is good quality), some cheeses, lamp oil, and dye. This latter product is a recent development. Quite by accident, it

was discovered that one variety of saltwater mussels produces a gray, dark green or black dye of excellent quality. The purity of the color does not yet rival the dyes of Tharggy, but that may come in time. In the interim, much work is being done to try to produce other hues.

### MILITARY

The city's barracks house 2,000 to 3,000 infantry and marines, many of them Imperial troops. The responsibility of the troops in Sobeteta is twofold. Their first mandate is to defend the city herself. This assignment is usually considered the easier of the two responsibilities, though it is not without risk. Their second mandate is to keep and assure the security of Sobeteta and the trade route down the Ridara River - the patrolling of Rokalel Island and all of the small settlements falls within this tasking, as well as the scouting and patrolling of the Ridara and its immediate environs.

There are several distinct elements to the Sobetetan military, aside from the Imperial troops. One is the City Guard, while the second is the Harbor Watch. Each of these has its own commander, with a separate and distinct hierarchy or rank, but required by the nature of their mission to work closely together. This relationship has led to trouble and issues over rank and command in the past, but the current Duke has sufficient strength of will and personality to make it work.

Aside from the Guard and the Watch, there is also the unofficial "Guild Levies" (detailed below), a large contingent of marines and infantry, and whatever visiting Imperial troops happen to be in the city at that time.

The City Guard: Guardsmen receive training comparable to the foot soldiers of most nations and are well equipped (though not up to the standards of Kabori's legions). They are responsible for policing the city for and manning all city walls, gates and towers. They usually maintain watch in Stone Beak Tower at the north end of the island, watching over the natural springs in the northern hills, from which virtually all the city's fresh water comes. In addition to these varied duties, they sometimes patrol Rokalel Island.

The City Guard is more loosely organized than various units of the military, and less rigidly disciplined, but this is no reflection on their ability. There are 490 constables in the City Guard available to police Sobeteta, 32 of them female. This also includes several low-level clerics who aid in investigations. They are almost all human, but a few are half-breeds of different kinds and at least a dozen elves are among them. The City Guard is comparatively large

considering the size of the city, but despite this they remain busy, even harried during the height of the shipping season.

Prefect Paramil Tusima, an intense and soft-spoken man in his middle fifties, commands the Sobeteta City Guard. Tusima is tall for a Kalamaran, with thinning hair cropped short and a sharp widow's peak above his brow. He often makes those who do not know him uncomfortable when he gazes at them—he rarely blinks, and the scar from an old wound has left his right eye permanently half-closed. Tusima was born an orphan and spent his early years in the narrows of Old Town. Tall and strong, if unusually lean, even in his youth, he became a gladiator out of desperation at the age of thirteen. Fighting for his life against beasts or other men with a full belly seemed preferable then to starving to death.

His few years in the arena were successful ones, though he never earned any huge amount of renown or inspired any songs. The worst hurt he ever suffered was the one that nearly took his eye, inflicted by a sahuagin pitted against him in Gor Lisaderi, Sobeteta's huge gladiatorial arena. Still, living through half a decade of gladiator fighting was, in his mind, a success in and of itself. He was never happy, however, and still bears a burden of guilt and shame over the lives he took and the wounds he inflicted in the name of entertainment.

At the age of eighteen he left the arena and found a place in an adventuring company leaving the City on the Rock for Tarisato. He stayed with this group for the next several years, venturing into the P'Rorul Peaks and the Obakasek Jungle several times. This life, though lucrative, left him feeling so incomplete that he eventually returned to Sobeteta to don the half-cloak of a city guardsman.

That was over thirty years ago. Tusima rose through the ranks steadily, if not quickly, serving as a constable for years and taking part in several notable investigations. One particular event, his last case before taking the position of District Captain involved tracking down (and ultimately destroying) a rakshasa that was using its alter self ability to control a murderous ring of smugglers and thieves. Four other guardsmen were slain in the course of that investigation and two more crippled. It was their loss that eventually led him to create the Wall of Stones outside the Tower of the Guard when he became Prefect a decade later.

Tusima does not much care for the Duke, who returns the antipathy, but he is good at his job and maintains a productive professional relationship with the nobleman despite his personal feelings. The Duke, for his part, recognizes the ability of and strength of character in his Prefect and supports him to the fullest (despite his personal feelings). He is too busy

these days administering the City Guard and carrying out the other various responsibilities of his post, but he is at heart still a simple half-cloak, and earnestly believes in the fundamental necessity of his job.

The Prefect has divided the city into three districts: the High, Low and the Wharf (so-called so as not to create any confusion with the Harbor Watch). The High District is comprised of what most call the "old city," within the original set of city walls; the Low District is what many call "downside," or that part of the city which was built within the second set of city walls. The City Guard also has three divisions - the Street Guards, responsible for patrolling the city streets, the Wall Guards, who man the walls, towers and city fortifications, and the Harbor Guards, who handle the Wharf District. Approximately half the City Guard constables are assigned to the Street Guards, around a hundred and fifty to the Wall Guards and the remainder to the Harbor Guards.

Constables of the City Guard always patrol at least in pairs, and sometimes in a group as large as half a dozen, but this is rare. Guardsmen split the day in half, working one of two twelve-hour shifts each twenty-four hours. Barring special events, assignments or turn-outs (when everyone that can walk is put on the street) there are six elements in each district, three per shift; each element works four days on and is then off for two. In theory this keeps the maximum number of constables on the street at any given time.

The typical guardsman wears a kind of studded leather armor the Guard's own armorsmiths make and maintain for them. The heat of the island and the amount of walking they do make heavy armor prohibitive and impractical. Similarly, the amount of time they spend in proximity to the water makes something they can stay afloat in a necessity.

Guard armor is made of a stout canvas cuirass, with soft leather sleeves guarding the upper arms to just above the elbow. A side-split pleated skirt protects the groin and thighs, the lower legs by stout boots. The canvas cuirass is reinforced with finger-width strips of stiff, lacquered leather affixed at right angles with other stripes in a crisscross fashion by flattened metal studs. (In game terms, this armor is identical to studded leather armor as presented in the D&D Player's Handbook.)

Though this kind of protection is by no means the best to be had, it is almost always sufficient for the typical threats the guardsmen have to face. If confronted with something that requires a "heavier" response, they will call the nearest soldiers to assist.

Constables carry a variety of weapons and equipment and wear a distinctive half-cloak with a weighted hem that keeps the garment from flying up in their face. A few carry quarterstaves, but most carry a

folded net and baral (see Chapter 5: Equipment). The guardsmen who carry nets are very skilled in their use (given the number that come from a fisherman background, this is hardly surprising) and can swiftly entangle an unruly citizen – followed by a few stout thumps from a baral, if need be. Most will also carry a dagger or bill knife as well, and all are issued with a wax-sealed wooden vial of white ilem blossom and a pair of smotherblend vials in case of emergencies. The guardsmen along the harbor in the wharf district, particularly those assigned to the night shift, also usually carry wax ball of 'merfolk musk' to deter any unfriendly critters they might encounter.

The Guild Levies: Aside from the City Guard and Harbor Watch, there are also the Guild Levies. The 'troops' of the Guild Levies are reasonably equipped and indifferently trained, provided, supplied and paid for by various guilds, trade-leagues and merchant alliances at the direction of the city's powers-that-be to augment the Guard and Watch. Their numbers vary depending on the time of year and level of activity within the city, but typically number about half that of the City Guard. They are not particularly well regarded by their official counterparts, and with the exception of a very few reliable units they are not committed to difficult situations if there is a choice. However, the majority of merchants and trading leagues are well aware that the continued profitability of their various enterprises is dependent upon the stability and relative peace of the city, so they provide reliable support to the Prefect and his officers if called upon.

The Harbor Watch: The Harbor Watch is also reasonably well trained and equipped. It is primarily responsible for maintaining the security of the harbor, wharves and docks of the city proper. Its personnel patrol both on foot and in fast, well-equipped ships, working in conjunction with visiting Imperial vessels,

to patrol the southern half of Rokalel Island. They also bear the unenviable responsibility of keeping the Ridara River trade route safe for nearly a hundred miles from the delta to a point almost 50 miles north into the swamp. Sobeteta has no large naval craft of her own - everything beyond the immediate vicinity of the island is the responsibility of Emperor Kabori's navy.

The Harbor Watch falls under the command of the City Prefect (who answers only to the Duke). The Harbor Watch is divided into troops - each troop consisting of two 56-man platoons, with each platoon further divided into five 11-man squads (ten watchmen and a squad sergeant). The platoons are commanded by a monitor (roughly equivalent to a platoon sergeant), the troop by a captain with a subaltern (lieutenant) for an adjutant/aide-de-camp. Unlike most navies, where crews are assigned to specific vessels, Watch ships and boats are manned by different squads on rotating assignment.

The Harbor Watch wear a style of brigandine armor, a composite construction made of small plates sewn to an undercoat of sturdy canvas and reinforced by an outer layer of lacquered leather. They wear helms with an open-fronted visor that is guarded by vertical metal strips to block slashing attacks. Though this kind of helmet surrenders some protection, particularly from piercing attacks, it does allow good visibility. They are typically armed with a ranseur or longspear, with a shortsword or mace as a secondary weapon. A few are armed with a flanged footman's mace - these guardsmen carry a large shield. At least a third of these troops carry light crossbows, and have a few bolts treated with stumblefish toxin (see Chapter 5: Equipment) for use if needed. In addition to the standard materials as carried by the City Guard (dagger or bill knife, white ilem blossom, smotherblend vials, merfolk musk) each member of the Harbor Watch has one dose of Second Wind available to him.

Imperial Troops: The Imperial troops of Sobeteta are organized in unit standards, in the same manner as Emperor Kabori's Legions. Colonel Pitar Pateris, a fiercely mustachioed man whose temper is as fiery as his hair, commands both marines and infantry. Colonel Pateris is a volatile but capable man who accompanies his men into the field as often as his administrative duties will permit. He is a seasoned officer who limps slightly because of two old leg injuries. One injury is several years old; the lingering reminder of an encounter with a massive carnivorous lizard while stationed in Tarisato. The other is more recent and still healing, the result of a run-in with a maddened dire crocodile that ran afoul of a patrol he was accompanying north of Ropidu. He has suffered two other major injuries in his life; neither, ironically, suffered in any of the many battles he has seen in nearly twenty years of service. The scar on his left arm came from the wyvern that killed his horse in the Katagas Rise - the finger missing from his right hand was taken by a water naga he hunted down and killed with several of his father's men-at-arms while home on furlough.

His troops find great humor in this litany of reptile-inflicted wounds (a standing joke says that his next encounter will be with a dragon, and the only thing left for him to lose is his head). They recently purchased a brilliant emerald-green lizard from a Svimohz merchant for him, and painted a bright red stripe down its head to match his hair. He found the foot-long lizard on his desk early one morning and the resulting curses would have blistered the ears of any of the sailors down on the docks—he didn't get rid of it, however. Now, nearly six months later, the creature is as long as his arm and weighs as much as a small dog. He continues to revile it on occasion, and threatens to kill and skin it at least once a week, but he never fails to feed it scraps from his table. If it is not basking in the sun on the windowsill in his office (a pastime it will soon outgrow), the lizard can usually be found sprawled across the flagstones outside his door. Since that time many of the lower-ranking soldiers have taken to painting a tiny green lizard on the boss of their shields, something their officers affect not to notice.

The typical infantryman of the Colonel's command is armored in a chain hauberk and helm, most with a shield. They carry a longsword, dagger and javelins, and when on the walls or patrol afield they also carry a long spear (to deal with threats from above). Each platoon has also been ordered to issue a crossbow to as many of its soldiers as show some ability with the weapon. This has proven to be, on average, about one in five.

Of the six platoons, five are on duty of some kind at all times. Typically two are on the walls, splitting the day and night shift between each platoon's squads. This keeps around eighty soldiers atop the battlements (alongside the Wall Guard) at all times. A third and fourth are usually the "traveling platoons" used for tasks away from the city, while the last is tasked with some kind of special assignment.

The current task, undertaken with the usual grumbling of all soldiers everywhere, is the construction of a new road that will run from Sobeteta straight northwest to Tovidu, and finally north to Stone Beak, bisecting the island. This endeavor is backbreaking labor, but keeps the soldiers conditioned and strong. Good-natured rivalry between the infantry platoons and their mounted counterparts has so far led to cobblestone walls being stacked by night in front of the stable doors and large amounts of horse dung being deposited along unwatched stretches of roadway.

Go-Fourth Road, as it is called, is being built of crushed rock on a foundation of packed earth. It stands two feet higher than the surrounding terrain, and is sloped somewhat to allow water from frequent rains to run off. Any thickets and brush have been cleared away from the road a stone's throw to either side in order to prevent any ambushes. The few trees have been left in place, but their limbs are lopped off to the height of a man and they have been thinned out in those places where they grow too close together.

Captain Balan Nosahu, a dogged and close-mouthed scion of an old Tokite noble family, leads the light horse squadron that accompanied Colonel Pateris to this assignment with the tradition of breeding both superlative warhorses and fine cavalrymen. He has an excellent rapport with the Colonel, but does not often take part in officers' counsels unless required to, preferring to spend as much of his time in the saddle as possible.

Nosahu's troopers wear either studded leather armor or brigandine. High spirited and skilled, most carry short composite bows and a horseman's mace or flail, usually with a buckler hanging from their saddle for the rare occasions when they fight in melee.

This cavalry has the primary responsibility for providing roving patrols over all of Rokalel Island, riding as far north as the very tip of the isle. At any given time a quarter of the squadron will be out on patrol, typically divided into two squads of about a dozen men. Other may be abroad keeping contact with the stronger foot patrols that Colonel Pateris maintains.

It was a troop of this squadron that recently came to the aid of the mythar garrison at the Black Wound when fish-like creatures from the pits and caverns



below attacked it. The cavalry captain was not present for that fight, something that he bitterly regrets despite his justifiable pride in the conduct and performance of his men.

## TEMPLES

The two major temples in Sobeteta are to The Knight of the Gods and to The Speaker of the Word. There are, in addition to these two, several smaller churches and shrine to other deities. Less well known, and rarely acknowledged (if it is indeed even known) by most Sobetetans are a few cult-like organizations that worship entities or creatures that may not actually be divine, but have certain powers (and a less than desirable effect on their devotees) of their own.

The Basilica of the Sword: The greatest temple in City on the Rock is that of the Halls of the Valiant. This monumental and martial edifice, called the Basilica of the Sword, or at times the Basilica of Blades, is home to the Valiant himself, High Priest to the Knight of the Gods for all of the Sovereign Lands. Here the Knight of the Gods is worshipped in as many different

tongues as there are people that have ever set foot on a ship's deck. Because Sobeteta is a Kalamaran city, however, he is most often prayed to as Deb'fo. As befits the church of such god whose sacrifices include the weapons of defeated enemies, it is virtually a small fortress in its own right - the Halls of the Valiant is the only institution in the city allowed any fortifications beyond stout walls and barred windows.

Vanamir the Tall, the High Valiant, is a swarthy and powerful Svimohz who is known and admired for his personal courage and demonstrated willingness to defend the city or its inhabitants from any peril. Vanamir has personally saved the city and its citizens from destruction by sea monsters on three separate occasions.

The first was from a band of marine trolls who overwhelmed the few Harbor watchmen that could be readily mustered against them and began wreaking havoc along the waterfront. The sea trolls attacked the city in unheard of numbers and easily butchered the constables and soldiery that were first responding to their depredations. It was not until Vanamir arrived with Purifiers, Defenders and even Guardians, as well as at least two paladins, that the monsters were contained. He did not single-handedly defeat the entire band, but he was personally responsible for the destruction of a large part of them, and there can be little doubt their attack would have gone largely unchecked if it had not been for his arrival.

His second exploit was his single-handed destruction of a giant squid (some say kraken) that pulled over a dozen ships down into the waters of the harbor, slaughtering their crews and easily defeating the soldiers that came against it. Vanamir is said to have leaped from the rigging and struck and an amazing killing blow, though no witnesses have been found to pledge the story's truth. Minstrels have since written more than one ballad about it, and the story of the battle is said to have reached ports as far away as Geanavue.

The last time he rescued the city was from a host of water elementals and never-before-seen aquatic monsters that poured out into the sea from what is presumed to have been a gate that opened just a quarter of a mile off the coast of the island. Several naval vessels were involved in this epic fight, including several of Sobeteta and some of Basir as well. Though Vanamir survived, an Imperial trireme known as Bulakar's Troth was sunk in that battle with



Vanamir recounts his impressive adventures for young visitors.

all hands. The loss of these brave Kalamaran sailors and marines was a bitter pill that overshadowed any joy he might have felt at his victory.

Vanamir the Tall is the epitome of what a cleric or paladin of the Knight of the Gods should be. He personifies justice, chivalry and kindness, and is as soft-spoken and merciful to children, as he is terrible to his foes. Over 4,000 faithful and ardent followers of The Knight of the Gods fill the Halls of the Valiant on holy days. They adulate The Swift Sword in various names - Deb'fo (Kalamaran) and Whenhesh (Svimohzish) usually, but at times as Brovadol (Brandobian) or Naemae (Reanaarese) as well. Most of the congregation is comprised of the common folk of Sobeteta, but there are great numbers of constables and soldiers among them. At any given time there may be as many as two score or more clerics residing in the temple, although many may be abroad or afield on missions as required by their faith. There are typically several paladins to be found there as well, taking or reaffirming their oaths, or resting in preparation for their next foray abroad in search of evil to fight.

Across the city from The Basilica of the Sword is The Glaive House, a large house and hall administered by clerics of The Swift Sword and providing shelter to many of the city's orphans (brought to that state by shipwreck as often as not). Several Friends of the Fields and lay followers of The Raiser assist in this charitable endeavor alongside the clerics of Deb'fo. It too is of stout construction, with a low outer wall and a catwalk (but is not a keep or fortress of any kind).

Clerics and paladins of the Swift Sword accompany Sobetetan soldiers abroad as a matter of course, but their help is not wanted as often as they would like. They have a tendency to charge the foe without regard for what more practical soldiers would think of as necessary tactical or prudent considerations. For similar reasons they rarely stand watch at The Black Wound - few have the patience for sentry work even with the chance that foul creatures might issue forth from that abominable place. Most of them deeply regret that they were not there during the recent trouble...but none of them have volunteered to help either.

**TrueTroth Cathedral:** The second major temple in Sobeteta is that of the Hall of Oaths. Truetroth Cathedral is also a massive and impressive (if more subdued) structure, one of the largest temples of The Speaker of the Word in the Sovereign Lands. It is not by chance that this temple is located relatively close to the Tower of the Guard. Its Grand Esquire, Minon, serves as Duke Sorabek's Chief Magistrate. He has a flawless memory for faces and crimes. Criminals in Sobeteta rightly fear being brought before him for a

second time. His policy is "Once, show mercy. Twice, show justice." Minon, who has forsaken his family's surname in favor of his calling, was once a member of a powerful noble family. The name of this family is not known, but he maintains correspondence with many powerful people in Bet Kalamar, and once hosted Legionnaire Donik Galo in his chambers as an honored guest.

Many of the temple's clergy, primarily Servants and Advocates but including at least one or two of higher level, accompany constable patrols throughout the city. There are about a half score of these, and another half-score initiates of the order who have not yet been ordained in the order. They may accompany Guardsmen alone or in pairs, often in company with one or doughtier ordained fighters (not paladins or clerics, but still recognized members of the church). Known as "Red Lions" for the sigil they wear on their tabards, they are a great asset to the city's efforts in the enforcement of law and order, and are welcomed by the often-overworked constables as such. They or their counterparts from Falcon Watch are present during most investigations and at all interrogations and questionings, where their skills are of great use.

They can also be counted on to be of great help in a fight if confronted by wrongdoers who opt for violence when confronted. The Venerable Hovaran Ku'Ato, for instance, recently came to the aid of a beleaguered patrol and surely saved it from destruction. They were beset on all sides by steel-bearing smugglers and at least five wererats, when Hovaran arrived. He burst in amongst the attackers reciting mantras from The Word, laying several of them low with hard-swung blows of his flail and scattering the lycanthropes.

There are probably only 1,500 or so regular worshippers that attend services at the Hall of Oaths, but approximately the same number are occasional or desultory members of the congregation. There are, of course, many other Sobetetans who call upon the Keepers of the Word as witnesses, counselors or advocates. Amongst the clergy are approximately a dozen clerics of varying rank (this number does not including the Red Lions) serving their faithful, and usually a paladin or two as well.

**Sobati's Well:** Sobati's Well is the Sobetetan church of The Great Builder. The stern clerics of this particular branch of that faith have a unique responsibility in the city. Their hall, though no fortress, is nonetheless built to withstand anything short of an overwhelming attack or a siege. The reason for this is that in the center of their temple is a huge cistern, the largest source of fresh water in the city. Water from a large natural spring on a hill two miles north of the city is

piped down into the cistern through aqueducts in a cool, unending flow. It is then piped from the church to several other cisterns available to all and sundry, scattered throughout the city.

Many years past, during the Time of Misfortune, the Duke of Sobeteta at the time charged the temple with the responsibility of warding the water supply and ensuring that no one would tamper with the vital drinking water nor deny it to anyone who needed it. The Builders of Law accepted the charge and now keep watch over the cistern. They do so autonomously, unattended by even the City Guard (with whom they maintain an excellent relationship). Should anyone escape their vigilance and manage to taint the water supply or disrupt its dispersal, they can rest assured that every resource will be bent to locate them. Tampering with the city's water supply is a crime punishable by death.

The congregation of this church is very small by the standards of the city, its few clergy kept very busy by the demands of architects, builders who desire a blessing or assistance with planning new construction, and of course their guard of the cistern. In addition to these demands, they are often called upon for counsel or help during The Fortnight Purge because of their knowledge of sewer construction and sanitation.

Several of the younger clerics of the temple (there are only ten total) occasionally go out and help with the construction of Go-Fourth Road. They help with the City Guard and the Prefecture as much as possible, but their many duties severely limit this time.

**Journey Hall:** Journey Hall is the local church of the Journeymen—the number of worshippers and petitioners in its congregation is completely dependent upon the number of ships in the harbor. Here sacrifice can be made and blessings asked of The Traveler. By and large most of the people who come here are sailors, ship's crewmen and marines. There is a surprising amount of dialogue between the clergy here and that of Truetide Bight (see page 20); Journeymen can occasionally be found serving aboard the ships of Wave Crusher who venture abroad in search of pirates. Others who travel the Ridara, however, and there have been many who have taken service as escorts or guides to merchants or travelers who wished to ply the river. It is important to note that Journey Hall has a small barracks inside its walls, two common rooms full of beds for those of the faithful that might need a place to rest. These often include visiting clerics, travelers on an extraordinarily lengthy journey, and even the "Breakers," as lay folk often call the Knights of the Breaking Wave (see page 48).

**The Church of Life's Fire:** Mother Tellene has a small, unnamed shrine in the market district, where rice, other grains and livestock are bought and sold. She has but a few clerics in the city. The clerics of the Church of Life's Fire are kept busy in the markets, promoting the many small gardens that flourish throughout the city (most of them on the flat rooftops common to almost all structures in the city). They also assist in the tending of orphan children in The Glaive House. One cleric in particular, a formidable woman named Fitolima Fapeki, is noticeable and outspoken. She has mused aloud more than once about organizing a crusade of sorts against the lacedons that haunt Keelshiven Shoals and prey upon sailors that are blown off course.

**Four Falcons Watch:** Four Falcons Watch is the hall that harbors the clerics and congregation of The True. It takes its name from the four stone, gargoyle-like statues of falcons over its great doors. Each three-foot statue is poised differently, but all are arranged to glare down upon anyone wishing to enter. From here The Courts of Justice watch over the populace of Sobeteta and assist the Duke's Prefecture in the enforcement of Kalamaran and Sobetetan law. There are seven clerics of The Magnificent Magistrate in Four Falcons Watch, four of whom attend Grand Esquire Minon as magistrates of the Prefecture. The other three, each with three sturdy fighting men who hold true to the principles of the Exalted Judge, travel on an ongoing 'tour' of the villages and towns of the archipelago. In these distant and remote places they hold court and dispense justice in the Duke's name (and that of The Exalted Judge as well, of course).



Followers of G'Tiru prepare an unfortunate for sacrifice.

Miscellaneous: Places for the worship of several

### G'TIRU OF THE TRENCH

G'Tiru of the Trench is an unthinkable massive, black-hearted and disgusting creature that has been the source of many reference to a mythical Kraken god over the centuries. Said to hail from some abyssal trench in the floor of the deepest parts of the Kalamaran Sea, no one is sure if the monstrosity ever existed, nor, if it did, if it exists still today. Certainly it has not been sighted or encountered in many lives of men.

The creature G'Tiru is revered in a few hidden places of Sobeteta and certain other port cities (including a few in Svimohz) by a small, paranoid cult of beast-worshipping fanatics. It is also worth noting that certain small, truly nauseating carvings have depicted a massive squid-like creature that is said to be G'Tiru. These pieces of artwork command incredible prices if sold, but supposedly lead to misery and murder when kept, as persons unknown perpetrate gruesome acts and atrocities to obtain them.

There are purportedly a few actual clerics worshipping the creature as a deity and receiving spells. How this is possible is unknown, nor is it clear that G'Tiru is granting the spells itself (it is very likely that other evil gods may be doing so for their own reasons or to spread misery). Such clerics have thus far been rumored to gain 1st-level to 3rd-level spells only, but no one knows if that is the limit. Clerics of the Cult of G'Tiru are also said to have gained spells of both the Destruction and the Ocean Domain.

Not a real church as the other religions of Tellene are reckoned, the small enclave is secretive and sadistic, given to grotesque ceremonies and torturous, foul sacrificial rites. Their prayers beseech their obscene beast god to come forth from some abyssal sea trench and destroy the coastal cities of the world, particularly Sobeteta (where the cult seems to be headquartered). They are dangerous and undoubtedly mad, to desire to see or summon the creature, but they are neither stupid nor reckless.

If G'Tiru does exist, it is very likely that it has lain dormant since time immemorial. If it awakened, the resultant devastation to Sobeteta and the surrounding area would be beyond imagining, for surely only a colossal protector could defend against such a creature.

other gods may be found throughout the city. Among these are temples to The Eternal Lantern, The Peacemaker, The Pure One and The Lord of Silver Linings. Clerics of The Raconteur are well regarded, given the number of bards and spellsingers in the city, but those of The Guardian do not willingly identify themselves without cause. There are too many merchants and travelers who take exception to their beliefs to make open preaching of their doctrine a healthy endeavor. However, several local clerics of The Guardian, along with a small number of the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, recently attempted

to free a large number of slaves being held in the pens of a local gladiator trainer. The attempt was sadly unsuccessful, leaving most of those participating dead and the survivors in chains.

There are also small shrines to The Shimmering One, The Great Huntress and the Coddler, as well as also the Parish of the Prolific Coin, the Temple of Three Strengths, the Inevitable Order of Time, the House of Scorn and the House of Vice.

The Parish of the Prolific Coin has a following of several hundred, as might be expected, and the House of Vice as well (worship to the latter god being conducted in lewdly decorated chambers hidden beneath more than one brothel along the docks). The Inevitable Order of Time and the House of Scorn have substantial congregations as well. Luckily, worship of P'Rakeke in Sobeteta is disorganized and scattered, with several 'sects' in the city preaching different dogmas. "Drive out the deep gnomes," some say; "despise the Svimohz, burn out those who do not belong here" say others. However, the attentions of a local wizard, Resemer the Unholy, have severely depleted the ranks of House of Scorn during these last several months. Clerics of the Hatemonger have taken to hiding or leaving - Resemer holds a grudge against them all, and goes to great lengths to let them know about it.

At one time, the Temple of Strife held surprising sway in Sobeteta, but its influence has waned almost to nothing since internal dissension (ironically) brought many of its clerics to blows and tore the faith apart. If there are any Minions of Misfortune still in the city, they are keeping a low profile.

The Cult of G'Tiru: The cult of G'Tiru is a small enclave worshipping a mythical Kraken god from the deep. They are secretive and paranoid, given to sadistic practices and violent rituals. Their prayers beseech their obscene beast god to come forth from some abyssal sea trench and destroy Sobeteta, breaking her ships, pulling down her walls and devouring everyone who does not drown. They have perpetrated murder in back alleys and underneath the wharves on occasion, usually in the form of a ritual killing that makes the sacrifice a long and torturous practice.

Any thinking creature is a suitable sacrifice, but sailors—preferably of some rank, with captains or officers best of all—are their first choice. Thus far most of their victims (there have only been a few) have been just simple sailors, but the recent killing and disfigurement of a sailor (he was defaced with knife wounds carved into squid-like shapes) has gotten the attention of the City Guard and the Harbor Watch alike.

What the cult hopes to gain from the rites is unknown. Their mindless deity, if it does indeed exist, would certainly destroy them all in the process. The most ardent worshippers among them are deranged, murderous and cunning; any attempt to understand their motivations may be a pointless endeavor. As to whether G'Tiru is indeed a god, or if such a creature exists, remains unknown. Clerics of The True investigating the cult alongside the Guard dismiss the idea as ridiculous and unworthy of thought. Certain lay folk (and some of the more superstitious sailors who have heard rumor of the cult) are not so sure. There is at least some evidence that certain priests of the cult have been granted the ability to cast minor spells, which begs the question as to how they gained them.

### FESTIVALS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Sobeteta celebrates several holy days and has its share of fairs and festivals. The most important, of course (though the clerics might argue this point) is the anniversary of the coronation of His Most August Supremacy, Kabori Bakar I, as Emperor of the Vast Empire. Oddly, this celebration does not occur on the actual date that he was crowned, almost twenty years ago. By Imperial Decree, the celebration of his coronation is held each year on Hometown, in the month of Renewal (the fifth day of Spring). The significance of this date is supposed to reflect the "new beginning"

Emperor Kabori's assumption of power brought to the Empire.

**The Hewing:** The Hewing is a three-day mercantile festival, held towards the end of summer, where merchants and craftsmen of the city offer up their best wares for inspection and sale. Pavilions, carts and temporary shops are set up in the open markets and nearby streets. In addition to the haggling and arguing and comparison of wares, this 'holiday' typically offers great numbers of folk taking advantage of the gathered crowds - hawkers with sweetmeats and candies, minstrels and performers (and, inevitably, cutpurses and thieves). By tradition, The Hewing is when any soldiers who have been afield have the opportunity to tell tales of their exploits. Mercenary captains often use the time as an opportunity to regale crowds with similar stories, and to negotiate for the next year's contract. If swords are wanted for hire, there is never a better time to look for them. No gladiatorial events are allowed during The Hewing - neither the Duke nor the Sobetetan merchants want anything to detract from potential business.

**Guildscall:** Guildscall (or "Pura'Aran") occurs on the first Veshday in the month of Frosting. While not universally "celebrated" by everyone, it is an important event (particularly to those directly involved).



The Hewing is an event enjoyed by young and old alike.



Guildscall is the day where, by tradition, new apprentices are taken into a guild that has accepted them. Such inductions are not exclusive to the formal guilds, either. Guildscall is the day where most masters will formally take on new apprentices or assistants. These acceptances are normally made during the noon hour. A few hours of celebration are allowed, and then two hours before dusk the guild promotions or movements are announced (apprentices to journeymen, journeymen to craftsmen, etc.). Usually the newcomers, who are mostly young men, are given the next seven days for their own, allowed to do as they will without responsibility for one week. On the following Diaday they report to their new home or master and begin the long, grueling hours of their training. This is done all through the winter months, so they are trained and ready to shoulder their duties come the spring.

The Races: Sobeteta has large number of private boats, as one might imagine, as do all the other towns of the archipelago (Rethido in particular). Though the majority of these craft are working vessels, for fishermen and crabbers and others who make their living on the waves (or wage war upon them), there are still a great many that are designed for nothing but pleasure and speed. These boats are not for work or war; they are sleek racing vessels. Most of the people in the city have been on a boat at least once, and many have spent much time on the water. A few of the rich even have time and gold to spend on boats that have no other purpose than to compete against other such boats.

A seasonal race held twice yearly, during the summer and winter solstices, that runs from Bosinela Island to the docks of Sobeteta, that attract virtually every small craft that can put a sail into the wind. There are two other regattas held during the vernal and autumnal equinox, as well as a more military contest that occurs each year exactly ten days after Veshemo and Pelselond align. This latter race attracts warships, galleys and sailing ships from along the coast, most notably from Basir (and, before the current war, from Baneta), along with others from Svimohzia. The Rules are very strict, except for the Dash of the Pennants, which is held yearly within a few days of Wavecrusher's Harpoon (a constellation) appearing on the horizon. By tradition all vessels that take place in that race, which runs from Sobeteta to Tovid to Rethido and back to Sobeteta, must fly a bright flag upon which some fantastic or mythical beast has been colored. In the Dash of the Pennants, any tactics other than outright physical attack are acceptable.

Religious Holidays: The most widely celebrated religious holidays, by virtue of the sheer number of worshippers in the city, are those of the Halls of the Valiant and the Hall of Oaths. The former celebrates during both the Spring and Fall Equinox, the latter during the new moon of Veshemo. In addition to their own ceremonies and rites, the clerics of the Knight of the Gods turn out in full force during the nighttime hours—nothing can be better than smiting evil or defeating some villain on the God's holy day.

There are other religious holidays, of course, though none as significant. The first day of Spring is sacred to the Traveler, for instance. Every constable and watchman that can be put on the streets is out and about on the first day of Autumn, along with every priest or paladin of the Valiant and the Speaker of the Word. They prowl the streets and alleys ceaselessly in an attempt to avert any kidnappings, abductions or murders that might be performed to honor the Vicelord (whose holy day that is). Right-minded folk, especially those with children of either gender, tend to stay at home on this date if they can help it.

### MAGES & SAGES

There are several competent wizards and sorcerers in Sobeteta, most of no more than middling skill. However, there are a few of real ability. Sobeteta is also home to several bards and spellsingers of note, with a larger number of these spellcasters in the city than is often found gathered in one place (it is for this reason that many of the city's taverns can be such lively places to visit). They find the port city to be an excellent place to see and hear new and different instruments and melodies from other lands.

Doratu Ku'Ato: Among the wizards of more impressive talent in the city is Doratu Ku'Ato, a young graduate of the College of Magic in Pekal. He is also one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, maintaining an impressive mansion on a cliffside outside the city, overlooking the sea. Doratu has two piers of his own immediately adjacent to his business office and warehouse. Rumor has it that his natural business acumen has been unnaturally augmented by his willingness to employ charm and suggestion spells to further his business dealings. However, he is so naturally subtle and dynamic that few people take such suspicions seriously.

He is so subtle and so naturally charismatic that even his most intense business rivals are only beginning to suspect anything unnatural. There have been rumors bandied about that at least one of them has contacted the thieves' guild not to have something stolen but rather to gain information about the man. Other, darker rumors hint at a growing unease in

the Ku'Ato household - he has recently hired a newly retired soldier of Kalamar's Third Legion to command his bodyguard and warehouse guards. Sergeant Esamil, a gray-haired but hale man of middle years, is a no-nonsense type who brought one of his troopers with him when he returned to Sobeteta (he evidently grew to love the place while stationed here years ago). No one has seen this trooper—it is believed that he is working incognito as a member of the thieves' guild. As to the source of the unease, no one knows, but agents of the Golden Alliance may be involved.

**Resemer the Unholy:** Resemer the Unholy is a converted spellslinger with a bad reputation, as his moniker indicates. Resemer was once a sorcerer in the employ of Grand Duke Orilaras of Doderia. Girod, the Grand Duke's chief captain, often called upon Resemer to help on campaigns against the dwarves. Resemer was very good at his craft, much to the grief of the dwarves he persecuted. The blood of entire clans is on his hands, and few dwarves escaped with their lives.

However, in a strange and ironic twist of fate, it was an exile from Karasta that saved the wizard's life when he nearly died in the summer of 558 IR. Resemer traveled into the Kakidela Mountains in the guise of a simple herdsman, accompanied only by a homunculus, a raven familiar and a pair of large hounds, in order to seek out hidden dwarven strongholds. A sudden landslide high in the mountains caught the mage unawares, crushing the two hounds and both of his familiars. Resemer himself was trapped beneath a great weight of rock and soil; the dwarf, not knowing who he was, pulled him from under the rubble more dead than alive then nursed him back to health in his own home.

Resemer spent two full seasons in the dwarf's home, eventually even learning the dwarf tongue and his savior's entire name. In the spring of 559 IR a Doderan patrol discovered their hidden refuge. The dwarf had no opportunity to defend himself—they filled him full of arrows from a distance, and dealt with the handful of other dwarves and gnomes there likewise. Resemer arrived too late to save them, but not too late to avenge them—he slew everyone in the patrol, the soldiers who recognized and hailed him in friendship notwithstanding. He then placed the bodies of the slain dwarves and gnomes in their hold and sealed it with every defensive spell at his command.

A week later he was in Kaleta, in the guise of a halfling, and a week after that was on a raft heading down the Ridara for Sobeteta. There is still a sizeable reward being offered in Doderia for the name of the

villain that butchered and burned thirty men-at-arms.

Since that time, Resemer has sworn a vow of poverty and spends all of his time and resources hunting down clerics of the House of Scorn. He blames the Purgers for his earlier prejudices and bigotry, and seeks to atone for the past atrocities he perpetrated by removing their influence from others - permanently. Since he arrived aboard the port last year, five Purgers who dwelled in the city have disappeared or turned up dead. In addition to these five, an unknown number (at least four for sure, perhaps more) of Purgers visiting the city or putting in to harbor there aboard ship have been taken, all within hours of their arrival.

The Prefect of the City knows who Resemer is, and is all but convinced that he is responsible for the murders. However, Resemer is very cunning and uses all his skills to avoid being seen or leaving any evidence. Too, the nature of the 'victims' of his feud keeps most Guardsmen from being too worried about his activities. Thus far they have not linked him with a certainty to the slayings or disappearances, and no one appears to be trying too terribly hard to do so. There are simply more pressing matters to attend to.

Resemer's future plans remain unclear. He was once overheard asking about the time and fare of a ship voyage to Zoa. It is possible that he intended to travel there and continue his efforts to 'make things right,' but doubtful that he would ever go through with it. Too many bearded fellows with axes and hammers know his name, if not his face. If he truly seeks to strike out against The House of Scorn, he would do better to book passage for Eldor, though this will do little to help the dwarves.

Resemer is well aware of Duke Sorabek's past, and his actions in the war with the dwarves. He has visited him twice, in the Duke's castle, somehow getting past all the guards without being seen, in an attempt to make him see the error of his ways. This attempt has failed, of course, and out of respect for Resemer's proven loyalty to the Emperor and past service, the Duke has forgiven the intrusions. If it happens again, however, he will not be so patient.

**Celenon Torist:** One particularly distasteful but powerful fellow that lives in Sobeteta is Celenon Torist, a haughty expatriate from Vrandol who has dwelt in the city for less than a few months but has already made a name for himself as a master of symbol, runes and sigils. He is sharp-tongued, sadistic and vindictive, however, and if it were not for the quality of his scrolls and his unmatched expertise regarding written magic he would be regarded as little more than a learned villain. In the twelve months since he has lived in the

city he has purchased four different beautiful young women from slavers to serve as concubines - one each season. When he grows tired or bored of them, he is said to flay them and use their skin for his own personal collection of scrolls and codices. Celenon was forced to put self-preservation before dignity when King Aldorn's Mendarn troops took Vrandol by storm. What many do not know is that he was smuggled out of the burning city in secret by agents of the Secret Network of the Blue Salamander and is now in debt to them for his life.

### OTHER NOTABLE PERSONS

There are many interesting individuals and notable personalities that call Sobeteta home. Some are powerful, some skilled, many inept, a few that are dynamic and charismatic and others are repugnant or feared. Among them are fighting men who have made a name for themselves battling pirates, others who have earned their fame as pirates, some who were explorers of the Alubelok Swamp (few of these survive to retirement), etc. There are powerful merchants, eerily charismatic beggars, daring rogues and even a few monks. Some do not truly live in Sobeteta, but only pass through. One thing is a certainty, however - one never knows whom he or she will meet on (or under) the streets.

**Maargue She:** In a port city of this size, it requires much to become well known for extraordinary skill in a nautical trade. Such a man is Maargue She, who owns and operates the finest dry-dock in the city. His ships are the best that can be bought along the coast of Kalamar, and rightfully so. He was once the guildmaster of the Shipwright's Guild of Shyff, and has brought all of his experience and expertise here. No one knows why he left the city-state of his birth, though there is conjecture that no love is lost between Maargue and Shyff's various guilds. He lives just to the east the city in a small fortress-manor built with the permission of the Privy Council and garrisoned by a strong company of seasoned Zazahni mercenaries. Rumors within the city that this fortress is connected to the sea by a complex of underground caves may be supported by the shipwright's recent purchase of several shackled sea trolls from members of the Company of the Strutting Crow, an adventuring band of some notoriety.

**G'rana Ral'Pas:** Another notable Sobetetan is G'rana Ral'Pas, at one time a well-respected (and powerful) cleric of the Order of the Pike—it is believed that he once held the rank of Captain in that martial order. Disgraced for unknown reasons while fighting abroad in Brandobia, Ral'Pas returned to found a School

of Gladiators in his home city. All of his skills and prowess were applied to the training of his fighters, some of whom were slaves and some free. These gladiators are, as a consequence, amongst the most fearsome fighting men to be found inside or outside any arena. His gladiators fight in Gor Lisaderi, but have done battle as a unit as far away as Dodera and Tarisato. At least three of his best fighters have survived bouts in Gor Monodera in Bet Kalamar itself. How the Temple of Armed Conflict feels about his school is unknown.

Recently small bands of G'rana's gladiators have been commanding high prices hiring out as indentured mercenaries, though usually in small bands that act more as bodyguards than proper soldier. More than one Ral'Pas gladiator has earned his freedom in a grand bout, and the most recent to do so has since formed his own adventuring company, the Band of the Bared Blade. The Brotherhood of the Broken Chain recently attempted to free the gladiator-slaves of G'rana's school, but most of them wound up floating face down in the harbor. The rest, to their chagrin, became slaves (and gladiators) themselves.

**The Finders' Council:** This small but reputable association of sages and scholars, probably numbering no more than a dozen, maintains its offices on Cliffside, overlooking the sea. Here, it is said, the various members of the Council provide information for customers seeking knowledge on various topics. Whether the information provided comes from divinations and other magicks, or simply through a well-established network of informants, is unknown.

By Ducal order, fees charged by the Finders' Council are lightly taxed, although the wording of the decree clearly defines what does and does not fall into this category (and the records of the Council must be readily available for inspection or review at any time). The reason for this is simple - the Duke reserves the right to have any request made by (or on official behalf of) the crown considered a priority of the council. All other projects and researches are suspended indefinitely until the object of the Ducal request is resolved. Duke Sorabek has only invoked this mandate on two occasions, once for himself and once at the behest of the Prefect of the City Guard. On both occasions his requests for information were filled within a few days, with every resource of the Finders' Council being applied. The nature of his requests is unknown to the general populace; though the location and destruction of a powerful vampire in the narrows immediately after the Prefect received his information leaves little to wonder about. A series of brutal murders plaguing the city were immediately halted, as well

as the consistent disappearances of hard-working constables toiling to locate the perpetrator.

## THE UNDERWORLD

The mercantile nature of Sobeteta, with the huge numbers of ships going in and out of port and the vast amount of cargo being transferred about make smuggling inevitable. Fences, cutpurses and numerous thugs make up the bulk of a brisk black market trade, with simple cudgel-over-the-head strong-arm robbers making up the low end and expert, creative burglars making the other. Overall the thieves' guild is one of the most numerous and active on Tellene. To make matters worse for the poor constables of the City Guard, there are many freelancers and unattached thieves consistently circulating through the port from the ships. Although the City Guard is diligent and hard working, the best it can do is keep the streets safe and strive to keep the thievery to a minimum.

Smuggling is a very lucrative and profitable criminal career. False holds, falsified manifests and clandestine shipments make it difficult for the Duke to get his fair share. Pirates from as near as the archipelago and as far as the Straits bring their booty to shore here, selling it through a variety of agents (mostly fences, but many "legitimate" factors).

The thieves' guild proper is run by Teren Masa'i, known as Teren the Drowned. The guildmaster was part of a pirate crew once, and many years ago was knocked overboard by the boom while attacking and Ozhvinmishii trading ship full of gold. His pirate comrades thought nothing of it, of course, and he nearly died. His waterlogged body washed ashore near Rosaleta, however, and a selfless Friend of the Fields saved him, thinking he must have been one of the Basiran marines whose ship had sunk in a storm the day before. He now refuses to set foot on a ship of any kind, and rarely goes down to the harbor, preferring to let his subordinates run that aspect of the operation.

Currently, the thieves' guild is embroiled in a conflict that may soon worsen, as an unknown presence in the underworld known as Three-Eyes is encroaching upon guild territory. The Golden Alliance and the Secret Network of the Blue Salamander are about to go head to head as well, and both organizations have factions within the guild itself.

## CITY STRUCTURES, FEATURES AND PLACES OF NOTE

**Dalamur Grove:** Though Sobeteta has numerous plants, single trees and even small copses, nothing in the city—nor even anywhere on Rokalel Island—

compares to the Dalamur Grove. Dating back six centuries and named for the Brother of the Bear that started it, the grove is full not only of native trees but also trees not found within a thousand miles of the city. Through painstaking effort the various clerics and druids who tend the grove have slowly added species from all over, including even three Blue-Rag Firs from Jorakk and a massive oak from Sentinels Grove in the Lendelwod (though at less than a hundred feet high it is small for its kind). The Dalamur Grove is not in any way a formal church and is not considered a sacred place in the traditional sense of things, though services to Belanar are occasionally held there. There are only two or three Brothers of the Bear that tend the grove, and rarely is more than one of them present at any given time, and citizens of the city are free to wander through it at their leisure. It is a thick and overgrown place, however, with a dense canopy that lets little sun through. There are, without a doubt, hiding places and secret things in the shadows undiscovered by the Brothers of the Bear or the City Guard.

**The Docks:** The city's docks include a long section of low-lying docks for personal craft. These boats are not used for work or war; they are sleek racing vessels. Most of the people in the city have been on a boat, and many of them spend much time on the water. A few of the rich have time and gold to spend on boats that have no other purpose than to enter a seasonal race from Bosinela Island to the east back to the docks at Rokalel Island, where garlands of lilies and orchids are draped over the winner.

**The Ducal Manor:** Since the attempted insurrection of the Duke of Sobeteta in 441 IR, Imperial writ has forbidden the construction of any familial castles or keeps within the city. It likewise prohibits the use of battlements, machicolations or any siege engine (ballista, catapult, and so on) in or on private structures. Any solid stone building over three stories tall must have plans on file with the city engineers and must submit to periodic (usually semi-annual) inspections. In addition, the owners of such structures are required to pay substantial land tax, sometimes four times what their counterparts pay. (This prevents any noble family from establishing a stronghold against the Duke, but also denies a fortified location from which to conspire against the Emperor.) The Ducal Manor complies with all of these proscriptions, though past Dukes have done their best to make the place as fortified and self-sustaining as possible.

The manor house and attendant structures are surrounded by a circular wall that is 8 feet high and 1-foot-thick, buttressed where necessary and lined

on the inside with a catwalk. This catwalk is only two feet below the lip of the wall - thus providing an excellent vantage point for sentries, but sadly lacking in cover for anyone attempting to withhold a determined attacker. Two round stone pillars cap the two encircling arms of the wall, both apparently solid throughout and topped with immense torches. Two brick-and-timber kiosks stand immediately inside and outside the gates, each large enough to hold and protect up to four armored guards. The outer one is continually manned by at least two of the City Guard. Four men-at-arms similarly man the inner one. There are usually a number of other guards within the compound, but the numbers of these vary greatly with the time and tensions of the day.

The ducal residence is as grand and well-appointed a building as could be built while abiding by the Emperor's decree. Three stories tall and far larger than necessary to support the Duke's household and staff, most people assume it is connected to the stables (which have a conveniently walled roof) and the nearby wall-towers by concealed tunnels. There are even some rumors that hidden passages lead down into natural caves beneath the city, through which certain past Dukes have conducted business better kept from the populace. This is reputed even to include the sale of children of troublesome nobles to slavers, who carry their cargo back to their ships through water-filled passageways in rowboats.

Whether the current duke utilizes these passages is unknown. He certainly is not one to worry about whether the office of the Duke should have a palace or a castle, and his loyalty to the Emperor is unquestioned. In addition to the sentries provided by the City Guard and the Fourth and Foremost, Duke Sorabek has a household guard of fourteen stout men-at-arms, three of whom are related to him by blood and all of whom have served with him in the field before.

**Gor Lisaderi:** Gor Lisaderi is the largest gladiatorial arena along the Alubelok Coast, and the only one in the city of Sobeteta. Second only to the greatest arenas of Bet Kalamar, Gor Lisaderi has seen countless fights since it was constructed in 265 IR. It was designed by several masters of the Bet Kalamaran College of Architecture and can seat several thousand people. Followers of great gladiators and specific schools (which are many, in the Vast Empire) favor Gor Lisaderi over many others due to its superior structure, size and wide range of potential challenges and games.

The arena itself is built around a huge bowl of rock that was once a large lagoon. This bowl remains connected to the sea by three natural caverns. Most

times it is covered by a sectioned "floor" atop which sand is piled up to a foot deep, for traditional fights. Other times, however, the floor is pulled up and the bowl is allowed to flood to a variety of depths. This allows games of pit gladiators versus aquatic monsters, gladiators against swamp beasts (as these are available in great supply), gladiators in and out of boats and any number of variations. There are several large pillars sunk in the "lagoon" as well - these are often used to isolate single (or perhaps a pair of) gladiators, which is then filled with swimming creatures that have sufficient reach to seize or tear at them from the water.

Gladiator games in Gor Lisaderi share all the typical attributes of other arena contests of the Empire's Great Game. Prisoners of war, criminals and debtors are forced to fight alongside professional slave-gladiators and free men who contract with various gladiator houses. Every imaginable combination of arms and armor are used, though missile weapons are uncommon. Some contests feature mounted combatants, but such fights, like those involving chariots, are not as popular as certain others (though a grand contest featuring sea cat-mounted gladiators fighting others shackled to a raft proved to be a great draw). At least once per year a small tower is erected in the center of the arena and a battle is conducted between the "garrison" (all criminals or debtors) and the "besieging host" (all professional gladiators). If any of the garrison manages to survive and maintain control of the tower they are given a ducal pardon for their crimes and banished from the city.

There are several fighting school and gladiator stables in the city, most very small (a dozen fighters or less) but a few very large indeed (over a hundred gladiators, including many that "tour" other arenas in other cities). The vast majority of the fighters in these schools and stables are human, and most are slaves, but there are representatives of many other races in their ranks (including elves, dwarves, hobgoblins and even merfolk). S'Nakas Tomil, a wealthy Sobetetan native, finances a stable that pays good coin for trolls, then trains them to use weapons and fight together. They have appeared in just two major contests thus far, against opponents equipped with nets, slashing weapons and burning pitch. The trolls won both contests, and drew huge crowds.

Wagering upon the fights in Gor Lisaderi is a huge business for many. The arena itself is owned by the city, as represented by the Duke. If an individual or agency wishes to sponsor or organize an event they must pay a fee to use the arena, then tithe a substantial (usually 40%) amount of the proceeds to the crown. No other fighting contests (even between animals) are allowed



within the city walls by law upon penalty of forfeiture of property and a lengthy stay in the cells.

**Kraken Hall:** Kraken Hall is the administrative heart of the city. It is here, in this massive, sprawling, four-story building that the Duke, his staff, the Privy Council and all the functionaries thereof work to keep the city thriving. It is in this structure that the Prefect and Magistrate conduct the bulk of their business. Even the resident Imperial Legion has a token representation in a wing of this building, though they are billeted elsewhere. The architecture of Kraken Hall is of an old, old style, harkening back to the days of Thedorus. The kraken-and-galley symbol of Sobeteta is carved into the walls in great circles as tall as a man, and to enter the building one must pass through a hallway of sorts formed by the stone oars of a carved galley that shelters the building's steps.

**The Naga's Niche:** P'Laro Kudori, owner and proprietor of the tavern known as The Naga's Niche, originally hailed from Bet Bireli. Prior to beginning his career as an adventurer he spent nearly a decade as a spy for Duke Gadadik of O'Par, and he was a very good one. He honed his skills as an infiltrator as a part of one of the best intelligence networks across the Sovereign Lands. His last assignment, before mustering out, was in the Pekalese army, where he posed as a member of the supply corps and helped to track "aid" in the form of monies and materiel coming to the Rogalans from elsewhere (but specializing in that of Paru'Bor and Cilorea).

After leaving the Duke's service, P'Laro made his way to Basir, where he was eventually recruited by the Reanaarian adventurer Gaelon Crowgait as a scout and information-sniffer for Crowgait's adventuring company, the Crow's Coterie. P'Laro accompanied this troop for several years, adventuring as near as the Highlands and as far away as the Elos Desert with great success. About five years ago Gaelon led the group to Sobeteta, and from thence into the Alubelok Swamp, apparently to hunt for the ruins of an ancient fortress rumored to lie beneath the Settlemaw Flats. Unfortunately for the better part of the company, they encountered the black dragon Carstanaughir Atramentous (see Appendix A) within days of entering the marsh. Amazingly, P'Laro made it out alive, though the rest of his comrades were never seen again.

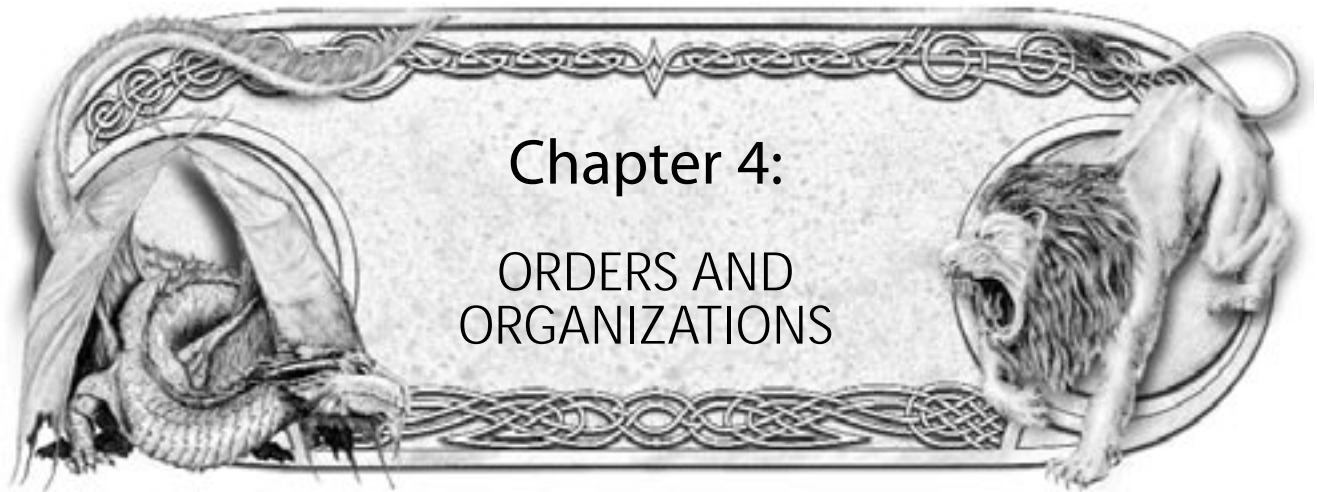
Now, P'Laro runs the Naga's Niche, a rowdy but reasonably safe place kept clean and in good repair. It is two story, with a storage cellar below and another, secret basement level beneath that where P'Laro conducts much of his business. There is a large painting of the Crow's Coterie on the wall opposite

the fireplace. P'Laro keeps various trophies in the common room as a means of attracting and keeping the business of adventurers. Among these are a wyvern stinger, attached to about two feet of tail, eight sahuagin jawbones mounted on a plaque, and three of Carstanaughir's black scales, similarly displayed.

**Tal S'Beta:** Tal S'Beta is the city bastion for Sobeteta during times of war or siege. It is a well-built fortress, bristling with siege engines of various kinds and well-stocked with food and munitions against need. Tal S'Beta is occupied by the military troops stationed here in the City on the Rock and is also the headquarters and billeting area for the Harbor Watch. Recent work has gutted at least one building in the complex and replaced its cellar with a huge underground amphitheater that is filled with seawater and mud. In this watery barracks, the infantry train for swamp combat. There are also several docks at the foot of the fortress walls reserved for warships and Watch sloops.

**The Tower of the Guard:** The Tower of the Guard is an old structure, some 300 years old, built upon an even older structure that dated back to the founding of the city. Each group of the City Guard (Street, Harbor and Wall) has administrative offices here, as well as an armory and a training area. All ceremonial functions are conducted in the tower (induction of new recruits, awards and decorations presented, etc.), but most arms and armor are actually crafted, stored and repaired in the large fortified tower on the spur opposite Tal S'Beta. This keep is properly called Tal G'tera, but most Sobetetans, Guard and civilian alike, call it "The Blockhouse." The on duty "Ready Troop" of the City Guard stages out of Tal G'tera if it is not actively patrolling in one large body as a deterrent and to "show the flag."

**The Wall of Stones:** Prefect Puramil Tusima, commander of the City Guard, created The Wall of Stones a little less than a decade ago. Tusima was, at the time, heading an investigation into a series of grisly murders (tied into a great deal of slave-running and smuggling) that had most of city staying indoors at night and cries for the Guard on the lips of anyone hearing a sound in the dark. Tusima's team included ten Street Guards and two proveurges (See Chapter 4: Orders and Organizations), along with



several clerics out of Four Falcons Watch. Over the course of nearly a year, and after at least forty murders (including several of noble blood), Tusima and his band cornered the creature (a raksasha) responsible for it all. Two Guards were ambushed and killed and another crippled during the course of the investigation; two more were slain and another crippled during the fight to end it. After Tusima became Prefect he set about the establishment of a memorial wall outside the Tower of the Guard. Each stone of the wall would be inscribed with the name and visage of a Guardsman killed in the service of the city (including those that could be remembered from the years before).

Since the wall was erected, 31 names and faces have been inscribed on the wall, a testament to the dangerous nature of Sobeteta's alleyways and side streets. Another 17 have been researched from past Guard service and inscribed long after their actual deaths. The Wall of Stones is well-maintained by the Guards themselves, and has been blessed and consecrated by the highest ranking clerics of both Four Falcons Watch and TrueTroth Cathedral. It is said that the wall, which runs in a semicircle across a flooring of black marble flagstones, is watched over by a ghost. Since no one has as yet tempted the Guard's wrath by trifling with the place, such assertions remain untested.

### SPECIAL NOTES

Monstrous threats to the city are many and varied. Flying creatures from the Alubelok Swamp or the rocky islands around Sobeteta are a hazard to farmers, ranchers, and sailors. Giant vultures, eagles, harpies, and stirges keep citizens wary of the skies. Bullywugs, gripli, dire crocodiles, scraggs and sea trolls, and other marine creatures threaten trade and travel. Still, there are monstrous threats and mysteries inside the city as well:

**Basonok Snare:** The Basonok Snare is a large, seemingly very deep bog on the north side of the city, immediately outside the walls. The Snare is a veritable saltwater quagmire, full of treacherous mud currents and sinkholes. No one knows exactly how deep it goes, nor has anyone ever really tried to find out. Though covered with rushes, vines and other swamp-dwelling vegetation, there is no safe way to cross it except by boat (and even then only with great difficulty). The Snare has for years been the repository for secret murders, and the bodies that no one would claim, as well as the corpses of executed criminals, slain brigands and pirates, and so forth.

The small island that forms its outer boundary stands just 2 to 3 feet above sea level and is covered by nothing more than grass. It is home to seabirds and crabs. There are, as might be expected, many rumors of sodden corpses coming up out of the mire, seeking revenge upon their murderers or other dire purposes. This, if true, is not as bad a problem as it could be, for there are no settlements or dwellings on the north strip of island outside the walls, and unless the walking corpses have learned to scale a 20-foot-tall wall they would be unable to trouble the city.

### New Feat: Valiant Stature [General]

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +6, membership in the Sacristy of the Swift Sword.

**Benefit:** A paladin of the Sacristy of the Swift Sword can grow to valiant stature, as the righteous might spell, once per week. She can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times at 12th, and so forth).

Furthermore, allies or followers to whom the paladin is visible (within 30 feet) gain an additional +1 resistance bonus to saving throws against attacks made or effects created by evil creatures, while this power is active.

**The Burning Quay:** In 459, when Paru'Bor seceded from the Kalamaran Empire, two wealthy Paruvs (residents of Paru'Bor) purported to be wizards were in the city with their families. When word came of the troubles at home, they immediately sought to flee the city and return there. Imperial soldiers and City Guards attempted to stop them, led by the resident Provost Mage. The ensuing battle was costly to both sides, including the fiery death of one of the two Paruvs, but in the end their fleeing vessel managed to slip its lines and escaped. Since that night, a strange and ghostly apparition has appeared at the dock where the vessel was moored, usually no more than two or three nights a decade. This apparition takes the form of a burning cog, and ghostly crewmen can be seen writhing in the flames. It appears seemingly at random, though some older sailors claim it arrives when the constellation of The Shimmering One encircles the moon Veshemo. The flames do not burn the dock and the ghostly crewmen are not, evidently, undead. However, if a ship is docked at that location when the apparition appears, the hapless vessel will burn to the waterline. Locals are by now quite used to the phenomenon and take care not to dock any ship

#### Variant Class Feature: Special Mount (Sp)

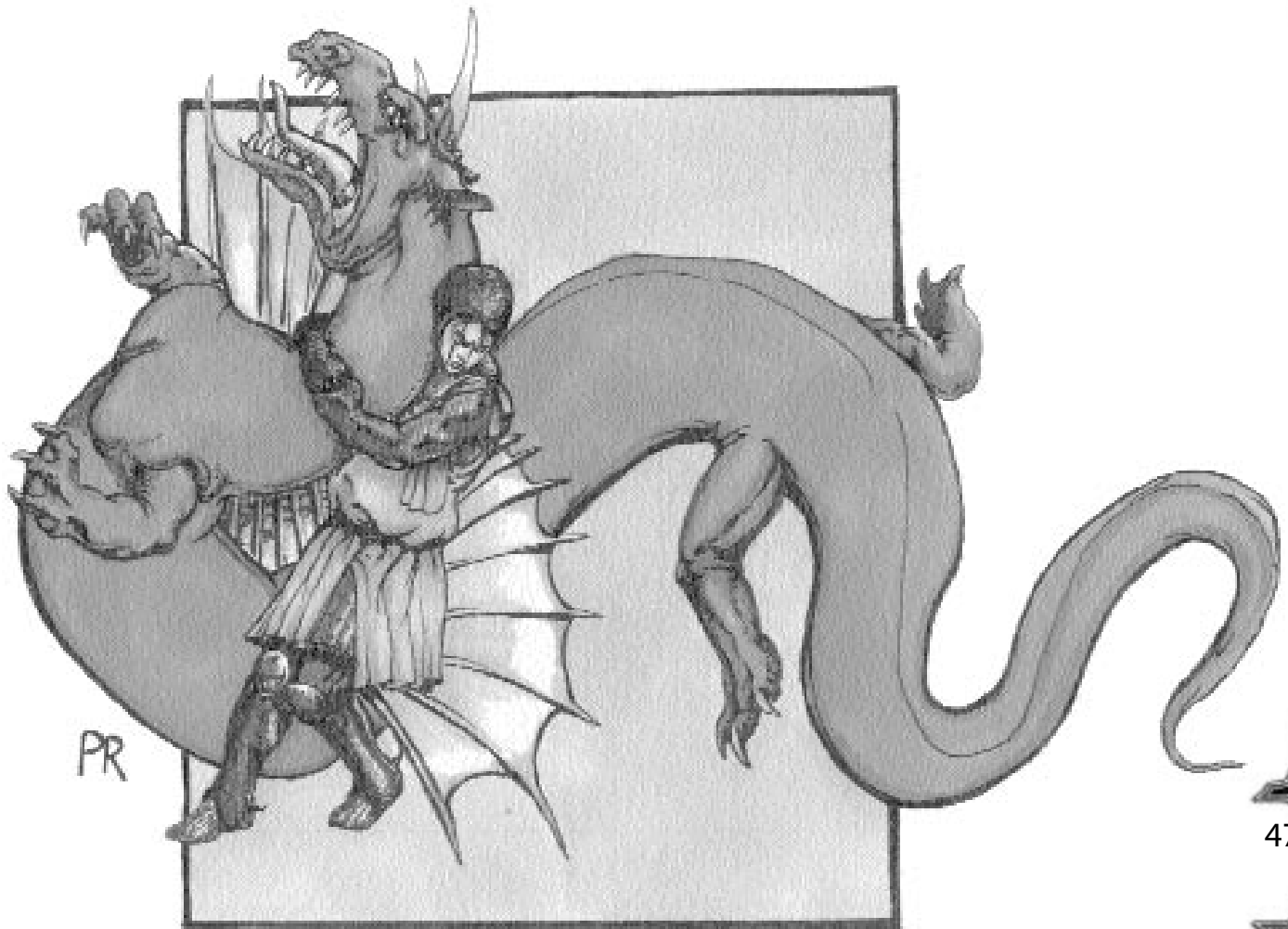
Paladins of the Right Gallant Order of the Undismayed may call their special mount at 4th or 5th level. Otherwise, this class feature functions as normal.

**New Class Feature: Shielded Mount (Su)**

At 6th level, a paladin of the Right Gallant Order of the Undismayed can imbue his animal with an aura of strengthening divine energy, once per week. This effect causes the mount's eyes to shine with a sacred light. For the next round +1 round/paladin level, the mount gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC against attacks made or effects created by evil creatures. The mount also bestows a +1 resistance bonus on saving throws (against attacks made or effects created by evil creatures) to anyone within 20 feet of the mount, while this power is active.

The paladin can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times per week at 12th, and so forth).

there, just in case. Dockworkers refer to the south end of the harbor as "the hot end," a phrase that comes from this apparition.



Within the Alubelok Coast operate several specialized groups, with goals that range from war to worship. Save for the orders with religious affiliation, their influence on society is sparse.

### THE SWORN ORDERS OF THE VALIANT

There are several orders of knights and paladins dedicated to the worship of the Valiant. With the central temple of the Servants of the Swift Sword located in Sobeteta, the City on the Rock sees members of many orders and brotherhoods, though three of them in particular are significantly noteworthy.

#### The Right Valorous Sacristy of the Swift Sword

Commonly known as: Swift Swords

Motto: Valor and Succor, Swiftly Done

Emblem: The Swift Sword; a greatsword, point down, with wings above and behind the crossbar.

There are more paladins sworn to the service of The Knight of the Gods than perhaps any other deity, all serving in one of several formal orders. Though each of these orders unerringly follow the tenets of The Valiant, each has its own unique personality (including one, headquartered from a chapel-fortress on Reanaaria Bay, whose membership is restricted solely to women). While the Right Valorous Sacristy of the Swift Sword is not the largest of these organizations (this honor is said to belong to the Knights of Justice in Paru'Bor), the High Valiant himself holds court in Sobeteta for those seeking spiritual guidance, undergoing training or even those needing healing of grievous wounds.

The Swift Swords represent the ideals and values of their god, and are constant in the defense of the helpless, weak and downtrodden. Innocence and goodness demand defense by force of arms; evil must be met boldly and openly. Swift Swords are required as part of their service to spend time in the services of orphanages (healing, defending or whatever may be required) for at least one night when in a city (though this may be deferred if grave need demands).

It is fortunate for the Halls of the Valiant that so many wish to enter service with the Sacristy; the Swift Swords suffer badly from attrition, as they tend

to hurl themselves not just willingly into the fray but eagerly. It is the greatest goal of each paladin to win glory and renown by combating evil. Their bravery is unquestioned, though their judgment often is. Such valor, without temperance, often sets them at odds with those who "plan and plod without purpose" (a common sentiment of these paladins).

Paladins of the Right Valorous Sacristy of the Swift Sword favor plate or half-plate armor, boldly emblazoned with the emblem of their order. While traveling abroad, adventuring or otherwise acting on their own, they wear a long golden tabard with the Swift Sword embroidered upon the chest in cloth-of-silver, girded at the waist with a wide leather belt trimmed in gold and set with diamonds. While on quest, pursuing specific holy instructions or accompanying Servants of the Swift Sword, they will be garbed in a silver knee-length tabard with the Swift Sword embroidered upon the chest in cloth-of-gold and girded about the waist with a narrow blue belt trimmed in silver.

#### The Right Gallant Order of the Undismayed

Commonly Known As: The Undismayed

Motto: Be Not Dismayed

Emblem: The Charger; A white stallion rampant over a diamond-checked circle in blue and white.

The Right Gallant Order of the Undismayed is a small order, both because there are fewer who attempt to enter it and because the mortality rate of its paladins is nothing short of appalling. Indeed, they are the only sworn order that suffers greater casualties than the Sacristy of the Swift Sword. The Undismayed spend far less time in defense of the innocent and performing charitable works - they are a driven order, hunting evil creatures across the breadth of the Sovereign Lands without respite or mercy.

The Undismayed are, as a rule, a grimmer lot than the Swift Swords, though no less interested in reaping the glory that comes from defeating powerful foes. They simply act in a somewhat more subdued fashion, and often in smaller numbers. Undismayed often prowl the swamp alone, or with small bands of adventurers. They keep careful watch for any sign of outsiders or undead, though their most frequent enemy in the swamp is the bands of brigands and monsters that live there. Undismayed have occasionally been found keeping company with Sentinels of Providence, or even members of the Order of the Slayer (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide). Some of the Undismayed (though not many) have actually been inducted into these organizations. Ganamar Vasita (nicknamed "the Scouring Blade"), for instance, was active in southern Pekal for at least two years along-

#### New Class Feature: Strong Eyes, Stern Flesh (Su)

At 3rd level, paladins of the Unblenching Eyes gain darkvision out to 60 feet and low-light vision. At 6th level, they gain resistance to electricity 10 and fire 10, provided the electricity or fire is part of an attack made or effect created by evil creatures.

side two men and an elven female thought to be Slayers (though he has not been heard from or seen in quite some time).

Because of the nature of their service, and their extensive travels, the Undismayed are often on friendly terms with rangers or other itinerant folk of good alignment. They attend regular worship services far less often than their fellows, and even visit proper churches only rarely, as they spend the majority of their time in the field. Like the Swift Swords, Undismayed wear heavy armor, preferably plate, though it is rarely as shiny or well cared for. Over their armor they wear a blue and gray tabard, split into two colors down the middle; blue on the left, gray on the right. The Charger is embroidered on the center of the chest, so it straddles both colors, and will be painted on the upper right quadrant of their shields as well (if they carry one). A stark white baldric is worn over the shoulder, and a horsetail crest mounted on their helms. Undismayed that have successfully defeated a powerful outsider or major undead have the right to wear a wide belt of undecorated leather with a knot of white hair, ceremonially taken from a white steed that has fallen in battle. There have been some paladins of this order known to have grown their hair long and dyed it to match the mane and tail of their steed.

#### The Unblenching Eyes of Saint Balan the Indomitable

Commonly Known As: Unblenching Eyes or Golden Eyes

Motto: Stay the Course

Emblem: Two golden eyes on a blue and white diamond-checked oval turned sideways, as an eye shape

The Unblenching Eyes of Saint Balan the Indomitable are the paladins who ward the priesthood of the Valiant whenever such minding is needed. Given the martial nature of the Servants of the Swift Sword, the presence of the Unblenching Eyes is only rarely required, but when it is, the need is assuredly dire. The order is a relatively young one, being just a little more than a century old. It takes its name and doctrine from the paladin Balan Mag'Par, now known as Saint Balan the Indomitable. Sir Mag'Par met his end in Shrogga-pravaaz, the City of Giants, defending a band of parentless children from assassins of the House of Knives. According to the Scriptures of the Eye, one of the children (there were twenty) was the rightful heir to a powerful throne, and the actual target of the Veiled Priesthood. They did not know which child was the heir, however, and were going to

#### Feat Progression: Knight of the Breaking Wave

The average Breaker needs good Strength and high Dexterity, and has a typical order of feat progression as follows:

1st feat	Power Attack
2nd feat	Cleave
3rd feat	Two-Weapon Fighting (flail in off-hand)
4th feat	Two-Weapon Defense

butcher them all to make sure they eliminated their intended target.

Saint Balan demurred.

What followed was an epic struggle between one elderly (but still hale) knight and at least a score of evil clerics, assassins and hired bravos. In the end it was poisoned knives in the back and scorpions as large as hounds that ended the paladin's life; but not before all but three of the attackers were slain and all of the children safely fled. Sir Mag'Par was soon canonized, and quickly the focus of many young paladins who found inspiration in his example. The order has grown since then, and earned a great deal of respect from its older, more entrenched fellows; it also holds a bitter grudge against the House of Knives, and will go to great lengths to cause that church and its followers harm at any opportunity.

By tradition, at least one Unblenching Eye stands as Warden of the Steps at every major church of the Valiant, acting as seneschal for the guards and servants. They likewise stand watch over any orphanages run by the Halls of the Valiant. Finally, an Eye of Saint Balan will accompany a Servant of the Swift Sword as he goes on his Mission of Searching whenever possible, providing companionship and a defender at need. When not performing one of these tasks or duties, the Unblenching Eyes travel the land in search of people in need of help or defense. Unblenching Eyes are the bane of brigands and roundly cursed even by those in supposed authority, if they are the kind of folk that prey upon those weaker than they.

The Unblenching Eyes of Saint Balan the Indomitable are typically garbed in lamellar armor or a chain hauberk, over which they wear a white, gold or light blue tabard. Upon the left breast of the tabard are embroidered the Eyes of their order, also in gold, blue and white.

#### THE KNIGHTS OF THE BREAKING WAVE

Commonly Known As: The Breakers

Motto: Unflinching as the waves



**Emblem:** A circle, the inside of which shows a wave crashing upon a rock.

Across the seas of Tellene, from the fog-shrouded and icy waters of Voldor Bay to the ghost-haunted waters of the Sea of the Dead, there are few mariners feared more by pirates and fiends than the Knights of the Breaking Wave. The order is headquartered on Bosinela Island, several miles east of Rethido. It is an unprepossessing place as fortresses go, scarcely more than a good-sized keep by the standards of Kalamar, or even the Young Kingdoms, but its strength lies not in the thickness or height of its walls. Its strength lies in the unflagging spirit and prowess of the knights that call the place home. The Order of the Breaking Wave is an autonomous, martial organization dedicated to its own goals and no others, owing fealty to neither faith nor nation. Though it is independent of any allegiance to particular secular or religious powers, it is looked upon with favor and good will by many of both.

The Order of the Breaking Wave is a small one - there are probably fewer than twenty knights all told, and these are scattered across the seas. It is a rare occasion indeed when even a handful of them are gathered together in one place - a dozen of them in congress is considered to be a large convocation! As orders of knighthood go, that of the Breaking Wave is far different from the norm. They are neither a proud collection of cavaliers, encased in steel and sitting atop huge warhorses, nor are they a stark-minded

religious order sworn to the service of a particular god or pontiff.

The sole purpose of the Order of the Breaking Wave is to defend those who would sail the sea from any who would prey upon them or despoil it. In this respect, the Breakers are virtually indistinguishable from certain followers of The Voyager, and even bear some resemblance to those who venerate Wave Crusher. So much do their Canons of Ordination resemble the tenets of Bright Eyes that there are many who wonder if the original founders of the order were not adherents of that faith or perhaps even lapsed Journeymen. Whatever the case, Breakers are always welcome in a church of The Voyager and have a long history of good relations with the clergy there. In fact, most such churches, if in a port or shipping community, will have a hostel or barracks in which the Breakers are welcome to spend a night or three to rest or heal.

Typically the Breakers, a handful of whom will be aboard any one vessel (the ships are manned by lay followers of the order or contracted sailors), will sail toward whatever location seems most appealing at the time. This may be a region that has been particularly plagued by pirates or a stretch of the cliffs where shipping is harassed by harpies. Only rarely is there a coordinated effort to have the different knights and ships act in concert. They have, in fact, been likened to knights-errant of the waves.

Breakers do not easily lie within the typical knightly mold. They are like the seas upon which they travel, quite unpredictable, often brash without warning and very dangerous. Honor or propriety as the paladin regards it is not so much an overriding concern (though this is not to say they are dishonest or boorish, by any means - quite the contrary) within this knighthood as it is in others. These knights are a lusty and headstrong lot; hard drinking and hard fighting. They may, for instance, be seen in a quayside dive at which a proper knight would look down his nose, then found guesting in a palace the next evening. Ever ready to fight, they will draw sword and flail at need, wielding both weapons in place of a shield. Respected (if not well-regarded) by most that traffic upon the sea, they are for the most part friendly, feckless and impatient, and bear little love for confinement or lengthy stays in one location.

Knights of the Breaking Wave can be easily distinguished in a crowd by their rolling gait and their distinctive brigandine armor (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide, or use studded leather armor). This armor, which is issued to each new Knight upon his induction to the Order, is a suit of brigandine armor crafted by the armorsmiths of Per F'Gir. It is blue and gray, with each separate plate and panel outlined in

### Feat Progression: Proveurges

All Proveurges need good Intelligence, while those focusing on combat skills also require good Dexterity and Strength. A typical order of feat progression is as follows:

- 1st feat Investigator
- 2nd feat Negotiator or Improved Initiative
- 3rd feat Persuasive or Combat Expertise
- 4th feat Improved Unarmed Strike or Improved Disarm
- 5th feat Combat Reflexes or Two-Weapon Fighting

#### Recommended Proveurge Spells

As mentioned in the text, spellcasting proveurges often require magic that is subtle or investigative in nature.

0-level- detect magic, detect poison, light, read magic; 1st-level- alarm, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, disguise self, hold portal, ventriloquism; 2nd-level- alter self, calm emotions, delay poison, detect thoughts, knock, locate object, see invisibility, tongues; 3rd-level- arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, glibness, speak with animals; 4th-level- arcane eye, detect scrying, locate creature, modify memory, neutralize poison, scrying; 5th-level- prying eyes, seeming, song of discord; 6th-level- analyze dweomer, find the path, legend lore, shadow walk, true seeing; 7th-level- arcane sight (greater), forcecage, scrying (greater),

black stitching. It splits at the waist to guard the legs down to the knees, and rolls over the top of the shoulder to just below the top of the biceps. When fully armored for impending action Breakers will wear gauntlets and heavy boots that match the armor, but they will rarely wear a helm. Breakers may also be identified by their mustaches, which are groomed thick and long and braided at the tips. They wear their hair shorn close to the skull and typically keep their chins clean-shaven. Only a Breaker who has had a ship sunk beneath him in action is entitled to wear a beard, which will be grown as a spiked goatee and waxed to a point. Breakers who have defeated a powerful outsider on or near the sea are entitled to wear a wide girdle of brilliant yellow, set with numerous copper coins, around his waist. A Breaker that defeated a powerful undead under similar circumstances may wear a belt of bright crimson, set with rows of silver coins. Furthermore, each pirate vessel or wrecker lair that the Breaker helped to sink or destroy entitles him to a tear-shaped blue sapphire earring worn from either ear (though not from both). Some Knights are known to tattoo a small ship's wheel on their left cheek after they have successfully navigated the Sea of the Dead, but not all will do so. If there is an established hierarchy of rank within the Knighthood it has not yet become apparent to outsiders.

## THE PROVEURGE

Outside of Emperor Kabori's Legions, there are few Imperial institutions as well respected as that of the office of the Provost Theurge. Also called "provost magi," proveurges are the scourge of those who perpetrate unlicensed wickedness in the Vast Empire. Most major Kalamaran cities have a Provost Theurge, though the relative skill and number of proveurges vary with the size and importance of the city.

A proveurge may be an inspector or inquisitor, depending on his assignment, background and training. However, most are advisors, assisting the city guard and city watchmen on the street with difficult problems. The proveurge must be curious and insightful (and, of course, intelligent). At heart, the best of them are sleuths, caring as much for the solution of a crime or puzzle

## New Feats: Foundlings of the Heedful Eleemosynary of Har'nam

### Har'nam's Teaching [General]

You have studied extraplanar creatures and their culture.

Prerequisite: Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Knowledge (the planes) checks and a +2 bonus to Decipher Script checks to read githyanki or githzerai writing. Also, you may try again when attempting to decipher these particular writings.

Normal: You cannot normally try again when using the Decipher Script skill.

### Heedful Grapple [General]

You have been well-trained in wrestling and grappling.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Improved Unarmed Strike, Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: You double your base attack bonus when rolling a grapple check, regardless of whether you started the grapple. However, you still provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple.

Special: If you have the Improved Grapple feat, the +4 bonus it gives stacks with this feat (after the doubling).

A fighter may select Heedful Grapple as one of his fighter bonus feats (see the Player's Handbook).

### Heedful Mind [General]

The character has a very focused and powerful mind that has been specifically trained against githyanki.

Prerequisite: Iron Will, Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: You gain a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws against psionic attacks made by or psionic effects caused by a githyanki.

### Heedful Trip [General]

You are skilled in knocking foes off-balance during a fight.

Prerequisite: Int 13, Combat Expertise, Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: You may make a Dexterity check instead of a Strength check on trip attacks.

Special: If you have the Improved Trip feat, the +4 bonus it gives applies to the Dexterity, not Strength, check.

A fighter may select Heedful Trip as one of his fighter bonus feats (see the Player's Handbook).

### Planar Negotiator [General]

You are accomplished at dealing with strange creatures from beyond your world.

Prerequisite: Negotiator, Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: You get an additional +4 bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Sense Motive checks made against creatures (typically githyanki and githzerai) who come from the Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo.

### Sense Sorcerous Transit [General]

You have been trained to detect magical transportation.

Prerequisite: Alertness, Caster level 1st, Raised in the Heedful Eleemosynary.

Benefit: The character can sense the use of any power or spell that enhances movement or allows instant transportation from one place to another (provided that it is within a 30-foot radius of the character). This is not a line-of-sight ability, nor does it determine the exact location of the start and end point. It is focused enough, for instance, to warn that a githyanki just plane shifted somewhere behind you, but not precisely where he is. Some examples of spells that can be detected with this feat are: dimension door, plane shift, summon monster i-ix and teleport.

as to see justice done (though justice is often a relative term).

Most proveurges are, predictably, sorcerers or wizards focusing on magicks that is subtle or investigative in nature. Of course, they will have access to some spells that enable them to capture their quarry, whether it is a sly murderer or merely a common robber seen dashing into an alleyway. Very rarely do they care to know or employ spells like fireball or ice storm. Of much greater use in their profession is sleep, hold portal, or alter self.

A bard also makes a good proveurge, because of her information-gathering skills, while rogues are excellent proveurges ("use a thief to catch a thief," so the saying goes), though both are particularly proficient at working incognito or undercover. Infiltrators make excellent proveurges, as do some rangers (particularly in frontier territories or trouble-filled regions, such as Tarisato). It is very unusual to find a proveurge who was formerly a shaman, druid or barbarian (though it is probably not impossible).

### The Heedful Eleemosynary of Har'nam

Founded some twenty-five years ago, the Heedful Eleemosynary of Har'nam is an orphanage - of sorts. It was established by Saterus Har'nam, said to be the

last scion of House Har'nam, a noble line of Kalamaran aristocrats originally from Tokis. The family was loyal to Emperor Kabori at a time when such fealty was considered unfashionable, and they paid dearly for it. Saterus moved to Sobeteta to put his past behind him (or so he claimed). Though unassuming in demeanor and quiet to a fault, his manners are impeccable, and there is little doubt that his Eleemosynary has given many an abandoned child a home.

Saterus appears to be of failing health, with a pinched face and lean physique that makes it seem that he might often miss meals. His skin has an unhealthy hue to it, one not dissimilar to that of men who have fallen ill with one of the fevers of the Alubelok Swamp, and he often seems tired. For all that, he has never been heard to complain, or to devote any less attention to the waifs, urchins, strays and guttersnipes that are in his charge. He is often seen walking alleyways or back streets, offering anything from a meal to a warm bed to children in need of either. He has been remarked to be, at times, profligate, despite having no visible source of income. Many accredit this to his presumed inheritance, or to monies gained from interests held elsewhere.

Well-regarded by most people who know of him, very few people ever realize that no one seems to



## Chapter 5: EQUIPMENT

For those planning to adventure within the Alubelok Coast, it is important to note the new weapons and rules listed below. Also included here is information on musical instruments, herbs and plants, food and drink, and travel and transportation specific to this region.

### WEAPONS AND ARMOR

While characters from the Alubelok Coast may use any weapon from the Player's Handbook, some weapons are more common to the area. These include: clubs, crossbows (see sidebar), flails, javelins, quarterstaves, nets, slings, spears, swords and tridents. New items specific to the area include the baral, haerthach and half-cloak.

**Baral:** The baral is a wooden weapon some 26 inches long, weighted inside with a lead core and set with a handle at a right angle near one end. The wielder grips the handle with the length of the shaft lying alongside the outer part of the forearm and the other thrusting out beyond the fist. It is an excellent blocking weapon, and can be spun in the palm to deliver fast, vicious blows. The baral is a common weapon of Sobeteta's City Guard.

**Haerthach:** The haerthach ("badger tooth" in Merchant's Tongue) is a unique and distinctive deep gnome weapon with a frightening and vicious appearance. It consists of a hooked hardwood shaft with a sharp point on the hook as well as on the opposite end. Both the inside and the outside of the hook are honed to a keen edge. It is held on a leather-wrapped or studded grip near the end opposite the hook. A hand guard consisting of a wicked, crescent-shaped blade that can also be used to strike with protects the wielder. Haerthach are almost always wielded in pairs, or singly with a spiked buckler or shield.

**Sobetetan Half-Cloak:** The half-cloaks worn by Sobeteta's City Guard are a distinct part of their uniform, easily recognizable by citizens and travelers alike. It is a practical piece of kit, usable both defensively and as a weapon of sorts. The sturdy garment is light green in hue and worn over the guardsman's left shoulder, where slashes and sigils sewn onto it denote rank, professional specialties and years of service to the city. The sides of the half-cloak are reinforced with sturdy leather and the bottom hem is weighted to keep it from flying about in the wind.

Guardsmen are taught at need to whip the half-cloak around their off-hand and forearm to act as

Table 5-1: New Exotic Weapons

Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Light Melee Weapons							
Baral	1 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Haerthach	25 gp	1d6	1d8	x3	-	4 lb.	Slashing or

Table 5-2: New Armor

Armor	Cost	Armor/Shield Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	Speed (30 ft.)	Speed (20 ft.)	Weight
Half-cloak	2 gp	+1	+7	-1	5%	-	-	2 lb.

Table 5-3: New Crossbow Ammunition

Ammunition	Cost	Damage (S)	Damage (M)	Critical	Range Modifier
Birding Bolt	1 gp	1d4	1d6	20/x2	-10%
Shatterhead Bolt	2 gp	1 (nonlethal)	1d2 (nonlethal)	20/x2	-25%
Whistlepoint Bolt	5 sp	- (deafening)	1 (deafening)	20/x2	-20%

a buckler. It can also be used when attempting to subdue an opponent by flipping it over the foe's head to blind him (this cannot be done without first establishing a hold on the opponent and successfully grappling him). All City Guardsmen are taught this method, which does not require a special skill or feat slots. Using the half-cloak to blind an opponent takes away the AC bonus of using it on the forearm and hand.

### AMMUNITION

The Range Modifier in Table 5-3 indicates the adjustment to a crossbow's range increment as given in the Player's Handbook. For example, a birding bolt shot from a light crossbow would have a range increment of 72 feet, but a range increment of 108 feet if shot from a heavy crossbow.

**Birding Bolt:** Birding bolts are not as effective as bird arrows made the same way (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide), but they still offer an advantage when used against avian targets, which the Alubelok Coast provides aplenty. They are short, slender and lightly fletched, often using feathers instead of leather or thin brass (which is the common fletching of most crossbow bolts) in order to take birds on the wing.

They incur a -2 circumstance bonus on attacks, but a flying target gains neither dodge nor Dexterity bonuses to AC to avoid the bolt due to its swiftness.

#### The Crossbow in Sobeteta

The crossbow has long been popular along the Alubelok Coast, particularly in Sobeteta. The great numbers of avian monsters that populate the region compel the folk that dwell therein to employ missile weapons or suffer the consequences. Crossbows require less training than the other bows, and have greater range and impact than slings or javelins.

Though the javelin remains common in the smaller thorns and fishing villages of the Archipelago, the crossbow is more consistently used in the larger towns. The popularity and commonality of the crossbow has become even more marked in recent years with the recent influx of Zazahni immigrants. Many of these immigrants brought with them great skill in the crafting of such weapons, as well as the skill for which the soldiers and fighting men of their country are justly famous.

Missile troops of Sobeteta's military and constabulary use the crossbow exclusively, so common is the weapon, and so obvious its advantages in the face of the particular hazards

The use of a birding bolt does not allow a sneak attack.

**Shatterhead Bolt:** On this bolt, the metal head is replaced with a small glass or hardened clay tip that can be used to deliver small amounts of liquid or powders. Due to their ungainly construction, they suffer a -3 circumstance penalty to attacks. Upon impact, the tip shatters and releases its contents.

Attempts have been made to use such a missile to deploy everything from Kaldabran death fog (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide) to something like a lightning bottle, with mixed results. In 561 IR, a pirate ship captured a Basiran galley without injury by using a volley of shatterheads to release a vapor that overwhelmed the crew and dropped them senseless on the deck. One year later, the adventurer Shazahh Tallstone, purportedly in the employ of the Dark Omen (a thieves' guild out of Zenshahn), ordered the use of shatterheads against a threatening Brolenese warship. No one is exactly sure what happened (including the event's few survivors, most of whom wound up wearing slave's shackles), but something evidently went awry, because his ship erupted in flames and burned to the waterline.

**Whistlepoint Bolt:** Much like a screecher arrow (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide), the head of a whistlepoint bolt is shaped like a whistle and emits a loud shriek when loosed. The whistlepoint bolt does but little damage, but does cause deafness to all creatures within 5 feet of the target until the end of the following round.

### ALCHEMICAL MIXTURES AND HERBAL CONCOCTIONS

The fens and islands of the Alubelok, though dangerous to enter, produce many herbs and medicinal plants noted for their healing value. Alchemists use some in the preparation of their concoctions, while others are used by lay healers, midwives and their ilk as vital components in various potions, unguents and balms. A tremendous variety of these naturally occurring materials are gathered and even cultivated in tended bogs and lagoons along the islands and in the deltas. From there, the great majority of it makes its way to the markets of Sobeteta.



At least three different breeds of wild rice are gathered there, along with rare plants, unusual spices and unique herbs. Items include feathers from the vast numbers of waterfowl, at least one kind of healing mud, saltwater clams dug from shallow, muddy beaches, freshwater clams from river courses and mussels from the marshes and innumerable fungi for everything from healing to making dye for cloth. Rare plants, spices, rare creatures (or parts of them) command high prices across the Sovereign Lands, and the many medicinal herbs, unguents and balms are vital to the researches and various efforts of Kalamar's apothecaries. Though local consumption accounts for most of what makes its way to the city, there is always some leaving the harbor in the hold of a ship – perhaps sacks of bullywug root bound for the kitchens of Koraki barracks, or casks of dampened marrowmoss bound for Zoa.

As with most great cities, a variety of exotic products and unusual things from other places are available for purchase or trade in Sobeteta. Much of this selection is common in cities across the Empire; some is not.

### Existing Substances

This section provides more detail on some of the items found in Chapter 7 of the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*, detailing their locations and uses in the Alubelok Coast.

**Blackleaf:** Imported from up the Ridara River or brought across the straits from Svimohzia, this oily black liquid has proven to be of use to military excursions into the swamp. There is a variety of inimical intelligent plant life in that place (and for that matter, carnivorous unintelligent plant life) that blackleaf can be used to fight off or ward away.

**K'Miwi Sap:** Deep in the stagnant depths of the Alubelok grow thin and pale K'Miwi trees. The folklore of the lizardfolk of the swamp describe the poison of the K'Miwi as a toxin so virulent that a bird landing on one of its branches will die before it can fold its wings. The lizardfolk are not the only intelligent creatures that use the sap of these trees as a major ingredient in poisons. Bullywugs and gripli have used it (albeit more crudely), human tribesmen have used it, even sahuagin have employed it on occasion. The sap is gathered by the agents of various merchants along the "safer" peripheries of the swamp (safe being a relative term), but the most potent toxin is obtained in trade from the lizardfolk.

**Merfolk Musk:** Also called lesquiya by intelligent marine creatures, this white, grainy powder is of great value to those who travel or explore this region for

Table 5-4: New Substances

Name	DC to create	Market Price Per Dose
Breathweal Fungus	15	15 gp
Bullywug Root	-	250 gp
Burnwarden Salve	20	25 gp
Jaras Shell Powder	15	50 gp
K'terek	-	1 cp
Marrowmoss Poultice	20	25 gp
Mermaid's Purse	20	90 gp
Numbjelly Salve	15	20 gp
Stumblefish Toxin	30	300 gp
Swampspears Tea	15	20 gp

understandable regions. The vast array of marine creatures seeking an easy meal provides motivation enough to encourage merchants to bring shiploads of the stuff into port. Rumor of late has quantities of merfolk musk being stockpiled in the barracks of the city in preparation for a punitive foray against sahuagin strongholds. Due to the easy availability of the stuff in the city, it usually sells for a lower price than in other cities (often 10% or more off the common market price).

**Satum's Bane:** This herbal mixture is equally popular in the city and for similar reasons. Merfolk Musk will keep marine predators at bay - Satum's Bane salve keeps off insects. Military excursions and adventuring expeditions do well to stock up on both substances!

**Smotherblend:** As a port city, Sobeteta has a great demand for smotherblend. Ship captains of merchant and military vessels alike want it aboard in case of an attack or encounter gone awry. Smotherblend can be obtained very inexpensively in the city due to the large amounts of it stockpiled there (typically 25% or more off the common market price).

**White Ilem Blossom:** There are over a score of different Ilem species across Kalamar, all but two of them occurring in wetlands and marshes. The Alubelok Swamp is home to four of them, but the most important is white Ilem, for the medicinal benefits of its sap.

### New Substances

Some of the materials and reagent-component type materials unique to the Alubelok Coast are explained below. The entry for alchemical DC to create reflects the difficulty inherent in successfully creating the substance in question (whether a powder, unguent, poultice or other form). The market price reflected

is for the finished product, not for the raw material (where such a distinction is appropriate).

**Breathweal Fungus:** Breathweal (or “sarulata” in Kalamaran) is a fungus said to grow only on the decaying body of a shambling mound that has expired or been slain. It is found only within the swamps of the Alubelok, and harvested there by the native humanoids and some daring human villagers. When specially prepared by an alchemist, breathweal allows whoever eats it to hold their breath for up to 10 minutes without difficulty. Breathweal fungus is rare, and must typically be purchased at an herbalist or apothecary shop.

**Bullywug Root:** Bullywug root (“rana’al tara” in Kalamaran) is so called because it was from those creatures that Sobetetans first learned of it. A pasty-white tuber, bullywug root provides all nutrition necessary for a normal-sized human for two days. The size of a small potato, it tastes like a bland, pulpy turnip. The digestion of one good-sized root in its entirety will wipe away virtually all vestiges of exhaustion, and yields a temporary +1 to Constitution for 1d6 hours. Bullywug root also boosts the immune system, providing +1 to saving throws versus disease for up to 1d4 days after it has been digested.

**Burnwarden Salve:** Also called “jafebar” in Kalamaran, this pungent salve is crafted from the flesh of the saltwater citon (small mollusks covered by calcareous plates that attach themselves to rocks in the water). When prepared by alchemists or apothecaries, a process that involves mashing the citon flesh into a paste and then boiling it down into a thick balm and mixing it with assorted other reagents, burnwarden provides sovereign relief from the pain of even the worst burns. This soothing effect takes place almost instantly, eliminating what are often the most painful of injuries as soon as it is applied. The salve also mitigates the damage from such burns, healing 1d8 points of fire damage (magical or otherwise) so long as it is applied within an hour or so of receiving the damage in the first place. (Note that this time constraint does not apply to its painkilling effect, which can be used long after the burn was first suffered.) One application of burnwarden is sufficient to treat one wound. It cannot be applied to the same wound more than once.

Burnwarden must be stored in clay, ceramic or stone. It will lose its efficacy in a container of any other material.

**Jaras Shell Powder:** The jaras is a shelled gastropod found in the shallow waters along the Alubelok

Swamp, where the saltwater meets the swamp and mixes into briny effluvia. Its coloration and location make it very difficult to collect (they are almost impossible to see, and the creatures common to that area make it perilous indeed to pursue). When ground into a fine powder, left in the sun for a time and treated with several other powders (including sea salt and two different dyes), Jaras shell powder becomes a snuff-like substance that can be inhaled as a stimulant. One “dose” of Jaras shell powder sniffed through the nose (or, it is said, rubbed up under the gills of aquatic creatures) yields a startling jolt that makes it almost impossible to sleep, even when exhausted. Within a turn of inhaling it, the snuff increases mental awareness, and visual and auditory acuity. This has the result of giving the individual the Alertness feat for 3d4 hours.

Unfortunately, it also results in a terrible headache, the onset of which occurs 1d4-1 hours after the bonuses wear off. This headache imposes a -1 circumstance penalty to all skill checks and actions for 1d4 hours from its onset.

**K’terek:** A popular pungent clove-and-tobacco pipeleaf worth 1 cp per pinch.

**Marrowmoss Poultice:** A wet, dripping moss of deepest green, marrowmoss (or “gitolat” in Kalamaran) hangs in curtain-like sheets from the trees of the deepest mires. Poultices of marrowmoss wrapped around injured areas of the body for one hour will restore 1d4+2 hp of bludgeoning damage. Marrowmoss must be kept wet after it is harvested.

**Mermaid’s Purse:** A Mermaid’s Purse (“ke’isel panesma” in Kalamaran) is a thin sack of saffron-colored fish eggs found clumped together in bundles and glued by excretions to the Alubelok kelp. The purse is considered to be the entire bundle, somewhat larger than a man’s fist. By themselves, unaltered from when they are pulled out of the seawater, they possess no especial attributes. However, when treated properly with alchemical processes, Mermaid’s Pudding (as many have jokingly called it) can be consumed to allow the individual eating it to breathe water for up to an hour, as per the water breathing spell (though it confers no ability to move or see beneath the waves).

**Numbjelly Salve:** Numbjelly (“malabip” in Kalamaran) is a substance taken from a jellyfish-like invertebrate that is found in saltwater marsh areas. Apothecaries of the coast have long since learned to concoct an unguent that will ease hurts, soothe burns and the like in the same manner as burnwarden (see above).

However, numbjelly salve also affects tactile awareness. Rubbed on the fingers and hands, for instance, it imposes a -3 circumstance penalty to skills or actions requiring a sense of touch (picking locks, picking pockets, use rope, etc.).

Numbjelly salve can be purchased in apothecary shops, herb stores, even in places that sell fishing supplies along the waterfront (the balm is excellent for chapped or rope-burned hands or for treating the stinging wounds inflicted by a variety of fishes).

Stumblefish Toxin: "Mitamika," or stumblefish (not to be confused with the edible shamblefish), are a rare, tiny green-scaled fish that are found in the estuaries of the Ridara River. They prefer areas of slower moving water shaded by overhanging plant life. They are difficult to locate and difficult to net, due to their coloration and because there is typically an overabundance of vegetation and other obstructions in the water.

Stumblefish produce a substance in their bodies that, when treated by an alchemist, seriously impairs the motor skills and physical abilities of whoever ingests it. Stumblefish toxin is legal in Sobeteta in only one instance, and that is when in the hands of the City Guard. The men and women who police the streets of the City on the Rock are, in certain instances, issued weapons that have been treated with this poison. Typically this is done in order to take custody of particularly dangerous wanted persons who are needed alive.

Name	Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Price
Stumblefish Toxin	Contact/Ingested/ Injury DC 18	1d4+1 Dex	1d6+1 Dex, 1d4+1 Str	300 gp

There is no way to purchase the poison legally, although an alchemist not associated with the League might be willing to risk an attempt to make it for the right price. As might be expected, though, it can be bought in the darker places of the city if one knows where to look.

Swampsphear Tea: Swampsphear, or "varel'mar" in Kalamaran, is a cattail-like plant found in the fens both on the mainland and some of the smaller islands off the coast. The fuzz at its tip, if harvested during high summer, can be dried and made into a bitter tea which heightens the senses of the drinker. All Spot and Search checks made for 1d4+1 hours after a cup of this tea has been ingested are at +2. Swampsphear tea is part of the staple ration issued by Tovid to its Tidesmen when they are out patrolling.

Table 5-5: Musical Instruments

Item	Cost	Weight (lbs.)
Adayra	24 gp	1
Bagpipes, Svimohzish	30 gp	10
Bandore	35 gp	5
Bell, Kalamaran Hanging	55 gp	130
Bladder Pipe	11 gp	2
Cornett	30 gp	1
Dularan	25 gp	12
Dulcimer, Flat Hammered	35 gp	13
Handbell, Kalamaran	2 gp	1
Horn, Kalamaran Brass	16 gp	3
Rebek	26 gp	2
Tocken	14 gp	5
Triangle	6 sp	1

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

There are probably more minstrels and musicians per capita in Sobeteta than in any other city on the Kalamaran Sea. There the lure of constant exposure to foreign music and the instruments of strange and distant cultures greatly outweigh the dangers of the city. Among the minstrels and musicians are, as might be expected, numerous bards and spellsingers. They favor a wide assortment of musical instruments, few as mundane or common as a lute or a lyre.

**Adayra:** This instrument is an open-ended, end-blown reed flute commonly found in many coastal towns and villages, though predominantly in Reanaaria Bay. It has a fairly limited range but its breathy, ornate sound adds a distinct and welcome sound to an ensemble. Sobetetans pronounce it "adaw'ra."

**Bardic Music:** While playing an adayra, the bard may impose a -2 morale penalty on her listeners' saving throws against charm and fear effects. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Bagpipes, Svimohzish:** This instrument originated long ago in the highlands of Svimohzia, later migrating to Sobeteta and the rest of Tellene. It consists of an inflatable bag with one double-reeded "melody pipe," and one to four single-reeded "drone pipes" attached to it. The bag, which is made from animal skin or stomachs, is kept inflated both by a bellows attached to the elbow and breathing through a small wooden mouthpiece. The bag is then compressed by the arm to force air through the pipes as the player opens and closes finger holes on the melody pipe, causing piercing, high-pitched chords.

During battle, worshippers of the Creator of Strife will play discordant bagpipes, cymbals, horns and drums. Their chaotic, disturbing tunes urge ill-luck's

troops into the fray and announce to their enemies the strife to come.

**Bardic Music:** The bard can produce an unearthly wail that imposes a –1 morale penalty on the listeners' saving throws against fear effects. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Bandore:** The bandore is a member of the lute family with three wire strings, a flat back, and a straight neck with several lateral ridges across the fingerboard. Its body is also unique in having ridged sides like the edges of a seashell.

In Sobeteta and the rest of Kalamar, it is known as a p'dora. It is a popular instrument for Kalamaran bards.

**Bardic Music:** This instrument imposes a –1 morale penalty on saving throws against fear effects for listeners opposing the musician. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Bell, Kalamaran Hanging:** This is a larger, frame-mounted version of a handbell, played by swinging or pulling on the rope attached to the clapper. The sound of a hanging bell can carry for miles, especially when mounted in a bell tower. Hanging bells are most often found in Kalamar, followed by Brandobia, though they do exist in other regions.

**Bardic Music:** When played to inspire courage, a hanging bell (weighing at least one ton) increases the morale bonus on allies' saves against fear and charm effects from +1 to +2. The music also imposes a -1 morale penalty on all opponents' saves against the same effects.

**Bladderpipe:** The bladderpipe is a loud, unusual-sounding instrument made of two hollow reeds connected by a pig (or other animal's) bladder. The musician blows into the reed mouthpiece, inflating the bladder, at which point the wind slowly passes through the second reed, fingered in a manner similar to a crumhorn. The bladderpipe is found primarily along the north and northwestern coast of Reanaaria Bay, though it is also a popular instrument with the inhabitants of the Alubelok Coast.

**Bardic Music:** The bladderpipe produces an unusual droning sound that imposes a –2 morale penalty on opponents' saving throws against fear effects. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Cornett:** Known on Tellene as a "lolavara," this instrument is a very simple Malavla (Dejy) flute, made of a single tapered piece of wood about two feet long. A tiny conical hole in the top acts as the mouthpiece, while six holes in the body are used for fingering. The narrow bore of this flute gives the instrument a very

soft sound, which the Malavla (Dejy) say is intended to calm the storms that beset their islands. A merchant vessel recently brought a small shipment to Sobeteta, where they have become quite popular.

**Bardic Music:** By playing a cornett, the bard may impose a –2 circumstance penalty on her listeners' saving throws against charm and compulsion effects, including the bardic music effects of fascinate and suggestion. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Dularan:** This Kalamaran instrument consists of a piece of wood some five feet long, within which are two deep, long parallel holes. A U-curved mouthpiece, giving the instrument a deep, resonant sound covers one end. The opposite end is somewhat conical, and can be left open or muted for a softer tone.

The dularan can be found in the hands of traveling musicians, in performances for nobles and royalty, and even among temples and monasteries.

**Bardic Music:** A dularan bestows a certain prestige on any character who can properly play it. A successful Perform check made in an aristocratic setting grants the performer a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise and Gather Information checks made against listeners for 1d6 hours after the performance ends. It also shifts the attitude of listeners by one category in the performer's favor (see the NPC Attitudes section on page 72 of the revised D&D Player's Handbook). The dularan also imposes a –4 circumstance penalty on Intimidate checks against those listeners for the same period. Creating the above effects is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Dulcimer, Flat Hammered:** This is a flat trapezoidal instrument, consisting of a thin but hollow wooden frame one to three feet across. Ten to forty wire strings of different lengths are tied across it. These strings are struck in rapid succession with tiny hammers, one held in each hand between the index and middle fingers. A baldric may be attached to the dulcimer for portability.

Originating in southwestern Kalamar (now Basir), where it is known as the "gibikar," the dulcimer can now be found in Sobeteta, most civilized areas of Brandobia and the Wild Lands.

**Bardic Music:** When played to inspire courage, the hammered dulcimer boosts the morale bonus on saves to resist charm and fear effects from +1 to +2, but also decreases the morale bonus on weapon damage rolls from +1 to +0.

**Handbell:** A handbell is a small bell approximately 2 to 12 inches long, with a clapper inside and a handle at the top. It produces ringing notes when the player

flicks their wrist and the round clapper strikes the side repeatedly. Handbells may be used in musical performances or as a danger signal to others.

Of the human races, Brandobians and Kalamarans are the fondest of handbell music. Of the demihumans, high elves are especially fond of handbells.

**Bardic Music:** A handbell grants the user a +1 circumstance bonus on Perform checks made for countersong attempts. (This bonus does not increase with additional handbells.)

**Horn, Kalamaran Brass:** A simple form of the horn consisting of a 3 foot tapering tube of brass wound two or more times into an ellipse with a large flaring end. There is a small mouthpiece at the other end and the horn is held parallel to the ground in front of the player. It can only produce a limited number of harmonic tones. It may have two to four finger holes that allow a wide range of tones.

Brass horns are commonly found in Kalamar, and used more to summon or warn troops than as a musical instrument. During battle, worshippers of the Creator of Strife will play discordant bagpipes, cymbals, horns and drums. Their chaotic, disturbing tunes urge Ill-luck's troops into the fray and announce to their enemies the strife to come.

**Bardic Music:** When played to inspire courage, a brass horn can boost the morale bonus on attacks and weapon damage from +1 to +2. The morale bonus to saves to resist charm effects, however, drops from +1 to +0.

**Rebek:** The rebek is a small stringed instrument with a hollow and rounded body, a short narrow neck and three strings without a bridge. It is played with a bow while resting it on the shoulder or chest, or cushioning it in the armpit. It most closely resembles a tiny fiddle about 1 foot long and 3 to 4 inches wide, though its tone is thinner and more nasal.

The rebek originates in Tarisato, though it is slowly beginning to spread throughout Kalamar. Nobles and royals shun the rebek as an "inferior" instrument. Sobetetan bards, however, feel differently.

**Bardic Music:** Like the fiddle, the rebek enables its performer to maintain one bardic music or virtuoso performance effect while initiating another. For example, a bard could maintain a countersong effect on one listener while inspiring courage in others.

**Token:** Token are sets of wooden bells with no clappers inside. They are hung from a stand or a branch, and struck with a wooden hammer. They produce lively but hollow tones. Token may be found in all areas of Tellene.

**Bardic Music:** The hollow echo of the token imposes a -2 morale penalty on listeners' saving throws against fear effects. Creating this effect is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

**Triangle:** The musical instrument called a triangle is simply a thick cylindrical rod of iron bent into the shape of an equilateral triangle, leaving one corner open. It is typically 6 inches in height, and one corner has a string attached that is tied to a stand or held. When struck with a metal rod, it produces a single clear tone of definite pitch.

Triangles are popular in the western Reanaaria Bay region, as well as in the various elven, Brandobian and Kalamaran lands (such as Sobeteta).

**Bardic Music:** While being played, triangles add +1 to the DC for each Concentration check made by a listener (including the performer). Creating this effect is a supernatural, sonic ability. When played as part of a countersong attempt, the triangle gives the user a +1 circumstance bonus on the Perform check required for that effect.

## FOOD AND DRINK

**Bisato L'Rasu:** Eel cooked in bayleaves (bisato l'rasu) is one of the oldest of Sobetetan recipes, first cooked on red-hot furnace stones before walls ever went up around what was at the time no more than a port town. The eel is opened and cleaned, then sliced with two parallel cuts, one on each side. The eel is arranged atop a large pot (usually terracotta), circling around itself, and covered with bayleaves. This is seasoned with salt and peppercorns, then covered with another layer of bayleaves. It is then left to cook with nothing else added to it - the eel meat cooks in its own fat. Traditionally it is cooked over hot coals for approximately 25 minutes, but can be prepared in an oven as well.

**Biscuits (Sobetetan):** The bread baked and dried for the use of the Kalamaran navy is good for a whole year after it is baked. On the piers of Sobeteta, in addition to sailmakers, carpenters and other craftsmen necessary to keep vessels seaworthy, is a huge bakery that produces the biscuits that feed virtually every Imperial squadron that sails. The process of making the biscuits is simple but ingenious. A large mass of dough is mixed and placed on a wide, circular platform raised like a table above the floor. One or two workers (or slaves) turn a gear system around a central shaft. Several rollers attached to the shaft move over the dough until it is sufficiently kneaded. The dough is then handed over to other workmen, who use knives to prepare it for the bakers who attend the ovens. Each of the three ovens is worked by four



men - the first molds the dough, the second stamps them with the city (Sobeteta) and date. The third man is the most dexterous and skilled - he throws them on the peel for the fourth to put in the oven. They work like the teeth of a cog, in a clockwork rhythm, and can turn out great numbers of biscuits in a short period of time. The finished biscuits are kept in drying lofts above the ovens until sufficiently dry to be packed into bags without danger of getting moldy. These bags of biscuits are removed to a storehouse for use. On an average day, the Sobetetan bakery can turn out over three hundred pounds of biscuits; enough to supply the Watch refectories and provision those ships that need it.

G'tano B'puru: Also known as "cuttlefish in green," this is a popular late afternoon dish eaten in place of supper in many of the cities of the coast. It is prepared by taking two pounds of cuttlefish and two tightly packed mugs of b'pur, a spinach-like green. It also requires a fresh onion, two to three tomatoes, two dried red peppers and their seeds, a quarter cup of olive oil and several spices (usually two or three spoonfuls of parsley, a like amount of basil and generous amounts of garlic, salt and pepper). The cuttlefish are chopped into small pieces, as is the spinach and the onion. The olive oil is heated in a big pot and the onion jumped it; once the onion becomes translucent, the spices are added, and the mixture sautéed for a minute or two. The b'pur is added and stirred until it cooks down. The cuttlefish, tomatoes and red pepper is added and the whole concoction simmered in the covered pot until the cuttlefish is cooked through and the sauce is thick (which takes 30 to 40 minutes). It is usually served with a salad of some kind and warm bread. On Bosinela Island and some smaller villages along the coast it is customary to chill the concoction instead of eating it warm off the stove and spreading it on the top of slices of baked bread.

K'raka dol dol-M'ras: During all but the coldest weather, or the worst of monsoon season, the lamp-lights of the fishermen catching cuttlefish are easily visible along the southern shores of Rokalel Island. Sobetetans have many ways to cook this popular fish, but one of the most traditional recipes is to cook them in their ink - k'raka dol dol-M'ras.

To prepare this recipe, a pound of cuttlefish are carefully cleaned, removing the beak, the bone, the outer skin and the bag of ink (this is set aside for use later). If small cuttlefish are used, they should be left whole. Otherwise they should be sliced into large strips. A chopped clove of garlic and a bayleaf should be sautéed in olive oil until golden brown. The cuttle-

fish strips should then be added, letting them brown slightly. When they are brown, a splash of white wine is poured over the dish and allowed to reduce completely.

The ink, previously held aside, is diluted with oil and broth from the sauté. A generous spoonful of tomato sauce should be added to the cuttlefish after the wine has reduced, along with the ink (prepared as described above). The dish is seasoned to taste, typically with salt, pepper and parsley, then covered and allowed to simmer for about forty minutes (it should be checked periodically to make sure it does not get too dry). In Sobeteta, this dish is typically served with warm, soft rice after a shrimp and clam appetizer.

Marasar: Marasar (simply called "wild duck" in Merchant's Tongue) are perhaps the most common of the waterfowl that populate the coast and marshlands in numbers too great to count. They are hunted, trapped or hatched (and later eaten) in great numbers. A favorite recipe of local folk is Marasar Loba, a dish served over rice. Marasar cooked this way is simple to prepare. First, a wild duck (preferably a fat hen) is plucked, drawn and cut into fourths after hanging for three days. The evening before it is to be cooked, it is soaked in wine with marjoram, thyme, rosemary, bayleaves and a small amount of rice vinegar. It is allowed to marinate until two hours or so before the meal is to start. It is roasted on high flame (typically in a terracotta pot, with olive oil and minced garlic) until cooked slightly more than halfway through. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, onions, celery, bayleaves and fresh oysters have been lightly fried. To this mix the pieces of duck are added, followed by salt and pepper, white wine and broth. (Some of the islanders substitute whole black peppercorns for salt and pepper; Sobetetans use dill weed.)

It will take 1 to 1 1/2 hours to finish cooking on medium heat (care should be taken to marinate further with more broth as it cooks). It is served on a bed of rice (islanders usually pour their broth over this. Sobetetans usually eat it plain.)

Shamblefish: Wetur, or "shamblefish," is a round-bodied fish that looks from a distance like a clam and is often found waddling across mud-flats on its fins (hence the name). Found in the shallows on the sea side of the archipelago, shamblefish taste more bland than many other fishes, but they can be easily preserved (pickled, dried, etc.) and remain edible far longer than would seem possible. Shamblefish is usually sold in wide, circular "cakes," which can be wrapped in kelp and steamed, smoked or dried

## TRANSPORT

on racks, or stacked in casks and pickled for long journeys.

**Sora:** Sobetetans have always been interested in recipes that would keep for a long time, but do something to relieve the tedium and bland nature of typical shipboard fare. Such is the case of sora, a favorite Sobetetan recipe. Sora is best made with eel or sole, although sardines or other small fish will suffice. They are fried in the normal way, while sweet onion equaling about half the weight of the fish is softened in extra-virgin oil. The onion must be cut very finely, and should end up as sweet, soft golden strips. Fish stock or water can be added during cooking. Vinegar is added to taste. The fish are placed on the bottom of an earthenware bowl and covered with part of the onion, oil and vinegar mixture. Another identical layer is placed on top of that, then all of it is covered with the remainder of the liquid. It should be left in a cool place at least two days before serving. Various spices are added to each layer, depending on the individual preparing it. It is typically served with rice.



While the ships of Sobetetan craftsmen vary little from their counterparts in other lands, the Sobetetan clerics of the Water Corner are said to have a tradition of shipbuilding that rivals even the finest craftsmen of Shyff (though most believe this quite unlikely). These worshippers of Lisar the Wave Crusher are known to watch for any idea or tactic that can be used to improve their craft, and often visit Shyff in search of new ideas. Many will have a variety of enchantments woven into their hulls, sails or rigging, but this varies from vessel to vessel.

The following new ship template uses the ship construction guidelines from the Kingdoms of Kalamar supplement *Salt & Sea Dogs: The Pirates of Tellene*.

## CREATING A SOBETETAN WAVE CRUSHER SHIP

“Sobetetan wave crusher” is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal ship (referred to hereafter as the base ship) of Gargantuan or Colossal size. A Sobetetan wave crusher has all the base ship’s characteristics except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** Same as the base ship.

**Attacks:** A Sobetetan wave crusher gains a ramming prow (3d6) if it did not already have one.

**Special Qualities:** A Sobetetan wave crusher gains the following special qualities: extra-strong frame, compartmentalized hull, sprinter and stable.

**Frame, Extra-Strong:** An extra-strong frame doubles a ship’s base and section hit points, but reduces the ship’s maximum cargo space by half. It also reduces a ship’s base speed by -10 feet (-1 mile/day) and lowers its maneuverability by one step. This special quality does not stack with other special quality frames.

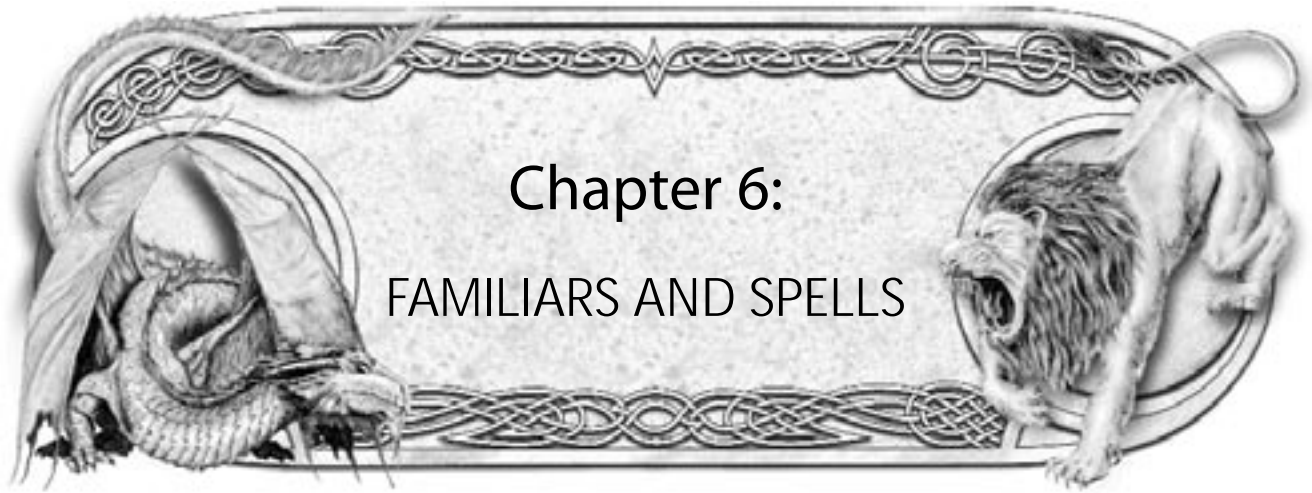
**Hull, Compartmentalized:** Ships with a compartmentalized hull are less likely to sink. A ship with this augmentation gains +10 hit points to each 10-foot section of hull. This bonus does not apply to rigging or to the ship’s base hit points. A ship can only gain this special quality once.

**Sprinter:** A ship with this special quality gains +10 ft. to its base movement, though its daily mileage and maneuverability remains unchanged. A ship can only gain this special quality once.

**Stable:** A ship with this special quality gains an additional +2 to its Seaworthiness bonus. A ship can only gain this special quality once.

**Cost:** +27,000 gp (+5 1/2 months)

SAMPLE SOBETETAN WAVE CRUSHER



### SLOOP

Gargantuan Sailing Ship  
Hardness: 5 (60 hp), section 5 (70 hp), rigging 0 (4 hp)  
Speed: 2 miles/hr., sail 30 ft (average)  
Armor Class: -1 (-4 size, -5 Dex, -2 inanimate), section 2, rigging 1  
Attacks: 2 ballistae 3d8 (fore, aft), 2 light catapults 4d6 (port, starboard), ramming prow (3d6)  
Space/Reach: 30 ft./20 ft.  
Special Attacks: -  
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/fire (rigging only), extra strong frame, compartmentalized hull, sprinter, stable  
Seaworthiness: 14  
Draft/Length/Beam: 1 ft./35 ft./10 ft.  
Decks: 3  
Cargo: 11 tons (20 max.)

Crew: 8

Cost: 42,000 gp (13 1/2 months)

A standard sloop is a single-masted ship with square rigging. It is small (compared to most sailing ships), fast, and very maneuverable, and its shallow draft lets it sail surprisingly far upriver, as well as over dangerous shoals. Sloops are lightly armed, but their speed is usually enough to compensate for the lack of armament. Most sloops carry a single launch (not included in the price) to ferry crew members to and from shore or to use as a lifeboat.

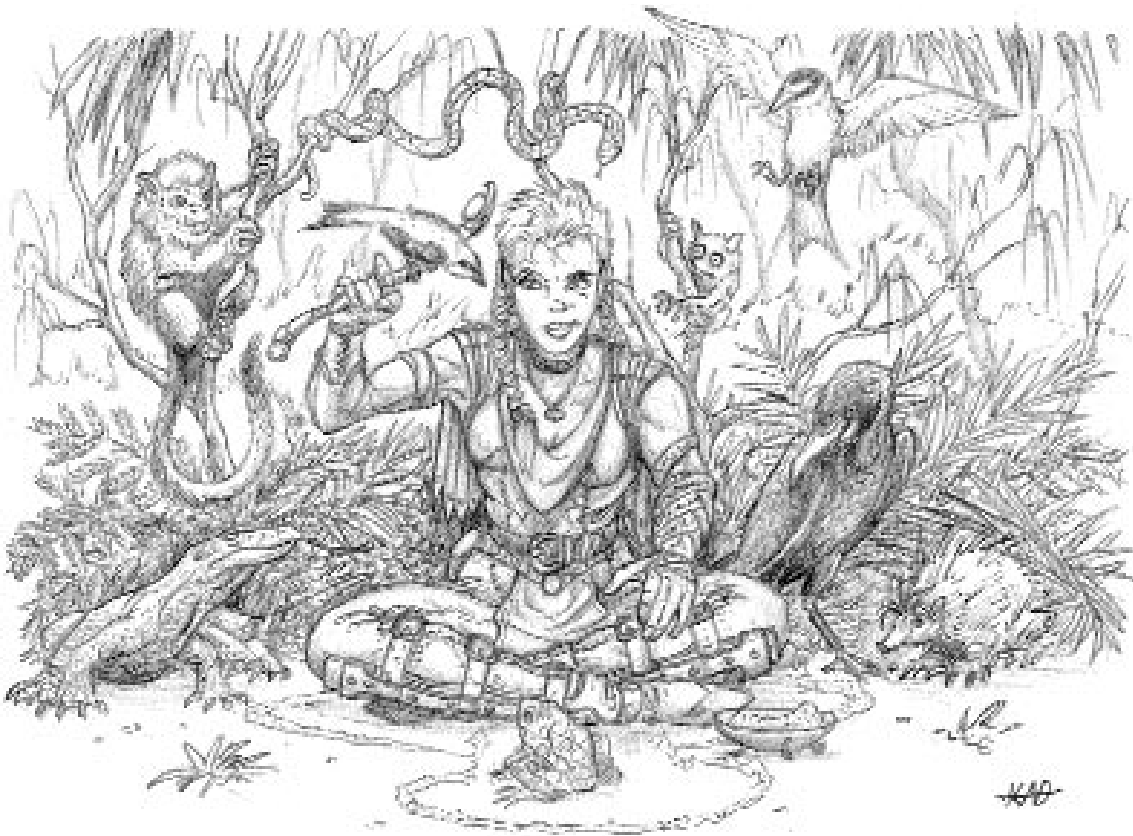


Table 6-1: New Familiars

Familiar	Master gains...
Blind Medusa Fish	+3 on Hide checks
Cormorant	+2 Con to determine Hold Breath only, +2 bonus on Swim checks
Curmudgeon	+2 bonus on Balance and Climb checks
Eagle, Crested Sea	Natural Spell feat
Frog, Jeweled	+3 on Charisma checks
Halberd, Red	a +3 bonus on Spot checks in dim light or twilight
Herne	Marsh Move ability
Lizard, Alubelok Monitor	a +2 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks
Octopus, Ubaralas	a +3 bonus on Escape Artist checks
Rumblefrog, Flatheaded	ability to cast stinking cloud 1/day
Shrike, Wave	ability to cast fly 1/day
Snake, Harlequin <sup>2</sup>	a +3 bonus on Balance checks
T'Nerec	ability to cast dancing lights 2/day
Tarsier, Woeful	a +1 on Climb checks and low-light vision
Tern <sup>1</sup>	a +2 bonus on Handle Animal and Intimidate checks

1. A tern familiar can speak Aquan as a supernatural ability.

2. Tiny viper.

This chapter provides new information on spells and familiars found in the Alubelok Coast.

## FAMILIARS

Sorcerers and wizards across the face of Tellene have kept company with various creatures for years. By tradition as much as anything else, these familiars have typically run the gamut of cats, toads, rats, owls, and so forth - all very useful indeed, and all somewhat mundane. The Alubelok Coast, however, is home to an abundance of unusual animals that serve as well as these or better. Many of them are unique to just certain parts of the region and not to be found anywhere else in the world. Wizards and sorcerers residing in Sobeteta, the swamp and even settlements beneath the sea have made familiars of many of these animals. Some have done so for the special abilities and traits the creatures possess, others for no other reason than to appear more exotic to their fellows.

Regardless of the individual spellcaster's personal motivations, a mage traveling away from Sobeteta is sure to attract at least some attention from those who might not otherwise have given him a second glance - after all, ravens, ferrets and snakes are (relatively) commonplace. It might be a tad unusual, but not overly so, to see an individual traveling with such a creature on his shoulder. However, one is not typically prepared to see folk with tarsiers, cormorants or lizards as large as a small dog, in tow.

A wizard or sorcerer wishing to summon a familiar from among these animals should do so following the guidelines presented in the Player's Handbook. Familiar basics remain the same (i.e., summoning, dismissing, familiar or master's death, scrying, etc.),

as do the mechanics of special and imparted abilities. Abilities that these animals impart to their master are outlined below.

## EXISTING SPELLS

While adventuring in the swamps, spellcasting adventurers should be sure to bring a druid or ranger along. However, other magic-wielding classes can also come in useful, particularly with certain spells. Spells commonly used in the Alubelok swampland are: spells that affect or control animals, plants and undead; create or purify foodstuffs; cure spells; spells of teleportation and transportation; and terrain and water-affecting spells.

## NEW SPELLS

The spells herein are presented in alphabetical order.

### Cluo's Living Swamp

Evocation [Earth]  
 Level: Sor/Wiz 8  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Casting Time: 1 standard action  
 Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
 Area: 30-ft.-radius spread  
 Duration: 1 round/level  
 Saving Throw: None  
 Spell Resistance: No

When you cast Cluo's living swamp, a mass of marsh or swamp seems to come alive, attacking anyone standing within it. Treat the swamp attacking a particular target as a Huge creature with a base attack bonus equal to your caster level and a Strength score of 19. As such, its grapple check modifier is

## Chapter 6: Familiars and Spells

equal to your caster level +12. The swampy mass is immune to all types of damage. Once the swamp grapples an opponent, it may make a grapple check each round on your turn to deal 1d8+6 points of bludgeoning damage. The swampy mass continues to crush the opponent until the spell ends or the opponent escapes.

Those who escape the swamp's grapple must move out of the affected area before the next round, or be attacked again. Anyone entering the area will be immediately attacked. However, even creatures who are not grappling with the swamp may only move through the area at half normal speed.

**Material Component:** A small piece of dried mud, a pinch of moss and a drop of water.

### Crocodile Stone

Transmutation

Level: Drd/Sha 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Crocodiles often swallow rocks and stones to help in digestion and to add weight so they can stay underwater for longer periods. Though they are large creatures, they eat a comparatively small amount, and eat infrequently at that. Crocodile Stone confers some of the crocodile's natural features onto the target. While the spell is in effect the recipient gains the following abilities: hold breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 x its Constitution score; receive a circumstance bonus of +4 to Hide checks while in water; and a +8 circumstance bonus to any Swim check to avoid a hazard or perform some special action.

Though this spell was first developed by the Sethome tribe of the Dejy, living within the Alubelok Swamp, knowledge of it has spread. It is now common among the Alubelok lizardfolk and other Dejy all





along the coast. Such magic is rumored to have been used in the flooded arena of Sobeteta, where gladiatorial contests are held between men and vicious aquatic predators.

**Material Component:** A small stone taken from the belly of a crocodile.

### Death Deduction

Divination

Level: Brd 3, Magic 3, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: Dead creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Quite useful for proveurges (see Chapter 4) when examining a corpse, this spell identifies the item that struck the killing blow. Thus, if a jewel merchant was stabbed several times by thieves, but actually killed by a cudgel blow to the head, this spell would identify a cudgel blow to the head as the exact cause of death.

This spell does not work on any creature who has been turned into an undead creature, or killed by nonphysical magic or a death effect.

**Arcane Material Component:** A tiny strip of skin from the corpse.

### Death Deduction, Greater

Divination

Level: Brd 6, Magic 6, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: Dead creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like death deduction, but allows a spellcaster to determine whether the item that struck the killing blow was magical or an artifact. If the killing blow was struck by magic (such as a horrid wilting spell), poison or other such attack, the spell identifies what spell, poison, or so on was used.

**Arcane Material Component:** A tiny strip of skin flayed off the corpse, then burned in a very quick, hot flame. The spellcaster must inhale the smoke from the resultant fire and concentrate, whereupon the evaluation will be revealed.

### Herne Stalk

Transmutation

Level: Animal 2, Drd/Sha 2, Rgr 3

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Your legs become similar in form to those of a herne (a large bird indigenous to the Alubelok Swamp, similar to an ibis or heron but as tall as an emu). You can now move across marsh terrain as you would on dry land (travel in bogs does not cost you any additional squares of movement). Furthermore, bogs do not increase the DC of your Move Silently checks.

When the change occurs, any clothing or equipment on your legs melds into the new form and becomes nonfunctional. You retain your own ability scores, class, level, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, base save bonus, and extraordinary, supernatural and spell-like special attacks and qualities (provided that these magical abilities do not require your normal legs), physical qualities (such as natural size, movement, etc) and so on.

The spell is common amongst the various tribes of the Alubelok Swamp, and has been used by patrolling rangers and scouts for many years. Orcs on the northern and eastern fringes of the swamp have been known to employ the spell as well.

**Divine Focus:** A necklace made of cord, leather, or similar material, with beads of herne-bone strung on it and a herne-feather hanging from it.

### Intuit Destination

Divination

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Spl/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: See text

Target: Caster

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You know the current intended destination of any one creature you have seen within the previous two rounds. This spell is also effective against invisible creatures (so if you know an invisible quarry is nearby (you've seen it within the last 2 rounds), and can hear or smell him, that is enough for the spell to work). This spell is ineffective against extraplanar transportation (ethereal jaunt, plane shift and so on), though it is effective against magical transportation (such as teleport).

## Chapter 6: Familiars and Spells

The destination learned from this spell is limited only to regions and settlements, such as the town of Fulido, or the Alufalik Hills. Thus, it may not be used to reveal the exact location (square) of an invisible creature. The caster does not know if the target has already reached its intended destination, when it reaches the destination, or if it alters course for any reason after the spell is cast.

### Korasela's Spectral Shrike Armor

Conjuration (Creation) [Force]  
Level: Brd 2, Sor/Spl/Wiz 3  
Components: V, S, F  
Casting Time: 1 standard action  
Range: Touch  
Target: Creature touched  
Duration: 1 hour/level (D)  
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)  
Spell Resistance: No

Crafted by Proveurge Korasela Vesiter of Nobidu, this spell wards the caster in a dark, ghostly field of force that is somewhat opaque, providing a +5 armor bonus to AC. Furthermore, the armor is covered in similarly ghostlike (but very sharp) spikes that deal piercing damage on a successful grapple attack. These function and deal damage as spiked armor (detailed in the Player's Handbook). The armor also allows the wearer to make a free attack when overrunning an opponent (1d4, crit 19-20/x2) if the opponent does not avoid him, as the standard Kalamaran or Tokite shrike armor (detailed in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide).

Focus: A small metal spike.

### Murilato's Moss Cloak

Transmutation  
Level: Drd/Sha 2, Plant 2, Rgr 2  
Components: V, S, DF  
Casting Time: 1 standard action  
Range: Touch  
Target: Living creature touched  
Duration: 10 min./level (D)  
Saving Throw: None  
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Murilato's moss-cloak is an effective camouflage spell for someone traveling in a swamp, mire or similar marsh terrain. The caster's skin and clothes change to match the surrounding environment, with hues and mottled shades that seem to change the texture as much as the color.

The affected creature receives a +5 bonus to Hide checks, and an additional +1/2 caster levels for the duration of the spell (so long as the creature remains in the same environment). If the creature moves into

a non-marshy or dry area the benefits of the spell are lost. Murilato's moss-cloak has been known to wizards and other spellcasters along the coast for years - far too long for the man who originally created it to still survive.

### Power Word Halt

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]  
Level: Sor/Spl/Wiz 6, War 6  
Components: V  
Casting Time: 1 standard action  
Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)  
Target: One creature with 50 hp or less  
Duration: See text  
Saving Throw: None  
Spell Resistance: Yes

You utter a single word of power that instantly halts one creature of your choice, whether the creature can hear the word or not. A creature halted by this spell cannot move. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature that currently has 51 or more hit points is unaffected by power word halt. Flying or swimming creatures will continue to fly or swim in slow circles immediately above their current location, but will not land or stop movement unless otherwise forced.

Hit Points	Duration
25 or less	1d4+1 minutes
26-50	1d4+1 rounds

Also known as "Jumar's shout" in the Alubelok Archipelago, power word halt was the creation of a Basiran of some repute, a half-elven proveurge named Jumar Remosa. Proveurge Remosa is best remembered for his great, if unusual, skill with the thrown bola and for the arrest of three powerful lycanthropes atop the "wailing man" cliff face near Rosaleta (an accomplishment that left him nearly dead).

### Puturo's Poise

Transmutation  
Level: Sor/Spl/Wiz 2  
Components: V, S  
Casting Time: 1 standard action  
Range: Touch  
Target: Creature touched  
Duration: 1 minute/level  
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)  
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You gain a +1 dodge bonus and may ready two standard or move actions simultaneously. This works exactly like a normal ready action, except it has

two different actions with two potentially different triggers.

Puturo was, if tales are to be believed, one of the first orphans to ever take shelter in the Eleemosynary (see page 50), and the second to ever become a foundling. He was old for a street waif, probably around thirteen or fourteen, but crafty and good-natured and, as it turned out, a very good sorcerer. He remained in Sobeteta until sometime after his twentieth year, traveling to Bet Kalamar to study further. From there he moved to Trarr for reasons unknown, but he is said to still return to the City on the Rock at least once every few years.

Ravenous

Transmutation  
 Level: Drd/Shal 5, Animal 5, Madness 6, Suffering 6  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Casting Time: 1 standard action  
 Range: Medium (100 ft. +10 ft./level)  
 Target: One living creature  
 Duration: 1 round/level  
 Saving Throw: Will negates  
 Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates wracking hunger pains in the affected creature, causing it to hurl itself upon the closest living creature and begin to savagely bite it, ripping away and devouring chunks of its flesh.

A successful Will save each round (DC 15) will allow the affected creature to target "prey" (meaning creatures that were not formerly considered friendly), provided the prey is close enough to reach within one standard action.

If no prey is available, the target creature will be unable to control itself and will leap upon whomever or whatever is nearest. The creature will attack only with its bite, regardless of whatever other forms of attack it has available to it. It will continue to attack the same target until it is unconscious or somehow restrained. If attacked by another creature, it will then turn on its attacker. In any case, the affected creature remembers nothing about the entire episode unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom check.

If it did not possess a bite attack before the spell was cast, it will temporarily gain one according to the chart below.

Size	Bite Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8

Colossal 4d6

Few Followers of the Great Huntress employ this spell, as they find it abhorrent or evil, while the majority of those who worship Old Grizzly simply believe it inappropriate. Others are not so reserved. Many Deji shamans employ the spell upon intelligent creatures or beasts, if it suits their needs. Others do so only in specific circumstances. The Sethome of the Alubelok Swamp, for instance, will not cast the spell upon a crocodile - any other creature is considered to be a fair target.

Certain clerics of The Fearless One will cast the spell upon their own followers (indeed, this is considered to be an honor in some Deji tribes, and is preceded by a ceremony), while clerics of the Flaymaster have been known to cast the spell upon friend and foe alike.

Material Component: The tooth of a carnivore.

Quarrelspy

Transmutation  
 Level: Brd 2, Clr 2, Pal 2, Sor/Spl/Wiz 2, War 2  
 Components: V, S, F/DF  
 Casting Time: 1 standard action  
 Range: Touch  
 Effect: Bolt or arrow touched  
 Duration: 1 min./level  
 Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)  
 Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

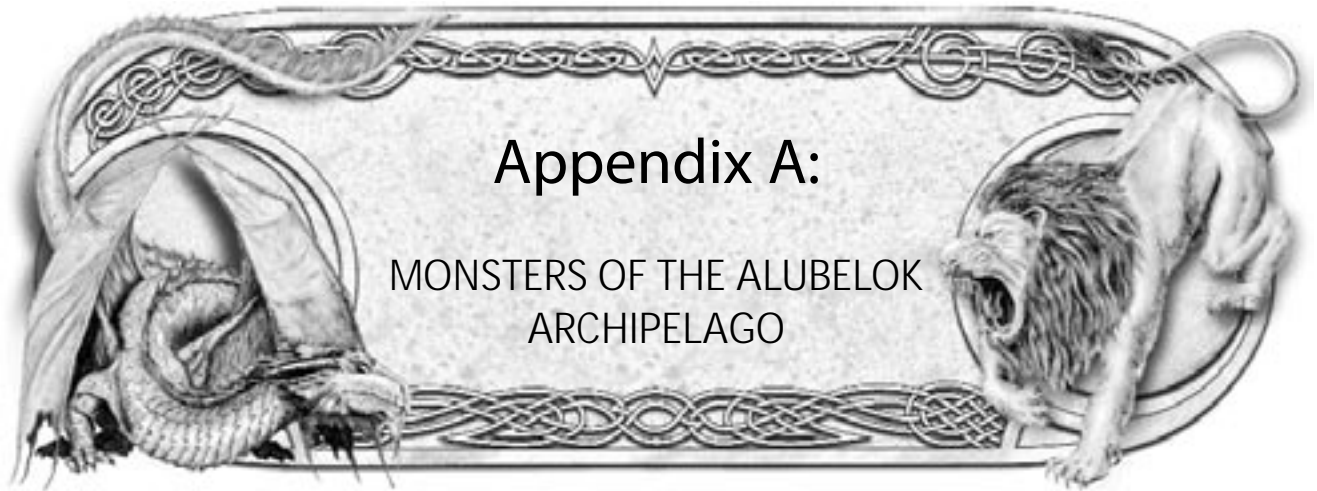
Quarrelspy allows you to enchant an arrow or crossbow bolt to be your eyes and ears. As soon as the bolt hits, the caster may immediately transfer the source of his auditory or visual senses to it. At that time, you can hear (or see) as if you were there. This spell also allows magically or supernaturally enhanced senses to work through it.

It is said that this spell was first developed during Zazahni's struggle for independence from Meznamish. Unfortunately, the enchantment was subsequently used (and continues to be used) by soldiers of Zazahni's various feuding nobles - upon each other. The spell has recently been adopted by the local mages of Sobeteta.

Arcane Focus: Any type of bow or crossbow carved with the image of an eye and ear. The cost of such an arcane focus varies depending upon the type of weapon used (see Chapter 7 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

Spirit Crocodile/Shark

Evocation (Force)  
 Level: Drd/Shal 5  
 Components: V, S, M



Casting Time: 1 standard action  
 Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
 Effect: Crocodile- or shark-like manifestation of force  
 Duration: Concentration + 1 round  
 Saving Throw: None  
 Spell Resistance: No

You create a mostly transparent crocodile or shark to attack your opponents. This false creature has statistics identical to those presented in the Monster Manual, but you must concentrate to direct its actions. Otherwise, it will not move. If you are unable to continue commanding it, it is disrupted and the spell ended.

The spirit creature cannot be harmed by weapons or spells, but it can be dispelled or disrupted by disintegrate or similar attacks. The spirit creature will be able to attack so long as the target is within the spell's range and is within sight of the controlling shaman or druid. For example, a wall of fungus interposed between the target and the spellcaster would end the spell, while an invisible wall of force would not.

The provenance of this spell is unknown. The Sethome Deji have long used it (creating a ghostly crocodile) and the sahuagin (creating a ghostly shark) as well. Both forms of the spell are utilized by spellcasters of other peoples and clans, but not so often as those two.

Material Component: The scale of an alligator or a shark's tooth.

#### Swamp Stench

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]  
 Level: Brd 1, Clr 1, Sor/Spl/Wiz 1  
 Components: V, S  
 Casting Time: 1 standard action  
 Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
 Target: One living creature with 5 or fewer HD  
 Duration: 1d4 rounds or 1 round; see text  
 Saving Throw: Will partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature becomes nauseated, as the smell of rotting vegetation fills its nose. If the subject succeeds on a Will save, it is nauseated for only 1 round. Creatures with 6 or more Hit Dice are immune to this effect.

This appendix provides statistics and basic information for several kinds of monsters and mundane animals found among the swamps and fens of the Alubelok Coast.

#### BULLYWUG, ALUBELOK

Medium Monstrous Humanoid  
 Hit Dice: 1d8+3 (7 hp)  
 Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)  
 Speed: 20 ft., swim 30 ft.  
 AC: 13 (+3 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 13  
 Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2  
 Attack: Club +2 melee (1d6+1) or tongue -3 melee (1d4 plus poison)  
 Full Attack: Club +2 melee (1d6+1) or tongue -3 melee (1d4 plus poison)  
 Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.  
 Special Attacks: Poison  
 Special Qualities: Amphibious, marsh move, nature summoning (druids only)  
 Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0  
 Abilities: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 5  
 Skills: Hide +2\*, Listen -2, Spot -2  
 Feats: Endurance, Improved InitiativeB  
 Environment: Warm and temperate marsh  
 Organization: Solitary, mated pair plus 2-12 offspring, or tribe (10-20 plus 100% noncombatants plus two 2nd-level barbarians, one 4th-level fighter and one 6th-level druid or shaman)  
 Challenge Rating: 1  
 Treasure: Standard  
 Alignment: Usually chaotic evil  
 Advancement: By character class

## CARSTANAUGHIR

Young Adult Black Dragon

With the exception of certain magic items noted below, the statistics for Carstanaughir are identical to those for the young adult black dragon found on page 72 of the Monster Manual.

Carstanaughir Atramentous, known as Carstanaughir the Black throughout the Alubelok Coast region, is believed to be the single most dangerous creature active in the Alubelok Swamp. He has been the scourge of the Girdsword Strait for many years, though his (relatively) short attention span has made him a threat so infrequent and unpredictable that shipping is relatively unaffected. This same inconstancy may be what has prevented a determined and concerted effort to destroy him.

Carstanaughir's main lair (he has at least one backup) is within a particularly treacherous expanse of bog, off a small inlet in the western shore of the Readywatch Passage. He claims everything from Defiles Course to the Girdsword Strait, as well as all of the land stretching north of his lair, to the Ridara River. Only his lack of interest keeps him from claiming more of the swamp than he currently does.

Around the lair at various locations are numerous bullywug encampments, most of them on floating, almost raft-like villages crafted of reeds and wood. Many of them are so well camouflaged to blend into the swamp that an unwary traveler could walk right up on one without realizing it. The dragon has chosen his lair in such a way that no solid ground leads to it, and no clear waterways approach it closer than a half a mile. The depth of the water and mud vary, but all of it is deep enough that he can swim easily.

There are but two ways into the caves beneath (at least, just two known to the bullywugs and giants). The first is a submerged passageway that opens up nearly thirty feet under the surface of the swamp, thus requiring intruders to swim down in and through it, before surfacing in a large cave that is the first in a series of interconnected chambers. The second is a sunken pit in the center of the island, a hundred feet across and forty deep, at the bottom of which is a tree-shrouded hole leading to another cave in the same complex. The three reef giants use the pit when they wish to visit the dragon. Of the three giants, only Gerbor swims down through the other entrance, and even then only occasionally.

Beneath the island, amidst the different dank caverns through which he crawls, are two more water-filled caverns that lead to his lair proper (so intruders must twice venture beneath the water to get to his

hoard). These two tunnels are protected with alarm spells and other well-constructed defenses.

When it comes to fighting, Carstanaughir is careful, but not overtly circumspect. He is a dragon, after all, and quite convinced of his own prowess. If he is unsure of the threat intruders present he lurks below the water, with just his eyes and the top part of his head above the surface, watching. He will swim far more often than fly, if near his lair, knowing that staying beneath the water makes him less vulnerable than flapping through the air (plus, he prefers to swim anyway, usually flying only when needing to travel great distances). If there are smaller characters amidst his opponents (such as gnomes, halflings or dwarves) he may strike from ambush, snapping them up in his jaws and using his Snatch ability to drag them beneath the water to drown. In this case he then waits for a while, perhaps hours if practical, before attacking again. When he attacks to finish the fight, he uses his breath weapon on obvious wizards or sorcerers first, trusting to his awesome scales and superior mobility in the swamp to help keep fighters and their ilk at bay – that kind of opponent will have difficulty maneuvering in the muck and dense foliage. Besides, his giant and bullywug servants know to concentrate on them. If he deals grievous injury to a foe and then observes someone heal them (as a cleric), he marks that character next, to prevent any further rescues or significant healing.

Though cunning enough to prepare ahead of time with his spells, Carstanaughir is basically a brutal, evil creature that likes to fight. Once a battle has begun, he will not be willing to leave it. His anger is just a little short of a barbarian's rage, once his blood is up, and intruders that dare to challenge him (let alone actually hurt him) will be made to pay.

**Notable Possessions:** In addition to the huge amounts of treasure he has gathered over the years (much of it plundered from ships and river craft), Carstanaughir makes use of several magic items (though there are many in his hoard he cannot employ). Among these are an amulet of proof against detection and location that is wrapped tight about his left horn, a gem of brightness imbedded in the scales on his front right shoulder, a pearl of power (4th level) embedded in the scales of his breast, and a bracelet of secrets (see KPG, p 200) worn as a ring on his left foreclaw – the dragon's claw has grown around and over the bracelet so that it is largely concealed (and would have to be cut free from his corpse in order to be taken as a prize). Deep inside the dragon's left nostril, in one of the few places where the flesh is tender enough to pierce, Carstanaughir has had a griplli shaman place an earring of evasion



## Appendix A: Monsters of the Alubelok Archipelago

(identical to a standard ring of evasion). He could very well acquire other usable magic items within his hoard quickly, given the amount of shipping moving through his territory. If so, he undoubtedly makes the best of them.

### Bortil, Bremen and Gerbor

Thirty or so years ago, Carstanaughir was surprised to find himself stalked by a mated pair of reef giants seeking to revenge the deaths of their family, killed during one of the dragon's infrequent attacks upon the surrounding lands. In typical draconic arrogance, he did not take the threat the giants presented seriously. It was a mistake that nearly cost him his life - and one he has not since repeated. The giants prowled and watched and observed him for several months, occasionally getting close enough to see the great mound of his lair, but generally keeping their distance. Initially wary of him, his blatant disregard for their presence soon allowed them to openly watch him and watch for weaknesses or patterns.

The giants judged the time ripe when they watched the dragon, engorged after devouring almost an entire bullywug tribe, swim heavily under the water into his lair to sleep. At the time the two giants attacked, the dragon had not yet gone to great lengths to fortify his lair or recruit servitors - during those years he had just a few sycophantic bullywugs serving as guards. The giants made short work of those, and, being excellent swimmers, managed to enter the dragon's lair undetected. They caught the dragon heavily asleep and so gorged he could barely move. To say that the fight that followed was desperate is a gross understatement - though Carstanaughir managed to kill both of his attackers, his lair was wrecked, many of his treasures lost, and several hectares of the lush growth around his lair devastated when the battle made its way outside. Most significantly, the dragon suffered the worst hurt he had ever experienced during that battle, and worse than any he has taken in all the years since.

It took the dragon days to recover from the grievous wounds. Once he did, he found that the few surviving bullywugs had captured three young giants - the reef giants' brood. Though his first inclination was to slay them out of hand, further reflection convinced him to stay his claws. Though already larger and stronger than a human man, they were still young enough that they were susceptible to his dragon charm and influence.

It was a wise decision. The reef giant triplets have served him as guards and confidants for over three decades - they are the strongest of his servitors and worshipers, and the most dedicated to him.

Bortil, Gerbor and Bremeg are now in the prime of their adulthood. They are typical of reef giants in their appearance—long black locks of stringy hair, frog-like skin mottled in unhealthy shades of green and webs between their fingers and toes. Bremeg is the biggest of them, Bortil the tallest and Gerbor the smartest. Each weighs in the neighborhood of 600 pounds and each is intimately familiar with the environs of the swamp that surrounds the dragon lair. The bullywugs that surround and worship the dragon in great numbers will obey any instruction issued by one of the brothers without question.

**Bortil:** Bortil knows the swamp better than either of his brothers; in fact he knows it better than any of the bullywugs nearby, having explored it out to great distances on numerous occasions—he is more often away than at home. Bortil is a ranger and a bit of a loner, preferring to spend the majority of his time ranging and hunting; this is fine with his brothers and the dragon, because his patrolling has more than once detected an intruder or potential problem long before it could become a threat. Bortil has actually, on his own initiative, subjugated two small clans of grippli far outside the dragon's influence. He has not done this out of any desire to brook the dragon's will or to build his own power base, but rather to have one or two safe places in which to hide, rest or heal at need. In return for accepting his less than tender rule (not that they have much choice), Bortil periodically spends two to three days hunting and killing any large or dangerous predators near their villages (including, on more than one occasion, such creatures as orcs or trolls). His periapt of wisdom is a gift from the dragon out of its own treasure hoard. He took the ring of blinking from a lizardfolk shaman (who presumably took it from an adventurer in turn); the bag of tricks was a less than gracious "gift" of the grippli (who never explained where they obtained it).

**Bremeg:** Bremeg is a fighter, and the brute of the three brothers. He knows he is not as smart as Gerbor, nor as cunning as Bortil. This does not bother him - he is perfectly content with his place in things. Bremeg rarely leaves the immediate vicinity of the dragon's lair, and is always in the company of one of his brothers when he does so. This is not due to any fear or hesitation (he is a reef giant, after all), he just prefers to stay close to Carstanaughir and the bullywugs, whose warriors he leads. He is simple, direct and violent. He is neither a skulker nor a stalker, preferring to move straight into the fray, and will always choose the strongest-seeming opponent first. Bremeg does not like to hurl rocks, and only keeps a sack of boulders nearby at the insistence of his two

brothers – he likes to fight, and to do it up close (or as close a giant needs to get carrying a long spear lance!). Though it took him nearly two years to finally master the various enchantments provided by his weapon, he has finally done so and has had much practice using its powers to best advantage. The giant keeps his enchanted lance covered in a wrapping of moss and mud, to hide the gleam of its unblemished steel and will go nowhere without it. See the Appendix B entry on Vitisar's Lance for more information on this weapon. He is never unaccompanied; at all times at least 2-5 bullywug warriors will be with him, or tailing him if his oft-times wicked temper flares.

**Gerbor:** Gerbor is a sorcerer, and the nominal leader of the three brothers, inasmuch as they have a leader. He speaks to the dragon more often than the other two, who are content to let him make any necessary decisions on their behalf. Gerbor also acts as the spiritual leader for Carstanaughir's bullywug minions (they have a fairly good relationship with the giant, and as the dragon's mouthpiece they look to him for guidance in any major tribal decisions). He is intimately familiar with the swamp around the lair out to a distance of several leagues, but does not like to venture as far away as his brothers. Gerbor often takes the form of a lynx and quietly prowls the region with his companion. Periodically he prefers to hunt in that form, to keep his skills up. If it comes to a fight, the giant uses his various spells, feats and skills to disrupt his foes from a safe (preferably covered) distance, wreaking havoc among them with entangle, liana (KPG), summon swarm and the like while his brothers and the bullywugs engage them in physical combat. If he does move in close, he often seizes smaller opponents and shoves them down under the mud and water, holding them there until they drown. The scarabs in his bag of beetles (see Kalamar Player's Guide) are bone, not jade, and are carved with long-outdated Svimohzish runes. The four gold beetles perform normally, but are also covered with runes. He took it from a Meznamishii adventurer he killed many years ago. Gerbor is 10 feet tall and weighs around 500 pounds. He wears his hair pulled back in a single thick braid, clasped with three matching turtle-shell combs worth at least 100 gp each.

#### P'Laro Kudori

P'Laro Kudori, owner and proprietor of the tavern known as The Naga's Niche (in Sobeteta), originally hailed from Bet Bireli. Prior to beginning his career as an adventurer he spent nearly a decade as a spy for Duke Gadadik of O'Par, and he was a very good one. He honed his skills as an infiltrator as a part of one of

the best intelligence networks across the Sovereign Lands. His last assignment, before mustering out, was in the Pekalese army, where he posed as a member of the supply corps and helped to track "aid" in the form of monies and materiel coming to the Rogalans from elsewhere (but specializing in that of Paru'Bor and Cilorea).

After leaving the Duke's service, P'Laro made his way to Basir, where the Reanaarian adventurer Gaelon Crowgait eventually recruited him as a scout and information-sniffer for Crowgait's adventuring company, the Crow's Coterie. P'Laro accompanied this troop for several years, adventuring as near as the Highlands and as far away as the Elos Desert with great success. About five years ago, Gaelon led the group to Sobeteta and from thence into the Alubelok Swamp, apparently to hunt for the ruins of an ancient fortress rumored to lie beneath the Settlemaw Flats. Unfortunately, they encountered the black dragon within days of entering the marsh.

It is not inconceivable that the company could have bested the dragon, or at least driven him away. They were a powerful party, fourteen strong and experienced in their various crafts. P'Laro, however, was the weakest of them and was not going to take chances. He acted quickly to ingratiate himself with the drake. Any chance the Coterie had to survive the encounter was quickly eliminated when the former spy put a knife in the back of their captain, then slit the throat of their most powerful wizard. The dragon made short work of the rest of them, then set down to consider P'Laro – and what to do with him.

By no means foolish, or unaware of how humans are when it comes to treasure and challenges, Carstanaughir knew that the Coterie would not be the last such company to meddle about in the swamp. He also knew that despite his great strength and precautions, there could very well come a day when a band that could truly challenge him might arrive. Thus, he made a deal with the former spy (one that P'Laro could scarcely refuse). P'Laro was allowed to take a large portion of his former friends' valuables, along with bags of coin from the dragon's own hoard, in return for which he was to act as the dragon's eyes and ears in Sobeteta. P'Laro was to open a business of some kind in Sobeteta, and from there instructed to listen and watch out for any talk of dragons, dragon-hunting or anything else to do with dragons—any conversation or rumor that might herald or forewarn of a threat to Caustanaghir's life and domain. P'Laro knew a good deal when he heard it, and agreed.

In the years since that meeting, he has built the Naga's Niche up into a very popular, very respectable establishment and found himself to be quite the successful businessman. The Niche is the perfect

place from which to carry out his mission. With fare ranging from mean to extraordinary and no less than twenty individual guestrooms, it is one of the most popular inns in all of Sobeteta. He takes great care to cater to the wants and needs of people of the adventurous ilk, and consequently usually has a very good idea of what goes on in the city or around it. Rumors of anything not having to do with the dragon he freely passes along, but all the while keeps his ear to the ground for anything that might be of interest to his master. Since beginning his career he has passed along information that has led to the destruction of at least six adventuring companies, including a fairly famous troop of ex-Brandobian Marines and another led by a prominent nobleman out of Bet Kalamar herself.

P'Laro Kudori is widely considered to be an "upstanding citizen" of the City on the Rock, and has taken great pains to keep it that way. He donates money to the various orphanages of the city, sponsors at least two craft in the boat races every year and has assisted the constabulary at least twice in the investigation and subsequent eradication of two different smuggling rings. He has several paid informants through the city, all of whom watch or listen for anything he might wish to be alerted to. These informants can be found in other taverns, in various

guildhalls and one even in the Basilica of Swords. He takes great care to ensure that none of them know about more than one or two of the others, and is careful not to leave any hint of why he truly wants the information. Should he suspect that there is a real threat to Carstanaughir, he quickly sends word to the dragon, after which he will typically be contacted by a seeming beggar or itinerant sailor (other agents of the dragon) in order to pass on complete details of what he has discovered. If he deems the situation serious, he might even hire assassins to eliminate the threat, though this is a last resort. As long as the dragon is forewarned, he can handle almost anyone or anything that might come hunting him.

P'Laro is a somewhat heavysset but rather nondescript fellow, just under six feet in height, with green eyes and brown hair. He dresses well, though not ostentatiously, and is successful enough that most of the work in the inn is performed by employees (freeing him up to look and listen). He is unaware of the eventual destination of the magical messenger he sends – it is actually trained to fly to a bullywug settlement, where the messages are taken and the creature returned. The bullywugs take the messages to one of the two reef giants living in Carstanaughir's lair, where the dragon mulls over the content before contacting one of his other agents via other means.



This seemingly complicated method of maintaining contact is not an accident – the dragon takes care to prevent the location of his lair from becoming known. Not even P'Laro knows exactly where it is. Though he is not an overtly wicked man, P'Laro Kudori has no qualms about taking whatever steps are necessary to remain successful and continue holding up his end of the bargain.

## FROGHEMOTH

Huge Aberration  
 Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95 hp)  
 Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)  
 Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)  
 AC: 16 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15  
 Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+19  
 Attack: Tongue +9 melee (1d8+4) and bite +7 melee (2d6+2)  
 Full Attack: Tongue +9 melee (1d8+4) and bite +7 melee (2d6+2) and 4 tentacles +7 melee (1d8+2)  
 Space/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.  
 Special Attacks: Improved grab, swallow whole  
 Special Qualities: Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., marsh move, resistance to electricity 10  
 Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +8  
 Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11  
 Skills: Hide +7\*, Jump +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Spot +8  
 Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Multiattack  
 Environment: Warm and temperate marsh  
 Organization: Solitary  
 Challenge Rating: 6  
 Treasure: None  
 Alignment: Always neutral  
 Advancement: 11-20 HD (Huge), 21-30 HD (Gargantuan)  
 Level Adjustment: -

The froghemoth is a monstrously huge frog creature native to the Alubelok Swamp (although they have been sighted, allegedly, in other mires), a massive aberration that lurks in deep pools of mud or brackish water awaiting its prey. It appears as a gigantic frog-like creature with four large tentacles around its gaping maw and a 15-foot-long tongue. Its eyes are at the top of extendable eyestalks on the top of its head, allowing it to submerge completely while lying in wait. Its underbelly is a sickly vomit color, its body and tentacles an unhealthy mottled green.

## COMBAT

The froghemoth attacks using its tentacles and tongue to grab opponents and attempts to swallow them. It typically lurks below the surface of the marsh, watching for a possible meal through its eyestalks. When it sees prey, it will burst from the muck to attack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the froghemoth must hit a creature at least one size smaller than itself

with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the opponent in the following round.

A froghemoth can also use its improved grab ability on a tentacle or tongue attack. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold, picks up the opponent, and transfers it to the mouth as a free action, automatically dealing bite damage.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** A froghemoth can try to swallow a grabbed opponent by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the froghemoth's stomach, a swallowed creature takes 2d6+4 points of crushing damage plus and 4 points of acid damage per round from the froghemoth's digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light piercing or slashing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the froghemoth's stomach (AC 17). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The froghemoth's stomach can hold 2 Medium, 4 Small, 8 Tiny, or 16 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

**Marsh Move (Ex):** Froghemoths suffer no movement penalties for moving in marsh terrain.

**Skills:** The froghemoth receives a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks. \*Due to its coloration, the froghemoth receives a +6 racial bonus to all Hide checks when in marsh terrain.

## REEF GIANT

Huge Giant (Water)  
 Hit Dice: 16d8+96 (168 hp)  
 Initiative: +2 (Dex)  
 Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares), swim 40 ft.  
 AC: 23 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +13 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 21  
 Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+33  
 Attack: Longspear +23 melee (3d6+19/x3) or slam +23 melee (1d8+13) or rock +12 ranged (2d8+13)  
 Full Attack: Longspear +23/+18/+13 melee (3d6+19/x3) or 2 slams +23 melee (1d8+13) or rock +12 ranged (2d8+13)  
 Space/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.  
 Special Attacks: Rock throwing  
 Special Qualities: Amphibious, freedom of movement, low-light vision, rock catching, spell-like abilities  
 Saves: Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +9  
 Abilities: Str 36, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18  
 Skills: Climb +19, Concentration +15, Craft (any one) +7, Hide +0, Jump +22, Listen +10, Spot +13, Swim +19\*  
 Feats: Alertness, Awesome Blow (MM), Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack  
 Environment: Warm and temperate land and aquatic  
 Organization: Solitary or mated pair  
 Challenge Rating: 12  
 Treasure: Double standard  
 Alignment: Usually chaotic good  
 Advancement: By character class  
 Level Adjustment: -

The reef giants of Tellene are solitary and typically introspective creatures. They are rarely, if ever, seen

in the seas of Tellene, both because of this lonely temperament and because there are so few of them. Some say they are more closely related to cloud giants than any other breed of giant-kind. The noted sage Amateloreal Proweagle, an elf of far-off Cosolen, believes they are in fact cloud giants who have only recently (as the long-lived elves view time) become racially distinct. He asserts that there were no reef giants before approximately a thousand years before the Reanaarians crossed the P'Rorul Peaks (nearly 1,200 years before the Kingdom of Kalamar was established). The truth of this cannot be confirmed, but Amateloreal may be the most knowledgeable expert on giants the Sovereign Lands has ever known.

Although reef giants are loners by nature, they are rarely encountered in larger groups. Whether encountered singly or in numbers, they enjoy living in opulent conditions (often well appointed mansions or surprisingly comfortable sea caves). Reef giants are usually some 20 feet tall and can weigh around 4,000 pounds. They can live to be 500 years of age or even older.

The temperament of a reef giant varies from individual to individual. Although they are typically neither malicious nor cruel, they are as capricious and unpredictable as the seas in which they dwell. They

have their own dialect of Giant, and many of them (usually those who interact with drylanders) also speak the Merchant's Tongue.

Reef giants vary in appearance, but most have coppery-gold skin and pale white or blue hair. They are massively built and well proportioned, their bodies made prodigiously strong by a lifetime in the water battling waves. They dress scantily (in simple garments made of kelp or sea lion fur or similar materials) or not at all, in their homes. If they dress for an audience with drylanders or to venture ashore for some reason, they usually adopt the dress of the local human population (that being said, they seem to favor Svimohz fashion over that of other lands).

### COMBAT

The strength of a reef giant, and his natural swimming skills and abilities, make him a fighter to be reckoned with underwater. They are scarcely less formidable above the waves, but given any opportunity prefer to do battle under the waves. They cannot be harmed by water-based attacks and suffer only half-damage from those of a cold nature. A prototypical reef giant will, unsurprisingly, carry a massive trident, bident or longspear. They usually also carry





one or more large knives and can fight with their gigantic fists as well. This is, of course, in addition to their innate powers. In addition to these tactics, reef giants can and do hurl boulders like their land-dwelling kin. This is not their favored attack, however, and is usually used only against ships rather than individual opponents.

**Freedom of Movement (Su):** Reef giants have a continuous freedom of movement ability as the spell (caster level 15th). The effect can be dispelled, but the reef giant can create it again on its next turn as a free action.

**Rock Throwing (Ex):** The range increment is 120 feet for a reef giant

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 2/day- cloud of fish; 1/day- control water, waterspout. Caster level 15th.

**Cloud of Fish:** Twice per day, a submerged reef giant can summon a large school of tiny fish from the waters around him, acting as a silvery underwater fog cloud spell (caster level 15th). Rough water or a control (raise) water spell disperses the fish in 4 rounds; stormy water or a control (lower) water spell disperses the fish in 1 round.

Though the fish summoned by this spell are flesh and blood, attacks against the cloud produce no significant result because there are so many of them.

**Skills:** A reef giant has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

\*Reef giants ignore all weight penalties for gear carried when swimming.

## REEF GIANT SOCIETY

Reef giants are solitary creatures, although on the rare occasions that they take a mate they do so for life (the rarity of their coupling is another reason for their small population). The dwelling of a reef giant is usually built well below the waves, in the midst of a reef or in a sea-cave near an island. If they build a home on land, it is always within sight of the sea and well concealed (and protected) by cliffs, gorges and other difficult terrain. Homes are generally well appointed, even opulent, decorated with materials and treasures recovered from the hulls of wrecked ships. In those few instances that a giant has a family or mate, its progeny or surviving mate inherits the dwelling. Usually, however, the place is simply abandoned to lie vacant until discovered and occupied by some other marine creature (or another reef giant).

They prefer warmer coastal waters to the cold deeps, although on occasion a particularly reclusive reef giant will make his home in some remote

and cold place. They take what they need from the bounty of the sea, fishing and foraging at need. Those that desire more material possessions reap the sea's harvest to obtain pearls, quantities of rare fish, coral and other valuables for sale or trade.

Reef giants often have members of other races as guests in their homes for extended periods (evidently their desire for seclusion applies more to their own kind than other folk). They may also have servants or guards of these races (locathah, merfolk, tritons or even sahuagin or kuo-toa in some instances). They will also have guard animals or pets taken from aquatic species – commonly sea cats.

Reef giants have been encountered off the coasts of Cosdol, Eldor and Mendarn, as well as in the Straits of Svimohzia and the southern end of Reanaaria Bay (though not as far as the Sea of the Dead). It is said (though difficult to believe) that some Torakki have occasional dealings with a reef giant hermit who lives somewhere in Lake Adesh, trading sweets and other articles for nets full of lungfish.

Reef giants are not an overly religious race, but they do acknowledge and respect the tremendous powers of Wavecrusher and The Storm Lord. Certain individuals may follow the tenets of the Inevitable Order of Time or the Temple of Three Strengths as well. A very few will be actual followers of The Eye Opener, The Overlord or The Creator of Strife, but these are very, very few indeed.

## REEF GIANT CHARACTERS

On the rare occasions that a reef giant pursues a profession, it favors the fighter class. Other relatively common classes include sorcerer and adept.

## GRIPPLI

Small Monstrous Humanoid  
 Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)  
 Initiative: +2 (Dex)  
 Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.  
 AC: 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12  
 Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-2  
 Attack: Dagger +3 melee (1d3) or dart +3 melee (1d3)  
 Full Attack: Dagger +3 melee (1d3) or dart +3 melee (1d3)  
 Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.  
 Special Qualities: Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., marsh move  
 Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +4  
 Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 9  
 Skills: Climb +5, Craft or Knowledge (any one) +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +5\*, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +5, Spot +7, Swim +1  
 Feats: Alertness  
 Environment: Warm and temperate marsh  
 Organization: Solitary, clutch (2-5), hunting party (6-11), or village (20-40 plus two 3rd-level fighters and 1-3 shamans of 1st-3rd level)

## Appendix A: Monsters of the Alubelok Archipelago

Challenge Rating: 1  
Treasure: Standard  
Alignment: Usually neutral  
Advancement: By character class  
Level Adjustment: +2

Grippli (or “rana’al” as the Kalamarans call them) are a simple and primitive race of humanoid tree frogs. Very few people know anything about them, for they are reclusive and reluctant to reveal themselves. They are a non-aggressive folk and shun outsiders, following the theory that what cannot be seen cannot be attacked—or enslaved. Certain Brolenese slave merchants have made a great deal of money selling grippli to wealthy collectors and certain sages.

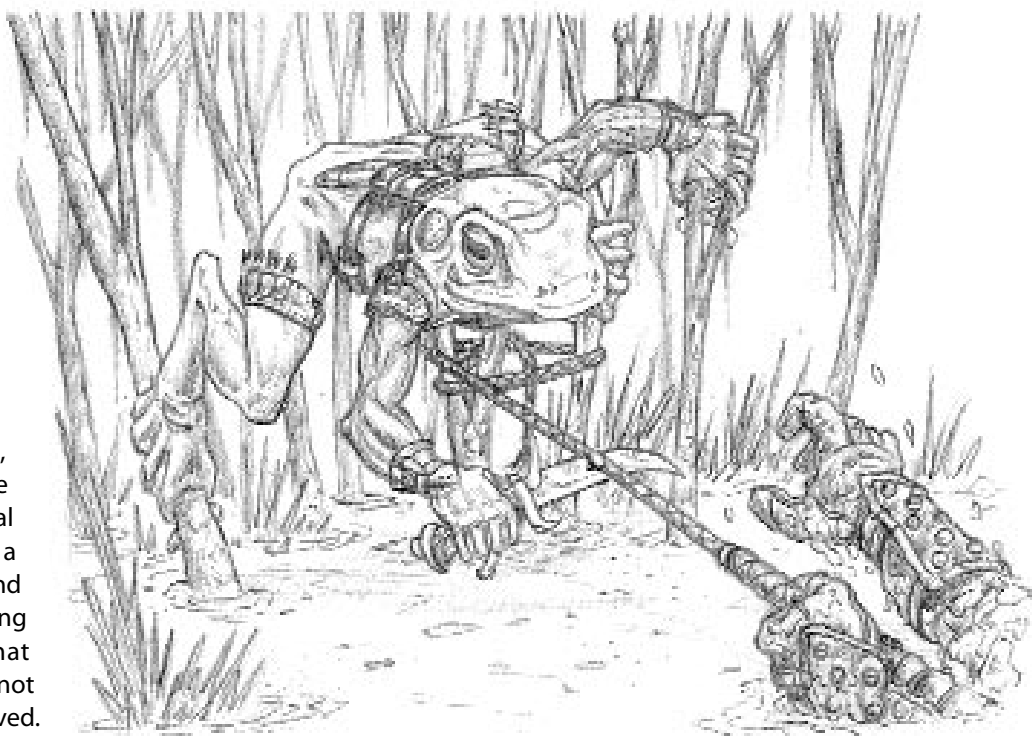
Grippli males and females stand approximately 2 feet tall and weigh between 40 and 50 pounds. They look much like tree frogs, with overlong finger appendages on hands and feet. Their eyes are brilliant yellow, and the intensity of the color is indicative of their mood – excitement, fear, or other strong emotions brighten the hue. Relaxation and calm emotions (or old age) dims it. The skin of a grippli is a green, its exact tint varying by where it lives (those of the Alubelok Swamp, for instance, are bright green; those of Obakasek are more moss-colored).

Grippli love bright and shiny objects of any kind. It is for this reason that the small grippli villages of the Alubelok often have jeweled frogs as pets and adornment. Their clothing is largely utilitarian, for carrying weapons or supplies.

Grippli have a language of their own, a tongue that is predictably frog-like. A very few of them may speak the Merchant’s Tongue; others speak the language of lizardfolk.

### COMBAT

Grippli prefer to avoid conflict. Failing that, they will employ ambushes, snares and traps to slow an opponent, followed by poisoned darts; an intruder wishing to venture into grippli territory would do well to watch where he walked, and to keep a wary eye on the trees. If they must fight in melee they typically use daggers.



**Marsh Move (Ex):** Grippli suffer no movement penalties for moving in marsh terrain.

**Skills:** All grippli have a +4 racial bonus on Climb and Escape Artist checks, and a +2 racial bonus to Spot and Search checks. Grippli also have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

\*Grippli receive a +5 racial bonus to Hide checks when in marshes or forested areas due to their coloration.

### GRIPPLI CHARACTERS

A grippli’s favored class is either fighter or ranger, though clan leaders are usually shamans.

### GRIPPLI SOCIETY

Grippli villages are clan affairs, a well-camouflaged collection of open-topped platforms or small huts of wood and leaves high in the trees (usually with a plethora of cunning snares or perhaps quicksand below). A village may have as many as three different clans in it. Usually the village leader will be a shaman, but on occasion (especially in very dangerous locales) he will be a strong fighting male. They have basic family units, just like humans, and each family has its own hut or platform.

Grippli worship few gods, preferring to adulate only those that directly impact their survival. Among these are The Great Huntress and The Old Oak. Occasionally they will also venerate The Lord of Intuition and The

Holy Mother. Worship and reverence in a gripli village is a simple and private affair, with little formal ceremony or pomp and circumstance.

Gripli eat fruit, particularly strangler figs and marsh figs. They also enjoy a fine meal of insects. They trap small animals and birds as well as insects, and on rare occasions hunt giant insects in large well-armed parties. Given the nature of the areas in which gripli live, they do well to be wary. All sorts of predatory creatures will make a meal of them. Above all else, a gripli understands caution.

## Homunculus, Sobetetan Messenger

Tiny Construct

Hit Dice: 4d10 (22 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 50 ft. (good), swim 50 ft.

AC: 15 (+2 size, +3 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/-5

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d3 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d3 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con -, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Hide +14, Listen +4, Spot +4

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: None

Alignment: Any (same as creator)

Advancement: 5-6 HD (Tiny)

Level Adjustment: -

A long-standing tradition of maritime sorcery and nautical enchantments have led to the creation of the Sobetetan messenger homunculus, a small servant construct much like the more widely-known homunculus. The origins of the homunculus are unknown, but it is rumored to have been created by a powerful Kalamaran wizard of the past (perhaps even the great Dorama herself – see page 147 of the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide). Like the common homunculus, the Sobetetan messenger homunculus is a diminutive servant created by a spellcaster. They are of little use in combat, but their size and abilities make them effective messengers and scouts. In addition to being able to fly, they can dart through the water as fast as most fish.

Unlike common homunculi, the Sobetetan messenger homunculus is able to speak (repeating its master's words exactly, not new words of its own), and the magic involved in its creation allows it to willingly travel any distance from its master. This messenger

homunculus is often used to deliver verbal messages (or occasionally carry small trinkets) from one spellcaster to another.

However, the telepathic link remains only within a certain range. A Sobetetan messenger homunculus knows what its master knows and can convey to him everything it sees and hears up to a range of 3,000 feet (though this is limited to a distance of just 1,500 feet if either it or its creator is submerged in water).

An attack that destroys a Sobetetan messenger homunculus deals 2d10 damage to its master (no save), regardless of distance. If the creator's master is slain, the homunculus immediately dies, its flesh sloughing away until just a thick puddle of ichor remains.

Also like the common homunculus, the Sobetetan messenger homunculus has a vaguely humanoid form, though it is often quite attractive when compared with common homunculi. However, its wings are scaly and its limbs are finned (like those of a triton). The creator will determine an individual messenger homunculus's exact features, but in general it stands about 18 inches tall with a similar wingspan. A messenger homunculus's skin is slick with tiny fish scales, typically silver or blue, though the exact color depends upon the exact materials used to create it. Its mouth is filled with small teeth that deliver a mild toxin.

## COMBAT

Messenger homunculi prefer to avoid combat, seeking only to deliver their message. However, when forced, they bite with their teeth.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 15; initial damage vertigo (-2 to all actions) and blindness for 1 minute, secondary damage vertigo and blindness for another 5d6 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## CONSTRUCTION

A Sobetetan messenger homunculus is constructed much like a common homunculus, as seen in the following passage, attributed to the Sobetetan wizard Tesemel Lasas, whose treatise on magical constructs is often part of the syllabus at the College of Alchemy in Pekal:

...clay remains the staple of construction, though care should be taken to use sand in the mixture. This sand should be as fine as can be found, and as free of impurities as possible. A dram of the wizard's own blood must be mixed with the sand before it is joined to the clay, else the creature will have difficulty hearing its masters thoughts when beneath the waves. Not until last should the wizard provide the ashes of burned cuttlefish or squid's beak. As the rituals of

## Appendix A: Monsters of the Alubelok Archipelago

bound cogitation are begun, the finished form of the creature should be wetted first in salt water, then in fresh water, after which it must be covered in the scales of a fish that has been compelled to breathe only air and then suffocated in water...

The materials for construction of a Sobetetan messenger homunculus cost 50 gp. The creature's master may assemble the body or hire someone else to do the job. Creating the body requires a DC 12 Craft (sculpting) check.

After the body is sculpted, it is animated through an extended magical ritual. This ritual requires a specially prepared laboratory or workroom, similar to an alchemist's laboratory and costing 500 gp to establish. If the creator is personally constructing the creature's body, the building and ritual can be performed together.

The first task in the building is shaping the creature's body from a mixture of clay, sand, and ashes from a burned squid or cuttlefish beak. Then, in the ritual, the finished body must be soaked in fresh water and allowed to dry, then soaked in salt water and allowed to dry. After this requirement is met, it must be covered completely in fish scales and in the feathers of a bird upon which water breathing has been cast. The bird must have been suffocated in water, plucked, and scraped clean with a non-metallic blade. Finally, the construct's body must be polymorphed into a fish, then returned to its own form.

It is said that a Sobetetan messenger homunculus can gain a +4 natural AC bonus if kraken tentacle is used in place of squid or cuttlefish beak, but this adds +4,000 gp to the cost to create (unless the spellcaster can find and defeat a kraken). The use of aboleth scales (+2,000 gp cost) has been rumored to double the allowed range of the telepathic link. Powdered sea cat teeth mixed with sea cat scales (+4,000 gp cost) is said to increase the damage potential of the messenger homunculus' bite to 1d6, and triton scales (+1,500 gp) used in the place of those of a mundane fish are rumored to increase the homunculus' swimming speed by 10 feet.

Craft Construct (see page 303 of the D&D Monster Manual), arcane eye, mirror image, mending, polymorph any object, water breathing, caster must be at least 15th level; Price – (never sold); Cost 5,050 gp + 78 XP.

### Kalanu

Large Magical Beast  
Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (30 hp)  
Initiative: +3 (Dex)  
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), swim 30 ft., climb 20 ft.  
AC: 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13  
Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+13

Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d6+5)  
Full Attack: 6 claws +8 melee (1d6+5) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)  
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.  
Special Attacks: Pounce, improved grab, rake 1d6+2  
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent  
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2  
Abilities: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 9  
Skills: Balance +8, Climb +13, Hide +6\*, Jump +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Spot +9  
Feats: Alertness, Endurance  
Environment: Warm and temperate marsh  
Organization: Solitary or pair  
Challenge Rating: 3  
Treasure: None  
Alignment: Always neutral  
Advancement: 5-10 HD (Large); 11-15 HD (Huge)  
Level Adjustment: -

Solitary, almost noiseless hunters, the six-legged kalanu prowls through the mires and moors of the Alubelok Swamp.

Kalanu are roughly 7 to 8 feet long, and weigh between 500-600 pounds. Their fur is a mottled mixture of brown and green hues, making them hard to detect in the swamps. (Some rare kalanu will be all black in color.) A shaggy crest of fur runs from the top of their neck and down their back, with other patches of long hair on their legs (like the fetlocks of a horse). This longer fur looks much like the all-pervading hanging moss that grows everywhere throughout the Alubelok Swamp region, and serves to break up the beast's natural outline. The grippli (see page 73) consider the kalanu to be devils; bullywugs and lizardfolk will not willingly hunt or fight them out of respect or fear.

Their natural camouflage makes them quite dangerous - they are smart and cunning, with superlative eyesight, keen hearing and an extraordinary sense of smell. Many lizardfolk hunters have failed to return from the hunt in territory where a kalanu stalked - most taken by ambush. Kalanu are similar to great cats, such as tigers whom they resemble the most, but no one who ever saw one and lived to tell of it could ever mistake it for any other sort of feline.

The kalanu are well adapted to their environment. They are lean, with disproportionately wide paws to distribute their weight across the soft ground. On those occasions that they need to take to the trees, six sets of claws allow them to climb safely and quickly no matter how slick or slimy the wood.

### COMBAT

Kalanu are diurnal hunters, preferring the gray of the early morning and evening hours to the full light of day or the blackness of night. They can

function well in either extreme, however, and should be guarded against accordingly.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the kalanu must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a kalanu charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including four rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d6+2.

**Skills:** Kalanu have a +5 racial bonus on Balance, Hide, Move Silently and Spot checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. \*In swampland, the Hide bonus improves to +12.

One Sobetetan ruler is said to have commissioned a hunting expedition during the second year of his reign for the express purpose of capturing a kalanu for his entertainment pleasure in the arenas. The expedition was successful and brought a single adult male back from the Alubelok Swamp - they returned with but a fraction of their original number hale and whole, however, as many dying of disease and various poisons as did at the teeth and claws of the predators they encountered.

The kalanu, which was too old to be tamed, was released for sport in a public arena. It butchered any number of gladiators, and was pitted against a variety of beasts. Perhaps its greatest moment (at least in the minds of the crowd) was when it battled a full-sized sturm wolf and left it bloodied in the dust, lying in its own entrails.

This singular act delighted the ruler to no end, and he subsequently had the creature poisoned and stuffed to display in his throne room (it was, incidentally, one of the last commands he was able to issue before dying of a bloody flux). That mounted kalanu remains on display in the current Duke's residence, eyeing all passersby through eyes of gnome-worked glass.

It is a mark of great prestige for a hunter of the Alubelok lizardfolk to take a kalanu, for their claws, teeth and fur are all used for decoration and warlike adornment. These trophies, often won at great cost, are rarely traded or sold. Because they are so difficult to come by, however, they will fetch a great price in the market place. An intact kalanu hide has brought as much as 2,500 gp in Sobeteta in the past. The coat of one of the rare, black kalanu commanded a price well over twice that. A living cub would probably bring a staggering amount of money, but thus far no one is known to have ever captured one.

## Blind Medusa Fish

Small Animal (Aquatic)  
 Hit Dice: 1/2 d8 (2 hp)  
 Initiative: +2 (Dex)  
 Speed: Swim 20 ft. (4 squares)  
 AC: 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12  
 Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-4  
 Attack: -  
 Full Attack: -  
 Space/Reach: 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.  
 Special Qualities: Camouflage, ink cloud, low-light vision  
 Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0  
 Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6  
 Skills: Hide +8, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +1  
 Feats: Alertness  
 Environment: Warm and temperate aquatic  
 Organization: Solitary or school (3-18)  
 Challenge Rating: 1/10  
 Treasure: None  
 Alignment: Always neutral  
 Advancement: -  
 Level Adjustment: -

Blind medusas are among the most unusual creatures to be used as familiars. Blind medusas are a species of cuttlefish found in the warm, shallow waters of the coast. Like all cuttlefish, blind medusas are soft-bodied, with skirt-like tentacles, the ability to naturally camouflage themselves and squirt ink. Their tentacles are more pronounced and narrower than the norm, however, giving them their name. Understandably difficult to maintain above the water, they are rarely seen (as a pet or familiar, anyway) by the residents of Sobeteta or other nearby settlements. They are superlative familiars for aquatic elf or merman sorcerers, however, and are often so used.

## COMBAT

**Camouflage (Ex):** A blind medusa can spend a move action to adapt its skin (including texture!) to its surroundings, gaining an additional +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks.

**Ink Cloud (Ex):** 1/minute (up to 3/day): a blind medusa can produce a cloud of jet-black ink in a sphere roughly 6 feet across as a standard action. The cloud provides total concealment; creatures within the cloud suffer the effects of total darkness.

**Skills:** Blind medusa fish have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. They can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. They can use the run action while swimming, provided they swim in a straight line.



### Cormorant

Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1/2 d8 (4 hp)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average), swim 20 ft.
AC: 12 (+1 size, +1 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 11
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-6
Attack: Claw +1 melee (1d3)
Full Attack: 2 claws +1 melee (1d3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1
Abilities: Str 6, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills: Hide +6, Listen +4, Spot +4
Feats: Alertness
Environment: Warm and temperate land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/6
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: -
Level Adjustment: -

Cormorants are common along the coast. They are voracious birds with a long neck and distending pouch under the bill for holding captured fish. Many are caught and trained by fishermen; the birds dive headlong into the sea, returning with their catch to the boat above (usually prompted along by a cord tethering the bird's foot to the fisherman's ankle or boat).

**Hold Breath (Ex):** Because it dives for fish, a cormorant can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

### Curmudgeon

The curmudgeon is found mostly in the trees of the coastal marshes. It is a kind of marmoset, earning its name from the long whisker-like hairs that grow from its face and the streaks of silver running down its neck from the back of its head. They are nimble and curious creatures, typically good-natured despite their name.

A curmudgeon has identical statistics to a weasel (see the *Monster Manual*), with the following change:

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

### Eagle, Crested Sea

The crested sea eagle of the Alubelok and remote Svimohzish coasts is fierce, sharp-eyed and noble. Its likeness is synonymous with courage and ferocity, and carries with it the romantic nostalgia of the sea. Crested sea eagle feathers are a burnt copper in hue, but can range from an almost gold-like color to one that is nearly black. Its hackles arise when angry or aroused, and its shriek pierces the sky.

Certain Deji tribes and islanders have a long-practiced tradition of hunting with the birds the way some land-bound folk use falcons. They more often use the females of the species for this practice, as they are slightly larger and more aggressive than their male counterparts. When taught and cared for by only slightly less fierce clansmen, the eagles can successfully hunt creatures up to four and five times their size, fearing nothing.

Sea eagles are solitary except for brief periods of mating. They prefer huge nests in high, inaccessible places like coastal cliffs and remote promontories. They are territorial, but rarely fight each other—though they respect each others' territorial claim, they rarely do battle. Instead they hurl themselves upon other aerial predators and monsters, sometimes joining together to drive such creatures away. They cannot abide wave shrikes, and will attack them if given the opportunity.

Along the Alubelok Coast these birds of prey are more often seen along the shores of the western islands. An unusually large colony of them live in close proximity along the cliffs along the western and northern shores of Rokalel Island. The men of Tovidó have successfully befriended and tamed smaller sea eagles, adding them to the terns and kestrels and ospreys that often hunt alongside them.

A crested sea eagle has identical statistics to an eagle (see the *Monster Manual*), with the Flyby Attack feat as a bonus feat, and the following addition to skills:

**Skills:** Crested sea eagles gain a +8 racial bonus to Spot checks in daylight.

### Frog, Jeweled

The jeweled frog is another brightly colored creature of the region. The amphibian is a burnished gold in color, with irregular splashes of ruby, emerald and sapphire across its back (hence the name). While they are not poisonous to humans, their skin does produce an irritant that serves to repel most predators and produce a bellyache in those it does not.

A jeweled frog has identical statistics to a toad (see the *Monster Manual*), with the following changes:

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Special Qualities: Amphibious, low-light vision, poison

Poison (Ex): Contact; Fort save (DC 10); initial damage 1d2 Con plus nauseated, secondary damage 1d2 Str.

### Halberd, Red

Small Animal

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

AC: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-3

Attack: Claw +2 melee (1d3+1)

Full Attack: 2 claws +2 melee (1d3+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, marsh move

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +2, Spot +6

Feats: Endurance

Environment: Warm and temperate marsh

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: -

Level Adjustment: -

The red halberd is a strong and striking species of hornbill. Its name comes from the shape and color of the crest atop the bird's head.

Their call is a distinctive, booming cough that can be heard in the swamps up to a mile away. They are bold, cocky and unafraid, showing an inquisitiveness and territoriality more akin to some primates than most birds. They walk as often as the fly, striding around as though the lord of a domain as they hunt for food (which can include nuts, berries, small reptiles and amphibians and even creatures as large as dire rats). The bird's eggs are considered a delicacy in some of the smaller towns of the Alubelok region for their very sharp flavor. This makes the rare bird somewhat more difficult to obtain as a familiar than might otherwise be the case – far more people know their eggs taste good than are aware they make a good magical companion.

The practice of eating red halberd eggs also leads to conflict with certain denizens of the swamp. The more primitive and savage lizardfolk of the Alubelok Swamp regard the Red Halberd as a sacred animal, a manifestation of Turacq (their name for Battle Rager). It is a major transgression to harm such a bird and considered a good omen to see one when setting out to raid or make war. The act of eating an egg is a religious affront of such magnitude that offenders can make no atonement. It is this practice that is most responsible for the constant trouble the cities and towns have with the clans in question—were the

lizardfolk strong enough, they would mount an attack to extirpate the Kalamarans completely. Red halberds can live to be forty or more years old, making them valuable familiars indeed.

### Combat

Skills: Red halberds have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Marsh Move (Ex): Red halberds suffer no movement penalties for moving in marsh terrain.

### Herne

Medium Animal

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Claw +3 melee (1d3+2)

Full Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d3+2) and bite -2 melee (1d3+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, marsh move, sprint

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills: Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2

Feats: Alertness

Environment: Warm and temperate marsh

Organization: Solitary or flock (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: -

Hernes are tall, flightless birds much like ibis, herons or cranes, but approximately the size of emus or ostriches. Their feathers vary in shades of blue and white, occasionally turning to silver. A very few of them have reddish plumage. They are common in swamps and marshes. The feathers of a herne are very fine, and much sought after in trade.

### COMBAT

A herne is not aggressive unless threatened or cornered. They will attack with claws or beak, but only if they are unable to flee.

Marsh Move (Ex): Herne suffer no movement penalties for moving in marsh terrain.

Sprint (Ex): Once every four rounds, a herne can make a burst of high speed, reaching a maximum speed of 60 feet for that round.

### Lizard, Alubelok Monitor

The monitors of the Alubelok Coast are agile climbers and surprisingly good swimmers. Their

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tails are long, flat and dense, helping to propel them through the water. Monitors are carnivorous and will eat just about anything they are capable of tearing apart and gulping down. They readily eat fish, birds, other reptiles and even gripli.

The Alubelok monitor lizard has statistics identical to the monitor lizard found in the Monster Manual.

### Octopus, Uburalas

The uburalas ("pearl-eyes") is a small species of octopus found off the Basiran and Alubelok coast. It is another aquatic creature utilized by some water-breathing spellcasters as a familiar. Most land dwellers do not realize the innate intelligence of octopi, which have the most complex brain of the invertebrates – they possess both long- and short-term memories and are excellent problem-solvers. Aquatic races, particularly merfolk, do not share this ignorance, and many keep octopi in the same manner as land-dwelling folk keep cats and dogs.

An uburalas octopus has identical statistics to an octopus (see the Monster Manual).

### Rumblefrog, Flatheaded

Flatheaded rumblefrogs are a large species of amphibian that can attain the size of a small dog. They have an odd-shaped back, with a seemingly random bone structure that gives their head, spine and ribs a grotesque and uneven appearance. This, along with their splotchy coloration, allows them to blend in quite well with their surroundings. Their name comes from the wide, flattened heads and the noise they make, which is lower and longer than the croak of a typical frog or toad.

A flatheaded rumblefrog has identical statistics to a toad (see the Monster Manual), with the following additions:

Special Qualities: Amphibious, low-light vision, stench

Stench (Ex): When frightened, the rumblefrog excretes a vile cloud of noxious gas identical to a stinking cloud spell in effect (5-foot-radius). They do this to avoid predators or when startled (a rumblefrog must make a successful Will save to avoid producing the cloud when injured or startled, which can be unpleasant if it happens to be a familiar and near its master). Rumblefrogs live in the deeper areas of the Alubelok Swamp.

### Shrike, Wave

Wave shrikes are small but aggressive, often bellicose, predatory birds that live along the coast. They feed on insects, small fishes and other birds.

Fishermen accuse the birds of gluttony; they have a reputation for killing more than they can eat. Wave shrikes are fierce and fearless, unafraid to attack other animals to take their prey. They are not well regarded in Tovid, for they will often kill terns (but rarely eat them, adding insult to injury). The sea eagles of northern Rokalel Island, however, tend to drive these birds away, so they are rarely seen near the Ridara river delta.

Wave shrikes have identical statistics to a hawk (see the Monster Manual), with the bonus feat Endurance.

### Snake, Harlequin

The so-called harlequin snake is simply a small, venomous snake, with scales so brightly colored (yellow, orange, red and green) it verges on gaudy. They are no longer found near human settlements, but can be seen in many of the more remote places along the coast. They are less commonly encountered in the deeper swamp, though it does happen. The gripli prize the snakes' scaled hides and use them to make ornate, ceremonial garb whenever possible.

A harlequin snake has identical statistics to a snake (a tiny viper; see the Monster Manual), with the bonus feat Toughness.

### T'Nerec

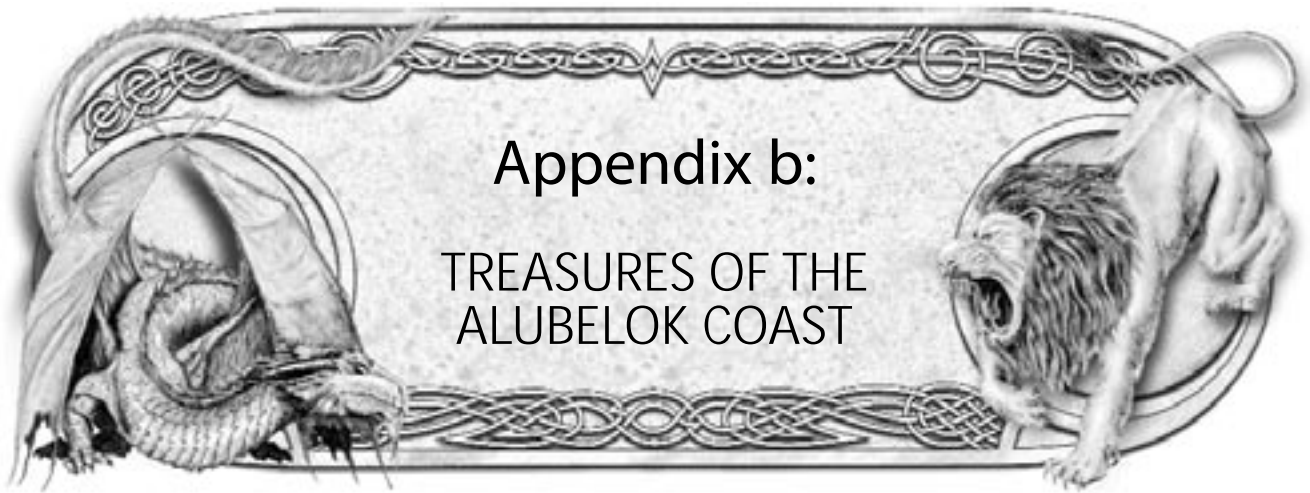
T'nerec are small, furry insectivores found all over the islands of the coast. They have long, pointy snouts and are approximately a foot long, with disproportionately wide paws to paddle around in shallow water. Farmers approve of them because they consume great quantities of insects that might otherwise harm rice and other crops. Some species are also fond of snails. They are also sometimes called sleepyrats (although they are only very distantly related to rats), because they blink constantly and have a shaggy ruff of tousled hair on the top of their heads.

A t'nerec has identical statistics to a rat (see the Monster Manual), with the bonus feat Toughness.

### Tarsier, Woeful

Woeful tarsiers, often called "little woefuls", are tiny, nocturnal mammals usually less than five inches tall. They have long toes for climbing, a narrow tail and disproportionately wide eyes.

While not closely related, woeful tarsiers have the same statistics as a rat (see the Monster Manual), with the addition of the bonus feats Acrobatic and Agile.



## Appendix b:

### TREASURES OF THE ALUBELOK COAST

#### Tern

Terns are commonplace throughout the islands of the Alubelok Coast, but nowhere as prevalent as along the cliffs and shores of Rokalel and Bosinela Islands. Terns are similar to gulls, but more slender, with a long forked tail, smaller bill and a more graceful flight. Many are tamed and kept by the men of Tovidó and other settlements. Oddly, it is not uncommon to see them nesting in areas alongside the powerful ospreys and sea eagles of the region; the birds seem to have a cooperative relationship.

The statistics of a tern are identical to that of a raven (see the Monster Manual), with the bonus feat Agile.

The following minor artifacts are mentioned in tales and legends of the denizens of the Alubelok Coast.

**Edaro's Snarling Trident:** The original provenance of this weapon is unknown, though it is thought to have been the craftsmanship of a B'Remes Edaro, a noted ship captain. The craftsmanship of the trident is excellent, its head crafted of uncorrupted steel and its haft from a straight piece of driftwood ensorcelled to be as strong and long-lasting as adamantine. At the base of the trident's three tines are what lend the weapon its name - three snarling seacat heads, maws agape as though howling, with the metal spike coming forth from their mouths like steel tongues. Edaro's snarling trident was used by Edaro, and later his son and grandson, in numerous ship battles and monstrous encounters at sea. His grandson, unfortunately, died without heir while at sea and the trident was taken by one of his mates against future need.

After several years, the weapon eventually made its way into the hands of a Pekalese adventurer from Motido, and was carried by that worthy with great success in the exploration of numerous coastal ruins along the Kalamaran Sea (and even into the Straits of Svimohzia). Jumar's vessel and crew were accused of piracy (perhaps falsely) by a Kalamaran admiral. Jumar, his adventuring company and all but a few crew members were butchered by that now-unknown admiral after a savage half-day of fighting that shifted from one ship to the next and back again (at least two Kalamaran craft had grappled Jumar's vessel and were firmly alongside). Unknown assailants sank the Kalamaran flagship less than a fortnight later in the Girdsword Strait, its crew and their possessions lost beneath the waves. It is thought that Edaro's snarling trident was later recovered by a hunting party of locathah, and that it may still be in the possession of a chieftain of that race.

## Appendix B: Treasures of the Alubelok Coast

This weapon is a trident +2. The magical properties at the wielder's command will prevent aquatic creatures within 20 feet from attacking him unless they successfully make a Will saving throw (DC 14). Three times per day the wielder of the trident may cast exile (KPG) upon any aquatic creature as though by a 10th-level spellcaster. The range of this magic is only 10 feet, however, and cannot be used upon any creature the wielder cannot clearly see.

Strong enchantment; CL 14th; Weight 4 lbs.

**Gornatt's Bone:** Gornatt's Bone was the prized possession of a Zazahni mercenary captain by the name of Yahul out of the city of Emosvom. Tales say he gained it while fighting hobgoblins in the mountains south of that city, and given the name (Gornatt) engraved upon it, this is a likely tale.

Gornatt's Bone is the end bone from the little finger of a mountain giant, wrapped in silver bands on each end. The name was burned into the bone with some kind of heated stylus, then filled in with silver matching the end-bands. A loop of steel wire is threaded through a hold at the lighter end, by which the item is suspended like a fetish from its bearer's belt or baldric or the like.

To employ the magic of Gornatt's Bone the owner must first clench it in his dominant fist (or either if ambidextrous) tightly enough that the knuckles turn white, then smash his fists together with sufficient strength to cause 1 hp of self-inflicted damage. Subsequent to this, it will give its wielder a temporary +2 STR bonus, with all attendant modifications, for a period of 1d6 turns + 1turn for every 3 points of Strength the owner already possesses (so an owner with a STR 15 will maintain the magically enhanced strength for 1d6+5 turns). The Bone will, in addition to this enchantment, allow the bearer to ignore the first 2 hit points of damage sustained from any crushing or bludgeoning weapon. This latter power remains in effect as long as the Strength bonus does.

Captain Yahul kept and used Gornatt's Bone throughout the bulk of his career. When he drowned (or was drowned) in the Durbattum River, his nephew took it for his own. This nephew, Zhulahni Yahul, was one of many Zazahni that emigrated to the city of Sobeteta to escape the ongoing civil war in his home country. Zhulahni put his martial skills to work in his adopted city by joining the Street Guards there, rising quickly to the rank of sergeant. He was killed in an alley in the City on the Rock several years ago, after which the Bone disappeared for many months. The item turned up again just a few months ago in a squalid harbor-side tavern, in the hands of a brutish and unpleasant Kalamaran galley mate. This individual, whose name was never known, provoked a

fight with a burly half-orc that turned out to be (much to his chagrin) one of the more ferocious gladiators of the city. It was a brief encounter, and a fatal one. To the best of the local Zazahni population's knowledge, Gornatt's Bone remains in the possession of that gladiator. Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Weight 1 lb.

**Glorious Barding of Ichilven:** Crafted by the enchanter Ichilven Peolain, a wizard of Reanaarian and Brandobian ancestry said to have studied under the renowned elven enchantress Shasseril, this barding protects a warhorse from virtually all harm. It is plate barding +4 that encumbers a warhorse as Medium armor. It is an unblemished silver in color, tinted along its curves and flutes with blue and adorned with images of seahorses wrought with electrum and powdered sapphire. A steed clad in this barding can gallop at will across water, quicksand or mud without difficulty, as though it was firm and solid footing. Once per day the rider of a steed so clad can invoke the power of blinding beauty (similar to a nymph – see the Monster Manual). Any humanoid within 30 feet of the horse (save for the rider) who looks directly at it must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be blinded temporarily as though by the blindness spell, for the next 4d6 hours.

The magic of the barding can also haste the steed and rider (as the spell of the same name) for 1d4+1 rounds once each day. Its final (and perhaps most impressive power) allows the steed to rear up on its hind legs, and when its front hooves strike the ground (or water, as the case may be) it will let loose with a thunderclap (as the spell in the KPG). The thunderclap inflicts 5d4 damage to all creatures in a 50-foot-radius, and deafens them as well. A Fortitude save (DC 14) reduces the damage by half and removes the deafness.

The glorious barding of Ichilven's steed supposedly passed from the possession of its creator when he was killed in an attack by undead pirates in the Sea of the Dead, in sight of the sand of the Khydoban Desert. It was recovered by a prominent nobleman-adventurer of Geanavue, Viirigar Eluudas, and used by him for the next decade. It is said that he had never ridden a horse when the armor came into his possession, but that he was so enamored of it that he purchased a massive warhorse from far-off Torakk, then hired a riding-master to teach him.

With his steed so armored, Viirigar rode forth against pirates and aquatic monsters for several years, usually alongside one or more ships he purchased and crews he had hired. He led the heroic life he wanted and wished for, but eventually succumbed to an assassin's poison. From there the barding changed hands many



times over the years, until it is rumored to have been recovered from the lair of a monstrous sea hag by Vanamir the Tall, a cleric of the Swift Sword. It is said that Vanamir possesses it still.

Strong transmutation; CL 16th; Weight: 100 lbs.

**The Pipidal Wand:** Pipidal's Wand is a slender wand of polished birch that has been enchanted with a permanent Ironwood spell. One end (the business end) is carved to show a man's torso with its arms crossed across its chest. There is neither a head nor lower body, though it is clear from the quality of the work that the craftsman possessed sufficient skill to have included them had he desired.

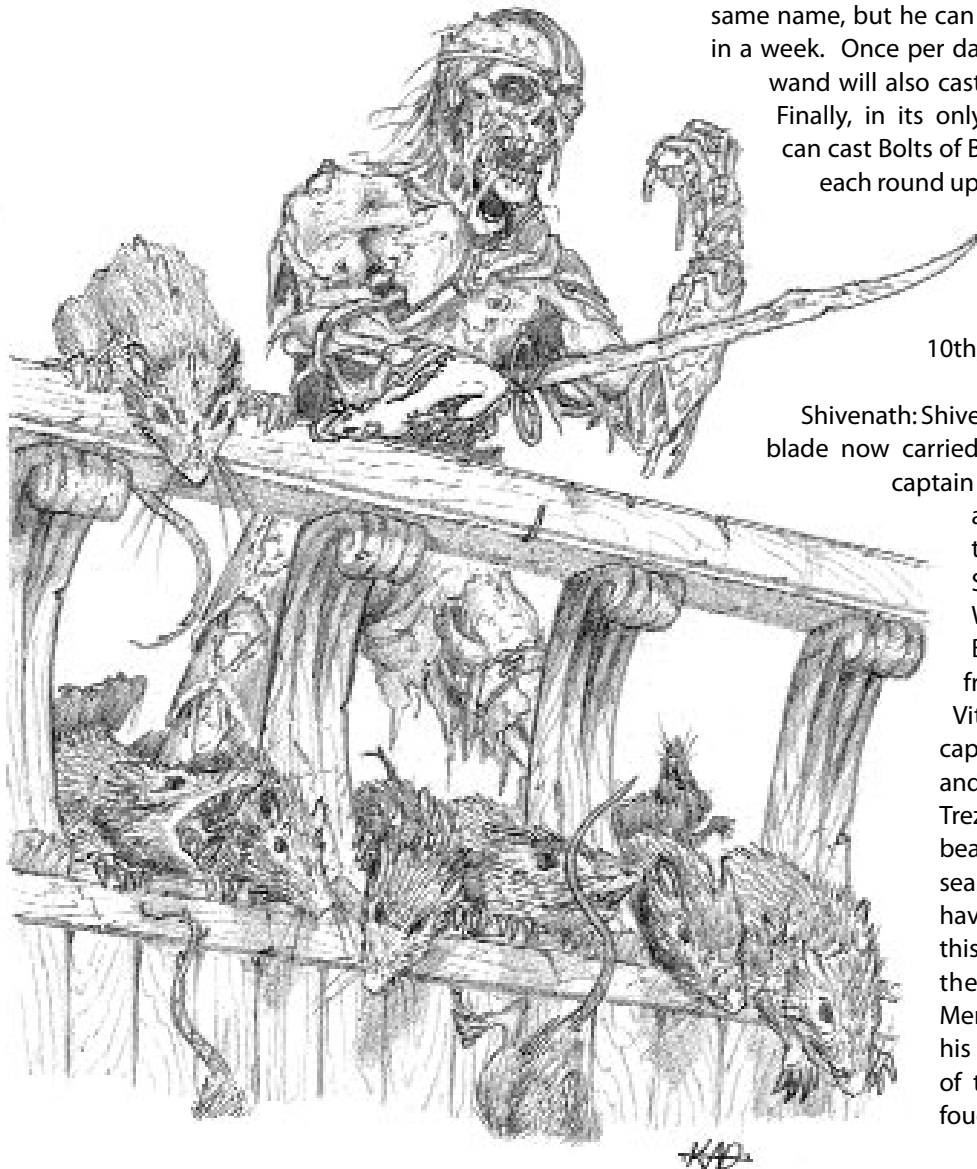
The wand was purportedly taken from a looted tomb near the border with Pekal over a hundred years ago by a Proveurge assigned by the Provost Magi's office of the time. Whether this is true is unclear, but the wand remained in the man's family (the Pipidals of Bet Seder) for over a century, handed down from

one mage to another for three generations. The final member of that family was a Proveurge assigned to the city of Sobeteta, off the Alubelok Coast. He carried and made good use of the item for the entire decade he was assigned to that city. When the time came for Proveurge Pipidal to retire he bequeathed the wand to a constable he had spent his entire tour working with, a Harbor Guard named Sulat Remel. Pipidal had no close family nor even distant relatives to pass the wand on to, and he had developed a sort of paternal relationship with the young constable anyway. Constable Remel kept the wand after Pipidal retired to his home, and is presumed to still have it in his possession.

The Pipidal Wand has several powers. None of them are major, but taken as a whole they make the item very effective. Twice per day each the wand will cast *Bar Creature* (VDH p. 102) at 5TH level of spell use and *Bird's Eye View* (VDH p. 103) at 10TH level of spell use. Once per day the bearer of the wand may cloak himself in *Greater Invisibility* as the spell of the same name, but he can only do so up to three times in a week. Once per day, every day if necessary, the wand will also cast *Analyze Portal* (KPG p. 163). Finally, in its only offensive mode, the wand can cast *Bolts of Bedevilment* (KPG p. 166), one each round up to three rounds in a row. This last power can be utilized thrice per week (for a total of 9 ray attacks).

Moderate divination; CL 10th; Weight: 1 oz.

**Shivenath:** Shivenath is a storied and infamous blade now carried by Skahdal Breaktroth, the captain of *The Mermaid's Promise*, a ship of the dead haunting the waters of the Kalamaran Sea along the Alubelok Coast. When still among the living, Breaktroth took the cutlass from the Olosetan hero Balan Vitisar. Vitisar was a former captain of the Kalamaran navy and the master of the trireme *Trezek's Poor Belly* (her ramming beak was made to look like a seasick dwarf and was said to have magical powers—though this availed her crew none when they crossed paths with *The Mermaid's Promise*). Vitisar, to his credit, actually hewed one of the pirate's arms off as they fought, but was eventually slain



## Appendix B: Treasures of the Alubelok Coast

in the fighting. Breaktroth took the sword and used it to personally chop the surviving crewmen of Trezek's Poor Belly into blood gobbets, which he threw overboard to the sharks. The Mermaid's Promise is now a ship of rotted wood with a dead crew. It comes forth only by night and only in deep fog to prey upon ships crewed by living men. Merchantmen and warships alike must fear the ship, for the undead crew, for the unholy magic they command, and for shivenath, which reaps a bloody harvest in every boarding action it sees.

Shivenath is a keen scimitar+2. The metal of its blade is tarnished, pitted and spotted with crusted bits of old gore, but it has not lost its edge. The hilt of the weapon is crafted in the semblance of a long, sleek rat, its tail wrapped around the tang and a fish protruding from its mouth to form the pommel. Twice per day the weapon can call forth a plague of rats (KPG) as a 12th-level caster. Breaktroth can, and has, conjured forth this disgusting tide of dire rodents onto another ship, gleefully watching their effect upon the terror-stricken crew.

Strong conjuration; CL 14th; Weight: 4 lbs.

**Suvar's Vaunted Girding:** Suvar's vaunted girding was worn first by a great captain of the Svimohzish ruler Vhohmi III. It protected him well as he did battle with hobgoblins despoiling what was then the Duchy of Zazahni near the Tanezh Mountains. This captain, recalled in Svimohzish histories as Suvar the Proud, was by no means the only hero to work great deeds in that war, but he is one of the few recalled in song and rhyme. Suvar fell to a company of bugbear mercenaries in the hobgoblins' employ sometime during Fortnight's Battle. So many were the fallen, however, that his body was never recovered. Nor was the girding. It was presumed carried back into the Krimppatu Mountains by surviving bugbears, or perhaps a band of retreating hobgoblins. The great civil conflict that wracked the kingdom during the next few years prevented anyone from pursuing the matter, and as times grew worse any desire to locate his remains or his magic armor was quickly lost.

Adventurers from Ashoshani eventually recovered the armor many years later when it was learned that a bodyguard of Brog-Tuuakh, king of the hobgoblins, had taken the vaunted girding for himself and attempted to carve out a small fief for himself high in the Krimppatu peaks. They pried the armor from the lair of an ettin somewhere in the Parnor Hills and attempted to return with it to Ozhvinmish.

They were caught by a hobgoblin tribal chieftain and scores of his soldiers in the Zamul Forest, however; all but one, a half-elven mage who escaped by employing sorcerous powers of flight, were slain.

Ownership of the vaunted girding is uncertain for the next several decades, but it was eventually recovered by a Zazahni pirate captain in Zhano-mewhi Bay off the coast of the port at Kazullagh. This captain took it and even wore it for a season or three, but eventually ran afoul of a powerful cleric of the Traveler and was sent to his doom.

Mizovohr Zhamish was the name of that cleric - the same man who eventually became High Worder of his faith. Zhamish wore the vaunted girding for many years on many travels and forays into perilous places. Unfortunately, he vanished in 459 IR along with a large group of fellow clerics and adventurer-followers of The Voyager. They were said to be searching for an ancient temple of Amehz purported to lie in deep waters somewhere off the Alubelok Coast. Much like its first loss, the events and turmoil of the time prevented anyone from attempting to locate him or his company. The location of the vaunted girding remains unknown - indeed, the final resting-place of Mizovohr himself remains a mystery, though it has been earnestly sought in the years since.

Suvar's vaunted girding is a breastplate +3, with a variety of protective magic spells that serve to ward its wearer against harm in battle. The first of these is a protective enchantment that forces any opponent wishing to make an attack of opportunity against the wearer to make a Reflex save (DC 15) in order to strike. The vaunted girding also provides a +2 resistance bonus to Will saves against spells or charm attacks. Lastly, the owner of the vaunted girding is considered to have the Final Breath feat (KPG) so long as it is worn - if at any time he is reduced to 0 hp or less, he may make one last attack of opportunity against any target within reach. However, this attack, the wearer's penultimate gesture, is made at +3 to hit and damage.

Strong conjuration; CL 18th; Weight: 30 lbs.

**Vitisar's Lance:** Vitisar's Lance is an enchanted lance that glitters and gleams constantly as though recently polished and honed, even after the most desperate and bloody combat. Blood and gore seem to just slide off its steel tip. It originally came to light in the hands of the nobleman Sir Vitisar Robilad of Pekal, though most think his claims to nobility were spurious and self-fabricated. Sir Vitisar was a well-known Steel Ribbon

of that country, who formed an adventuring band in the city of Gorido. A regular for many years



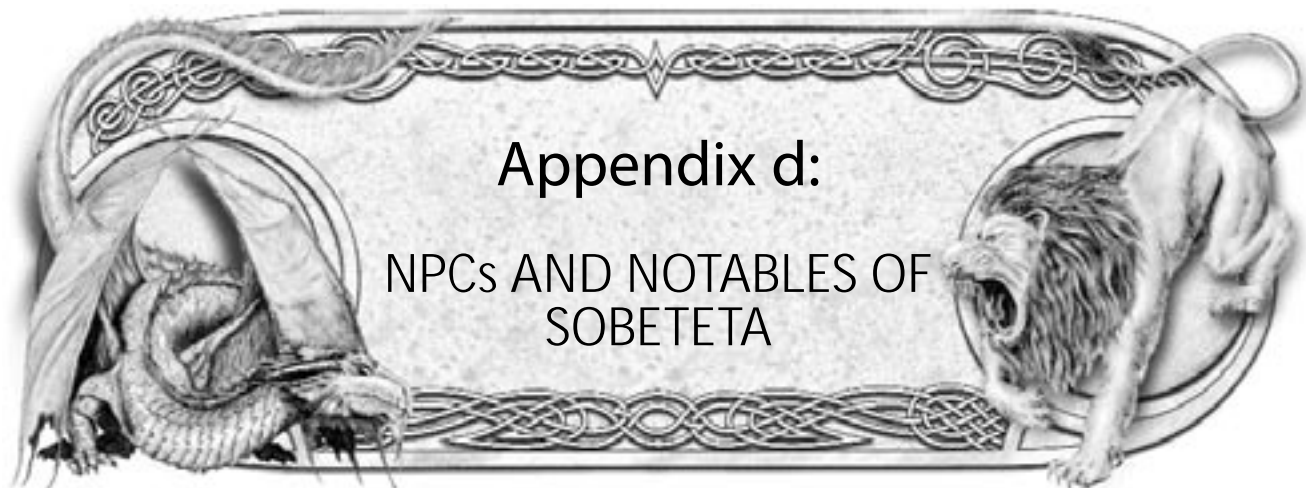

## Appendix C: ADVENTURE HOOKS

at the Inn of the Witch's Cackle, Sir Vitisar adventured up and down the Renador River for a long time. Growing weary of that, he eventually led his band into the Kalokopeli District to "hunt undead" rumored to be coming out of the forests there. After middling success there, the company set sail from Baneta to Basir, intending to go prowling around the Ubikokeli Highlands. This he evidently did, though no one is certain exactly what happened to him there. He and his entire company evidently ventured too close to the Alubelok Swamp and disappeared.

Vitisar's Lance is a +3 Lance that does not abide the touch of blood. Its primary enchantment allows it to ignore any shields it may come up against in combat (negating any AC bonus the shield may render its bearer, magical or otherwise). A secondary enchantment gives its bearer low light vision upon command, but this is only available once per day and then must be activated with a Wisdom check (DC 15). Once activated this enchantment lasts for one turn. Another Wisdom check (also DC 15) activates a Shield (as the spell) up to twice per day, also with a duration of one turn. The Lance's third and last power requires an identical Wisdom check and will Haste the bearer, as the spell, for 3 rounds only and will Haste the bearer's mount as well, if he should be mounted. Lastly the weapon's bonus applies to any ride checks attempted in combat while using the Lance.

The origins of Sir Vitisar's Lance are unknown, much as is the background of the "nobleman" himself. He evidently came from somewhere other than Pekal, but quickly purchased the necessary equipment to join the Steel Ribbons. He is presumed to have brought the lance with him from whence he came. After his disappearance, several nobles of Pekal announced large rewards for the safe return of the weapon. It is doubtful that any of them care whether Vitisar is located or heard from again.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Weight: 10 lbs.



This appendix provides ideas for DMs in search of quests or adventures with which to tackle their players.

- The stronghold of the noted sage Lebasas D'Jarú appears to have collapsed, or to have been destroyed. This fortified manor, used as a landmark by sailors rounding the coast near Tovido, was constructed by artificers of The Builder, so it is doubtful it fell due to a structural deficiency. It was guarded by retired veterans of Kabori's Fourth Legion, gray-haired but hale, so it would have taken a strong foe to reduce the hold by violence. Lebasas D'Jarú was known to research doppelgangers, mimics and other shape-changing creatures, and to have more than a passing interest in lycanthropes and the intricacies of polymorph spells.
- The entire crew of a warship out of Truetide Bight was butchered within the last fortnight. This vessel, found adrift by a pair of Basiran sloops with her decks awash in blood and gore, had been quartering the waters immediately west of the Saltheart Kingdom as though searching for something. The captain and crew of the pirate vessel Wavehunger are being held to blame for the carnage. The clerics of the Bight, as might be expected, are furious.
- The Company of the Strutting Crow, which has made a small fortune over the last few years bringing assorted fantastical creatures, hideous beasts and the alchemically-desirable parts of the same to the docks of Sobeteta for sale, recently hove off to Rethido with several cages packed with goblins. Sometime during the evening at least a score of the foul things burst their shackles and got over the side, gutting several sailors in the process. At least one of the company (it isn't known which) was badly wounded in the fight and may wind up losing a hand. A sizeable reward for the destruction of the escaped pack is being offered in the name of Duke Sorabek II.
- One of the Emperor's infantrymen staggered into Sobeteta recently, more dead than alive. This was not that unusual, patrol duties being as dangerous as they are. The oddity is the fact that the trooper wore the insignia of the First Legion, out of Bet Kalamar.

The gravely wounded soldier managed to stagger out bits of a rather unbelievable story before succumbing to his injuries, despite the best efforts of a cleric to keep

him alive. According to the soldier's tale, his platoon had been tasked with scouring a small, long-abandoned dwarf outpost in the Kakidelas before pushing towards the Jenth Ridges. This they did, and while there they discovered a cunningly hidden passage leading deep into the heart of the mountain.

The troops explored the passage, emerging after a few hours into another dwarven hold. There, evidently, they encountered something (or several somethings) of such a dire nature that they were unable to stand before it. Whatever the creature was, it went through them like a scythe through wheat. The survivors fled, hastening through strange, twisting passageways the likes of which they had never seen. The last officer alive succumbed to his wounds somewhere in that deep place, and two troopers were caught and devoured by subterranean predators as they made their way up the walls of a deep crevice towards the surface. The last soldier alive finally made his way to the surface, emerging from a cave in the hills north of the mythar (deep gnome) city of Dakelvail. Though badly wounded, he began to make his way south and was finally found by halfling herdsman. They delivered the man to a passing patrol, who immediately returned with him to Sobeteta.

The mystery of this bizarre occurrence is the talk of the city. Speculation is rampant - how does one explain a walk of a few hours carrying the Emperor's soldiers from the Kakidela Mountains across the breadth of Dodera and Kalamar and all the way across part of Kalamaran Bay? Typical of military bureaucracy, an investigative expedition is only slowly being outfitted. Adventuring companies and bands of peril-seekers of all sorts, however, have been leaving town and heading westward for the last week. The mythar are also said to be curious - even worried - about the story, and may be looking into the matter themselves.

- An adventuring company calling itself the Iron Few has departed Sobeteta for islands eastwards. These stout fellows announced their intention to explore several of the ruins around Sahuagin's Grieve. This occurs just weeks after they are rumored to have refused a request to go looking for Carstanaughir the Black on behalf of persons unknown. The Iron Few, originally hailing from Oloseta, are led by a malakbar-wielding former bounty hunter, seconded by a Keyholder from the temple at Falikido and looked after by a towering half-orc named

Hark Abuto. Their captain is mostly known for the armor he wears, a suit of plate armor that gleams like the scales of a fish and is said to lend him powers of movement underwater and communication with the creatures that dwell there (plate armor of the deep), as well as for his unabashed intention to earn a patent of nobility from Emperor Kabori.

#### Sulhagh "the Snarler"

Male half-orc, Class Barbarian/Gladiator 2/4: CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (half-orc); HD 2d12+4d10+18; HP 57; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13; Atk +10 (penalties for attacking with two weapons will apply), Dwarven Ugrush (Damage 1d8+4/1d6+4, Crit x3; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8. Height 6'2".

Skills and Feats: Appraise +0, Balance +2, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Concentration +3, Craft +0, Diplomacy -1, Disguise -1, Escape Artist +1, Forgery +0, Gather Information -1, Handle Animal +2, Heal +0, Hide +1, Intimidate +2, Jump +4, Knowledge (Fighting Styles) +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +1, Perform -1, Ride +1, Search +0, Sense Motive +3, Spot +1, Survival +0, Swim +4, Tumble +10, Use Rope +1. Dodge feat, Mobility feat (+4 Dodge bonus to attacks of opportunity caused by moving out of or into a threatened area), Spring Attack feat (can move before and after the attack if using attack action with melee weapon, provided that total distance moved is not greater than speed; does not provoke an attack of opportunity from target).

Class Abilities: Barbarian Rage 1/day, Fast Movement (+10 ft./round in no, light or medium armor), Uncanny Dodge (retain Dex bonus to AC when flat-footed), Center of Attention (morale bonus of +1 per factor of 10 in the audience), Arena Veteran (+1 attack of opportunity/round), Bonus Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Dwarven Ugrush), Feint (+4 when attempting to use Bluff skill to feint in combat and when using Sense Motive to detect a feint), Weapon Diversification (suffers only -2 penalty using non-proficient weapons).

Languages: Orc, Merchant's Tongue

Appearance and Mannerisms: While Sulhagh is not as orcish in appearance as some, no one looking at him would ever mistake him for a human (nor would they have even before the disfiguring wound he suffered in the arena). He has dark green, almost black, eyes and black hair that he hacks off himself. He does not wear his trademark armor when walking around the city; that is only for the arena. If he isn't fighting in the arena he is usually

garbed in a studded leather coat, carrying just his vilely enchanted dagger for a weapon and wearing sandals on his feet. Sulhagh's teeth are not overtly tusk-like but they have obviously rarely been cleaned, if ever, and a large number of them show through the hole in his jaw. He does not speak much, though he understands Merchant's Tongue, and rarely initiates any conversation. Sulhagh frequents several taverns and shops in the vicinity of Gor Lisadera and never goes through the gates into the lower city. There was a very disreputable brothel he favored down by the docks, but after a fight with a Kalmaran naval officer that ended in the man's death (he was cleared of the death by the Harbor Guard when numerous witnesses reported that the other man provoked the fight). Since that time he has avoided the place.

Notable Possessions: Specially crafted cord armor (no bonus), dwarven ugrush, Bracelet of Eyes, Dagger of Disease, Gornatt's Bone. He is known to possess great wealth as well, though he wears no outward sign of it.

Background: Sulhagh is one of the more prominent, even notorious, gladiators in the City on the Rock. Hailing originally from the Chuul-Skin orc tribe of the Alubelok Swamp, the half-breed was known in that tribe for his fighting ability at an early age. After defeating a bullying black orc at the age of just 16, he was selected by a black orc rival of the fellow he'd killed to accompany a ranagran hunting party traveling south along the Ridara river hunting for chuul. Though the hunt was fairly successful in other ways (including the defeat of a Sethome Deji scouting party), the band was unable to locate any chuul. After several weeks abroad in the swamp, the band's leader chose, unwisely, to assault a river barge traveling to Sobeteta for loot before returning home. That particular barge, however, was guarded not only by several hardened mercenaries but by a pair of spellsingers who'd agreed to help the merchant's defense in return for passage downriver. Sulhagh's was the only survivor of the ensuing fight, and he himself was petrified.

Once in Sobeteta, the bargemaster sold the petrified half-orc to P'Naru Baras, a former gladiator from Bet Kalamar who owned a large fighting "stable". P'Naru saw something he liked in the hulking half-orc and, taking a chance, paid to have the enchantment on him reversed.

Sulhagh quickly proved to be a worthwhile investment, rapidly becoming a favorite of the crowd and a sure bet in gladiatorial contests. He was particularly good when pitted against multiple heavier armored opponents, where he was able to use his speed and



## Appendix D: NPCs and Noteables of Sobateta

superior mobility to whittle groups as large as four down to a single opponent, followed by a theatrical finish that usually left four corpses in the sand.

After two years of this, Sulhaugh was teamed up with a dwarf slave taken in the Ka'Asas. Thinking it both ironic and humorous, P'Naru had them switch the weapons they were accustomed to. Sulhaugh began fighting with the urgrush spear-axe and his dwarf partner, Dorvallik Bregard, was forced to wield Sulhaugh's orc-made broadsword. Sulhaugh and Dorvallik gained quite a reputation as a duo, fighting not just in Sobeteta but in Bet Kalamar, Aroroleta and even Bet Seder. The dwarf, however, was killed in a triumphant return match when the traveling troop of gladiators arrived in Sobeteta. The fight was between he and Sulhaugh atop a flat-topped, wench-drawn wain and a lamia imported at great expense from the Elos Desert. Sulhaugh survived the fight, though barely, but suffered a wound that left his face permanently disfigured. The scar left a gaping whole in his cheek, revealing most of the teeth in the right side of his mouth (hence the named he's been called ever since, "Sulhaugh the Snarler").

That was six years ago. One year ago, Sulhaugh gained his freedom by craftily betting on one of his own matches through a factor that profited handsomely from the deal. P'Naru didn't care to let the money-making fighter go, but had no way to wriggle out of the deal. Since that time Sulhaugh has continued to fight in Gor Lisadera and has amassed a considerable fortune doing so, even defeating a prized ogre gladiator of Baruta's Gladiator School of Bet Kalamar. He currently lives in a small dwelling in a walled compound of free gladiators just a few minutes walk south of the great arena. Rumor has it that P'Naru has engaged in several attempts to regain control of the half-orc, and it is well known that the gladiator bears his former owner considerable ill-will. Sulhaugh has disappeared from the city twice to places unknown. There are only a very few who know his actual background, and these are all other gladiators. They believe he has traveled back into the swamps to his home tribe on those occasions.

Sulhaugh fights in a suit of cord armor crafted specifically for him. It is made of three different-hued vines (two greens and a black) from the Vohven jungle, woven in such a way as to give a tiger-striped aspect. He still carries the urgrush he gained from his former partner, a weapon with a haft wrapped in cord to match his armor (as have the cuffs and ankles of his hobnailed boots). None are magical, though he does possess the following items; a Bracelet of Eyes (casts the spell Eyes Open (KPG) three times per day at 6TH level of magic use), a Dagger of Disease (KPG p. 198) and Gornatt's Bone (q.v.).

### Corporal Sulat Remel, The Harbor Guard

Male human, Class Rogue/Fighter/Muse 1/4/2: CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d6, 3d10, 3d6+7; HP 47; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +10 (1d6+5 unless using quarterstaff defending ability); SQ N/A.; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 16. Height 5'9".

Skills and Feats: Appraise +1, Balance +3, Bluff +6, Climb +2, Craft +1, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +0, Forgery +1, Gather Information +9, Heal +2, Hide +1, Intimidate +7, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +9, Move Silently +0, Pantomime +2, Perform +12, Search +1, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8, Survival +2, Swim +3, Use Rope +0. Alertness feat (+2 to Listen and Spot checks), Circle of Friends feat (+4 to Gather Information and Intimidate checks in Sobeteta), Fable Weaver (+4 to Perform checks when telling stories)\*, Glib Tongue (+4 to Bluff and Diplomacy checks if speaking is involved)\*, Improved Initiative (+4 Initiative checks), Improved Subdual (staff), Skill Focus (+3 to Perform checks)

\* Bonus not included in above skill statistics.

Class Abilities: Sneak Attack +1d6, Trapfinding, Keen Ear and Eye (+2 bonus to all Listen, Spot and Search checks), Inspire Greatness (one listener gets a +4 competence bonus on skill check while muse recites inspirational words).

Languages: Merchant's Tongue, Kalamaran, Svimohz, Brandobian.

Spells (2): charm person, hypnotism, message, silent image, sleep.

Appearance and Mannerisms: Sulat Remel is a deceptively unassuming fellow, a seemingly mild-mannered man with an unprepossessing appearance. His hair is a sandy brown with a hint of red in it, which he wears fairly short and has a pronounced widow's peak. He has grey eyes and a somewhat slender build, and has a notably bent finger on his left hand (the result of a fight on the docks long ago). He speaks softly and often appears distracted, though he is not, and has a tendency to repeat things others say to him before responding ("You're staying at the Ridara's Gate Tavern then, hmmm...staying at the Ridara's Gate..."), whether they're answering a question or just engaging him in conversation. He tends to shuffle a little bit as he walks and taps his fingers on the helve of his quarterstaff almost constantly. Sulat Remel is 5'9" tall and weighs 160 lbs.



**Notable Possessions:** A Potion of Charisma, a Potion of Heroism, 2 Potions of Healing, Boots of Levitation, a +3 Quarterstaff (with the power of Defending) and The Pipidal Wand. Remel foregoes the usual brigandine armor of his troop in favor of leather since it carries a smaller chance of arcane spell failure. Dagger, 1 dose white ilem blossom (KPG), 2 smotherblend vials, 1 dose merfolk musk, 1 dose of Second Wind (KPG).

**Background:** Sulat Remel has been a constable in Sobeteta for nearly fifteen years, the first five spent as a Street Guard and the latter ten with the Harbor Guards. He has held a corporal's rank for the last four years and turned down a promotion to sergeant twice (saying he wanted to concentrate on real constable work rather than having to supervise others as they performed such duties). He is well known along the docks of his district and elsewhere in the city, and has a well-earned reputation for dogged persistence when it comes to tracking down his quarry or uncovering unlawful activity.

Remel was a street urchin, born into bastardy in the slums of Sobeteta. He grew up the hard way, garnering extra coin for his family (he had two sisters) by pilfering and committing petty acts of thievery. This continued until he was past twenty years of age. By the spring of his 24TH year Remel was being considered for induction into the thieves' guild and had a reputation amongst certain smugglers as a clever man who could justify nearly anything at need and was good at thinking on his feet. It was said that despite his relative youth and lack of formal training there was no one better in the underside of the city at misleading the City Guard.

All that changed, however, when his mother was taken by slavers and his sisters were viciously assaulted while he was away (two of them bear terrible scars to this day). The young thief immediately sought help from his cohorts and those that had employed him in the past, but the slavers that had taken her were powerful amongst criminal circles, and wealthy to boot. He received no help and was unable to recover her. It was the last he ever saw of her.

This traumatic event changed Remel's view of the world. Within a week he had managed to enlist in the City Guard (an act that required every bit of glibness he could muster), and within a year he had proved himself a dutiful constable and excellent investigator with a great future.

Corporal Remel is known in the Guard for his ability to talk to anyone and to know instinctively when someone is lying to him, even without magecraft. He has earned many powerful enemies amongst the criminal element of the City on the Rock, though this

does not seem to perturb or disturb him any. He is now a fixture in the Harbor District and the first one to talk to with questions or problems. He uses his abilities as a muse to better the constables he works with and to assist his sisters, who are all renowned painters in the city. Remel has several magic items, though he does not advertise the fact. The most powerful of these is The Pipidal Wand, which he carries in the hollow end of the capped quarterstave he bears on his rounds.

#### Donoro Bebeta, The Right Valorous Sacristy of the Swift Sword

Male human, Class Paladin 10: CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 10d10 +30; HP 87; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (Full Plate, no shield); Atk +13/+8 (Longsword 1d8+3); SQ N/A.; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +1, Balance +1, Bluff +2, Climb +3, Concentration +3, Craft +1, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +1, Forgery +1, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +3, Heal +14, Hide +1, Knowledge (Nobility) +5, Knowledge (Religion; the Knight of the Gods) +6, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +1, Perform +2, Ride +14, Search +1, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Survival +1, Swim +3, Use Rope +1. Mounted Combat feat (Ride check 1/round in combat to avoid hit to mount in combat), Power Attack feat, Ride-By Attack feat (move and attack as a standard charge then move again), Spirited Charge feat (mounted and using charge action deal double damage with melee weapon), Valiant Stature feat (as spell Righteous Might 1/week and enhance saving throws of allies. q.v.).

**Class Abilities:** Detect Evil, Divine Grace (+2 to saving throws), Lay on Hands (20 hp/day), Divine Health (immune to diseases), Aura of Courage (immune to fear, +4 morale bonus vs. fear effects to allies within 10 ft.), Smite Evil (+10 damage to one normal melee attack against an evil target), Remove Disease 3/week, Turn Undead (5/day). Spells (2/1).

**Languages:** Merchant's Tongue, Kalamaran.

# TOWN OF RETHIDO



0 10 80  
1 inch = 80 ft.



# SAHUAGIN'S GRIEVE

0 20 40  
1 inch = 40 ft.



# TOWN OF TOUIDO



0 40 80  
1 inch = 80 ft.

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