

Kingdoms of Kalamark



SVIMOHZIA
The Ancient Isle

Svimohzia: THE ANCIENT ISLE

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WHAT IS KALAMAR?

The *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting provides a vibrant land alive with rich cultures, imminent danger and complex intrigue. It is also a world rife with adventure, where fantastic creatures roam the wilderness, evil clerics worship deities hell-bent on destruction, and the dead rise again to spread terror throughout the world. Here, complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids, and technology and industry come face to face with magic and the fantastic.

Combining all the elements of fantasy you've come to enjoy with a strong medieval world based on real geographical, social and political features, this dynamic world remains enjoyable long after the novelty of the "tourist bazaars" wears thin. Whether you dream of exploring the ruins of a lost civilization, warring with barbarian horselords for control of territory, guarding your elven home against the human threat or ridding the desert of undead abominations, the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* provides the where and how, without sacrificing continuity or common sense.

The setting is named after the great Kalamaran Empire, which once covered much of the continent of Tellene. But time weighs heavy upon all, and the empire's reach is not what it once was. Its provinces declare independence, hobgoblin kingdoms thrive and foreign empires expand, while the monsters of the land grow stronger than ever.

Many races of beings populate Tellene, including humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, hobgoblins and a variety of monsters. The lands of Tellene are often referred to as the Sovereign Lands, and include the kingdoms of Brandobia, the Kalamaran Empire, the cities and city-states of Reanaaria Bay, the Isle of Svimohzia, the Wild Lands and the Young Kingdoms.

WHAT IS SVIMOHZIA?

A great island continent, Svimohzia (rhymes with "swim-zee-uh") has a checkered history built on conquest, revenge, treachery and betrayal. Much of Svimohzia remains a place of unspoiled, verdant beauty, with vast stretches of land so far uncultivated by human hands. Areas scarred by warfare, plague and tragedy, dominate other parts of the island, with sprawling metropolises serving as the seats of power for those strong enough to hold them. Yet, no matter where you journey, you will find Svimohzia is a place ripe for legends both old and new.

Considering Svimohzia's cultural and historical placement in Tellene, it is fitting it should be the first book covering a region in such extensive detail, peeling away the half-truths and secrets to unearth the foundations of civilization. This book promises unprecedented detail, building on the foundation of the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting and other sources to explore Svimohzia in a complete and mature manner, fleshing out its varied cultures, the complex interplay between nation-states, and the dangers posed by the trackless wilderness.

In short, this book provides everything needed to run a campaign in this vibrant and exciting land.

As this book deals with the peoples and places of Svimohzia, we refer to time and chronological events employing the Coming of Miznoh (C.M.) calendar, which is used by most of the island's human population. The Kingdom of Ahznomahn differs, using Imperial Reckoning (I.R.; the Kalamaran calendar), while humans and foreign colonies may use their own system of dating. For details on how C.M. compares with Imperial Reckoning and other dating systems, consult the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook*.

ORGANIZATION

Chapter One: Races and Regions presents a detailed listing of available character races native to Svimohzia, plus a new reorganization of character regions and an updated regional feat system, with revisions of some Svimohz-specific feats. The new, more specific character regions included here better represent the options for PC and NPC characters originating on the Svimohzish Isle.

Chapter Two: Classes and Paths discusses character options (including starting packages for every class), and also includes several new career paths and prestige classes.

Chapter Three: Weapons, Equipment and Magic presents setting-specific options for weapons and equipment common to native characters, and lists a variety of new spells most commonly found in this land.

Chapters Four through Nine detail the major kingdoms, cities and regions of the Svimohzish Isle, from mercantile Ahznomahn to war-torn Zazahni and beyond.

Chapter Ten: Svimohzish Adventures provides Svimohzia-specific adventure ideas available to the DM, and offers tips on incorporating these into your own game.

The Appendices covers statistics for new NPCs and monsters, as well as the glossary and index.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

This campaign resource assumes that you have access to 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 supplements the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* fantasy campaign setting, it is also useful to have the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

If you are not using the D&D v.3.5 system, simply ignore or revise the game mechanics to fit your own campaign. Fortunately, a clever DM should be able to utilize most of the material in this tome for any other game system or fantasy campaign setting.

HackMaster players can find conversion information for this product on the *Kenzer and Company* website.



CHAPTER I: RACES AND REGIONS

For game mechanics, this supplement uses the *Dungeons & Dragons* rules found in the *D&D Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If you have ever played in a D&D game, then you already know almost every rule you need to adventure on the Svimohzish Isle. However, there are a few important differences, including cultural details, regions, equipment and more material designed specifically for Svimohzia campaigns.

To create a 1st-level D&D character, turn to the beginning of the *Player's Handbook* and use the steps outlined in the Character Creation section. However, particularly when it comes to choosing your character's race and class, refer back to this book to review the options specifically designed for this supplement.

If you are using another game system with this book, simply ignore the game mechanics, or adapt them to fit your own campaign. As with other *Kingdoms of Kalamar* products, the background material and flavor text of this book is rules-free, and can easily be placed into any world you choose.

NOMENCLATURE

Ahznom: A resident of Ahznomahn.

Ahznomahnii: Things originating in Ahznomahn.

Dejy: The most diverse and widespread of all the human races; many tribes live in the Vohven Jungle.

Kargi: A resident of, or something originating in, the hobgoblin kingdom of Ul Karg.

Meznam: A resident of Meznamish.

Meznamishii: Things originating in Meznamish.

Ozhvin: A resident of Ozhvinmish.

Ozhvinmishii: Things originating in Ozhvinmish.

Sil-karg: A half Kargi.

Svimohz: A resident of Svimohzia.

Svimohzish: Things originating in Svimohzia.

Vohnazni: Svimohzish name for the world of Tellene.

Zazahni: A resident of, or something originating in, Zazahni.

RACES OF TELLENE

Each of the races described in the *Player's Handbook* is present in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting, though they are known by names specific to Tellene. For example, the standard elf is a *lathlani*, or high elf, although gray elves, shadow elves, wild elves and wood elves are also possible characters. Hill dwarves, forest gnomes, and lightfoot halflings correspond to the *Player's Handbook* dwarf, gnome, and halfling, respectively. Humans (Brandobian, Dejy, Fhokki, Kalamaran, Reanaarian and Svimohz), hobgoblins and orcs also have specific subraces on Tellene, though half-elves, half-hobgoblins and half-orcs do not.

RACES OF SVIMOHZIA

While characters of any race can travel to the Svimohzish Isle in search of adventure, not all races make their home here. The dominant race, of course, is the Svimohz human, followed by the Kargi hobgoblin. These two predominant races also share the continent with mountain, hill and stone dwarves, dark, wood and wild elves, rock and forest gnomes, lightfoot halflings, orcs and a variety of other humans and humanoids.

Svimohz Humans

The Svimohz have dark skin and a wide range of facial features that vary from region to region. Svimohz live throughout the land, except in Ul-Karg, wholly dominated by hobgoblins, and in the west, which many people avoid because of the Mendarn (formerly Pel Brolenese) colony of Vrandol. While the Mendarns are less belligerent than the Brolenese, many Svimohz formerly residing there have migrated east or north to friendlier places.

Svimohz primarily speak Svimohzish, except in Ahznomahn (where they commonly speak Merchant's Tongue) and some of the folk who live near the Malachite Heights, where Dwarven is as common as Svimohzish. Those who live in Ozhvinmish and Meznamish also have their own dialect of Svimohzish, causing some confusion among travelers from other lands.

Chapter One: Races and Regions

The Svimohz often have sprawling, close-knit families, especially in Ozhvinmish, Meznamish and rural Zazahni. Family ties are very tight, and foreigners who fall in love with a Svimohz must make a good impression on the family or risk losing their paramour's affection. Otherwise, Svimohz have the racial characteristics of humans described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Ahznoms: Nearly a century ago, during the Meznamishii Empire's war with the hobgoblins, the Duchy of Ahznomahn declared its independence. Now the economic power of the island, Ahznomahn is a confederacy run by a Parliament of well-to-do merchants, wealthy barons and rich landholders. Yet, even before the confederacy declared independence, they were well known for their talents in sailing, shipbuilding and woodworking – traits they continue to maintain today.

Some people believe all Ahznoms are cutthroat merchants bent on economic conquest and beholden to the Golden Alliance, and are wary when dealing with them. While this is true of many Ahznoms, it scarcely defines the varied outlooks and opinions at home in this nation. Most Ahznoms want nothing more than to live without oppression from the zurenas of Parliament or a monarchy. There is a strong anarchistic trend in many of the commoners, who feel the transition of power has not improved their lives, and look back fondly on the days of old.

Many of the current Ahznoms are descended from the Zassho folk, the land's indigenous peoples. Other Ahznoms are of various Svimohz heritage, possibly including some foreign blood, as such travelers and merchants can be found here. In fact, with the constant influx of immigrants from Kalamar and the Reanaaria Bay region, marriages between peoples of other regions are becoming more common, making it increasingly more difficult to identify a common racial trait among contemporary urban Ahznoms.

Most mainland Ahznoms have shiny black skin and soft pleasant features. They wear their hair short, and few men wear beards, due to the humidity and heat in this region. Ahznoms of pure Zassho blood are slightly shorter than their mainland kin, and almost all Ahznoms have black hair and dark eyes. Occasionally, hazel and blue eyes emerge, but these are rare and such an appearance is always an omen for good or ill.

Meznames: Historically, the Meznam people were a relatively small group that lived near the Zhano-Mewhi Bay and moved north to the Mewzhano Bay. Their leaders were strong, particularly a chieftain known as Miznoh, and soon many conquered lands and tribal leaders swore allegiance to him. King Miznoh's Meznamishii Empire lasted for fifteen generations of relative peace until Fortnight's Battle and economic problems caused its collapse.

Now, nearly a century later, the peaceful ways of the Meznamish people are long gone, for being part of the greatest Svimohzish Empire known changed them. Some individual Meznames still bear open hostility to the folk of the seceded kingdoms, particularly their Ozhvin and Zazahni neighbors.

Still, most folk seem content with their lot and friendly towards their neighbors, though they dream of better days and might quickly rise to a national call to war. Most Meznames are hard bargainers, something they have in common with their Ahznom cousins, but they place trade beneath family.

All of today's Meznames are tall, with sharp angular features, long beards and athletic builds. Their skin is ebony, and almost all Meznames have brown or black eyes, with gray and hazel being rare. Like many on the island, Meznames wear their hair short to keep cool in the sub-tropical climate.

Mewhi: The Mewhi folk, from whom the Mewhi Marsh takes its name, once lived in Zazahni, where they lived until the land's secession from the Meznamishii Empire and collapse of the new Zazahni kingdom into widespread civil war. Those Mewhi who escaped the destruction settled in the foothills of the Tanezh Mountains, and are now part of Meznamish. Pureblooded Mewhi also live in Ozhvinmish and (occasionally) in Zazahni.

Most Mewhi would rather negotiate before fighting, ready to make concessions to avert unnecessary bloodshed. Their agreeable nature does not suggest they are incapable of defending themselves, however. They are strong-willed, but value the sanctity of life over the trivialities that so often lead to death.

In appearance, they resemble Meznames, but tend to be just a bit taller and heavier.

Ozhvins: It is from the native tribes of this land (including some Zassho tribes) that an upstart named Mewzhano left for the riches of the west. There, he and his followers conquered its primitive fishing tribes and forged a new kingdom. A generation later one of his descendents, Miznoh by name, eventually arose to form the Meznamishii Empire, and returned to bloodily conquer Mewzhano's original tribe and its neighbors.

However, in time, the Duchy of Ozhvinmish seceded from the Empire. It is now the largest of the Svimohzish nations (a fact in which its people take great pride), but actually operates like two separate states with separate capitols. The King runs the western state, while a steward manages the eastern province.

Ozhvin personalities vary based on the region in which they live. Those in the west are conscious of social rules, while those of the east shun the values of their ancestors and show admiration (mixed with a heavy dose of jealousy) towards Ahznomahn. Even those in the south seem more like neighboring Zazahni than the Ozhvins of east and west. The reason behind these unusual psychological tendencies comes, perhaps, from their lack of identity. Miznoh struck the tribes living here hard, destroying centuries of culture and identity. He left in his wake a shattered people, searching for their place in the empire. Consequently, many lack their own system of values and adopt those nearest to them.

The modern Ozhvins are tall and handsome, with gentle features and lithe builds. Those in the west often bear traces of Meznam bloodlines, as evidenced by sharp and angular features. Traces of elven blood are common in those from the Miznoh

Forest, having pointed ears, somewhat lighter skin and slighter frames.

Zassho: The name for the ancestral peoples of eastern Svimohzia and the Mezh-Vowmi Isle. See Ahznoms and Ozhvins (above) for more information on these folk.

Zazahni: Miznoh's conquest forever changed the lives of the southern Mewhi people. In an effort to avoid unwanted warfare, they accepted the emperor, and refused to fight him and his legions. As they pledged their loyalty to the Emperor, sickened by the death, he spared the Mewhi, and let them live their lives as they would, but as subjects of the Empire. With Miznoh came soldiers of Meznam-Zassho blood who took wives from the Mewhi people, creating the modern Zazahni. However, some pureblooded Mewhi retained their independence and their racial heritage, avoiding contact with their conquerors. After Zazahni collapsed from a cohesive state into a chaotic civil war, some of these pureblooded Mewhi fled to Meznamish and Ozhvinish, while a few others remain in Zazahni.

Modern Zazahni are the descendants of the Mewhi and Meznam-Zassho ancestors. Culturally confused, they understand the value of peace, but feel that peace is achievable only on their terms. Most Svimohz have a difficult time interacting with these people for long, and often call them duplicitous.

Zazahni are less muscular than the Meznams, but their shorter builds make them look barrel-chested and ungainly. They have broad faces, wide noses and soft brown eyes. They have the darkest coloring of all the people in Svimohzia.

Vohven Deju Humans

Pockets of native Deju reside within the Vohven Jungle, driven deep into the jungle by the more warlike races, especially the Kargi hobgoblins. Their first movement was southward, in avoidance of the wild elf tribes of the north, and in the hope of finding new lands on the other side of the jungle. Failing that, they then moved northward again, acquiring new social customs and survival skills along the way as they fought against the frightening moss trolls, green apes and other creatures that lived beneath the green canopy. Once settled in their new location they split into three major factions divided into east, west and south. They then further divided into smaller groups, which remain largely separated and independent due to their geographic isolation in this massive and largely uncharted wilderness covering nearly 150,000 square miles.

While most outsiders believe that all Vohven Deju are barbaric savage, in truth, however, over half of the tribes are peaceful hunter-gatherers who want nothing more than to live their lives in peace and do battle only when attacked. Each tribe has a leader (an *Ony*), who gains his position either through inheritance, participation in title associations, or selection by the residing *Ony*. Every *Ony* is a direct descendant of the founding *Ony* of each tribe.

Some of the more prominent groups are listed below, though the jungle is vast, and the DM may choose to add more with little to no hope of overcrowding. Most Vohven Deju stand about 4 1/2 to 5 feet tall, with skin in varying shades of brown,



An unusual meeting of Meznam, Ahznom, Kargi, savage Vohven Deju, Zazahni and Ozhvin.

c. cleveland 2004

Chapter One: Races and Regions

black hair, dark brown eyes and speak in a halting, staccato manner punctuated with clicks and whistles.

Players interested in creating a Vohven Deji should first get DM permission, and discuss why the character left his jungle home. Perhaps one of his victims showed him kindness, or introduced him to a faith more lawful or good aligned than his own, and he left his tribe to learn more about this new knowledge. On the other hand, perhaps he is merely a wanderer who learned to suppress his savage nature around others who would not understand. Still, how long can this self-control last...?

Jynavi: All members of these golden-brown skinned tribes respect the dead, including not only the deceased but also those not yet born, and pay homage to them. Worship of the Harvester of Souls, the Bear and the Mother of the Elements is prominent here, and religious rituals attempt to achieve balance between the dead, the nature spirits, the earth and the living. These people live in tiny, self-governing villages tucked inside dense groves of trees. Their round, mud-walled houses are compact, sitting slightly above the ground with cone-shaped thatch roofs. In the center of the village is a public square with a dwelling place for the village Ony, the eldest of the tribe.

The Jynavi live in the northern central mass of the Vohven, between the wild elves and the Ryaga. They are intrepid explorers and traders, and frequently trade with the Svimohz to the north, exchanging mineral wealth and beautifully carved items in exchange for cheap beads and other small goods.

Ryaga: Another group is the ebony-skinned Ryaga, whose tribes create beautiful sculpture in wood and bronze, and who have varied masking traditions resulting in a great diversity of mask forms. Maskers

appear at funeral ceremonies (leaving the body in the jungle to rot) and embody the spirit of the deceased person – or so it is believed. As the Ryaga tribes live mainly in the central mass of the Vohven Jungle, surrounded by many monsters and rival tribes, they are quite skilled in jungle combat.

The Ryaga are quite superstitious and constantly live in fear of the supernatural. They wear charms in order to protect themselves from evil spirits, and believe all arcane spellcasters are evil. They tend to worship Risk, the Battle Rager, and the Fate Scribe.

Simay: The Ahznoms believe these dark brown-skinned, easternmost tribes to be barbaric, if not cannibalistic, and they are not far from wrong. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. Strength is their most prized attribute, but without the honor prized by hobgoblins. What a Simay wants, he takes. Personal property is personal only so long as it can be defended. Even one's body is not their own, for the Simay feel no shame about eating the flesh of other humans. Perhaps their one redeeming feature is that they only eat humans when no other options are present.

The Simay worship their ancestors, and success during hunting is recognized as a gift from them. Almost every member of the tribe is a barbarian, though the Ony is usually a shaman. These shamans claim to use divination in order to learn the future, and employ carved bone knives as rubbing oracles in order to arrive at their knowledge.

Yeruji: Members of this tribe can be recognized by the heavy ridge of scars, given during a ritual of adolescence and bisecting the forehead vertically. The Yeruji believe that a child is not a "complete" person, but is dirty and impure. Therefore, when a child of either sex reaches puberty, he or she is to be purified. This scarring "cleanses" the child and ushers him into adulthood.

Music plays a unique role in the Yeruji culture, and it is sometimes used for certain types of communication. The music does not necessarily have a melody, but rather a rhythmic sound with much drumming and whistling. Naturally, Yeruji bards favor the didgeridoo as their instrument of choice.

Polygamy is widely practiced among the Yeruji, and being able to trace one's lineage to an important or very old ancestor is the primary measure of importance among all members of the tribe. Sorcerers are also common among the Yeruji, and



Great dangers and dark deeds await those who brave the depths of the Vohven Jungle.

their shamans are known as *dejath-sasan* (a Deji phrase loosely translating as "out of the great earth", or sometimes "one with the land" in Merchant's Tongue). They favor evenhanded worship of the Bear and the Riftmaster.

The Yeruji live mostly in the northwestern Vohven and even claim several areas of the coast. As such, they are the tribesmen most often captured as slaves by the nearby Kargi. They also contain the most likely player characters of all the Vohven tribes.

Zhensha: The Zhensha, on the other hand, worship an entity that they call "*Dofededejy Shynadyr*" (loosely translating as "the Lightning Eater"). In truth, this is a cultish combination of the Storm Lord and the Locust Lord. This great god, so they believe, gifted each creature with an inborn energy that others can gain by consuming the body of the dead creature. Like the Simay, they are cannibalistic, but for different reasons. The Zhensha believe it is their calling, and they carry out their slaughter with a religious fanaticism unknown to the Simay. In the Zhensha culture, finger bones of their victims are their most precious possession, and a matrilineal line of descent rules their tribal hierarchy.

OTHER HUMANS

Of course, Svimohz and Vohven Deji are not the only humans on Svimohzia. Colonists, travelers, smugglers, pirates and many others also journey to the birthplace of humanity. These humans have the racial characteristics of humans described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Brandobians: Most Brandobians on Svimohzia reside in the Colony of Vrandol. In fact, about 20% of its inhabitants are Brandobian (80% are native Svimohz). The two cultures do not always agree, since the Brandobians are almost exclusively members of nobility or government, leaving the Svimohz to do the work.

Outside of Vrandol, Brandobians dwell in cities that trade with their homeland, such as Monam-Ahnoz (Meznamish), Ashoshani (Ozhvinmish), Ul-Karg, and Ahznomahn.

Deji: Other Deji cultures exist in Tellene, from the Malavla islanders in the west to the nomads of the Khydoban Desert in the east. However, only the most adventurous tend to leave the mainland in search of a new life on Svimohzia.

Fhokki: These northern humans are extremely rare on Svimohzia. The only Fhokki who venture so far from their homeland are adventurers, criminals fleeing prosecution, and brave merchants with dreams of foreign wealth.

Kalamarans: The people of Ahznomahn trade extensively with Kalamar, and so Kalamaran merchants are not an uncommon sight in the confederacy. They can also be found in Monam-Ahnoz (Meznamish) and eastern Ozhvinmish. Non-adventuring Kalamarans in other parts of Svimohzia may be spies, exiles, or worse.

Reanaarians: Reanaarians occasionally buy and sell goods in Ahznomahn. Otherwise, their appearance is rare.

KARGI HOBGOBLINS

While the human nations strain under the threat of humanoid attack directed at their heart – the food-producing villages and farms – one race among the humanoids has grown into a dominant force in trade, politics and war. Physically larger and stronger than humans, traditionally lawful (evil or neutral) in alignment, and gathered under strong leaders, the hobgoblin tribes formed into nations centuries ago.

Hobgoblins are very competitive and see a great deal of honor to be gained from winning a simple contest or a huge battle. During contests, friendships, religion and other factors lose importance – only winning matters. Competitors need not fear deceit, for hobgoblins consider cheating worse than losing.

Kargi are larger than men, the average Kargi standing just less than 6 1/2 feet tall (though they range from 5 to 7 feet tall). They are broad-shouldered and well muscled, with dense, thick bones, and skin of a yellowish-brown. Kargi eyes have a distinctly animal appearance, and range from dark yellow to brown.

Kargi beards run along the jaw line, tapering into a goatee or small beard, but they do not cover the neck or the front of the face. Facial hair is generally black or dark brown. The hair that grows on the head is predominately dark brown or black, though maroons, grays, and some reds do exist. The Kargi trim the hair on their head more regularly than their facial hair, as it has a much greater potential to obscure vision. The lower classes have their heads shaven, both as a mark of their inferiority and as a matter of efficiency. Warriors either crop their hair close to the head or pull it back in a long braid. Royalty always keeps their hair long as a sign of their station.

KARGI RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, 2 Intelligence, 2 Wisdom, 2 Charisma. Kargi have developed a hardy physique due to their harsh environment, but they lack development in the mental areas.
- Medium: Kargi hobgoblins receive no special size related bonuses or penalties.
- Kargi speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Kargi hobgoblins can see in the dark at a distance of up to 60 feet. This type of vision is mostly colorless (showing only shades of black, white and gray), and needs no light to function.
- +4 racial bonus to all Fortitude saving throws. Growing up in a climate of rampant disease has made the Kargi especially resistant to diseases and poison.
- +2 racial bonus to all Survival checks when in a tropical climate. The Kargi have learned to adapt to their harsh environment, and can now use it to thrive.
- Automatic Languages: Hobgoblin and Goblin. Bonus Languages: Svimohzish, Merchant's Tongue, Brandobian, and Orcish.
- Favored Class: Cleric. When deciding whether a Kargi hobgoblin suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing, his cleric class does not apply.

Chapter One: Races and Regions

Kargi females share all of the characteristics of their male counterparts, with a few exceptions. They generally weigh five to ten percent less, and are about two inches shorter on average. Their skin is also generally lighter in complexion, though just as tough. They do possess facial hair, though it tends to grow only on the chin and is not as thick or long. Their voices are raspier and higher in pitch. In addition, since most Kargi females spend their mature years replenishing the Kargi population, their musculature is less developed. More information on Kargi and their culture can be found in *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene*.

Sil-Karg: Half-hobgoblins of Kargi stocks inherit the sturdiness and the intellectual ineptness of their hobgoblin parent. These offspring are often the result of violence, in which case the hobgoblin parent is male, but a female hobgoblin parent is not unheard of, even if the prospect is altogether unpleasant. The appearance of these offspring is wildly variable; no doubt a result of combination with human stock. Some have so little trace of their hobgoblin heritage that they could pass for large humans, while others seem entirely hobgoblin. A wide range exists, but the majority have some distinctly hobgoblin traits and some distinctly human traits. Those that can pass for Kargi usually try to join their hobgoblin parent, as the Kargi accept sil-karg that can hold their own on the battlefield.

SIL-KARG RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Constitution, 2 Intelligence (Kargi breeds differ from Krangi half hobgoblins)
- Medium: Half hobgoblins receive no special size related bonuses or penalties.
- Half hobgoblin speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Sil karg can see in the dark at a distance of up to 120 feet. This type of vision is mostly colorless (showing only shades of black, white and gray), and needs no light to function.
- Hobgoblin Blood: For all special abilities, magic item usage and other effects, sil karg are considered hobgoblins.
- +1 racial bonus to Fortitude saves. Regardless of their origin, half hobgoblins are resistant to hardship and disease.
- Automatic Languages: Krangi or Kargi, plus one regional human language. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Giant, Goblin and Infernal.
- Favored Class: Fighter. When deciding whether a half hobgoblin suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing, his fighter class does not apply.

OTHER HUMANOIDS

These humanoids have the racial characteristics of their particular subrace as described in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* and other related *Kingdoms of Kalamar* racial sourcebooks. If you do not have these supplements, simply use the racial statistics found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Dwarves: Hill dwarves (*adurek*) and mountain dwarves (*rurok*) dwell in the Menamo Hills and Tanezh Mountains,

respectively, numbering in the tens of thousands. They also live in human cities as well. In Monam-Ahnoz, two thousand dwarves have citizenship and figure prominently in local politics due to the wealth they represent. In smaller numbers, they live in Anowhizh, Svomwhi, Svowmahni and Vrandol. The distrustful stone dwarves (*durvalk*) reside in their ancient citadels beneath the Dashahn Mountains.

Elves and Half-Elves: Elves dwell throughout the forests and jungles of Svimohzia, as well as in some human cities. The Mizohr Woodlands have many reclusive wood elves; while both wood elves (*aralarai*) and wild elves (*seleeris*) inhabit the heart of the Miznoh Forest (although they too have few dealings with the outside world). The wild elves of the Vohven Jungle are even more xenophobic; the shore of the Izhoven River has a small forest of totem poles mounted in the sand that supposedly marks the borders of their tribe.

Small numbers of elves live in Emosvom and Nenehi, and (rarely) in Ashoshani, since the ascension of King Shahn III of Ozhvinnish. He despises elves and makes his prejudice clear in laws and public statements. A secret society known as the Songs of Liberty seeks to protect elves from unfair treatment by this hostile government and reveal the lack of evidence supporting the King's actions.

About 2,000 wood elves and 300 half-elves (*tel-lathlan*) live together with 5,000 Svimohz in the town of Miznahn. They are caught between Anowhizh, famous for its architecture, and Ashoshani, famous for its hatred of elves. Half-elves typically live in the same regions as their elven parents. Their appearance is similar to normal half-elves, but with Svimohz-like skin and facial features mixing the traits of their parents.

In addition, the dark elf empire of Nal'loreian lies beneath the Krimppatu Mountains. For more information, see *Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene*.

Gnomes: While many rock gnomes (*dalgul*) make the Zhano Headlands and Mizohr Woodlands their home, others live in the cities of Anowhizh, Svowmahni and Svomwhi. Gnomes have mined copper from the Dashahn Mountains for centuries, and occupy many of the dwarven citadels there (as most mountain dwarves left to mine iron in the Tanezh Mountains). The Menamo Hills are also home to gnomish farmers and miners. Forest gnomes (*fulmaren*) prefer to remain on the main continent of Tellene, but also dwell in wooded areas of Svimohzia.



Halflings: The Mizohr Woodland and the human cities of Anowhizh, Nenehi and Svomwhi hold small lightfoot halfling (*gurin*) populations, as does the independent state of Bronish.

Orcs and Half-Orcs: Only two major orc tribes, the Crooked Claw tribe and the Snake Head tribe, dwell in the lands of Svimohzia (and both of these are within the Vohven Jungle). Elsewhere, a traveler finds only a smattering of small bands of orcs, most within the lands of Ul-Karg, and none worthy of the name "tribe." In other areas, orcs harass unfortunate or unwary travelers, but are even more timid than typical orcs in the face of any kind of sizeable force or significant resistance. More information can be found in *Fury in the Wastelands: the Orcs of Tellene*. Naturally, full-blooded orc player characters should get DM approval.

SPECIAL HUMANOIDS

Although these humanoids exist on the Svimohzish Isle, they require greater roleplaying ability, and are often more powerful than a standard character. As such, you should consult your DM to see if he or she allows these races in a Svimohzish campaign. Further cultural information on each race can be found in *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*.

Half-Githzerai: Though quite rare, these strange offspring are not unheard of. They are typically born through political alliances between the githzerai and the noble Svimohz families – marriages for love are extremely rare.

Half-githzerai ("haragitu") have thin, muscular bodies with angular facial features and small noses. Those of half-Svimohz birth lack the yellow tinge of lighter-skinned half-githzerai, and can almost pass for full Svimohz. They stand half a head over 6 feet tall and weigh approximately 160 pounds. Their eyes tend to be gray or a peculiar shade of light yellow or green. They have a lifespan only slightly longer than that of a typical human.

HALF-GITZERAI RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, 2 Constitution. As the offspring of an outsider and a human, half githzerai have light, agile bodies. However, their weak blood gives them less health and stamina, with a greater susceptibility to diseases and toxins.

Medium: As Medium creatures, haragitu have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Half githzerai base speed is 30 feet.

Spell Resistance: A haragitu has spell resistance equal to 2 + 1 per character level.

Outsider Blood: For all special abilities, magic item usage and other effects, haragitu are considered outsiders.

Automatic Languages: The secret githzerai tongue, plus one regional human language (usually Svimohzish). Bonus Languages: Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal and Merchant's Tongue.

Favored Class: Monk. A multiclass haragitu's monk class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, in the *Player's Handbook*).

Haragitu usually worship the Powermaster, Old Man or the Mule.

Half-Gnoll: These offspring of gnolls and human prisoners are called *zolansahr* in Svimohzish and *vraark* in Gnoll. They stand about 6 to 7 feet tall and weigh from 180 to 220 pounds. Their skin is dark, with a brown or black mane-like head of hair. Their bodies are quite hairy or covered with a thin coat of fur. They have wide, pointed ears and a menacing face. Zolansahr are adults at age 10 and can live to be up to 70 years old. They are usually male, and all are either sterile or asexual.

HALF-GNOLL RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Strength, 2 Intelligence. Though strong, half gnolls have a definite bestial streak with an accompanying lack of intelligence.

Medium: As Medium creatures, half gnolls have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Zolansahr base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision: Half gnolls can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and zolansahr function just fine with no light at all.

Gnoll Blood: For all special abilities, magic item usage and other effects, zolansahr are considered gnolls.

+1 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

Automatic Languages: Gnoll and one regional human language (usually Svimohzish). Bonus Languages: Goblin, Hobgoblin, Merchant's Tongue and Orcish.

Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass zolansahr's ranger class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, in the *Player's Handbook*).

Worse, they are often ambitious, brutal, chaotic and untrustworthy. They usually dwell in the central plains of Svimohzia, though they may range throughout the island (with the exception of the Vohven Jungle). PC half-gnolls usually worship the Battle Rager, Storm Lord, Emperor of Scorn and the Seller of Souls.

Lizardfolk: Few other races have had dealings with the lizardfolk, who call themselves *zek'ira*, (meaning "the people") in their language. As such, few realize how generally peaceful the lizardfolk of Tellene are. They have a complex society, bound by tradition and pride in their homelands. For the most part, they fight only to protect these homes, which on Svimohzia lie in the western Whiven Marsh, the Ehniven Marsh and Ivez Estuary of Meznamish and the Mewhi Marsh of central Zazahni. They are tenacious fighters with long memories for injustice.

Most zek'ira stand about 6 to 6 1/2 feet tall, not including their 3 to 4-foot-long tails. Their hide tends toward greenish-yellow, with spots of darker green scattered over all but their underside, which is a light yellow or nearly white. Zek'ira have large neck gills, can breathe underwater, and are natural swimmers. Their faces are slightly more dinosaur-like than the standard lizardfolk of the *Monster Manual*.

Zek'ira speak Draconic, though most also speak the prominent local human language of the area. They usually worship the Eye Opener or the Bear. If you do not have *Dangerous Denizens*, use the statistics for the lizardfolk in the *Monster Manual*, with an alignment of lawful neutral.

Minotaur, Plains: The plains minotaur of southern Ul-Karg is a fierce and savage warrior, preferring to live on the open lands rather than secreted away in an underground labyrinth. A plains minotaur stands approximately 8 feet tall and weighs around 600 pounds. It has powerful arms and short sleek black fur that covers its entire body except for its hooves, palms and fingers. The skin exposed is equally black, and its nails are short. This creature lives to be about 120 years old, gaining maturity after the first fifteen. An individual's age can be determined by horn color – white or ivory for the young, black for mature adults and gray for elders. Only males have horns.

Although they have a small presence in Kargi society, the plains minotaurs established themselves as powerful allies, useful in war, and valued for their tremendous strength and canniness. Brutal and heartless, they are terrors on the battlefield, striking fear into the hearts of many foes, and only through the promise of flesh, treasure and a vaunted position in the expanded Kargi nation, do the plains minotaurs fight on behalf of the hobgoblins.

On rare occasions, a plains minotaur breaks from their kind, to make a life elsewhere in the world. The PC plains minotaur usually worships chaotic neutral gods, such as the Battle Rager. Plains minotaurs speak Giant, and have identical statistics to the standard minotaur.

CHARACTER REGION

Choosing a region defines a character's favored deity, provide access to regional feats and bonus equipment, and define how far the character's Knowledge (local) skill actually extends. In the case of favored deities, these are not required deities for that region, but are simply the most common choices. You may choose any of the deities listed in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook*.

When you take ranks in Knowledge (local), you must designate the country or region to which your local knowledge pertains. If you have at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (local) for a particular region, you gain a +2 bonus on all other Knowledge skill checks pertaining to that region. For example, if you have 5 ranks in Knowledge (local: Mezh-Vowmi Isle), you gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), and all other Knowledge checks made relating to topics that have to do with the Mezh-Vowmi Isle. Regions are by their nature broad and often loosely defined. Your DM has the final say on what constitutes your character's knowledge about his or her region.

Like characters from other lands, those of the Svimozhish Isle have access to unique feats that reflect the special talents, tricks and lore of its inhabitants. To select one of these feats, your character must meet these prerequisites. Regional feats are not bonus feats; you use normal feat slots to select them.

For easy reference, this book reprints certain feats from the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* common for Svimozhish characters. The Alertness, Athletic, Deceitful, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stealthy, Toughness, Track and Two-Weapon Fighting feats in Table 1-2: Regions come from the *Player's Handbook*.

BAZAAR VETERAN [REGIONAL]

You are skilled in barter and trade.

Prerequisite: Raised in Ahznomahn, Ashoshani, Bet Kalamar, Bet Seder, Bet Urala, Dalen, Dowond-Brandel, Monahm-Ahnoz, Ospolen, P'Bapar, Svomahni, Thygasha, Zhanehmish or Zoa.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Appraise checks when appraising common trade goods and Bluff checks when bartering for those goods, or a +2 bonus when appraising or bartering for less common or rare items (your DM will determine the item's status).

Special: You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

BORN OF THE CRADLE [REGIONAL]

Being steeped in the lore of your Svimozhish ancestors, you find history fascinating.

Prerequisite: Born and raised in Meznamish, Ohzvinmish or Zazahni.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks.

Special: You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

BORN INTO BONDAGE [REGIONAL]

You were born a Nehzrin, a non-person. Even if you are now free, you carry the marks of the past with you.

Prerequisite: Raised in Ahznomahn, Meznamish, Ohzvinmish, Ul-Karg, Zazahni or the Vohven Jungle; or other foreign nation where slavery is accepted. You must also have a visible brand or scar revealing your former captivity.

Benefit: In exchange for taking a –2 circumstance penalty on all Charisma-based checks made to interact with citizens (not slaves) in slave-based societies, you gain a +1 bonus to all Fortitude and Will saves and a +4 bonus to Spot checks.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

CARRIER [REGIONAL]

Your life among plague-filled streets has infected with a terrible contagion, but you are immune to its effects.

Prerequisite: Raised in Burzumagh.

Benefit: You carry filth fever (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), but you are immune to its effects. If you successfully bite or claw an opponent, you transmit this disease on the opponent's failed Fortitude save (DC 12). You gain a +8 resistance bonus to Fortitude saves against remove disease and similar spells, but only against the removal of filth fever from your system. Even if filth fever is removed from your system, you again become a carrier if exposed to the disease at a later date.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS [GENERAL]

You have a reliable network of friends and contacts among a certain group or a unique location.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Gather Information checks and Intimidate checks in a city, or among a certain organization, that you have a strong connection with.

DEALER IN FLESH [REGIONAL]

You are skilled at capturing potential slaves and "conscripting" citizens unharmed.

Prerequisite: Raised in Ul-Karg, Vrandol, the outskirts of the Vohven Jungle, or the Zhano-Mewhi Bay area; or other foreign nation where slavery is accepted.

Benefit: You never suffer -4 penalty to attack rolls when using a weapon to deal nonlethal damage. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Use Rope checks.

DRAGON BLOOD [GENERAL]

Related to dragons or not, you have a natural ability to feel the presence of magic.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: You can feel the presence of magic with your bare hands. You can detect the presence of magic in an item (as if you had cast detect magic on that item) if you make a successful Search check (DC 15). You can detect the presence of magic on an item that you do not touch on a successful Search check against DC 20, as long as it is within 30 feet. Per day, each use after the first suffers a cumulative -2 penalty, as overuse blurs your magic sensitivity. Use of this ability is a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

EXOTIC STEED [REGIONAL]

You are proficient at handling unusual mounts.

Prerequisite: Raised in Thygasha, Ehzhimahn, Slen, Tarisato, a desert, jungle or marsh.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Ride checks and Handle Animal checks when the check involves a mount other than a horse, donkey, pony or riding dog.

EXPLORER [REGIONAL]

You are independent and capable of survival in the wild.

Prerequisite: Raised in Cosdol, Eldor, Mendarn, the Wild Lands, any jungle, desert, marsh or unclaimed land.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Survival checks and Knowledge (nature) checks.

Special: You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

EYES OF FURY [GENERAL]

Your great skill (or appearance of great skill) causes enemies to doubt themselves in battle.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: Once per round, you can take a free action to gaze sternly at a single creature within a range equal to your natural reach + 5 feet. If the creature is looking directly at you, it must then succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your Hit Dice + your Cha bonus) or become shaken for 1 round.

There is a 50% chance your gaze attack fails if the creature is intentionally averting its eyes (though this does give you concealment), or a definite failure if it cannot see you.

Special: You cannot use Eyes of Fury and Commanding Presence during the same round. This gaze attack cannot affect ethereal creatures.

FOE HUNTER [REGIONAL]

Your lands are threatened, but you have learned your opponents' ways and know how to fight effectively against them.

Prerequisite: Dwarf, elf/half-elf, gnome, half-orc, halfling, or human resident of Svimohzia.

Benefit: You acquire a favored enemy, as the ranger class feature of the same name. However, the type of creature is determined by your home region, as noted on Table 1-1: Favored Enemies.

You may choose one favored enemy from this table. Rangers may select this feat for an additional favored enemy at 1st level.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

Table 1-1: Favored Enemies

HOME REGION	FAVORED ENEMY
Ahznomahn	Humanoid (human Dejy or Meznam), (elf), (gnoll) or (reptilian)
Meznamish	Humanoid (human Ahznom) or (goblinoid)
Ozhvinmish	Humanoid (gnoll), (goblinoid) or (giant)
Ul-Karg	Humanoid (human Meznam or Zazahni), (dwarf), (elf), (giant) or (gnoll)
Zazahni	Humanoid (human Dejy), (elf), (gnoll), (goblinoid), (reptilian)
Bronish	Humanoid (reptilian), (elf) or (goblinoid)
Vrandol	Humanoid (human Brolenese) or Undead
Hills	Humanoid (dwarf), (gnoll), (gnome) or (goblinoid)
Mountains	Humanoid (dwarf), (elf), (gnome) or (goblinoid)
Wetlands	Humanoid (reptilian)
Woodlands	Humanoid (human Dejy), (orc), (reptilian) or Plant

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TABLE I-2: REGIONS

REGION	HUMAN SUBRACES	HUMANOID SUBRACES	FAVORED DEITIES ¹	RECOMMENDED/REGIONAL FEATS
Ahznomahn (mainland)	Ahznom, Zassho	Wild Elf ² , Half-Elf ² , Rock Gnome, Lightfoot Halfling	the Landlord, the Founder, the Traveler, the Holy Mother	Bazaar Veteran, Born to the Saddle, Foe Hunter ³
Ahznomahn (Mezh-Vowmi Isle)	Ahznom	-	the Landlord, the Founder, the Traveler	Bazaar Veteran, Glib Tongue University Trained ³
Awhom Forest (outskirts)	Ahznom, Ozhvin, Zazahnii	-	the Knight of the Gods, the Eternal Lantern, the Powermaster, the Old Man	Fearless, Foe Hunter ³ , One Eye Open ³
Bronish	Brandobian, Meznam	Lightfoot Halfling	the Peacemaker, the Pure One	Circle of Friends, Dragon Blood, Touch of Rhingoryx ³
Dashan Mountains	Meznam	Stone Dwarf, Mountain Dwarf, Rock Gnome	the Founder, the Earth Mother, the Watcher, the Holy Mother, the Eternal Lantern	Foe Hunter ³ , Metal's Mettle ³ , Two-Weapon Fighting
Ehniven Marsh	Meznam	-	the Old Man, the True	Foe Hunter ³ , Track
Imomena Hills	Ozhvin, Zazahnii	Hill Dwarf, Lightfoot Halfling, Rock Gnome	the Holy Mother, the True, the Knight of the Gods, the Traveler, the Powermaster, the Coddler	Foe Hunter ³ , Power Attack, Toughness
Krimpatu Mountains	-	Dark Elf, Kargi Hobgoblin	the Prince of Terror, the Creator of Strife, the Dark One	Foe Hunter ³ , One Eye Open ³ , Stealthy
Menamo Hills	Meznam, Ozhvin	Hill Dwarf, Lightfoot Halfling, Rock Gnome	the True, the Powermaster, the Guardian, Risk	Foe Hunter ³ , Skeptic, Toughness
Mewzhano Bay	Meznam	Mountain Dwarf	the Holy Mother, the True, the Shimmering One, the Founder, the Landlord	Athletic, Born of the Cradle, Foe Hunter ³
Meznamish	Meznam	Mountain Dwarf	the Holy Mother, the True, the Shimmering One, the Founder, the Landlord	Eyes of Fury, Foe Hunter ³ , Patience
Miznoh Forest	Ozhvin	Wood Elf, Wild Elf	the Knight of the Gods, the True, the Powermaster, the Eternal Lantern	Born of the Cradle, Foe Hunter ³ , Mighty Brachiation ³
Mizohr Woodlands	Meznam	Rock Gnome, Wood Elf	the Guardian, the Mother of the Elements, the Bear, the Great Huntress	Foe Hunter ³ , Mighty Brachiation ³ , Track
Nazguk Hills	-	Kargi Hobgoblin	the Dark One	Iron Will, Strong Gut ³ , Toughness
Ozhvinmish (western)	Ozhvin, Mewhi, Kalamaran, Brandobian, Reanaarese, Deiy	Wood Elf, Half-Elf	the Knight of the Gods, the True, the Powermaster, the Eternal Lantern, the Guardian	Born of the Cradle, Foe Hunter ³ , Martial Adaptability ³
Ozhvinmish (eastern)	Ozhvin, Ahznom	Rock Gnome, Wood Elf, Hill Dwarf, Lightfoot Halfling, Half-Elf	the Powermaster, the True, the Knight of the Gods, the Raiser, the Eternal Lantern	Alertness, Foe Hunter ³ , Patience
Svomawhom Forest	Ozhvin, Zazahnii	-	the Knight of the Gods, the Powermaster, the Old Man	Foe Hunter ³ , One Eye Open ³ , Track
Tanezh Mountains	Meznam, Zazahnii	Mountain Dwarf	the Holy Mother, the Founder, the Eternal Lantern	Foe Hunter ³ , Metal's Mettle ³ , Two-Weapon Fighting
Ul-Karg	-	Kargi Hobgoblin	the Dark One	Dealer in Flesh ³ , Foe Hunter ³ , Power Attack
Vohven Jungle interior	Vohven Deiy	Wild Elf	the Battle Rager, the Mother of the Elements, the Bear, the Storm Lord, the Great Huntress	Foe Hunter ³ , Jungle Native ³ , Mighty Brachiation ³ , One Eye Open ³
Vohven Jungle outskirts	Zazahnii, Vohven Deiy	Wild Elf, Half-Elf	the Old Man, the Battle Rager, the Knight of the Gods, the Bear, the Raiser, the Great Huntress	Born of the Cradle, Dealer in Flesh ³ , Foe Hunter ³
Vrandol	Brandobian, Sehzal ²	Hill Dwarf	the Lord of Silver Linings, Raconteur, the Landlord, Risk, the Emperor of Scorn	Dealer in Flesh ³ , Deceitful, Foe Hunter ³
Whisvomi Forest	Brandobian, Meznam	Lightfoot Halfling	the Peacemaker, the Pure One	Foe Hunter ³ , Touch of Rhingoryx ³ , Track
Zamul Forest	-	Kargi Hobgoblin	the Dark One, the Rotlord	Carrier ³ , Foe Hunter ³
Zazahnii	Zazahnii	Wild Elf, Hill Dwarf, Lightfoot Halfling, Rock Gnome	the Knight of the Gods, the Old Man, the Battle Rager, the Storm Lord, the Corruptor, the Harvester of Souls, the Seller of Souls, the Creator of Strife	Born of the Cradle, Martial Adaptability ³ , One Eye Open ³

Zhano Headlands	Meznam	Lightfoot Halfling, Mountain Dwarf	the Holy Mother, Risk, the Eternal Lantern	Foe Hunter ³ , Toughness, Track
Zhano-mewhi Bay	Zazahni	Kargi Hobgoblin	the Old Man, the Battle Rager, the Dark One, the Knight of the Gods, the Raiser	Dealer in Flesh ³ , Foe Hunter ³ , Power Attack

¹Listed in order of prominence

²Mostly slaves or lower class

³New feat in this book

IRON TOUCH OF BROG-TUUA KH [GENERAL]

You have learned to strengthen weak areas of the body.

Prerequisite: Hobgoblin or sil-karg. Though the hobgoblins of Norga-Krangrel attribute this feat to Kruk-Ma-Kali, the Kargi hobgoblins call this the Iron Touch of Brog-Tuuakh.

Benefit: Reduce the critical multiplier by 1 factor when your character takes damage. Thus, an axe that normally deals x3 damage on a critical hit inflicts only x2 damage.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. The Iron Touch of Kruk-Ma-Kali feat appears in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

JUNGLE NATIVE [REGIONAL]

You have adapted well to the environment of the jungle-covered areas of Tellene.

Prerequisite: Raised in the Vohven Jungle interior; or Obakasek Jungle interior.

Benefit: Choose either a +4 bonus to two of the following skills, or a +2 bonus to all four skills: Hide, Move Silently, Search and Spot. This bonus applies only within your native jungle.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

MAGICAL AFFINITY [REGIONAL]

You have a minor talent for arcane magic.

Prerequisite: Int 13 and raised in Cosdol or Pel Brolenon; or Int 13 and Gray Elf, High Elf, or Rock Gnome.

Benefit: You know and can cast one 0-level spell per each point of your Intelligence modifier, per day. (A character with a +2 Intelligence modifier can cast two 0th-level spells, once per day. You may not use this feat to cast the same spell more than once per day). These spells are in addition to any you gain for caster levels. Subsequent adjustments to your Intelligence may alter the number of 0-level spells gained with this feat.

MARTIAL ADAPTABILITY [REGIONAL]

Your region breeds disciplined, but adaptable, fighters.

Prerequisite: Raised in Zazahni or western Ozhvinmish.

Benefit: You gain proficiency with all martial weapons.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

METAL'S METTLE [REGIONAL]

Your family worked in metal for centuries, and they passed their knowledge down to you.

Prerequisite: Raised in Dashan Mountains, Tanezh Mountains; or dwarf.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Craft (armorsmithing) and Craft (weaponsmithing) checks relating to items made all, or mostly, of metal. You gain a +2 bonus to Appraise checks relating to metal items and a +2 bonus to Profession (armorsmith) and Profession (weaponsmith) checks regarding metalwork.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

MIGHTY BRACHIATION [REGIONAL]

You can move through the treetops of your home almost as easily as you can walk.

Prerequisite: Raised in Miznoh Forest, Mizohr Woodlands or Vohven Jungle; or in a forest from another land.



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Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Balance, Climb, Jump and Tumble checks in your home region, and a +1 bonus in other woodlands.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

ONE EYE OPEN [REGIONAL]

Prerequisite: Raised in Zazahni, Awhom Forest outskirts, Svomawhom Forest outskirts, Krimppatu Mountains, Vohven Jungle interior; or raised in other areas where war or monstrous attacks are frequent.

Benefit: If the DM determines your character would normally be surprised (i.e. you failed your Listen or Spot check), you may still take a free or standard action during the surprise round, but as if you are flat-footed (lose your Dex bonus to AC).

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

PATIENCE [GENERAL]

You are adept at taking the initiative without going first.

Prerequisite: Wis 13.

Benefit: By waiting for the right opportunity, you can empower an attack against an undefended or lightly defended area. If you hold your initiative until last, you gain a +2 bonus to your first attack roll (and damage roll, if the attack is successful) against a single opponent of your choice. You may only use this feat once against a specific opponent, though it may be used on your first attack against other opponents in the same conflict.

Special: You cannot use this feat against creatures that are immune to critical hits, because they guard no one area greater than any others. If you use this feat in conjunction with the Expert Timing feat, you must continue to delay your action each round in order to gain the +2 bonus.

A fighter may select Patience as a fighter bonus feat.

SKEPTIC [GENERAL]

Your character is tough to fool with illusions.

Benefit: Your character gains a +4 bonus to saving throws against illusions.

STONEBONES [REGIONAL]

Gnomes and dwarves sometimes have deep gnome or stone dwarf ancestors, and inherited their sturdy and resilient frames. Other dwarves and gnomes may look with dismay upon your "deformed" stature.

Prerequisite: Dwarf, Gnome.

Benefit: You gain a +1 natural armor bonus to Armor Class.

Special: You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

STRONG GUT [REGIONAL]

Your character can survive for long periods without food.

Prerequisite: Raised in the Nazguk Hills; or raised in other

Benefit: You can go without food for 5 days, in growing discomfort. After this time, you must make a Constitution check each day (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Normal: You can go without food for only 3 days before being forced to make your Constitution checks, as above.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character.

TOUCH OF RHINGORYX [REGIONAL]

One of your ancestors unwittingly mated with this disguised gold dragon and, though you bear no dragonlike traits, his blood is unusually strong in you.

Prerequisite: Raised in Bronish.

Benefit: You receive a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

UNIVERSITY TRAINED [GENERAL]

You have the prestige and knowledge of the Zha alumni.

Prerequisite: You must have attended the University of Zha, in Zha-nezhmish.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with a character that attended or taught at the University, or a +2 bonus to characters closely affiliated with the University (DM's call; for example, a noble whose child attends the University). You also gain a +2 bonus on any two of the following four Knowledge (architecture and engineering, geography, history, nobility and royalty) checks. Furthermore, you may choose two new human languages or dialects to speak.

Special: You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. If you select this feat, you may take no other regional feats.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

In addition to the guidelines given above and in the *Player's Handbook*, a player should take into account some other considerations when creating a character for Svimohzia.

To the traveler, Svimohzia harbors more dangers than worth, but it is an exotic and historical place. It is the home of ancient civilizations untouched by the hands of time, and the oldest human empires on Tellene. It houses religious sects that are found nowhere else in the world, unique tribal societies, and peoples that have seen the rise and fall of entire civilizations. It also holds a beautiful wilderness at its heart – a beautiful, dangerous wilderness with the nature of a jungle beast.

There are a variety of reasons for travelers to come here - they might be looking to strike it rich, they might be looking for a quiet, tropical paradise, or they might seek to profit from the civil wars. The lands of Svimohzia are varied and diverse, ranging from dense jungle to open plains to ancient, luxurious cities, and the nations are not always on the best of terms.

The natives, however, believe that they live at the very heart of all civilization. They know that their homeland must be given the respect it deserves. The savannas and jungles are not

TABLE 1-3: DEITY NAMES ON SVIMOHZIA

DEITY	ALIGNMENT	SVIMOHZ	DEJY	KARGI
Knight of the Gods	LG	Whenhesh	Dejfo	Thargaz-Tubrog
The Holy Mother	LG	Moimivam	Trondar	Gulmab-Thrakkro
Speaker of the Word	LG	Shozhor	Fyjner	Kurgaz-Thal
The True	LG	Svishozh	Lydthesh	Graz-Vagh
Eternal Lantern	LG	Shanvim	Sharynath	Kuban-Randtak
The Raiser	NG	Ehsiwomnesh	Shanydefyn	Dolkagh-Naz-Kelgar
The Peacemaker	NG	Hezhovozh	Wejryn	Tukamek-Ultak
The Pure One	NG	Shanano	Yewaji	Thunarrag
Lord of Silver Linings	NG	Shoniz	Jynondish	Gorrand-Krotak
The Traveler	NG	Amehz	Shodaf	Kakkel-Gazh
The Guardian	CG	Sashoz	Yelajod	Kelgul-Nazka-Dol
Raconteur	CG	Shanoh	Yeida	Grozar-Tuka
The Shimmering One	CG	Shimz	Feyd	Raithal-Terek
The Great Huntress	CG	Vishnoz	Dofejy	Nagra-Kel
The Coddler	CG	Sohadowah	Yendaj	Thulvar-Tudar-Brog
The Founder	LN	Minmivozh	Blojyk	Herka-Magazh
The Mule	LN	Shapirozh	Roshko	Mukli-Gurkkagh
Powermaster	LN	Shozor	Stryjor	Thagraz-Ranmek-Kro
The Old Man	LN	Siriumno	Kyrkshynad	Vradhka-Khor-Vredhi
The Eye Opener	LN	Shannan	Dokshy	Tukhar-Renn
Mother of the Elements	N	Mohrah	Thyjyk	Katha-Gulmakkel
Riftmaster	N	Ehnovam	Djahn	Ganlinaraz-Krok
The Bear	N	Bemmini	Bylenyr	Terenka-Shalik
The Landlord	N	Gohnim	Hydary	Dazulghaz-Vakh
Fate Scribe	N	Movan	Shardar	Grondivar-Brogguk
Battle Rager	CN	Minammoz	Dokarek	Thallak-Shakarz
The Watcher	CN	Rohsowmi	Ryjnar	Greznar-Tukro-Kuul
The Storm Lord	CN	Vimanshimozh	Dofededejy	Mokdar-Marrag
Risk	CN	Mizar	Sevyer	Luggukagh
The Laughter	CN	Neshvan	Zymur	Akdren-Ulkromar
The Corrupter	LE	Namona	Ojob	Ganor-Thana-Kurrug
The Overlord	LE	Thehzno	Asha	Grebok-Krokramar
The Dark One	LE	Zhanvim	Nyko	Mravroshkha-Khielshor
The Flaymaster	LE	Minmehw	Slen	Patukk-Ro-Tirnog
Harvester of Souls	NE	Zazimash	Kygyryr	Domaadrik-Kanar
Locust Lord	NE	Zhazaz	Shynadyr	Korrogaz-Melrak
Emperor of Scorn	NE	Slazhozh	Slazhozh	Kortak-Tuvaghaz
The Seller of Souls	NE	Imohn	Dotogyr	Guldarr-Thorbrog
Rotlord	CE	Moshohn	Shathy	Azzabrak-Kathal
The Confuser of Ways	CE	Unknown	Unknown	Rondarg-Thallinatt
Prince of Terror	CE	Owhzi	Adajy	Haagul-Naz
Creator of Strife	CE	Zhamaz	Kokyt	Vakkro-Gur-Haad
The Vicelord	CE	Zohszi	Jy	Stirnoggul-Brog

The *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook*, as well as the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* and the *Player's Primer*, are excellent resources for more information on your patron deity. If you do not already own either of these books, ask your DM for this information.

Food and Drink

On the island of Svimohzia, the main food staple is meat from domesticated animals, including cattle, poultry, goats, lambs and pigs. Game meat, less common but by no means rare, can come from a wide variety of animals, including antelopes, gazelles, monkeys and snakes. Staple agricultural crops are corn, rice and wheat, though other crops include bananas, beans, cassava, citrus fruits, cocoa, coffee, cotton, palm oil, peanuts, soy beans, sugar, sweet potatoes, tea and tobacco. When crops are poor and game is scarce, the Svimohz rely on berries, herbs, roots and even insects.

Along the coastline, as well as many lakes and rivers, staple food products come from rice and seafood. Fish and rice find their way into most meals, from spiced rice dishes to rice noodles and rice cakes, as well as corn and corn meal.

Most dishes include a variety of fish, crustaceans and squid. *Groh*, a cetacean resembling a dolphin without a snout, is often seen in the Straits of Svimohzia, and its meat is usually served with breads and spices.

DINING AND ETIQUETTE

Traveling adventurers who dine in the homes and taverns of Svimohzia will find the experience quite different from what they are used to on the main continent. Travelers stopping at an eating-place may open the door to find the proprietor dressed in bright clothing, with a flamboyantly colored hat or other headpiece on his or her head. Cheerily beckoning travelers inside, he seats his patrons at a table covered with a brightly colored cloth. He then serves small cups of weak tea to each patron before returning to the kitchen to prepare the meals.

If dining in a Svimohzish home, travelers will be greeted warmly before being seated at a wooden table covered by a plain

the only place that danger exists, however, for even the rich playground of Zha-nehzmish can be dangerous to the unwary. It is an island of beauty and blood, riches and death, great opportunity and powerful risk.

Religion

As in other lands, a diverse pantheon of deities watches over Svimohzia. In choosing a patron deity, consider first the deities most appropriate to your character's race, class and alignment. Some likely selections of favored deities are presented above in Table 1-2: Regions. Of course, this does not mean that the table presents every religion within an area. In fact, some locations, such as the Ozhvinmishii city of Zomo-wim, welcome all faiths. Feel free to choose the religion for your character that best fits his or her background. The most common racial names for deities are listed in Table 1-3: Deity Names on Svimohzia.

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white or striped tablecloth. No one sits at the ends of the table – these places are reserved for bowls and platters of excess foods, including a large soup tureen. The host or hostess sits on the sides of the table along with the guests. All plates, bowls and other tableware are already turned upside down before the guests are seated. Each guest turns over his own plate, mug or soup bowl (he only gets one of each, regardless of the number of courses) when the food is served. All foods arrive at the table at once, and are placed at the ends of the table. No dishes leave the table until after the meal is finished.

MEALS

The main meal of the day is known as *iriz*, while the last meal of the day is called *ugazhi*. Poor meals are typically composed of weak tea, bread and *zamoam* (a thick soup made of crushed peanuts, water and salt). Common meals include *maziwaya* (slightly sour skimmed milk), bread and *kozranga* (a plate of beef and potato stew), along with a plate of beans. Good meals are composed of a pitcher of ginger beer, *maboza* (a light, thin cornmeal bread), a small bowl of beans and a large plate of chicken (or fish) in coconut. Good meals also include dessert, or *nindiz*, consisting of bananas peeled and cooked in banana leaves.

Table 1-4: Meal Costs

Meal	Cost
Poor	1 sp
Common	3 sp
Good	5 sp

Portion size depends upon the strength or weakness of the latest harvests (or of the host's wealth). Alternate main courses include *couzez* (rice with spicy vegetables and/or meat), *mombazah* (hot oysters on a bed of rock salt) or, in northwestern Svimohzia, *whemin* (a mixture of mashed potatoes and corn).

Currency

Coins are typically named after a famous historical figure or leader. As new rulers come to power, coins may be renamed, as the new monarch attempts to build his own legacy or erase that of his predecessor. While some coins have racial names appropriate to the area where the coins were minted, other coins in the same area are called by their names in Merchant's Tongue. This is due to the common use of Merchant's Tongue among, well, merchants. Some new coin names stick, and pass into common speech, while other coins retain their names.

Table 1-5: Currency

AREA	COPPER	SILVER	GOLD	PLATINUM
Ahznomahn	Cheap	Hawker	Anvim	Zova
Bronish	Tollpiece	Bard	Dragon	Vromlond
Meznamish	Sealcoin	Vhohm	Miznor	Mewzhor
Ozhvinmish	Zarvim	Dancer	Champion	Sanovar
Ul-Karg	Bandit	Chieftain	Tuakh	-
Vrandol	Rube	Gent	Lord	Dremin
Zazahni	Onzar	Azhvar	Leshvim	Svohr

All human Svimohzish countries use slightly rounded, eight-sided coinage minted with copper, silver, gold and platinum. The colony of Vrandol and the free city of Bronish use round coins, while coins of Ul-Karg are triangular with rounded corners. Nonhumans, and the humans of the Vohven Jungle, do not mint coins, but rely on the barter system. Further specifics on each land's currency may be found in later chapters.

Style of Dress

In general, an adventurer native to Svimohzia wears patterned clothing with bright colors. Women might wear knee-length skirts and sandals (open-toed, or sandals that lace up to their knees). Females sometimes also prefer loose blouses with short capes, particularly in the rainy weather. Men, on the other hand, often wear vests without shirts underneath, and loose, baggy breeches. Males also wear sandals, but always the open-toed variety without high laces. However, though these are common, they are not exclusive, and heroes and villains alike may be found in a variety of garb.

Language and Naming

Each character speaks her native language (in the case of Dwarven) or state-sanctioned national language (e.g. Svimohzish for Ahznoms, Meznams, etc.) as her primary language. See Table 1-6: Languages by Geographical Subdivision. Since all characters with an Intelligence score of 12 or higher speak bonus languages, many PCs and NPCs speak at least one additional language as well. This secondary language is the language that the largest percentage of the population speaks besides the primary language. It is typically Merchant's Tongue, or a human tongue spoken by neighbors or frequent trade partners.

Significant dialects of languages, if any, are included in parentheses following the listing of the root language. In some cases, it might be difficult for speakers of a dialect to communicate with speakers of another dialect even when the root language is the same. However, characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus when speaking or trying to read a language with a root language common to a language with which they are already familiar.

Svimohzish: The Svimohzish language is widely thought of as the oldest of the modern human languages of Tellene, though some scholars argue that Deji predates it. It is said that tribes of farmers or fishers along the northern coast of the Svimohzish Isle first developed Svimohzish. It is characterized by soft consonant sounds spoken in a nasal tone or with a soft release of breath. Many of the words are three syllables or more in length and double consonants are used frequently; double vowels found in Svimohzish are used only as suffixes.

Grammar is simple yet effective. Sentences typically begin with a noun or pronoun, followed by the verb; many sentence structures are possible, though. Masculinity and femininity are shown by the articles "ozh" and "esh," respectively, which are placed after the noun. Adjectives and adverbs take the form of

prefixes attached to the words they modify. The Svimohzish language uses the following letters: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, HZ, I, J, L, M, N, NH, O, P, R, S, SV, U, V, W, WH, Y, Z and ZH.

Svimohz take two names, sometimes three. The first name is a personal name usually created to sound nice, dignified or strong. Svimohz

place great importance on the actual sound of the name and village 'name readers' are common fortunetellers in rural areas. The last name comes from a parent; whether the father or mother depends on the culture. In some parts of Zazahni, girls take their last name from their father and boys take theirs from their mother's last name. Unless one knows the local culture well, it is easy to make a mistaken assumption about a person's family based on her name.

Wizards are a special case in Svimohzia. When a person becomes a wizard, he takes a single name only and drops any family name. Modest wizards keep their given name, but others give themselves new names taken from arcane words of power.

Merchant's Tongue: Merchant's Tongue began out of the need for international traders and merchants to communicate. This conglomeration of many languages soon evolved into a commonly spoken language among those of different backgrounds. It first appeared along the Ahznomahnii coast

Table I-6: Languages by Geographical Subdivision

COUNTRY, CITY-STATE	PRIMARY LANGUAGE (DIALECT)	SECONDARY LANGUAGE (DIALECT)
OR REGION	Svimohzish	Merchant's Tongue
Ahznomahn	Svimohzish	Merchant's Tongue
Bronish	Brandobian (Mendarn)	Svimohzish (Meznam)
Meznamish	Svimohzish (Meznam)	Dwarven
Ozhvinmish	Svimohzish (Ozhvin)	Merchant's Tongue
Ul Karg	Hobgoblin (Kargi)	Hobgoblin (Goblin)
Vohven Jungle	Dejy (Vohven)	Low Elven
Vrandol	Brandobian (Mendarn)	Svimohzish
Zazahni	Svimohzish	Low Elven

and, within fifty years, so many Ahznoms were fluent that their Parliament officially recognized it as a second language. Merchant's Tongue also defines a system of weights and measures, recognized and used by Tellene's civilized countries.

It should be noted that while Merchant's Tongue is spoken throughout most of Tellene, in underdeveloped, rural areas many native inhabitants are not fluent. Except in Ahznomahn, most slaves and serfs are not learned in Merchant's Tongue, unless they were previously active in trade or city life.

Hobgoblin (Kargi): The Kargi dialect of Hobgoblin has roots in Dwarven and Ancient Hobgoblin, but it is now a separate language from the other offshoots of Ancient Hobgoblin. Kargi shares many words with the main hobgoblin dialect (Krang), and has many more similar words, but it has a structure all its own. Kargi is a convoluted tongue, not possessing any grammatical simplicity. Many Kargi words mean the same things, and many words have several meanings, each depending upon context and the particular way it is

Table I-7: Random Svimohz Names

ROLL (D100)	FEMALE	MALE	SURNAME
01 04	Anivamo	Amar	Arhomven
05 08	Daresvim	Anarvis	Aziri
09 12	Dezha	Ansven	Damozh
13 16	Eemi	Azhanimahr	Eshovim
17 20	Ehnoham	Dashaz	Ghanim
21 24	Emeni	Hilanozh	Giozh
25 28	Hava	Himvho	Izahn
29 32	Hizavah	Imoh	Mezahn
33 36	Lashavow	Izvan	Mizani
37 40	Lehano	Manahn	Mowani
41 44	Menahvna	Mesvanish	Mozarash
45 48	Minona	Miznamvho	Neshnamohn
49 52	Morashez	Mizovohr	Ohmdalz
53 56	Movamo	Movazh	Ohvamo
57 60	Nomishim	Onsar	Shenshal
61 64	Sanano	Razhan	Svowmizh
65 68	Sharresh	Roshanaz	Vezdor
69 72	Shazi	Selevahn	Vlan
73 76	Sisi	Shazahn	Whenonesh
77 80	Svara	Suvar	Whezani
81 84	Vanazha	Svemahni	Yahul
85 88	Zeminah	Vozohr	Yisahn
89 92	Zhani	Wherahzni	Zalden
93 96	Zhashosa	Zhulurahn	Zhamish
97 100	Zoravam	Zohshanam	Zhasorozh

Table I-8: Random Kargi Names

ROLL (D100)	FEMALE	MALE	SURNAMES
01 04	Arazagh	Azgran	Akdrenned
05 08	Brogatu	Azzak	Dazarnog
09 12	Brogulda	Bekkron Naz	Diaddun
13 16	Bulanaz	Bohagazh	Gabrazel
17 20	Dazulka	Dolmak	Grond
21 24	Dokamett	Dozhgran	Gulthal
25 28	Guibrakk	Gharzagh	Gurand
29 32	Gulmabek	Ghekkgaz	Haadrik
33 36	Gulmardar	Ghottak	Harrag
37 40	Gultta	Grezat	Hazar
41 44	Kaghe	Harrgran	Hulimak
45 48	Kakrana	Herkuul	Kaggaz
49 52	Kanabek	Kinshag	Kelggred
53 56	Kolmarz	Krihtak	Korenkol
57 60	Mekkulka	Orakh	Kuglek
61 64	Mrogul	Paggagh	Mabrogguk
65 68	Mulakk	Pagrahzak	Malzurek
69 72	Norog	Puwagh	Rantaz
73 76	Raggazh	Raitagh	Sekrott
77 80	Silkathal	Rargaz	Stirnog
81 84	Sulkro	Sagrhar	Terenkol
85 88	Thazu	Senakh	Thrakkol
89 92	Tukrome	Tizraz	Thulhak
93 96	Vuthal	Tukkrasz	Vakhtan
97 100	Wrogga	Tuvagh	Vandiaggun

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pronounced. There are some general rules to the language. All words are considered masculine, and there is no passive construction of verbs. Every sentence in Kargi conveys action, just as the Kargi behave.

Societal stature is evidenced by the words a hobgoblin uses. Royalty will often have to be translated for commoners—and vice versa. A slave is allowed only to speak to other slaves. When in the presence of a socially superior hobgoblin, one waits until spoken to before speaking. The penalty for “speaking out of caste” is the removal of the offender’s tongue.

The hobgoblin language uses the following letters: A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V and Z. Double consonants and hard consonant sounds are characteristic of the hobgoblin language. Written Hobgoblin is not difficult to learn, and most hobgoblins are taught to read and write a simplified Hobgoblin during their mandatory service in the military. It is written right to left and bears similarities to Dwarven.

Battle Tongue: All hobgoblins also speak Battle Tongue - the language of the military. Upon reaching maturity, every hobgoblin is taught this language, which primarily contains commands, strategy and common names for military hardware. Battle Tongue is not a complete language by itself, but a standardization that contains words only for military things. Words for weapons, armor, tactics, maneuvers and gods are standardized so that orders can be passed between forces. However, it would be impossible to negotiate a trade deal or discuss politics using Battle Tongue. Battle Tongue is taught to every Kargi during their basic military training, and all citizens can read and write it. Even those that cannot read or write Kargi are literate in Battle Tongue.

Other Languages: Outside of the Vohven Jungle, the next most common languages on Svimohzia are Dwarven and Low Elven. (High Elven is spoken only by elves.) Of the two elven languages, note that wood elves speak both, while wild elves speak only High Elven. Remaining languages include Gnomish, Halfling, Deji and other human tongues of Tellene.

Age

You can choose your character’s starting age or determine it randomly using Table 1-10: Random Starting Ages. As your character grows older, his mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma) increase. Unfortunately, his physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity and

Table 1-9: Random Vohven Deji Names

ROLL (D100)	FEMALE	MALE
01 04	Adeda	Babyr
05 08	Ashaji	Bvanyr
09 12	Aviva	Chavij
13 16	Chadoo	Danshah
17 20	Chira	Gebroh
21 24	Choshika	Jahani
25 28	Darajo	Jivash
29 32	Dviko	Jojyr
33 36	Eshi	Jynoth
37 40	Fashaa	Kathav
41 44	Gvisha	Kitho
45 48	Jobaji	Kobbo
49 52	Kagisho	Kvoja
53 56	Kina	Narva
57 60	Nacha	Nyrja
61 64	Ovija	Rashvo
65 68	Ranja	Ridvo
69 72	Reheva	Shekyr
73 76	Shakivy	Sovoj
77 80	Sivha	Tejen
81 84	Thaviny	Tojdar
85 88	Vatho	Varjen
89 92	Vohji	Vesh
93 96	Vondi	Vivnyr
97 100	Yehsho	Voyen

Table 1-10: Random Starting Ages

RACE ¹	ADULTHOOD	BARD		
		BRIGAND	BASIRAN DANCER	GLADIATOR
Human, Svimohz	14 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Human, Vohven Deji	12 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Half-hobgoblin	15 years	+2d4	+3d4	+5d6
Hobgoblin, Kargi	25 years	+2d6	+3d6	+8d6

¹Dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings and half-orcs are as defined in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

²Barbarians, rogues and sorcerers are as detailed in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

³Bards, fighters, paldins and rangers are as defined in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

⁴Clerics, druids, monks and wizards are as described in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

Table 1-11: Aging Effects

RACE ¹	MIDDLE AGE ²	OLD ³	VENERABLE ⁴	MAXIMUM
				AGE
Human, Svimohz	30 years	50 years	70 years	+2d20 years
Human, Vohven Deji	28 years	46 years	63 years	+2d12 years
Half-hobgoblin	55 years	80 years	110 years	+4d10 years
Hobgoblin, Kargi	90 years	130 years	180 years	+3d20 years

¹ Dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings and half-orcs are as defined in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

² -1 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.

³ -2 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.

⁴ -3 to Str, Con and Dex; +2 to Int, Wis and Cha.

Constitution) decrease. See Table 1-11: Aging Effects. The effects of each stage are cumulative, though none of a character's ability scores can be reduced below 1 in this way. Keep the advantages and disadvantages of this in mind when determining your character's age.

When your character reaches a venerable age, the DM secretly rolls the PC's maximum age (the number from the Venerable column on Table 1-11: Aging Effects, plus the modifier from the Maximum Age column). When your character reaches that age, he dies of old age at some point during that year. Note that the maximum ages listed on Table 1-11: Aging Effects are for player characters only. Most non-player characters (even nobles and other prominent figures) on Tellene die from accidents, disease or violence before facing natural death by old age.

Height and Weight

Choose from the ranges on Table 1-12: Random Height and Weight, or roll randomly. You may deviate from these ranges with the DM's permission. Roll the dice given in the Height modifier column to determine your extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll shown in the Weight Modifier column determines your additional weight beyond the base weight.

For example, Kelghaz (a half-hobgoblin male) stands 4' 10" tall plus 2d10 inches. Mark rolls 2d10 and gets 12, so Kelghaz stands 5' 10" tall. Then Mark uses that same roll, 12, and multiplies it by 2d4 pounds. His 2d4 roll is 5, so Kelghaz weighs an extra 60 pounds on top of the base 140, for a total of 190 pounds.

Table 1-12: Random Height and Weight

RACE	BASE HEIGHT	HEIGHT MODIFIER	BASE WEIGHT	WEIGHT MODIFIER
Dejy, Vohven, male	3' 11"	+2d8	90 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Dejy, Vohven, female	3' 6"	+2d8	80 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Ahznom, male	4' 11"	+2d8	130 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Ahznom, female	4' 6"	+2d8	90 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Mewhi, male	4' 11"	+2d12	140 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Mewhi, female	4' 6"	+2d10	95 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Meznam, male	4' 11"	+2d10	130 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Meznam, female	4' 6"	+2d10	90 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Ozhvin, male	4' 11"	+2d12	140 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Ozhvin, female	4' 6"	+2d10	95 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Zassho, male	4' 9"	+2d8	100 lbs.	x (1d4+2) lbs.
Svimohz, Zassho, female	4' 5"	+2d8	80 lbs.	x (1d4+2) lbs.
Svimohz, Zazahni, male	4' 6"	+2d10	120 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Svimohz, Zazahni, female	4' 4"	+2d8	75 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Dwarf, Hill, male	3' 7"	+2d4	120 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, Hill, female	3' 5"	+2d4	90 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, Mountain, male	3' 9"	+2d4	130 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, Mountain, female	3' 7"	+2d4	100 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Elf, Dark, male	3' 10"	+2d4	70 lbs.	x (1d4+1) lbs.
Elf, Dark, female	3' 8"	+2d4	60 lbs.	x (1d4+1) lbs.
Elf, Wild, male	4'	+2d4	80 lbs.	x (1d6) lbs.
Elf, Wild, female	3' 8"	+2d4	75 lbs.	x (1d6) lbs.
Elf, Wood, male	4' 2"	+2d4	90 lbs.	x (1d6) lbs.
Elf, Wood, female	4'	+2d4	85 lbs.	x (1d6) lbs.
Gnome, Forest, male	3' 4"	+2d4	55 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Gnome, Forest, female	3' 1"	+2d4	45 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Gnome, Rock, male	3'	+2d4	40 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Gnome, Rock, female	2' 10"	+2d4	35 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Halfling, Lightfoot, male	2' 8"	+2d4	30 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Halfling, Lightfoot, female	2' 6"	+2d4	25 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Half elf, male	4' 7"	+2d8	100 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Half elf, female	4' 5"	+2d8	80 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Half hobgoblin, male	4' 10"	+2d10	140 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Half hobgoblin, female	4' 6"	+2d10	100 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Half orc, male	4' 8"	+2d10	130 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Half orc, female	4' 4"	+2d10	90 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Hobgoblin, Kargi, male	5' 1"	+2d12	150 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Hobgoblin, Kargi, female	4' 8"	+2d12	135 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.

Pronunciation Guide

A as in grape, <i>flay</i> , <i>sail</i>	oo as in <i>boot</i> , <i>crew</i> , <i>tune</i>
a as in <i>cap</i> , <i>sat</i> , <i>carrot</i>	ou as in <i>cow</i> , <i>shout</i> , <i>hour</i>
ä as in <i>father</i> , <i>hot</i> , <i>heart</i>	yoo as in <i>cure</i> , <i>curious</i>
E as in <i>street</i> , <i>honey</i> , <i>even</i>	U as in <i>use</i> , <i>few</i> , <i>cute</i>
e as in <i>ten</i> , <i>health</i> , <i>berry</i>	u as in <i>mud</i> , <i>ton</i> , <i>blood</i>
l as in <i>ice</i> , <i>sky</i>	u as in <i>word</i> , <i>her</i> , <i>sir</i>
i as in <i>rich</i> , <i>mirror</i>	uh as in <i>agent</i> , <i>collect</i> , <i>focus</i>
O as in <i>go</i>	'l as in <i>paddle</i> , <i>cattle</i>
ô as in <i>corn</i>	'n as in <i>sudden</i> , <i>sweeten</i>
oi as in <i>boy</i> , <i>oil</i> , <i>royal</i>	

PRONUNCIATION WORD SAMPLER

Ahznomahn (ähz nO män): A small confederacy on the island of Svimohzia.

Anowhizh (an O whis): City on the Ozhvinmishii coast.

Arboretum of Clahz (clähz): An area in the heart of the Vohven Jungle, where intelligent vegetable creatures are said to have originated.

Ashoshani (ä shO shä nE): Capital of western Ozhvinmish.

Awhom Forest (ä hoom): Densely wooded area in east central Svimohzia.

Bronish (brO nish): Free city-state in northwest Svimohzia founded by refugees of Mendarn and Pel Brolenon.

Burzumagh (bärz oo mäg): Kargi city in the Zamul Forest.

Dashahn Mountains (du shän): Mountain range in northwestern Svimohzia, nicknamed Malachite Heights.

Durbattum River (där bä tum): River running through the Zamul Forest in Ul-Karg.

Ehniven Marsh (e nE ven): A low-lying area on the western shoreline of Mewzhano Bay, on Svimohzia.

Emosvom (E mOs vOm): Zazahni city located on the Izhoven River and bordering the Vohven Jungle.

Imomena Hills (im O mE nä): Hills located in eastern central Svimohzia, between Ozhvinmish and Zazahni.

Ivelo River (iv el O): A meandering river in the southern part of the Meznamishii Valley.

Ivez Estuary (iv ez): Swampy area at the mouth of the Ivelo river on Mewzhano Bay.

Izhano River (iz ä nO): River flowing through Meznamish.

Izhoven River (iz hO ven): Large river flowing south from the Imomena Hills through the Vohven Jungle.

Kazullagh (ka zoo läg): A city in Ul-Karg.

Krimppatu Mountains (krim pä too): The western portion of the Dashahn-Tanezh mountain range.

Lozhen Mountains (lO zen): A dozen active volcanic peaks within the Imomena Hills, on Svimohzia.

Menamo Hills (me nä mO): The ring of hills that define the eastern Meznamishii border.

Mewhi Marshes (myoo hE): Swamp in southwestern Zazahni.

Mewzhano Bay (myoo zä nO): Rocky inlet of the Straits of Svimohzia.

Mezh-Vowmi Isle (mez vO mE): Island where the

Meznamish (mez näm ish): Kingdom whose borders reach from the Whizvomi Forest to the Menamo Hills.

Miznahn (miz nän): A city in Ozhvinmish.

Miznoh Forest (miz nO): Forest in northwestern Ozhvinmish.

Mizohr Woodlands (mi zör): Forest in southwestern Meznamish, stretching from the foothills of the Tanezh-Dashahn mountain ranges into the Meznamish Valley.

Monam-Ahnoz (mO näm ä noz): Capital city of Meznamish.

Nazguk Hills (naz guk): Hills in northern Ul-Karg, at the southern slopes of the Krimppatu Mountains.

Nenehi (ne ne hE): City on the eastern edge of Ozhvinmish.

Ozhvinmish (Oz vin mish): Kingdom and largest of the Svimohzish nations that runs along the entire Svimohzish coast from Meznamish to Ahznomahn.

Ronazagh (rä nuh zäg): Kargi city south of the Zamul Forest.

Svimohzia (svim Oz E uh): The massive island dominating the southwestern portion of the continent of Tellene.

Svomawhom Forest (svOm uh hoom): Dangerous forest east of the Imomena Hills.

Svomwhi (svOm whE): Northernmost Zazahni city on the Izhoven River.

Svowmahni (svou mä nE): Capital city of eastern Ozhvinmish.

Tanezh Mountains (tan ez): Mountains marking the eastern edge of Meznamish.

Ul-Karg (ool karg): Hobgoblin nation located in the western portion of the Svimohzish Isle.

Vohven Jungle (vO ven): The massive jungle covering the southern portions of the Svimohzish Isle.

Vrandol (vran dOl): Mendarn colony on the westernmost tip of Svimohzia.

Whisvomi Forest (whis vO mE): A forest on the western slopes of the Dashahn Mountains.

Whiven Marsh (whi ven): Swamp bordering the Brandobian Ocean, on the northwestern shores of the Svimohzish Isle.

Wimish (wim ish): A Zazahni city on the Izhoven River.

Zamul Forest (zä mool): A forest in northern Ul-Karg.

Zazahni (zuh zä nE): Kingdom in central Svimohzia. Currently kingless and in a state of civil war.

Zenshahn (zen shän): Westernmost Zazahni city located on the Zhano-mewhi Bay.

Zha-nehzmish (zä nez mish): Capital of Ahznomahn.

Zhano Headlands (zä nO): The northern terminus of the Dashahn Mountains.

Zhano-Mewhi Bay (zä nO myoo hE): Large bay near Ul-Karg characterized by black sand beaches.

Zhanohven (zä nO ven): A Zazahni city.

Zomo-wim (zO mO wim): Ozhvinmishii city near the Awhom Forest.



CHAPTER 2: CLASSES AND PATHS

Character class is one of the most definitive elements of any *Dungeons & Dragons* character, and this is no exception on Svimohzia. Each class fills its own unique role in a Svimohzish campaign, with some more suitable than others. This section presents an overview of each of the core classes (and the seven variant core classes from the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*) and discusses their various roles on the Svimohzish Isle. Following this are career paths and feat progressions, as well as a listing of some new prestige classes that originate in the cradle of civilization.

CLASSES

Svimohz and humanoids that adventure often do so as fighters, rogues or clerics. Druids and shamans might hail from the Vohven Jungle, the central highlands or even the Tanezh Mountains. Sorcerers come from scattered places across the island, but a surprising number call Zazahni home. The Ahznomahnii produce eloquent bards. The Ozhvinmishii have an introspective culture that holds monks in high respect, and some of the greatest monks on Tellene come from Ozhvinmish. Barbarians often come from Ul-Karg or tribes deep in the Vohven Jungle.

This section discusses character creation options and variant rules (where applicable). Skills, spells or feats that are not defined elsewhere in this book or the core D&D books are usually taken from another source such as the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*. This is often abbreviated as PG#SL throughout the text.

BARBARIAN

When creating a barbarian for play on Svimohzia, your best choice is one of the Deji tribes deep in the Vohven Jungle. Other options include hobgoblin exiles, orcs and half-orcs. In game terms, players should know how to deal as much damage (to as many foes) as possible. Good Strength and Constitution scores are strongly recommended. In order to drop their opponents quickly and efficiently, barbarians on Svimohzia

tend to favor weapons that deal good damage, though not so large that they would be difficult to swing in the dense foliage. The Climb skill is beneficial in regard to the dense foliage, and a good Dexterity score is helpful both in and out of combat.

Due to the climate (and their fighting style), barbarians on Svimohzia prefer light armor that does not greatly hinder their movement or ability to climb. Barbarian characters have even more incentive to wear lighter armors, however, as their Fast Movement ability does not work while wearing heavy armor.

BARD

Bards are common among the Svimohz, for their use either as spies or boosters of morale. Ahznomahn, in particular, produces eloquent bards. Players interested in creating bards should focus on as many skills as possible, particularly those that will enhance the abilities of others. To be prepared for combat, bards should strongly consider weapons and tactics that take advantage of high Dexterity scores.

When making spell selections, bards need spells that improve mobility in battle, their ability to discern the value of treasure, and improve the combat abilities of their comrades. Summoning spells can suddenly make small jungle-scouting parties more formidable or provide unexpected reinforcements should a fight go badly, while mind-affecting spells may capture enemies without bloodshed.

BASIRAN DANCER

Basiran dancers are quite rare in Svimohzia, though occasionally some Kalamaran adventurers may be seen in Ahznomahn. Basiran dancers on Svimohzia often focus on skills and feats that maximize their usefulness as spies. Diplomacy is particularly recommended, and Perform is obviously necessary as are Balance and Tumble. Basiran dancers should also not overlook combat skills. Players should select feats that emphasize speed and mobility, allowing the character to move about efficiently in combat.

BRIGAND

It is difficult to create a brigand character that is not already well suited for a campaign on Svimohzia. The call for mercenaries is strong in almost all lands, and the existence of the Great Coastal Highway almost begs the typical brigand to assault passing travelers and innocent villagers. The adventuring brigand can easily join a group of heroes setting out into the mountains, jungles or savannas in search of glory and danger. Survival skills are required for adventuring in rural or jungle territory, and since brigands have slightly more combat ability than rogues do, players should consider selecting feats like Combat Expertise or Power Attack.

Much of the advice given for rogues later in this section applies equally well to brigands, but since brigands have half the number of skill points of the rogue, players are encouraged to specialize. It is better to be exceptionally good at a few tasks than to be average or poor at a large number.

CLERIC

Both good and evil clerics have a number of abilities that make them highly sought after, for they can cure or kill, stave off hunger and diseases, and gain guidance from the gods above. Players interested in playing a cleric need to decide first on the character's personality. Is he a lawful cleric who serves the King with his sword arm? Is she a cunning sneak who calls upon the favor of her god to twist fate in her favor? On the other hand, is

he simply a depraved servant of his god's bloodlust who enjoys killing for its own merits?

For clerics with a more martial bent, much of the advice given for barbarians applies equally well. Focus on dealing damage as quickly and brutally as possible while remaining alive amidst a large group of foes. Spell selection in this role is essential - emphasize spells that enhance abilities as well as spells that hinder enemies in battle. For a less straightforward approach, focus less on combat and more on spells that trick and confound opponents. For a stronger fighting force, choose spells that give allies bonuses in combat.

DRUID

On the Svimohzish Isle, druids often hail from the Vohven Jungle, the central highlands or the Tanezh Mountains. Fortunately, many of their class abilities are geared toward survival in forests, jungles and other green and verdant environs, and there are few lands with as much of this terrain as Svimohzia. When creating a druid, a character's biggest strength may be his or her selection of animal- and plant-controlling spells, as well as divination spells to learn of dangers lurking in wait.

FIGHTER

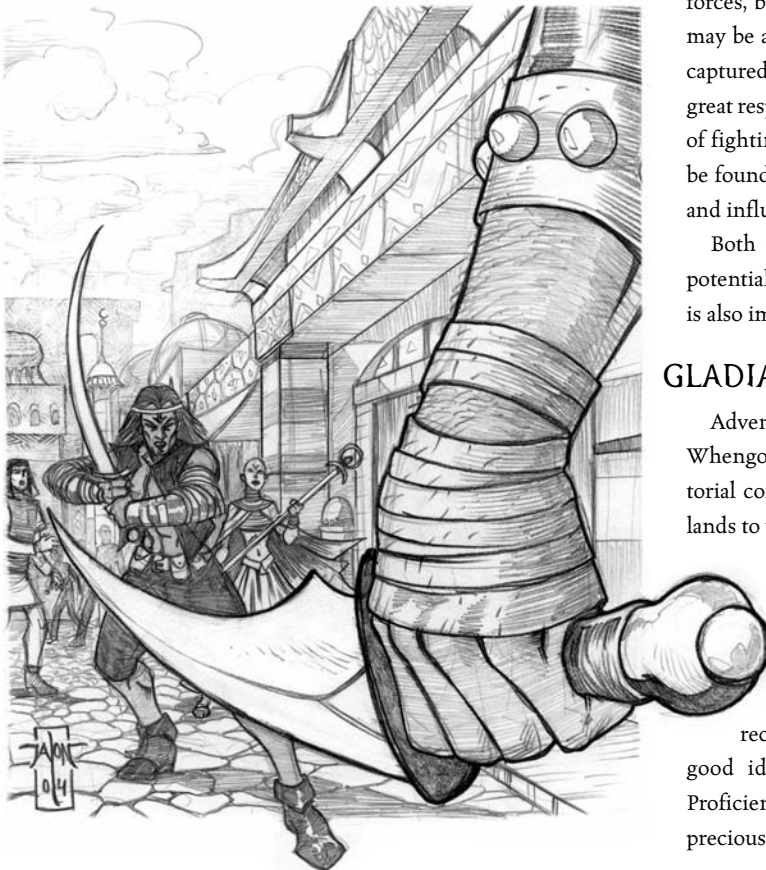
Adventuring Svimohz are common fighters, and can be found throughout the island, particularly in Zazahni. After all, druids, clerics, and wizards may be able to command terrifying forces, bards may be able to enthrall entire squads, and rogues may be able to circumvent the strongest protections placed on captured treasures, but the warlords of this fractured land hold a great respect for sheer martial prowess. As the absolute epitome of fighting ability, fighters are naturally very common, and can be found at all levels, from lowly soldiers to the most powerful and influential warlords in the land.

Both Strength and Constitution are important for damage potential and the ability to absorb punishment, while Dexterity is also important for speed.

GLADIATOR

Adventuring gladiators often favor Mezh-Vowmi Isle, where Whengohlzha, the House of Sport, holds many kinds of gladiatorial contests. Gladiators come to Zha-nehmish from many lands to win accolades and rewards for their successes in battle.

When creating a gladiator, the same advice given to fighters and barbarians applies. Gladiators should focus on mobility and speed as much as heavy armor and weapons. The gladiator's arena veteran ability makes his attacks of opportunity a force to be reckoned with, thus a weapon such as a spiked chain is a good idea. As gladiators receive a free Exotic Weapon Proficiency at first level, the player does not have to spend a precious feat to be able to use it effectively.



The gladiator's critical focus and legendary style abilities also give a powerful boost in single combat, so players might also consider carrying a second weapon. Gladiators of 13th level or higher often begin every battle with their notorious style ability - especially against low-level warriors, as they will be more likely to be frightened or panicked.

INFILTRATOR

In the largest Svimohzish cities, infiltrators are ample in number and always in demand. They often work for the king or grand dukes, ruling councils, and the noble Svizohr and merchant houses. In rural areas, the infiltrator might be a bandit, highwayman, scout, guide, caravan guard or honest hunter. Their sneak attack is both useful and deadly in either area, their ability to divine true north is invaluable beneath the sun-blocking jungle foliage, and the increased movement speed is useful in and out of combat.

MONK

The Ozhvinmish have an introspective culture that holds monks in high regard, and some of the greatest monks come from there - particularly the monastery of the Temple of the Three Strengths some six miles west of Zomo-wim. When creating a Svimohz monk, in particular, players should study the Disciple of Zhulurahh prestige class to determine if they want to follow that path later.

For starting characters, focus on building up Dexterity and Strength-related skills and abilities. Because they have so many built-in class abilities, however, monks can afford to be very flexible with their feats. The basic skills a monk needs often use most of her skill points, but if the character has a high Intelligence, players should consider investing in a rank or two of Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (history).

PALADIN

Svimohzish paladins may come from: the Home Foundation in Ahznomahn, Emosvom and Svomwhi; the Courts of Justice in Monam-Ahnoz, Ashoshani, Nenehi and Svomwhi; the Halls of the Valiant in Ashoshani; the Hall of Oaths in Svowmahni and Svomwhi; and the Assembly of Light in Nenehi. All lawful good faiths also have smaller followings in Zomo-wim, and elsewhere throughout the island.

When creating a paladin, many of the suggestions that apply to both fighters and clerics apply just as well. Paladins do not have the bonus feats of the fighter, so players must choose feats a bit more carefully, but with the added advantage of divine spells and powers as backup. Because most paladins are very charismatic, such a character might consider taking spells and feats to attract and augment allies.

On Svimohzia, the standard mount for a paladin is a highland dancer, an intelligent horse native to the eastern plains of Svimohzia. Only the wealthiest lords with an interest in foreign breeds take the time and expense to transport these animals

from northern Tellene. At the DM's discretion, a paladin might be allowed to call another type of mount, such as a rhino or zamulbah (see Chapter Three: Weapons, Equipment and Magic).

PSIONICS AND OTHER PSYCHICS

Native psychic characters are rare on Svimohzia, though those from other lands may flee to Svimohzia to avoid persecution at the hands of the College of Magic and their allies. Such characters often attempt to disguise their ability as sorcery, though their true nature quickly becomes apparent when traveling with arcane spellcasters. Fortunately, many Svimohz care more about a character's family ties, personality and actions over the source of their powers. Of all the island races, the introspective Ozhvins are perhaps the most accepting of psionics, though psychic characters can originate from any region.

As such, it is easy to create an adventuring psionic for a Svimohzish campaign. They can find mental stimulation almost anywhere, and their powers make them a good addition to any party. Survival skills are required for adventuring in rural or jungle territory, while Diplomacy and Sense Motive skills are more useful in urban areas. A psionic character is usually weakest in the physical aspects, and may wish to consider physical feats like Endurance, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, or Toughness, and feats that help with attack or damage, such as Psionic Weapon and Weapon Focus.

More information on the various psionic character types can be found in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

RANGER

Peerless hunters and trackers, rangers hunt the most dangerous quarries - other sentient beings. Whether they be human or humanoid, the ranger's keen tracking ability serves him well in Svimohzia, where they are often used as scouts. Occasionally, however, a ranger joins the military or an adventuring party. A ranger native to the Svimohzish Isle should focus on detection and tracking, and take full use of their knack for fighting with two weapons - a very useful ability.

ROGUE

Rogues are common throughout Svimohzia, particularly in Zha-nehzmish and Monam-Ahnoz (and Ronazagh for hobgoblins). Versatility is their stock in trade, and the character should reflect that. Rogues can, and should, do a little bit of everything. Unless this character plans on entering combat frequently, players should consider taking feats that will improve skills or give the rogue new skill-based abilities. For the fighting rogue, mobility and speed are more important than heavy armor and massive damage. When it comes time to pick special abilities, consider abilities like opportunist, skill mastery and slippery mind. Extra feats are also useful.

SHAMAN

Shamans often hail from the Vohven Jungle, the central highlands or the Tanezh Mountains. Regardless of their origins, however, many shamans treat their comrades as a surrogate tribe, and their blessings and rituals to appease the nature spirits often make warriors feel a bit more at ease.

Svimohz shamans should focus on a combination of combat and spells that focus on animals or creatures. Metamagic feats (and wild feats as described in *Complete Divine*) are often good choices for the shaman, as are general-purpose spellcasting feats like Spell Focus and Spell Penetration. Shamans have a decent skill point selection, and thus should consider putting ranks in skills related to alertness and survival.

Shamans native to Svimohzia may also choose from the following totemic nature abilities, in addition to those defined in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

Ape: You gain a hit point bonus equal to the result from one Hit Die roll plus your your totemic nature bonus, as well as a bonus of +5 ft. to your climb movement speed, each time you receive a totemic nature bonus.

Lizard: Your climb movement speed is equal to your base movement speed, plus an additional 5 ft. for each time you receive a totemic nature bonus. You can use your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier for Climb checks, if you so choose.

Monkey: You gain a bonus on Reflex saving throws to avoid the attacks or effects of traps, equal to 2 + your totemic nature bonus. You also gain a bonus on Balance and Hide checks equal to your totemic nature bonus.

Parrot: You gain a bonus on Will saving throws to resist enchantment (charm) spells, equal to 2 + your totemic nature bonus. In addition, each time you receive a totemic nature bonus, you gain a number of bonus languages equal to 1 + your new totemic nature bonus.

Toad or frog: You gain a bonus on Fortitude saving throws to resist poison, equal to 2 + your totemic nature bonus. You also gain a bonus on Jump and Swim checks equal to your totemic nature bonus.

SPELLSINGER, SORCERER AND WIZARD

Spellcasters come from scattered places across the island, but a surprising number of sorcerers call Zazahni home. When creating a sorcerer, spellsinger or wizard, spell selection is obviously the most important decision. If adventuring in the forests or Vohven Jungle, spells that manipulate plants and animals are helpful, though city dwellers might want to focus on illusionary and other diverting spells. Those that live in war-torn areas, such as Zazahni, may prefer more combat-related spells. In any case, the ability to take Knowledge skills as class skills is a powerful advantage. Metamagic feats are strongly recommended, particularly feats such as Extend Spell and Enlarge Spell.

Recommended familiars are the cat, lizard, monkey, parrot, snake and toad. The monkey and parrot are considered standard familiars (in other words, no special feat is required to take one of these familiars), and offer certain advantages in addition to the standard familiar abilities.

NEW FAMILIARS

FAMILIAR	SPECIAL
Monkey	Master gains +3 on Balance checks
Parrot*	Master gains 4 skill points to use on the Speak Language skill

*A parrot familiar can speak one language of the master's choice as a supernatural ability. Parrots use the statistics of ravens (see the *Monster Manual*).

WATCHMAN

As in cities on the northern continent, the watchmen of Svimohzia may be found in densely populated cities that maintain a lawful force of men and women. As with watchmen in other lands, consider if you want to improve your relations with the citizenry, your skills to track down people or items, or your ability to physically battle the guilty. Regardless of which you choose, remember that watchmen on Svimohzia usually wear light or no armor, because of the heat.

Most watchmen on Svimohzia follow a career path similar to the watchmen of Zha-nehzmish, described in the following section. You and your DM should feel free to create appropriate feat progressions for different cities and locations that best fit your campaign.

CAREER PATHS

Creating a character for adventuring on the Svimohzish Isle presents little difficulty. Assign your highest ability score to your key ability, then go with your secondary abilities and dump the low scores in your remaining abilities with disregard. Buy the best armor you can handle, get a weapon, buy whatever equipment you can afford, and head out across the savannah, killing anything that gets in your way.

Creating an interesting hero is a bit more challenging. Working with a model, or at least an idea of the direction you want your character to follow, provides some focus. A Vohven Deji barbarian that leaps onto his opponents from ambush presents quite a different image from an Ahznomahnii cavalryman, readying his weapon while he peers carefully into the darkness of the upcoming jungle.

Whether you play a monk, wizard, or a good old-fashioned fighter, it helps to have certain goals in mind when you create the character or advance in level and want to choose feats and distribute skill points. The following examples show how some inhabitants of Svimohzia compare to each other in attitude, skills and their approach to combat.

Ahznomahnii Border Patrol

Though the peoples of Ahznomahn rely heavily on trade with the natives in the Vohven Jungle, they must also face constant attacks by monsters (orcs, trolls and worse) and tribes of hostile savages therein. As such, the standing army requires heavy use of border patrols in the south and southwest.

Highland dancers are, naturally, the mount of choice. Members of the border patrol are armed with a spear or lance, and always carry a composite bow. They favor light armors, such as cord, studded leather and chain shirts.

The average member of the Ahznomahnii border patrol has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Mounted Combat
- 2nd feat Mounted Archery
- 3rd feat Point Blank Shot
- 4th feat Far Shot or Weapon Focus
- 5th feat Precise Shot or Weapon Specialization

Vital skills include Handle Animal, Ride, Spot and Survival.

Colonial Soldier

The soldiers of Bronish and Vrandol serve as protectors of the weak or enforcers of the ruling class, depending upon their nature and their orders at the time. They often hold a special place of honor (or fear) among the local populace, who have learned to follow their lead. Colonial soldiers do not adventure for glory, but in support of their leaders, who call on them for special assignments from time to time. As such, they must be quite capable in the wild and able to act independently when the need arises.

Most wear brigandine or lamellar armor, with shield and sword or axe. The few cavalymen, however, wear light armor and carry a spear or lance, and composite bow.

The average colonial soldier has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Explorer
- 2nd feat Toughness or Improved Initiative
- 3rd feat Shield Proficiency or Mounted Combat
- 4th feat Weapon Focus or Point Blank Shot
- 5th feat Combat Reflexes or Rapid Shot

Vital skills include Bluff, Heal, Spot and Sense Motive. Those who favor mounted combat also focus on Handle Animal and Ride checks.

Highland Defender

Mountain dwarves have lived in the highlands of Svimohzia for many generations, and are now joined by human and rock gnome miners. They fight to protect their lands, their homes and their families, and this protective nature shows even in their

fighting skills. They have designed their tactics around one basic philosophy - united we stand, divided we fall. They protect each other in battle, and though this means they advance slower than most fighting forces, they also lose fewer allies.

Their primary weapons are axes, picks, warhammers and shields. Though the stone dwarves favor heavy armor predominantly, the humans, gnomes and other dwarves prefer light or medium armor when outside, and heavier metal armors only when underground.

The average highland defender has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Toughness or Stonebones
- 2nd feat Immovability or Combat Reflexes
- 3rd feat Shield Proficiency
- 4th feat Improved Shield Bash
- 5th feat Guardian

Vital skills include Climb, Jump, Listen, Spot and Survival.

Kargi Infantry

The Kargi often claim that their soldiers are forged from the finest raw materials, and rise above all other forces. These warriors, they say, are born with the right instincts and the ability to learn techniques developed by their predecessors down through the centuries. Such individuals are found early and watched closely, for even those who seem to be made of the right stuff do not always develop into living, fighting tools of the nation of Ul-Karg. Those who are chosen endure a crucible of fierce, intense and difficult training. Not all survive, but those who do gain the honor of serving as Kargi soldiers. They are some of the most finely honed warriors in Ul-Karg.

Light infantrymen are issued with light or heavy crossbows, longswords and bucklers, though many carry their own weapons with them. Heavy infantrymen use longswords or battleaxes, with a large shield. Again, most carry their own weapons for backup (typically a mace or short sword). The basic armor for all units is lamellar.

The average Kargi infantryman has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Iron Touch of Brog-Tuuakh or Power Attack
- 2nd feat Hammer and Anvil or Cleave
- 3rd feat Weapon Focus or Great Cleave
- 4th feat Weapon Specialization or Fearless
- 5th feat Combat Expertise or Undying

Vital skills include Climb, Intimidate, Jump, Listen and Spot.

Meznamishii Home Guard

Meznamish is on good terms with Zazahni and Ozhvnmish, and they have a solid trade relationship with the local dwarves, Pel Brolenon, Mendarn and Basir. Their small but effective fleet keeps the nearby islands pirate free (for the most part) and helps secure the sea-lanes from enemy warships, monsters and buccanniers. As such, they are precluded from needing a large army, and keep only a small but strong army to secure their lands against the Kingdom of Ul-Karg, and any unexpected threats.

This home guard is mostly composed of heavy footmen, with some cavalry and missile troops to round it out. Lamellar and brigandine are common armors, while the standard weapon is the longsword and/or composite bow. Unmounted missile troops use light armor (mostly leather or cord) and longbows, backed up by short swords in case of melee combat.

The average member of the Meznamishii home guard has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Born of the Cradle
- 2nd feat Weapon Focus or Mounted Combat
- 3rd feat Combat Reflexes or Point Blank Shot
- 4th feat Power Attack or Mounted Archery
- 5th feat Cleave or Far Shot

Vital skills include Climb, Heal, Intimidate, Jump and Sense Motive.

Ozhvnmishii Cavalry

Though their ships are slower and weaker than most, Ozhvnmish has the largest and probably the strongest army in Svimohzia, a great part of which is light and heavy cavalry plus mounted hobilar. Most of these equestrians travel on the quick and agile highland dancer, patrolling the cities and roads of the northern portion of the island. These patrols also make the Great Coastal Highway safer for travelers and merchants.

A heavy cavalryman favors a warhorse with cord or hide barding, while he tends to wear cord or hide armor with lance, mace and sword. Light cavalry prefer the highland dancer, and wear cord or other light armors, plus spear, lance and composite bow. The hobilar also sit on highland dancers, and carry light weapons (usually a short sword, and handaxe or throwing axes) and wear light armor and shield.

The average Ozhvnmishii cavalryman has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Mounted Combat
- 2nd feat Weapon Focus or Weapon Finesse
- 3rd feat Power Attack or Point Blank Shot
- 4th feat Ride-By Attack or Mounted Archery
- 5th feat Overrun or Rapid Shot

Vital skills include Balance, Handle Animal, Ride, Spot and Survival.

Rogue Leader

Competing bands of rogues, thieves and smugglers are common in the cities of Svimohzia, from the gang wars in Zha-nehmish to the bands of Burzumagh. In fact, it only requires the right person to step up and unite the local bands, as guild-master Vohrol has done in Svowmahni. By combining resources, he has formed a benevolent guild against which the competition cannot stand. Most other cities, however, currently lack such a unifying force, and only wait for the right leader to arrive.

The average rogue leader has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Circle of Friends
- 2nd feat Eyes of Fury
- 3rd feat Negotiator
- 4th feat Persuasive
- 5th feat Combat Reflexes or Leadership

Vital skills include Bluff, Climb, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently and Sense Motive.

University Scholar

There are two prominent options for those interested in imparting higher learning to the inhabitants of Svimohzia. The first is the well-known University of Zha, in Zha-nehmish. Here are gathered the greatest teachers from around the world, and the most senior professors enjoy salaries that grant them gold, if not the status, equal to lesser nobility.

Though the University of Arcana, in Zenshahn, is newer and more focused on a single area of study, it provides an intriguing new career path for the magically minded. In fact, since sole instructor Mushahnohz has little patience for teaching and no clue how to best handle the school's finances and paperwork, the University of Arcana provides an arcane spellcaster with an excellent opportunity to build a foundation for the rest of her days.

The average university scholar has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Scholar
- 2nd feat Skill Focus (Knowledge [choose one]) or Magical Aptitude
- 3rd feat Diligent or Eschew Materials
- 4th feat Investigator or Spell Mastery
- 5th feat Skill Focus (Knowledge [any one]) or Antimage

Vital skills include Decipher Script, Knowledge, Profession (scholar) and Speak Language, plus Concentration, Spellcraft and Use Magic Device for spellcasters.

Watchman of Zha-nehzmish

The watchmen of Zha-nehzmish favor a staff-fighting style with an emphasis on swift movement, and causing the opponent to lose his balance, fall, or to put him in a position where he cannot avoid a blow inflicted upon him, while at the same time not letting the criminal do the same. The Zha-nehzmish watchman favors attacks to the ankles, the head, the stomach and chest (see the game mechanics in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* regarding wounds to specific body parts).

Note that the watchman career path is a series of bonus feats given by the class, and follows certain rules that other career paths do not. For example, the watchman gains these feats even if he does not have the prerequisites. Also, due to its emphasis on grappling, fast strikes and rapid movement, the benefits of these feats only apply when the watchman is wearing light or no armor. (This may differ for the career paths of other cities, at the DM's option.)

The Zha-nehzmish watchman is usually a brave, acrobatic fighter. The typical order of feats is as follows:

- 1st feat Dodge
- 2nd feat Improved Trip
- 3rd feat Mobility
- 4th feat Improved Disarm
- 5th feat Spring Attack

Vital skills include Gather Information, Jump, Knowledge (local: Zha-nehzmish), Tumble, Search and Sense Motive.

Woodland Scout

From the wood elves in the northern forests to the human tribes and wild elves of the Vohven Jungle, the woodland scout is an often-encountered warrior. The average woodland scout has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Explorer or Animal Affinity
- 2nd feat Track or Exotic Steed
- 3rd feat Alertness or Mounted Combat
- 4th feat Weapon Finesse or Ride-By Attack
- 5th feat Stealthy or Power Attack

Vital skills include Climb, Listen, Move Silently, Spot and Survival.

Zazahnii Mercenary Crossbowman

Zazahnii's notorious mercenary crossbowmen have been the deciding factor in major battles for the last two generations. Their reputation for honoring a contract, their steadfastness in battle and their willingness to go anywhere and fight anyone made them a famous force in a short time. They always bring excellent equipment with them, including good armor, a supply of bolts and shields.

Before the veterans induct a newcomer as a full soldier, the trainee must spend time as a shield bearer for a seasoned crossbowman. The shield bearer uses light armor and a large melee weapon, such as an axe or great sword, in case an enemy manages to get close.

The average Zazahnii crossbowman is well trained, well equipped and ably led. The typical order of feats is as follows:

- 1st feat Improved Initiative
- 2nd feat Point Blank Shot
- 3rd feat Precise Shot
- 4th feat Rapid Shot
- 5th feat Far Shot

Vital skills include Craft (bowmaking), Hide, Spot and Tumble.

Zurena Hopeful

When Ahznomahn, "the Kingless Land," declared its independence, the rich nobles, merchants and guildmasters formed a government based not on divine kingly providence, but on wealth. Now, any Ahznomahn-born citizen with a net worth of over 75,000 gold Anvims may hold a seat in Parliament as a zurena, if he or she so chooses.

Hopeful zurenas with the right character and looks, however, may find patrons to sponsor their entrance fee for them. Though Ahznomahn holds the rule of monarchy and royalties in disfavor, they are still impressed with those who possess a kingly bearing.

The average zurena has a typical order of feats as follows:

- 1st feat Inheritance or Bazaar Veteran
- 2nd feat Gorgeous
- 3rd feat Noble Bearing or Deceitful
- 4th feat Stately Demeanor or Negotiator
- 5th feat Regal Bearing or Persuasive

Vital skills include Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (local) and Profession.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Prestige classes offer a form of multiclassing, though characters must first meet certain requirements before they can take their first level of a prestige class. If a character does not meet the requirements, he or she cannot take the first level of that prestige class. The following prestige classes are tailored specifically to the Svimohzish Isle.

DISCIPLE OF ZHULURAHN

"The purpose of exploration is growth, and through growth we reach our full potential in service to the Powermaster." – the great monk teacher, Zhulurahn

The Powermaster clergy, the Seekers of the Three Strengths, strive for mastery of the three central strengths: Body, Mind, and Spirit (or Soul). While most Ozhvin Seekers content themselves to exploring their potential in the attainment of these three pillars, some adopt a monastic devotion to the Invigorator. These characters often leave their homes and travel

to a sprawling monastery some six miles west of Zomo-wim, to study at the feet of the great monk teacher Zhulurahn, Aspirant of the Three Strengths. Zhulurahn is known for his gentle touch in healing and his iron fist in combat, and many seek to emulate him. Disciples of Zhulurahn are highly prized as tutors, bodyguards and personal physicians.

All disciples of Zhulurahn are clerics of the Powermaster, and most already have monk levels. However, cleric/fighters are not unheard of, and a rare few cleric/wizards use their limited arcane spells to supplement their divine magic in service to the Powermaster.



Table 2-1: The Disciple of Zhulurahn (Hit Die: d6)

CLASS	BASE ATTACK	FORT	REF	WILL		
LEVEL	BONUS	SAVE	SAVE	SAVE	SPECIAL	SPELLS PER DAY/SPELLS KNOWN
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Strong body, alert mind, sturdy spirit	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Powerful body	
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Powerful mind	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Powerful spirit	
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	-	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
6th	+4	+5	+5	+5	Spirit over body	
7th	+5	+5	+5	+5	-	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
8th	+6	+6	+6	+6	Mind over spirit	
9th	+6	+6	+6	+6	-	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
10th	+7	+7	+7	+7	Body over mind	

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Heal, Jump, Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spellcraft, Spot, Swim and Tumble. See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* for skill descriptions.

BECOMING A DISCIPLE OF ZHULURAHN

To qualify to become a disciple of Zhulurahn, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Lawful neutral.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Concentration 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks.

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Zhulurahn Knows.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 1st-level divine spells.

Domain: Healing and Strength.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the disciple of Zhulurahn prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Disciples of Zhulurahn are proficient with light armor and all simple and special monk weapons. Armor check penalties for armors heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: Beginning at 1st level, when a new disciple of Zhulurahn level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in cleric. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of turning or rebuking undead, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that she adds the level of disciple of Zhulurahn to the level of cleric, and then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.

Strong Body (Ex): You channel your energy to gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength, adding the usual benefits to melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and other uses of the Strength modifier. This bonus has a duration of 1 min./divine caster level + disciple of Zhulurahn level, and each activation of

this ability counts against the disciple's daily uses of turn/rebuke undead.

Alert Mind (Ex): You channel your energy to gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Wisdom, adding the usual benefits to Wisdom-related skills. This bonus has a duration of 1 min./divine caster level + disciple of Zhulurahn level, and each activation of this ability counts against the disciple's daily uses of turn/rebuke undead. You do not gain any additional bonus spells for the temporarily increased Wisdom, but the save DCs for your spells increase.

Sturdy Spirit (Ex): A disciple of Zhulurahn is immune to fear effects cast or created by any creature with Hit Dice less than the disciple. The disciple gains a bonus equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum 1) against fear effects cast or created by a creature whose Hit Dice are greater than or equal to the disciple.

Powerful Body (Su): The disciple of Zhulurahn gains an additional bonus equal to one-half her Constitution roll (rounded down) on damage rolls with unarmed strikes. You also gain the monk's fast movement ability, if you did not have it already.

Powerful Mind (Su): At 3rd level, a disciple of Zhulurahn gains an additional bonus equal to the character's disciple of Zhulurahn level on any Knowledge check. You also gain the monk's AC bonus, if you did not have it already.

Powerful Spirit (Su): A 4th-level disciple of Zhulurahn gains an additional bonus equal to the character's disciple of Zhulurahn level on Heal checks. You may use this bonus to heal others or yourself. You also gain the monk's flurry of blows ability, if you did not have it already.

Spirit Over Body (Su): You retain your fast movement (see Powerful Body) when wearing armor, using a shield, or carrying a medium or heavy load, provided you devoted time (one hour total) to prayer and physical training within the last 24 hours.

Mind Over Spirit (Su): You retain your flurry of blows ability (see Powerful Spirit) when wearing armor, using a shield, or carrying a medium or heavy load, provided you devoted time (one hour total) to meditation and scholastic learning within the last 24 hours.

Body Over Mind (Su): As long as you have one-third your maximum hit points (rounded down), you retain the monk's bonus to AC (see Powerful Mind) even when you are wearing armor, using a shield, or carrying a medium or heavy load.

MELDIZ SAVAGE

"Glory to death!" – typical Meldiz savage battle cry

Long ago, when Miznoh conquered the island, several Svizohr Houses trained their captured slaves as mindless killing machines. They selected their trainees from the male children, making them eunuchs, desensitizing them to violence, and removing all trace of compassion and individual will. Though

these *meldiz* (which loosely translates as "killer man"), were found too dangerous in civilized warfare, they were used to great effect in the Vohven Jungle. Onsar banned the practice of training the *meldiz*, seeing the act as ignoble and evil. In the subsequent generations, the *meldiz* faded from the minds of all but those houses first developing them. Then, the empire fell.

Since Fortnight's Battle, however, a few minor Svizohr have restarted the training of the *meldiz*, purchasing young slaves from Brolenese slavers and beginning again the process of creating the ultimate warrior. King Warven secretly endorses them, offering royal gold to help with the acquisition, and waiting until several legions are developed before revealing his armies to Ozhvinmish and the rest of the island.

Meldiz lack personal willpower, being in the thrall of their commanders and masters. They fight with suicidal abandon, embracing death as one would a lover. Their masters brand their symbol onto their bare chests to signify ownership. In addition, they all have tattoos and ritual scarring throughout their bodies, including their faces, palms of their hands and the bottom of their feet.

BECOMING A MELDIZ SAVAGE

To qualify to become a *meldiz* savage, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Entry Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Intimidate 5 ranks, Tumble 5 ranks

Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility

Special: Born into or sold into slavery at a young age, and trained as a *meldiz* for a period of at least ten years.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the *meldiz* savage prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: *Meldiz* savages are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. They are not proficient with armor or shields.

Eyes of Fury (Ex): Once per round, you can take a free action to gaze sternly at a single creature within a range equal to your natural reach + 5 feet. If the creature is looking directly at you, it must then succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your Hit Dice + your Cha bonus) or become shaken for 1 round. There is a 50% chance the gaze attack fails if the creature is intentionally averting its eyes (though this does give you concealment), or a definite failure if it cannot see you.

Fearsome Appearance (Ex): The scarring and tattoos make the *meldiz* savage a frightening foe on the battlefield. Opponents must make a Will save (DC 10 + your Cha bonus) to make an attack of opportunity against you.

Fast Movement (Ex): At 2nd level, you gain an enhancement bonus to speed. A *meldiz* savage wearing light or heavier armor or carrying a medium or heavy load loses this bonus. This bonus increases at 5th level and again at 8th level.

Scarred Flesh (Su): A meldiz savage continues to cut patterns on his flesh, just as those who once branded and tattooed him. As such, a 2nd-level meldiz savage gains damage reduction 5/magic. This increases to 10/magic at 6th level and 10/magic and lawful at 10th level.

Savage Strike (Su): For a number of times per day equal to 3 + the meldiz savage's Dexterity modifier, you gain an additional +2 bonus to melee attack rolls. This bonus increases to +4 at 6th level and to +6 at 9th level.

Improvised Charge (Ex): By keeping his limbs loose and relaxed, and using his opponents' weight and movements against them, a meldiz savage of 4th level or high can make a charge attack that surprises his opponents. This ability has two beneficial aspects: First, the charge need not be in a straight line, even though the meldiz savage can still move up to twice his speed. Second, if a meldiz savage makes a DC 15 Tumble check before beginning a charge, his movement through threatened squares provokes no attacks of opportunity.

Spurn Mind-Warping (Su): A 5th-level meldiz savage applies his Wisdom modifier (if positive) as an additional bonus on all saving throws against charm, fear, illusion, and other similar mind-affecting spells. Will saving throws thus add double the normal Wisdom modifier.

Death Throes (Ex): The most powerful meldiz seem impossible to kill. When the meldiz savage is reduced to between 0 and -5 hit points, the meldiz savage stabilizes, and remains conscious enough to immediately make a number of melee attacks equal to half his Charisma modifier (minimum one)

Table 2-2: The Meldiz Savage (Hit Die: d12)

CLASS	BASE ATTACK	FORT	REF	WILL	
LEVEL	BONUS	SAVE	SAVE	SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Eyes of fury, fearsome appearance
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Fast movement +5 ft., scarred flesh 1
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Savage strike +2
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Improvised charge
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Fast movement +10 ft., spurn mind-warping
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Savage strike +4, scarred flesh 2
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	-
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Fast movement +15 ft.
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Savage strike +6
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Death throes, scarred flesh 3

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Spot and Tumble. See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* for skill descriptions.

before collapsing. When making these attacks, the meldiz savage deals an extra 10 points of damage on each successful hit.

PRIMAL WARRIOR

"Their warriors slip through the trees like shadows in an alley. Take my word for it – and don't linger long in the Vohven."

– Vanazha Aziri, watchman of Zha-nehzmish

The Deji and wild elves of the Vohven Jungle have learned to live in harmony with its primal creatures, and shamans often adopt a primal as a totem animal. Primal warriors, through a special relationship with nature spirits, actually gain the ability to transform into these primitive animals. Primal warriors are usually rangers or shamans with a bent towards combat, serving as the guardians and scouts of their tribe.

BECOMING A PRIMAL WARRIOR

To qualify to become a primal warrior, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Entry Requirements

Region: Raised in the Vohven Jungle (interior or outskirts)

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Acrobatic or Agile.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the primal warrior prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Primal warriors gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor or shield.

Primal Form (Su): A primal warrior can transform into a primal creature (ape, baboon or monkey). This is similar to the *polymorph* spell, but the number of transformations is limited to the primal's level. This transformation lasts for a number of rounds equal to 7 + the character's Constitution modifier, unless the primal warrior chooses to end the transformation early. While transformed, the character also gains certain bonuses appropriate to the primal form taken (see below). As normal for *polymorph*, the primal warrior gains the creature's physical quali-



Table 2-3: The Primal Warrior (Hit Die: d8)

CLASS	BASE ATTACK	FORT	REF	WILL	
LEVEL	BONUS	SAVE	SAVE	SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Primal form (monkey), speak with primals
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Scent
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	-
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Primal form (baboon)
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Low-light vision
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Fast jungle movement
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Primal form (ape)
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Hide in plain sight
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	-
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Primal form (dire ape)

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Survival and Tumble. See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* for skill descriptions.

ties (including size, movement, natural armor bonus, natural weapons, space and reach), as well as any extraordinary or supernatural special attacks possessed by the form (such as the expectorate breath weapon of the green ape).

Unlike with the *polymorph* spell, a primal warrior does not gain the creature's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores when he takes its form, nor does he regain any hit points when he transforms.

Any primal warrior can assume the form of a monkey once per day. While in primal form, he gains a +6 bonus to Dexterity and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. The primal warrior can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb checks.

At 4th level, a primal warrior can assume primal form twice per day and can choose between monkey and baboon forms. While in baboon form, he gains a +6 bonus to Strength, a +6 bonus to Dexterity and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. The primal warrior can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

At 7th level, a primal warrior can assume primal form three times per day and can choose between monkey, baboon and ape forms. While in ape form, he gains a +8 bonus to Strength, a +6 bonus to Dexterity and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. The primal warrior can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

At 10th level, a primal warrior can assume primal form four times per day and can choose between monkey, baboon, ape and dire ape forms. While in dire ape form, he gains a +11 bonus to Strength, a +7 bonus to Dexterity and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. The primal warrior can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Speak With Primals (Sp): At will, the primal warrior may comprehend and communicate with monkeys, baboons, apes, dire apes and other similar creatures (such as chimps, lemurs and the green apes of the Obakasek Jungle) as the *speak with animals* spell. He cannot communicate with vastly different animals, such as cats or lizards.

Scent (Ex): At 2nd level, a primal warrior gains the scent special ability (see the *Monster Manual*) while in primal or nonprimal form.

Low-light Vision (Ex): At 5th level, a primal warrior gains low-light vision while in primal or nonprimal form. If the character already has low-light vision, his vision is unchanged.

Fast Jungle Movement (Ex): A 6th-level primal warrior's land speed increases by +10 feet when in jungle terrain. This benefit applies only when he is wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor and not carrying a heavy load.

Apply this bonus before modifying the primal warrior's speed because of any load carried or armor worn.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): An 8th-level primal warrior can use the Hide skill even while being observed, but only if he is in jungle terrain. As long as he is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, a primal warrior can hide himself from view in the open without actually hiding behind something. He cannot, however, hide in his own shadow.



SAVANNAH STALKER

"You say the gnoll is little more than a common predator? Come, tell that to the graves of my brother warriors."

- Selevahn Yahul, savannah stalker

The savannah stalker specializes in hunting down and eliminating the gnoll tribes of central highlands. They favor stealth and tracking skills to pursue their foes. Savannah stalkers typically come from Svimohz whose families were massacred by gnoll tribes, although rangers from the area often follow this path as well.

Savannah stalkers are primarily found wandering the lands of northern and western Zazahni, southwestern Ozhvinmish and the far west of Svimohzia, though they travel wherever their adversaries dwell.

BECOMING A SAVANNAH STALKER

To qualify to become a savannah stalker, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Table 2-4: The Savannah Stalker (Hit Die: d8)

CLASS	BASE ATTACK	FORT	REF	WILL	
LEVEL	BONUS	SAVE	SAVE	SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Favored enemy (gnoll) +2
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Ambush sense +2, fast movement
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Favored enemy (gnoll) +4, savannah stealth
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Ambush sense +4
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Sneak attack +2d6, improved savannah stealth
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Favored enemy (gnoll) +6
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2	Ambush sense +6, vicious attack
9th	+6	+6	+6	+3	Sneak attack +3d6
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3	Favored enemy (gnoll) +8, gnollbaned

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Craft, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (monsters), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival and Use Rope. See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* for skill descriptions.

Entry Requirements

Region: Ahznomahn (mainland), Ozhvinmish (western or eastern), Ul-Karg or Zazahni.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Hide 3 ranks, Listen 3 ranks, Move Silently 3 ranks, Speak Language (Gnoll), Spot 3 ranks, Survival 3 ranks.

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Track.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the savannah stalker prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Savannah stalkers gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor or shield.

Favored Enemy (Gnoll) (Ex): A savannah stalker gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Survival checks when using these skills against gnolls. He gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against gnolls. This benefit stacks with the ranger favored enemy class feature if gnoll is the ranger's favored enemy. This bonus increases by an extra +2 for every three savannah stalker levels beyond 1st level.

Ambush Sense (Ex): At 2nd level, a savannah stalker gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from ambushes (a favorite tactic of gnolls). This sense gives him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves and a +2 dodge bonus against the first attack coming from creatures in ambush (such as those who make a successful Hide check, or gnolls that catch the savannah stalker flat-footed). These bonuses rise to +4 when the savannah stalker reaches 5th level, and to +6 when he reaches 8th level.

Fast Movement (Ex): At 2nd level, a savannah stalker's base land speed increases by 10 feet. This benefit only applies in plains and savannahs, and when he is wearing no armor, light armor, or



medium armor and not carrying a heavy load. Apply this bonus before modifying the savannah stalker's speed because of any load carried or armor worn.

Sneak Attack (Ex): A savannah stalker hopes to strike down his target as quickly and efficiently as possible, and attempts to employ the element of surprise to strike at the vital spots of his foe's body in hopes of scoring a quick kill. This ability is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. This extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every further two levels (6th and 9th). If a savannah stalker gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses from damage stack.

Savannah Stealth (Ex): At 4th level, a savannah stalker gains a +4 bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when in plains and savannahs.

Improved Savannah Stealth (Ex): At 6th level, a savannah stalker's bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when in plains and savannahs improves to +6.

Vicious Attack (Ex): At 8th level, a savannah stalker who studies a particular gnoll for 2 rounds and then makes an attack against that gnoll with a melee weapon deals double damage if that attack hits. While studying the gnoll, the savannah stalker can undertake other actions as long as his attention stays focused on the target.

Gnollbanded (Su): A weapon wielded by a savannah stalker, including unarmed strike, gains a +2 enhancement bonus to attacks and deals an extra 2d6 points of damage against gnolls.

SEDIZEHN

"If you kill a man, you are a murderer. If you kill his freedom, you are a conqueror. If you kill his family, you are a Sedizhen."

– Vanazha Aziri, watchman of Zha-nehzmish

The elite killers in the Ahznomahnii Gray Cloak organization, Sedizehn are ruthless assassins and spies for hire, though they also conduct their own burglaries for funding. Despite their despicable profession, Ahznomahnii regularly hire these men and women to spy on rival houses, remove opponents or sabotage shipments. Becoming a Sedizehn is extremely challenging, requiring the candidate to murder one of his own family members for Helshan Zide, leader of the Gray Cloaks.

Sedizehn live and operate in Zha-nehzmish, but occasionally accept jobs outside of the city and even in other nations. Some have gone so far to blame the organization for assassinations in distant lands. Sedizehn on the job wear the traditional gray cloaks of their organization and conceal their faces with wooden drama masks. Most Sedizehn disdain the use of poison and magic as a coward's tools.

BECOMING A SEDIZEHN

To qualify to become a Sedizehn, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Skills: Hide 10 ranks, Move Silently 10 ranks

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy

Special: The character must murder a family member as proof of loyalty, following which the character must spend at least one year in rigorous training.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Sedizehn prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Sedizehn are proficient with all simple weapons, martial weapons (light, one-handed or ranged) and exotic weapons (light or ranged). The Sedizehn are proficient with light armor but not with shields.

Sneak Attack: This is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every other level (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th). If a Sedizehn gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses on damage stack.

Bleeding Wound (Ex): A Sedizehn of 2nd level or higher who makes a successful sneak attack can choose to deal a bleeding wound, sacrificing the extra 1d6 points of sneak attack damage. Such an attack deals damage as normal in the round when the attack hits. Thereafter, the wound caused by the sneak attack bleeds for 1 point of damage per round. Multiple bleeding wounds stack (two wounds for 2 points of damage per round, and so on).

The bleeding can only be stopped by a DC 15 Heal check or the application of any *cure* spell or other healing spell (*heal* or *healing circle*, for example). Creatures immune to sneak attacks are immune to bleeding wounds as well.

Heartless (Ex): The DC for Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks against a Sedizehn increases by +4.

Mindless Devotion (Ex): Sedizehn have no capacity for mercy and once hired to do a job, stop only at death. At 1st level, the Sedizehn gains a +1 profane bonus to all saving throws against mind-affecting spells and effects. This bonus increases by an additional +1 every other level (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th).

Evasion (Ex): At 4th level, a Sedizehn gains the evasion ability. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he takes no damage. A Sedizehn wearing medium or heavy armor loses all benefits of this ability. He also loses this ability while helpless, such as when unconscious or paralyzed. If the Sedizehn already has this ability (such as from rogue levels), he gained improved evasion instead.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): At 6th level, a Sedizehn can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as he is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, a Sedizehn can hide

Chapter Two: Classes and Paths

himself from view in the open without having anything to actually hide behind. He cannot, of course, hide in his own shadow.

Improved Evasion (Ex): Improved evasion works like evasion (see above), except that while the Sedizehn still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw, he takes only half damage on a failed save.

If a Sedizehn already has improved evasion, he gains greater evasion. Greater evasion works like improved evasion, except that while the Sedizehn still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw, he takes only one-quarter damage on a failed save.

Chaotic Strike (Su): For a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier, a Sedizehn may attempt a wild strike with one normal melee attack. He adds +1d4 to his attack roll and deals an extra +1d6 points of damage. A failed strike has no effect but counts as a use of that ability for that day.

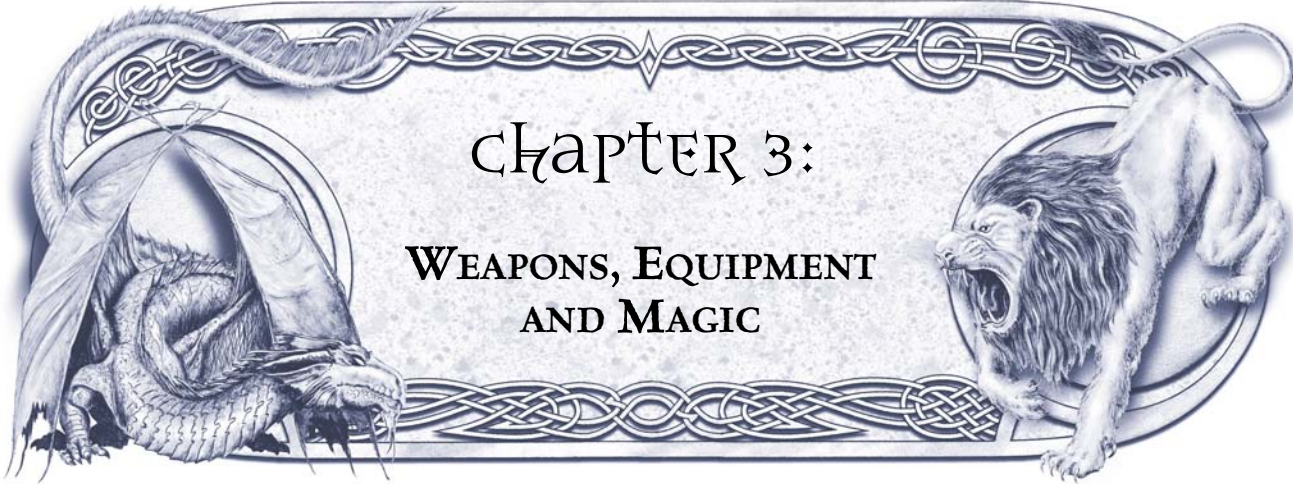
Table 2-5: The Sedizehn (Hit Die: d6)

CLASS	BASE ATTACK	FORT	REF	WILL	
LEVEL	BONUS	SAVE	SAVE	SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Sneak attack +1d6, heartless, mindless devotion +1
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Bleeding wound
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Sneak attack +2d6, mindless devotion +2
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Evasion
5th	+4	+1	+4	+4	Sneak attack +3d6, mindless devotion +3
6th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Hide in plain sight
7th	+6	+2	+5	+5	Sneak attack +4d6, mindless devotion +4
8th	+7	+2	+6	+6	Improved evasion
9th	+8	+3	+6	+6	Sneak attack +5d6, mindless devotion +5
10th	+9	+3	+7	+7	Chaotic strike

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Search, Spot, Tumble and Use Rope. See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands* for skill descriptions.



CHAPTER 3:

WEAPONS, EQUIPMENT
AND MAGIC

This chapter begins by covering many of the mundane and exotic items that characters may want to purchase from the varied shops, smiths and merchants of Svimohzia, and ends with a listing of new spells originating on the isle. Standard items from the *Player's Handbook* are also available.

WEAPONS

With the many years of history and many different cultures on the Svimohzish Isle, it is no surprise that its inhabitants should also have many weapons. For simplicity's sake, and to avoid introducing too many variant weapon statistics to the official D&D game, each of the following weapons lists a somewhat similar weapon from the *Player's Handbook*, from which you may take the statistics for the weapon. If you desire different statistics for each weapon, simply consult *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*. Not all weapons listed here are exact matches, but are similar to a *Player's Handbook* weapon in either size, shape, use and/or damage.

Note that mostly human and Kargi hobgoblin weapons are listed here. Although the Kargi must share their island with other humanoids (dwarves, elves, gnomes and halflings), as well as the accursed humans, they are by far the dominant humanoid power on the island, and so deserve special mention. Variant racial weapons for other humanoids are in *Goods and Gear*.

Anamvho: This Svimohz axe is made of a wide blade connected to the wooden shaft with a flat tang. The shaft is often reinforced with thin bands of bronze.

Amarahn: The Svimohz, typically Meznams, use this all-steel spear with a pyramidal head rather than a flat one.

Anarvozh: This battleaxe is found in Meznamish, along the Mewzhano Bay area of northern Svimohzia. The iron blade is attached to the wooden handle by a thin but sturdy cord binding.

Bajyr: This wooden club with a short grip and a long head fitted with stone "blades" around the edges and is found within the Vohven Jungle.

Bird's Head Club: This is a wooden, elaborately carved wood elf club with a large, pick-like head parallel to the shaft.

The head is thought to resemble a bird's head, or a leaf with a "stem" opposite the head. It can also be found among the Ozhvins.

Byrko: A two-handed Yeruji Deji weapon, it consists of one axe blade and one adze blade attached at the same end. Reeds are used to attach the stone heads to the wooden handle.

Crossbow, Hand: Though it does not differ in statistics, it is worth nothing that this common rogue's weapon is said to originate on Svimohzia.

Damonesh: This is a short wooden shaft fitted with a tanged wooden head. The damonesh is a common weapon among nomadic Svimohz.

Darahzni: A wooden Meznamishii club with a large conical head, often shaped to resemble a dolphin, shark or other marine animal.

Darevish: This fish-shaped, wooden club with a slightly pointed head is used mostly by the Mezh-Vowmi.

Dazurk-Razkamel: This Kargi warhammer has a wooden haft and a steel, mallet-shaped head opposite a short point.

Dezonesh: This wooden spear is fitted with a long, barbed, socketed steel head and used primarily by the Zazahinii. Below the tip, but above the pin of the socket, are multiple small barbs set in various directions so that the spear cannot be pushed or pulled out of the victim without dealing 1d8 points of damage.

Dezoran: This is a wooden Mezh-Vovmii spear topped with a socketed, iron leaf-shaped head. Below the head, the shaft is fitted with animal fur and reinforced with three or four steel bands. The butt of the shaft is also fitted with a steel cap.

Dezorozh: This is a wooden Ahznomahnii spear is topped with a long, barbed iron head.

Elephant: The unusual name of this two-handed axe refers to its function (hamstringing elephants) and not its shape. The semi-circular iron head is attached to the wooden shaft by means of an unusually long and thin tang.

Falchion, Svimohzish: The falchion is a heavy, two-handed weapon that originated on Svimohzia. This short, broad-bladed

TABLE 3-1: WEAPON EQUIVALENCIES

Simple Weapons

LIGHT MELEE WEAPONS

	WEAPON NAME ON SVIMOHZIA
Dagger	Fantail, forked tongue, izhanaz, kelukhar graz*, sharahznam, silkra brazog*
Dagger, Punching	Nyja
Mace, Light	Thija, yendo

ONE HANDED MELEE WEAPONS

Club	Bajyr, darahzni, darevish, koyrash
Mace, heavy	Goryen
Shortspear	Damonesh, dezorozh, hilzorahn, jora, monawhom, mozawhom, shawhom

TWO HANDED MELEE WEAPONS

Spear	Dezoran, nangohl
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RANGED WEAPONS

Javelin	Sibora, sikora
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Martial Weapons

LIGHT MELEE WEAPONS

Handaxe	Anamvho, grazgul roshkel*, mizahniz
Pick, light	Narkako

ONE HANDED MELEE WEAPONS

Battleaxe	Anarvozh, byrko, elephant axe, ohanurahn
Longsword	Nyrsha, ordo, mravrosh tukhar*, ruvmahzni, shamashno, whenzor, zhulurresh
Pick, heavy	Garko, bird's head club, koyenja
Trident	Amarahn
Warhammer	Dazurk razkamel*

TWO HANDED MELEE WEAPONS

Falchion	Svimohzish falchion, Kargi blood*
Guisarme	Monamasho, shomozh
Lance	Dezonesh, hilmahni, shagrakk brogatu*
Ranseur	Pozetli
Scythe	Vamsho

RANGED WEAPONS

Longbow	Svimohzish longbow
Shortbow	Hobgoblin shortbow

Exotic Weapons

LIGHT MELEE WEAPONS

Siangham	Svimohzish siangham
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RANGED WEAPONS

Shuriken	Svimohzish shuriken
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*Kargi weapon.

iron sword has a single scimitar-like cutting edge, but only the tip of the falchion is double-edged.

Fantail: This wide-tipped slashing dagger originates on Svimohzia. Its grip is often half the size of a typical knife.

Forked Tongue: The forked tongue dagger is a variation on the fantail dagger. The tip is forked like a serpent's tongue and it splits 3 inches before the tip. It is most commonly found on the island of Svimohzia, where it originates.

Garko: The garko is a unique, primitive, stone-headed Vohven Deji tool that consists of two stones attached to

opposite sides of a haft with tree resin. One stone is blunt and the other stone is sharpened and set at 90 degrees to the haft, so this axe can be used as either a hammer or an adze.

Goryen: This curved wooden club is used mostly by Simay Deji and consists of a short grip and a long head fitted with the teeth of the club's victims.

Grazgul-Roshkel: This medium-sized battleaxe is primarily used by Kargi or Krangi combatants. It is constructed of a heavy iron head socketed to the wooden shaft. Opposite the head and attached to the socket is a piton-like spike.

Hilmahni: This is a very simple wooden Svimohzish spear with a long, pointed head.

Hilzorahn: The hilzorahn is a wooden Svimohzish spear. Below the point are multiple wooden barbs set in random directions so that the spear cannot be pushed or pulled out of a victim without dealing 1d6 points of damage.

Izhanaz: The izhanaz is a broad, double-edged Ozhvinmishii dagger.

Jora: A pointed wooden Vohven Deji spear, the jora has its point blackened and hardened by fire.

Kargi Blood: This is a common, heavy two-handed Kargi sword with an iron, double-curved, double-edged blade and an unguarded hilt. The blade's shape is reminiscent of a fish.

Kelukhar-Graz: Kargi warriors favor this large, single-edged, single-curved war knife. Its blade broadens as it draws away from the grip.

Koyenja: This long wooden club is commonly wielded by the Vohven Deji (mostly Ryaga). The koyenja has two bone or stone spikes set into the head slightly below the perpendicular. Plant resin or a cord is used to attach the spikes to the head.

Koyrash: The Simay Deji also favor this thick wooden club whose head is fitted with sharpened human or humanoid teeth, although fish, reptiles or other mammals may also be used.

Longbow, Svimohzish: This type of built longbow is found only on the island of Svimohzia. This longbow is almost 7 feet tall and its wooden curve features many painted bands of varying colors. This weapon is also known as an *azirmohn*. Like the standard longbow, it requires at least two hands to use. This bow is too big to be used while mounted.

Certain cultures, like the Ozhvins, may have their own special requirements for a longbow. For an Ozhvinmishii longbow to be traditional, the bow must be wider at the arrow plate than any other location on the upper limb, the bow must

have straight ends and arrow rests are not allowed – the arrow always rests on the forward finger when shooting. Ideally, a longbow is made of yew wood, though other tight-grained species of carefully chosen high-quality wood may be used.

Mizahniz: These Svimohzish axes are used for special rituals, and only rarely in combat. Generally, they are carried only as symbols of rank among the tribe. These axes consist of a curved and beaked steel head fitted into a club-like wooden handle by means of a large tang.

Monamasho: The Svimohz top this polearm with a short, slightly curved, tanged blade. Just below the blade is a roundel. Due to the shorter blade, the monamasho is slightly less effective than the vamsho, the other common Svimohzish polearm.

Monawhom: The monawhom is a wooden Svimohzish spear topped with a tanged, barbed head. Below the head are multiple barbs set in various directions so that the spear cannot be pushed or pulled out of the victim without dealing 1d6 points of damage.

Mozawhom: The mozawhom is a Svimohzish throwing spear with a barbed steel head. Its design is based on the monawhom. The head is attached to the wooden shaft by means of a tang. Though once considered a weapon of assassination, this spear has now lost that connotation.

Mravrosh-Tukhar: The Kargi use this single-edged sword with a curved steel blade fitted into a wooden hilt and carried in a flat wooden scabbard. The pommel is often pointed and slightly curved to resemble a raven's beak.

Nangohl: This pointed, wooden Meznamishii spear has many rows of small barbs near the tip.

Narkako: This axe is only used by the Deji of the Vohven, and is made of a small stone head attached to a wooden handle with the hardened sap of certain jungle plants.

Nyja: This thin-bladed dagger is used by the Simay Deji only to deliver the killing blow to a dying or unconscious foe.



Darahzni (Meznamishii)



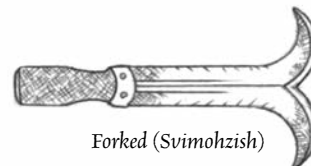
Kargi blood (hobgoblin)



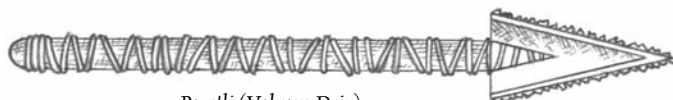
Yendo (Vohven Deji)



Fantail (Svimohzish)



Forked (Svimohzish)



Pozelli (Vohven Deji)



Ordo (Zhensha)



Dezoran (Mezh-Vowmii)

Chapter Three: Weapons, Equipment and Magic

Nyrsha: The Zhensha Deji decorate this slightly curved, single-edged bronze blade with a tassel of human or humanoid hair. It has a bronze crossbar and wooden hilt. The nyrsha is double-edged at the tip and worn in a red-stained wood scabbard.

Ohanurahn: This battleaxe is used primarily by the inhabitants of Mezh-Vowmi Isle and the far eastern tip of Svimohzia. The triangular steel head is attached to the wooden handle by a short, narrow tang.

Ordo: This slightly curved, single-edged bronze sword of the Zhensha Deji is fitted to an unguarded wooden or horn hilt by means of a tang. One side of the pommel is elongated, and is occasionally decorated with braids of human or humanoid hair. The wooden scabbard is wrapped with cane.

Pozetli: Many Vohven Deji favor this polearm with a triangular wooden head, with stone chips imbedded to produce a serrated, slashing edge.

Ruvmahzni: This single-edged Ahznomahnii sword is fitted with a crossbar hilt and a forked wooden pommel. However, the ruvmahzni's best known feature is its scabbard. This scabbard is constructed from two slightly concave pieces of wood lashed together with thin cord, allowing the sword to be easily drawn by grabbing the hilt and slicing the blade through the cord between the two wooden pieces. This allows the wearer to keep his sword sheathed in circumstances where a drawn sword might be viewed as offensive, but an attack still might be forthcoming.

Shagrakk-Brogatu: The Kargi favor this polearm composed of a pointed wooden staff with a flat double-edged spike protruding from the side. Twelve inches below this spike are two single-edged blades, one set on the same side as the spike and the other on the opposite. This gives the head the overall appearance of an upside down letter "T". These secondary blades can be used to make trip attacks. If the wielder is tripped during her own trip attempt, she can drop the weapon to avoid being tripped. The head is fitted into the wooden shaft with a tang.

Shamashno: Zazahnii favor this single-edged sword with a slight *namlyr* hilt (no crossbar and a bent end serving as a pommel) and a curved, scimitar-like steel blade.

Sharahznam: This double-edged Zazahnii dagger has one serrated edge.

Shawhom: This pointed wooden spear has a barbed head. Rather than making bronze or wooden barbs, the two large barbs are made of sharpened animal spine and inserted in to the wood. This design is often found among the Simay and Yeruji Deji.

Shomozh: This Svimohzish polearm has a three-pronged head, the central prong larger and double-edged and the smaller prongs dulled.

Shortbow, Hobgoblin: The hobgoblin variant on the shortbow is a horn-backed, metal-tipped bow just under 4 feet tall and weighing 2 pounds. Like the standard shortbow, it requires two hands to use. A hobgoblin shortbow can be used while mounted, provided the wielder is of at least Medium size.

Shuriken, Svimohzish: Though it does not differ in statistics, it is worth noting that this small, flat 2 to 3 inch piece of iron that is usually star-shaped originates on Svimohzia.

Siangham, Svimohzish: This monk favorite is a small piercing or slashing weapon resembling a metal arrow with a wooden knob at the end for gripping. The siangham is not well balanced enough to serve as an effective throwing weapon. Though it does not differ in statistics from the siangham in the PHB, it is worth noting that it is said to originate on Svimohzia.

Sibora: This long wooden staff has a needle-like bone point. It is generally found among the Vohven Deji tribes.

Sikora: The Vohven Deji (mostly Jynavi) construct this wooden spear with a stone head. The head is glued to the shaft with plant resin and lashed with vine or cord for extra stability.

Silkra-Brazog: Only Kargi leaders possess this small, slightly curved, single or double-edged dagger. The silkra-brazog ornamental dagger is used solely to commit ritual suicide.

Thija: Vohven Deji tribes craft this mace composed of a stone head bound to a wooden handle with vine or cord.

Vamsho: This popular Svimohzish polearm has a long, slightly curved, tanged blade on one end. Just below the blade is a roundel.

Whenzor: This curved, single-edged steel sword has an unguarded, angled wooden hilt with a cane-wrapped grip.

Yendo: A Vohven Deji's wooden club with a concave shaft and fitted with a carved stone head. The handle is wrapped in skins, reeds or vines.

Zhulurreh: This straight, single-edged Zazahnii sword is often inlaid with silver or gold. The zhulurreh has an unguarded horn hilt and a round pommel.

NEW WEAPONS

The following do not easily fall into an equivalent category, and so are presented as new weapons.

Blowgun: Though some sages of Tellene argue that early Svimohzish natives were the creators of the blowgun, various human, elf and halfling races have also made the same claim. Regardless, it is certain that the Svimohz are the most frequent users of the blowgun. Typically used for hunting small and medium game animals, the blowgun is also an effective weapon in both warfare and assassination. A small, funnel-like mouthpiece is often affixed to the side, to avoid inhaling the needle.

The Svimohz have used the blowgun since time immemorial, constructing different styles and types of blowguns. Standard blowguns plain wood, and fitted with needles made of metal (for land) or wood (for use over water). For ceremonies and rituals, these plain blowguns are put away and more ornate ones are brought forth. In the large and cultured cities, such as Zhanehzmish, blowguns are often found concealed in walking canes.

To ensure an airtight fit in the tube, the end of a blowgun needle is typically dipped in sap or some other sticky substance, then fitted to lightweight plant fiber or paper cones. (These are called the "flight.") The tip of this needle is coated with deadly

Table 3-2: New Weapons

	COST	DMG (S)	DMG (M)	CRITICAL	RANGE INC.	WEIGHT	TYPE*
SIMPLE WEAPONS							
Light Melee Weapons							
CHOPPER	7 GP	1D3	1D4	X3		3 LB.	SLASHING
MARTIAL WEAPONS							
Two-Handed Weapons							
PATUK GRON MABUK	5 GP	1D4	1D6	X3	10 FT.	8 LB.	PIERCING
SHOVIMZAR++	12 GP	1D6/1D6	1D8/1D8	X2		4 LB.	PIERCING AND BLUDGEONING
WHEZNAR	12 GP	1D4	1D6	X2		4 LB.	BLUDGEONING
EXOTIC WEAPONS							
Ranged Weapons							
BLOWGUN	2 GP	1	1	X2	10 FT.	2 LB.	PIERCING
NEEDLES (20)	1 GP		1	X2			
BLOWGUN, WAR	5 GP	1D4 (MELEE)	1D6 (MELEE)	X2	20 FT.	4 LB.	PIERCING
DART, WAR BLOWGUN (10)	5 GP	1D3	1D4	X2		1/2 LB.	
THROWING IRONS	4 GP	1D4	1D6	19 20/X2	10 FT.	1 LB.	PIERCING

*When two types are given, the weapon is both types.
++ Double weapon

poison, which is kept in a separate container and applied as necessary. Needles used by Vohven Dejy are often barbed and scored, so that the tip breaks off when pulled out of the flesh. Unless otherwise specified, all blowguns have the same statistics.

Blowgun, War: This Svimohz two-handed blowgun uses poisoned darts, rather than needles. Made of wood, the blowgun has an iron spearhead lashed to the end of the barrel with a cord, above the hole so as not to impede the progress of the dart. The blowgun's darts are piercing weapons and the blowgun itself can also be used as a piercing weapon.

Chopper: The chopper is a shorter version of the machete. It has a heavy, short blade with a single edge and often has a serrated back. Recent versions have a sharpened tip on the forward edge, allowing for some thrusting ability. Older choppers have a tip that curves away from the edge.

Widely used by non-human archers, crossbowmen and slingers, the chopper is considered a light weapon. Among non-humans, this weapon serves as a basic, commonly available sword. While it does not have an especially sharp edge, the blade is both sturdy and durable. This weapon can survive years of use and abuse that would destroy a prettier, flashier weapon. Though originally developed to remove foliage for a Kalamaran campaign in Tarisato and the Obakasek Jungle, trade choppers have found their way into Svimohzia as well.

Patuk-Gron-Mabuk: The patuk-gron-mabuk is a hobgoblin spear made from wood and socketed with a iron head. It is found primarily along the southern coast of Ul-Karg.

Shovimzar: This is a two-handed, pointed wooden staff, to one end of which is attached an iron ring. The pointed end deals piercing damage, while the ring can make a bludgeoning attack.

Throwing Irons: These are primarily Svimohzish metal weapons with multiple blades, forks and barbs. Many different

varieties exist, but the basic shape is that of a flat piece of metal with a small handle that has many sharpened protrusions. The irons are usually not shaped to represent anything specific, only to have as many sharp edges as possible. To increase accuracy, throwing irons are thrown horizontally. Other types include the Meznamishii *izaresh* and the wood elf *jolamaris*.

Wheznar: This long wooden staff curves into a hook-shape at one end. Long feathers are attached to the hook, and flicked into the face of an opponent to distract. The hook can be used



Table 3-3: Armor

TYPE	COST	ARMOR BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	ARCANE SPELL FAILURE	SPEED (30 FT.)	SPEED (20 FT.)	WEIGHT
LIGHT ARMOR								
Breastplate, wood	25	+2	+2	-3	20	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lbs.
Cord	30	+2	+5	-1	15	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lbs.
MEDIUM ARMOR								
Lamellar, wood	250	+3	+3	-4	25	20 ft.	15 ft.	30 lbs.
Brigandine	120	+4	+3	-3	20	20 ft.	15 ft.	30 lbs.
Lamellar	200	+4	+3	-4	25	20 ft.	15 ft.	30 lbs.
Dark elven chainmail	450	+6	+1	-5	30	20 ft.	15 ft.	45 lbs.
HEAVY ARMOR								
Splint mail, wood	300	+5	+0	-7	40	20 ft.*	15 ft.*	45 lbs.
Dwarven plate	3,000	+9	+0	-8	45	20 ft.*	15 ft.*	55 lbs.

*When running in heavy armor, you move only triple your speed, not quadruple.

to make trip attacks. If the wielder is tripped during her own trip attempt, she can drop the weapon to avoid being tripped. The wheznar is most often found on the island of Svimohzia, though its use has spread to the mainland.

ARMOR

Iron armors are available throughout Svimohzia (as well as the Kalamaran Empire, the Young Kingdoms and Brandobia), though the Svimohz tend to wear lighter armor due to climatic conditions. The same goes for barding. Mounted combatants in Svimohzia almost never use medium and heavy barding because of the region's heat and humidity. They only use light barding when battle is imminent or while traveling in the cooler high altitude regions. Instead, riders sometimes drape their horses in a plain white cloth (usually with some small ornamentation) to shield them from the sun.

Races who live in the cool darkness of the earth (particularly the stone dwarves, dark elves, and the Kargi beneath the Krimppatus) tend to wear metal armors. Humanoid armor statistics are usually equivalent to the standard human armors. In appearance, however, they often indicate the culture from which they came.

Table 3-4: Donning Armor

ARMOR	DON	DON HASTILY	REMOVE
Breastplate, wood	1 min. ¹	5 rds.	1 min. ¹
Brigandine	4 min. ¹	1 min.	1 min. ¹
Cord	1 min.	5 rds.	1 min. ¹
Dark elven chainmail	4 min. ¹	1 min.	1 min. ¹
Dwarven plate	4 min. ²	4 min. ¹	1d4+2 min. ¹
Lamellar	2 min.	5 rds.	5 rds.
Lamellar, wood	2 min.	5 rds.	5 rds.
Splint mail, wood	4 min. ¹	1 min.	1 min. ¹

¹With help from someone doing nothing else, cut the necessary time in half.
²This armor requires an assistant to don it properly, otherwise it can only be donned hastily.

Several Svimohzish armors, as well as the special dwarven plate and dark elven chain, are listed below on Table 3-2: Armor. Characters may, of course, continue to use the other armors found in the *Player's Handbook*, the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*, and *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*.

Breastplate, Wood: A wooden breastplate is bulky and only feebly deflects blows. Its primary use is by druids, who have it constructed from darkwood or enchant it with the *ironwood* spell. The statistics shown here are for its normal, unenchanted version. Once subject to *ironwood*, it functions as a normal front-plate. Because of the increased effort to craft and fit a wooden item for wearing, the cost of such an item is slightly higher than other, full-body armors.

Brigandine: Brigandine armor is not uncommon on Svimohzia, for it encloses sturdy metal plates between s trips of leather for a comfortable suit of armor that resists corrosion while providing some measure of protection. The arm and leg pieces use smaller metal plates, sacrificing protection for mobility.

Cord: Cord armor is made from tough vines or ropes twisted into wiry cords. The thick cords deter edges and points well, though their organic nature makes them susceptible to certain druidic spells. Fortunately, cord armor is always treated with a special material to make it no less vulnerable to fire than metal armor. It is most common among barbarians and shamans from jungle areas such as the Vohven.

Dark Elven Chainmail: This armor uses the same principal as standard chainmail but incorporates a design of tightly woven and slightly heavier overlapping metal rings. It is hard to come by, as the dark elves are the only ones who know how to produce it – and they are certainly not interested in trading it to others. Dark elven chainmail comes with a set of gauntlets. Elven chainmail on Tellene is normally made of iron, not mithral (as they are in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Dwarven Plate: This full body suit of hardened plate is the ultimate in armor protection. While it does not allow good freedom of movement, it is very difficult to penetrate. Only the

dwarves know how to make it, and they jealously guard its secret. It is never sized for anyone larger than a dwarf. The standard dwarven plate is normally made of iron, not adamantite (as it is in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Lamellar: Lamellar armor consists of metal strips against a backing of leather or padded cloth. This medium armor protects well without hindering movement as much as some heavier armors. Lamellar is airy enough to be worn in hot climates longer than chainmail or other types of all-metal armor. It is also faster to don and doff. The Kargi favor lamellar armor for adventuring in the surface world.

Lamellar, Wooden: Lamellar is sometimes fitted with wooden strips and plates instead of metal. While this offers little better overall protection than a typical suit of hide armor, those who are limited to non-metal armor sometimes like to take advantage of the fast removal property of lamellar armor. Alternatively, some druids wear wooden lamellar armor made from darkwood (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) or with the ironwood spell cast upon the wooden strips and plates. The wooden version requires two craftsmen (an armorer and a carpenter) working together – thus, the price is higher.

Splint Mail, Wooden: Wooden splint mail incorporates longitudinal strips of reinforcing wood to a heavier leather base. The splints are attached to the underlying material by tight lacing. Wooden splint was developed by Deji druids and shamans who were interested in better protection than conventional non-metal armors could provide. Like wooden lamellar, this armor requires two craftsmen (an armorer and a carpenter) working together on this project – thus, the price is higher.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Though the three prime bardic instruments are the fiddle, lap-harp and lute, the bards of Svimohzia favor certain racial instruments. Each instrument listed here also provides a special enhancement to bardic music. (This applies to masterwork versions only. Masterwork musical instruments cost 50 gp more than the listed price in Table 3-5: Musical Instruments.) If the enhancement alters an existing bardic music effect, only the stated aspects change; all else pertaining to that effect remains the same. For new effects, unless otherwise stated, the term “listeners” defines everyone within hearing range of the music who are not otherwise prevented from hearing it. The effect lasts as long as the performance. For each performance with a masterwork instrument, a bard can choose either the special benefit, or the standard +2 competence bonus on Perform checks.

Musicians without the bardic music ability cannot achieve these enhancements. Unless otherwise stated, the bard is immune to the effects of his own music.

Bagpipes, Svimohzish: This instrument originated long ago in the highlands of Svimohzia, later migrating to Reanaaria Bay, Kalamar 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, made from

animal skin or stomachs, is inflated both by a bellows attached to the elbow and breathing through a small wooden mouthpiece. The arm compresses the bag 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 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.

Didgeridoo: This instrument is made of a branch or small tree trunk hollowed out by termites. This wood is then cut to 1 to 4 feet in length, polished, and has one end covered in beeswax, leaving only a small opening. The player then blows gently from this end, and producing a sad and haunting tone.

This unique wind instrument is one of the oldest on Tellene, and so far is only found in Svimohzia, though there are rumors of similar instruments to be found deep in the Obakasek jungle.

Bardic Music: Like the bagpipes, the eerie droning of this instrument imposes a –1 morale penalty on listeners' saving throws against fear effects. Creating this effect is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

TABLE 3-5: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Instrument	Cost	Weight
Bagpipes, Svimohzish	30 gp	10 lbs.
Didgeridoo	18 gp	4 lbs.
Meznar	18 gp	1 lbs.
Mezwar	8 gp	7 lbs.
Nemarzen	8 gp	3 lbs.
Seryf	22 gp	1 lbs.
Thelarr	4 gp	3 lbs.
Zemvar	40 gp	5 lbs.

Meznar: A meznar is a double-reeded flute with a flared end. Musicians play it in accompaniment with another person playing a thenyevi drum. The meznar exists among the nomadic tribes of the Elos, as well as the Meznams of Svimohzia. Both groups claim to have created this instrument, though the name implies that it is of Meznamishii origin.

Bardic Music: Playing a meznar grants a +2 competence bonus on attacks for all listeners allied with the musician. Creating this effect is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

Mezwar: The mezwar is a double hornpipe affixed to a soft, squeezable leather bag. It is carried by shoulder straps and played bagpipe style. Like the meznar, it is found among the Elos tribes and the Meznams, both of whom claim its origin.

Bardic Music: The mezwar produces a melodic screech that imposes a –2 morale penalty on all listeners' saving throws against charm and fear effects. Undead listeners receive only a –1 morale penalty to their Spot and Listen checks (if not

immune to mind-affecting effects). This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

Nemarzen: The nemarzen is a two-string fiddle, with strings of gut laced on a thin frame with a small round body fashioned from a coconut shell. It is frequently used to accompany poetic sagas and has a distinctive and popular sound, and many bards in northern Svimohzia are trained on it. The nemarzen is also known as the "spike fiddle."

Bardic Music: The nemarzen 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.

Seryf: The seryf originates in the lands of eastern Svimohzia. It is an open ended and obliquely blown reed flute with a breath tone and a range of two and a half octaves. Having been carried by ship across the oceans, the seryf can now be found in many other areas of Tellene. Humans, surface elves, hill dwarves, and most gnomes and halflings enjoy the seryf's breathy music.

Bardic Music: While playing a seryf, the bard may impose a -4 morale penalty on listeners' saving throws against charm and compulsion effects (including bardic music effects of fascinate and suggestion). This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability.

TheIarr: A theIarr is also known as a "whistle cane." Wooden canes are dried and cut to specific lengths between three and six feet. They are hollowed so that when either end is blown, the theIarr produces a single cheery whistling note.

The theIarr originates in Svimohzia, but may now be found in many areas of Tellene. Despite the instrument's size, groups of them cut to different lengths are often played together during lightfoot halfling festivals.

Bardic Music: While played, a theIarr grants the musician a +2 bonus for countersong attempts, as well as bestowing a +1 morale bonus to saves against fear effects for all listening allies.

Zemvar: The purchase of a zemvar is a wise investment for any bard skilled in its use, for this instrument is popular almost anywhere. It is particularly welcome in the houses of the nobility and the wealthier merchant classes, where its presence is a symbol of affluence and good taste. A flat, trapezoidal instrument with a wooden frame and flat sounding board, it has 26 triple courses of strings, each with its own adjusting key. It is played sitting with the zemvar in the lap or on folded legs, or standing with the zemvar on a table. The player plucks the strings with two small metal ring picks, one on each index finger. The zemvar originated in Ahznomahn.

Bardic Music: When a bard plays this instrument, all allied listeners gain a +1 morale bonus to their saving throws against charm and fear effects, but suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls. These modifiers are cumulative with the modifiers from any bardic music effect, such as inspire courage. The playing of the zemvar also beneficially influences the attitude of noble and "high-class" listeners towards the performer (by one category; see the Diplomacy skill in the *Player's Handbook*).

This section lists a few unusual items that may be found on the Svimohzish Isle. Characters may also use equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*, or *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*.

Akdren-Thall: Made from a pressed pulp of plants found only on the Svimohzish Isle, the Kargi strength-boosting drug known as akdren-thall (loosely translating as "laughing rage") is found among the dregs of hobgoblin society, while sometimes used by foolish youngsters as a sort of "rite of passage." It is rumored that hobgoblin armies ingest this paste before going into battle, but this is quite untrue. Hobgoblin soldiers consider such comments as a blight on their honor, boasting that they need no drugs to achieve superiority in battle.

Type: Ingested DC 12.

Initial Effect: +4 alchemical bonus to Strength for 2d10 minutes.

Secondary Effect: -2 AC penalty, plus side effects.

Side Effects: Constant, uncontrollable laughter. The user can take normal actions while under the effects of this drug, but cannot use any skills or abilities that require patience or concentration, such as moving silently or casting spells. In addition, the user cannot use the following feats: Expertise, item creation, metamagic or Skill Focus (for skills that require patience or concentration). After the drug wears off, the user is fatigued (-2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot charge or run) for one hour.

Overdose: A second dose, taken while still under the effects of the first, causes the effects to double in effect (+8 Strength bonus for 4d10 minutes, -4 AC penalty, plus side effects). However, after the drug wears off, the user is fatigued for two hours and permanently loses 1 point of Strength. This lost point can only be regained by magical means. A third dose taken while under the effects of two previous doses is fatal.

Addiction: Low. A first-time or non-addicted user must make a Fortitude save (DC 6; saving throw versus poison with a +5 bonus) or become addicted. If addicted, the character must succeed at this same Fortitude save every day or suffer 1d2 temporary Wisdom damage. Characters naturally heal 1 point per day. If an addicted user stops using this drug for more than 10 days, the DC of the Fortitude save increases by +5. If he uses akdren-thall again, the DC returns to 6 for the next 10 days. An addicted user trying to give up akdren-thall must make two successful saving throws in a row, or remain addicted.

Blackleaf: Blackleaf originated among the halflings who found it convenient for ridding themselves of large trees in fields they wished to farm (DC 20 to make). From its home in the Young Kingdoms and northern Kalamar, it spread across the continent and across the straits to Svimohzia.

This oily black liquid prevents plants from capturing light, food and carbon dioxide, killing them in a matter of days or even hours. A vial splashed on an intelligent plant creature does 1d4 points of damage as a grenade-like missile.

Curaxa: Curaxa's origins are unclear. Both elves and dwarves claim to have invented it, as well as several human alchemists. Its first recorded mention was in a human work entitled *Alchemical Secrets of the Highlands*, written in Svimohzish and published in -49 C.M. The tone and context of that work clearly indicate that curaxa more than significantly predated *Alchemical Secrets*.

This thick green mixture corrodes metal, slowly turning it to rust. A single vial (DC 25 to make), if used carefully, coats 2 square feet of metal, inflicting 1d4 points of damage to it every ten minutes, for up to an hour. It has no harmful effect on non-ferrous metals or other substances. Humans and other creatures exposed to it suffer a light rash and some itching.

Hishmanwhi: You can craft an herbal mixture (DC 20 to make) with this rare herb, found near volcanic vents in the Lozhen Mountains of Svimohzia, to cure as a *remove disease* spell against the Rotting Death. More information on the Rotting Death can be found in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

Jilipsi Snuff: This red dust is a powdered form of the jilipsi leaf, a powerful narcotic found in the Vohven Jungle. Jilipsi is expensive and used only by the wealthiest people who can afford the addiction. Although legal, most frown upon its use due to its debilitating effects.

Type: Inhaled DC 12.

Initial Effect: User is dazed for 1d4 rounds, plus 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage. The user feels a sense of euphoria.

Secondary Effect: 1d2 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Side Effects: While under the effects of the drug, the user gains a +4 alchemical bonus to all Intelligence checks for 1 hour.

Overdose: Taking a second dose before the first has worn off causes the user to be nauseated for 1d8 + 20 minutes. Furthermore, the drug deals 1d6 points of damage as the victim vomits blood.

Addiction: Low. A first-time or non-addicted user must make a Fortitude save (DC 6) or become addicted. If addicted, the character must succeed at this same Fortitude save every day or suffer 1d2 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Wisdom damage. Characters naturally heal 1 point per day.

If an addicted user stops using jilipsi snuff for more than 10 days, the DC of the Fortitude save increases by +5. If he uses the drug again, the DC returns to 6 for the next 10 days. An addicted user trying to give up jilipsi snuff must make two successful saving throws in a row, or remain addicted.

Kahranak-gott: Hobgoblin agents and spies use this Kargi concoction in dire circumstances where death is considered more honorable than capture. A single dose (DC 25 and four days to make) paralyzes every muscle in the body and almost always brings a severely painful death. The concoction also works on sil-karg though, interestingly, it seems to have no effect on other races. The Kargi do not even mention its existence to outsiders, and keep it secreted for exceptionally dangerous or difficult missions.

Type: Ingested DC 30.

Initial and Secondary Damage: 3d6 Con

A previous version of this alchemical mixture appeared in *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene*.

Orc Bone Juice: This remedy (DC 20 to make) of orc bone powder and rare herbs from the Vohven Jungle acts as a remove disease spell against orc shingles. This potion costs at least 100 gp, and possibly as much as 500 gp the further one gets from Svimohzia, simply due to the rarity of the substance. More information on orc shingles can be found in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

Papyrus: This is one sheet of paper-like material made from cutting thin strips from the pith (spongy central section) of a papyrus plant. This plant is commonly found near water sources in the Elos and Khydoban deserts, the Reanaaria and Elos bays and along Svimohzish and southern Kalamaran rivers.

Table 3-6: Special Items

Item	Market Price	Weight
Akdren Thall (per dose)	15 gp	
Blackleaf (per mixture)	10 gp	
Curaxa (per mixture)	100 gp	
Hishmanwhi (per mixture)	250 gp	
Jilipsi Snuff	60 gp	
Kahranak gott (per dose)	300 gp	
Orc Bone Juice (per mixture)	100 500 gp	
Papyrus (per sheet)	1 sp	
Perfume, Liquid Spice (per mixture)	10+ gp	
Pithgaris (per 1d4 uses)	1 sp	
Satum's Bane (per mixture)	15 gp	
Spellbook, Wizard's Papyrus (blank)	15 gp	3 lb.
War Helmet	3 gp	4 lb.

No weight, or no weight worth noting.

Perfume, Liquid Spice: This Ahznomahnii perfume is made of exotic wildflowers and spices from the northern Vohven Jungle. Merchants often claim that it eliminates depression, but the exact truth of this is so far unfounded.

Pithgaris: This Svimohzish face paint comes in assorted colors. Certain clans use it to decorate the face with cheek stripes, though more outgoing individuals (particularly Ozhvins and wealthy Ahznoms) favor distinct patterns on all areas of the body.

Satum's Bane: Satum's bane has been spread throughout the world, by sea-lanes and land bound caravans, as well as by clerics of the Traveler. The herb grows alongside highways and farmlands across the world. Its greatest concentration is in Ahznomahn on the island of Svimohzia. Vast fields of Satum's bane cover the plains south of Nenehi.

The mixture (DC 20 to create) repels normal insects when rubbed on the skin and clothing. Satum's bane lasts for 2d4 hours. Conjured insects ignore the balm, but normal ones do not trouble the wearer.

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Spellbook, Wizard's Papyrus (Blank): Spellcasters along the Svimohzish coast and within a 50-mile radius of those areas occasionally use papyrus spellbooks. These versions are equivalent to the standard spellbook in page count and cost. (See the *Player's Handbook*, or *Goods and Gear*).

War Helmet/Mask: Primitive peoples, such as certain tribes of the Vohven Jungle, often wear these helmets with cord armor. They are often decorated with a frightening visage to ward off the enemy and/or evil spirits. Smaller masks tend to weigh approximately half as much as a war helmet.

MOUNTS

As mentioned in Chapter Two: Classes, the most common mount for a Svimohzish paladin is the Highland Dancer, a horse native to the eastern plains. This animal is included here, along with the zamulbah. Other standard mounts and animals are as described in *Goods and Gear* and the *Monster Manual*.

Highland Dancer: These horses, although small among equines, are loyal, intelligent and unnaturally dexterous. Their colors run from chalk white to charcoal gray, often with spots on the sides and legs. Many people make the mistake of assuming that if these small horses are useless in warfare, but this is not the case. In fact, Zha-nehzmish houses 700 soldiers, all of them mounted on light highland dancers.

A highland dancer can fight while carrying a rider, though the rider cannot attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 10). These animals are usually ready for useful work by age two, but not for warfare until after age three. They usually cost at least 300 gp.

HIGHLAND DANCER

Large Animal CR 1
HD 3d8+9

Attack and Movement

Init +2
Melee +4 hooves (1d6+3) or
Melee -1 bite (1d4+1)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +9
Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Defense

hp 22
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Traits

Racial low-light vision, scent
Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6
Skills Listen +7, Spot +7
Feats Alertness, Endurance, Run

Carrying Capacity

A light load for a highland dancer is up to 190 pounds; a medium load, 191-380 pounds; a heavy load, 381-500 pounds. A highland dancer can drag 2,850 pounds.

Zamulbah: This unusual animal is found only along the southern reaches of the Svimohzish Isle, within the Vohven Jungle. Here, it is used as a beast of burden by jungle-dwellers and those who are fortunate enough to locate and capture one. The zamulbah is only occasionally seen in the hands of the wealthy in Zenshahn and Emosvom, and rarely elsewhere outside of the jungle. Due to rarity, they cost about 8,400 gp.

A zamulbah's hide is yellow, with brown patches not unlike that of a giraffe. Its body appears similar to a Brahma bull or ox, with great mass and muscle. The placid expression on the creature's face leads some to think it slow and stupid, though it can put up quite a fight if provoked.

ZAMULBAH

Large Animal CR 2
HD 6d8+18

Attack and Movement

Init +1
Melee +8 gore (1d8+5) and
Melee +3 hooves (2d4+2)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +13
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Defense

hp 45
AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12
Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

Traits

Racial low-light vision, scent
Abilities Str 20, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 8
Skills Hide -3 (+1 in jungles due to mottled coloring), Listen +7, Spot +6
Feats Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will

Carrying Capacity

A light load for a zamulbah is up to 310 pounds; a medium load, 311-600 pounds; a heavy load, 601-870 pounds. A zamulbah can drag 5,450 pounds.



NEW SHIP TEMPLATE

Though the Ashoshani merchant galley, the Brolenese slaver, the Kargi destroyer, the Golden Alliance merchant ship and the common suvarzha (see *Salt and Sea Dogs: the Pirates of Tellene* for these ships) can all be seen plowing through the coastal waters of Svimohzia, these are not the only ships in evidence. One ship in particular is the Rismish trader.

SAMPLE RISMISH TRADER

This example uses a baradri as the base ship.

RISMISH TRADER

Colossal Sailing Ship

Hardness: 5 (30 hp), section 5 (40 hp), rigging 0 (8 hp)

Speed: 4 mi./hr., sail 40 ft. (average)

Armor Class: -5 (-8 size, -5 Dex, -2 inanimate), section 2, rigging 1

Attacks: 2 ballistae 3d8 (1 port, 1 starboard), light catapult 4d6 (aft)

Space/Reach: 60 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: -

Special Qualities: Bare-bones crew, compartmentalized hull, stable, streamlined hull

Seaworthiness: 18

Draft/Length/Beam: 5 ft./75 ft./20 ft.

Decks: 2

Cargo: 125 tons (150 max.)

Crew: 10 (2 min.)

Cost: 47,550 gp (9 months construction time)

Rismish is the commercial center for trade between Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn, and collects a substantial amount of gold from travelers entering and exiting the nation. Rismish is also the key agricultural center for Ahznomahn's rice production, and the home of Ahznomahn's shipyards. Rismish's ships are small and fast, and prove effective against the larger and more ponderous Meznamishii vessels.

CREATING A RISMISH TRADER

"Rismish trader" is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal ship (referred to hereafter as the base ship). A Rismish trader has all the base ship's characteristics except as noted here.

Speed: A streamlined hull doubles the speed of the base ship (both daily mileage and all base speeds).

Admirable Construction: The Rismish carpenters do good work. The ship's sail maneuverability is increased to average, and oar maneuverability (if any) is increased to good. If the ship's maneuverabilities were already at this level or greater, they are unaffected.

Special Qualities: Rismish traders gain the following special qualities: bare-bones crew (see below), compartmentalized hull (+10 sectional hit points), stable (+2 to Seaworthiness) and streamlined hull (see speed, above).

Bare-Bones Crew: A Rismish trader can operate with as little as one-third of its regular crew. Until it is reduced to this amount, it does not suffer penalties for operating with half crew.

Weapon Spaces: A Rismish trader usually carries two standard ballistae (one port and starboard) and a light catapult

(aft), and also has the following available weapon spaces: port or starboard (3), fore (2), aft (1), amidships (1).

NEW SPELLS

The following spells are common among the spellcasters of Svimohzia, though knowledge of them is seeping out to other lands as well. Naturally, spellcasters also have access to spells listed in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*, as well as other official D&D and *Kingdoms of Kalamar* race and region sourcebooks, with DM approval.

AIR BARRAGE

Evocation [Air]

Level: Air 4, cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 3, spellsinger 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a mass of invisible 6-inch diameter spheres of air that spring forth from your exhaling mouth and deal 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per caster level (maximum 10d4) to every creature within the area. Unattended objects take no damage, but the force of the *air barrage* automatically extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames in its spread. It also causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and has a 25% chance to extinguish those lights.

Tiny or smaller creatures are knocked down and rolled back, but take no additional damage due to this effect. Small creatures on the ground are knocked prone, or if flying are knocked back 1d6x10 feet. Medium creatures on the ground are unmoved, but if flying are knocked back 1d6x5 feet. Large or larger creatures are unmoved.

Material Component: A small exhalation of breath.

ANIMATE VINE

Transmutation

Level: Druid 1, Plant 1, ranger 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One vine, length up to 50 ft. + 5 ft./level; see text

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like *animate rope* (see the *Player's Handbook*), except that it functions on living plant matter.

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CHEETAH'S SPEED

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 2, druid 2, ranger 2, shaman 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

The transmuted creature becomes faster, improving his or her base land speed to 50 feet. If the creature already has a base land speed greater than 50 feet, its movement is not reduced to 50 feet but remains at its current level. The *cheetah's speed* spell also improves a character's normal speed by a multiplier of ten when he or she makes a charge.

CHEETAH'S SPEED, MASS

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 6, druid 6, ranger 4, shaman 6

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

Mass cheetah's speed works like *cheetah's speed*, except that it affects multiple creatures.



CLUO'S CURSE

Necromancy

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 8, spellsinger 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Though created specifically to battle an evil foe, use of this spell was eventually taken up by other wicked spellcasters against the forces of good - much to Cluo's chagrin. As such, evil wizards often refer to this spell as *Cluo's folly*.

Cluo's curse bestows a -4 penalty to Strength, Dexterity and Charisma (reducing the usual benefits to melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls and other uses of the ability modifiers). *Cluo's curse* cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* spell.

COMMAND PLANTS, LESSER

Transmutation

Level: Druid 1, Plant 1, ranger 1

Target: Up to 1 HD/level of plant creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

Duration: One hour/level

The druid, and certain divine spellcasters of Svimohzia, due to their familiarity with plants, learned to master plant-based spells much faster than spellcasters from other lands. This spell functions like *command plants* (see the *Player's Handbook*), except that only 1 HD per level may be affected, and the duration is limited to one hour per level.

CONTROL PLANTS, LESSER

Transmutation

Level: Druid 4, Plant 4

Targets: Up to 1 HD/level of plant creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

The druids and certain divine spellcasters of Svimohzia, due to their familiarity with plants, have learned to master plant-based spells much faster than spellcasters from other lands. This spell functions like *control plants* (see the *Player's Handbook*), except that only 1 HD per level may be affected.

ELEPHANT'S OVERRUN

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 2, druid 2, ranger 2, shaman 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

The transmuted creature becomes more adept at overrun attacks, much like a Svimohzish elephant. The spell grants a +8 enhancement bonus to Strength checks made as part of an overrun attempt. Moreover, your opponent may not avoid you. The bonus applies only to the chosen target, not its mount (if it happens to be riding one).

ELEPHANT'S OVERRUN, MASS

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 6, druid 6, ranger 4, shaman 6

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

Mass elephant's overrun works like *elephant's overrun*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

EYE OF THE DARK ONE

Evocation [Darkness, Evil]

Level: Cleric 6, Darkness 6, Evil 6

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Magical eye

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a visible orb that can produce black ray effects known as darkbolts. You can move the eye up to your speed as a move-equivalent action, but it cannot go beyond the spell's range.

Starting in the round the eye appears, you can command it to fire a darkbolt ray (60-foot range) as a free action once per round. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack with a ray to strike a target, but each ray uses a flat +6 bonus on attack rolls instead of your ranged attack bonus. The eye has a total number of darkbolt rays equal to one for every two caster levels of its creator (maximum seven darkbolts).

A target struck by a darkbolt suffers 2d8 points of damage and is dazed for 1 round unless it makes a Will save. Undead take no damage, but are dazed if they fail their saves. A creature struck by multiple rays during the same round is dazed for a maximum of 1 round, no matter how many times it fails its save.

The *eye of the Dark One* is a Fine object with AC 18 (+8 size) and 9 hit points. It uses your save bonuses for saving throws.

Focus: A polished black marble, opal, or black pearl.

LOZHEN'S BREATH

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Air 2, druid 3, shaman 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, spellsinger 3, Tempest 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Smoke spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high

Duration: 5 min/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude; see text

Spell Resistance: No

A cloud of ash-filled smoke, like that from the volcanic Lozhens, billows out from a chosen point. The smoke obscures vision, giving a 40% miss chance to characters within it. A character that breathes this heavy smoke must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character that chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the smoke in 4 rounds, and a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the fog in 1 round.

Lozhen's breath does not function underwater.

MUSHU'S FALLING FOOT

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3, spellsinger 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: 10-ft. x 5 ft. long foot

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Mushu's falling foot creates a Large magic foot that lands on your opponent, dealing 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 10d6) to creatures beneath, before vanishing.

Focus: A boot or other piece of footwear.

NAUSEATE

Necromancy

Level: Bard 1, cleric 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, spellsinger 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: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: Fort negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature becomes nauseated - unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention.

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The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn. Creatures with 6 or more Hit Dice are immune to this effect.

NEMESIS

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 8, spellsinger 8

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casting Time: 12 hours

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: One duplicate creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Nemesis creates an illusory duplicate of any creature. The duplicate creature is partially real and formed from earth. It appears to be the same as the original, but with a sinister look of evil intent evident on its face.

The duplicate has only one-half of the real creature's levels or Hit Dice (and the appropriate hit options, feats, skill ranks and special abilities for a creature of that level or HD). You cannot create a duplicate of a creature whose Hit Dice or levels exceed twice your caster level. You must make a Disguise check when you cast the spell to determine how good the likeness is. A creature familiar with the original might detect the ruse with a successful Spot check (opposed by the caster's Disguise check +2) or a DC 18 Sense Motive check.

Once created, the duplicate is no longer under command of the creator. The duplicate's only goal is to seek out the original. Should it encounter the original, it attempts to touch or make eye contact with her. If it succeeds in this, the original must succeed at a Fortitude save or die. If the original succeeds in her check, she instead takes 5d6 points of damage +1 point per caster level. (Of course, the original might die from damage even if she succeeds on her save.)

Once its task is complete, or if reduced to 0 hit points or otherwise destroyed, the duplicate crumbles into a small pile of its original components. Only a complex process requiring at least 24 hours, 100 gp per hit point, and a full equipped magical laboratory can repair damage to the duplicate.

A nemesis has no ability to become more powerful. It cannot increase in level or abilities.

Material Component: The spell is cast over the rough earth form, and some piece of the creature to be duplicated (hair, nail or the like) must be placed inside the earth. Additionally, the spell requires powdered jade worth 100 gp per HD of the duplicate to be created.

XP Cost: 125 XP per HD of the nemesis to be created (minimum 1,250 XP).

ONAHU'S CLOAK OF COURAGE

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bard 5, cleric 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 20 ft.

Target: One creature/level in a 20-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

An ethereal glowing cloak appears on the creature's back, bolstering their attitudes and improving their abilities. The affected creatures receive a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects, a +2 bonus on skill checks with a particular skill (chosen by the caster) and a +2 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Focus: A small piece of cloth stitched with golden thread.

PRIMAL'S BRACHIATION

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 1, druid 1, ranger 1, shaman 1

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

The transmuted creature becomes more adept and climbing and swinging, like an ape or monkey from the Vohven. The spell grants a +8 enhancement bonus to Balance and Climb checks.

PRIMAL'S BRACHIATION, MASS

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 4, druid 4, ranger 4, shaman 4

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

Mass primal's brachiation works like *primal's brachiation*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

PULL OF THE EARTH

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bard 3, druid 3, shaman 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, spellsinger 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: 20-ft.-radius emanation

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By casting *pull of the earth*, you manipulate the minds of your opponents so that they believe their gravity is increasing. Their bodies and limbs feel weak and heavy, and movement forward becomes checked (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Flying creatures in this area are forced back out of the radius emanation.

SPITTLE SPLASH

Conjuration (Creation) [Acid]

Level: Animal 2, spell singer 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One missile of green ape excrement

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half; see text

Spell Resistance: No

From your mouth comes a nasty orb of sticky, horrible smelling excrement (like the spittle of the green ape; see *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*) at the target. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack to hit. Any living creature struck suffers a -2 morale penalty to attacks, saves and checks until the spittle is washed off (with at least 1 pint of water).

TOUCH OF THE DARK ONE

Necromancy [Darkness, Evil]

Level: Cleric 6, Darkness 5, Evil 5

Components: S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Target: One creature/level, all within 30 ft. of each other

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You call upon the power of the Dark One to blind living creatures. Those affected also suffer 1 point of damage +1 point per caster level (maximum +10). This spell may be used to cure undead creatures of a like amount of damage, but it also blinds them. This power is commonly used by clerics of the Dark One.

A successful Fortitude save reduces the blindness to 1 min./level (D) and reduces the damage by half.

TRAILBLAZE

Universal

Level: Druid 0, ranger 0, shaman 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: Three trail markers plus three per caster level, no two of which may be placed more than 30 ft apart, and each of which must fit within 1 sq. ft.

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The spell allows you inscribe a visible trail marker, which is a single character consisting of a vertical, angled, or horizontal slash. A *trailblaze* spell enables you to place the trail marker upon any substance (usually a tree, but even stone or metal) without harm to the material upon which it is placed. The trail marker cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed by the caster or by an *erase* spell.

TRANSPORT VIA COLUMN

Transmutation

Level: Craft 6, Earth 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Unlimited

Target: You and touched objects or touched willing creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Thanks to an ancient Svimohz cleric of the Founder (with a fear of the wilderness outside of Monam-Ahnoz), you can enter any supporting stone column and pass any distance to a second column of the same kind in a single round, regardless of the distance between the two. However, both the entry and destination column must be crafted from the same type of stone (granite or marble, for example). If you are uncertain of the location of a particular destination column, you need merely designate direction ("a column in the north end of this city") or distance ("a



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column 200 miles west of here”), and the *transport via column* spell moves you as close as possible to the desired location. You may also indicate a particular destination (such as the third column from the left at the Temple of the Arts in Bet Kalamar).

You can bring objects as long as their weight does not exceed your maximum load. You may also bring one additional willing Medium or smaller creature (carrying gear or objects up to its maximum load), or its equivalent per three caster levels. Use the following equivalents to determine the maximum number of larger creatures you can bring. A Large creature counts as two Medium creatures, a Huge creature counts as two Large creatures, and so forth. Creatures to be transported must be in contact with each other, and at least one of those must be in contact with you.

You cannot use this spell to travel through statues, unless they support a structure, and you cannot travel through a creature of the construct subtype, even if it supports a structure. The destruction of an occupied column slays you and any creatures with you, ejecting the bodies and all carried objects from the column.

VOHVEN VIPERS

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Druid 3, ranger 3, shaman 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft./ + 5 ft./level); see text.

Effect: One tiny viper per level

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you utter this spell, you call forth a tiny viper (one at each level, to a maximum of eighteen vipers at 18th level). The vipers must be summoned so that each one is adjacent to at least one other viper (the vipers must fill one contiguous area). You may summon the vipers so that they share the area of other creatures. Each viper attacks any creature occupying its area. The vipers do not remain stationary after being summoned and pursue creatures that flee.

See the *Monster Manual* for details on tiny vipers.

WALL OF BRONZE

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 4, spellsinger 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Bronze wall with area up to one 5-ft. square/level

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No

You cause a flat, vertical bronze wall to spring into being. This wall can seal off a passage or close a breach, for it inserts itself into any surrounding nonliving material if its area is sufficient

to do so. The *wall of bronze* cannot be conjured so that it occupies the same space as a creature or object. It must be a flat plane, though you can shape its edges to fit the available space.

A *wall of bronze* is 1 inch thick per four caster levels. You can double the wall's area by halving its thickness. Each 5-foot square of the wall has 22 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 9. A section of wall whose hit points drop to 0 is breached. If a creature tries to break through the wall with a single attack, the DC for the Strength check is 22 + 2 per inch of thickness.

If you desire, the wall can be created vertically resting on a flat surface but not attached to the surface, so that it can be tipped over to fall on and crush creatures beneath it. The wall is 50% likely to tip in either direction if left unpushed. Creatures can push the wall in one direction rather than letting it fall randomly. A creature must make a DC 40 Strength check to push the wall over. Creatures with room to flee the falling wall may do so by making successful Reflex saves. Any Large or smaller creature that fails takes 10d6 points of damage. The wall cannot crush Huge and larger creatures.

A *wall of bronze* is subject to perforation, and other natural phenomena, but unlike a wall of iron, it is not subject to rust.

Material Component: A small piece of sheet bronze, plus a bronze ingot worth 7 sp and weighing 1 pound.

WALL OF VINES

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Druid 4, Plant 4, shaman 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Wall of vines, up to one 10-ft. cube/level (S)

Duration: 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

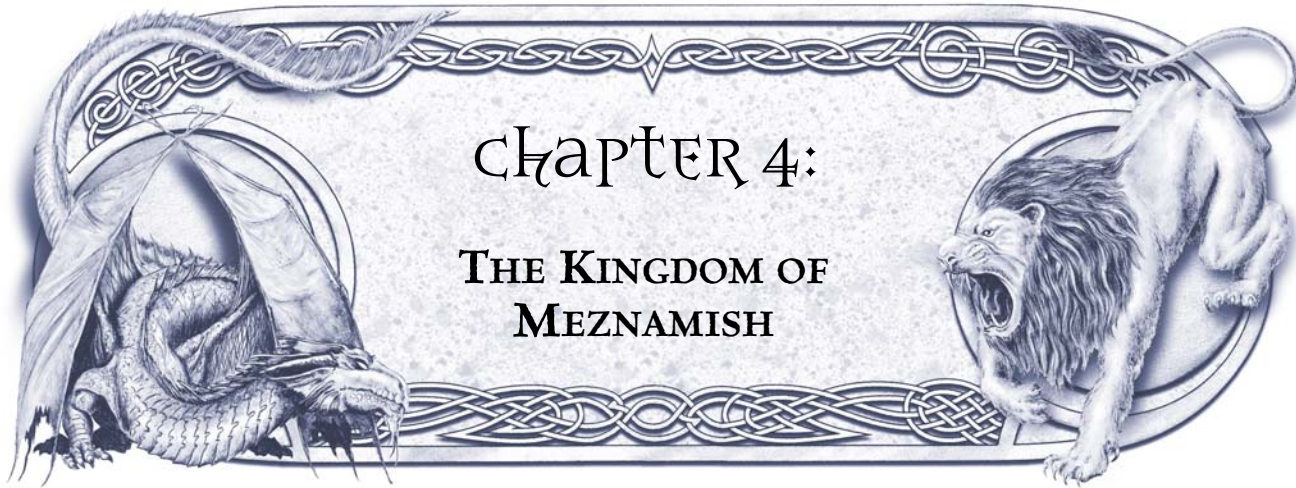
Spell Resistance: No

A *wall of vines* spell creates a barrier of tough, pliable vines at least twice as thick as a human finger. A creature forced into or attempting to move through the wall becomes entangled. The creature can break free and move half its normal speed by using a full-round action to make a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 20 Escape Artist check. A creature that succeeds on a Reflex save is not entangled but can still move at only half speed through the wall. Each round on your turn, the wall once again attempts to entangle all creatures that have avoided or escaped entanglement.

You can make the wall as thin as 5 feet thick, which allows you to shape the wall as a number of 10-by-10-by-4-foot blocks equal to twice your caster level. This has no effect on the entangling ability of the wall, but creatures attempting to move through the wall take that much less time to force its way through the barrier.

The wall can be breached by slow work with edged weapons, creating a safe passage 1 foot deep for every 10 minutes of work. Normal fire cannot harm the barrier, but magical fire burns it away in 10 minutes.

Despite its appearance, a *wall of vines* is not actually a living plant, and thus is unaffected by spells that affect plants.



CHAPTER 4:

THE KINGDOM OF MEZNAMISH

Though it was once the most powerful nation ever to arise on the island of Svimohzia, Meznamish is now a small and ignominious place, a mere shadow of its former glory. Where it once ruled the entire island from coast to coast, its holdings now only extend from the Whisvomi Forest to the Menamo Hills. Yet, despite its fall, the wars, plagues, false leaders and embarrassing defeats, Meznamish survives and, some suggest, is on the precipice of regaining its former glory. This chapter provides a comprehensive history of Meznamish's rise, fall, and road to rebirth.

HISTORY

While the ancient Dejay civilization on the main continent neared its end, modern civilization first awoke on the island of Svimohzia, though that name did not yet exist, nor were any such ideas as nations, peoples or culture yet conceived. Its people were primitive hunters and gatherers, their survival dependent upon herd animals and the availability of foodstuffs. These simple people gathered in tribes forming the basis for communities, wherein each member provided for the rest. Eventually, as is wont to happen with societies lacking reliable resources, environment and circumstance forced them to wander and follow the migratory patterns of their food supply.

Scholars debate the nature of the impetus for the four migratory flights. Most believe the limited food supply could not meet the demands of a growing population, while another position holds that war was the cause for the Kalamaran and Reanaarese movement, perhaps instigated by powerful Svimohzish tribes. Archeological evidence, in the form of excavated mass graves, structures and weaponry from the period, confirms many of the recent suspicions about these wars of antiquity.

There is also evidence of some reptilian aggressor. Cave paintings and pottery fragments from the period illustrate giant snakes with one or more human features. The sites exist in the greatest concentrations deep within the Awhom Forest, where

ziggurats, ruined cities and other skeletal remains of a past civilization still stand, overgrown now by sprawling woodlands.

From this evidence, a new theory emerged claiming the migratory flights originated with the pre-Brandobian nomads. Some sages claim the other tribes reviled the Brandobians, who were warlike and preyed on other tribes who, in turn, treated them as less than human. A great war ensued between the tribes, whereby the Kalamarans, Reanaarians and Svimohz joined to oust the hostile tribes and push them from the island. Of course, no one knows the exact path the Brandobians took to reach the continent, for all of the clues are contradictory. Scholars agree only that the Brandobians followed the herds of sheep and goats over the Legasa Mountains, settling in the western coastline of the main continent.

With the troublesome tribe cast out, the remaining peoples prospered for a time and the first communities took hold. Unfortunately, this first civilized settlement ended abruptly when serpent masters emerged from the Vohven Jungle and enslaved them all. Though the rule was long, the Fhokki were the first to successfully flee the island by crossing the land bridge, freeing themselves from enslavement and the wars perpetrated by the hostile tribes of humanoids and monsters. Many believe the Fhokki's flight provided the impetus for the other people to fight back against their foul masters.

Following the Fhokki were the Kalamarans and the Reanaarians. The Kalamaran people crossed the land bridge to found agricultural communities in the wetlands of the Alubelok swamp, later expanding northward. While they learned the basic techniques of agriculture, the Reanaarian host, an offshoot of the tribes, followed the migratory patterns of game animals, moving through what is now Kalamaran lands, and crossing the Ka'Asa Mountains to settle by the waters now known as Reanaaria Bay.

Those who remained in Svimohzia survived, relying less on hunting and gathering methods and learning to cultivate the land. Soon, scattered villages formed throughout the northern

Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish

portion of the island, well away from the sea, as isolated spots within the safety of the sheltering trees.

Before any other tribes could cross the stretch of land, the waters once again covered the natural bridge, separating the people on the island from those on the continent. Most sages suggest the land bridge rose and sank several times in antiquity, and it is merely a matter of time before it resurfaces once more. Experts on climate posit that the land bridge is actually a stretch of land resting just below sea level, and that great glaciers once covered the continent and the level of the seas was lower. Yet, as the climate became more temperate, much of this ice melted and caused the sea level to rise, plunging the narrow strip of land beneath the waters.

The Journeymen, however, call such suppositions blasphemy. They claim the hand of the Traveler created the so-called land bridge, facilitating the natural movements of the people to populate the lands. When the people moved beyond the barrier, the Traveler withdrew his hand, having given each tribe a place of their own.

Early Civilizations (-300 C.M.)

The first known nation on Svimohzia was the Deji city state known only as the "City of the Elders." The City of the Elders developed in a fertile river valley off one of the branches of the Izhoven River in the Vohven Jungle, and faced many raids from neighboring tribes when basic amenities, such as potable water, food and shelter, were scarce. In time, and through the intercession of a wood demon bound to Clahz, the city's plantmaster, these frequent raiders were repulsed. Thereafter, the nation thrived and soon grew to the size of present day Meznamish.

Of course, as Svimohzia proves repeatedly, no civilization lasts for long. When a virulent strain of Green Rot began to spread throughout the plants, and then the people, Clahz summoned the demon once more in a foolhardy effort to spare his garden from burning (to remove the infestation). Alhiz, the Emperor, moved to destroy the demon, but Clahz's garden came to life, killing the monarch and all his men, trapping the druid to suffer for eternity, and precipitating the collapse of the nation.

Vohven locals claim the garden still exists, but if so, no one has yet located it. For more details of this lost city state, consult the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* adventure, *Garden of the Plantmaster*.

Mewzhano and the Birth of a Nation

While most Svimohz were content being farmers, hunters and fishermen, the village leaders yearned to expand. Conflict and war were common, as Svimohz raiders plundered villages, captured their women and burned the settlements to the ground. The rivalry between the villages, little more than extended families, was so fierce that there was just one law respected: that no man shall hunt in the land of the setting sun (west, over the Menamo Hills). Regardless of the disagree-

ments, the wars, and the treachery, no Svimohz had violated this edict.

The threats from other villages forced each community to be vigilant about protecting their youth. Children and adolescents could not venture beyond the walls of their woodland homes, resulting in a natural resentment and frustration in many youths. While most, however, outgrew the rash behavior and lived within their community's rules, a few let this resentment and frustration define them.

Mewzhano was such a young man. He felt stifled by the security of his home and railed against the customs and safeguards hemming him in. Yearning for adventure, he saw the western hills as a symbol of freedom and escape, and dreamed of climbing those slopes. Often, he and his childhood friends crept from their village to explore, slowly training themselves to hunt and survive in the wilderness. Each foray took them further and further west until, one day, they came upon a man who told them of rich lands beyond the hills, places of infinite wealth and prosperity.

Legend holds this traveler was none other than the god Amehz the Traveler, cloaked in the physical form of man. A more secular view holds that this man was simply of some other tribe to the west. Regardless of the identity of the traveler, his presence - if indeed he existed at all - inspired Mewzhano to great and terrible things.

Each tale the traveler wove filled their minds with glory, promise and freedom, and seeing the beliefs of his people as foolish superstition, Mewzhano returned to his village and spoke of rich lands beyond the hills. Instead of finding allies, however, the village responded with scorn and hate, exiling him for his blasphemous words. Disgraced and homeless, Mewzhano prepared to travel west alone when, to his astonishment, a handful of his most loyal followers volunteered to accompany him. The exiled and destitute group left the forest of their ancestral home, crossing the plains, while keeping the Menamo Hills in front of them until they reached the slopes of those very hills. Climbing to the top, they saw with wonder a sparkling bay with beaches of black sand. Scattered throughout the area were small clusters of simple huts, and in the bay were fishing boats hauling up full nets, holding more food than Mewzhano and his comrades thought possible.

Mewzhano now saw the traveler spoke truly. The lands were wealthy, rich with agriculture and fishing, and with a muddy but established road system. Despite being few in number, he and his friends were well trained and well armed, and certain they could conquer these people with little effort, judging by the idyllic nature of those seen below. Therefore, Mewzhano and his loyal followers crept down the slopes of the Menamo Hills under the cover of darkness to infiltrate the first village, now called Nezormish. Mewzhano and his men were brutal and warlike, ruthlessly slaughtering the leaders of the tribe, taking their women and seizing control of the entire village. The conquest was messy, cruel and shocking, but their ease in taking

the village inspired Mewzhano to begin a campaign to conquer the entire bay.

Mewzhano's invasion continued throughout the year. In the beginning, he saw little resistance and, with his charismatic leadership, he soon convinced the surviving captives of his divine right to rule and of the mighty empire he would eventually govern. Many natives chose to side with the upstart lord, learned combat techniques and became almost as skilled as the loyal warriors who had accompanied him into exile. Increasingly more land came under Mewzhano's control until, at the end of the year, he controlled the entire region. At the end of this campaign, he founded Monam-Ahnoz as his capital. To the surviving followers, he gave villages of their choosing to develop as they saw fit and to rule under his command. From these followers the families of Meznamish were born, and from the blood and ashes of Mewzhano's vision, a new nation arose (in -49 C.M.).

After ten years of rule, Mewzhano's rule of destiny was little more than a haphazard collection of bandit leaders, unable to defend their holdings from the ogres in the Zhano Headlands, who came down and burned their villages, stole treasure and despoiled the women (and even young men). Mewzhano, fearing a loss of control over the Bay, soon led forays into the hills to hunt the ravaging ogres. Following the Izhan River, he and a small army of footmen explored the Mizohr Woodlands, braving the dangers found there, and destroying knots of diseased and foul humanoids with crueler practices than their own.

THE DWARVEN RACES

The dominant dwarves of ancient and modern Meznamish are the mountain, or highland, dwarves (*rurok*) of the peaks and the stone dwarves (*durvalk*) who live in the depths and rarely interact with anyone other than the *rurok*. In Mewzhano's time, both races inhabited the Dashan Mountain heights and depths, respectively, though in the current time the supplies of Dashan iron are much depleted. Hence, most highland dwarves have moved on to the Tanezh Mountains, where iron is more common.

Though the Tanezh *rurok* openly trade with the surface races, the suspicious *durvalk* of the Dashan Mountains only barter through their intermediaries – any highland dwarves remaining in the Dashan peaks (also known as the Malachite Heights).

Reaching the foot of the Tanezh Mountains, Mewzhano spied a tor he felt was well suited for another stronghold. Planning to scout the area, he and his somewhat diminished band climbed the slopes, until they reached a level place from which the mound rose. To their surprise, a contingent of highland dwarf miners and stone dwarf warriors waited, bearing metal weapons of a kind Mewzhano had never before seen.

Mewzhano, in a flash of rare insight and restraint, knelt in supplication. The act of contrition surprised the dwarves, and

several asked him to stand, but Mewzhano remained kneeling until from amongst them emerged King Gramdal IX, the ruler of all dwarven clans in the Dashan Mountains. Bidding him to rise, the King placed a hand on Mewzhano's shoulder and questioned him about his purpose for coming onto their lands.

Mewzhano stated that the Zhano Headland ogres slaughtered and enslaved his people and, as king, he thought to find a defensible place in the mountains. Gramdal, moved by Mewzhano's plight (and the desire to rid the land of ogres), offered an exchange. The dwarves would trade finished iron goods for commodities such as blubber, ivory and foodstuffs. Mewzhano eagerly agreed.

Now armed with iron weapons and armor, Mewzhano led a foray into the Zhano Headlands to slay the ogre chieftain. Supported by 1,000 armed footmen, he pressed into the heart of the hills, and fought the ogres for nigh upon two years. In the final conflict, Mewzhano battled the ogre chieftain himself, slaughtering his nemesis, but suffering wounds so severe that he succumbed to death a week later.

The Coming of Miznoh

Though the ogres were defeated, an alliance with the Dashan dwarves formed, and the late Mewzhano's people controlled the entire valley, they lacked a king. For a brief time (-37 to -15 C.M.), the families of Meznamish squabbled over who could claim Mewzhano's place. Small conflicts blossomed throughout the kingdom, with houses setting on one another in bloody displays of anarchy. From these conflicts, a young lord, who claimed he was Mewzhano's bastard grandson, emerged. Thanks to his familial claim to the throne, disaffected people flocked to the young man, and with their support, he soon quelled the other houses' bids for dominance.

To secure his control over the power-hungry families, he took a daughter from each of them, making them all his wives. While this consolidated his power over the other families, it also served as a threat, for if a family raised arms against Miznoh, he would kill the daughter. His ruthlessness silenced the complaints of his rivals, and young King Miznoh quickly assumed a stranglehold over the Bay.

Miznoh had both ample pride and ambition, and being in the shadow of Mewzhano frustrated him. Feeling he would have no place in history if he remained content to just rule the small coastal regions of the bay, he sought revenge for his grandfather by seizing the forests of Mewzhano's former home, back to the east. Gathering able-bodied warriors and hiring a contingent of dwarven mercenaries, he marched along the same path that Mewzhano and his followers took when they first came to Mewzhano Bay. Along the way, he conquered the lands, and those who would not join him fell to his sword.

Miznoh

Even today, many Meznams disagree about Miznoh's true appearance. Some claim he stood 7 feet tall, wielded two greatswords and rode on the back of a dragon. Others claim a halo of fire surrounded his head. Still more state that his mere voice compelled men to lay down their swords and weep for their arrogance. Of course, these are the embellishments attributed to a great man by an adoring populace.

Miznoh was, in fact, an average man of ordinary build and physique for his station, with dark skin and coarse black hair worn in long braids. Granted, he was attractive, strong and athletic, but there is no proof he had supernatural qualities that lent him aid in his efforts to forge an empire. However, he did have an aura of confidence that enabled him to gain assistance from the families of Mewzhan's eastern home. He also had intimate knowledge of dwarven customs and enjoyed many ties with these people.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on whom you ask), the would-be emperor had a dark side. Conquest and glory consumed him, driving him to commit unspeakable acts in the name of destiny. Using his natural skills of leadership, he compelled his people to mount campaigns resulting in the

deaths of thousands of innocent citizens and to take part in the bloody business of destroying the communities in the forests of Mewzhan's former home. While a hero and a popular figure, he was still human, and prone to selfish desires and petty revenge.

Miznoh's crusade required some fifteen years to complete. Over this time, he conquered all the lands between the bay, the southern hills to the Vohven Jungle and all the lands east of his grandfather's former woodland home. The king owed his successes to many factors, the most obvious being his superior weaponry. The iron swords cut through the wooden and bone blades of the primitive tribes with ease, and iron armor proved impervious to the flint spears and arrowheads. With the military advantages of superior arms, Miznoh swept through settlements with impunity.

Another deciding factor in Miznoh's victories was the dwarven assistance in their conquests. The dwarves developed combat tactics and techniques centuries before the founding of the Meznamish Empire, and were experts at fighting giants and ogres, as well as knowledgeable in employing fire at range. Wattle and daub huts easily catch fire, and whole towns burnt to the ground without Miznoh's army having to once draw their swords.

Possibly the most important component to Miznoh's forces,

however, was the discovery of the "highland dancer" horse. Miznoh recognized the value of these horses, and commanded his men to gather and train the steeds for fighting. After a year of training, these steeds completed Miznoh's army and allowed his forces to cover vast distances quickly.

It is said that Miznoh saved his grandfather's forest for last, wanting to savor all the destruction while giving the people nowhere to run. With the rest of the island well in hand, he pressed into the forest, burning and destroying all villages between him and his goal, the tribe of his grandfather. When he arrived, the village offered an unconditional surrender, but Miznoh would have none of it. Instead, he passed through the walls and butchered man, woman and child.

With the killing done, he commanded his forces to burn the town and salt the earth, so that nothing would grow thereupon for many years. Then, from the bones of the dead, he built a mound to serve as a reminder to those who would defy the mighty Meznamish Empire. Though the monument has long succumbed to vandals and to the elements, explorers and archeologists can still mark the haunted ruins of these settlers by the lack of growth.

Miznoh realized he could never govern the entire empire by himself due to lack of an effective infrastructure. To ensure his continued rule,



he selected his three most loyal officers, each descending from the original loyal companions who followed Mewzhanu over the Menamo Hills. He made each man a Duke, there in the heart of the woods now called the Miznoh Forest, on a day still called "The Dawn of the Three Dukes."

To Oznohz, he gave the northern shores and all the land touching it. To Zahnzor, he gave the southern lands bordering the Vohven Jungle. To his favorite officer, Mezvansho, he bequeathed the Eastern Islands, a veritable paradise rich with resources and ideal for building a powerful duchy. With his lands divided and each man swearing oaths of fealty to the Emperor, Miznoh returned to Meznamish. There, he ruled for just 10 more years before succumbing to a strange wasting disease apparently contacted while in the Miznoh Forest.

The Years of Growth (11-83 C.M.)

With Miznoh dead, the monarchy fell to his eldest son, Miznoh the lesser. Most of Miznoh's small acts of importance passed down to Miznoh's heirs, such as brokering continued trade relations with the dwarves, building the infrastructure for the enormous nation, and quelling the complaints of the noble houses in their bids for power. In fact, Miznoh the lesser's reign was so successful he established a functional and self-sustaining nation. Aside from the occasional border conflicts with the native tribes in the Vohven Jungle, his reign was peaceful, prosperous and foundational enough for the next three monarchs to capitalize on the achievements of their ancestors.

After Miznoh the lesser, first Izvan and then Miznoh III held the throne. Izvan established roads and irrigation systems and developed trade routes to lay the foundation for the nation. Izvan reigned for ten years before he died without issue and the throne fell to Miznoh III, Izvan's brother, a power-hungry warlord, whom Miznoh the lesser passed over when naming his heir.

Miznoh III, resenting the peaceful ways of Izvan and his father Miznoh the Lesser, lusted after his grandfather's glory. He believed that to gain a place in history he would have to mount a campaign of a scope equal to Miznoh's sweep of the East. Looking south, he chose the Vohven Jungle as the target of conquest, and so rebuilt the flagging military by outfitting his soldiers with new iron armor and weapons, reorganized the cavalry and established a military far greater than Miznoh's. In 60 C.M., he sent his legions over the Tanezh Mountains to spill down through the Zamul Forest, where his forces encountered unorganized tribal hobgoblins. They routed their enemy and began to press into the Vohven, when Miznoh III suddenly died alone in his chambers, poisoned.

Succeeding Miznoh III was Miznamvho. Though masquerading as a member of the Hall of Oaths, in truth he served Zhanvim the Dark One. Seeing his father's folly as an opportunity to distract the noble houses while establishing a wicked theocratic regime, he looted the imperial coffers to fuel the taking of the Vohven Jungle. From those funds, he diverted

resources to build a network of Knights of the Black Pit throughout the nation. Soon after, the Church of Endless Night practiced their faith openly, committing horrific atrocities on the streets of Meznamishii cities. Miznamvho endorsed the faith and so the Knights stood unopposed.

While the regime tightened its grip on the populace, the Meznamish armies lost momentum in the jungle as the troops fell victim to ravaging diseases, starving for want of supply lines and facing greater and greater numbers of enemies. Meanwhile, the population, cowed by the Knights and their bloody sacrificial altars where countless citizens died, locked their doors and hid in their homes. A new Izvan, Miznamvho's son, watched in horror as his nation stood on the precipice of destruction. To avert the annihilation of his homeland, he confronted his father, begging him to repent of his foul ways, abandon the dark god and halt the atrocities of his priesthood. Miznamvho, in thrall to the Dark One, cast his son out of the palace, exiling his son to die in the Vohven.

Upon his banishment, Izvan concluded that his father was lost, and if the injustices of the regime were to stop, he must shoulder the burden of regicide. He steeled his heart and, like a thief, stole back into the palace. Creeping into his father's dark chambers, he plunged his blade into the emperor's heart. As the shock of the act sunk into the young emperor, the dying monarch cursed his son and the nation with his final breath, vowing that the Dark One would one day break the Empire's spine.

The End of Miznoh (84-87 C.M.)

With Miznamvho dead, the Miznoh line descended into bloodshed and chaos as grasping noble houses sought to seize the throne. To his horror, Izvan realized that, despite the sacrifice of his act, he had set a precedent of regicide that would plague the nation for many years – which it did, until the nation's collapse over two centuries later.

Refusing to surrender control of the throne, Izvan recalled the remaining armies embroiled in the conquest of the Vohven Jungle, hoping to secure his power base through military might. Riots, arson and murder ripped through the nation, causing civil unrest within the area under Izvan's control, while the duchies experienced few disruptions. Izvan's brief rule was fraught with assassinations, civil wars and widespread destruction and, in the end, Izvan himself fell to the sharp blade of his own brother, Razhan.

Razhan was a power-hungry wretch and, worse yet, in the thrall of his father's cult. The usurper hated Izvan for their father's murder and, in an act of revenge, stabbed his brother to death, severed the head from the body and cast it down the steps of the palace, thrusting the capital into complete chaos. Mobs of peasants hunted the priests, while the same clerics slaughtered men and women in the name of the Dark One. The intact noble houses chose sides; some, like Onsar, supporting and even leading the upstart peasants, while others sold their souls to the priests. Meanwhile, the legions marched home, harried by

Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish

lizardfolk attacks, serpent priests and worse. Razhan, the doomed, exulted in the power he held, though it never extended beyond the boundaries of the palace. He killed his wives when they displeased him, devoured his own children and turned the once beautiful palace into a charnel house.

After two months of civil war, and with the duchies watching, Onsar the peasant hero overcame the priests and laid siege to the palace, overtaking the forces there and executing Razhan, putting an end to the evil gripping the nation for the last two decades. Unfortunately, with Razhan's death, the only surviving heir was his idiot brother, Mozvin.

Merely thirteen years of age, Mozvin was a drooling incompetent who lacked the ability to rule the empire, even with the return of the legions (badly weakened by the ravages of jungle fighting). The houses, fearing a revolt from the duchies, elected Onsar to be the boy's steward and chief advisor. Soon, Onsar eradicated all visible traces of the Church of the Endless Night, and reestablished order in the name of Miznoh's last heir. Two years later, Mozvin "the Daff" succumbed to his crippling birth defects.

So it was that Miznoh's line ended.

The Hundred Years' Peace (88-215 C.M.)

Unopposed, Onsar claimed the throne, for he had proven himself to all of the other houses in his tenure as Steward. Furthermore, the people loved Onsar, calling him a national hero. Onsar's reign began Meznamish's "Golden Age," and through his sovereignty - and the reigns of the next four emperors - Meznamish saw explosive growth and extensive trade with the main continent. With a burgeoning surplus of finished dwarven metal goods, whale flesh and other items, Meznamish gained new staple foodstuffs, slaves and other materials not found on the island. The monsters and savage tribes of the Vohven Jungle remained quiet, and the other duchies were content with their positions of paying tribute to the Emperor.

Though no major conflicts, plagues, blights or any other difficulties disrupted the development of the empire through this period, it also set the stage for the inevitable decline that culminated in Vhohmi III's reign (more on this below). Pirate ships sailed the Straits of Svimohzia late in the century, though they would not become a problem until the start of the third century. The hobgoblins south of the Dashahn Mountains enjoyed a population explosion with the rampant depopulation of the Vohven Jungle bordering the region. Brolenese prospectors explored the western coastlands of the island, while the duchies themselves developed value systems, cultures and beliefs independent from those citizens nearest the center of power.

The Decline (216-300 C.M.)

The years of decline began with the reign of Suvar. Though he was just, honest and forthright, his failures were those of circumstance and the growth of the bad seeds of the previous

era. Realizing the size of the empire had grown too large and too populated for a centralized form of government, he ceded some of his sovereignty to the dukes. Each duke readily accepted their additional duties and responsibilities, understanding they had also received unprecedented power. Shortly thereafter (260 C.M.), Ozhvinnish appointed a steward to oversee the Eastern half of the duchy. Simultaneously, Zha-nehzmish, the mercantile capital of the largest eastern island, exploded with population growth, soon eclipsing the mercantile might of Monam-Ahnoz. Though its merchant princes paid lip service to their Duke, they were merely biding their time, amassing the resources to take control of the city and the duchy.

Hilanohz, Suvar's son, was a weak emperor, and through his reign the Dukes acquired increasingly more independence. With the loss of tax revenues to the monarchy, the Empire's income was insufficient to maintain the roads, public offices, military and nearly anything else controlled by the state. More and more of the states' functions fell to the private sector, fragmenting its command and weakening its control over the nation. Private operations became monopolies, hedged out the competition and descended into corruption. Further, the hobgoblins began to develop communities in their blighted lands, and pirates of the Straits burned and looted merchant vessels, taking their plunder and threatening to destroy Meznamish's economy. In addition, the admirals and other military officers seized greater control over the government, weakening the throne and threatening a military coup. Worse still, undermining Hilanohz's efforts to fix the problems eroding his empire, came a plague sweeping through the major cities. Contending with plague, pirates and the occasional hobgoblin raid proved to be too much for Hilanohz, and he committed suicide in 287 C.M.

Where Hilanohz was weak and ineffectual, his son, Vhohmi III, was nothing of the sort. Intelligent and capable, Vhohmi III saw his birthright disintegrating before his eyes. The duchies had become independent states, free to pass their own laws, collect taxes, and govern their regions as they would, and worse, the pirate situation, along with the monarchy's disinterest in solving those problems, fomented discord and potential treason in the ranks of the admirals. Fearing such an uprising, and frustrated with the piracy problems, the emperor plotted to eliminate both threats in one well-crafted action. He would crush the pirates with the combined might of the Meznamish navy and, when the battle was in hand, he would then turn on the traitorous admirals.

When the fleet set sail from the capital, the citizens in the coastal city massed at the waterfront to wish them good fortune, for Vhohmi's brazen act harkened back to the days before the kings grew fat and lazy, letting their nation become prey to the ravenous sea wolves. However, there was a flaw in Vhohmi's thinking, for thanks to the obvious commotion on land, the pirates learned of Vhohmi's fleet and rallied 30 warships in an effort to escape.

Furthermore, what Vhohmi did not realize was that the admirals became disloyal and treasonous because they resented the inability of the previous monarch to protect the citizens and the nation's welfare. With a national focus on dislodging the pirates from the Windy Straits, nationalism and patriotism swelled in the hearts of these men and all doubts and thoughts of treason vanished as if they had never existed. Not foreseeing this, Vhohmi continued ahead with his plans and was fully intent on destroying his now most loyal officers.

Just off the coast of Zhano Cape, the Meznamish fleet descended on the pirates like jackals, tearing through the enemy while sustaining few casualties. When it seemed his fleet had routed the pirates, several of Vhohmi's ships moved to attack those vessels captained by the formerly disloyal officers. As his ships moved into position, opening fire with ballista and catapult, and ramming the allied craft, nearly half the fleet moved to their victims' defense. In shock and horror, Vhohmi watched the remaining pirate ships limp away, while his fleet tore itself to pieces.

The result of the bloody affair was the sinking of 25 of his ships, including one his second son commanded, and nearly three dozen turning to piracy and joining the surviving freebooters. From Vhohmi's private fleet, only 14 crippled craft and 30 intact craft remained. The emperor returned to the Empire, but not as a hero. Instead, he returned as a traitor, leaving the pirates organized into an enormous threat still plaguing Svimohzia to this day.

The Battle of Zhano Cape (also known as Vhohmi's Folly) damaged the monarch's reputation both with his people and with the Merchant Princes of the eastern duchy, for half of their committed craft were loyal to the admirals Vhohmi attacked. Too many of their sailors and expensive galleons succumbed to the conflict, sowing the seeds of dissent that would soon flower into great betrayal and the formation of the Kingless Land, Ahznomahn (more on this below). Even Ozhvinmish resented the monarch's tactics, and distanced itself from the throne. Of the three duchies, only Zazahni remained loyal. Worse, five years later, the theocrat Miznamvho's curse would come to fruition, casting the nation into civil unrest like never before.

Fortnight's Battle (301 C.M.)

Although Meznamish collapsed the theocratic and despotic rule of the Church of the Endless Night, the Dark One's influence was not removed. It is rumored that fleeing clerics found haven with the organized hobgoblin tribes south of the Dashahn and Tanezh Mountains. Finding their views compatible with these strange humans, the hobgoblins are said to have allowed the humans to remain, some even taking the humans as mates. Occasionally, or so it is said, half-hobgoblins (sil-karg) sprang from these unions, though these sil-karg intermarried with other hobgoblins until almost no trace of the human infusion remained. According to some legends, the great hobgoblin leader Brog-Tuuakh arose from this bloodline. It was

he who, barely after reaching adulthood, conquered the hobgoblin chieftains and united many local humanoids behind his bloody banner.

Meanwhile, as Brog-Tuuakh mustered the hobgoblins in preparations for war, the merchant princes in Ahznomahn convened, deciding that for them to realize the might of their economic superiority, they must break away from the empire. The merchant princes had long ago bankrupted the duke and had seized a great deal of power from him, but they knew they could not declare independence from the empire without ducal consent. Approaching the Ahznom lord, they offered to absolve him of his debt for a declaration of independence. The duke concluded that he could protect his heirs by siding with the power-hungry merchants and seceding from the empire, maybe some day regaining control over his ancestral lands. However, he also concluded that by doing so he would invite war with the imperial seat. Wisely, he counseled the merchants to wait until the time was right and when the empire was distracted; then, he would declare independence and abdicate the throne.

In the autumn of 301 C.M., Brog-Tuuakh's hobgoblins marched into Zazahni. In response to the threat to his subjects, King Vhohmi III commanded his dukes to raise armies and send them to engage the hobgoblins. Zazahni naturally responded quickly; their warriors were well seasoned from fighting hostile natives and trolls in the Vohven Jungle. Within three weeks, half of the Ozhvinmishii forces arrived, while the other half (those from Eastern Ozhvinmish) approached through the gap between the Svomawhom Forest and Awhom Forest to buttress the weakened Zazahni at Ahznomahn's behest. Ahznomahn, instead of sending troops to fight, declared independence.

Vhohmi also realized he could once more call upon the ancient alliance with the dwarves. While the Zazahni and Ozhvinmishii forces contained the hobgoblins, Vhohmi and the dwarves flanked the enemy. The fighting lasted for two weeks. Because the Ahznomahn military and Ozhvinmishii reinforcements never arrived, casualties were high. Worse, many of the routed hobgoblins escaped intact. These survivors may still represent the greatest threat of all to the island's security.

While the fighting dragged on during Fortnight's Battle, the Ozhvinmishii reinforcements occupied Zazahni, claiming a "protective occupation." Instead, what actually occurred was the occupying forces depleting the nation's stores of food and supplies, brutalizing the population, and acting no better than the hobgoblins. When news of the invading armies' defeat reached the now-ruined Zazahni, the occupying Ozhvinmishii withdrew but left the land ravaged, having taken the remaining cattle, supplies and any other goods they fancied.

The Collapse (302-306 C.M.)

Fortnight's Battle also diminished the dwarves, who returned to their mountain and underground homes. With so many dead, the dwarves cut their mining operations by half, increased their prices and focused on affairs internal to their kingdom. Though Vhomi III tried to bargain with food supplies, the dwarven food stores were full and they refused to lower their prices.

Ahznomahn, untouched by the war, put down any internal resistance to their new plutocratic regime, asserted itself as a mercantile power, and forged treaties with many of the nations on the continent. With Ahznomahn's economic advantage as an entity free from the ravages of war, they quickly outpaced Meznamish, and developed into one of the most influential powers on the island.

Meanwhile, the Zazahni troops marched back to their homeland, and what they found there caused great hatred for the neighboring Ozhvins - even more so than the spite they held for the hobgoblins. No town was unaffected by the soldiers' occupation; wives and daughters carried the children of the soldiers, the food stores were empty, and almost all of the livestock had been carried off. It was all the duke could do to keep his men from invading Ozhvinmish, a decision ultimately resulting in his murder the next year.

Instead, the duke of Zazahni approached Vhohmi, demanding restitution. Vhohmi, still angered by Ahznomahn's betrayal, demanded Ozhvinmish replace what they had stolen and pay heavy fines. The duke of Ozhvinmish, having lost all but one of his sons in Fortnight's Battle, refused. At the urging of the Ahznom diplomat, he declared his nation independent and proclaimed himself king.

Vhohmi III, enraged, launched a foolhardy invasion into Ozhvinmish through the Miznoh forest. Oddly, where the empire was born, there did it die, for the Ozhvin forces were fresh from their occupation in Zazahni, and drove the Meznamish troops back into the hills. The empire quickly collapsed into smaller states without a national response. The Zazahni populace, outraged at their defilement, sacked the ducal palace and executed their monarch in the central marketplace. Meanwhile, Meznamishii noble houses, disgusted with Vhohmi's perceived incompetence, sent assassins to wipe out the entire royal family, while Ozhvinmish emerged as the largest state on the isle.

The Year of the Three Kings (307 C.M.)

Onsar III, an outspoken general, who led a company in Fortnight's Battle and was a longtime friend of the dwarves, emerged and took the throne, promising to retake what was lost. To the cheers of thousands, he gathered the shattered remains of the army under his banners. From Monam-Ahnoz, 1,000 tired and battered soldiers rallied and launched the second Ozhvinmish invasion.

Yet, Onsar's brash assault ended in ruin. First, he lacked a fresh supply of weaponry, for the nation could not afford to

replace what was lost in the hobgoblin war. Second, the dwarves, who lost appalling numbers in Fortnight's Battle, and who despised Ahznomahn and cared nothing for Ozhvinmish, refused to send any more of their sons and daughters to the waiting swords on Ozhvinmish's savannahs. Furthermore, Ahznomahn privateers harried Meznamishii supply ships along the coast; so needed food, clothes and equipment never arrived. Onsar's forces seemed doomed from the start.

Mustering at Nezormish, Onsar's army circled the Menamo hills to invade the neighboring nation. Ozhvinmish responded with small but well-placed cavalry attacks targeting the rear guard before quickly vanishing back into the hills. The result of these sudden strikes demoralized Onsar's legions and men deserted by the scores. To save his forces from the elusive attackers, Onsar force-marched his remaining troops into the Miznoh Forest to launch an attack against Tezsvahn and regain their supplies.

However, Ozhvinmish had a surprise planned. Earlier attacks against Meznamish's fleet emptied the city of all its citizens and left only 500 heavy infantry to hold it, while the Ozhvinmishii cavalry, hiding in the hills, emerged from the south and crushed the Meznamish forces against the walls of the city.

Demoralized, hungry and already beaten, the Meznamish forces laid siege to the city, but for each Ozhvin they killed, two Meznams fled. Onsar's men made a half-hearted attempt to retake the city until enemy cavalry swept in on them from the south. The survivors attempted to flee, but the cost was high and the Ozhvinmishii soon claimed Onsar's life as he tried to reorganize his men.

Such a defeat devastated the populace, who now feared reprisal for their king's actions. Indeed, Ozhvinmishii forces, aided by Ahznomahnii privateers, soon gathered to strike against the weakened nation. Meanwhile, Ozhvinmishii raiders targeted outlying towns and villages. It seemed Meznamish would fall, but when news of Onsar's death reached Monam-Ahnoz, crafty Whensvish took power. Whensvish, in an effort to save the ailing nation, tried to buy off the Ozhvinmish king, sending diplomats to the neighboring king with thousands of gold coins (drained from both the royal treasury and coffers of noble houses) and a promise of non-aggression. Within a day, chests laden with Meznamish gold departed for Ashoshani, but in response to what many nobles perceived as theft, the great houses put Whensvish to death, a mere month after he assumed control of the nation.

When Ozhvinmish received the gold and the promise of peace, the old king accepted the truce, much to Ahznomahn's frustration, and thus ended hostilities between the nations - though Meznamish never recognized their independence.

Naminsho, a powerful and influential noble, took the Meznamishii throne by force, making no promises and giving no justification for his action except to state that the seat of the empire was something he was due. The remainder of 307 C.M. was a brutal year of infighting, as noble houses battled one

another on the streets of Monam-Ahnoz. Plantations burned, towns were razed and the blood of a nation poured into the black sands of Mewzhano Bay.

Later that year, Svemahni, an opportunist and petty noble, overtook the capital, executed the upstart Naminsho and emerged victorious by Mid-season Harvest of 308 C.M.

The Dark Years (308-342 C.M.)

Though no actual proof may still exist, some sages agree that Svemahni took Brolenese gold in exchange for turning a blind eye to slave ships from the Pel. No one anticipated the Brolenese intention to develop trade with Ul-Karg, perhaps because the Meznamishii ignored it out of desperation or because Svemahni hid the truth from his people. In any event, the assistance of slavers and coin is said to have returned some stability to the nation, though Meznamish as a power lay broken.

In C.M. 309, the Meznamishii colony of Ehzhimahn, just across the Straits, declared independence. Eight years later, in C.M. 317, Pel Brolenon founded the colony of Vrandol on the western coast of Svimohzia, the first known intrusion of a foreign power on Svimohzia in its history.

While the rest of Svimohzia moved forward from Fortnight's Battle and the new order on the island, Meznamish brooded and festered. Its economy plummeted, while Ahznomahn expanded into new markets with Kalamaran merchants and became the new economic power.

The Rise of the New Age (342 C.M. to present)

After Svemahni died in 342 C.M., the throne passed to his nephew Onsar IV, also called Onsar the Merchant. Where his father was brash and foolish, Onsar IV was cautious and wise. Despite 40 years of a poor economic climate, Onsar IV maintained trade with the dwarves and urged merchants to promote the sale of the dwarven metals by virtue of its quality, instead of the lower quality Ahznomahnii goods. Meznamishii and dwarven metalsmiths also focused on producing finished products instead of just selling raw ore. In addition, a good harvest of ivory and seal oil added to their trade. Fortuitously, Kalamar's elite developed a taste for Meznamishii wine, and so Meznam merchants established a small but important foothold in the Kalamaran Empire. Onsar IV also repaired relations with Ozhvinnish and helped finance his part of the Great Coastal Highway that runs along Svimohzia's northern coastline. Alone, each of these deeds may seem insignificant, but when taken as a whole, they helped Meznamish's economy to prosper.

In 354 C.M., Onsar IV sought to make the nation more appealing to foreigners by taking a tolerant stand toward all 43 religions and calling for an open religious council. This council was to meet in Monam-Ahnoz in hopes of improving relations between rival priesthoods, and so Onsar IV invited representatives from all religions (though not all attended). When complete, the Council of Monam-Ahnoz developed a unilat-

THE GREAT COASTAL HIGHWAY

The Great Coastal Highway connects Sehnezhmish in northern Meznamish to Hezmahn, a small Ahznomahnii town on the other side of the isle. Though rough in many places, and often heavily taxed when it crosses into a rival kingdom, it is still the safest way to travel by land along the coast.

eral code of conduct applicable to all religions to usher in a new era of enlightenment and peace. Many of the propositions met with only marginal success, such as fomenting better relationships between the faiths and their communities, agreements to limit the size of a faith in specific areas, and so on, but two propositions met with universal agreement.

The first was the promise of returning slain clerics to their centers of faith for proper burial. The Council of Monam-Ahnoz set a precedent for faiths and showed that even those of differing alignments can work together. Second, the faiths agreed that the Vessels of Man, a secret society dedicated to eradicating all religion in the world, must be destroyed.

When Onsar IV died in his palace, the nation grieved, for his efforts moved Meznamish from the long night of turmoil to the daylight of progress. His state funeral, the largest in Meznamishii history, saw attendance from leaders throughout Svimohzia and many of the nation's trading partners, though Ahznomahn was absent. The coronation of Warven II, the son of Onsar, followed this funeral.

Warven II, who rules to this day, continues the work of his father and tries to restore Meznamish to a position of prominence in Svimohzia. Where Onsar IV was content with the current borders and the status quo, the thought of restoring the former empire consumes the mind of this most recent king. Hence, Warven II established trade agreements and funding to Zazahni warlords to draw them into Meznamish allegiance, while his diplomats work to divide Ozhvinnish into two completely separate states to weaken their military strength, while Meznam spies infiltrate Ahznomahn to restore the ducal seat. What will come of Warven's ambitions, none can say, but many see days of war returning to the land - if not by their own leader, then from a feared hobgoblin threat.

WHO'S WHO IN MEZNAMISH

With the collapse of the empire and the subsequent reduction of its borders, almost all of Meznamish's politics occur in the capital of Monam-Ahnoz. The smaller settlements, towns and villages house other personages, but they focus on local developments, continuing to receive instructions from the capital.

Unless otherwise noted, all entries below feature human characters of Svimohz descent.

Lords of Meznamish

Meznam lords all trace their lineage back to the original loyal followers of Mewzhano. In fact, most of the nobility throughout Svimohzia stems from those who once aided either Mewzhano or Miznoh. As this body is exclusive, advancing one's position to nobility in Meznamish is nearly impossible, and thus the state's nobility is respected, almost deified, in the eyes of their commoners.

KING WARVEN II

Warven (N aristocrat 17) was born to a successful family and, as the son of Onsar IV, learned about power since the time he could walk. Denied nothing, he has a distorted sense of fairness and justice and believes his family owns all of Svimohzia. When he assumed the throne in 371 C.M., he vowed he would ultimately regain what he regards as the land of his heritage. He is prepared to do anything it takes to remain in his current position and become emperor of Svimohzia.

Warven built a façade for himself as a benevolent and peace-loving ruler. In secret, however, he works behind the scenes to establish a massive network that will allow him to take control of the entire island. He consorts with unsavory types for the promise of power, and has dealings with many warlords, such as Desveminh in Ozhvinnish and a host of Zazahni warlords. While not evil, Warven is utterly pragmatic and driven by his desire to rule.

A middle-aged man, Warven has dark skin and short black hair. He wears a trimmed beard and has dark and intelligent eyes. His big and muscular frame is intimidating to all that meet

him or know him well. He appears in public wearing his royal armor and with a large ornate sword always at his side. Though he is a widower, he keeps close company with his consort, Lady Pekara Ragarela, an influential Kalamaran.

Warven lives in his palace in Monam-Ahnoz with his consort, advisors and sons (Prince Warven III and Prince Vurlan).

PRINCE WARVEN III

The firstborn of Warven II, Warven III (N aristocrat 1) is an idiot who passes his days half-aware and in blissful ignorance, having been born without the intellect or grace of his younger brother. To preserve the integrity of the family line, Warven II named his younger son heir, thereby passing over the elder for the far more competent younger child. Still, the king favors his eldest son and spends most of his free time with the fool.

Warven III looks very much like a younger version of his father, though without his shrewd eyes and confidence. The young prince frequently moans and shudders, rocking back and forth, and uttering small yelping noises.

Warven III lives in Monam-Ahnoz with his elder brother and his father.

PRINCE VURLAN

King Warven II has always loved his namesake the most, so it was difficult for him to give up hope that one day his firstborn would be competent enough to take the throne. Only pressure from his advisors and practical demands led him to name Vurlan (CG aristocrat 10) his heir. Vurlan and Warven II were never close, for the king always showed open preference for his eldest son. Even the pronouncement of Vurlan as the heir did nothing to help the estranged father and son repair the rift in their relationship. They rarely speak, except when the king must instruct his heir in the particulars of statecraft, and even then, their meetings are brief and terse.

Vurlan covets the status of his undeserving brother. He wishes to be crown prince and his father's favorite - desires and the ensuing bitterness that perhaps served to widen the familial gap. Vurlan suppresses his anger and resentment that, when his father finally named him as heir, it was not because he was worthy but because he was the only alternative. Since the naming, Vurlan has made plans of his own, identifying those counselors and nobles who have wronged him - the sycophants and other despised court people. When he gains the throne, he plans to make Meznamish a dominant empire, to ensure its place in the modern world. Until then, he is content to watch and learn.

Vurlan is shorter than his father is, but bulkier. He has a weak chin and soft, intelligent eyes. He wears his hair long and sports a short beard. He has a nasty temper but is quick to forgive. Vurlan lives in the King's Palace with the rest of his family, though he spends much of his time in Zha-Ehnsahn, to get away from the intrigues and favoritism.



KING DURMAK GRAMDAL XII

King Gramdal (LN stone dwarf aristocrat 11) is the latest in an ancient family line (his ancestor Gramdal IX brokered peace between the warlike Mewzhano and the dwarves of the Dashahn Mountains). Since the accords between their people, the (mostly highland) dwarves have aided the Meznamis for over 300 years, sacrificing their sons and daughters to human wars, conquering the island, fighting against the monsters of the Vohven, and battling the hobgoblin armies in Fortnight's Battle.

However, dwarves are slower to reproduce than are their neighboring humans, and the major conflicts greatly thinned their population. With the recent escalation, many dwarves are resentful of this exploitation, some going so far as to vow never to raise an axe on behalf of a human again. Others demand payment and a renegotiation of the ancient truce, including a way that would pay for all the dwarven blood spilled in foolish human wars. This is the political climate where Durmak rules.

He struggles to appease his people while also retaining the existing trade relationship with the humans. Personally, he harbors no love for the Meznamis and only sees them as protection against the shadow of the hobgoblin menace and the greedy Ahznomahnii merchants. That said, he still prefers Meznamis to the traitorous Ahznoms and Ozhvins, for he recalls a time when all prospered under the rule of Meznamish. However, he never again intends to commit dwarven lives to another war unless his people are directly threatened.

Durmak is fit but approaching middle age, with nearly chalk-white skin, black hair and a short black beard. He has cold blue eyes and a large frame typical of stone dwarves. He is fond of pipes and always smokes during negotiations. Durmak spends most of his time in his fortress, but occasionally descends to Monam-Ahnoz for business and national holidays.

The Upper Class and Politically Powerful

The characters described below are the most prominent figures in Meznamish, guiding the nation to suit their own interests. Many of these figures reside in Monam-Ahnoz, as it is the largest population center, but a few hatch plots in more remote sections of Meznamish.

PEKARA RAGARELA

King Warven II lost his wife 10 years ago. Since then, he has kept a number of courtesans, but none have enjoyed the prominence and favor of Pekara Ragarela (NG Kalamaran aristocrat 2/expert 3/bard 2/muse 3). The daughter of a lesser count and merchant in Bet Kalamar, her family sent her to Monam-Ahnoz to court the king and seek a union with him to improve their social position. Of course, Warven, knowing her station, would have discounted her if not for her stunning beauty and regal manner. Warven, understanding he could not take her as his royal wife, has kept her as his courtesan.

In the intervening years, she gained influence in Warven's court and is able to persuade merchants, lords and admirals alike

to the king's point of view. While she disagrees with Warven's goal to retake all of Svimohzia, she tries to serve him in whatever way she can.

Pekara wears her long auburn hair up in ringlets, and has inquisitive blue eyes. She is a striking object of desire with most of the capital's nobles, making her very unpopular with many of the ladies. She wears clothes of Kalamaran style and design, as well as Svimohzish garb for dignitaries and important guests.



HIGH SEER HAVA TANSHEN

Monam-Ahnoz features the largest temple dedicated to the True in all of Tellene and, while not the most influential edifice, it is the most impressive. Overseeing the duties of the temple, spreading the message, and working to purify Meznamish is Hava Tanshen (LG cleric 13), High Seer. Reinforcing the city's justice system, she lends support to the militia by offering spells, lending magistrates from her temple to help the watch, or even advising or offering insight to anyone that will help apprehend Monam-Ahnoz's criminals.

When Hava was born, over 40 years ago, it was clear she received the goddess' blessing. Her head of beautiful blond curls and incredible blue eyes impelled her pious parents to immerse her in the Courts of Justice, where she could learn the catechism of their faith. It seemed her parents were not the only ones who believed there was a divine hand in her birth; the Courts of Justice lauded her as a living symbol of Svishozh the True's blessing upon Meznamish. Even in her youth, Hava displayed great wisdom, a deep faith, and a profound understanding of justice. When she turned 16, the church raised her to the rank of magistrate. She excelled in her duties, eradicating

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crime in her district and gathering a large flock of followers to the faith. Thereafter, she enjoyed success after success, until two years ago when the church awarded her the rank of High Seer - the highest and most prestigious position in the church. Though not the head of the entire religion, she represents the Courts of Justice throughout all of Svimohzia.

Truthseeker Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Referee	1
Arbitrator	2
Magistrate	3
Justice	4
Adjudicator	5
Justifier	6
True Seer	7 8
High Seer	9 10

Hava's blessed career was not without difficulty, however, such as when she fell in love with a Justice who served in her parish. Their romance, although hidden, reinforced the might of the church, and filled Hava with a radiant power. Then, her lover vanished, and although he was free to go where he wished, she became concerned. Her concern turned to fear when dark clouds gathered in the skies, the earth shook, and deep cracks suddenly developed in the streets as foul blackened blood bubbled up from the heart of the earth.

Hava, fearing unholy magic, gathered the Truthseekers and scoured the city for the source. Their search took them beneath the city to a vast cavern filled with obscene porcine symbols and a great altar dedicated to the Vicelord. There, they found a congregation gathered in a great orgy of sin where each member subjected the young Justice to amazingly cruel abuses. Though in time to prevent the rising of the Vicelord on Tellene, Hava had not arrived soon enough to save her lover. The Truthseekers shattered the House of Vice, scattering the minions to the winds, though their leader Shoshanoh escaped. Since recovering the broken body of her lover, Hava focuses her efforts on finding the Insulter, growing more obsessed with Shoshanoh's destruction with each passing day.

Hava is something of a curiosity, as she has smooth ebony skin with naturally blond hair and blue eyes. She wears long gold robes hemmed in white, with a white collar and sash and a gold headband. In battle, she dons golden-colored full plate armor embossed with small golden swords and tiny scales.

COLLECTOR SELEVAHN VEZDOR

Monam-Ahnoz is a cosmopolitan city that tolerates many religions, even the evil ones. A notable and influential leader of one of these evil faiths is Selevahn Vezdor (NE cleric 12), priest of Zazimash the Harvester of Souls. Most people fear the Ruler of the Dead, shun his priests and try to protect themselves against his touch. Selevahn, however, is different, because his

theology is unique. He preaches that Zazimash's role it is to oversee mortal death and so must prey upon all - he does not discriminate when doing his duty. Selevahn's innovative message allows the Congregation of the Dead to gain members more readily than other dark religions.

Selevahn was born to a slave in 345 C.M. The product of rape, his stricken mother carried her child out to the Mizohr Woodland and abandoned him there to whatever fate nature deemed appropriate. The frightened and hungry child finally attracted the attention of a half-hobgoblin matron who lived at the very edge of civilization. In a rare act of compassion, she gathered the child to her and raised Selevahn as her own.

Selevahn grew up in poverty, dwelling with other cast-off and destitute peoples living in the shadow of great Monam-Ahnoz. Death was his constant companion, claiming the lives of childhood friends, pets and even his adopted mother. Devastated by his loss, he wandered the woodlands searching for answers until he came upon an ancient shrine overgrown with vines and scattered about with bones. Entering the domed structure, Selevahn felt what he was sure must be the presence of a divinity. He fell to his knees and received an epiphany.

When Selevahn returned from his self-imposed exile, he was changed. He seemed to be flush with power and claimed to be able to kill with a touch. Instead of slaughtering people, however, he spoke words of peace, proclaiming what he believes to be the nature of his fearsome god. He developed a small following and grew in prominence in the region. As his sect increased, he gained respect for his faith and person. Now,

Harvester Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Novitiate	1
Messenger	2
Collector	3
Butcher	4
Malefactor	5
Fiend	6
Hellion	7
Reaper	8
Harvester	9
High Harvester	10

nobles entreat him to pray on their behalf, though Selevahn reminds them that the god of death kills. He serves as an advisor and many respect him throughout the nation. However, it is whispered that a great number of other Harvesters believe Selevahn's teaching to be blasphemous, for his words ignore the deity's evil nature and power over the undead. How this conflict will end remains to be seen.

Selevahn wears the traditional flowing black robes of his priesthood and a malachite pendant denoting his station. He is tall and thin, with light brown skin and short black hair. His eyes are dark and intimidating. He often smells of flowers.

Leaders of the Underworld

As the head of the former empire, it is no wonder Meznamish has a sprawling criminal underworld. The narrow alleys, seedy districts and coastal location foment sinister plots and villainous action. Moreover, with Meznamish's liberal outlook towards religion, the nation draws as many villains as saints, housing a myriad of thieves, smugglers, pirates and other unsavory types.

"RUTHLESS" JYTHEL

Despite Meznamish's opposition to piracy, many coastal cities and towns are popular ports for a cutthroat sailor. Wanted men openly gather in the taverns, swapping news and lies, and testing the mood of the King by listening for rumors of national events. One such pirate is "Ruthless" Jythel (NE Deji barbarian 2/ranger 3/rogue 2/wavemaster 1), who sails the Straits of Svimohzia raiding coastal towns. Jythel is not a friend to the Brolesene Rinwar brothers' pirate organization (see Salt and Sea Dogs: the Pirates of Tellene) nor to Meznamish, for he and his crew prey on kingdom and pirate ships alike, but prefer to raid small towns rather than board other ships.

Jythel committed his first murder when he was 12, killing a fat merchant with an eye for young boys. The young killer took the merchant's gold and fled into the night. The victim's entourage searched all over for the youth, and Jythel soon realized he needed some way to escape, so he stowed away on a Reanaarese sailing ship. Two days after the ship left port, three sailors found the youth in the hold. The sailors hid the boy from the rest of the crew and captain and tormented the youth for their own pleasure. After two weeks of this, Jythel took revenge, murdering not only the three sailors but slaughtering the entire crew in the space of one night. The ship floated adrift for a month, before the Abyss, captained by Dorn Shemmal, came upon the craft. While Jythel was alone aboard ship, he struggled to learn all he could of sailing, so that by the time Shemmal found the youth, Jythel was capable enough to join the crew. When the captain asked young Jythel of the crew's fate, the boy claimed that sea devils crept on board in the night, dragging the sailors down to the cold depths below.

He stayed on the Abyss for five years, honing his skills as a sailor. While a valued member of the crew, the other sailors learned to avoid the young man, for he had a sadistic side to his personality - a cruel streak that suddenly surfaced as a scathing torrent of blasphemous insults or a cold knife in a man's loins. At 17, Jythel left the Abyss to captain his own ship, the Scorn. Hiring a crew of murderers and cutthroats, he left for the warm waters of the Straits of Svimohzia, where he still prowls.

Jythel is a tall, slender man, with long black hair and a thin moustache and beard. His skin is bronzed and scarred. He wears breeches and a white shirt, and wears a cutlass at his side.

ZEBA MASTERA

It is common knowledge that the Golden Alliance is an influential power in Svimohzia, dominating Ahznomahn and with an established hold on Eastern Ozhvinmish's economy. With

their widespread interests, it is no wonder their agents can be found throughout Meznamish. Golden Alliance agents fulfill many roles throughout the nation from dock workers, slave dealers, guards and even lords, but they all report to one person, Zeba Mastera (NE rogue 4/expert 2/bard 1/Alliance merchant 1), a prominent ivory dealer who operates in Sehnehzmish.

The Golden Alliance approached Zeba 15 years ago, after she amassed a considerable fortune trading ivory. She destroyed her competition by undercutting their prices locally and paying her laborers better rates, but then selling the goods for higher prices overseas. Consequently, her faction is the only ivory dealer in northern Meznamish and is said to be the most powerful in all of Svimohzia.

Zeba uses ruthless business practices, with such things appearing in her conversation. She tends to dominate all discussion, using her intellect and natural charm to maneuver the talk in whatever way she desires. She is rarely, if ever, cowed and she fears no lord, merchant or customer.

Zeba is short for a Svimohz and slight of frame, with long, brown hair worn in braids. She has smooth dark skin and deep brown pools for eyes. She wears very fashionable clothing, colorful body wraps and a great deal of jewelry.

SHOSHANOH

Meznamish is tolerant of all religions, allowing each citizen to practice their faith in accordance to their beliefs and customs. Part of the reason for this liberal outlook is Meznamish's brief tyranny under the yoke of the Knights of the Black Pit. After their fall, the nobility vowed never to allow a religion to rule again. Other religions work to remove this developing faith, but with little success, for at the head of the House of Vice is the elusive Shoshanoh (CE cleric 9).

There is little in Svimohzia more depraved than Meznamish's Vicelord. Shoshanoh personifies wickedness and revels in human corruption. When Shoshanoh's mother (a pirate vessel's harlot) died shortly after her birth, the pirates sold the baby into slavery when they docked at Dowond-Brandel. The infant fell into the hands of foul priests of the Vicelord who subjected the child to horrors not fit for human ears. As she grew, she embraced the horrors of the House of Vice and, fully ordained in the dark religion, left Pel Broleson to journey to Ahznomahn. However, along the way, Meznam privateers attacked the ship and killed all on board, except the seductive Shoshanoh, whom they thought would entertain them during the return voyage. Right they were, for the cleric was well-versed in such things, but with each carnal act, she destroyed the soul of her would-be lover, until one day away from the black sands of Meznamish, the sailors fought and killed each other for the right to bed the cleric.

In the confusion, Shoshanoh leapt from the bow of the ship and swam the choppy waters until she emerged safely on shore. While the ship crashed into the rocks and sank beneath the

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waves, Shoshanoh laughed, knowing Zohzsi would claim the pirate souls.

Once in Meznamish, Shoshanoh chose to establish a new House of Vice in the capital, as it was ripe with decadent nobles hungry for diversions. Thus, she built a new following, preying upon the weak wills of the bourgeois, the rapacious merchants and the hedonistic artisans. All who would find pleasure in gluttony, drunkenness, perversions or worse could find satiation with Shoshanoh. With her success came the attention of the good-aligned churches, those religions wary of such foulness on their streets. To destroy them, she kidnapped the High Seer Hava Tanshen's lover, carrying the captive to the secret temple beneath the city. Before the gathered orgy, her flock committed atrocities unimaginable, that destroyed him physically, emotionally and spiritually, all to bring forth the avatar of the Sodomizer of All. Yet, before the ritual was complete, the Cleric of the True and her minions poured into the unholy temple and destroyed all that met their eyes. Shoshanoh fled to her



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dominated servant, Movazh, who hides her still and is helping her rebuild the congregation in Monam-Ahnoz.

Shoshanoh is a stunning woman of exceptional beauty. She is brown-skinned, with blue eyes and, as is the custom of the Vicelords, she shaves her entire body (though she occasionally paints eyebrows on her face). She wears a bronze skullcap and the long brown robe of her faith (open, to reveal her perfect physique beneath).

SUBAR TOTORI

Subar Totori (CE Kalamaran fighter 12) was not always a pirate. Once he sailed the seas as captain of a Kalamaran warship, crushing the empire's enemies, sinking pirates and many privateers. Though having served for a decade, his betters passed him over for admiral too many times, forcing him to continue commanding his little cruiser and preventing him from reaching the destiny he foresaw for himself. Subar decided it was time for a defection. After receiving orders he was to transport his admiral to Bet Kalamar, Subar decided that this man, who failed to realize Subar's worth, would not make it to port. The day after the admiral boarded, Subar stabbed the old sailor to death. Yet, when Subar searched the admiral's body, he discovered his promotion papers tucked away in the old man's satchel.

As the full ramifications of his act sank in, Subar succumbed totally to the clutches of evil. He threw to the sharks any sailor whose loyalty lay more with Kalamar than with himself. With his remaining crew, he sailed away. When news of his betrayal reached Kalamar, a sizeable bounty was placed on the rogue captain's head. Knowing imperial ships were hunting him, Subar turned to the sole port of safety he could think of, seeking refuge with the Captain's Table of Thirteen. After killing one of its members with his bare hands, he gained a seat at the Table, and has earned quite a reputation of cruelty and violence ever since.

Subar is now in Meznamish searching for a new ship's mage. Finding Zha-nehzmish too risky to remain in for long, he docked in Monam-Ahnoz, where he prowls the seedier district to find a wizard more cunning and wicked than the last one (which he brutally drowned in a water barrel for ineptness). Thus far, he has had no takers, strangely, for Meznamish has no shortage of corrupt wizards. It is rumored that Subar may be in Meznamish for another reason, perhaps at the behest of another organization. True or not, since Subar's arrival, talk is spreading about Blue Salamander activities throughout the capital.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Meznamish leaders concentrate their efforts on maintaining border integrity first and foremost. They also direct much attention to Ahznomahn, which emerged the mercantile victor after undercutting the cost of Meznamish goods and bankrupting the parent state in the process.

Though a smaller nation is far easier to manage than a sprawling empire, Meznamish did not adjust to its reduced size for thirty years, continuing to grapple with its fractured and over-large infrastructure. With no need for an enormous army when the extent of the kingdom lay along the coast of a single bay, the leaders reduced the military and thereby cut expenditures, giving the empire greater resources. However, in the years following the collapse, there was much corruption as bureaucrats scrambled to preserve their posts and their funding. Meznamish spent fifty years reorganizing its government to reduce spending and streamline the national process.

Preservation of the culture is another major force in Meznamish's domestic politics. At the height of the empire, Meznamish acquired relics and artifacts from civilizations all across Tellene. Maintaining a cultural superiority required liberal thinking and appropriating funds for the arts and a host of other intellectual pursuits. It is said that the monarchy actually fabricated the whole idea of cultural preservation to justify the huge reduction of its armies and navies. The saved funds paid for special house guards for the noble houses, as well as bribes to Zazahni and Ozhvinmish to achieve a semblance of peace and temporarily safeguard the nation's new borders.

In recent years, Meznamish has rebuilt its defenses, renovated the walls and aqueducts, stored foodstuffs and rebuilt its armed forces. In addition, for now, the nation seems to have quelled the rebellious elements. However, less and less of the cultural preservation fund reaches the educational institutions, as the nation needs more gold for alliances and the military. Government buildings close throughout the nation, while well-trained armies drill in former schoolyards and officials tear down museums for lumber to build new warships. Meznamish still maintains the façade of a cultural center, but it is becoming clear it expects war, and soon.

Status

When Mewzhano crossed the Menamo Hills and sacked the communities of the bay, he set a precedent - conquerors rule. Mewzhano rewarded those who followed him by dividing his lands amongst them. A half a century later, Miznoh did the same, but divided the island among his most loyal generals. Three centuries later, those descendants of the original warriors still rule their lands and estates as the privileged elite.

Aside from the ruling families, there are four major castes in Meznamish. At the bottom are the Nehzrin, or "non-persons." Most of these are slaves purchased from Brolenese slavers, and originate from all over Tellene. A few come from neighboring states, but a sizeable number also originate from the Vohven Jungle. The rest of the Nehzrin are children sold by the poor, or criminals condemned to a set number of years of slavery. Nehzrin perform all of the manual labor, such as road maintenance, dockworkers and laborers for the rice plantations in the Ehniven Marsh and Ivez Estuary. Meznamish has a closed slave system, except when slavery is the sentence for a crime, so those made slaves will be slaves for life. However, a slave's children can gain their freedom on their 18th birthday and become Sohrihz (see below). Slaves account for 12% of Meznamish's population.

The next caste is the Sohrihz, the contributors, who make up the bulk of Meznamish's populace. Sohrihz include the artisans, merchants, craftsmen and all of the other common folk that form the heart of a community. Most Meznamish and adventurers come from this social class. Sohrihz also represent the greatest economic diversity. With Meznamish's reliance on slave labor, there is a job shortage for the unskilled poor. They are an

unattractive alternative for the plantations, for they require payment for their services. On the other hand, the most successful and wealthiest merchant princes (whose coffers rival those of the lords) must still bow to the priests, warriors and nobles occupying the higher levels of society.

The Sohrihz is the most flexible caste, as members can descend to Nehzrin or ascend to the Tahlzid caste, the priests. Only the warrior and noble castes are closed to them. A contributor can fall and become a Nehzrin if convicted of a crime or, if

Meznamishii Castes

Name	Peoples
Nehzrin	Non persons (slaves)
Sohrihz	Contributors
Tahlzid	Priests
Miznoh	Warriors
Svizohr	Loyals (nobles)

too poor to feed his family, sells himself into slavery for food and shelter. Wealthy Sohrihz can place one of their children in a theological institution for advancement into the caste of priests. Placement into these schools is restricted, however, and reserved for only the wealthiest Sohrihz.

Above the contributors is the Tahlzid, the caste of priests. Meznamish does not draw distinctions between faiths, provided there is an established church in the community. Priests have the greatest liberties, being able to speak freely, have access to state buildings and make eye contact with those of the warrior and noble castes. While this social class is prominent in Meznamishii society, a priest cannot personally own land or hold a public office.

The Miznoh caste, the warriors, is an exclusive society, consisting of the families of the original warriors that once supported Mewzhano (or later, Miznoh). However, this is not to say all of Meznamish's soldiers come from this class. In fact, much of the military force is from the Sohrihz caste. The warrior caste is the elite, the knights who own and control small plots of land, and serve one of the elite Svizohr. No person can ascend to this caste, nor be dropped from it, without consent of the king; once a member, always a member.

The highest caste is the Svizohr, the loyal caste, who are the descendants of the great warlords loyal to Mewzhano and Miznoh. These families control of the nation's destiny; for it is from them that kings are crowned. There are only a small number of Svizohr left in Meznamish, for many former lords now live in Ozhvinmish, Zazahni and even Ahznomahn, although there they function only as zurenas or merchant princes. Only by royal decree can a Svizohr be dropped from this elite class, and this only occurs if the monarch finds the loyal to be guilty of a most heinous act of disloyalty or crime.

Svizohr Succession

When Mewzhano founded Meznamish, he intended the throne to fall to his heir. Unfortunately, he never had a legitimate issue, and thus the throne went to Miznoh. Miznoh ruled for his time, but it seemed his line was cursed and died out with Mozvin. Though the succession then went to the charismatic Onsar, the emperor feared future difficulties and so established a system for anointing future emperors. (Although Onsar's system is still the preferred one, exceptions fill Meznamish's history.)

A monarch must name his heir soon after ascending the throne. When a monarch succumbs or abdicates the throne, the title then passes to the aforementioned heir. If a monarch has not had time to name an heir, the throne passes to the monarch's eldest legitimate child. If no legitimate child exists, the throne goes to the eldest known illegitimate child. If the heir is too young to rule, a Svizohr of the closest familial relation serves as steward until the heir's coming of age ceremony, after which the heir gains absolute power. The High Seer in Monam-Ahnoz always adjudicates which Svizohr has the strongest ties to the monarch, should there be any conflict.

Before a new monarch takes the throne, there is a grand ceremony whereby the whole Meznamishii navy appears in Mewzhano Bay. Each ship sports bright green sails that commemorate spring and new life to the throne. Festivals and revelry fill the streets, while the entire nation celebrates. The intended King then enters the Courts of Justice and takes part in an elaborate ritual, wherein the High Seer anoints the king by cutting the King's hands with Miznoh's sword. The king then drips drops of his blood onto the nohr, a sacred meal of seal blubber the Svizohr consume to prove their loyalty. Many believe disloyal Svizohr cannot swallow the nohr.

Svizohr Houses

As one would expect, the Svizohr are dying out. Once there were 36 families but, after three centuries, only 13 remain. When a family dies out, or is dishonored, their king adds the family name to the tombs of Mewzhano, to honor the lost heroes that founded the nation. Still, even with their small numbers, the Svizohr are the most powerful and influential people in the kingdom. They have birthed kings, rallied the nation and kept alive the dream of the first conquerors. Few in Meznamish begrudge their station and all give them the respect they deserve.

The entries for the Svizohr houses defined below are as follows:

Colors: Meznamish's elite do not employ coats of arms, badges or other outward symbols. Instead, the Svizohr use clothing of specific color combinations of some geometrical pattern. Their banners employ the same patterns and their personal guards and warriors don armor painted or dyed with these chosen colors.

Mottos: A relatively recent development only a century or so old, the idea of using mottoes is borrowed from the nations on the main continent. A house presents its motto on the lintel or estate gate and reflects the general temperament of the family. Mottos in Meznamish rarely reflect the current mindset of the Svizohr and instead serve as an ironic statement of what they used to be.

Domain: A Svizohr domain consists of all the family's holdings and estates. Some houses even control a city and are responsible for taxation, maintenance and general rulership.

Interests: This entry defines the house's economic interests and the nature of the house's income.

HOUSE ARHIMVEN

Colors: Black and Red

Motto: "Fidelity For Evermore"

Domain: Narmish (31°0'N, 16°20'W) and the Mizohr Woodlands east and south of the Izhano River (map area 1).

Interests: Iron, lumber, trade, military matters

Head of House: Sanano Arhimven (LG paladin 6) makes up for her blocky face, small broken nose, scars and uneven green eyes with her charismatic personality and charitable nature. A dedicated champion of good, she leads many forays against ogre tribes, moss trolls in the Mizohr Woodlands and the hobgoblins of Ul-Karg.

There is a marked difference, however, between the Sanano on the battlefield and the Sanano ruler of Narmish. At war, she is calm, confident and ruthless. At peace, her charity and optimism are her dominant traits. Though a competent leader of men, she is nervous when not wielding a blade nor astride her faithful steed, and tends towards a nervousness that causes many jokes at her expense.

The matron of House Arhimven upholds order as the highest ideal and principle, and criminals under her rule face the strictest penalties. Interestingly, the real drive behind her vigilance is to satisfy her curiosity. With each new oppressive law, she observes the actions of local criminals, for she believes evil worsens in reaction to goodness and vice versa. What she will do with the information she does not yet know, but she believes she can create stability in an empire if ever it should be reformed.

Supporting Families: Eshmohvim, Ohmdalz, Svowmizh

General Information: House Arhimven is the most ordered of all the houses in service to the king. Descended from a long-line of noble warriors and heroes, Arhimven secured their place in history when Onsar emerged to act as steward in 88 C.M. for the idiot emperor Mozvin. When he ascended the throne, Arhimven's status increased and its heirs enjoyed status, wealth and prosperity – at least, until Fortnight's Battle.

At that time, House Arhimven had extensive holdings in what would become Ahznomahn, with several of their members in Parliament. Though House Arhimven suspected treachery, their Ahznomahnii kin vowed they would forestall secession until Meznamish dealt with the hobgoblin menace. What the Svizohr

in Meznamish did not know, however, was that their extended family had been championing the cause of secession for years. When Ahznomahn sent no troops to aid the beleaguered emperor, House Arhimven accepted a measure of blame (wrongfully or not). Soon, the house adopted a new motto, "Fidelity For Evermore" to pronounce their loyalty to the throne.

Currently, House Arhimven is interested in restoring the empire, if only to gain revenge. They lent the throne enough gold to bribe many merchant princes and to manipulate the Zazahni warlords - urging them to reunite their shattered nation with Meznamish once more. The House also funds privateers to attack slave ships bound for Ul-Karg, though this makes them unpopular with their rivals who support the slave trade.

HOUSE DAHLMOHZ

Colors: Blue and white

Motto: "By virtue and valor I shine, but never burn"

Domain: Zhosnahni (31°20'N, 15°15'W) and the Ivez Estuary (map area 2).

Interests: Rice, slaves, trade

Head of House: Silvehn Dahlmohz (NE expert 3/cleric 4/dread slaver 1) is a short and ugly man. A schemer and a prude, he seems a very unlikely Svizohr, due to his limited stature and awful viewpoints. Silvehn retains his station due to his profitable business ventures and the excellent management of his lands, but even his exceptional governing skills cannot hide his pettiness and grasping nature. Furthermore, he is his own worst enemy, draining his coffers to sate his compulsive buying of slaves. He often spends far too much, simply to acquire rare and exotic beauties for his harem or strong, powerful laborers for his rice paddies.

Silvehn makes no effort to conceal his faith. He worships the Seller of Souls and faces down any opposition to his faith. He watches for those that would supplant him with paranoid efficacy, and is prone to pre-emptive strikes against any that might threaten him or his holdings. Though he is not very bright, his hatred for his fellow man gives him the impetus to commit atrocious and occasionally creative acts of cruelty.

Rice production and the slave trade are key concerns for House Dahlmohz. As the leading agricultural power in Meznamish, it is interesting to note that Dahlmohz' lands feature a disproportionate number of slaves to Sohrihz. If ever there was a slave revolt, Dahlmohz might be ill prepared to suppress it.

Supporting Families: Eshmohvim, Ghanim, Mezhen, Zalden

General Information: Dahlmohz lacks virtue (contrary to the family motto), but they have plenty of courage, and freely lend their support to the throne even though Meznamish has many enemies determined to shed its blood. This quality has always been a part of this house ever since their founding in the service of Miznoh.

After Miznoh's great conquest, he rewarded brave service by granting lands and new Svizohr status to the worthy. House Dahlmohz received the Ivez Estuary, a ripe land for rice production, though the house diminished through the succeeding generations as power provided fulfillment of their vices. Their pragmatic decisions and courage on the battlefield manifested in times of peace as debauchery, enslavement and greed, staining the family name. In time, the family patriarchs embraced an isolationist policy, rarely emerging from their lands to make an appearance at state functions in the capital, or even to vote with the other houses. Though distanced from court politics, they continued to lend aid in times of crisis, either by committing slave soldiers for the wars in the Vohven, volunteering their troops to undertake suicidal attacks against the hobgoblin hosts at Fortnight's Battle and even by raiding Ozhvinnish during Onsar III's brief reign.

Now, House Dahlmohz seeks to establish Zhosnahni as a slave hub for Meznamish by bribing Brolenese slavers to trade inland instead of at the bayside ports, by inviting Zazahni merchants to come first to their town, and so on. It is rumored that House Dahlmohz trades with Ul-Karg, but they claim these rumors are nothing more than unsubstantiated speculation spread by House Arhimven. What is known, however, is that Silvehn Dahlmohz has no legitimate heir, but sired at least dozens of bastards from slave women. The future of this wicked house is uncertain, but if war erupts, Dahlmohz is ready to commit its gold, men and resources to the cause.

HOUSE ESHMOHVIM

Colors: Tan and black

Motto: "First conquerors, never defeated" and "Kingmakers."

Domain: Nezormish (31°45'N, 14°5'W) and northeastern Mewzhano Bay (map area 3).

Interests: Copper, iron and tin

Head of House: Hilano Eshmohvim (N aristocrat 3/fighter 4) personifies the idle rich. Daring and courageous, he craves adventure and travels the hills of his lands searching for mountain cats, ogres and worse. His image, however, does not quite match the bold hero persona he tries to portray, for while he has smooth grace and an easy manner, he is quite a bit overweight with a soft belly hanging over his belt. Worse, he acts the sycophant when around King Warven, laughing at all of his jests and nodding with approval to anything the king says and does. A mere toady to Warven, Hilano lacks respect from his peers, who see him as a foolish youth with no common sense.

Hilano earns his fortune from mining, for his lands produce copper, tin and a little iron that he sells at outrageous prices, even moreso than the dwarves. He is a competent administrator, and could enjoy a substantial popularity, for people tend to like him, except that he overtaxes his lands, which he excuses by blaming his country's smaller population. As he lives in Nezormish, his family hosted meetings of Svizohr throughout

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the nation's history, adding somewhat to Hilano's pompous behavior.

House Eshmohvim craves prominence and status. Their mines are useful to Meznamish's economy, but Hilano's high prices make it a poor alternative to the dwarves'. While Hilano is not the ideal lord for these lands, his son, Hoshivem, is far more perceptive than is his father. When he ascends to the head of the house, Eshmohvim will surely prosper.

Supporting Families: Arhimven, Dahlmohz, Mezhen, Neshnamohn

General Information: Eshmohvim should be far more powerful than it is. It is founded on the birthplace of the Meznamish Empire, with proximity to profitable copper and tin mines. Yet, Eshmohvim is a minor player - overlooked and insignificant.

Historically, Mewzhano gave these lands to Eshmohvim, a younger cousin, because the boy lacked the hardness to destroy the natives in the area. Leaving young Eshmohvim to watch over their first conquest in shame, Mewzhano moved on, wrested the Bay from the peace-loving natives and forged an empire. Eshmohvim remained in disgrace, but soon turned to the conquered people. He rebuilt the town, giving more power into the hands of the natives than was safe, and soon after, the natives rose up against him and seized control of the town until Mewzhano returned and crushed them once more. Thereafter, Eshmohvim lay quiet, handing power to his sons as soon as they came of age.

Since then, House Eshmohvim remained insignificant, content to rule their lands quietly. Hilano wants to improve his House's standing but lacks the cunning to achieve it. Instead, he fawns over the king, playing the fool in a court filled with dangerous men and women. However, he does succeed in diverting attention from his son and house, thus establishing the perfect climate needed for a new generation of Eshmohvim.

HOUSE GHANIM

Colors: White and gold

Motto: "Watching the gates to defend our lands"

Domain: Sehnezhmish (33°50'N, 14°40'W) and northern islands (map area 4).

Interests: Ivory, seal oil and fur

Head of House: The witch of Sehnezhmish, Nomishim Ghanim (NE aristocrat 2/adept 4), is legendary for her decadence and corruption. She trucks with devils and sacrifices virgins to whatever dark power captures her attention at the moment. In general, she is a reprehensible being, spared from death by many a sword only because of her wealth and station. To look at her, none would suspect her occult interests, for she is a thin and attractive young woman with long dark hair and smooth black skin. Nomishim favors clean and comfortable clothing, even if a little inappropriate for her status. On the other hand, those who know her well speak quietly of the truth of her personality - a jealous witch driven by pleasure and

comfort, and spending far too many days intoxicated on Reanaarese wine.

Locals claim that their Svizohr has not always been a force for evil. They strongly believe that her behavioral change is due to the loss of her lover and dearest friend, Sisi, with whom she dabbled in magic charms, trinkets and alchemical concoctions. Then, one day, Nomishin found an ancient scroll purported to summon forth a powerful servant that would see to their wishes. The young women, drunk with power and wine, read the scroll and called forth Koyranix, a foul demon from the netherworld. Instead of serving the girls, it plucked up Sisi and devoured her. Sisi's shrieks drove Nomishin mad, and she fled, leaving the demon to do what it wished. No one knows for certain what became of the demon, but a traveling cleric of The True claims to have dismissed the monster, thereby saving the region.

Since Sisi's death, Nomishin has succumbed to flights of madness. Leaving the administration of her lands to a steward, she lives alone in a tower on a small island north of Meznamish. She emerges only once a month to claim a slave from Sehnezhmish, upon whom she performs some horrific rituals in the quiet of her windswept home. She is the last of her line and her House might very well die with her.

Supporting Families: Dahlmohz

General Information: House Ghanim's deplorable state has not always been so. Once the Ghanims were a well-respected family, coming from a beloved but relatively minor officer who served Mewzhano, and whose son served Miznoh well. Miznoh rewarded their constancy by establishing them as lords and charging them to guard the northern islands that head the Windy Straits.

Throughout the generations, House Ghanim provided support to the rest of the empire by operating the lighthouses that guide ships safely into the Straits, as well as developing trade with the citizens of Pel Brolenon and the Elos Desert. Ghanim's role in developing Meznamish economy cannot be overstated, but is not spectacular.

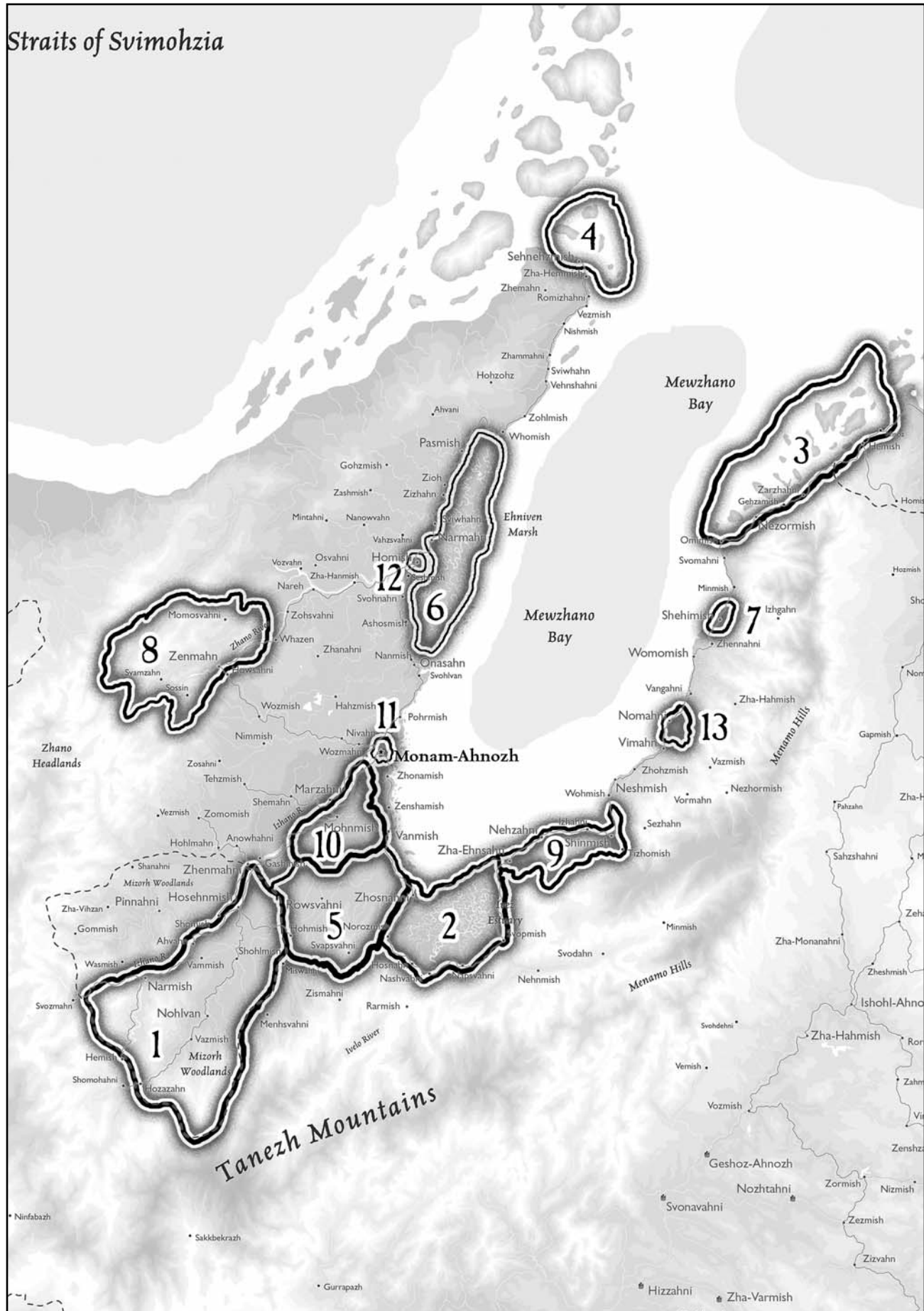
Perhaps it was the boredom or the isolation, but House Ghanim has soured in the latter years, being so distanced from the throne and disillusioned by the empire's fall, as well as losing so much of its former market when the steel trade slowed. Without an effective leader, these lands suffer, being ripe for a neighboring house to seize when its government collapses. At this time, at least three other houses watch and work to erode the matriarch's mind further by supplying her with fine wines and exotic drugs. When the lady is totally destroyed, her lands will be wide open for the strongest to claim.

Near their northern islands is one (33°40'N, 15°15'W) that holds the pirate town of Bluffport (see *Salt and Sea Dogs: the Pirates of Tellene*), though none of House Ghanim are aware of it.

HOUSE MEZHEN

Colors: Yellow and green

Motto: "No shame in honor"



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Domain: Rowsvahni (31°15'N, 15°40'W) and land between Mizohr Woodlands and Zhosnahni (map area 5).

Interests: Iron, lumber, trade

Head of House: House Mezhen is in decline and its patriarch, Iwezhan Mezhen (N aristocrat 4/rogue 3), personifies its fall. Dishonorable, petty and hiding behind the motto and glory of a once great House, Iwezhan is a grasping Svizohr with little regard for whom he steps on to improve his position. Known as a bully and a liar, few lords (even minor ones) pay him the respect to which he believes he is entitled. His bigoted ways and strong opinions about the superiority of the human race make him unpopular with the dwarves, which may explain part of House Mezhen's economic shift towards trade and lumber to supplement the slackened dwarven steel trade.

Iwezhan is not much to look upon, being somewhat short for a Svimohzish, with odd ears that stick straight out beneath his heavy braids. Worse, his social skills are lacking, as he slurs his words and talks with a thick Merchant's Tongue accent - sounding more like an Ahznom than a Meznam. He wears worn, out of style (though once expensive) clothing and lacks sufficient funds to yearly upgrade his wardrobe.

Part of Iwezhan's failure results from being in the shadow of House Arhimven, which is regaining its former prominence. As virtue and order take hold in neighboring lands, Mezhen's estates attract undesirables, thugs, foul priests of evil gods, and worse. With the influx of criminal elements migrating here, the atmosphere of the land has taken on a sinister edge. Iwezhan unknowingly encourages them by having reduced taxes on questionable goods and being very lax about justice.

Supporting Families: Dahlmohz, Eshmohvim, Mizahni, Vlan, Zohrehz

General Information: Decadence defines House Mezhen. They allow many undesirables to live in their lands, from malfesans to escaped slaves to thugs to openly organized criminals. However, with regular purgings of nonhumans, including elves, dwarves and even gnomes, the population is almost entirely human. Like many other Svizohr who began the inexorable slide into decrepitude, they were not always this way. It is only since Fortnight's Battle that House Mezhen became so despicable.

House Mezhen traces its roots back to Mewzhano, where they served the young lord in the wars against the ogres. The first Mezhen lost three of his four sons in service to the monarch and, for his sacrifices, Mewzhano granted the Mezhen family status of Svizohr, where they remained an honorable house until the fall of the empire. In the intervening years, House Mezhen continued to hunt ogres and moss trolls in the Mizohr Woodlands, committed themselves to the first Vohven War and even aided in the overthrow of the mad Miznamvho.

However, all their nobility and honor washed away with onslaught of the hobgoblins from the south. After the battle, the head of the house claimed to have warned King Vhohmi of the massing hobgoblins, but the king's obsession with the pirate problem distracted him from the true threat to the south. House Mezhen, fearful of an invasion, supposedly shouldered

the responsibility for the nation's defense and sent guards into the mountains. When the hobgoblins marched, House Mezhen then have forced the black armies of Ul-Karg to skirt the mountains and move east into Zazahni. The battle was said to have raged for three days before the hobgoblins moved on to find easier entry. The House claimed to have saved the empire's heartland, though they lost nine out of ten men in the battle.

In the following weeks, the kingdom never acknowledged what House Mezhen claimed to be their sacrifice, not even after their forces aided in Fortnight's Battle. Most soldiers believed the hobgoblins never intended to travel over the mountains, considering it an incredible waste of effort and resources. Many people openly stated that House Mezhen merely encountered a splinter group of the hobgoblin army, not the army itself, and the logic of this strengthened the belief in it. Consequently, both honor and loyalty faltered from the House and resentment quickly bloomed in their place. House Mezhen faded from the center of politics and eventually grew to despise the nonhuman races. They now live on depleted lands, festering in their hate.

HOUSE MIZAHNI

Colors: Grey and green

Motto: "Vigilance"

Domain: Narmahn (32°40'N, 15°10'W) and Ehniven Marsh (map area 6).

Interests: Rice, trade, fishing

Head of House: The swamp king, Mazhal Mizahni (NE rogue 8), is a petty lord ruling a dilapidated city on the edges of the Ehniven Marsh. While friendly and positive, he hides his dark obsession with elves. He collects elven artifacts, art, books and anything involving those people, and keeps a stable of elven slaves to learn from them and to pleasure him. One indication of his darker side is the four white claw-marked scars on his face, earned when he tried to force an elven princess to his bed.

Mazhal prefers loose and comfortable silk robes, beneath which he dons light armor to protect him from vengeful slaves or attacks from assassins. A contemptible man, Mazhal has few friends among the Svizohr and fewer allies on his own lands.

Supporting Families: Mezhen, Neshnamohn

General Information: House Mizahni has always had an unsavory reputation. Even while in service to Mewzhano, they slaughtered the greatest number of natives, despoiled their lands and took whatever they wished, all in the name of conquest. Since those dark days, Mazhal has compounded their atrocities with brutal treatment of slaves and peasants, unjust laws and taxation, and rewarding treachery and evil with promotion.

This Svizohr house survives because of their eagerness to go to war, being instrumental in Fortnight's Battle and even giving their lives to the ill-fated invasion of Ozhvinmish. Meznamishii rulers regard them as butchers, little more than tools, but Warven II courts this House ardently, as he prepares the nation for war; he ignores the house's failings in favor of their warriors.

Mazhal leaves the governing of Narmahn and his surrounding lands to his administrators, while he focuses on exploiting the elves he holds in captivity. His obsession allowed

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the Golden Alliance to gain a strong foothold in his lands and, consequently, they have forced out almost all competition. Many believe the Golden Alliance purposely supplies the Svizohr with elven slaves from all over the world to keep him distracted and to ensure their continued presence on his lands.

HOUSE NESHNAMOHN

Colors: Orange and red

Motto: "Vengeance for the fallen"

Domain: Shehimish (32°25'N, 14°5'W; map area 7)

Interests: Shipbuilding, metals, trade

Head of House: Overseeing the shipyards of Shehimish is Zara Neshnamohn (LE ranger 2/aristocrat 3/fighter 2), the mysterious matriarch of the most powerful Svizohr in all Meznamish. Few are certain of Zara's appearance, claiming it frequently changes. Some say she has long auburn hair and the pale skin of a Fhokki, while others vow she has deep black skin and hair. Though the descriptions of this woman vary, one thing unites them all - her unusual yellow eyes.

Only a few know that Zara inherited her eyes from an ancestor who consorted with devils. Since the shameful coupling, House Neshnamohn hid their fiendish heritage from the public. Still, some suspect it, given their ruthless business tactics and the cold, inhumane injustice of their rule. Zara is no exception. She is a hard woman, with an eye for power and a dangerous temper.

Since the breakup of the empire, House Neshnamohn spearheaded a movement to totally wipe out the hobgoblins, sparing none. She has had marginal success, but most are hesitant to declare war on Ul-Karg before the empire is reformed. However, once Ul-Karg falls, she plans to expand her holdings in the conquered lands and begin a huge slave trade to rival Pel Brolenon's.

Supporting Families: Eshmohvim, Mizahni, Vlan, Yahul, Zalden

General Information: House Neshnamohn has always skirted propriety and is predominantly comprised of occultists and mystics who learned to blend sword with magic. Having emerged during Miznoh's conquest, the Neshnamohn proved their value to the young king by buttressing their armies with mysterious allies (perhaps demons and devils, whispered the rumors) to conquer more land than any other group. While the other houses and the dwarves took exception to the use of these strangers, Miznoh (ever the pragmatist) allowed and encouraged their participation, but only in instances where victory would have been too costly in Svimohz lives otherwise.

Following the founding of the empire, Neshnamohn became synonymous with invoking fear, to the point that no other noble family dared cross them or even compete with them. Consequently, Neshnamohn led the nation in shipbuilding and copper and tin mining; always more profitably than their neighbor, House Eshmohvim. To ensure their continued successes, rivals disappeared, troublesome merchants were found murdered and a totalitarian rule gripped their lands.

House Neshnamohn continues its iron hold over the populace, making the lands unpopular for casually visits or immigration, but the attraction of their exquisite trading centers and the easy availability of illegal goods draws those who feel the need for such things.

HOUSE OHMDALZ

Colors: Purple and green

Motto: "Loyalty knows no bounds."

Domain: Zenmahn (32°10'N, 16°10'W) and surrounding towns and cities (map area 8).

Interests: Diplomacy, military training, trade.

Head of House: Anarvin Ohmdalz (LG aristocrat 6) is a hard man not to like. Friendly, personable and dedicated to his country, Anarvin commands respect from his subjects and his peers. Anarvin is a young man in his twenties, with smooth black skin and attractive features. He shaves his head in the old style and wears armor painted in bright colors.

Having inherited his family's prestige in training soldiers, Anarvin holds his honor above any other consideration and views his service to the kingdom as the greatest and most important calling of all. He works to secure the nation's borders and to defining its defense. Though his demeanor is pleasant, he is firm and calculating at heart, with a shrewd eye for excellent military tactics and disciplined training.

Supporting Families: Arhimven, Svowmizh, Yahul, Zohrehz

General Information: The first Ohmdalz was a great military strategist and good friend of Miznoh. Like brothers, the two warriors devised the strategy for conquering the island, sweeping eastward. After Svimohzia fell to Miznoh, the Emperor offered Ohmdalz lands of his own, those that later would become known as Ul-Karg. Not wishing to be so far from his liege, Ohmdalz asked instead for a smaller estate nearer the capital. Miznoh granted the request but also established his long-time friend as the head of Meznamish's armies and as the chief diplomat for the nation.

The Ohmdalz line has kept faith with the throne and has established good trade routes with the nations to the north, developed the infrastructure of the empire and has built up the finest army in all the land. However, when Meznamish collapsed, and the nation diverted its resources from the military, Ohmdalz's influence waned. The kings relied less and less on House Ohmdalz, and began taking control of diplomacy and their trade themselves. Only recently, in the last few years, as Meznamish again began to escalate its military might, did House Ohmdalz emerge as a power again.

HOUSE SVOWMIZH

Colors: Black and gold

Motto: "In the shadows of no man, we stand."

Domain: Zha-Ehnsahn (31°25'N, 14°55'W) and southeast Mewzhano Bay coastline east of House Dahlmohz (map area 9).

Interests: Rice, fishing, rare goods

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Head of House: Once a great warrior, Onsvohn Svowmizh (LG fighter 7) now directs his efforts on his fisheries and on agriculture. This head of House Svowmizh is a large bald man, with dark black skin, a broad chest and huge, well-developed arms. When not working alongside his people in the rice paddies or hauling in the day's catch, he rides his Highland Dancer and patrols the lands with his personal guard to safeguard his people from bandits, thieves and monsters.

Onsvohn trained under House Ohmdalz in his youth and served as a commander in Meznamish's southern guard, but when his father passed away, he left the service to oversee the operation of his House. Unlike other Svizohr, Onsvohn respects his people. He keeps no permanent slaves, finding the practice distasteful. He is by no means a learned man, but is still a competent and just ruler.

House Svowmizh is opposed to engaging in another war. They see the neighboring nations as potential allies, not threats. Onsvohn believes the days of imperial rule is over and openly voices his opinion whenever the Svizohr meet. However, if war arises, he will put aside his misgivings and lead his troops into battle.

Supporting Families: Arhimven, Ohmdalz, Yahul, Zohrehz

General Information: House Svowmizh is not prominent among the Svizohr due to being the "young upstart" member; a House appointed by Vhohmi III in an unprecedented act of hubris, for no other Svizohr had been established since Miznoh. Most of the other houses deeply resent the newcomer, especially one with such radical ideas against war and slavery. Of course, Vhohmi had good reason for appointing a new Svizohr, for Amlehzh Svowmizh took the killing blow from an assassin's poisoned knife after Ozhvinmish seceded. Out of respect, Vhohmi elevated the minor family to this highest rank.

Since their advancement, the heads of House Svowmizh stayed far away from all the politics until recently, when

Onsvohn threatened another war. Most of the other Svizohr despise this small house and the Svowmizh have had to divert much of their resources to protect the family from hired killers. The other houses are unsure about the family's allegiances should the inevitable war ensue.

HOUSE VLAN

Colors: Brown and white

Motto: "Only struggle makes one strong."

Domain: Mohnmish (31°35'N, 15°35'W) and surroundings (map area 10).

Interests: Agriculture, slaves, iron trade

Head of House: House Vlan is notorious in their support of the slave trade with Pel Brolenon, funding the creation of slave auction blocks throughout Meznamish. Rezwhen Vlan (N expert 8), current head of House Vlan, is no different and in many ways even worse than his ancestors. A thin, spiteful man with pinched features and small eyes, Rezwhen is not malicious about his disdain for life, just practical. Rumor has it that he values the dead more than the living, for the dead can work countless hours without need of food or shelter and if they break down, they can be replaced with just the cost of a spell. Rumors say he even animates cadavers to farm his rice paddies.

Rezwhen lacks a humane component in his personality and is cold and unresponsive. Lacking any formal training in magic, he developed what skills he has through trial and error, learning through sheer force of will. Most despise House Vlan for their corrupt and irreverent activities but Vlan does not care. Whenever someone voices a comment about souls and their former bodies, he responds with scathing language, not quite enough to be construed as Vessel of Man propaganda, but close.

Supporting Families: Mezhen, Neshnamohn

General Information: House Vlan is notorious for their dealings in the slave trade. The founder of this House is said to have supplied Miznoh with a legion of slave warriors, each called *meldiz*, or "killing man" (see Chapter Two: Classes and Paths for more on this prestige class). These troops, if they existed, must have proved useful at the front of Miznoh's armies. House Vlan still uses *meldiz* to this day, though in far smaller numbers than ever before.

Some hold that House Vlan is the most evil of the Svizohr, but such assessment is unfair. With their detached interest in rights, and indifference toward greed, lust and a myriad of other evil traits, they are almost amoral entities. Although most people consider exploitation as evil, the Vlan do not see it this way.

Rezwhen's exploits are offensive to most of the Svizohr and to almost all of the Meznamish. If not curbed, King Warven II may be forced to deal with him. The King, however, fears possible repercussions for executing a Svizohr. Vurlan, on the other hand, is already plotting the execution of other Svizohr and the gaining of the throne.

HOUSE YAHUL

Colors: Blue, green and black

Motto: "For the emperor."



Svizohr Houses use colors, not badges or coats of arms.

Domain: Monam-Ahnoz (32°15'N, 15°15'W; map area 11)

Interests: Rice, fishing, trade

Head of House: Admiral Whensow Yahul (CG aristocrat 4/fighter 3) is King Warven II's principal pirate hunter and commander of the Meznamish navy. Whensow comes from a long line of naval commanders and the Yahul House has long been famous for their excellence at sea. However, during the Battle of Zhano Cape, Whensow's ancestor betrayed his nation and sided with the pirates. Though he was killed in this battle, the Yahul name became sullied with the stain of treason. Now, so many years past, not many know that a Yahul betrayed his king; even most of the Yahul family forgot, except Whensow. The admiral has secretly vowed to cleanse his name, restore honor to his family and eradicate the pirates in the Windy Straits.

His zeal and dedication drive him to be thorough to a fault, boarding innocent ships at whim and even going so far as to attack Meznamishii privateers. Some even claim he steals from the vessels he boards. Whether true or not, Whensow is the most hated man in the straits, a status King Warven II encourages.

Standing just less than 5 1/2 feet tall, his height belies his courage and ruthlessness. He has the dark coloring of his fellow Svimohz, though his skin is weathered and cracked from the briny air.

Supporting Families: Neshnamohn, Ohmdalz, Svowmizh

General Information: Founded in the years between Mewzhano and Miznoh, House Yahul is an old and influential House, despite the stain on their family name. Its members enjoy the ear of the monarch and receive favorable treatment from the royal family. Meznamish owes much of its success at sea to this House and its influential and powerful admirals. Recently, though, Whensow Yahul is becoming something of a problem, obsessed as he is with capturing pirates. While King Warven II appreciates the Svizohr's zeal and his past success against legitimate pirates, he is growing weary of the complaints from other Svizohr, and their tales of lost lives and stolen gold.

HOUSE ZALDEN

Colors: Dark green and white

Motto: "Quell the hosts, so that all may live."

Domain: Homish (32°35'N, 15°15'W; map area 12)

Interests: Military, trade, slaves

Head of House: Lazdahn Zalden (LE monk 7) is rumored to be the product of an unscrupulous and grasping Svizohr who agreed to wed a githzerai princess to secure trade with another plane. Lazdahn looks much like a young, light-skinned Svimohz, though his facial features are more angular and his nose is smaller than most. Black serpentine tattoos cover much of his body, and tufts of hair grow out from either side of his chin. He is arrogant and egotistical but also level-headed.

After the death of his father, he focused on making a life for himself and bringing order to his lands. (Whispers say that he simultaneously brings new goods to his mother's otherworldly realm.) He dislikes humans, preferring the company of elves whenever possible. In any event, he distances himself from his

House's people and fellow Svizohr, a trend that earns few friends and fewer supporters.

Supporting Families: Dahlmohz, Neshnamohn

General Information: House Zalden has a history of pushing the limits, negotiating trade with Ozhvinmish after they seceded, and trading with Ahznomahn in secret. Their trading practices infuriate other Svizohr and resulted in many small skirmishes throughout the house's history. Now, with Lazdahn at the head of the house, whose loyalties are said to lie on another plane and who will use citizens as commodities, most Svizohr question House Zalden's motives.

Since Lazdahn's ascent, House Zalden has been quiet in national politics, not even responding to claims of their treason. Lazdahn is, in fact, negotiating trade agreements with Ul-Karg, offering to transport peasants to the hobgoblin people who will serve as their slaves in exchange for raw goods. The other Svizohr suspect something is amiss, but have thus far have no proof.

HOUSE ZOHREHZ

Colors: White

Motto: "Beware the Mountain."

Domain: Nomahni (32°0'N, 14°15'W; map area 13)

Interests: Trade, shipbuilding

Head of House: Dark and beautiful, Sidi Zohrehz (N Sor 6), leads House Zohrehz with a kind of disinterest, for her true interests lie in magic. Sidi has long, straight black hair and angular features with smoldering brown eyes. She is unaware of her beauty, however, for she does not use it to her advantage, relying instead on her keen intellect and infectious personality.

Sidi does not have much interest in ruling, although she does keep a casual eye on her shipyards and receives regular reports from merchants and spies who trade with the Dashan Mountains and Zazahni, respectively. Her magical studies consume much of her time, as she toys with the newest device, or pours over scrolls, or analyzes the composition of the latest potion procured from the Shinmish bazaar. Conversations with the beauty of Meznamish may start with politics or social concerns, but she always manages to turn talk to magical matters, which is quite frustrating to her peers.

Supporting Families: Mezhen, Ohmdalz, Svowmizh

General Information: The Zohrehz House is small for its importance and as it holds an essential role in the trade relationships with Zazahni and the Dashan Mountains, many feel Sidi is not well suited as matriarch of this House. Consequently, many Svizohr, even lesser houses not highlighted here, vie for her hand in marriage so they can gain control over this House. She has rebuffed all such efforts thus far.

Her obsession with magic stems from her family's history as sorcerers, for the first Svizohr was Mewzhano's diviner, who studied the stars for an auspicious day to mount the conquest of what would become Mewzhano Bay. Mewzhano named Zohrehz as a Svizohr and it was to be a tradition for a Zohrehz to serve as advisor to the king. The practice, however, did not

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last long, for Vhohmi II, in 179 C.M., cast out his magician advisor in an act of foolishness because the sorcerer would not summon a demon to serve the monarch.

Since the fall, the Zohrehz family has been content to serve Meznamish as a go-between for the Dashan Mountains, and later, as spies to watch Zazahni and gauge the political climate for an eventual return. The current matriarch does her duty, continuing her service as before, but since she spends so much of her time in study, she fails to report her spies' findings in a timely manner to King Warven II. Advisors have suggested that Warven, or perhaps Vurlan, should take the young matriarch as wife, but Warven is content with his consort and Vurlan says nothing about how he feels.

FOREIGN POLICY

Warven II is convinced of his right to rule a united Svimohzia. His frustration at being blocked from his "destiny" clouds other considerations of foreign policy. However, as Meznamish works to become the dominant force on the island once more, the king also listens for developments in other lands, especially if they may threaten the nation's sovereignty.

The most important outside nation, in the eyes of Meznamish and its nobility, is Ahznomahn. Ahznomahn's successes insult the king while their failures are causes for celebration. The nation's resources fund the monarchist movement in the "Kingless Land," to dislodge the zurenas and restore the Ahznomahnii throne to the exiled heir.

Next are Meznamish's immediate neighbors, Zazahni and Ozhvinmish. Though it is at peace with both nations, Meznamish does not recognize other nations' independence. Instead, the king waits eagerly for them to destabilize, so that he can mount an invasion or attempt economic takeover. Zazahni, a land fraught with civil war and power-hungry warlords, is perhaps the ripest for the taking. Meznamish supplies warlords with gold, food and troops, hoping to conquer either or both nations whenever possible.

Last in importance is the Kingdom of Ul-Karg, south of the Tanezh Mountains. As Ul-Karg continues to develop, organizing into population centers at the expense of countless slaves and laborers, Meznamish grows more nervous to reunite the empire, hoping to stave off the screaming hobgoblins that would remove all humanity from the island.

Foreign Interests

Meznamish maintains a diplomatic presence in both Ozhvinmish and Zazahni, with one embassy each. On the main continent, they have presence in Pel Brolenon, Mendarn and Basir to ensure continued trade and friendly relations, though they have long since closed their embassies there. Meznamish has no diplomatic presence in Ahznomahn or Ul-Karg.

EMBASSY OF ASHOSHANI

It is far too dangerous to send a diplomat to eastern Ozhvinmish, as Meznams are as unpopular there as in

Ahznomahn. Instead, King Warven contents himself with keeping an eye on the Ahznomahn presence in Ashoshani (the capital of western Ozhvinmish). Meznamish also receives information from Ahznomahnii infiltrators that cross the border to spy on Meznamish. They kill about one-third of these spies, subvert another third and dismiss the remainder (tracking their movements as long as possible).

EMBASSY OF SVOMWHI

Given Zazahni's chaotic climate, maintaining an embassy there is difficult, and would not even be possible without the aid of Baron Svemahni (seneschal overseeing the Zazahni city of Svomwhi for Duke Dovizhem III). In sight of the ducal palace, Meznam diplomats meet with the Baron hoping to convince Dovizhem of Meznamish's good intentions. The Duke tolerates the Meznam ambassadors along with the Baron, but his patience is waning, as it seems only a matter of time before the Meznams turn to the nation's other warlords to seize the country by force.

PEL BROLENON

Meznamish has a tempestuous relationship with Pel Brolenon. On the one hand, the two nations are good trading partners. However, they cannot abide the piracy, as Brolenese slavers sometimes prey upon Meznamishii merchant vessels to harvest potential laborers. A Meznamishii ambassador meets with the Grand Mistress of the Whip Yulan Velsin (ruler of Brolenese city Dowond-Brandel) once a month to negotiate trade terms and discuss international interests. As far as Pel Brolenese politics are concerned, Meznamish has no interest in them as long as a regular supply of laborers reaches their shores.

MENDARN

Despite Mendarn's hostility towards Pel Brolenon, Meznamish works with King Aldorn III to protect the Mendarn colony (Vrandol) in western Svimohzia. In addition, Meznamish trades with this country, supplying them with iron, rice and gold. While the relationship is not as lucrative as many of Ahznomahn's trade agreements (see Chapter 5), the relationship between Meznamish and Mendarn proves profitable for both sides.

BASIR

Meznamish recognizes Basir's importance to the economy of Kalamar, as it is a nation rich in spices and herbs, gold, wood and minerals - goods Meznamish lost when the empire fractured into smaller nations. Furthermore, Basir has a powerful navy, one reducing piracy and preventing foreign privateers from openly sacking merchant vessels. While they are not close allies, the nations have an amicable trade relationship and Basir is able to supply their soldiers with Svimohzish steel. Meznamishii agents even fight Ahznomahnii spies under the streets of Bet Urala (Basir's capital). Basir tolerates this behavior, provided none of its citizens is injured. In fact, Basir's Princess Dela prefers it when two nations compete for trade exclusivity as it always ends up to her advantage.

National Opinion on Foreign Affairs

Most Meznams are indifferent to reuniting the empire. Some have long memories of the depredations of the despots and would do whatever they can to avoid a return to the dark days of a corrupt monarchy. However, most Meznams also hate Ahznomahn, and any action to visit revenge on the historic traitors would be regarded with pride and celebration. Too many sons and daughters lost their lives because of Ahznomahnii cowardice. Therefore, while most Meznams couldn't care less if Ozhvinmish and Zazahni pay their taxes to the crown, they would support any effort to destroy Ahznomahn.

Though few care about their Svimohzish cousins on their eastern borders, there is a universal concern about Ul-Karg. Many are afraid of the day the hobgoblins will return, with their foul trumpets announcing their legions, and the pain and suffering that always accompanies such an invasion. Commoners fear an invasion at any time, regardless of the unlikelihood of the hobgoblins traveling over the mountains, as the king calls men and women to serve and train as soldiers. Since Warven II reinvested his gold in the armies and navies, a noticeable pall has settled over the land.

CURRENT EVENTS

Although Warven concentrates his efforts on reuniting all of Svimohzia under one banner, there is a serious threat from Ul-Karg. Scouts claim to spot hobgoblin skirmishers in the Dashahn Mountains and the dwarves report a few raiders. Hobgoblin slavers are whispered to slip into the nation under the cover of night to capture human slaves for their labor camps. On the brink of a major conflict, the king and the majority of the Svizohr have their attention trained elsewhere.

With each day, each treachery and each death, Zazahni slides towards reunification with Meznamish. Warlords, greedy for wealth and comfort, see Meznamish as the means to achieve the coveted position of Duke, or at least that of Svizohr. However, some warlords plan to betray Meznamish once they conquer the shattered nation. Should this occur, Meznamish could likely do nothing about it, for to retaliate would only serve to invite war with Ozhvinmish.

Ozhvinmish presents another problem, mainly because of the kinship between eastern Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn. With each generation, the eastern Ozhvins increase their resentment of Ashoshani rule, glamorizing the merchant life and wealth of Zha-nehzmish. On the other hand, eastern Ozhvinmish would not trade a western ruler for a council of zurenas who know nothing of their culture, and so refuse advances to tighten the ties that would bind the nations more closely. Meanwhile, western Ozhvinmish grows increasingly somber, resenting the abandonment of custom and the values of old. A growing faction in the west sees Meznamish as a means

to right the wrongs of their eastern kin, and do not see unification as a bad thing.

ECONOMY

The backbone of Meznamish's economy is its capacity to export metals and minerals to other nations, and a strong trade relationship with Ozhvinmish and Zazahni. Of course, the most lucrative import is iron mined from the Tanezh Mountains, which is then made into steel or other iron products. Products crafted of dwarven iron or steel are also prized.

Trade Routes

As has been the case for centuries, the dwarves supply ore to human tradesmen, in exchange for foodstuffs and oil. This trading occurs at one of three major routes, along roadways or footpaths through swamp and wood to reach the mountains. The home guard protects these roads.

Another important trade route is with Zazahni. Traveling eastward over the Menamo Hills are faint paths, where Meznamishii merchants carry goods to trade in the highlands with the many scattered communities throughout the land. Wise merchants, of course, frequently change their paths to avoid brigands and raiders.

Sea routes are more common than land routes, however. The Brolenese stop first in various Meznamish ports, risking their cargo for the higher prices the Svizohr pay for additional laborers. After Meznamish, the Brolenese move on to other ports along the northern coast before ending their run in Kalamar.

The Merchant's Run trade route passes through the Straits of Svimohzia, where cloth, tin, silver, wheat and other commodities travel from Mendarn to Kalamar. However, merchants going to and from Mendarn also stop in Meznamish to swap news and stories, in addition to buying prized goods hard to come by in Svimohzia. Meznamish merchants occasionally bring in their sweet wines by joining the merchant fleets of Merchant's Run, but often sail alone, braving Ahznomahnii privateers to turn a good profit in Basir.

Meznamish imports most of its ore from the semi-autonomous dwarves in the Tanezh Mountains (and a little from the Dashahn Mountains), giving them the trading power to purchase slaves from Pel Brolenon, and other commodities from Mendarn and the Merchant's Run. The nation also imports wood for construction and shipbuilding from Ozhvinmish and Zazahni, despite the nation's own woodlands. Cloth, wool, red wine and tubers are all sought and bring a good price in Meznamishii marketplaces.

To the dwarves, Meznamish's principal trading partners, they offer seafood, oil made from whale blubber, and ivory. Supplementing their harvests from the sea, they also sell rice, though they do not have enough surpluses to also sell this abroad. Meznamish exports gold, copper and tin to the conti-

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ment, using the funds generated there to bring foodstuffs and cloth to the island. Above all, Meznamish is an arms dealer - trading dwarven-forged weaponry and armor throughout the world. Chances are that a Basiran guard wears a breastplate crafted by a dwarven artisan, just as a Mendarn soldier may carry a Meznamishii longsword.

Taxation

With the spike in the cost of metals, Meznamish's higher prices diminish their hold on the iron and steel market. To keep foreign merchants trading, Meznamish reduced tariffs on exports, but retained their former levels on import tariffs. Consequently, it shouldered much of the economic burden over to the Meznamishii dealers rather than onto foreign investors. Currently, the nation taxes exports at a rate of 3% of the total worth of the goods, and imports at a rate of 2%.

Meznamishii Taxes	
Caste	Annual Tax
Nehzrin	1 cp per person in family
Sohrihz	10% of property value
Tahlzid	5% of church holdings
Miznoh	No tax
Svizohr	2% of net worth
King	No tax

In addition to the import/export tariffs, citizens must pay an annual tax, assessed and collected by a tax collector during the month of Reaping. Taxes, however, are status-based. In most instances, the value of the citizen's holdings determines the tax. Citizens have up to three months to pay their taxes in full; if they do not, they are incarcerated.

Currency

Meznamish, like all Svimohzish countries, uses slightly rounded, eight-sided coinage minted with copper, silver, gold and platinum. The silver, gold and platinum are of equivalent size and weight, while the copper is slightly larger. The copper Sealcoin is imprinted with the image of a haphazard pile of natural resources (gems, metals, seals and whales), while the silver Vhohm, gold Miznor and platinum Mewzhor coins display the visages of past leaders (Vhohmi, Miznoh and Mewzhanon, respectively). The reverse of each coin displays a merchant ship in dock, above the words "I [name of coin]" in Svimohzish.



EXCHANGE RATES

Meznamish accepts coins from Pel Brolenon at no exchange rate. Coins from Basir, however, are exchanged for 10% more of their list worth. For example, 100 Arus exchanged in Meznamish brings 110 Miznor. Ozhvinmish and Zazahni coins

are exchanged for a 10% penalty, thus 100 Ozhvin Champions are worth 90 Miznor. All other currencies are exchanged for a 5% penalty, including Ahznomahnii coinage.

LANGUAGES

The people of Meznamish speak Svimohzish, though many other languages are present in the bazaars and marketplaces throughout the land. Snippets of Brandobian, particularly the Mendarn and Brolenese dialects, can be heard throughout northern Meznamish, with occasional Gnome, Dwarven and even Hobgoblin (Kargi) among those who live near or on the southern mountains. Those who live near the Mizohr Woodlands may even use some Halfling in their speech, but Low Elven is extremely rare among non-elves. Bringing them all together is Merchant's Tongue, a second language for all people dealing in commerce.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Mewzhanon's conquest of the Bay all but destroyed the culture of the natives settled there. With the warlord came a violent and rigid culture, one of caste and class, with little mobility between the stations. In the lower castes, contributors and non-people are tools for the Svizohr and warrior class to use, levied for raids or war. They expect casualties, but care little about them, for no cost is too high for victory.

Behind the façade of conquest, Meznamish place family matters above government and nation. One owes fealty first to ones own family and then the state. Monarchs wed Svizohr to ensure loyalty to the state as well as to the family.

Social behavior is important in Meznamish where social class determines etiquette. Nehzrin, non-persons, may only meet the eyes of others of their caste, and must affect a posture of bowed subservience to all of their betters. When meeting someone from a higher caste, the person of lower caste must bow, with the depth of the bow determined by how many echelons higher the person stands. The individual of a higher case need do nothing. For example, a Nehzrin who meets a Tahlzid of the True must make a quarter bow and avert his eyes throughout the conversation, while the Tahlzid makes no action and may or may not look at the non-person. If neither party knew the others station, both would close eyes and make a quarter bow with arms open, and during their talk, neither would look at the other.

Meznamish grant foreigners some leeway when first moving through Meznamishii society, greeting them as if they did not know their station. However, after the guest has been in the area for some time, they are expected to conform to all of the customs upheld by the state. If someone fails to show the proper respect (such as an upstart individual either from a lower caste or a long-standing foreigner who refuses to learn the ways of Meznamish), the offended party metes justice as they see fit. For minor errors, a simple apology suffices, but for the lower classes, a public flogging, a challenge or even death can result. Visitors would do well to learn the customs of the land.

Another social concern is the issue of touching. Individuals of the warrior caste and below may touch each other without committing a social error, and so many Meznams brush up against each other in the busy avenues of a marketplace without fear. However, those of the lesser castes refrain from touching a member of the Svizohr caste or the monarch without permission, for to do so is punishable by death. Commoners and slaves avoid the Svizohr, for if their daughter or son catches the eye of Svizohr elite and is taken as a lover, they are likely to be killed when the Svizohr tires of them.

Style of Dress

Meznamish identifies social standing by a person's attire, so it is important to dress appropriately at all times. While a certain style of dress is not mandatory, custom considers it bad form to confuse the lesser castes, which must act appropriately or face severe punishment.

Nehzrin wear plain white or tan tunics and black breeches, regardless of gender. The plainness of their garb both protects attractive members of this caste from depredations from their betters, but also helps to identify their status. All Nehzrin wear a thin cord of silk, dyed in the colors of their owners, around their necks and wrists to mark their status. This caste's garb is universal throughout the land. Some masters allow Nehzrin to wear flowers in their hair or pinned to their shirts, but usually only during special occasions or festivals. Nehzrin almost never wear shoes.

Next are the Sohrihz, who have the luxury of being able to wear whatever they wish, in accordance with their livelihood – provided they do not masquerade as one of a higher caste. Typical styles of clothing change with the current fashions, but overall, Sohrihz prefer comfortable and loose clothing with intricate patterns. Wool is uncommon, because of its prohibitive cost and warmth. Most use cotton or linen instead. For shoes, the Sohrihz wear elevated sandals to keep their feet out of the mud.

The Tahlzid, the priests, wear the vestments of their faith when in public. If they opt not to do so, they are treated as Sohrihz, and are subject to the same social restrictions as the lesser caste. This restriction to their attire results in a variety of styles, for Meznamish is liberal towards the nature of religions in its streets.

Warriors have the most stringent requirements as to their style of dress, for their clothing must indicate their status as warriors. Meznamishii warriors in service to the great houses always wear some piece of armor (or their full regalia) indicating their past deeds or service to that house. For comfort, most wear something simple, such as a chainmail coif or other helmet, a single gauntlet on their off hand, or a small shield, all painted in the colors of the Svizohr House they serve. Those of the lower houses wear cord armor, and may not wear armor except during times of war. When in their homes, they wear long silk or linen robes dyed in the same colors of their armor.

The Svizohr, the king and his family all wear whatever clothing they wish, although most don the colors of their house. Fashions change with the season, so clothing styles (such as the cut of a cloak or the length of a dress) change. Their clothing bears the intricate dyes and weaving common among Svimohz.

The clothing of the king and his family always contains the color of the throne (black) in some form or another. They favor headdress, sashes, houpelands and cotehardies, usually with fur facings. On formal occasions, the king wears the iron crown of Meznamish, a thick band of dull gray iron encrusted with rubies. Legend says dwarven hands created this crown as a gift for Mewzhano.

Festivals

Meznamish usually has at least one small festival a month to commemorate the birthday of a king, a break from labor or to raise the spirits of the populace. These minor revels last for only a portion of the day, and always in the afternoon after the morning's work. Though not as extravagant as Ahznomahn's festivals, Meznamish does decorate the city and the people always appreciate the events. What follows are the major festivals of Meznamish, organized by season, region and caste.

SEASONAL FESTIVALS

Festival of Mewzhano: Commemorating the founding of Meznamish, people all over Meznamish come out to celebrate this weeklong revel, which occurs the third week of Declarations. In the weeks leading up to the event, people carve or craft Mewzhano dolls from wood, ivory or rope. The dolls must contain a hollow so the families may place their fingernail clippings or locks of hair inside, to show they give themselves to the great first king of Meznamish. The festival begins with a reenactment of Mewzhano's last battle, where actors dress as ogres and take their mock fight throughout the streets. In wealthier locations, the town or city captures a ogre and set it loose in the streets while onlookers watch from their balconies or windows as the city champions "kill" the ogre. Afterwards, the nation supplies a token portion of food and drink for its citizens. Consequently, the festival of Mewzhano is costly; in times of financial strain, the nation reduces the amount of decoration and supplies no free food.

New Autumn: Seemingly a cathartic day of purging one's vices and sins, this day is actually an unholy day for the House of Vice. Citizens are free to take to the streets, and do whatever they want, as they desire. Criminal acts sometimes occur in the seedier areas, but for the most part, people wishing to take part realize there are no laws, no restrictions and no social propriety. Those who object to such behavior, stay indoors. Almost all of the churches protest, before the festival's start, but many people ignore them. High Seer Hava Tanshen currently leads a coalition of priests to persuade King Warven II to ban the holiday.

New Trade: This festival, taking place the last week of Famine, marks the beginning of a new trading season.

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Merchants display their wares early, presenting their goods at a discounted price so the people of the nation can have first choice. In addition, social customs are relaxed, and commoners can rub shoulders with Svizohr and warriors. Except in times of financial strain, there is always plenty of food and drink - supplied by the Parish of the Prolific Coin to encourage spending.

REGIONAL FESTIVALS

Soul Harvest: During Veshemo's harvest moon, on the autumnal equinox, the people of Monam-Ahnozh emerge from their homes to march the paths of the dead. All citizens wear black robes, painting their faces white and black to appear as skulls. At dusk, the people move through the streets, or remain in their homes and throw sweet meats onto the street, led by the local high cleric of Zazimash the Harvester of Souls. At the end of the march, the cleric sacrifices a monkey to the dark god. This festival is new, and so far contained to the nation's capital. Other faiths are leery about the growing presence of this new faith, regardless of the peaceful intent the city's Harvesters claim.

Whale Mating: In northern Meznamish, the whales swim through the Straits of Svimohzia to mate just off shore. Pods of whales come to frolic and play in the warm waters, and the whalers and fisher folk join in the celebration when they arrive, for it means another good harvest. The people of those lands are careful to hunt whales far from the Bay, because the scent of blood would surely keep the whales from mating there. The festival lasts for about three days, with carousing and dancing in the streets.

CASTE FESTIVALS

Fortnight's Battle: This holiday celebrates the deeds of the Meznamishii warriors that fell in the fateful war with Ul-Karg. No other citizens save warriors may participate, for it is a matter of honor. The warriors march through the streets of Monam-Ahnozh, and nearly the entire nation seems to turn out for this event, but no one makes a sound on pain of death. During the march of the fallen, as Meznamish call it, Monam-Ahnozh is quiet, as if the entire city holds its breath in honor of those who died.

Miznoh's Birthday: All citizens mark Miznoh's birthday as a special day in Meznamish, though few Meznamish celebrate the day. Instead, this is a day of suffering for the slaves, who are withheld food and water to remind them of their sorry state under the might of Meznamish. This is an unpopular custom throughout the nation, and only the hardest lords still practice it, to the derisive mutterings of their peers.

Other Customs

These customs celebrate the passage of time in one way or another: birth, coming of age, marriage and death.

BIRTH CUSTOMS

Meznamishii view family as the most important of values, so when a child is born, it is an event of celebration and excitement. It is customary in Svimohzia for expecting mothers to invoke blessings from the goddesses Moimivam the Holy Mother, Shanano the Pure One and Movam the Fate Scribe to aid in the birthing process. As elsewhere in Svimohzia, mothers in Meznamish make these prayers often. The birth of a child draws the immediate family to the home for visitation and blessings, and such visitors always come bearing gifts. For families of

lower (not slave) castes, the local Svizohr sends a small token to the family to congratulate them on the newest addition. Thereafter, the parents take the child to the church of the deity they venerate the most.

Among the Nehzrin, childbirth is tragic and unlucky, for children born to slaves become slaves themselves. Furthermore, the danger is great to the mother as slaves often lack the resources to have a proper bed for the birth of the child. Consequently, the birth

rate among Meznamishii slaves is low, and some mothers abort the child rather than expose it to a life of hardship and suffering.

At the other end of the social spectrum, when a child is born to a Svizohr House, the midwife brands the child with the house name or symbol to prevent any disputes about the child's origins. Thought cruel by outsiders, it is the custom of this land. This is called the Touch of Movam.

COMING OF AGE

Men and women in Meznamish are equal in the eyes of the state, so the coming of age ceremony is the same for adolescents of either gender. As with many customs, the coming of age ceremonies vary by caste, but the key difference lies in the expense behind the event. There is a coming of age ceremony for all castes, except the Nehzrin slave caste.

On the 15th anniversary of the child's birth, the parents host a celebration whereby they recognize the child as an adult. Coming of age ceremonies consist of the gathered family and those of family business associates. At these events, there is always a representative of the local Svizohr (or of the King, if the child is a Svizohr) and a cleric of the family's faith to oversee the event. Although this is an important step for the child, announcing to the world that he or she is now an adult and citizen, it is more of an opportunity to find a suitable match in marriage.

BOWING

As noted in the text, all who meet someone from a higher caste must bow, with the depth of the bow determined by how many echelons higher the other is. The chart below defines these differences.

Caste Rank	Action
Equal	Meet eyes
One degree higher	Incline head
Two degrees higher	One quarter bow
Three degrees higher	One half bow
Four degrees higher	Three quarter bow
Five degrees higher	Kneel and bow
Unknown station	Close eyes, one quarter bow with arms spread wide

The warrior caste, on the other hand, has a different ceremony to commemorate the advancement of a child. At the age of 15, the child leaves home, wandering the mountains for three days in search of a foe to slay - be it a goblin, hobgoblin, wolf or other creature. This trial is dangerous, but the warriors train their children well. Refusal to take part in the rite of passage is a disgrace. The family casts the child out of their home, condemning him to become a Sohrihz. If the child does not succeed in defeating a foe, they must return to their home for more training. After another year, the adolescent returns to the wilds to find a suitable opponent. If he cannot find an opponent, the adolescent returns home yet again, to spend another year in training. On their 17th birthday, they must then leave home for the final time, not to return until they achieve victory against an opponent in single combat. The family acknowledges success when the child returns with the head of the foe, marking the birth of the new warrior.

MARRIAGE

Marriage in Meznamish is less of a financial opportunity than to encourage unity in the land. Given the nation's strict social classes, wedding outside of one's caste is nearly impossible, although there are dozens of romantic stories of a Svizohr falling in love with a Sohrihz, or a slave elevated to the warrior caste through marriage. In practice, however, such occurrences are rare. Most families remain in the same caste for generations.

Meznams arrange all marriages, though love and personal interest often override the needs of the family. The parents select a number of husbands for their daughter from several eligible bachelors, after which the daughters then initiate the process of gaining suitors by approaching these single men on the streets, sending letters, or visiting their homes. Such meetings are always chaste and serve as an opportunity for the woman to make her interests known. A courtship lasts for one year, at which time the young woman must decide which of her suitors to marry; and then the date is set. The father of the bride pays a dowry to the husband, the terms of which are negotiated during the year of courtship.

Divorce is uncommon in Meznamish, for both parties involved have at least a year to determine whether they wish to marry. However, there are times when divorce is prudent. Instances of infidelity, abuse or exploitation on either side constitute grounds for divorce. The two parties must go to the Hall of Oaths and rescind their vows, whereupon a Sister or Brother of Industry strikes the offending party who brought ruin to the marriage.

Among the Svizohr, the courtship process is similar. However, given the shrinking numbers of the great houses, the Svizohr are turning to smaller estates to keep their bloodlines healthy. The difference between the Svizohr and lesser families are that the weaker house must play suitor to the stronger, regardless of gender. In instances where the houses are equally influential, the man and woman meet on sacred ground to

spend time together and learn of each other. The most coveted marriage is to the King or a prince, with many houses fighting each other to place their daughter as a suitor.

DEATH CUSTOMS

Life has always been cheap in Meznamish, as it would be in any nation founded on war and conquest. What Meznams do with their corpses varies depending on the caste. The lords of the Nehzrin allow the slaves whatever death custom they uphold, so among the slaves, there are funerary rituals blending burial customs from many lands. At worst, harsh masters boil the corpses and render them into a meal for feeding the living slaves. This practice is illegal, but it does happen.

The higher castes have their own ways with handling the dead. The priest caste usually inters the remains of dead clerics in consecrated (or desecrated) mausoleums beneath the church - protecting the faith in death as they did in life.

The warrior caste, when possible, embalms the corpse, filling the body with scented oils, herbs and treasures. The closest ten friends of the deceased each take a finger to keep as a good luck charm. A cleric (of the warrior's particular faith) oversees the ritual of embalming, blessing the spirit as it travels to the afterlife. On the battlefield, when it is not possible to give a proper burial, the survivors gather the dead into a pile, burning the bodies. Should there be any captives, one in ten is thrown into the pyre - feeding the dead one final meal before passing into the afterlife.

Before dispatching Sohrihz dead, each member of the family inscribes a likeness of the dead one's face or write the deceased's name on expensive slips of paper, which they keep with their dowry or personal treasures. Once this stage is complete, they light several pyres, only one of which contains the body of the deceased. The other pyres are meant as distractions, for tradition says that the fires distract the demons just long enough to let the body's soul escape. Those not burning the dead condemn the spirit to an eternity of suffering. Though burning the dead is customary, harkening back to pagan ways, a priest of the deceased's faith presides over the ceremony.

FOOD AND DRINK

Like the rest of Svimohzia (see Chapter One: Races and Regions), quality of food varies with income. Slaves make do with rice, fish and sometimes meal provided by their masters, mixed with ground rice to make a type of flatbread. The middle class enjoys a wider sampling of foods, and is able to afford spices and seasonings. The wealthiest citizens enjoy the widest fare, sampling delicacies from all over Tellene.

Rozele is a plant cultivated throughout western Svimohzia. There are two types of rozele, red and green, though both are grown for their pleasant sour taste. The red- and pink-blossomed rozele is occasionally grown for decorative use as well. Both types can be cooked to make a sauce, or boiled to

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make tea. Meznamish also have a taste for coffee, their version of which is strong and smoky.

Another popular dish in Meznamish is *shozhan*, a shrimp and rice dish. Natives peel the shrimp, baste it with milk, pepper and honey, and then wrap them in damp seaweed before burying them in the coals of a banked fire. In a large skillet, they heat peanut oil and sauté green onions, peppers and garlic until soft. Then they add the cooked shrimp to the skillet, and season the dish with crushed red pepper to taste. Once complete, they serve the dish over brown rice seasoned with shredded mutton. *Shozhan* is best with a sweet wine or beer.

Architecture

The Dashahn Mountains shield Meznamish from the worst of the seasonal storms plaguing the rest of the island, allowing Meznamish artisans some latitude in the nature of their designs and construction. On the other hand, the ocean currents in Mewzhano Bay can be deadly. Therefore, to keep the ports intact, architects build piers out of stone, mined by the neighboring dwarves and fitted by slave labor.

One thing most visitors note about Meznamish is its majesty. Once, Meznamish was a strong and influential empire. Consequently, the capital, Monam-Ahnoz, features buildings of all heights, with paved streets, an extensive aqueduct system and sewers. In the smaller towns, much of the majesty is lost, giving way to more practical structures, such as narrow cobbled streets and rows of houses, while a single castle or manor house dominates the center.

In even smaller communities, the houses may be wooden with sod roofs. Few of these buildings have glass windows, using shutters instead. Roads connecting these communities

are second-rate at best, for many are washed away by the mild but all-too-frequent rains.

Recreation

Meznamish's fierce warlike heritage explains why blood sport is the preferred entertainment in Meznamish. In these blood sports, opponents fight one or more humans, animals or monsters in fierce combat to the death, inside a shallow pit or depression known as a *suzrehl* ("killing hole"). *Suzrehls* exist mostly in large cities, but can sometimes be found in outlying towns and villages. This is not to say the nation is one of bloodthirsty killers, however, for Meznamish enjoy other pursuits such as cliff diving, castles, jousts and other diversions.

Castles: A less dangerous diversion than facing an opponent in a killing hole is "castles," a game similar to chess but with more pieces and a larger, two-level board. Each side of the board has a raised section representing the side's castle. The object of the game is to capture the other castle. The game employs many of the standard pieces, such as the knight, king and queen, but introduces several new ones. These include: the noble, moving like a bishop; the priest, siding with the player with the most pieces remaining; and thieves, who can infiltrate and conquer the castle, evading capture by all but knights and other thieves.

Cliff Diving: Meznamish has several ideal locations for those wishing to show their bravery by leaping from the cliffs into the churning waters of Mewzhano Bay. There are many accidents, as the divers drop to the shallows below, but those surviving are heroes in the eyes of their peers.

MAJOR RELIGIONS

Meznamish owes its liberal stance on religion to the Council of Monam-Ahnoz (see the History section, above). Since the Council, Meznamish has maintained an open policy towards all religions, even the evil ones. The established faiths are not as forgiving, of course, waging a secret war against the heretics and driving the unholy from the city as they can.

Church of the Night's Beauty

Though not a major religion in the capital or even the major towns, the Shimmering One has her greatest following in the rural countryside, among the Sohrihz and those who value beauty. The Church has small chapels and shrines throughout the countryside, often little more than a ring of stones around a pool of water. In the capital, the temple stands in the shadow of the Road of Kings and the museums featuring the nation's treasures. Among the rustics, worship surpasses the influence of the Home Foundation and covens gather to pay homage to their goddess on clear nights. It is theorized the spread of this faith is a result of the elves that live in the Mizohr Woodlands south of the capital, but no proof is overtly evident.



The Founder's Creation

The Founder's Creation has congregations throughout the major towns in Meznamish. Identifiable for their red brick construction and the telltale red-robed priests, they are something of a regular sight. Like many other civilized realms, the Builders of Law influenced the creation of the state, and now serve as artisans, explaining the capital's breathtaking architecture and commitment to structural beauty.

Builders of Law sometimes accompany the watch on their patrols, meting justice to those that commit wrongs and bring chaos to the lands. The Founders are said to have a greater presence in Meznamish than anywhere else in Svimohzia. The congregations in Monam-Ahnoz, believe they are near the first temple of the Upholder, rumored to lie somewhere within the Vohven Jungle. The Founder's Creation is gathering the resources necessary to mount a pilgrimage - if they can locate it.

The Hall of Oaths

The largest known temple to the True rests in Monam-Ahnoz. It is said that when Mewzhano founded Monam-Ahnoz, he consulted with the Builders of Law for the city's structure, but retained a Keeper of the Word to assist in defining his legal system. Some evidence of this exists in old legal volumes and some of the first laws. Mewzhano was not a very religious man, and his actions in taking the bay suggest an adherence to his own views rather than those of the Hall of Oaths.

Allied with the smaller and less influential Courts of Justice, the Hall works to reform the slave system in Meznamish, force out the corruption of the House of Vice and eradicate the Congregation of the Dead. Unfortunately, their dispersion prevents them from forming a cohesive force and they face corruption and crime through many of the smaller settlements.

The Home Foundation

Compared to the other good faiths in Meznamish, the Home Foundation is rather small, perhaps because they communicate with Grandfather Razhan in Zha-nehzmish for instruction and have lost much of their former influence. The Home Foundation does not focus on orphans as it does in Ahznomahn, instead working to be a constant presence in the lives of Meznamish by overseeing marriages, helping citizens build new homes, repair damages and doing what they can to knit the community together. Warven II suspects a Brother of Industry is a secret agent for the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, but is uncertain of his (or her) identity.

House of Vice

The House of Vice is a source of never ending frustration for all good (and many neutral) clerics in Meznamish. With each eradicated nest of Vicelords, another cult emerges elsewhere. It is not hard to explain why, for the Master of Depravity is a favorite god of the idle, the decadent and the wealthy. The

Ravisher's temples exist underground or in brothels, where one can satisfy any desire. King Warven II is putting pressure on the Svizohr to root out the religion, but he is meeting with little success. Symbols of the Master of Depravity appear as graffiti in conspicuous places.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Meznamish, for all its culture, is still a place where violence and warfare are the first solutions to problems. It is a place of sharp social class differences, of cruelty and fear. However, it is also an educated land, with a solid justice system, honor, nobility and heroism. Yet, Meznamish has its fair share of secret societies struggling either for dominance in the market places, for the hearts and minds of slaves, or to overthrow the nation and supplant it with a theocratic regime to strike terror in all that behold them. Below is a survey of the major secret societies at work within Meznamish. Pirates of the Straits of Svimohzia, a common underground threat frequenting port towns throughout Meznamish, are further detailed in *Salt and Sea Dogs: the Pirates of Tellene*.

Brotherhood of the Broken Chain

It was only a matter of time before the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain would turn to Meznamish after their successes in Mendarn, Vrandol and Ul-Karg. While they have yet to organize, a few agents have infiltrated the nation, focusing on the remote villages, which have fewer slaves. Some of these agents sell themselves into slavery to establish credibility with the other slaves and speak to them about a slave rebellion. So far, they have not freed many slaves, but as knowledge of the slaveholders' crimes spread, such as supporting cannibalism to



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reduce feeding costs, the organization commits more of its resources to the effort.

Activities: The Broken Chain infiltrate slave rings to gather information such as numbers, routes and leaders. Armed with this information, their agents strike against the slavers and their caravans, liberating the captives. In some cases, they plant agents as slaves to work from within, fomenting unrest and urging the other slaves to rise up. Only in the direst circumstances does the Brotherhood buy slaves from slaveholders, and even then, to liberate important figures or their own agents in the organization.

Short-term goals: The Brotherhood is in the process of identifying the major trade routes and the most corrupt slavers first. They are not yet ready to take armed action, as they are already committed to breaking Ul-Karg and Vrandol from the practice. For now, they are content to free a few slaves when they can, and spread hope among those willing to listen.

Long-term goals: Slavery is wrong and it is the duty of all to stop it, regardless of the cost. The Brotherhood is committed to ending slavery throughout Tellene, toppling governments, using unsavory tactics like blackmail, assassination and theft to achieve these ends. Meznamish is just one-step on the road to liberation. When the nation gives up the practice, the Brotherhood will then turn to the next nation and start all over again.

Locations of greatest activity: The Brotherhood has cells scattered throughout rural Meznamish.

Location of headquarters: Agents of the Broken Chain are said to meet in a hidden camp within the Whisvomi Forest.

The Golden Alliance

The Blue Salamanders are slowly eliminating all Golden Alliance leaders centered in Monam-Ahnozh and intend to spread to the outlying communities, once the rest of the agents there are in hand. The surviving Golden Alliance members are losing ground with the recent developments, and are grappling with what to do in the face of their deadly adversary. Zeba Mastera (see "Who's Who in Meznamish," above) is currently the highest-ranking member of the Golden Alliance in Meznamish, and communicates with a Jewel (prominent Golden Alliance member) in Ahznomahn for her orders.

Activities: The Golden Alliance strives to control all mercantile activity, assuming greater control over the government. It buys out smaller guilds and merchant houses to remove competition. Most of its resources focus on developing new Alliance members.

Short-term goals: In the short-term, the Golden Alliance wants to survive. To do so, they must mount an aggressive campaign against the Blue Salamanders. Unfortunately, the Salamanders often kill Golden Alliance agents when they sneak into the country, so assistance must come from other ports.

Long-term plans: The Golden Alliance wants the same thing as the Blue Salamanders - a united Svimohzia. Where they differ is on who should be in charge. The Golden Alliance

strongly supports Ahznomahn, but have designs on the other nations as well. By developing Svowmahni, the Golden Alliance creates a fierce economic competition between Ahznom and Ozhvin merchants, and exposes the backwater regions to modern ideas and systems. Furthermore, the Golden Alliance wants Eastern Ozhvinmish to secede from Western Ozhvinmish. However, they also desire war between the nation states, forcing Eastern Ozhvinmish to turn to Ahznomahn for aid. At the parliament's behest, Ahznomahn would lend troops and gold, but at a high interest rate, bankrupting the country and forcing the independent nation to join Ahznomahn for protection. The combined economic might between Eastern Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn would be enough to crush Western Ozhvinmish and Meznamish, whereupon Zazahni would join the new Confederacy out of fear, leaving only the hobgoblins as a threat. Even these may not be a huge problem, for the Golden Alliance has agents working there as well.

Locations of greatest activity: The Golden Alliance has agents in marketplaces throughout Meznamish.

Location of headquarters: Zeba Mastera has complete control over the ivory trade in Sehnezhmish. As she is the highest-ranking Alliance member left, Sehnezhmish houses the local headquarters of the Alliance by default, though even they receive their instructions from Zha-nehzmish.

Knights of the Black Pit

The Knights of the Black Pit dedicate themselves to smothering the world in total darkness. A Darkknight named Amar Swomveh (LE cleric 5) leads a small coven of clerics spearheading the triumphant return of Zhanvim, the Ruler of the Night.

Activities: The Knights of the Black Pit prepare for the Time of the Void by training recruits to fight and survive in total darkness. When not training, they creep into isolated farmsteads and drag the inhabitants to their foul altars in the woods to sacrifice them to Blacksoul. They also kidnap children and blind them, corrupting their minds and promising a return of their vision through service to the Ruler of the Night. The Knights also prey upon other clerics, killing them as they can.

Short-term goals: The Knights seek recruits, for the greater their numbers, the greater chances for success. They employ hit-and-run tactics in Meznamish, hoping to instill fear in the hearts of the government and the people.

Long-term goals: The Knights of the Black Pit want to regain control over Meznamish, for doing so would be a great step in destroying the Assembly of Light. Once they seize Meznamish, they hope to eventually turn and take the island.

Locations of greatest activity: The Knights of the Black Pit operate in small groups throughout Svimohzia.

Location of headquarters: It is said a large group of Knights of the Black Pit headquarter beneath the Tanezh Mountains, where their recruits undergo a strict training regimen.

Secret Network of the Blue Salamander

The Secret Network of the Blue Salamander has never before expressed an interest in Meznamish, being focused on the larger nations. However, signs of the organization's presence can be spotted in the city, evidenced by the inexplicable corpses showing up in sewers, warning signs to members of small thieves' guilds and the like. King Warven II suspects the Blue Salamanders, but he keeps his suspicions to himself, using those same thieves who reported the activity. What he does know is that the activity all started when a certain pirate arrived in Monam-Ahnoz. He is not sure if the pirate is still there, or even his name, for they found the informant's mutilated corpse in front of the palace the night before he was to report.

Activities: The Blue Salamanders keep a low profile, but their arrogance and confidence leads them to rash outbursts of violence, alerting the king. Sowing the seeds of fear in the monarch is what they do not want, for they want King Warven II to succeed in reuniting Meznamish. Instead, they wage a quiet war with the Golden Alliance, preventing them from gaining too strong of a foothold in the city, whereby they could influence the King and prevent his war effort. The Blue Salamanders use assassination, bribery, blackmail, kidnapping and other crimes to achieve their goals.

Short-term goals: The Golden Alliance is a major threat to their plans, and so they concern themselves with removing those citizens on the Alliance's payroll. They also seek to destroy Monam-Ahnoz's thieves' guilds. Though not heavily organized, their loose arrangement provides the necessary infrastructure for the Blue Salamanders to take over. The Blue Salamanders use Subar Totori (the defector from the Kalamaran Imperial Navy, and one of the captains from the Captain's Table of Thirteen) to gather information about Monam-Ahnoz's underworld - such as the identities and schedules of smugglers, killers and other scum for recruitment or removal, as warranted.

Long-term goals: King Warven II must reunite Meznamish. After he conquers Ahznomahn, and the states in-between, the Blue Salamanders hope to subvert the king and use him as a puppet ruler to launch a major offensive against Kalamar. Of course, the Blue Salamanders plan to aid the king in his efforts for conquest, even so far as to fund and perhaps offer open support against Ul-Karg.

Locations of greatest activity: The Blue Salamanders operate heavily in Monam-Ahnoz.

Location of headquarters: There is no official headquarters for the Blue Salamanders in Meznamish, yet. All orders come from merchant vessels hailing from Basir.

POPULATION CENTERS

Meznamish's major population centers cluster around Mewzhano Bay and the Izhano River. Some small settlements may also be found in the Menamo Hills, where farmers and miners of human, dwarven, halfling and gnomish creed live and

work. Deep within the Dashahn Mountains is a vast stone dwarf kingdom, while most of the upper mountain dwarf citadels now occupied by gnome and human miners. A dense population of mountain dwarves now exists in the Tanezh Mountains, mining new veins of iron.

The center of commerce for almost all coastal or river communities is along the waterways. One of the first structures established are the docks to allow ships to make port and unload goods. Along rivers, these docks are wooden, but many of the towns along the bay have stone piers to resist the destructive high waves hammering the shores.

The government center tends to be in, naturally, the center of the community. In smaller towns, fortified houses serve as government offices, while larger towns feature small keeps or castles depending on the wealth. The Svizohr commanding the city controls the town's center and surrounds the family's lands with a low wall or hedges.

Each caste favors a separate section of town, and those of a lower caste cannot enter higher caste neighborhoods without permission; guards restrict travel between neighboring districts. Structures within the community vary depending on the geographical location and the caste occupying the territory.

Though the town's Svizohr commands from the center, she often has estates on the community's outskirts. These walled compounds are elegant, beautiful, and stand as a constant reminder of their privilege. Surrounding these estates are the fields or rice paddies worked by their slaves, who live in primitive huts and shelters on the opposite side of the fields.

In large cities, such as Monam-Ahnoz, the warrior caste favor large buildings (or several smaller ones) with interior open-air gardens and quiet places for contemplation and practice. In smaller towns, the warrior caste may have small compounds of their own, similar to those of the Svizohr – but on a much smaller scale.

The Tahlzid priest caste lives in small buildings attached or adjacent to their temples. This caste has their own district, but unlike other districts, anyone can enter to worship in the temples. As it is filled with churches of often-exquisite artisan-ship, the Tahlzid district may rival the Svizohr.

The remaining two castes, contributor and slave alike, live in their own districts and neighborhoods. Near the shore, these homes and businesses are stone, with wooden or slate roofs. Inland, sod and thatch may replace wooden shingles – though wealthy Sohrihz sometimes use tin shingles. Row houses forming a maze of narrow alleys and side streets make the district cramped. Beyond the community, fields or rice paddies extend for some distance.

Walls of stone, with wooden watchtowers, protect all large towns and cities. A local militia patrols the walls and gates night and day, though in smaller towns, they are supported by Svizohr House Guard and Miznoh soldiers.

Monam-Ahnoz

Population: 88,500 (approximately 10,000 of which are slaves of mixed races, and 2,000 are mountain or hill dwarves).

A Closer Look: Sitting at the edge of Mewzhano Bay, Monam-Ahnoz (31°50'N, 15°25'W) is a beautiful city of spires, towers, homes and shops. Several major thoroughfares crisscross the city, each lined with the objects of the nation's conquest. These range from lizardfolk territorial markings from the Mewhi Marsh to malachite sarcophagi from the Dashahn Mountains, and even limestone statues from the Mez-Vowmi. Walking the streets of the city, one can identify the nation's wars and conflicts, its failures and successes and mark its growth by the trophies left in full view. All citizens, regardless of their station, respect these objects as they represent their heritage and culture, and look on their beauty or hideousness with pride and respect.

Three roadways and one rocky-sided waterway offer access to the city. The Road of Kings passes through the city, traveling from the west gate, circling the palatial estates and exiting through east gate. To the south, Mewzhano Road provides entry into the heart of the city.

Surrounding the entire city is the Harbor Wall, a 20-foot-tall, 15 feet thick wall of granite with regular watchtowers spaced along its length (though the walls of these are only 5 feet thick). Stone gargoyles leer down from their perches, surrounded by rusting iron spikes that leave red stains on the mortar below. Each watchtower rises 30 feet tall, and has a single iron door granting access from the interior of the city. A given watchtower can house ten men, and all ten guards can make ranged attacks from within using arrow slits or from atop the crenelated battlement. Monam-Ahnoz keeps one soldier in each tower at all times.

Where the Road of Kings passes through the Harbor Wall, ten guards (LN warrior 1) control the influx of visitors into the city by collecting a gate tax: 3 cp per person and 1 cp per animal. Gathered around these gates one may also find a myriad of religious advocates, as well as clustered groups of urchins ready for hire as guides through the splendor of the old city.

The guards close the western and eastern gates about half an hour after sunset. To the south, the city closes the southern gate shortly after noon. This is a symbol of the king's commitment to defense, as this gate faces the direction of Ul-Karg. However, it is more of a frustrating obstacle than an appreciated symbol. All three gates are iron and embossed with the image of Miznoh holding his hand palm outwards as if to bar entry.

All of the buildings facing the streets are exquisite examples of Meznamishii and dwarven artisanship, with intricate detail and statuary decorating the fronts of their stone structures. Each has narrow shuttered windows overlooking the streets below. These streets are clean, for Meznamish has an elaborate sewer system draining into the Izvano River and out into the Bay beyond. Therefore, while the city does not have the pervasive odor of human waste as many other cities do, the river is

polluted - clogged with trash, excrement and the occasional corpse.

Behind the façade, the ancient buildings affect a shabby appearance - worn, old and, in many cases, dilapidated. The further one travels through the maze of houses and shops, the worse it gets, with the poor living in the heart of those closeted areas, hidden from view by the wealthier middle class.

Three ports occupy the northern edge of the city, and ships dock there year round, regardless of the Bay's conditions. The Harbor Wall protects much of the city from the bay's 12-foot-tall tides, but the harbors are still far more dangerous than the rest of the city, due to unrestricted visitors. The watch makes token rounds through this area, but rarely arrests anyone for criminal behavior. Brothels, taverns and general stores fill the waterfront in the western docks.

The eastern docks, however, house the city's shipyards, where lumber extracted from the Mizohr Woodlands arrives for the waiting workers. In addition, Meznamish's navy headquarters here, launching all of their ships from this port. Over 1,000 sailor and officers reside in the city, many from the warrior caste.

An interior wall separates the Svizohr and the King from the rest of the population. It is from here many minarets and spires overlook the city. The Palace Wall sits at the foot of a low rise where the government buildings stand. Here, visiting Svizohr and lesser nobles live.

Small arenas also pepper the city. The walls of these open-air killing floors are decorated with bas-reliefs of warriors battling terrible beasts. Nearby are slave quarters, pens and the barracks for the free gladiators.

Slaves in service to the state have quarters throughout the city, in long low buildings akin to barracks. Guards transport them to their work sites, whether they repair the roads, clear clogs in sewer lines, or serve as laborers at the shipyards; there is never a shortage of work for these condemned souls. Slaves in the city wear the traditional dress of their station.

Those of the contributor caste live throughout the city; the higher their station within the caste, the closer to the main thoroughfares they live. The warrior caste lives in the northeast portion of the city, near the docks, or within site of the many barracks near the outer walls. Those dwarves living in the city have a small section of town they like to call their own, while the temples and shrines of the priest caste cover nearly an entire city block.

Government: King Warven II rules from a sprawling palace covering more than four acres in the middle of the city. The main entrance, which leads to the oldest part of the complex, is the Tower of Justice and contains the king's court. More information on the king can be found above, in the section entitled "Who's Who in Meznamish."

Economy: Monam-Ahnoz is the strongest trading power in the nation. Almost all trade occurs at the docks, but only during daylight hours - to avoid the unsavory elements that emerge

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after dark. Most of the goods sold are metalwork objects like weaponry and armor, but also utensils, art objects and jewelry. Supplementing the metal trade are merchants selling oils, ivory and other art objects.

Trade between the Meznams and nearby gnome and dwarf clans has been steady for generations, and Meznamish maintains a good trade relationship with their eastern neighbors Zazahni and Ozhvinmish. Seal fur, oil from their fat, and tools made of bone and ivory are lucrative and abundant products that come from the adjacent Mewzghano Bay. The mountains provide mineral wealth and valuable ores. Even some reclusive elves of the Mizohr Woodlands may occasionally come to the city to sell handcrafted wooden objects, fruit and magical trinkets.

Despite the less-than-ideal harbor, Monam-Ahnoz is traded with numerous distant nations and ports - primarily the Kalamarans, Brandobians and towns of Whimdol Bay. The diversity of trade gives the city resistance to bad harvest or ill will from a single market.

Military: Monam-Ahnoz is the heart of the kingdom and so is the best protected of all the communities. A mere 1,000 heavy footmen have barracks scattered through the city, almost half of those in the entire nation, while 400 light cavalry stable their mounts just outside the city's outer wall. Of course, King Warven II's effort to rebuild the nation's military means that this number does not include soldiers in training. Meznamish has done well to hide the actual numbers of soldiers from their neighbors, but rumor suggests five times this number are in scattered training camps all over the land.

The city is also headquarters for Meznamish's navy, only 1,200 sailors and rowers. While they have an influential voice in the nation's political structure, King Warven II keeps them at arm's length, wanting to avoid another fiasco like the Battle of Zhano Cape. On the other hand, Warven appeases the admirals, for he needs them to protect the nation if his troops march to war.

Sowiven Dahmlar is typical of naval officers. He is cocky, clever and eager to accept a dare. However, his confidence is easy to understand once a person has stood on the deck of his ship. Bringing a vessel into or out of the dangerous Mewzghano Bay, with its 12-foot-tall tides and rocky sides, is a daunting task. Cautious captains find themselves red-faced as their ship sits high and dry when the tide ebbs if they are timid or unsure when it is time to sail.

Temples: As mentioned before, the city houses the largest (although not the most important) known temple to The True, a huge marble building with six marble statues in a line outside its doors. Other faiths also have impressive churches in the city. Of the evil faiths, the Congregation of the Dead has the largest temple, because Collector Selevahn Vezdor has altered the faith's message to come across as neutral rather than evil (more on Selevahn can be found in "Who's Who in Meznamish" above).

The House of Vice and the Courts of Justice are feuding, as are their leaders (High Seer Hava Tanshen and Vicelord Shoshanoh, respectively). More information on this can be found in "Who's Who in Meznamish" above, and "Mages and Sages," immediately below. Shoshanoh's head is worth 5,000 gold pieces in the eyes of the local courts (and 10,000 to High Seer Hava).



Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish

Mages and Sages: Monam-Ahnoz's focus on culture and learning makes the city attractive to scholars and sages, though not to the degree of the University of Zha (in distant Ahznomahn). Archeologists, antiquarians and other intelligentsia all have a place in the city, and readily accept work from enterprising sponsors. Though there are educated individuals in almost any school of knowledge, ancient history is the common specialty.

Wizards are rare, and sorcerers almost unheard of. Arcane spellcasters stand outside Meznamish's accepted castes, and many do not know what to do with them. Such individuals retain the status of their family's caste; spellcasting slaves are rare as they are usually born as slaves, and have no ability to train in the arcane arts. The warrior caste sees wizards as shameful, and children who show an aptitude in magic are encouraged to redouble their efforts at military training. Consequently, most wizards come from the Svizohr or Sohrihz castes.

Perhaps the most notorious spellcaster is Movazh (LE wizard 13), a once-great wizard who succumbed to his lusts and is now a thrall to Shoshanoh, the local head of the Vicelords. Born Ilthin Dorbren, his father was an expatriate Brandobian and rising merchant, and his mother a Meznam witch and seductress that introduced her only child to occult studies and pagan beliefs. In time, Ilthin gained entry to the University of Zha, hiding himself and his heritage with the few spells he had learned from his mother, and learned the fundamentals of Illusion and other schools of magic. Graduating from the academy, he returned to Monam-Ahnoz under the name of Movazh, hoping to make a life for himself as a teacher of illusionary magic.

His fledgling school attracted pranksters, rogues and ruffians, but they paid well, thus affording Movazh a comfortable lifestyle. (Unknowingly, Movazh has educated some of the worst assassins in the nation.) In time, his little college attracted the attention of Shoshanoh, a cleric of the Vicelord, who sought to expand her skills by studying arcane magic. What she found was a pliable young man who could not see the repercussions of his actions.

Shoshanoh enrolled in the school, but made a poor student. However, her beauty drew Movazh to her, and the attraction was obvious. Shoshanoh knew she could never become a skilled illusionist, and concluded she would use Movazh instead. Seducing the young wizard, she awakened new vistas of pleasure within him. In time, their relationship passed beyond the illicit into the obscene, and then into the depraved. After only a short time, Movazh's heart belonged to the Vicelord.

When High Seer Hava sacked the subterranean temple to the Vicelord, Shoshanoh ran to Movazh for help. Utterly in her thrall, Movazh hid her in the city, using his magic to thwart Hava from rooting out the fugitive priestess. While Movazh commits more and more of his resources to hiding the cleric, Shoshanoh works to rebuild her foul temple, and the House of Vice grows throughout the nation's capital. Movazh also presented

Shoshanoh with a brilliant robe that allows its wearer to alter self three times per day and change self up to six times per day.

An albino, Movazh is in his early thirties, with extremely pale skin and a mouth full of brown and rotting teeth. He hides his frightful appearance with spells, allowing him to move in the city without attracting unwanted attention. Still, he cannot abide the brightness of the sun and rarely emerges from his modest tower during the day.

Underworld: Monam-Ahnoz has a thriving underworld, though it is less organized than in other cities. The criminal elements come primarily from ex-slaves, disgraced nobles, down-on-their luck contributors and foreigners. Home to four small and lean thieves' guilds, one assassin's guild and a beggar's union, the seedy underside of the city is a dangerous place. Fortunately, few guilds are significant enough to be a threat to the city's stability, and their differences prevent them from unifying. Many thieves and rogues of all sorts are content simply to commit brazen crimes at night and then speculate loudly in the morning about "that crazy pirate," Subar Totori (see "Who's Who in Meznamish" above).

King Warven II has a good relationship with the Red Fists and the Watchers, two small guilds of little consequence. The former is a coven of assassins and the later a group of street thieves holed up beneath the city. He uses them as spies and informants to gauge the city's temper, but he is growing concerned, for many of his spies are turning up dead.

In addition to the normal criminals common to a city, Monam-Ahnoz has its fair share of pirates who come to port under the guise of normal merchant vessels, easily infiltrating the city because of the lax port security. With them come organizations like the Blue Salamanders, the Golden Alliance and others that struggle for dominance in the city's black market.

Sometimes, individuals have a significant impact on the underworld political climate without taking an active part. Allowing a wanted criminal to hide in the basement may allow the villain to evade capture and continue his nefarious ways. For example, loaning gold to a friend that kidnaps children for slavery, or aiding in the defense of a street urchin who murdered a guard for his coin purse, all allow the seedy side of Meznamish to thrive.

Interesting Sites: One of the many interesting displays along the Road of Kings has an unnatural aura about it, and people give it a wide berth. It is a large obsidian disk with a hollow center, about 3 feet in diameter and mounted on a basalt slab. Nobody knows where it is from or when it was erected, but all avoid it when they walk. On certain nights, voices seem to echo from the hollow spot, and though many claim to know what it says, each story is different.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the danger, the rocky cliffs west of the city are popular diving places for swimming in the Mewzhanoh Bay. On any clear day, hundreds of young men and women seeking to prove their courage dive up to 75 feet into the waters that at low tide are less than two fathoms. Accidents

happen often, and more purposeful injuries occur when two young clerics of the Confuser of Ways join the group to incite fights.

Special Notes: Much of the city's religious tolerance and influence stems from the Council of Monam-Ahnozh that took place in 354 C.M. Here, the priests of 23 different religions convened to come to terms with their role in the world and establish rules of conduct between the faiths (see the History section, in the Rise of the New Age (342 C.M. to present), above). While the meeting had marginal success, it set a precedent for religious tolerance in Meznamish. In the center of the intersection between Church Street and the Road of Kings is a small marble obelisk, where the names of all of the faiths present at the council stand written. This is a place of power, drawing commoners from all over the city to pray to the gods and receive a blessing.

Homish

Population: 2,927 Svimohz, 585 of which are slaves.

At a Glance: Before the Zhano river drains into Ehniven Marsh, it first passes through Homish (32°35'N, 15°15'W), a large town and center for a bustling slave trade. The land around Homish is flat, though to the west one can find the foothills of the Zhano Headlands.

Homish is a well-fortified town, with recent improvements sparked by the transition of power from the elder Zalden to the younger. Forest green and white pennants ripple in the light breeze atop the battlements of House Zalden's fortress. Spreading out from the town's center are blocks of streets in a grid pattern. The roads are cobbled, but in poor repair, with structures of wood and stone as is common in Meznamish. Riverboats come from inland to trade in Homish, where they hire caravans to carry their goods to Narmahn, Pasmish and Sehnezhmish. Homish sees travelers from many parts of northern Meznamish, and foreign slavers who travel to Homish for the express purpose of dealing in flesh to the greedy Svizohr.

Government: House Zalden rules Homish. Always a grasping family, they have fallen from favor with the emergence of Lazdahn Zalden (see "Svizohr Houses," above). Zalden, the current Svizohr cares nothing for his people, seeing them as little more than tools to use and tax.

Economy: Homish is a slave trade hub for northern Meznamish, a place where minor nobles or those with a need for labor come to purchase flesh. Part of their success in this end is the Zalden family's continued interest in this market, having been one of the biggest supporters of the slave trade since their founding. Business has slowed somewhat for, while Zalden still buys an inordinate number of slaves, they resell them to discrete buyers headed south.

Military: King Warven II maintains a small garrison of several dozen light cavalry in Homish as a base of operations for patrols in the north. Among those soldiers, however, are spies; hoping to uncover whatever corruption is at work in Homish. Thwarting

the King's efforts are House Zalden's ten private warriors, who in turn have ten to fifteen loyal soldiers under them. Overall, Zalden has about 130 loyal soldiers in their service.

Temples: Once Lazdahn Zalden assumed control over his family, there was a new and noticeable hostility towards the local religions. The Overlord and the Old Man both have a strong presence in Homish and, despite the inhospitable climate, the Parish of the Prolific Coin has an office facing the town marketplace.

Mages and Sages: To maintain the secrecy of his plans, Lazdahn banned arcane magic in Homish, and offers a flat 50 gp reward to informants of practitioners of criminal magic. Those caught are quietly brought before the Svizohr's advisor, Kalmus the Hooded (NE tiefling wizard 14), who cuts their fingers from their hands and their tongues from their mouths. Most believe Kalmus himself is merely a warlock of great power, but are also too afraid to voice their suspicions.

Underworld: Anar Mezhran (NG rogue 3) is an instigator for the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, and pretends to be an ivory dealer from the north. He watches the slaves and tracks the movements of those purchased by the Svizohr. He has noticed that many of the slaves vanish in the Zalden castle, never seen again, while a few go to the struggling rice paddies at the marsh's edges. He suspects that the rest go to masked dealers who come in the night, keeping away from the roads so that few notice them.

Interesting Sites: In Zalden's castle courtyard, there is an unusual freestanding arch covered with eldritch runes. At night, so it is said, strange lights appear from within the castle, with rumblings of thunder and inhuman screams.

Special Notes: Homish's people live in fear. On the surface, Homish functions as any other town of its size, but mysterious strangers have taken up residence, entire families are missing while the remainder grow afraid for their lives.

Narmish

Population: 2,969 mostly Svimohz inhabitants, with approximately 500 gnomes, a handful of elves and 350 slaves of assorted races.

At a Glance: Situated within the Mizohr Woodlands, where streams from the Dashahn Mountains converge to form the Izhano River, one can find Narmish (31°0'N, 16°20'W). This peaceful town incorporates some elven design, for the city stands on the ruins of an old elven community conquered during Mewzhano's invasion. Lumber mills stand on the shore of the northern bank, while woodcutter camps form a tent city beyond the town walls.

Government: House Arhimven (see "Svizohr Houses" above) rules the town from an extensive estate situated on the Sizahn Spur, a narrow ridge extending out from the Dashahn Mountains. Sanano enforces a restrictive society, with harsh punishments for minor infractions. Six loyal members of the

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Miznoh caste support her rule within the town itself, using their warriors for peacekeeping and law enforcement.

Economy: Once the center of Meznamish's iron trade with the dwarves, Narmish has moved towards the lumber industry in recent years. While much of the city's income comes from the woodland, Narmish also serves as an export center for trade with Zazahni. Merchants from all over Meznamish send their goods to trade caravans making overland journeys to the fractured land.

Military: Six families of the Miznoh caste reside in Narmish and enjoy the fruits of their station for the Svizohr indulges their excesses. In exchange for their service, the Miznoh field cavalry to patrol the surrounding lands. Commoners regard them with fear.

Temples: The Courts of Justice are the principle religious institution in Narmish, and are located in the heart of the town. Much the church's success comes from its role as a court, for criminals face Arbitrator Soval Whomsvi (LG cleric 4), who listens to their case. Most people brought before the courts (those not punished by the Miznoh caste) receive a fair trial, and many receive mercy - something not said of the House Arhimven's warriors

Mages and Sages: Khalzor (N wizard 4) is an enigmatic little wizard that claims training by Folnester, the cruel wizard of Brandobia. While his claims have weight with the common folk, anyone with a wide range of knowledge knows that Folnester's death was reported long ago. Khalzor sometimes serves as an advisor to Sanano, but even she tires of what she believes are his lies and delusions.

Underworld: Narmish's laws are stifling at best. House Arhimven serves as an intolerant tyrant meting the severest punishments for the slightest infractions. Consequently, there is an underground movement, fueled by resentment for the Svizohr. Mahz Svolzeh (CG expert 1/warrior 1) leads the small band of resistance fighters. They conceal their involvement by never associating with one another on the streets of the town, and meeting in the wild elf encampment about 8 miles to the south. The elves vow to help them overthrow the Svizohr in exchange for their sovereignty.

Interesting Sites: On the southwestern side of the town are the remains of the original wild elf settlement. House Arhimven preserves it to remind any residing or visiting elves of their fates, to reinforce their status as non-people. Most of the structures there are of exquisite craftsmanship, blending the architecture with the trees. They are little more than platforms high in the canopy, but a few stand at ground level.

Special Notes: House Arhimven supports King Warven II's efforts to reunite Svimohzia under Meznamish rule. In fact, Sanano diverts a portion of her tax revenue to Monam-Ahnoz, while also conscripting able-bodied men and women to serve as levies. Furthermore, she has a training camp in a nearby valley, where 100 Meznams undergo a vigorous training regimen.

A wooden palisade encircles the encampment; inside are barracks, a mess and a command center. The people training there did not volunteer for the duty, however. Instead, the Miznoh caste took them, forcing the commoners to serve House Arhimven as soldiers.

ENVIRONMENT

The Kingdom of Meznamish extends outward from the shores of Mewzhano Bay, west to the Zhano Headlands, south past the Mizohr Woodlands to the slopes of the Tanezh Mountains, and east to the Menamo Hills. Meznamish also claims several islands within the Windy Straits, though they have little, if any, power to enforce this claim. Three major regions define the nation: East, South and West. Each region is described below.

Eastern Meznamish

The rising Menamo Hills define eastern Meznamish, and are the dominant feature of the landscape. Isolated towns and picturesque farms speckle these hills, with only small paths connecting them to the rest of Meznamishii civilization.

The Great Coastal Highway wends northeast, keeping along the shore at the lower elevations and connecting large towns like Nezormish, Shehimish, Nomahni and the nexus of towns in southern Meznamish. The lands are shady and cool, smelling of the sea, with wheeling seagulls in the picturesque skies.

Mining is a common trade in Eastern Meznamish, and the economy of the small Menamo Hill towns rests heavily on the veins of iron ore running through the hills. Even with the mining industry, the residents claim there are no landscapes more beautiful in all of Svimohzia. It is no wonder Mewzhano vowed to make the lands his own.

Southern Meznamish

The Menamo Hills curl south, joining the Tanezh Mountains, who in turn collide with the Dashahn Mountains to the west. The land rises to the foothills of the mountains, and in some areas, lies at sea level in a swampy mess of rivers and pools, such as the Ivez Estuary. Further west grow the Mizohr Woodlands, a forest covering the Dashahn Mountains. Beautiful waterfalls spill down from the mountain heights to drain into the Izhanu River, traveling north to spill into Mewzhano Bay, and other creeks, streams and rivers irrigate the land, making it ideal for rice production and easy transport.

Continuing from Eastern Meznamish, the Great Coastal Highway skirts the Ivez Estuary before turning north towards the capital. Several smaller roads wind through the forest offering easy paths to reach the large towns of woodcutters and gnome trading outposts. Many of these roads eventually lead to the capital or the Great Coastal Highway.

Western Meznamish

The western lands are far less severe than eastern and southern Meznamish. The Zhano Headlands, an extension of the southwestern Dashan Mountains, drain into the Zhano River carrying the rainwater into the massive Ehniven Marsh, a place of death and danger, and where slaves struggle to maintain rice paddies. Most of the land flattens out below the hills, before dropping into the marsh and the Izhan River Valley.

Far to the north is a chain of many small and large islands. Though uninhabited by civilized folk, these islands are a haven for reptiles, birds, a handful of fishermen and many pirates. The islands extend north to the main continent.

TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands

MIZOHR WOODLANDS

The Mizohr Woodlands is a far tamer place than the other woods and jungles on Svimohzia. A mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees, with little underbrush, it blankets the foothills of the Tanezh-Dashahn mountain ranges as they descend into the Meznamish Valley. Irrigating the forest is the Izhan River, and on its banks are several towns and villages.

The forest is also said to be home to the largest concentration of gnomes in Svimohzia. A small community of wild elves resides here as well, but they are few, having suffered terribly at the hands of greedy Svizohr. King Warven II commits a small patrol of soldiers to watch over the borders.

Mountain Ranges

DASHAHN MOUNTAINS

These ancient mountains derive their nickname, the Malachite Heights, from the abundance of malachite deposits rather than any visual resemblance to this dark ore. It is rumored that the true origin of this name is because these hills once served as the last bastion for the dark elves before they were driven underground a dozen millennia ago (for more information, see *Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene*). Regardless, a traveler can find lush greenery here throughout the year, and mild temperatures even at high elevations.

Dwarves and gnomes have mined copper from this area as far back as either race can remember. For centuries, the world's finest bronze came from the Dashahn Mountains. Although plentiful in copper, tin, lead and zinc, the scarcity of iron, gold and platinum has resulted in a steady decrease in the dwarven population as the most avaricious abandon their ancient homes in search of greater wealth. Today fewer than 15,000 still dwell here. Human miners or gnomes now occupy many of the former dwarven citadels, the latter having closer ties to the land itself. Still, many dwarves remain here, for there are other

materials to be mined, all of which bring a decent price. The low foothills are home to both gnomes and men.

Interestingly, the human exploration of the dwarven land turned up many artifacts, tombs and more, all revealing more of the island's history. Two particular items of interest are a stone tablet found in a ruined fortress to the west, which describes a battle against a host of dark elves from the southern Krimppatu Mountains, and a dwarven king's tomb, in an old tunnel where the Dashahn Mountains meet the Tanezh. On the surface of the tomb is inscribed dwarven script, describing a war against an ancient host of some type of serpent men, yuan-ti or other scalykind. The words read:

*And the hosts fled before the serpents,
Who slaughtered them with lances of fire and
Swords of white metal.
Good King Tulven welcomed those in flight,
And closed his doors to the horrors of the world,
Providing succor to those whom asked.
This was the first error.*

TANEZH MOUNTAINS

This eastern counterpart of the Dashahn Mountains is taller and more rugged than its progenitor. It is also rich in iron, a point that has attracted a dense population of mountain dwarves from the Malachite Heights. These dwarves guard their holdings and do not allow humans or gnomes to work in their tunnels. They also keep silent the existence of a few hobgoblin settlements on the southern face of the mountains. Worse still, those dwarves who have traveled deepest beneath the earth (and returned alive) babble of a great city where "slime-glistening creatures with the heads of octopus" dwell.

Hills

MENAMO HILLS

The ring of hills that define the eastern Meznamishii border is home to both farmers and miners of human, dwarven, halfling and gnomish creed. Though dotted with orchards and picturesque little farms, the region's true wealth comes from deeper within the earth. Copper, tin and iron ore is plentiful.

One interesting site is Mewzhano's Point, a stone tower commemorating where Mewzhano crossed the Menamo Hills and launched his invasion of the Bay. This 30-foot-tall cylindrical landmark doubles as a watchtower where the Meznamish keep watch on Ozhvinmish.

ZHANO HEADLANDS

The northern terminus of the Dashahn Mountains, these cliffs project into the Straits of Svimohzia and tail off, becoming the Dragon's Teeth. Although the headlands are devoid of many valuable metals, several gnomish clans and a few dwarves still tunnel these hills. A small community of about 150 gnomes and dwarves, called Daskran, stands at the foot of one of the larger peaks. There, the gnome clans meet to swap stories and

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exchange goods and news. Fertile throughout, the Zhano Headlands are also home to many human farmers and herders.

Wetlands

EHNIVEN MARSH

This stretch of wetland is uninhabited by all but the most desperate rice farmers in Meznamish. Flat and having only stunted trees and bogs of stagnant water, this land is little value to anyone. Moss trolls (see *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*) and a few tribes of goblins claim this land for their own and emerge from this pestilential bog to attack any who pass.

IVEZ ESTUARY

This swampy area lies at the mouth of the Ivelo River on Mewzhano Bay. Migratory birds nest here in huge numbers during the winter months and attract many predators. Mosquitoes are a plague year round, and the crocodiles in its shallows make it even more dangerous for anyone to explore.

The Ivez is home to various humanoid creatures, including lizardfolk and even a few locathah, who come here to hunt. King Warven II sees this swamp as a problem and must find a means to resolve it.

Bodies of Water

MEWZHANO BAY

This rocky inlet of the Straits of Svimohzia is infamous for its unpredictable gusts that propel ships into the sheer cliffs on either side of the cape. Vessels frequent this area, however, as seals are plentiful and easy to capture.

STRAITS OF SVIMOHZIA

Forty leagues of open water separate Svimohzia from the continent. For most sailors, the Windy Straits mark the western edge of civilization, for few have dared to sail further west. Home to a wide assortment of dangerous aquatic monsters, from sea drakes, tiger sharks and more, it is used by skilled sailors only. Pel Brolenese slavers also prowl these waters, boarding passing merchant ships and pressing their crews into slavery.

"THE DRAGON'S TEETH"

Emerging from waters of the Straits of Svimohzia are the peaks of an ancient sunken mountain range, believed to have once been an arm of the Dashahn Mountains. The Dragon's Teeth form a dangerous obstacle for sailors, but are still a favorite haunting ground for pirates, who ambush ships trying to pass through. There is a rumor that rocs nest in the peaks, although no one has seen one in a decade.

Rivers

IVELO RIVER

Spilling down from the heights of the Tanezh Mountains, in the southern part of the Meznamishii Valley, are the falls of the

Ivelo River. At the bottom, the waters form a small lake before descending to the Ivez Estuary, where it sluggishly empties into Mewzhano Bay.

IZHANO RIVER

Fed by drainage from the Zhano headlands and the Dashahn Mountains, the Izhano flows through the heart of Meznamish, from the Mizohr Woodlands to its outlet at Monam-Ahnoz. Many traveling merchants use the river in lieu of roads.

ZHANO RIVER

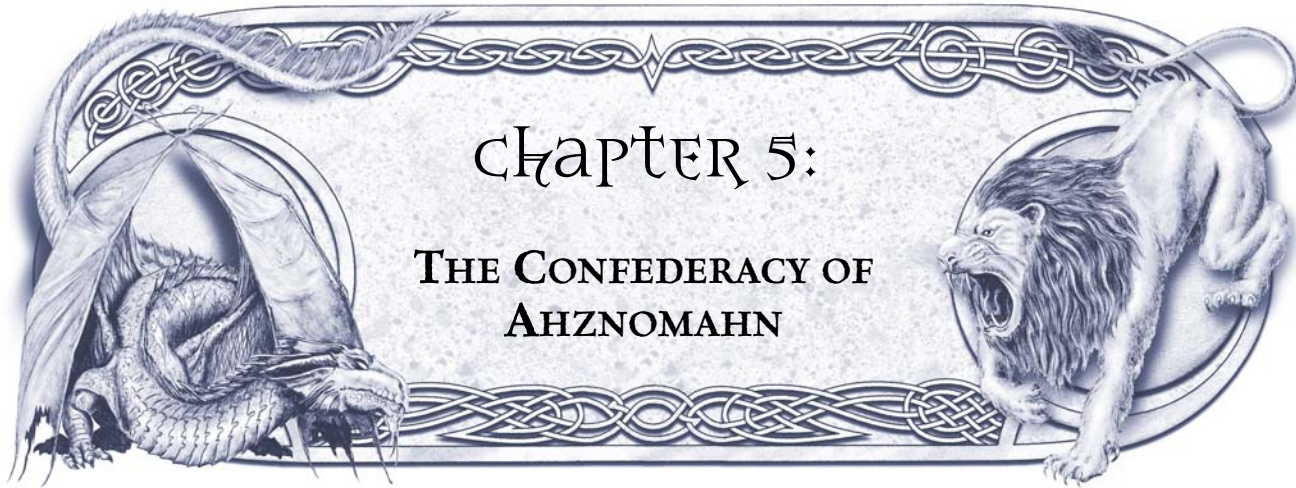
This minor river runs but twenty leagues from the northern tip of the Dashahn Mountains to Mewzhano Bay, serving to transport goods and supplies to the smaller settlements all along its shores. The waters of the Zhano are bitter, likely polluted by impurities from the hills to the west.

WEATHER

Meznamish shares the subtropical climate of the rest of Svimohzia, and the coastal areas are very hot and humid for most of the year. Summer often brings rain to northern Meznamish, but most storms are mild when compared to those that hammer Ahznomahn, where the trough shifts and forces much of the moisture further south. Fortunately, for much of the warm season, the nation is spared much dangerous weather thanks to the presence of the mountains to the south and the tall hills to either side of the Bay.

In the winter, high pressure over central Tellene forces wind down along the Elos Breeze, spinning off to join with the moisture of Svimohzia and create torrential downpours. Again, the terrain spares Meznamish from the worst of the weather, although winter brings the worst winds in Mewzhano Bay, continually buffeting ships and homes alike.

Compared to other places, Meznamish is a paradise, with hot, but tolerable temperatures (for the natives, at least), beautiful weather, and a cool breeze to take the edge off the heat. In the highest mountain peaks, temperatures fall off, even gaining snows in the winter, though the dusting always melts by midday.



Ahznomahn, "the Kingless Land," is possibly the most influential nation in all of Svimohzia. With trade routes linking its capital to the major mercantile centers in the south, Ahznom merchants can be found from Pel Brolenon to as far as Tarisato. However, despite its economic influence and wealth, Ahznomahn is a nation of sharp contrasts. While its capital, Zha-nehzmish, is undoubtedly the jewel of the island, the rest of the nation is poor, hungry, and at constant risk of invasion by the horrors in the Vohven Jungle, as well as wild elf rebels and a developing rivalry with Eastern Ozhvnmish. Consequently, nearly a fifth of the populace resides in or around Zha-nehzmish, with the rest living in abject squalor, scattered in small settlements on the island proper.

HISTORY

Mystery shrouds Ahznomahn's early days, some scholars even suggesting that the Vohven Jungle extended over this region before withdrawing to its current boundaries. Within this jungle nation, they say, tribes of humans toiled for serpent masters, functioning as both slaves and food. If this is true, then the humans must have risen against their masters, for little evidence remains of any serpent kingdom, unless the architectural ruins in and around the Awhom Forest indicate such a thing. Over the succeeding generations, humans would have returned to this land, establishing small fishing communities to harvest fish from the warm waters of the channel between the larger and smaller islands. Some of those early communities, such as Whizhahni, still exist in the current year, though with roads and stone structures instead of huts.

When Miznoh divided his ancient empire (see Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish) among his most loyal followers, he gave this land to Mezvansho, his blood brother and best friend. Mezvansho, honored by the gift, named the duchy Miznohsho, after his friend.

Governing a largely lawless region was no small task, but despite his youth and the magnitude of responsibility, he began his reign responsibly, sending scouts to assess the strengths and

weaknesses of the native Zassho people. Those scouts scoured the land, mapped the region and surveyed the small hamlets dotting the coastlands. Using native labor, he then began construction on Rismish, the first capital of the new duchy.

After five years his scouts returned, having covered the entire region. Among other things, Mezvansho discovered the inhabitants of the coastal communities were skilled in the use of boats, relying on the sea's bounty to survive. With the gathered information, Mezvansho worked to establish a system of roads to unify his land and to allow transport to and from Meznamish. He also established minor lords to organize and improve the towns throughout the duchy.

The Years of Growth (15-83 C.M.)

In the succeeding years, Miznohsho grew, gradually claiming more and more of the wilderness. Unfortunately, fierce storms seemed frequent, and often destroyed many community improvements, drastically setting back the work of the previous year. Floods wiped away the roads and destroyed newly diversified crops planted to improve the duchy's food stores. What they originally perceived as a paradise seemed more like a nightmare.

In addition to the meteorological setbacks, the smaller communities and forts established near the Awhom Forest disappeared entirely, buildings and all, in the space of a few short months. When new supply caravans arrived, they found no sign of the previous inhabitants. Worse, many of these wagons never returned, lending an air of fear and suspicion about what might live in the Awhom Forest.

Natives warned their new rulers not to disturb the old gods sleeping under the canopy of the ancient wood, suggesting that if these gods were awakened they would once more enslave humanity. Mezvansho and his advisors ignored these threats, attributing them to uneducated superstition, and sank gold into expanding their holdings to the west. While the rest of the empire grew stronger, Miznohsho crumbled. Their efforts to build and expand ended in failure. After 30 years of labor, the

duchy appeared little more than it did when first conquered - natural and wild, with only the barest trace of human presence.

Then, in 43 C.M., plague swept across the land, killing two out of every four people. The pestilence emptied entire towns, depleting the land to such an extent the duchy was powerless to stop the raids from the Vohven Jungle savages. Mezvansho, by now a broken old man, fled to Mezh-Vowmi Isle, which had been spared the ravages of the plague. Once there, he founded the duchy's new capital, Zha-nehzmish, abandoning the former to the ravages of plague, famine and war. The duke died three years later, consumed by a wasting disease and broken with sorrow. Mezvansho II ascended the throne upon the death of his grandfather. Eager to succeed where the duchy had met so many failures, he focused on developing Mezh-Vowmi Isle.

In his youth, Mezvansho II spent much of his life in Meznamish as a pupil of King Izvan. From the monarch, he learned the value of infrastructure: road systems, irrigation and the value of the people to ensure a successful reign. However, his youth was not as pleasant as one might expect, for during his time there he suffered at the hands of Miznoh III, a brash young man who would be responsible for the plunge of the empire into a theocratic tyranny. He endured the older boy's insults and abuse but learned to despise him, returning to his homeland and assuming control of the duchy on his 18th birthday.

Mezvansho II devoted his reign to making Miznohsho the most powerful of all the duchies. Finally, after nearly 50 years, the land began to grow. It recovered from the plagues, raids and other calamities that undermined his predecessor's efforts to build. Financially, however, the duchy was poor, and Mezvansho II accepted loan after loan from its neighbor Ozhvinmish. When the funds from the allied duchy began to wane, Mezvansho II turned to the growing merchant class for support. While this allowed him to pay off his debts, he ceded much of the ducal power to the guilds.

Another important event that occurred during Mezvansho II's reign was his connection to Miznoh III's murder. According to custom, the heirs of the various duchies, and even the imperial seat, must spend part of their adolescent years in another duchy, expanding their knowledge. Mezvansho II, who spent his teenage years in Meznamish, accepted Miznamvho, the heir of Miznoh III, into his home in Zha-nehzmish. The young prince was free to do as he wished, but during this time, the duke turned Miznamvho against his father. Reeling with doubts and fears, the young man slipped into corruption, turning from one excess to another and even exploring the occult, until he fell under the sway of the Dark One. At 18, he returned to his homeland and poisoned his father, taking the throne for himself. While Mezvansho II is not directly responsible, his incautious words and the efforts to turn son against father were clear instigators for the boy's corruption.

News of the emperor's death reached Mezvansho II and he quietly celebrated, reveling in his revenge. However, the sweetness of the act turned sour, as a new religion took hold in the

empire. With no resolution in sight for the Vohven Jungle wars, and with the dynamic shift of power in the capital to one of religious dominance, Mezvansho II realized the extent of his culpability in the unstable empire. In shame, he continued his rule in silence, as the empire fell into the grip of Zhanvim.

In 76 C.M., Mezvansho II died quietly in his home, in the midst of a severe hurricane. Before dying, the old duke begged his eldest son, Mizhnavam, to correct his mistakes and restore stability to the empire. Mizhnavam, a secret advocate and boyhood friend of Miznamvho, did not understand what his father requested and instead devoted his energies to expanding the duchy's borders and to consolidating his own personal power. Mizhnavam assumed the former duke rued the poor relations with the tribes of the Vohven Jungle and so, while the nation suffered at the hands of the Knights of the Black Pit, he sent delegations to the Vohven Jungle to secure peace and improve trade relations. After three years of negotiations, Mizhnavam achieved what he considered a good and advantageous peace, for the natives accepted his worthless baubles for precious and rare hardwoods, herbs and spices. Though Mizhnavam's reign achieved little else, the economic conquest of the eastern Vohven Jungle formed the basis for the duchy's future economic might.

End of Miznoh and the Rise of the Golden Duchess (84-87 C.M.)

In 84 C.M., the Miznoh line ended (see Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish), and all the duchies watched as civil war swept the capital. The first death throes of the evil regime spread through the land, and the neighboring duchies underwent a purging, whereby their governments gathered and executed all known Knights of the Black Pit. Fortunately, the foul priesthood had not extended as fully into Miznohsho as it had in Ozhvinmish, and had not erected temples or even had much organization in the eastern duchy. Mizhnavam, who sympathized with the Meznam king, objected to the regicide and demanded that Izvan the king-slayer be brought to justice. Given that the Knights had much influence in Svimohzia, despite their best efforts, the other dukes remained silent, but feared their neighbor was also in thrall to Zhanvim the Dark One. Later, however, after the quick succession of emperors and the eventual seizure of the throne by Emperor Onsar, the other dukes remembered Mizhnavam for his allegiance to the Meznam king. In the spring of 86 C.M., assassins struck the duke, ending his reign and leaving the throne to his only child, Daresvim the Duchess.

With the turmoil in the capital ending, Daresvim, perhaps the most successful leader in Ahznomahn's history, extended the hand of friendship to merchants from Kalamar and Reanaaria Bay. With access to the Vohven Jungle's seemingly limitless supply of spices, herbs, lumber and other foodstuffs, she offered an excellent price for high-demand items.

Along with the low tariffs imposed on merchants coming into her markets, she developed a brisk trade. Merchants flocked from to Zha-nehzmish, building and renovating the city with materials and architecture able to withstand the brutal storms sweeping the land each season. By the end of her reign, many merchants kept an icon of her in their homes, coins bore her visage, and statues of her stood in the marketplaces. Even today, merchants remember the Golden Duchess with honor.

The Hundred Years' Peace (88-215 C.M.)

Even with Daresvim's early mercantile victories, the Hundred Years' Peace was not as kind to Miznohsho as it was to Meznamish. Of course, there were benefits, for the duchy grew in power and prominence, spending gold to expand the duchy's navy, establish trade routes with the continent, and even began anew the settlement on the western reaches of the land. Yet, the Duchess' successes eventually flagged, and even halted altogether, with the failures of her heirs and the subsequent instability over the next fifty years. When Daresvim died in 124 C.M., the grieving populace gained Sisirah as the next duke. This petty noble halted all westward expansion, raised tariffs on merchants and worked to restore the full powers of his throne, taking them back from the merchant princes who helped the duchy years earlier. After six months of this, Duke Sisirah was murdered and the duchy fell to Sisirah's cousin, Rehvosh.

Duke Rehvosh was the exact opposite of his cousin, made so by his fear for his life. Afraid to act, he hid in the palace for six years, while the duchy slipped into decline. Effectively, Miznohsho had no duke; hence, he gained the moniker of "the ghost Duke." While Rehvosh haunted his castle, crime syndicates seized the marketplaces and forced out the honest merchants. Kalamaran and other continental merchants withdrew from the city, turning to other safer ports. The growth experienced during the reign of the Duchess shriveled, until Rehvosh's fears were made real. Then, in 130 C.M., disgusted with a powerless duke, the merchant houses formed a parliament commanding even greater control over the duchy. Monarchists, fearing the increased power of the merchant class, approached Duke Rehvosh and demanded he abdicate in favor of his stronger and more popular brother, Iznashan. Rehvosh fled to Brandobia, where he lived for the rest of his days.

Iznashan took the throne in 131 C.M. and found much of the ducal powers reduced. Vowing not to let the merchants completely overtake the duchy, he used his only remaining recourse to regain control: the military. First, he withdrew two-thirds of the soldiers guarding the trade routes on Svimohzia and stationed them in the capital. Next, he ordered the navy to blockade the city, preventing ships from entering or leaving Zha-nehzmish. The parliament, accustomed to a weak duke, was unprepared for Iznashan's tactics, and before they could send assassins to deal with him, Iznashan led 200 of his best soldiers into the parliamentary building. He disbanded Parliament, restored all powers to his family line and executed

the head-of-house of all the merchant families. To remind the citizens of who ruled, these corpses were dipped in tar and hung on the central road to his palace.

With his iron fist, Duke Iznashan took back power from the merchants, and though they suffered economically, their navy was unmatched. Over the next 50 years, Miznohsho became the power its founder had only dreamed of. Through fear, blood and a near tyrannical rule, the bloody Duke set the stage for the rise of Izenmas and the zurenas almost 150 years later.

Closing this period of Miznohsho history were two more dukes, neither of much consequence. Amar "the Mad" ascended the throne when Iznashan died and ruled for just two years. Mizmohvam followed Amar and, as a moderate, relaxed many of the restrictions his predecessor placed on the merchant class by reducing tariffs, restoring a few political rights to merchant princes and allowing free trade in the now five marketplaces. Despite his fairness and good intentions, however, the memories of "bloody" Duke Iznashan still lay fresh on many minds. Through the next 70 years, merchants gradually regained control over the government, seizing more and more power until they reigned supreme.

Improvement (216-300 C.M.)

Meznamish's decline had the opposite effect on Miznohsho. During these years, beginning in the reign of Duke Mezvansho III, the merchant class recovered from the depredations of the earlier century, technological advances improved the sailing vessels, and seasonal hazards lost much of their impact on the island. With the friendlier atmosphere to merchants and visitors, Zha-Nehzmish experienced a huge population boom. A succession of weak dukes allowed the merchant princes to restore control over Parliament, leading to the duchy's secession from Meznamish. During this time, the merchants also developed close trading relations with Kalamaran, Whimdol and Elos Bay cities, generating massive revenues that helped turn Zha-nehzmish into the jewel of an isle that it is today.

The next three dukes drained the ducal coffers to the point of poverty, forcing each succeeding ruler to borrow increasingly more funds from the growing merchant families. When Mizmohvam III finally came to power, he had inherited so much debt that he was forced to sell important government positions to meet the payments owed to the merchant princes. In 299 C.M., the merchants codified the requirements to enter Parliament, creating a new class of citizens called zurenas.

ZURENAS

A *zurena* is any native citizen with a net worth over an established amount (currently 75,000 gold Anvims). Such a person may hold a seat in Parliament, if he or she so chooses. Most zurenas claim noble heritage from the days of Miznohsho (the old name for the land of Ahznomahn).

The bankrupt duke was powerless to respond and watched as more of his government fell into the hands of this new class. By Arid, and with almost all government functions in the hands of the zurenas, the duke controlled only the navy. By Snowfall, the zurenas had begun disbanding political parties and secretly assassinating the heads of the families who supported the duke.

Still, the zurenas knew they could not effectively seize the duchy and declare independence from the empire without ducal consent, so they approached Duke Mizmohvam III, offering to absolve him of his debt in exchange for a declaration of independence. The duke agreed, seeing it as the only way to protect his heirs from the power hungry merchants, but retain the possibility of restoring the ruling family to power in some future day. However, he believed a declaration of independence would invite war with Meznamish, which the nation could not afford. He counseled the zurenas to wait until the time was proper and, when the empire was suitably distracted, he would declare independence and abdicate the throne.

Fortnight's Battle (301 C.M.)

The moment of glory for the zurenas, and the moment of dread for Duke Mizmohvam III, was when the host of hobgoblins rallied beneath Brog-Tuuakh's banner. The empire held its breath while Vohmi III rallied the duchies, and dispatched messengers bearing orders to send troops and supplies to aid the country in its defense. While both halves of Ozhvinmish and the people of Zazahni complied with the emperor's requests, the zurenas (in the name of the duke) replied by sending back the messenger's head with a declaration of independence in its mouth. Vohmi III was enraged, vowing revenge on the traitorous duchy, but was powerless to respond immediately. With no reprisal from Meznamish, Duke Mizmohvam III fled Zha-nehzmish with his family to take refuge in Rosaleta, in Kalamar, where the ducal family remains to this day. Miznohsho was no more, and rising from the ashes of the duchy was the Confederacy of Ahznomahn, "the Kingless Land."

As war raged on, civil unrest plagued the new state. Ahznomahn, through economic intimidation, gained recognition from foreign powers. Their longstanding relationship and the assurances of continued free trade gave Ahznomahn's would-be allies all the assurances they needed. Furthermore, when Fortnight's Battle ended and even with the hobgoblins repulsed, Meznamish was too weak to mount a counterstrike against the former duchy.

After the war, Ahznomahn, free from the excesses of the dukes and without the financial drain imposed by Meznamish, diversified their commodities to meet the demands of the main continent and the neighboring duchies. Meznamish could only watch, crippled by the increase in dwarven metal prices, the loss of their youth and the unrest in their citizens. While Meznamish spiraled into economic collapse, Ahznomahn enjoyed a meteoric rise.

After the War (301 C.M. to present)

Despite their successes, the merchants of Ahznomahn still feared reprisal from Meznamish. The zurenas, partly to assuage any misgiving and doubts among their numbers, forged a secret tie with Ozhvinmish, whose duke mourned the loss of his sons in Fortnight's Battle. The zurenas leaped on the opportunity to weaken Vohmi III, urging the duke to remain defiant of the emperor through the difficult times. When Vohmi III demanded Ozhvinmish make reparations for damages caused by their occupation of Zazahni, the zurenas convinced the duke to secede from Meznamish instead. Consequently, Meznamish invaded Ozhvinmish. The brief battle resulted in a crippling loss to Meznamish, and afforded Ahznomahn an invaluable and longstanding ally.

With Ozhvinmish and Zazahni as buffer states between Ahznomahn and Meznamish, Ahznomahn flourished. Over the next 70 years, Ahznomahn enjoyed unprecedented growth, developing the Mezh-Vowmi Isle into a powerful land, while slowly putting funds into developing their holdings on Svimohzia proper. The Vohven Jungle natives easily gave up their wealth in exchange for worthless junk acquired, and with initially low tariffs, Ahznomahn became one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Over time, Ahznomahn also increased the tariffs on imports and exports, but the market overlooked most of this thanks to the free flowing gold. The new income, as well as the visitor tax, solidified the zurenas' hold over their new nation.

Ahznomahn still shows no signs of recession, but it remains a nation of sharp economic contrasts. Zha-nehzmish is a playground for the wealthy, while Ahznomahnii holdings on Svimohzia have muddy and overgrown roads, and people's lives remain little changed from the days of Miznohsho. With the constant raiding from monsters and hostile savages along the south and southwest borders of the nation, it is no wonder merchants avoid moving their holdings there. Ahznomahn prefers to focus on economic development, rather than improving the lives of its citizens in those areas, but has few contingencies in place should it face an economic downturn.

WHO'S WHO IN AHZNOMAHN

Ever since Zha-nehzmish became the capital in 43 C.M., less and less of the important business of running the duchy takes place on the mainland. The mainland, at least according to the inhabitants of Zha-nehzmish, is only for disgraced lords, petty merchants and thieves. In truth, the citizens of the capital are little different than those elsewhere, save for their great concentration of wealth.

Lords of Ahznomahn

Though Ahznomahn lacks a royalty, it does not lack for powerful political figures, such as the zurenas. Of those nobles, the most powerful and influential are the merchant princes, and the greatest of them all is Izenmas.

IZENMAS

Izenmas (NG aristocrat 18) is the greatest of all the zurenas, the single most powerful among equals. He effectively owns several poorer zurenas through economic strangleholds, and defends the borders of a handful more with his expert navy and veteran marines. When Parliament convenes, everyone knows that his decisions carry the most sway, and there are few dealings where his presence passes unfelt.

He regularly meets with councilors to discuss politics, national developments and security, while minor business dealings are handled through an intermediary, a loyal administrator from the Parish of the Prolific Coin.

Izenmas shares many of the traits of his family, including an almost homicidal hatred for Meznamish, a laissez-faire attitude toward the economy and a friendly attitude towards Ozhvinmish and Zazahni. What he lacks is a tolerance for crime. After years of escalating violence between competing thieves' guilds, endangering Zha-nehzmish's place as a mercantile power, Izenmas formed a network of operatives to infiltrate and destroy the criminal organizations from within. The secret police brutally splinter and destroy many thieves' guilds. Those who survive narrow their focus on exploitation and specialized criminal enterprises rather than risk annihilation by the secret police. Consequently, the city enjoys far more stability.

Whenever he makes a public appearance, Izenmas dresses in white robes with a matching cowl. He stands just over 6 feet tall and has a medium build and a plain face, but intensely penetrating gray eyes.

The Upper Class and Politically Powerful

As a plutocracy, zurenas and the numerous wealthy clerics of the Parish of the Prolific Coin fill the upper echelons of society. The characters described below are the most prominent figures in Ahznomahn, guiding the nation to suit their interests. The fact that all of these figures dwell in or around Zha-nehzmish is telling of Ahznomahn's divided culture.

ALESHDIN

A popular figure in the eyes of many Ahznoms, Aleshdin (CG fighter 6/rogue 4), the son of the equally popular Alzhan, commands Zha-nehzmish's military. He oversees nearly 700 soldiers and is responsible for defending not just the Mez-Vowmi Isle, but the mainland as well. The demands of his station carry him to forts bordering the Vohven Jungle and the Awhom Forests. Nevertheless, he still personally oversees his soldiers' continued training on highland dancers and, with his devotion to honing his soldiers, has formed a light cavalry to be respected.

Aleshdin is a favorite among the zurenas, entertaining them with his good humor and natural athleticism. His time with his father's peers was not ill spent, for he learned much and developed his natural instincts for trading and negotiation. Yet, numbers (the value of a length of wood or other trivial details)

hold little appeal to the young hero. Fortunately, Alzhan recognized the free spirit in his son and sent him to a military academy in the city. There, Aleshdin's destiny revealed itself. He spent many hours with the horses, and with his agility and natural skill at arms soon rose to the top of his class. When he graduated, he joined the Ahznomahnii cavalry and fought skirmishes against the wild elves of the Vohven Jungle. In those early conflicts, Aleshdin won the respect of his peers and quickly advanced in rank, until eight years ago when the zurenas appointed him commander.

Aleshdin never forgot his early training and, while in the Vohven Jungle, he established a small trade consortium specializing in rare herbs and spices to supplement his meager military pay. When he ended his tour of duty, he had a thriving business and a small fortune. Now, years later, he has almost obtained the required 75,000 gold Anvims, and many believe he will soon take a seat in Parliament as a zurena.

The commander of Ahznomahn's military is in his early thirties with dark black skin and light brown hair. He has brown eyes and an easy smile. He disdains armor, preferring to wear loosely cut clothes with red leggings, a cream tunic and short brown jacket with sandals. From his belt hangs a slender rapier of exceptional quality. With his tall, athletic build, comfortable gait and dashing features, he is in high demand by many daughters. So far, however, Aleshdin seems content to be a bachelor. He has a small estate inside Zha-nehzmish, with interests and land on Svimohzia proper.

ADMINISTRATOR AVENSHI SOTAR

The Parish of the Prolific Coin is the foremost influential church in Ahznomahn and the closest thing to a state religion. The Profiteer has churches scattered throughout the city, primarily in smaller establishments rather than some monolithic temple in the city's center. Of them, the most powerful temple is within sight of Parliament. A thick, square building, it appears more like a bank vault than a place of worship. The highest-ranking cleric in the order is Avenshi Sotar (N Kalamaran cleric 13), who manages this temple.

Profiteer Ranks	
Title	Temple Rank
Apprentice	1
Trader	1
Barterer	2
Clerk	3
Bookkeeper	4
Accountant	5
Treasurer	6
Financier	7
Administrator	8
Entrepreneur	9
Magnus	10

Chapter Five: The Confederacy of Ahznomahn

Avenshi Sotar was born to a Kalamaran merchant and an influential daughter of the Zhenamohn family, a powerful merchant clan trading heavily with Bet Kalamar. In his youth, he took part in the business ventures, showing a flair for numbers and a skill in negotiation that exceeded his talented father's. The family's fortunes multiplied with Avenshi's influence, leading to his father gaining a seat in Parliament. Many of the other merchants and zurenas felt threatened by one of even partial-Kalamaran blood holding rank in Parliament and, as is wont to happen, Avenshi's father quickly fell to an assassin's poisoned blade. His mother, fearing for her son's life, sent him to the Parish of the Prolific Coin to study as a priest.

Despite isolation from his family, Avenshi enjoyed continued successes in the marketplace and advanced rapidly through the ranks of the church. As his station increased, he watched his family's fortune collapse until, one day, no other Sotars remained in Zha-nehzmish. Now he plots his revenge, using the church as a tool to uncover the conspirators that destroyed his father. So far, Avenshi uncovered two of the eight, and the ones he found suffered greatly. Unlike many Profiteers, Avenshi has no interest in finding the Hapless Diamond (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook), consumed as he is by revenge.

Avenshi is now the Temple Administrator, and though his responsibilities include the maintenance of his particular parish, he also manages the other temples throughout the city and on the main island. Some say his influence is so great that he has agents throughout Svimohzia and in many of the port cities through the Windy Straits and the Kalamaran Sea. It is merely a matter of time before he gains the title of Entrepreneur and, perhaps, even Magnus.

In his middle years, Avenshi has brown skin and curly black hair with flecks of white. His brown eyes are flat and lifeless. He wears expensive robes with gold and platinum thread, jewelry and an exquisite silver cloak. His manner is cool and his business practices are ruthless, possibly explaining how his temple maintains nearly 300,000 gold Anvims. He is single, though rumor speaks of a mysterious concubine from another land.

WORLDER Emeni ZALDEN

At least the second largest temple in Zha-nehzmish, the Temple of the Stars is a sprawling complex near the city's docks. The church's High Worlder, Mushan Ohmdalz, is frequently absent, so the duties of maintaining the church fall to its Worlder, Emeni Zalden (NG cleric 11).

Emeni is not native to Ahznomahn; like many people in Zha-nehzmish, she came to the city to seek her fortunes. A long time follower of the Traveler, she found the city lacking in much of an organized faith. She took it upon herself to unite the smaller shrines dotting the coastal towns throughout Mez-Vowmi Isle and establish a new church. The only thing stopping her was Mushan Ohmdalz; he was the rightful head of the church, but with his capricious manner and the irregularity of his time in

Zha-nehzmish, she felt she would never be able to secure his blessings or assistance.

In a bold move, she falsely announced she followed the intentions of the High Worlder (and therefore, the edicts of the Traveler) by creating a church to glorify the name of their god. Lesser clerics quickly joined her. To pay for the construction, she personally visited each ship docked in the port to remind them of their debt to Amehz. Her tactic worked, for no right-minded sailor would anger a priestess of the Traveler. With each ship, funds for the new church flowed, and after six years, the building rivals The Home Foundation.

Journeyman Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Quester	1 5
Worlder	5 9
High Worlder	10

Emeni is a proud and pious woman, with plain features and a tight-lipped smile. Her coloring suggests that she is not entirely Svimohzish (perhaps some Brandobian or Deji blood), though she never confirms or denies questions about her heritage. She wears her long brown hair in a tight bun. She is in her thirties and physically fit. When seen in the city, she wears long black robes over a yellow inner robe as befits her station. She carries a well-worn quarterstaff, to use against any thugs and ruffians she might encounter along the way to the docks.



GRANDFATHER RAZHAN

Razhan, son of a Meznamish exile and a Kalamaran beauty, founded the Home Foundation, the largest temple in all of Ahznomahn. As is common in larger cities, Zha-nehzmish has a large orphan population. Fate condemns these children to live lives as urchins or thieves or have brief and brutal existences in sweatshops. While the Home Foundation cares for children, Razhan made it the central function of his church, personally adopting over 100 children! From these former street thugs and criminals he makes priests and upstanding citizens.

After years of community service, Razhan is a prominent citizen in Zha-nehzmish. He also has a strong presence among the merchant princes, the zurenas, and in the manufacturing guilds. Through his work, he forces laws through Parliament that begin to protect child laborers, and acquires funding for his church or other humanitarian organizations in the city.

The Grandfather spends much of his day caring for his adopted children (and his actual 40+ grandchildren), teaching, playing and disciplining when necessary. However, given his nearness to the lower class, he knows about developments in the underworld, the power struggles between guilds and the movements of illegal goods, drugs and slaves through the streets. With his constant involvement in the seedier side of Zha-nehzmish, Razhan has become a voice of authority in the city, the sage of the streets.

Razhan was a tall and muscular man, but now in his late sixties, he is somewhat stooped, a mere shadow of his former self. His once dark and lustrous hair is white and brittle, and his face is pale, weathered and careworn. Even in these latter years, he retains the energy and the inclination to father, raise and otherwise care for as many needy children as he can. When in the church, during sacrifice or other holy days, Razhan wears a spotless white robe tied with a blue sash. Otherwise, he wears the simple garb of an Ahznom peasant - a lightweight tunic, breeches and sandals. He keeps his old battle armor and weapons of war safely locked away, in case he ever has need of them.

SHINTER WOL

One of the more famous institutions in Zha-nehzmish is the University of Zha, an educational facility without peer in all of Svimohzia. Ensuring the continuance of the school and its funding is Headmaster Shinter Wol (N aristocrat 4/expert 11).

Shinter is the son of a lesser aristocrat. In his youth, he exhibited a quick mind and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Young Shinter quickly devoured his father's meager library, and then became listless and depressed with nothing left to learn. His father lacked the resources for private tutors, however, as he had lost most of his funds with the fall of the nobility in Zha-nehzmish. Therefore, he turned to the University to educate his son. He indentured his 8-year-old son to the Mizani Merchant House (related to the same Mizani in Anowhizh) for four years to pay for the school.

The service to a merchant proved an ill fit for young Shinter. He disdained the drudgery it entailed. The master of the house required him to perform inventories, forcing the boy to count endless crates of stinking herbs and oils the family gained from dealers in the Vohven Jungle. Despite his hatred for this task, he performed adequately, if not superbly, and the Merchant soon employed the youth in more and more varied tasks, including accounting, appraisal, and more of the business practices. Shinter never really embraced the life of a merchant and left the House at age 12 to go to University.

As soon as he enrolled, he realized his destiny was at hand. He studied whatever subjects were available, from Pel Brolenese history to the Planar Suppositions. The faculty recognized his genius, and he began teaching classes by age 16. By age 18, he received a full professorship and by 20, he advanced to a tenured position. Five years later, after a brilliant and winning debate against the existing Headmaster, he took over the principal position in the school and has enjoyed the post ever since.

During his tenure, he has spent nearly all of his resources to improve the school, to secure more governmental and private resources, and to acquire manuscripts, tomes and other subjects of learning and study. With all of his expenditures, no one suspects he has fleeced the school of thousands of Anvims to build his own library of rare books. He keeps them in a private room beneath the school.

Shinter is a slight man in his early 50s with weathered black skin and a smooth scalp. His pinched features and his frail frame suggest something avian, perhaps predatory, which seems to reflect his personality. He dresses in black scholar's robes and wears a small gray cap. He is distant and detached, unless courting a merchant prince for funds, supplies or some other needed resource for the school. In these instances, he talks and gestures often, with a ready smile and shining eyes.

Leaders of the Underworld

Until just a few years ago, Zha-nehzmish had a thriving criminal underworld, with powerful crime families that had equal influence with Izenmas. The crime lords enjoyed rapid expansion, dealing in smuggling, assassination, extortion and drug trafficking. As each syndicate increased, it diversified and soon the guilds overlapped, as when two or more guilds smuggled goods. With this competition, tensions rose and open war ensued. Soon bodies began to turn up in the sewers, entire shipments were lost and fires, street fighting and more overwhelmed the city. In response, Izenmas created a group of infiltrators and, using information purchased from the Grandfather Razhan, moved quickly, murdering the suspected crime bosses in an event known as the Purging. The government crackdowns lasted for two years, erasing all crime by the end. The remnants of the criminal elements are small, lean enterprises, specialized to avoid drawing notice to themselves. Though many organizations still exist, at least in name, the Gray Cloaks command the most fear and respect of all.

HELSHAN ZIDE

Helshan Zide (CE rogue 14), leader of the guild of assassins and spies known as the Gray Cloaks, is a despicable man whose homicidal tendencies and love of murder drive him to erratic and psychotic behavior. A native of Zha-nehzmish, he was a promising young merchant of the Vezdor clan, University trained, and a favored pupil of Shinter Wol himself. At 16, he returned from his studies to relax and enjoy the companionship of his family and to compose letters of love to his paramour, Leshan of the Zhasorozh clan, a rival merchant family. The two adolescents met in secret and swapped letters for two years, and he intended to make her his wife. What he did not know was that another young lord had an interest in Leshan as well.

This lord, Suvarasa, was of another merchant clan, who were also zurenas. Suvarasa was better established and a more attractive suitor for the Zhasorozh clan. Even though Leshan had some say in her future husband and her heart was indeed with the young Helshan, Suvarasa threatened to destroy her house if she did not agree to his proposal. Placing her family above her own interests, she accepted Suvarasa and turned young Helshan away.

Helshan was always an unstable youth, prone to fits of depression and violent outbursts. His family did what they could to hide his dark side, but with Leshan's rejection, he lost control and became overwhelmed by hate. Helshan, under the cover of darkness, infiltrated Suvarasa's estate, cut out his tongue and tortured him for hours. Taking the severed head, he crept into Leshan's home, murdering her siblings, parents, guards and everyone else in the house save Leshan. He entered her chambers and left the grisly trophy of her suitor at the foot of her bed.

Helshan fled into the underworld, but he heard rumors of Leshan's madness and eventual suicide. Hunted by the zurenas, he hid among the worst of the worst: killers, thugs and slavers. He made a name for himself for his bloodthirstiness and his willingness to do any job. Three years later, he killed the head of the Gray Cloaks and seized control of the guild. With Helshan as their leader, the Gray Cloaks emerged unscathed from the Purging and more powerful than ever before. Now, the guild concerns themselves with selling Ahznomahnii information, assassination and worse. Helshan Zide is still the most wanted man in all of Ahznomahn, but his ability to escape capture has made him something of a legend.

Helshan Zide would be an attractive man if it were not for his too intense eyes and the ever-present crazed smile on his face. His dark brown skin features tattoos over his entire body, mostly in whorls and vines, and with a large skull tattooed at the back of his neck. He wears the typical gray cloak of his guild with darker clothing beneath. Around his neck, he wears a locket that some say carries Leshan's portrait.

Other Notables

In addition to the official and unofficial powers in Ahznomahn, other important figures affect the decisions made by the elite. These may be a junior cleric serving the head of the church, an absent higher-ranking member of the clergy deferring to a lesser figurehead to serve a political role, or even powerful wizards, warriors, or rogues. What follows is a survey of the other notables whose lives may have influenced the nation's development, but for one reason or another, are not notable enough to play a significant role in day-to-day politics.

HAMAKA

Hamaka (LG half-elf cleric 13) works alongside Razhan to care for the city's orphans. She has over a dozen children and the youngest is only a month old. Dedicated to the Holy Mother, she is a pillar of virtue in the city.

The love of Hamaka's parents, her mother a Vohven Jungle wild elf and her father an Ahznomahnii hobilar, formed the cornerstone for her later theological beliefs. Meeting by the light of the moon, her soldier father happened upon a glade where her mother sat singing to the spirits of her ancestors. He watched entranced, his heart stolen. He returned to the glade repeatedly, shirking his soldierly duties as the hold of her charms tightened. Her mother spotted the young soldier on his first visit but pretended not to notice and, after awhile, she looked forward to his visits, until one day the soldier found the courage to speak. When he did, their love flowered.

They traveled across Svimohzia until they reached the shore where he secured passage for them to Mez-Vowmi Isle. Sadly, both succumbed to the Rotting Death, only shortly after bearing their first child. The cleric who tried to help them was Razhan, who was then first coming to Zha-nehzmish to serve the Home Foundation. He has cared for their child ever since.

Hamaka knows little about her parents, and only what Razhan has told her. The tragedy of her parents' demise encouraged her to stay and devote her life to the Home Foundation. She works through the church to instill racial tolerance toward the savages of the Vohven Jungle and halt their exploitation. She has had few victories, but through her acts, she has succeeded in reducing bigotry.

Hamaka is a regal woman of striking beauty. She has smooth light brown skin and dark black hair, but she has upswept eyes and elven ears. When in the church, Mother Hamaka wears long white robes with a blue collar. At other times, she wears a simple light blue dress, sandals and a white shawl.

HIGH WORLDER MUSHAN OHMDALZ

More legend than man, Mushan Ohmdalz (NG cleric 14) is Tellene's High Wordler. Compelled by an insatiable wanderlust, Mushan explores the face of Tellene, wandering from the heights of the Ka'Asa Mountains to the barren Khydoban Desert and down to the heart of the Emerald Sea. For him, no land is too distant, none too inhospitable. Some of his followers believe he shirks his duties as the head of the Temple of the

Stars, but nothing is further than the truth. As High Worlder, he sees it his duty to walk the earth and sail the seas.

Not much is known about his early history, beyond the fact he has been a High Worlder for two generations. Some believe he saw the face of Amehz and went mad, compelled to wander for the rest of his days. Others claim the god's spirit fills him, driving him to ensure the safety of Tellene's roads and travel routes. All stories agree Mushan had a life-changing epiphany urging him to leave the temple in Zha-nehzmish to wander the face of the world.

When he lived in the city, he performed blessings for travelers, oversaw a large congregation and did all the things an influential cleric does in a bustling city. However, when the zurenas seized political power, he consolidated his holdings and opposed the dissolution of the ducal throne. Eventually, even he lost heart. He turned to the surviving heir and helped install him in a secret complex on the eastern face of the island. Thereafter, he left Mezh-Vowmi Isle driven by his spiritual urge. When he does return, less and less often in the recent years, he spends more time with the ducal heir than in the city. His movements are so secretive that even his steward, Emeni Zalden, does not know where he goes.

The last time Mushan entered Zha-nehzmish, he came supposedly to enchant a pair of magical boots that would never wear out. He was aged, with dark weathered skin, long wispy white hair and a face full of wrinkles. His eyes were dark and filled with sadness. He lacked his normal joviality and seemed somber and careworn. However, that was six years ago and no one has seen him since.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Major issues in Ahznomahnii politics involve what to do with the mainland holdings. The wealthy Ahznoms live on Mezh-Vowmi Isle, as it is safe from raiding, and has a natural buffer from the other nations on Svimohzia. However, the zurenas recognize the value of mainland holdings because of their proximity to the Vohven Jungle's vast natural resources. The cost for transportation, protection and extraction would all decrease with improved defenses and financial investment to develop existing population centers. To encourage this development, many zurenas live on the mainland, where they grow wealthier with an advantaged location, despite the risk posed by the storms, hostile humanoids and a lack of attention from the government.

Other concerns deal with the constant threat of a restoration of the monarchy. Overall, the citizenry is content with their freedoms but, among the lowest classes, there is a resentment of the privilege and decadence of their betters. Most dissenters live on the mainland, adding yet another reason for Ahznomahn to focus on its holdings there. Worse, with the rumors of an heir still alive, the zurenas fear an emergence of a folk hero to challenge their authority.

Status

Wealth is power. All privileges, status and influence derive from an individual's personal worth. The poor have few, if any, rights, little security and lead miserable lives under the oppressive weight of a society only respecting power and wealth. Make no mistake, a powerful merchant prince, or zurena, who holds extensive power through vast resources retains his position only so long as he maintains his wealth. Zha-nehzmish is full of stories of influential merchant princes who fell from power after a pirate attack on an important shipment. In fact, a large number of the low and destitute have memories of their former glory but are forced to live in squalor and disgrace until they can somehow restore their former wealth, if ever.

Despite Ahznomahn's elitism, its citizens enjoy an open class system, where the lowliest citizen can hope to hold a seat in Parliament as a zurena. Of course, while all the citizenry could conceivably rise above their lots through hard work, dedication, and a lot of luck, the extant members of Parliament are resentful of those who would presume to become one of the nation's elite. It is common to see smaller zurenas suddenly turn upon an ascendant merchant prince and sabotage his efforts to gain political power. Therefore, while advancement is possible, it is rare.

Ahznomahn has several social classes encompassing different professions and occupations. There are no overt hierarchies, as this would go against the nature of the society, but there is a clearly defined organization of people throughout. Despite the class barriers inherent in a merit-based culture, people tend to move in and out of social classes depending on their industry, luck and savvy.

The lowliest social class is the slave. Like much of Tellene, slaves are common in Ahznomahn. Most slaves in Ahznomahn come from the poor who sell themselves or their children to pay a debt, to feed their family, or for a host of other reasons. The next largest segment of the slave population comes from natives captured in the interminable wars along the borders of the Vohven Jungle; hence, they consist of wild elves, savage humans and other, more dangerous, humanoids. Sold by the state, the revenues generated fund roads, public services and the like. Finally, the rest of the slaves are either brought into the country by slaving ships, or who were convicted of a crime and sentenced to slavery.

Slaves serve as the bulk of the labor force for most merchant houses. They work on the docks as common laborers, porters or carriers. The more valuable slaves, those with some skill, find better placement in larger houses that are able to afford them. However, unlike slaves of some nations, such as Pel Brolenon, slaves can buy their way out of slavery. To facilitate this, each year, on the anniversary of the purchase, slave owners must take their slaves back to the auction block, where the experts assess the slave's value. This gives the slave a supposedly unbiased price to match to gain freedom. Many times, unscrupulous

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slave owners bribe the auctioneers to keep a slave's value high to prevent the slave from ever winning his freedom.

Once slaves are freed, they enter either the unskilled laborer caste or the skilled laborer caste, depending on the skills of the individual. Universally poor, the unskilled laborers have a difficult time finding work, for slaves perform much of the work they seek. Throughout the year, these laborers gather at the docks just to scrape barnacles off the hulls, unload cargo, or do anything they can to earn at least a few copper coins.

The skilled laborers have it better. These citizens are the craftsmen, guild workers, guards and everyone who has a trade and can earn a living. While they lack any kind of appreciable power, they can feed themselves with regularity, and earn a modest income. Slaves with such a skill can enter this class.

Above the skilled laborers is a narrow middle class consisting of lesser merchants, officers in the Ahznomahnii military, scholars and most clerics. These citizens enjoy more stability in their lives, with greater respect and access to the higher echelons of Ahznomahnii society.

The next most powerful class consists of merchant princes, high-ranking officers, wealthy foreigners who live in Zha-nehmish, and the heads of the churches. These citizens influence the decisions of the zurenas and can exert political pressure to fight or push for new laws, tariffs or other taxes. Monarchists and the descendants of the old nobility have a sizeable presence at this level.

The last tier of Ahznomahn's social classes is the Parliament. One is not born into this social class; one must earn it. To become a zurena, you be worth at least 75,000 gold Anvims, and

have been born in Ahznomahn. Proof of both must be presented, which helps to prevent certain undesirables from gaining entry into the zurenas but also creates a thriving business for forged documents. Seats in parliament are in high demand, for the zurenas control all government functions and the military. Hence, a citizen desiring a life in politics must first be successful in business. A citizen who becomes a zurena must give up his/her surname, adopting a practice first started by Svimohzish wizards.

The Zurenas

Even when the zurenas are not fighting amongst themselves, the political climate in the upper tiers of Ahznomahnii society is dangerous and bloody. Rival houses employ spies and assassins to dispatch their enemies. The various powerful temples in Zha-nehmish coerce weaker zurenas to vote in their interests, while non-seated local or foreign merchants can impose weighty economic sanctions against members of Parliament to convince them not to tariff certain imports, relax watch patrols in certain sections of the city, or build up military offenses in the Vohven Jungle. Despite the power the zurenas wield, they are all still subject to the demands of the upper class. Of the zurenas, five members are particularly powerful and stand at the forefront of Ahznomahnii politics.

ALZHAN

Alzhan (NG aristocrat 15), the father of the young hero Aleshdin, is a popular force for good among the zurenas. He works closely with the Home Foundation, representing their interests, while also protecting his position with their powerful backing. Many of the zurenas respect his position and form a sizeable coalition to advance his views. Alzhan's greatest rival and enemy is the beautiful Minona. Where she would devote the nation's resources to starting an ill-advised war with the savages in the Vohven Jungle, he would rather put national funds into the navy to curb piracy.

Alzhan is in his 60s, with short gray hair, dark skin and friendly features. He wears comfortable clothes in bright colors in the traditional Svimohzish style and cut. He walks with a limp he gained after riding over a cliff while fleeing from pirates.

MINONA

The most seductive and charismatic of the zurenas, Minona (NE aristocrat 8/sorcerer 2) has interests in the slave trade, and brokers for an added military presence in the Vohven Jungle. Alzhan, who has ties to the Home Foundation and while not publicly against slavery, opposes harvesting slaves from the Vohven Jungle. Minona uses her vast wealth and her beauty to convince others to her thinking.

Minona is an attractive woman with dark skin and long black hair. She favors revealing clothing and cosmetics to enhance her already appealing figure. She wears low-cut dresses in the Kalamaran fashion. She constantly has a paramour on her arm, when not in the company of Zhashosa (below).



WHERAHZNI

Representing the interests of the Golden Alliance, Wherahzni (LN aristocrat 7/Alliance merchant 3) enjoyed a meteoric rise to power. With money amassed through his contacts in the Alliance, and being able to stave off the saboteurs and assassins hired to prevent his climb in Parliament, he quickly secured a seat in the zurenas. That was ten years ago. Now, Wherahzni, representing the mercantile interests of one of the largest organizations in all of Tellene, is a sizeable presence inside the zurenas. Those zurenas siding with the Alliance have all profited, making the prospect of joining their ranks appealing to most. In the contest between Minona's faction and Alzhan's, Wherahzni remains neutral, though both sides court his group with promises of gold and increased influence.

Wherahzni is a short middle-aged man who dresses like a fop in exquisite finery. Rings, bracelets and necklaces adorn his person. He is well manicured, and always smells faintly of jasmine and lavender. He has long, flowing brown hair, light brown skin and hazel eyes. He is never far from his personal bodyguard, a whip-thin elf with dead eyes and a cool manner.

ZHASHOSA

Representing the interests on the mainland, Zhashosa (LN fighter 2/aristocrat 8) is the great-granddaughter of a mighty general who led armies against the trolls in the Vohven Jungle and Awhom Forest. With her semi-famous ancestry, and her success in the mainland markets as a distributor, she entered the zurenas fifteen years ago. While a vocal advocate of Minona (some say they are lovers), she actually serves the last heir, Mizmohvam VI, by spying on zurenas and reporting the political developments to the monarchists. She plays a dangerous game, for if she is caught, her life (and the life of her liege) are forfeit.

Zhashosa is a short and stocky woman with dark skin and plain features. She keeps her hair short and she wears armor in public. Though lacking in grace and beauty, she makes up for it with her prowess as a warrior and her keen mind. If she were not a zurena, she could find a promising career in Ahznomahn's military. She is great friends with Aleshdin, although this relationship is not romantic in the least.

ZHULURAHN

Old Zhulurahn (N aristocrat 9) was a longstanding monarchist but rescinded his position after the fall. Even in his old age, he continues to work behind the scenes to restore power to the duke. He does not advocate a return to the corruption and tyranny of Meznamish but desires a monarch willing to cleanse Zha-nehzmish of foreigners and lead them to a greater glory. Zhulurahn abhors Wherahzni and sides with Zhashosa.

Zhulurahn is an ancient, wrinkled thing, giving the impression of a spider. He moves slowly, watchful of events as they unfold in the Parliament. His wispy white hair frames his long face. Cataracted eyes stare from beneath his long and bushy eyebrows. He wears expensive robes, but despite his cleanliness, he smells of jilipsi snuff, to which he is addicted.

Ahznomahn has two attitudes regarding foreign affairs. The first is to be neutral in all affairs beyond Svimohzia. Who rules what city, who is at war with whom, and all the treacheries and intrigues of foreign kings have little impact on the merchants of Ahznomahn. Gold speaks louder than ideology. The second attitude is to command a powerful presence in Svimohzia and do whatever it takes to keep Meznamish from regaining its former glory. As long as Meznamish remains crippled, Ahznomahn's place is secure. If Meznamish ever regains its former prominence, Ahznomahn may face a war it cannot win.

Foreign Interests

Ahznomahn employs diplomats to represent its political interests in other nations and to report favorable or dangerous developments back to Zha-nehzmish. Ahznomahn has few diplomats beyond the Straits of Svimohzia and uses their resources mostly to develop embassies in the nations of its neighbors. Ahznomahn has two embassies in Ozhvinmish and one in Zazahni, as well as a diplomatic presence in Bet Kalamar, Bet Urala, Sobeteta, Rosaleta and Oloseta.

EMBASSY OF SVOWMAHNI

Ahznomahn charges the ambassador to eastern Ozhvinmish, in Svowmahni, with assessing the city's economic power. As an important trading hub, merchants from Kalamar, Pel Brolenon, and Elos Bay frequent the city. Zha-nehzmish fears this city developing into a rival mercantile capital, and so uses its representatives to keep constant attention on developments unfolding there. In addition, the ambassador is to report any economic or commodity trend as it develops. Most of the information Zha-nehzmish receives is dated, however, as distance is a great barrier. The Assembly of Guilds is aware of the purpose behind Ahznomahn's emissary and uses their agents to feed Zha-nehzmish faulty and misleading information.

EMBASSY OF ASHOSHANI

While building trade relations and peace accords with Western Ozhvinmish, Ahznomahn's emissaries frequently send infiltrators to sneak into Meznamish and acquire intelligence. Given the city's minor role in trade, Ahznomahn has little interest here other than watching King Shahn III.

BET URALA

Bet Urala is a profitable trading center for Ahznomahnii merchants, dealing in spices, herbs, rare woods and more. With the influx of Svimohzish immigrants, Ahznomahnii diplomats (in conjunction with Golden Alliance spies) keep extensive records on all those who come to Bet Urala, and watch for Meznamishii spies or threatening alliances developing between the Kingdom of Basir and Meznamish. The Ahznomahnii ambassador counsels Princess Dela to remain single, as she is friendly to Ahznomahn and a marriage could confuse the relationship between the kingdom and the southern confederacy.

SOBETETA

Sobeteta sees many Svimohzish emigrants, whom Ahznomahnii agents infiltrate, hoping to establish businesses and gain a solid foothold on the continent to facilitate greater trading between Kalamar and Ahznomahn. Unfortunately, this is not easy, given Duke Sorabek's ruthless practices to ensure the security of his city.

ROSALETA

Ahznomahn has long tried to secure a foothold in Rosaleta, but faces strong competition from merchants hailing from Bet Kalamar and Sobeteta, where it is more convenient to land. Still, Ahznomahnii merchant princes believe they could sell much merchandise, if only the cost of transportation was somehow lessened.

National Opinions on Foreign Affairs

The people of Ahznomahn share the national interests on foreign policy as detailed above. The average citizen is unconcerned by foreign wars, plagues or anything else affecting those on the continent. Their ambivalence stems from the latent resentment of those who would subject themselves to a king's rule. Moreover, as long as the gold flows in Zha-nehzmish's marketplaces, the citizens are content.

On the other hand, Ahznoms are deeply concerned with developments in other parts of Svimohzia. The greatest fear is Meznamish will one day reclaim Ahznomahn, and the liberties granted by their independence would vanish. The majority of these feelings are the result of careful propaganda spread by the zurenas, who regularly remind the people of the nation that, as long as the zurenas are intact, citizens with will, drive and ambition can join their esteemed ranks and rise above the squalor of the common man's plight. With restoration of the monarchy, they claim, hardships would return and every individual would suffer under a yoke of unbearable oppression. Thus, both the elite and the commoner watch Meznamish's movements with great interest.

Another issue consuming the national attention is the Vohven Jungle. For generations, Ahznomahnii merchants exploited the natives, trading worthless goods for valuable woods, spices and other rare commodities. Yet, over the last 20 years, hostilities between the Ahznomahnii merchants and many of the savage tribes escalated, resulting in raids terrorizing the mainland populace. With each raid, the cost of goods increases, increasing prices on the market and slowing business.

Most Ahznoms view Zazahni with suspicion, for rumor spreads that Zazahni warlords are in talks with Meznamish. The nature of these meetings is unknown, for Zazahni has not allowed any ambassadors in their nation for five years. This word comes from enterprising merchants plying the Zazahni markets with Kalamaran products traded in Zha-nehzmish. Most fear an alliance between the fractured Zazahni with the

stabilized Meznamish. Such a relationship might plunge the island back into war.

Capital drives Ahznomahn's foreign interests. As long as foreign buyers trade with Ahznomahn, the people do not care who rules what kingdom, or who is at war with whom. On the other hand, a threat to their prosperity interests all citizens equally, from the poorest laborer to the zurenas themselves.

CURRENT EVENTS

A major difficulty facing the Kingless Land stems from the Vohven Jungle. The parliament is in turmoil over what to do about the increasing hostilities there. The problems are the subject of hot debate among the zurenas, with Alzhan's faction blaming the uprisings on Minona's brutal slave trade. Likewise, Minona's coalition blames Alzhan and his cronies on their reluctance to increase patrols and impose a greater military presence. Others counter that by deploying more of their forces in the region, they would escalate the growing tensions with Zazahni, something no one wants.

Zazahni itself is also a large problem. With all the rumors of an alliance between Zazahni and Meznamish, Ahznomahn is beginning talks with other nations to buttress their own defenses. Despite their good terms, Ahznomahn resists approaching Kalamar for assistance in the case of war, for the populace will not accept indenture to a foreign nation, especially one who would like nothing more than to seize Ahznomahn for its wealth.

Instead of entreating Kalamar for military assistance, Ahznomahn returned to manipulating Ozhvinnish. Therein lies another problem. After nearly a century of independence, the rift between the western and eastern parts of the country has widened. People living in the east often emulate the Ahznomahnii customs, leaving behind the old ways to pursue mercantilism. As Svowmahni develops into a center of commerce, eastern Ozhvins become less dependent on their crown. While the east is making steady economic advances, the west remains as they always have, beholden to old customs and superstitions, with deep resentment for newer ways of thinking.

Finally, amidst the turmoil of the modern world, the old world stirs again. With the previous skirmishes in and around the Vohven Jungle less frequent and the patrols around the Awhom Forest lessened, prospectors turned to the ancient wood to explore for resources. At first, the returns exceeded expectations. With no savages nor other hazards of the Vohven Jungle to contend with, merchants and profiteers quickly descended on the forest, forgetting the legends of the place. After a year of cutting and mining, over 100 woodcutters and laborers suddenly vanished. Since then, bizarre creatures are reported to have emerged and attacked neighboring settlements and villages. The extent of their attacks has been devastating, wiping out whole communities at a time and leaving not a trace of the dead. The raids add a new dimension to the difficulties facing the zurenas and place a greater strain on the nation's military.

ECONOMY

Ahznomahn relies on taxes from trade to keep its economy alive. Without trade, especially without Zha-nehzmish, Ahznomahn would collapse, for it lacks the resources to survive on its own.

Trade

From a trade route with Shrogga-Pravaaz, Ahznomahn gains precious stones and metals. From Bet Kalamar, they gain beets and olives. Largely though, their business comes from two major trade routes: the Reanaarian Run and Merchant's Run. The Reanaarian Run travels from Zoa through the Sea of the Dead, wraps around the Obakasek Peninsula across to the Kalamaran Sea and then to the Mezh-Vowmi Isle. Although a dangerous voyage, the promise of gold is considered well worth the risks. In the case of the Merchant's Run, ships travel from Bet Kalamar, through the Windy Straits to sell whatever wares they have before moving on to southern Brandobia and vice versa.

One of Ahznomahn's key industries is breeding highland dancers, steeds notorious for their intelligence and agility. Also important are the rare spices and herbs from the Awhom Forest and Vohven Jungle.

Taxation

Where the nation thrives is through its substantial import and export tariffs. Through heavy taxes, the nation generates substantial income and maintains security at the marketplaces throughout the nation. Furthermore, Ahznomahn is not particular about the types of goods sold or to whom they sell them. One is just as likely to see a kobold peddling gems, as he is likely to see a Kargi slaver manhandling elven slaves.

In addition to the steep tariffs at the ports (6% of the total worth of the goods), all people entering and leaving Ahznomahn pay a tax. Each person entering the nation pays 3 sp. Each horse costs 1 sp. Undesirables, such as hobgoblins, orcs and Meznams, pay 5 sp. Travelers pay these taxes at any town they enter. Upon payment, the visitor gains a certificate of authorization. Landbound travelers pay the same rate to leave, which is due when they apply for their certificate of authorization. In port cities, visitors simply pay when they get off a ship and again when they board a ship. Forging these documents is difficult, requiring a successful Forgery check (DC 20) to succeed. In addition, the forger must also have a seal manufactured only by the Parish of the Prolific Coin. Getting a seal on the black market is expensive, costing more than the tax itself.

Currency

Like other human Svimohzish countries, Ahznomahn uses slightly rounded, eight-sided coinage minted with platinum, gold, silver and copper. Ahznomahnii coins proudly display the



University of Zha on the obverse, with a variety of images on the reverse, below the words "1 [name of coin]" in Svimohzish. The copper Cheap has no image on the reverse, only the words. The silver Hawker displays a crowded marketplace, the gold Anvim a lush jungle tree filled with fruit, and the platinum Zova a merchant ship.

EXCHANGE RATES

Ahznomahn normally accepts currency from other lands as long as the weights are similar. Some marketplaces, especially in Zha-nehzmish, require trading in Ahznomahnii coin. There is a flat 10% exchange fee for all foreign coins and a 25% fee on Meznamishii coins.

LANGUAGES

With many diverse visitors coming to Zha-nehzmish, the sounds of the various languages form a cacophony. Wild elf slaves sing Low Elven songs on the docks, while Kalamaran sailors argue in their own tongue. Languages native to the continent and those of other humanoids are not the only ones spoken here; all of the Svimohzish dialects are present, with some speaking with the lilt of an eastern Ozhvin, or in the halting speech with thick consonants of a backwater rustic. Zha-nehzmish enjoys a chorus of many tongues and the rest of the nation enjoys rich and diverse languages.

Merchant's Tongue

Ahznomahn is the birthplace of Merchant's Tongue, a language born of the need for a common speech to transcend nationalities. As a hodgepodge of Svimohzish, Low Kalamaran, Reanaarese and many more tongues, most races have little problem learning the language. Merchant's Tongue developed along the Ahznomahnii coast in the smaller trading centers circa 210 C.M., and in 50 years became Ahznomahn's official second language. Through Zha-nehzmish's placement as a mercantile capital, Merchant's Tongue spread throughout the rest of Tellene in all but the most remote places.

Some people in other nations see Merchant's Tongue as a low form of speech, useful only in the bazaars and marketplaces. This is not true in Ahznomahn; the language makes strides at replacing Svimohzish as the nation's official language. Even the commoners and slaves know at least a few words, and it is fashionable to drop Merchant's Tongue expressions and words into everyday speech.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

The values of Ahznomahn are a mixture of ideals and beliefs inherited from Zassho natives and Meznam conquerors. Constant exposure to value systems of other cultures bled into the hearts and minds of a tolerant people. However, even though many people outwardly disdain the customs of the west, Ahznomahns, at heart, are Svimohz. They share a common history, outlook and attitudes towards etiquette.

Style of Dress

Style of dress in Ahznomahn is an expression of wealth. The wealthier the individual, the more elaborate the clothing, the richest wearing silks with metallic thread and glittering jewelry.

Common Ahznomahnii males wear homespun tunics and breeches, always of colorful fabrics. They favor intricate patterns and designs woven into the clothes. These are dyed one color, for they cannot afford multiple dyes. Instead, they weave the patterns into the fabric itself - the more complex, the better. In the rainy season, they wear "mud-shoes" - sandals with high soles to keep out of the mud.

Women wear long skirts, similar to the clothing worn by men of their station. They wear revealing shirts cut low and short to keep cool in the warmest months. In the rainy seasons, they add shawls or cloaks with woven patterns. Like men, they go barefoot, except in the rainy season, when they wear mud-shoes.

Middle-class Ahznoms break from the traditional garb of their poorer counterparts, embracing Kalamaran fashion, although with a definite Svimohzish twist. Men wear bright breeches, with random colored threads. They wear lightweight shirts, coordinating the colors to their pants. Most of the middle class goes clean-shaven. Men wear shoes year round. Women wear scandalous pants and baggy flamboyant shirts, in stark contrast to the poor, where Kalamaran fashions have yet to take hold. Their low-cut blouses leave little to the imagination and many keep the company of several suitors.

The zurenas and the rest of the upper class vary their dress, as their wealth affords them greater flexibility insofar as style is concerned. Many of the political elite wear traditional Svimohzish garb - beautiful and elaborate clothes with multi-colored threads and dyes with gold thread woven into the material. Accenting this formal garb is gold jewelry, rings, wide bracelets and necklaces depicting religious imagery, feathers or sunbursts.

On the mainland, fashion is slower to change. Middle class citizens wear traditional Svimohzish garb, being truer to their heritage. The upper class is far more daring than even the zurenas in Zha-nehzmish, wearing the wildest clothing, changing fashions with caprice. Their distance from the capital breeds a false conception of what life is like, and the rich compensate for their distance with outward expressions of their wealth.

Festivals

Festivals in Ahznomahn are expensive and elaborate. These events commemorate a religious, historical or economic event. Festivals signify a break in labor, allowing the poor and rich a much welcomed respite from the toil of their lives. What follows are the major festivals of Ahznomahn, organized by seasons, regions and social class.

SEASONAL FESTIVALS

The Festival of Breakfast: Every year, The Temple of the Stars funds a grand event the night before the first of Renewal. Throughout Famine, workers prepare ships for new ventures, navigators plot courses, and merchants oversee the packing of goods, readying them for the voyage to a distant marketplace. After a month of preparation, the Temple of Stars unveils the Festival of Breakfast, starting at sunset on the last day of Famine and continuing until dawn at the docks of most of the larger port cities. This is a time of blessings, of an opportunity to show the wonders of the world, where merchants can make an early sale before departing for distant ports. Many foreign travelers come to Zha-Nehzmish and other ports early, braving the dangerous and wintry seas to sell their wares for this festival.

During the festival, placards and banners with symbols of the Traveler decorate street corners and hang from high windows. Most people wear symbols of the shooting star on their collars in respect for the Nimble Navigator. While this is a time of goodwill and hope, the Profiteers also make a showing, collecting taxes and transforming the festival into a vast money-making enterprise.

Sacrifice: The most hated of events by common folk, Sacrifice falls on the first day of Frosting. Profiteers move as a processional through the streets and collect taxes from all the citizens. Once all have given, the Profiteers return to their temples and celebrate their good fortunes in the past trading season.

Vohmi Day: Vohmi Day both celebrates Ahznomahn's independence and Meznamish's collapse. Falling on the second Godday of Mustering, Vohmi Day is a riotous holiday full of carousing, free-flowing food and drink, and humor. In the week leading up to the day, families construct effigies of the old king - the more outrageous the better. The Vohmi doll is treated as a member of the family in jest, sitting with them at dinner, at sporting events, and just about everywhere else. Ahznoms encourage lewd and demeaning effigies.

When Vohmi Day arrives, people exchange gifts and then pour into the streets. Food and drink are free on Vohmi Day, so even the poorest citizen can enjoy the day's festivities. The people take all of their Vohmi dolls to a central marketplace, or in the case of Zha-nehzmish, throughout all six marketplaces, where they await the pyres. At nightfall, when the people are drunk, full and tired from a day of games, socializing and other entertainments, they all convene in the square. Here, the most popular and successful businessmen play to the crowds, making jests at the expense of Meznamish until the festival culminates in a great burning of the dolls. Sometimes, an unfortunate Meznam lands in Ahznomahn during Vohmi Day, where these outsiders find themselves in the heart of the conflagration. This happens very, very rarely in Zha-nehzmish and the bigger towns, but in the rural areas, it happens all too frequently.

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REGIONAL FESTIVALS

Daresvim Day: The second Pelsday of Declarations is a great holiday for merchants, where they acknowledge the great Duchess Daresvim and her esteemed rule. The Home Foundation began this holiday to celebrate the Duchess' birthday instead of her wedding anniversary, as she never married. While Ahznoms have all but erased the legacy of dukes, as a whole they still revere the Golden Duchess, for she established Ahznomahn's cultural identity as a nation of wealth.

Gold streamers decorate the major thoroughfares. Passion plays featuring the Holy Mother bestowing blessings on the young duchess are a central attraction in Zha-nehzmish, with young girls desperate to play the role of the Daresvim. Other plays recount the duchess' wisdom, her successes and victories, although embellishments modernize the tales to reflect the current political climate, such as by increasing the role and importance of the merchants.

The mainland does not recognize this holiday to the same extent as Mezh-Vowmi Isle. The successes and victories of Daresvim never affected the people of mainland territory, and with the unrest to the south, there is little time or interest in commemorating a holiday most perceive as frivolous and counter to the ideology of the modern nation.

The Week of the Snake: An ancient holiday inherited from the Zassho natives, the origins of this elaborate mainland celebration are lost in antiquity. Most scholars believe it marks the liberation of humanity from the purported reptilian masters. Other, more conservative, historians chalk up the

festival to an ancient defeat of a dragon, slain by some forgotten folk hero.

Regardless of its origin, the Week of the Snake always occurs in the third week of Snowfall and only in rural territory, where the Zassho bloodline is purer and the memories of a time before the zurenas are clearer. Each day, a group of performers dress in paper costumes, appearing as monstrous snake creatures. They march through the streets, where at the end of their march they mock-sacrifice a different young girl. Always watching on is the hero, a masked figure with exaggerated features, with stern eyes and long black hair. After each "sacrifice" he shakes his spear at the mocking snake-men, to the boos and catcalls of the gathered crowds. The monsters respond with outrageous roars and boasts. On the seventh day, as the snake men mount the steps to the altar, the hero springs out from behind the altar and a great combat ensues, where the hero defeats all the snake men, who then "flee" the town.

CLASS FESTIVALS

Dawn of the Storms: Ahznomahn suffers from severe spring storms, wreaking havoc on the mainland and, sometimes, on Mezh-Vowmi Isle. In a superstitious effort to protect their investments, many merchants and zurenas "pay" the Storm Lord and the Creator of Strife to spare their ships. These payments include a handful of gold cast into the Kalamaran Sea after a brief pilgrimage. Dawn of the Storms occurs just before the Festival of Breakfast. Impious and canny thieves, well aware of these pilgrimages, lie in wait to harvest the coins after the merchants depart, although the Minions of Misfortune living on the surrounding islands prey upon those thieves in turn. The lucky can make a fortune, while the unlucky lose the salt of their bodies through a terrible ritual at a secret Temple of Strife.

Birth Customs

The birth of a child is a blessing and an auspicious sign of good fortune. The mother makes weekly ritual prayers to Moimivam the Holy Mother, Shanano the Pure One and Movan the Fate Scribe to ask for an easy and live birth. Mothers make these ritual prayers to help prevent Namona the Mistress of Spite's attention.

Shortly after the child's birth, the whole family turns out for the event and all members donate gold for the child's care. This celebration is expensive, for the mother must house all of her family members, either in her own house or in hostels. However, the gold she gains from her family members usually more than compensates for the additional burden.

At the end of the celebration, the parents take the child to register at the Parish of the Prolific Coin and pay a tithe for a blessing from Gohlhim the Landlord to watch over the child. The tithe always comes from the family's gifts and is a gold equivalent of 20% of its value. The Profiteers claim the tithe is to purchase the child from the Landlord.



Spies in snake masks... or worse?

Coming of Age

The coming of age ceremony is an important day. It serves to release a parent from the obligations of paying for the child's upkeep, though they often continue to do so, and reflects the child's start in life as a contributor (either a buyer or a seller) to the marketplace. These ceremonies also announce the child is ready for marriage. These events rarely mark the young adult's departure from home, for children often remain in their parents' homes until married.

Ahznoms mark the Coming of Age ceremony for both girls and boys with a large celebration, music, gifts and entertainment. The celebration involves family members, but wealthier citizens invite business associates. An invitation to such an event is an honor, suggesting the outsider is considered family - a value all Svimohz hold dearly.

At the end of the ceremony, the mother and son, or father and daughter, hold a cord. The other parent cuts it, symbolizing the break between parent and child. Boys undergo their coming of age at 16 and girls at 14.

Marriage

All marriages in Ahznomahn are arranged, although the prospective bride and groom must agree to the match. The mother begins the process of marrying off her child by sending out discrete inquiries to prominent or important houses to gauge the availability of the match. If a house is interested, they arrange an introduction between the prospective couple. Such introductions can continue for weeks with prominent houses where a union is highly sought. The would-be bride dismisses all suitors not to her liking, and thus the courtship with the one she finds acceptable begins.

Courtships last until just one suitor remains. The suitor or the girl can end the process at any time. During this time, an older sibling or aunt supervises the suitors and the daughter when they are together. The couple exchange gifts throughout this period, with the woman bestowing small tokens on those she likes, or even those she does not like (to make the ones she does jealous), while suitors return the favors with gifts of their own. During this time, no gift or token should ever exceed 1 gp.

When one suitor remains, or when the lady chooses, the parents set the marriage date. Both families pay a dowry price, where the wealthier of the two families pays the poorer an agreed-upon sum, and the poorer agrees to house the young couple for one year and a day. Young adults are encouraged to marry within their economic status, and parents will often go so far as to forbid marriages to poorer families, although poorer families are desperate to wed their children to the wealthier group.

As the process leading up to marriage is a complex arrangement of gifts and negotiations, divorce is difficult and rare. The individual leaving the marriage must pay the spouse the dowry price paid during courtship. An outright refusal to honor this demand, or failing to do so, causes grave consequences of imprisonment or exile.

Death Customs

When a person dies in Ahznomahn, it is considered a terrible tragedy, for the individual can no longer earn gold. As soon as a citizen dies, a Profiteer comes to collect 10% of the family's wealth so the dead will have coin to spend in the afterlife. The remainder of wealth usually transfers to the heirs.

The funeral involves a large ceremony, bringing family members from many lands to attend. A cleric of the family's patron deity presides over the ceremony. People in Ahznomahn wear white to ward off Zazimash the Harvester of Souls. There is somber music, wailing and tearing of the clothes. At the end of the day, the heir takes over the family business, and the mate, if any, enters a period of mourning lasting 49 days. At the end of this time, he or she is free to remarry.

The only exception to the recognized death customs is when a slave or the lowest of laborers die. These unfortunates are buried in mass burial sites on the outskirts of the city or town. If available, a Profiteer gives a blessing in hopes the dead stay dead.

Food and Drink

Like other areas of Svimohzia (see Chapter One: Races and Regions), Ahznomahn's staple food is rice. (Ahznomahn can also count on Zazahni and Ozhvinmish for other grains.) It finds its way into most meals, from simple brown rice dishes to the more expensive rice noodles. Fish is also a surplus here, with Zazahni and Basiran merchants trading goats and pigs (both meats being in high demand) and gaining a good price for them. To supplement their meat consumption, many Ahznomahnii citizens add legumes and fowl to their meals.

If one thing can be said about Ahznomahnii cuisine, it is spicy. Ahznoms use the hot seasonings to hide the taste of imported and turned meat. Standing as a counterpoint to the sharp and biting seasonings extracted from the Vohven Jungle is coconut milk, the base of many soups and stews, creating an exotic and complex harmony of the sweet and spicy. As a side dish, wealthy and middle class Ahznoms enjoy flatbreads made from ground millet and barley, providing nourishing and tasty meals. These are best when eaten with one of Ahznomahnii famous soups or stews.

Vegetable availability varies depending on the season. Many vegetables are available throughout the year, especially potatoes and onions - produce that is storable underground for long periods. In the fall, bell peppers, leeks and leaf plants are all available at reasonable prices in the market.

Alcoholic beverages are not as common in Ahznomahn as in other parts of the world, although most Ahznoms drink a wine called *svaley*, distilled from honey. It is similar to mead, but thicker in consistency with a hot ginger taste. Fresh water is readily available during the stormy seasons, and the waters on the mainland are pure and plentiful. In addition, the plentiful fruit trees allow Ahznoms to enjoy a wide variety of fruits and juices. Coffee is a staple for most meals.

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A special Ahznomahnii menu item available nearly year round is a stew called *whamehzen*, made from chicken, cayenne pepper, onions fried in the drippings from the chicken, garlic, ginger, a cup of chicken stock, ground fenugreek, cardamom and nutmeg, with a splash of lemon juice. Most Ahznoms serve this dish with barley flatbread and svaley or coffee.

Architecture

The dangerous seasonal storms blowing in from the south prevent traditional construction methods. On the mainland, most buildings are made of rammed earth, where they take clay and soak it thoroughly before pouring it into wooden frames to build the walls. Using flat metal poles, craftsmen tamp on the clay to compress and even it out. Once suitably rammed, the frames are allowed to dry in the sun. Once hardened, the buildings are assembled. These structures are extremely durable and weather resistant. For windows, most leave openings near the tops of the walls to allow the hot air to escape. Doors are bound wooden stakes or hide cloth.

In cities, most of the civic buildings and homes of the zurenas are stone, with glass windows. In the middle class and even the poor districts, the structures are wooden with plaster walls. In Zha-nehzmish, some buildings tower as high as four stories, while in smaller population centers, they reach as high as two. Wealthier neighborhoods feature large sprawling stone mansions that house the zurenas. As domes are exceedingly difficult to build, these structures have a central dome to enhance their prestige. All of these buildings are whitewashed and most have stone fences surrounding them.

Recreation

A culture's entertainment says much about its society. Violent cultures, like Ul-Karg, prefer blood sport, whereas peaceful societies tend to focus on physical and mental excellence. As important as work and commerce are to Ahznoms, so too are their games. The games they play, however, vary depending on the region. On Mezh-Vowmi, the city enjoys spectator sports such as arena fighting, rowing races and marathons, while on the mainland, horse races, equestrian team sports and hunting are preferred.

MAINLAND SPORTS

Horse Races: Given the dangers of marauding trolls and other horrors, footraces are not as safe on the mainland as they are on Mezh-Vowmi. Therefore, mainland citizens enjoy horse races where riders cross the distance from one city to the next. These races are not as simple as one rider reaching the destination before the others, however, for each rider carries a cudgel to club and beat other riders along the way. Striking a horse is grounds for disqualification. These races are never more than 10 miles.

Roads between close communities are common racetracks, where riders from each town compete against the other. The

most famous path for these races is the road between Rismish and Anowmish. All along the road are statuettes depicting past champions. Enohmi the Swift has nearly twenty dedicated shrines to his past exploits. Enohmi ran races for years on this stretch of road, and no one was as swift and brutal with the cudgel as he. In one race, locals claim he hit another rider so hard the rider fell off his horse, while his horse stopped dead in its tracks and then ran all the way back to Rismish.

Hunts: A great pastime in the south is the hunts. Warriors from all of the communities gather on the first day of Siege-Hold at Vohran to mount a hunting foray into the Vohven Jungle. This is dangerous, as the Vohven is home to any number of nasty creatures. The object of the hunt is to kill and bring back the carcass of a black dragon, but only once in over 200 years has a hunter returned with a kill. That hunter was the great ranger Uzahn who, it is said, traveled all of the Emerald Sea (another name for the Vohven Jungle).

The most common version of this myth is that Uzahn joined other hunters and entered the jungle. It is said that she and her entourage traveled for days, deeper and deeper into the deadliest regions of the jungle, until they finally happened upon a young black dragon lying in a pool of brackish water, not unlike a crocodile in wait for a kill. Her compatriots charged just as the dragon awoke, slaying most of them with one strafing stream of acid. Uzahn, however, avoided the breath weapon and dived into the pool, while the other hunters fought on or died screaming. Just as the dragon was about to rise up into the air, the story tells that Uzahn lassoed its hind leg and hung on as the dragon flew up past the trees. As they flew, she hacked at the dragon with her sword, nimbly avoiding its deadly claws until, tired and bleeding, the dragon fell back to the earth. Proud of her victory, and of escaping the fall with just a broken leg, she and her surviving comrades dragged the dragon back to Vohran where they were greeted as heroes. Unfortunately, the wily dragon was merely playing dead, and awoke to snatch up Uzahn before flying back to its lair deep in the Emerald Sea.

Polo: A more sane sport than the Hunt, and one played almost year around, is polo. All of the major mainland communities have a team and a field, frequently challenging other communities to contests. The rules are simple, with both teams riding horses and using mallets to hit a leather ball into the opposing team's goal. Again, the polo players are allowed to strike the other riders with their wooden mallets, but not to hit the horses.

Currently, the best team is in Vivahni. Other people speculate their players have hobgoblin blood for their ferocity on the field. Called the Pale Riders, they have not lost a game in three years, are jealously admired by almost every other town in Ahznomahn.

MEZH-VOWMI SPORTS

Arena Fighting: Sports on Mezh-Vowmi are mostly spectator sports. Having seen the gold earned from arena

fighting in other cities, Zha-nehzmish constructed a coliseum named Whenohlzha, "the House of Sport," to hold gladiatorial contests. The entertainment there ranges from pit fighting to man versus beast contests to the crowd-pleasing monster fights. Gladiators come to Zha-nehzmish from many lands to win accolades and rewards for their successes in battle.

The combatants in the greatest demand are captured Meznam sailors. Five years ago, a captured Meznam noble fought in Whenohlzha and personally defeated three ogres, much to the shock of the gathered crowds. In the fight, he suffered a horrific wound to the head. In his dying words, as his lifeblood sloughed out of the hole, he cursed the crowds, damning them to "choke on their gold." His curse has become something of a joke, for the Profiteers took his corpse and dipped it in molten gold, mounting the grotesque statue near the ticket box in front of the coliseum's main gates.

Marathons: Similar to the horse races on the mainland, Ahznoms enjoy marathon races, where runners begin the race at Sehnohrmish and run the approximately 50 miles to the capital. The runners are all slaves owned by the zurenas, who pit them against one another. Many Ahznoms bet on particular and famous runners. Over the years, the marathon has become a spectacle as great as arena fighting, and some even entertain the thought of arming the runners with weapons to bridge the gap between the two entertainments.

OTHER GAMES

When not watching two creatures tear each other apart, or placing bets on the swiftest runner, people spend their time playing a variety of games. Two games stand out as particularly Ahznomahnii.

Hoop Tug: What originally began as a child's game, tug of hoop is rapidly developing into popular physical game requiring agility and endurance. The basic idea is as follows: two contestants wield long staffs with a hook at either end. Between them is a ring made of wicker or some other material. The objective is to keep the ring upright and steal it from the other player. The game is difficult, because the ring cannot leave the ground nor can a player use two hands at any time on the staff. Whoever knocks away the other's staff while keeping the ring upright wins.

Coins: A sedentary game challenging the mind and purse, this game is similar to checkers except, instead of wooden tokens, players use coins. Whenever you take the other player's coin, you keep it. When one of your coins reaches the other side of the board, the opponent has to pay twice the value of the coin.

RELIGIONS

As a land of money, business and greed, the Landlord is the dominant god in Ahznomahn. Temples to Gohlnim stand throughout the land and are featured in the marketplaces in every population centers, except in Zha-nehzmish, where several smaller temples spread through the metropolis.

Although other gods are recognized, if not revered, all pay their homage to Gohlnim. Next in importance to the Parish of the Prolific Coin are the Home Foundation, the Temple of the Stars and the Founder's Creation.

Home Foundation

The Home Foundation survives as a potent force in Ahznomahn's religious circles despite the Parish of the Prolific Coin's hold. Larger communities have churches dedicated to the Holy Mother, while smaller shrines tended by a single Binder stand in the remote reaches of the land. The Brotherhood of Industry focuses on instilling the virtues of family and life in a nation perceived as being comprised of only heartless merchants. Given the Svimohzish tendency for family unity, the Home Foundation has achieved some success in establishing a greater hold on sacred institutions, such as marriage. The Brotherhood functions less as matchmakers and more as caretakers, building families out of the ruins of shattered lives. Many of the churches also serve as orphanages.

Parish of the Prolific Coin

The Parish operates in the same capacity here as it does throughout Tellene, except with a greater involvement in Ahznomahnii politics. Profiteers also claim to have the ear of Izenmas, serving as his mouthpiece when he must address the public or other members of Parliament. In fact, their influence in Zha-nehzmish has led to the destruction of impious families, passed laws, levied taxes, and more. Many believe the Parish of the Prolific Coin actually rules Ahznomahn, but none would voice such suspicions in the open.

On the mainland, the Profiteers fulfill the standard roles as they do on Mezh-Vowmi, functioning as lender, jeweler and appraiser. They occupy high positions in town governments and firmly advise merchants throughout the Confederacy. Their influence in the Vohven Jungle allows the exploitative trade relationship with the natives, but the natives grow tired of the abuses and now resist the priesthood and their demands.

Temple of the Stars

Wherever there are travelers there is bound to be a Journeyman. The Temple of the Stars has enjoyed a marked increase in attendance, through Emeni's efforts (see Who's Who in Ahznomahn, above) and the tolerance of a free society. Now shrines stand in almost all of the ports and river cities throughout Ahznomahn, with traveling clerics walking the land to spread word of the Nimble Navigator's blessings. Most of the priests work in southern Ahznomahn to safeguard the roadways from bandits and brigands. The zurenas meet with Journeymen to learn about developments on the nation's western borders.

The Founder's Creation

Minmivozh the Great Builder is well revered in the larger cities of Ahznomahn, and by its many builders and architects. Aside from their normal duties of city planning, roads, irrigation and sanitation systems, the clerics of Minmivozh also work with the city guards to uphold law and order. Guards, lawyers and judges often favor worship of this deity, as do many strong believers of law and order. Because the letter of the law often favors the zurenas, they prefer Builders of Law as mediators in their disputes.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Beneath the veneer of the beauty and wealth, Ahznomahn has a powerful underworld, with operatives of the Golden Alliance seizing political seats and infiltrating the government, and the ever-present threat of a Gray Cloak assassin plunging his knife in your back or poisoning your drink. In addition, the government fears the monarchists, operating covertly by planting seeds of unrest in the lower classes. Smaller groups of anarchists, monstrous types and dark priests operate in secret, working to unleash their terrors on the world.

The Golden Alliance

Wherahzni (see Domestic Politics, above) is a zurenas, and a Jewel of the Golden Alliance in Ahznomahn. He is responsible for the spread of the organization throughout Zha-nehzmish, opening the door to the rest of the nation. Beneath him are a number of Gems, non-zurenas, military officers and petty merchants. He now has such a large network of Trinkets and

Baubles, it is believed he is one of the most powerful men in all of Ahznomahn.

Activities: The Golden Alliance is active in Ahznomahn politics. It buys out smaller guilds and merchant houses to remove competition. Most of their resources go into developing new parliamentary members by isolating and reinforcing their positions through elimination of the competition.

Short-term goals: In the short term, the Golden Alliance wants to solidify their hold over the Ahznomahnii market. To do so, they must eliminate their competitors and control the ports. So far, they have agents inside the Parish of the Prolific Coin and allow their merchants to pass through and avoid the tariffs, while enforcing tariffs on non-Alliance merchants. In addition, they foment discord with the natives in the Vohven Jungle to draw attention from their activities in Zha-nehzmish.

Long-term plans: The Golden Alliance in Zha-nehzmish seeks to reunify Svimohzia, but wants this to be under Ahznomahn rule. By developing Svowmahni, the Golden Alliance creates a fierce economic competition between Ahznom and Ozhvin merchants, and exposes the backwater regions to modern ideas and systems. The Golden Alliance wants Eastern Ozhvinmish to secede from Western Ozhvinmish. However, they also desire war between the nation states, believing this will force Eastern Ozhvinmish to turn to Ahznomahn for aid. At Parliament's behest, Ahznomahn would lend troops and gold, but at a high interest rate, thereby bankrupting the country and forcing the independent nation to join Ahznomahn's Confederacy for protection. The combined economic might between Eastern Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn would be enough to crush Western Ozhvinmish and Meznamish. Zazahni would join the new Confederacy out of fear, leaving only the hobgoblins as a threat to be dealt with after unification.

Locations of greatest activity: The majority of the Golden Alliance's activities center in Zha-nehzmish. Smaller cells operate throughout the mainland.

Location of headquarters: The Golden Alliance in Ahznomahn headquarters in Zha-nehzmish, although there are other power centers throughout Tellene.

Gray Cloaks

The Gray Cloaks are a criminal organization that survived the Purging. Helshan Zide (see Who's Who in Ahznomahn, above) commands this band of thieves and murderers with a shrewd business sense and inhuman ruthlessness. Serving as his lieutenants are his elite force of expert killers called the *sedizehn*, or "silent knife" (see Chapter Two: Classes and Paths). Beneath them is a web of thieves and killers who prowl Zha-nehzmish in search for work and information.

Activities: Gray Cloaks are spies and assassins. They sell their services to the highest bidder, including Kalamaran spies, Brolesene slavers, Draskan emigrants and even Meznamish spies. They are the most despised group in the city. The Golden



Alliance works to find Helshan Zide, as he represents a major threat to their organization.

Short-term goals: The Gray Cloaks exist to turn a profit. They do not care who they work for or what crimes they commit, so long as they control the underworld. Loyal to Helshan Zide, they uncover secrets in politics to extort Parliament and guarantee Zide's survival. They have identified thirty Golden Alliance agents so far and are near to discovering who is in charge.

Long-term goals: Helshan wants to control Ahznomahn. A sociopath, he has no regard for human life, and does not care who dies to achieve his goals. With this first goal completed, he would extend his organization to other nations until he becomes the most feared man in the world.

Locations of greatest activity: The Gray Cloaks operate in Zha-nehzmish.

Location of headquarters: It is believed the Gray Cloaks base their operation somewhere in Zha-nehzmish, but none have found it.

Monarchists

The monarchists are a disaffected political organization surviving the dissolution of the monarchy in favor of Ahznomahn's current parliamentary system. The organization operates as independent cells of three members each, who receive orders and information from a main contact. Small, lean and completely isolated, these small groups work to restore the throne to Mizmohvam VI, who lives hidden away in a secret location. They have been unsuccessful, foiled as they are by the Golden Alliance that uncovers cells and ruins the members. If the monarchists have a leader, no one knows who it is.

Activities: Monarchists meet in the basements of homes, pass notes in busy taverns, and act as a secret resistance to Parliament. They spend most of their time talking about the restoration, with little physical action aside from an occasional bribe or act of vandalism. With the right leader, the monarchists could present a serious difficulty to a nation balanced on the precipice of war and unrest.

Short-term goals: The monarchists want the restoration of their party in Parliament. Through innuendo, subtle threats and constant attention to developments in the capital, they work to lift the ban on their existence. Ideally, they would have anarchy in the streets, impelling the people to call for their dethroned ruler.

Long-term goals: Clearly, monarchists want a king on the throne. They also want the Golden Alliance out of the nation. They are divided as to whether or not Ahznomahn should rejoin Meznamish, with restoration of the old empire in the minority.

Locations of greatest activity: The monarchists have cells in Zha-nehzmish, Rismish, Mezhvahn and Vivahni.

Location of headquarters: As far as any of the monarchists know, there is no central headquarters. What no member knows is that Meznamishii spies operate in the capital and

support the monarchist movement. Meznamish would like nothing more than to plunge Ahznomahn into civil unrest.

POPULATION CENTERS

Nearly a fifth of all Ahznoms live in Zha-nehzmish, the capital of the confederacy. The rest of the population gathers in the various towns scattered throughout Mezh-Vowmi Isle and the mainland. With the exception of the capital, few communities enjoy populations over a few thousand citizens.

Mainland

Despite the dangers posed by the Awhom Forest and the Vohven Jungle, communities exist scattered throughout the mainland. Almost all towns and hamlets stand on the shores of the various waterways draining into the eastern coast. These communities rely on river traffic for trade, supplies and news of the day. Though Ahznomahn has substandard roads, when compared to the roads of Kalamar, they do have extensive waterways. It is common to see barges, skiffs and other vessels, laden with raw materials making their way to the large port communities. The coastal population centers and the ones furthest west typically have walls to protect the communities from pirates or other horrors.

In the south, the waterways are less frequent, and travelers must rely on the roads that exist between the hills or along the coast. These highways are dangerous as Vohven Jungle raiders, Awhom Forest monsters, or simple brigands emerge to waylay travelers. Most of these small southern communities are situated along these roads rather than along the waterways, as is so common in the north.

Overall, most towns and hamlets are actually forts with a small local population to support them. These garrisons have twenty to fifty soldiers who patrol an area of up to about 20 miles away. Ahznomahn funds these unprofitable little mudholes to protect the rest of the nation from attacks originating from the Vohven Jungle or Awhom Forest.

The government offices stand in the center of a community at the highest point in the town. In smaller settlements, these are little more than fortified houses. A large courtyard surrounds the structure, and facing it are the most important temples. If the church has an established congregation, the temples are the same size, but each church has a unique build in accordance with their faith.

Beyond the encircling temples are the homes of the wealthy. They wall off their neighborhoods to prevent individuals from exploring their districts while heading towards their temples. Beyond the upper class lies the district of the Merchant class and common citizens.

Most Ahznomahnii towns have at least two markets, with more in large towns and one in the smallest of towns. One market is open to everyone in the community, rich or poor. Here, traveling merchants may rent stalls and sell their goods to the public. Colorful tents filled with exotic merchandise,

unusual creatures, foods and beverages, along with bolts of multicolored cloth, raw goods like metals and more are all available in most towns. In the remote and tiny communities, the merchants are locals, as the towns lack the financial reward to draw the more exotic dealers.

Ahznomahnii towns also have traditional shops. These are longstanding successful businesses located around the edges of the markets. As established businesses, they offer better merchandise than those found in the market but at a higher price. Most jewelers, metalsmiths and tailors occupy these narrow two-story buildings. On the ground floor is space for selling their goods, and they live upstairs.

At the edges of town are the undesirable businesses, like slaughterhouses, dyers and tanners. Many people live there as well, but all are poor, being unskilled laborers, escape slaves or criminals. Most roads in these parts are muddy and worn.

Outside of town are the farms. In mainland communities, these are rice paddies, with a central house, barracks for any slaves, and storage buildings to hold animals and equipment. These farms are large and extend for miles on the outskirts. On Mezh-Vowmi isle, fruit trees and vegetable gardens replace the rice fields.

Villages with populations of 1,000 or more people often have enclosure walls, usually made of tree trunks planted into the ground, tied together with rope and sporting at least three wooden watchtowers. Larger towns have stone enclosure walls with stone towers, having abandoned wood in favor of sturdier materials. In any case, the towns keep guards on the walls and man the gates to watch for suspicious travelers or threats.

Mezh-Vowmi Isle

As the eastern coast of this island withstands the worst of the seasonal storms, it is mostly devoid of people. A few scattered thorp exist on the rocky shores, but are too small or insignificant to appear on most maps. These little communities consist of a few caves where the people, Zassho natives, descend the slopes daily to fish in the sea.

To the north and south of the island, communities are slightly larger, consisting of little more than hamlets. The coastal roads terminate in these centers, but are in better condition than many of those found on the mainland. Smaller communities feature a central government building, such as a town hall or tavern, where most decisions are made. Few buildings exceed one story in height.

As one travels further west toward the capital, the roads improve and the towns and villages appear more modern. Multi-story structures dominate the center of the communities, with farms and fisheries all around the outskirts. Overall, most of these little towns are nothing more than extended manors for the capital's zurenas.

Zha-nehzmish

Population: 126,200 native Svimohz, plus 4,000 transients from all across Tellene.

A Closer Look: The largest city in all of Svimohzia, Zha-nehzmish (29°10'N, 6°45'W) explodes with growth. A great wall, reinforced by watchtowers, encircles the entire city. Three roads and a massive port are the entries into this teeming city, where beautiful whitewashed buildings crowd together, forming narrow streets filled with hawkers, merchants, buyers, thieves and lords. The gem of Svimohzia, Zha-nehzmish is perhaps one of the most beautiful cities in all of Tellene.

Zha-nehzmish is a teeming city, filled with both the wealthiest and the poorest people in the entire world. A 20-foot-tall wall of smooth granite surrounds the city. The walls are 10 feet thick and reinforced with iron bars and splays on the inside. Watchtowers, made of the same material, have only 5-foot-thick walls. The watchtowers have single iron doors granting access from the city's interior and rise 30 feet into the air. A watchtower can house ten men comfortably and all of these guards can make ranged attacks from within by using its arrow slits and the crenellated battlement above. Guards rarely man the walls except when visiting dignitaries arrive or in times of war.

To the west, northeast and south, roads enter the city through massive stone gates. There stand twenty guards and one to four Profiteers to collect taxes from travelers who have yet to pay for entry into the country. The guards are disciplined and well paid to ensure their loyalty and zeal in performing their required tasks. The gates remain open all day and into the night, closing at midnight and reopening four hours later. Thirty slaves push open and close the heavy stone gates, which close in the city. Entering the gates, one finds that the malodorous smells of the traditional city are absent here, as Zha-nehzmish has an extensive sewer system, buried deep beneath the city and working well.

The Old Nehzmish Quarter, called Nehzmish by some, is the westernmost and smallest district in Zha-nehzmish. The haven of the city's small middle class, it is developing into one of the nicest, if not very crowded, neighborhoods in the city. Most of the buildings are two-storied and situated very close to the street, seeming to crowd the roadways.

To the northeast are the estates that make Zha-nehzmish famous. The Zurena Quarter features rolling hills and elaborate palaces replete with romantic gardens that can move even the hardest heart. Cutting through the center of the city's elite is

The Old Nehzmish Quarter

Character: Old city, but improving

Businesses: Common; specialty shops, small markets

Prices: 120% normal

Gold Piece Limit: 80,000 gp.

Buildings: Row houses, narrow twisting alleyways

Guard Detail: Two patrols of four watchmen walk the streets day and night.

Zurena Way, paved with white blocks of marble imported from the mainland. Throughout the day, slaves work to keep the streets clean, removing animal droppings, polishing the marble and replacing broken tiles. Ordinarily, such decadence would be far too expensive for most cities, but Ahznomahn keeps slaves to perform the tasks for their food and shelter.

Two gates allow access to the Zurena Quarter. Elite guards man each gate, barring entry to any undesirables. These guards are vigilant in their duties and loyal to the extent they removed their tongues to prevent themselves from betraying any secrets of the zurenas they protect. In addition to the elite guards, they also keep trained lions.

The Zurena Quarter

Character: Wealthy and elite
Businesses: Rare (mostly estates); luxury goods
Prices: Double normal, except for masterwork and superior items
Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp.
Buildings: Palaces surrounded by beautiful gardens
Guard Detail: Two patrols of four watchmen during the day. At night, three patrols walk the district.

Most estates here are whitewashed, sprawling, multi-level structures with carefully tended gardens bearing sweet-smelling fruit and aromatic flowers. Although each compound features an enclosure hedge to block most from seeing into the individual estates, the hills in this district allow most to see over the walls. Many important members of parliament live here, although some others choose to live outside the walls - even as far away as the mainland or on one of the small islands along the coast.

The Zha Quarter, occupying the oldest and second largest area of the city, stands in the northeast. It is encircled by both outer and inner walls. The Mezh-Vowmi highway enters the district through the northwestern gate bisected by Crescent Street and continues to the very heart of the city. The buildings are beautiful, objects of true craftsmanship, with whitewashed walls common. The major governmental buildings, restaurants, and hostels lie all along the major run. The centerpiece is the University, where one can find scholars knowledgeable in history, astronomy, literature, visual arts, military, humanoid culture, languages and more.

The Zha Quarter

Character: Intellectual and powerful.
Businesses: Common; expensive taverns and inns, specialty shops.
Prices: 175% normal.
Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp.
Buildings: Opulent row houses, painted in soft light colors.
Guard Detail: Three patrols of four watchman and one elite watchman day and night. Most citizens here have their own personal guard.

In addition, within this quarter is the Parliament building - formerly a ducal estate that the zurenas co-opted when the Duke abdicated the throne. While they maintained the building's outer architecture, they long since removed all traces of the monarchy within, leaving an impressive structure and an outward symbol of the nation's independence from the tyranny of kings.

The Merchant's Quarter is the largest in the city, surrounding the bustling port and filled with all manner of shops, warehouses, homes and curiosities. Each day, these streets and alleys fill with buyers and sellers, making passage through this part of the city slow, and occasionally nearly impossible. Although considered one district, it actually encompasses several neighborhoods and areas. Nearest the port are two marketplaces, where most visiting merchants do their business. Taverns, inns and smaller shops line the walks, offering food, drink and other amenities to sailors too long at sea. The buildings here form narrow alleys and paths branching off the streets.

At the eastern edge of this quarter, many of the manufacturing and undesirable businesses thrive. Here, one can find Zha-nehzmish's slaughterhouses, tanners and dyers, creating a noxious atmosphere. Originally, these enterprises sat in the Old Nehzmish Quarter, but after the zurenas seized the northern

THE MERCHANT'S QUARTER

Merchant's Quarter: the Docks

Character: Exciting bazaar
Businesses: Frequent; various taverns, inns, shops and entertainment
Prices: 110% normal
Gold Piece Limit: 75,000 gp.
Buildings: Free standing businesses
Guard Detail: Three patrols of four watchmen and one elite watchman day and night. Most traveling merchants have their own personal guard.

Merchant's Quarter: the Merchant's Run

Character: Exciting market.
Businesses: Frequent; open air markets, vendors, street hawkers, and smaller specialty shops.
Prices: Normal.
Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp.
Buildings: Row houses with shops on the ground and basements, and apartments above.
Guard Detail: Two patrols of four watchmen walk the streets day and night.

Merchant's Quarter: East End

Character: Poor and dangerous.
Businesses: Frequent; brothels, dyers and tanners.
Prices: Normal.
Gold Piece Limit: 5,000 gp.
Buildings: Row houses and businesses
Guard Detail: One patrol of four watchmen walks the streets during the day and at night.

extent of the city, their proximity to the sights, sounds and smells of these industries drove them to relocate the rabble to the opposite end of the city. With those guilds went the poorest citizens in Zha-nehzmish. Though many of the buildings are newer than in the Old Nehzmish Quarter, they are falling into disrepair, as the criminal elements gain a stronger hold. Fortunately, four narrow soldier barracks stand here on the southeastern side of the city; what crime there is immediately around the barracks occurs with permission of the soldiers, and is mostly limited to gambling and whoring.

Economy: Trade determines the success of Zha-nehzmish, so the city does what it can to ensure continued trading throughout the year. Consequently, not even the savage southern storms are allowed to deter ships coming to port. Most traders and merchants come by ship and dock in the city's bustling port. On any day, hundreds of vessels wait in the port, unloading or loading cargo and promising passage to exotic lands or bringing news from around the world. Most of the trade occurs right on the docks as eager buyers clamber to purchase imported goods to take to one of the city's six marketplaces.

Having six marketplaces in the city allows a merchant to move his goods from a slow market to a thriving one on the opposite side of the city, if necessary. Each market charges a different price to set up shop, ranging from 15% of all collected income on the Zurena Market to no charge in the shady Poor Market. Despite the availability of these centers of commerce, many merchants simply set up shop on Merchant's Run, selling their goods to passersby.

THE SIX MARKETS

Name	Location
Dock Market	the Merchant's Quarter (docks)
First Square	the Zha Quarter
High Market	the Merchant's Quarter (central)
Old Market	the Old Nehzmish Quarter
Poor Market	the Merchant's Quarter (east end)
Zurena Market	the Zurena Quarter

Old Market faces Merchant's Run, nestled between several smaller shops and delicatessens. Fenced in by a low stone wall, merchants rent small lots of selling space inside. A standard plot sells for up to 1 Anvim per day. Reasonably priced for dealers in expensive goods, the price is too high for dealers in common foodstuffs to be profitable. Consequently, several smaller vendors collect outside on the street selling foodstuffs and other lower price commodities.

The next market is the Zurena Market, a cluster of permanent shops catering to those citizens who can afford their prices. Such things for sale here are things like mechanical toy soldiers, exquisite perfumes, clothing and more luxuries. When restocked with shipments from overseas, porters carry the

goods under the watchful eyes of heavily armed guards, who march the goods directly from the port to the estates. To set up shop here, a merchant must construct a permanent building and pay an annual tax to the city equal to 10% of income earned.

Next to the Zurena Market, First Square is probably the nicest in the city, and one of the busiest. Instead of outrageously high priced goods, this market caters to visiting dignitaries from foreign lands, government officials and Zha-nehzmish's elite. However, it is expensive to sell here and merchants must pay a 10% gp income tax per day.

Dock Market serves as Zha-nehzmish's most popular market. Here, vendors sell their goods from their ships, or along the piers. Unlike the other marketplaces, this one never closes. Goods are for sale all day and all night, with hostels, taverns and brothels open to serve customers. Each docking ship must pay the tax to enter Ahznomahn and another fee to sell, normally 1 gp per day.

High Market and Poor Market both stand in the Merchant's Quarter. High Market is nicer, safer and features a variety of goods available at reasonable prices. The High Market charges one to three silver pieces per day for a basic stall. The Poor Market is a bustling place attracting all sorts of dealers, as it is free to sell there. Individuals looking for illicit goods, smuggled items and anything else one could desire only have to look in the Poor Market. However, as the market has no income on its own, it is shabby, dangerous and has no security. Consequently, this is a haven for thieves.

Military: Regarding Ahznomahn's military, 700 light cavalry are housed in the Old Nehzmish Quarter. Led by the popular Aleshdin, these soldiers are the pride of the city. Aleshdin, especially these days, spends less and less time in the city, pulled away as he is to oversee the military operations on the mainland. However, when he is in the city, he parades his soldiers through the streets to bolster confidence in the nation through troubling times, and drills his men just beyond the eastern walls, an event nearly always drawing public attention. Aleshdin's men wear studded leather armor, and carry spears and composite short-bows. They all ride highland dancers.

In addition to the city's military, nearly 300 warriors are employed to serve as constables and guards to patrol the various neighborhoods and check on the criminal elements. Most of the guards are friendly with the merchants, as nearly all of them are on the payroll of some private dealer. Those of the Zha-nehzmish watch wear red cord armor and carry clubs.

Temples: Though Ahznoms tolerate all religions, having shrines and temples all throughout the city, none has the unchecked power of Gohlnim the Landlord. From the most dominant Parish near the University, Avenshi Sotar oversees the rest of the city's temples.

The Home Foundation has a large temple in the Merchant's District on Daresvim Road. Appearing as a large house, most of its space is used for the city's orphans. In addition to the nearly 40 rooms, it also features a long vestibule leading to the central altar for worship of the Holy Mother.

The Temple of the Stars is a tall building overlooking the docks. Holy symbols, murals of distant lands and religious imagery dominate the cathedral's exterior. Inside are beds, an altar and a pulpit for the high cleric to perform her daily rituals. Despite its size and placement, it remains in the figurative shadow of the Parish of the Prolific Coin.

Other faiths are also important in Zha-nehzmish. The majority of their temples and churches are situated in the Merchant's Quarter, which boasts temples dedicated to all religions found in Tellene. Good and neutral clergies line the streets with a few temples dedicated to the Overlord, the Harvester and Souls, and more. The proximity of the faiths to one another sometimes erupts into conflict, as followers of the respective faiths are openly hostile to one another. Most of the darker religions have smaller, secret temples in basements and alleys throughout the city.

Mages and Sages: When one needs information in Zha-nehzmish, one need only look to the University of Zha. Here, information, libraries and sages are all at hand. For individuals seeking obscure knowledge, forbidden spells or other type of information, a few discrete inquiries and well-placed coins can turn up anything anyone would want to know (although accuracy is not guaranteed). With all this knowledge available, it is well protected and expensive, guarded by people who would see to it that some secrets are well kept. The great school has experts on all the major subjects, from planar theory to ancient Svimohzish literature.

However, if one needs guaranteed accurate information, the price is high and there is only one certain source: Umhul Mezahn (LG wizard 16). A former professor at the University of

Zha, Umhul is said to be one of the foremost diviners in the world. Umhul gained his post at the University in 352 C.M., heading the department of astronomy. Here he taught only a few classes as most of his time was consumed in research. A diviner by trade, he found the life of a scholar useful although teaching was not really for him.

He retreated to a small villa on the quiet, northern, older side of the city, away from the stink of the docks. For many years, he spent his time in study, continuing his passion for astronomy and only descending to help those who come to him in need. Aside from the occasional visitor, Umhul largely ignores developments and politics in the city, with his only connection to the elite through his usefulness as a diviner.

Umhul is a retiring man in his seventies, bald of head and with dark brown, nearly black skin. Time and drink have not been kind to Umhul, as he is now severely stooped, his former imposing height reduced to that of a bent old man. He is fond of brandy and spends a considerable sum to supply himself with this drink. Despite his addiction to drink and his advanced years, Umhul is still a brilliant diviner and scholar and his services are in high demand throughout Zha-nehzmish.

There are many gifted spellcasters in the city. From the street mages and entertainers, to the Basiran dancers and spellsingers, just about any type of arcane magic is present. A small and powerful guild of wizards keeps residence on Daresvim Road, just past Gold Boulevard. The Wizard Guild of Zha competes with the University to draw students, but not overtly. The contest between the two schools always occurs beneath the notice of the average citizen, and despite the pleasantries, a powerful animosity exists between the two organizations. In comparison to the poorly



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funded magical studies at the University, the Wizards Guild is a far better institution, claiming to have trained some of the best wizards in all of Svimohzia. However, the Guild does not share spells to non-members. One may join the guild by demonstrating proficiency in magic (3rd-level spells or higher), pay an initiation fee of 750 gp and 30 gp/month as dues, and give one year of time teaching apprentices.

Underworld: Before the Purging (see *Leaders of the Underworld*, in *Who's Who in Ahznomahn*, above), several powerful criminal organizations vied for dominance in the city. Open fighting erupted in the marketplace, visitors faced assault and Parliament members paid countless sums of gold to avoid their darkest secrets becoming known. The situation worsened each year until most citizens were afraid to leave their homes. Finally, Izenmas and the zurenas sent in infiltrators and, with the help of Grandfather Razhan, were able to collapse entire guilds.

As previously mentioned the Gray Cloaks, a band of heartless assassins and spies, emerged from the Purging unscathed, killing those infiltrators who would have wiped out their organization. Now, five years later, they remain a powerful and threatening force in the city, but they rarely act openly and mostly restrict their movements to killing the elite.

Other criminal guilds still exist in Zha-nehzmish, albeit far less powerful than they once were. Each organization specializes in a different crime, as it was their overlap and the struggle for dominance that alerted the government to their existence. Now, in addition to the Gray Cloaks, there are two smaller and leaner organizations.

The first is the Urchin Union, a collection of mostly street thieves and gamblers. Though most of their agents are orphans, leading them is a frightening old man mockingly known as Uncle (NE rogue 12), as a jibe to Grandfather Razhan. They operate throughout the city, but focus most of their efforts in the Merchant's District, especially near the docks. They are neutral to all of the other criminal elements and fear the Gray Cloaks.

The Alley Cats are a band of professional burglars who work in the Zha Quarter, stealing or copying secret information discovered in the hands of the offices of Parliament or merchant princes that they then sell to the highest bidder. Rarely do they actually steal from common citizens as finding the gain from pilfered information is much more profitable than a handful of Anvims or fine gems from the homes of the middle class. Sphinx (CN Kalamaran rogue 8), a pretty female, leads this small band. Their activities put them at odds against the Gray Cloaks and a secret war wages between the two. The Alley Cats are neutral towards all others.

Zha-nehzmish is also home to smugglers, pirates and freelance thieves all working to make a profit in the city. The Golden Alliance has a significant following and its members are scattered throughout the social classes and city districts. Hence, despite the success of the Purging, Zha-nehzmish has a powerful and efficient criminal underworld.

Interesting Sites: Even if Zha-nehzmish had no commercial center, the University of Zha would still draw many to this

area. As old as Zha is, it has evolved into one of the greatest institutions of learning in all of Tellene. Surrounding its main tower are a number of smaller buildings that serve as additional classrooms, dormitories and taverns for the city's intelligentsia. In addition, many secret organizations at work throughout the world have an underground presence here, such as the Golden Alliance, Blackfoot Society and others who work to recruit young and talented minds to their cause.

Tuition is steep (1,000 gp a year), but a student can find no finer education anywhere. The school employs professors and sages of every field, offering students subjects ranging from political theory, planar speculations, philosophy, theology and even arcane study, although this department is small and suffering from funding problems.

Most students who attend the University are the sons and daughters of wealthy merchant princes or foreign royalty. Despite political differences, the University accepts students from any nation, be they hobgoblins from Ul-Karg (there have not been any students from there thus far) or the most despicable slaver from Pel Brolenon. Only one exception exists by ban from the zurenas: the University does not accept students from Meznamish.

Special Notes: Zha-nehzmish houses a secret repository of the notes and logs of ship captains who journeyed east and south to distant lands. Five years after Ahznomahn gained independence from Meznamish the zurenas funded an expedition to expand their mercantile interests to foreign lands in the hopes of cornering new markets. Ten trading ships departed from Zha-nehzmish, each one owned by a Parliament member to show the national commitment to the plan. Ahznomahn dispatched these ships in secret to prevent competition with other explorers. For 10 years, the zurenas heard nothing. By the end of the decade, most of Parliament wrote the expedition off as a loss, but Izenmas dispatched an eleventh ship to the south to see if any sign of the vessels could be found. This ship never returned.

Ten years later, in 326 C.M., many new zurenas held seats in Parliament. In Frosting, one of the first of the original ten ships returned, sailed by a skeleton crew of a handful of men. These sailors, starved and maddened, recounted their tales to the ears of the zurenas only. It is said they reported fantastic and bizarre stories with few details, stories of twisted and warped realms, where monstrous creatures ruled through fear and magical power, warlike and hostile, devouring those who displeased them. In an effort to forestall a public outcry, the zurenas are said to have executed these men and hidden the ship's log in a vault beneath the Parliament building. Although most believed the sailors were addled, each has kept an eye to the southeast ever since.

OTHER POPULATION CENTERS

MEHZVAHN

Population: 2,099 humans (native Svimohz), plus a small minority of Kalamaran and Reanaarese immigrants living near the ports.

At a Glance: The town of Mehzvahn (29°5'N, 7°25'W) stands on the shores of the Mezh-Vowmi channel and at the mouth of the sluggish Shedmishi River. The land around Mehzvahn is soft and flooded nearly year around and serves as ideal land for rice farming. About five miles inland, the land around Mehzvahn rises to low hills. Alongside the Shedmishi River is a wide thoroughfare leading to the hamlets Toshahni and Shedmishi, and serves as the major overland route to southern Ahznomahn. Running north and south along the coast is the Great Coastal Highway, an extensive road running along the coast of northern Svimohzia to ultimately end in Monam-Ahnoz in Meznamish. To the south, it continues until it terminates in Hezmahn, the City at the End of the World.

Mehzvahn itself is a typical port city with the greatest density of buildings located along the Shedmishi and the Mezh-Vowmi channel. Throughout the year, except in the worst of weather, ships sailing to and from Zha-nehzmish arrive or depart from Mehzvahn. Hence, the docks are always bustling, with merchants and their slaves purchasing raw lumber, spices and an innumerable amount of other goods originating from the mainland holdings.

Government: The Golden Alliance rules Mehzvahn. Having long eliminated other guild competition, their agents control the flow of most of the raw materials before they reach Zha-nehzmish. Ahzlehhdan (N aristocrat 4) is Mehzvahn's mayor. He has been on the Golden Alliance payroll for ten years and never makes a major decision without first consulting their agents.

Economy: Mezvahn owes much of its success as a center of commerce to its strategic placement. As the closest town on the mainland to Zha-nehzmish and, given its placement at the center of three major roadways, most merchants and travelers crossing the mainland to reach the capital stop here before crossing the channel. The majority of goods available here are unfinished materials. Some interested buyers circumvent Zha-nehzmish altogether to purchase these goods at a lower price directly from the dealers. Most of the trading occurs at the port, recreating Zha-nehzmish's bustling marketplaces in miniature.

Mehzvahn is also a supplier of rice, and the rice grown in the surrounding countryside feeds much of the nation. The Golden Alliance ensures its hold here through its control of this major source of the nation's food.

Military: Given the Golden Alliance's control, Mehzvahn features a larger than normal military for a town of this size. About 120 light cavalry patrol the community and serve as guards. Furthermore, most merchants have private guards to protect their resources. On the other hand, Mehzvahn is

relatively protected from inland dangers, and Ahznomahn's fleet of small but swift and deadly ships are more than enough of a deterrent to keep pirates from sacking the town.

Temples: The Parish of the Prolific Coin is the supreme religion in Mehzvahn. The church stands adjacent to the town hall, appearing as a squat vault with no adornments other than a bas-relief of a set of merchant's scales on one side. Clerk Vanahza (N cleric 5), a shrewd little woman with a pinched expression, leads the congregation and has extensive dealings with the Golden Alliance. Her accounting skills are legendary throughout Ahznomahn, and many merchants employ her to manage their wealth.

Mages and Sages: Mehzvahn does not have a bustling market for the sages, focused as they are on commerce and leaving such interests to the University of Zha. Those who do live in this town have little competition. One such wizard is Sehvelehn (NG wizard 7), a modest artificer known for his skill at manufacturing useful magic items. He works cheaply, and has manufactured rings, cloaks and other magical clothing for many zurenas in Zha-nehzmish.

Underworld: The Golden Alliance influences government officials from port master to watchman. Suvar (NE aristocrat 1/expert 8) is a successful dealer of coffee, ginger and peppercorns, and owns several plantations in the neighboring hills. Secretly, he is an Alliance Gem and Mehzvahn's true leader, controlling the town and maintaining extensive communications with Wherahzni in the capital. His power is uncontested, and Ahzlehhdan, the mayor, always consults with him before making any political decisions.

Interesting Sites: Nearly 300 years ago, so Mehzvahn claims, they were the capital of the old duchy, and the current town hall was a palace. Although the function of the building has long since changed, Mehzvahn maintains one room as a historical site, with the original furniture, paintings and décor. It is a point of pride for the town's people, especially those families that have lived there for generations.

Special Notes: It was in this ancient town that Miznoh divided his lands among his loyal dukes. When Mehzvahn I founded Miznohsho, he did it here on these ancient steps. It was from here the duke fled to Mezh-Vowmi Isle to save the land from pestilence and war. Consequently, the commoners here are far more sympathetic to the monarchists' cause than almost anyone else in the nation. In fact, they would have resisted the rise of the zurenas if not for the Golden Alliance's hold.

RISMISH

Population: 3,029 mostly Svimohz humans. The city has a sizeable minority of Ozhvinn merchants who stay here to trade with Zha-nehzmish and to remain close to their homeland on the other side of the river.

At a Glance: Rismish (29°25'N, 7°40'W) is Ahznomahn's second largest population center and bustling port city. Situated at the confluence of several smaller rivers draining from the

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Awhom Forest and on the shores of the Mezh-Vowmi Channel, massive rice plantations surround Rismish. The Great Coastal Highway passes through the town and another roadway, the Rismish Way, leads inland to smaller towns. The town snuggles close to the river and the coast and gradually thins out to smaller and shabbier structures farther removed from the center. Dominating the city's center is the mayoral residence, the marketplace and the Temple of the Stars.

Government: Ruling the city of Rismish is a council of successful businessmen, modeled after the zurenas in Zha-nehzmish. To hold a seat on the council, a candidate must be worth 20,000 gold Anvims and own property within 5 miles of town. The council currently has five members.

Economy: Rismish is the commercial center for trade between Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn. Consequently, much of its tax revenue comes from trade between the two nations. While not as important to the national economy as Zha-nehzmish, Rismish collects a substantial amount of gold from travelers entering and exiting the nation. Rismish is also the key agricultural center for Ahznomahn's rice production, followed closely by Mezhvahn to the south. In addition, Rismish is the home of Ahznomahn's shipyards. Anowmish manufactures hulls and then floats them down river to larger Rismish where the boats are finished. Rismish's ships are small and fast, and prove effective against the larger and more ponderous Meznamishii vessels. Rismish competes against Ashoshani and is recently emerging as a true rival in the region.

Military: Rismish has only 30 active light cavalry, as much of its defenses are left to the merchants and private soldiers of the town's elite. In case of an emergency, it can muster up to 150 more heavy infantry. Commanding the town's garrison is Lieutenant Svewhenmi Ohmdalz (LN fighter 10). Svewhenmi is a middle-aged veteran of several forays into the Vohven Jungle. He came to Rismish because of its easier duty and because he would one day like to retire here.

Temples: Rismish features two significant temples. First is the Parish of the Prolific Coin, maintaining a modest church near the town's center. Clerk Leshan Izahn (N cleric 4) governs the church and serves as the spiritual advisor for the council.

The second temple is the Temple of the Stars, led by Quester Ansven Ohmdalz (NG cleric 6). Ansven is High Worlder Mushan's youngest son. Despite his station, he maintains only a small church near the docks.

Mages and Sages: The town's location makes it an ideal launch for travelers passing to Mezh-Vowmi Isle. A notable scholar in Rismish is Cyrn Miststrider (CG gray elf expert 6/bard 6), a traveling archeologist and historian. Considered eccentric by his people, Cyrn specializes in ancient human cultures. Having only recently arrived in Rismish, he plans to build an expedition to explore the Awhom Forest and to solve the mysteries of early Svimohzia. Thus far, he has not found anyone willing to explore the heart of those ancient woods, especially when one of the provisions is that there will be no

looting. Cyrn, while building a network of contacts, spends his time exploring the region, especially the smaller villages that retain the older customs of the land. He returns to make inquiries among the mercenary bands. Between racial bigotry, greed and superstition, Cyrn has had little luck so far.

Underworld: A small band of Meznamishii spies operates out of Rismish to dispatch orders to the monarchists working in Zha-nehzmish. Led by Mirohz Mizani (LN infiltrator 8), they have remained undetected for six years. Aside from sowing discontent among Ahznomahn's citizens, they also smuggle weapons, poison and other useful equipment in from agents in Ozhvinmish, to establish the foundation for a revolution.

Interesting Site: In the heart of the rice paddies rises a strange mound of earth. Said to be a burial mound by the locals, no one knows how old it is. Several clerics and mystics have studied the area, but none ever discerned who or what lies inside. What people do know is that during midsummer, weird lights play on its surface. The locals call the lights the ghosts of the Zassho, yet even they have forgotten why.

Special Notes: Rismish is experiencing a population growth, as more and more Ozhvins come across the border. The Ozhvin people have taken over a neighborhood and forced out the Ahznoms who lived there. As a result, nationalism is developing into a problem, as Ahznom youth protest the loss of work to the immigrants, and riots occur with more frequency as the shipbuilding jobs fall to more and more Ozhvins who volunteer to work for far less pay than the Ahznoms.

SISVAHNI

Population: 2,067 of various races, including 1,632 Svimohz, 186 half-elves, 103 wild elves (mostly slaves) and 146 members of other races including gnomes and halflings, but no dwarves

At a Glance: Another small town on the Great Coastal Highway, Sisvahni (28°20'N, 7°5'W) has a heritage steeped in Zassho culture. Like many small communities in Ahznomahn, it exists where a river drains into the ocean. The Tehzhahn River flows from Lake Sevhor and wends along a plateau, then spills down a waterfall and falls into a shallow pool, before draining into the ocean beyond. The town is roughly semi-circular, with the greatest concentrations of buildings clustered near the coast and near the waterfall. All of the structures are boxy rammed earth, designed for utility more than aesthetics.

Government: A mayor, elected by the landowners, governs Sisvahni. The current mayor is Hewzhor Samidz (NG aristocrat 6), who has held this title for the last five years. Although there is an executive figurehead, most of the town's laws and decisions come from the landowners and minor merchants who set up shop here.

Economy: Most of Sisvahni's economy relies on trade with Zha-nehzmish. As the third largest rice producer and one of the largest exporters of horses, the town is extremely vital to the nation's security and wealth. Sisvahni also trades with Vivahni and serves as the principal trading center in south Ahznomahn.

Military: Sisvahni keeps twenty guards active at all times. Like many commerce centers, merchant princes maintain personal guards to protect their own interests. In times of war, the town can muster an additional 100 able-bodied men and women to defend the community.

Temples: The Parish of the Prolific Coin and the Temple of the Stars vie for dominance in Sisvahni. Each faith has small temples at opposite sides of the town. While civil, both faiths struggle for dominance. The Temple of the Stars is aware of the Golden Alliance presence and fears the Parish does nothing to stop them from usurping the community.

Mages and Sages: A remote place such as Sisvahni has little appeal to intellectuals or wizards. Still, Sisvahni is home to one wizard named Alcaza (CG wizard 5), a woman of passing beauty who lives at the very edge of town. She takes apprentices, but only girls, and then just the unattractive ones.

Underworld: Recently, the Golden Alliance infiltrated the town and now works to drive out the competition. Zehzori Sehl (NE expert 6), an Alliance Trinket from Zazahni, poses as a minor dealer in spices, but watches the trends, spying on his rivals and reports to Suvar in Mezhvahn. So far, he has succeeded in cornering the spice market in town, and now plans to expand into herbs.

In addition to the Alliance presence, Khazdor Svodohni (CG rogue 4), a Brother of the Broken Chain, preaches to all who listen about the evils of slavery. Viewed as a fool and fanatic among the landed gentry, they do not realize the effect he has on the slaves that overhear his lectures. Thus far, Khazdor has secretly freed four wild elf slaves. He is willing to destroy the town if that is what it takes to free the rest of the oppressed.

Interesting Site: Many of the people living in Sisvahni have strong cultural ties to the native Zassho people who lived here before Miznoh conquered the land. The people who retain their heritage treat the waterfall fed by the Tehzhahn River as a sacred spot. The locals say drinking the water when Veshemo is full makes a woman fertile and removes all curses. No one has substantiated the claim but, among the natives, it appears to work.

Special Notes: Sisvahni is an important meeting place for the remaining Zassho tribal shamans, who met every 20 years at the Pool of the Elders to trade stories and news. This happened with such regularity the town even prepared for the event, making it a special holiday. Last year, the tribal heads were to meet but no one came. The local Zassho people do not know why the shamans did not arrive, but see it as an ill omen.

VIVAHNI

Population: 2,343 mostly Svimohz of Zassho heritage (over half are slaves).

At a Glance: The popular little town of Vivahni (27°55'N, 6°40'W) is a common vacation spot for Ahznomahnii elite. Nestled in a small valley between the Mounds of Ehsiwhomnesh, two sizeable hills flanking the Vivahni Watercourse, Vivahni is a quiet town of a modest population.

The town lies on the bank of the river and about a half mile from the coast. Surrounding the town are rice fields where slaves work to harvest the crop. In the nearby hills, villas overlook the serene beauty of waves continually lapping onto the lovely sandy beaches.

Government: Sunazhra Sobetehn (LE aristocrat 7) governs the town and is the principal owner of all the land. As she owns the entire community, slaves and all the land around it, Vivahni is much like an overlarge estate. In the recent years, some merchants have set up shop forming a commercial center in the town. Merchants can approach Sunazhra about concerns or problems. Her willingness to talk to her subjects does not imply weakness; any that oppose her suddenly vanish.

Economy: Vivahni is little different from the other coastal cities and enjoys a thriving rice industry. However, far more gold comes from its brisk tourist trade than from the income generated by trading rice throughout the mainland and Mezh-Vowmi Isle. Vivahni provides the beauty of southern Ahznomahn, but without the mosquitoes, disease and savages. It features dozens of villas, all for rent at exorbitant rates, and each features two or three attractive slaves to cater to the guests' needs. Zurenas from all over Ahznomahn come to Vivahni to relax and get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

Military: Vivahni employs 50 light cavalry to serve as its defense. Sergeant Amar Svohdohzi (LN fighter 4/ranger 2) is Sunazhra's lover and acts as her closest advisor. Even with the ear of the Lady, he is no decadent fop. His men are even more disciplined than the personal guard of Aleshdin (commander of Zha-nehzmish's military). Ruthless and deadly with a sword,



Amar hates Aleshdin and would like nothing more than to remove the upstart from his vaunted position and take his place.

Temples: The Parish of the Prolific Coin has a small shrine, as does the House of Shackles. Kuymar the Shackler (LE Brandobian cleric 5) oversees the slaves, and is hated throughout the region. This Brolenese native leaves town for weeks at a time and leads mercenaries into the Vohven Jungle to capture wild elves to sell in Zha-nehzmish. Sunazhra allows him to remain because he rooted out the Golden Alliance operatives, executing him in a public and excruciating way.

Mages and Sages: Vivahni has one notable scholar named Mizhroh (CE aristocrat 2/rogue 4), who escaped from Zha-nehzmish during the Purging. Mizhroh ran a crime syndicate that smuggled slaves into the city and then undersold any competition. Reprehensibly, he betrayed his business partner and fled south to take residence in some backwater community, posing as a student of history. He charmed Sunazhra, leading her to believe he is a disaffected scholar from the University of Zha, who left in shame when it was discovered his wife was unfaithful. As Sunazhra has no interest in his "area of knowledge," his ruse seems secure.

Underworld: The House of Shackles hopes to control the town, relying on Sunazhra's vanity to overlook their progress. So far, Kuymar has converted three locals to his faith and they work to convert their families. What Kuymar does not know is Sunazhra is a follower of the Overlord already and is aware of his activities. If the game grows too dangerous, she will use Amar to remove the arrogant priest.

Interesting Site: The nearby Mounds of Ehsiwomnesh commemorate the Queen of Green Pastures, although few Ahznoms in the immediate area worship the goddess anymore. Wild elves burn offerings to their goddess on the slopes of the hills whenever they can. They see the villas built on the slopes of the sacred hills as a great affront to the goddess, and plot revenge for the blasphemy.

Special Notes: The wild elves are plotting a revolt. They have no intention to remain slaves for the rest of their long lives and intend to act soon. Their leader is Bare Leafstrider (CG wild elf barbarian 3/ranger 2), who has clandestinely murdered one guard and nearly convinced the others to join him in the uprising.

ENVIRONMENT

The Confederacy of Ahznomahn controls the Mezh-Vowmi Isle and some of the easternmost lands of Svimohzia. Their holdings on the mainland extend as far west as the southeast Awhom Forest, south to the Vohven Jungle and north to the northeastern edge of the Awhom. The mainland rises the further west one travels towards the Awhom. The southern regions are hilly, marked with swampy valleys, and isolated hills. The east coast is prone to flooding, especially during the rainy seasons.

The Mezh-Vowmi Islands

Beautiful Mezh-Vowmi, sometimes called "little Svimohzia," is the largest island in a chain off the eastern coast of the Svimohzish Isle. The waters between these islands are bright blue, clear and relatively shallow - no deeper than 500 feet. Sailing vessels frequently pass through the stretch transporting goods to and from Svimohzia to the capital in Zha-nehzmish.

The smaller islands are quite flat and uninhabited, with a few stands of trees. The largest of the chain, Mezh-Vowmi Isle, is a little over 80 miles wide, about 150 miles long, sitting 40 miles off the east coast of Svimohzia. The center of the island features a spine of five hills nearly 2,000 feet in height.

The western face of the hills features a gentler slope down to population centers on the shores, with rolling hills, short trees and grasses. The elevation gradually descends closer to the shore, where the grasses are taller, broken only by the occasional road.

The eastern side, however, is raw and exposed with the topsoil worn away by the frequent storms, hence the lack of communities. The shore is rocky and unsafe for ports. The sea, fraught with aquatic horrors, deepens ominously only 10 miles from shore.

Most of the land here is devoid of forests due in part to the severe rainy season, strong gale winds and because settlers cleared them when they first colonized the island. The hills are grassy, with the remaining trees forming small copses. Spilling down from the heights are innumerable small creeks and streams, draining out to the sea and incidentally irrigating the land, making it ideal for agriculture. Situated at the intersection of several second-rate roads is the nation's capital, Zha-nehzmish.

The Mainland (the Svimohzish Isle)

The first thing a visitor notices about the Ahznomahnii territory is its beauty. Dominating the western horizon is a great forest rising far above the eastern lowlands. To the south, the land ripples before dropping off to the Vohven Jungles. Trees are more plentiful here than in other parts of the island, due to the proximity of the massive jungle and the ancient Awhom Forest. In those areas of savannas that account for nearly two-thirds of the mainland, bright wildflowers grow year around, carpeting the hills and valleys. A visitor quickly understands why the first rulers of this land grew so enamored with it.

Most of the northern lands of this nation are flat, bordered by the hills to the north. Northern Ahznomahn is extremely hilly, a rippled ground of rises and falls. Along the shores, where much of the Awhom Forest drains, the ground is swampy, filled with bogs and mires. Those communities developing along the shore center on the waterways for easy transportation of goods, but suffer from frequent flooding in the spring.

To the west, the land rises to reach the plateau where the Awhom Forest grows, a dense forest originally part of the Vohven Jungle, but isolated with a climate shift. Few towns and villages lie near the forest and only one of any real significance,

Zapsvahn, which serves as a trading center for the natives. Rivers are much stronger and wider, only narrowing when they draw closer to the Mezh-Vowmi Channel.

In contrast to the rolling hills and daunting forest, the south is extraordinarily wet, with fewer hills and with a profusion of wetlands. Road systems crisscross some of the land, offering safer passage through the mires, but even those with their heavy patrols of Ahznomahn guards are not always safe. Further south, the settlements grow more isolated, some over 30 miles apart with only fifth rate roads connecting them to the primary roads through the land. While still beautiful, southern Ahznomahn's nearness to the Vohven Jungle makes it an unattractive place for most of the nation's citizens.

TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands

AWHOM FOREST

The western edge of this massive, dense forest receives a wide berth by the people of Ahznomahn, for deep within the woods are the remains of a once powerful culture. Evidence of its might persists in the ruins of the lost city of Shwimajomwhi, and villages and overgrown temples with hideous statuary and foul symbols. Locals claim it was in these cities that serpent masters forced the early tribes of humanity to toil endlessly. On altars dedicated to foul and strange gods, countless men and women died, sacrificed in appalling numbers.

Recently, Ahznomahnii explorers, funded by the zurenas in Zha-Nehzmish, penetrated the outskirts of the Awhom Forest, searching for gold, magic and other treasures. However, none of these first explorers has yet returned.

The most notorious spot in the forest is an ancient metropolis about 15 miles from Hehivahni. Prospectors, when exploring, stumbled onto this vine-choked ruin. The city's layout is a series of concentric circles with a huge ziggurat rising from the center. The explorers sketched a map to this ancient city, intending to return with more supplies before exploring its remains, yet as they journeyed out of the forest, monstrous creatures set upon the band, killing them all. Fortunately, a local ranger discovered the remains of one of the fleeing prospectors and discovered the map or even this knowledge would have been lost.

VOHVEN JUNGLE

The Izhoven River descends from the high plains of northern Zazahni and southern Ahznomahn, draining the savanna into a vast jungle known to locals as the Emerald Sea. Early river navigators so named it because far upstream they could see the green of the vast rain forest off in the distance and believed it was the sea. Covering nearly 150,000 square miles, the Vohven is a massive and largely uncharted wilderness. Human and humanoid tribesmen live there in great numbers along with all manner of wild beasts. Tribes of intelligent vegetable creatures also inhabit an area of the jungle.

Hills

FOZHOR HILLS

These five hills form Mezh-Vowmi's spine and occupy the center of the island. On the western face, the land gently rolls to the sea, but on the eastern side, the land is far rockier and treacherous, but marked with beautiful waterfalls. Few settlements exist, and those that do are composed of thieves, brigands and murderers who seek to evade capture. It is rumored that Mizmohvam VI - the last heir to Mizmohvam III's throne lives in a secret complex built under the southernmost peak on the isle. Constructed by loyal monarchists during the rise of the zurenas, one member of the ducal family has lived here in secret for the last 70 years, waiting for the restoration. Less than a handful of persons know of its possible existence, thinking the eastern face merely occupied by unsavory types.

SVOMWHOM PEAK

Standing far above the bogs and swamplands of southern Ahznomahn, this tall hill overlooks the Kalamaran Sea to the east and the Emerald Sea to the southwest. Covered in tall grasses and sharp jutting rocks, the natives avoid it. They believe it is an ancient burial mound for a mighty god who perished at the dawn of creation, and the very sharp rocks are his broken bones, piercing the skin of the earth. Vohven Jungle natives occasionally make pilgrimages to this site and make sacrifices to their primitive idols. Ahznomahn, seeing its strategic value, attempted a number of times to establish a stronghold there, but so far, their efforts have met with disaster. Lost supplies, troll attacks and freakish storms prevent any progress thus far. With the high cost of moving supplies and the previous failures, Ahznomahn has all but abandoned plans to colonize this site.

Islands

SORHIZNI ISLE

A larger island southeast of Vivahni, Sorhizni is believed to be empty except for ghosts. Actually, the island is home to a small number of escaped slaves. They conceal signs of their community by creating their homes underground and camouflaging the entrances with brush and debris. Whenever a ship lands, the ex-slaves creep out of their hidden holes to slaughter and drive away the interlopers. Sorhizni natives wear white body paint made from lead, a practice that is slowly driving them all mad.

VEZDAHNI ISLE

This small island off the coast of Winmish is not much more than a mound rising from the channel. A small thorp of fishermen have a dock here but abandon it during the stormy seasons.

VOWMI ISLES

A small chain of islands extending from the northern tip of Mezh-Vowmi Isle, they are the subject of hot debate between Ahznomahn and Ozhvinmish. Currently, they stand unclaimed, but a few zurenas have established estates on the southern isles and Ozhvin fishermen ply the waters there for food. Most of the islands are simply uninhabitable as there is no shelter from the spring storms but both nations bicker over their ownership.

Bodies of Water

MEZH-VOWMI CHANNEL

The waters between Mezh-Vowmi and Svimohzia are calm and favored by locals for good fishing. In the south, along the coast of the Vohven Jungle, lurk aquatic predators such as sharks, dragon turtles and worse.

SEVHOR LAKE

About five miles long and three mile wide, the lake is clean, pure and home to a variety of fish, fowl and fauna. Tehzhahni and other small inland communities rely on the lake to supplement their food stores. Locals claim the lake was the site of the last battle between the humans and their former reptilian masters. While most claim these speculations as nothing more than legend, two years ago, a fisherman in the lake pulled up a well-preserved hand in his net. The hand had six fingers, long black talons and scales.

Rivers

THE VOHVEN JUNGLE GATES

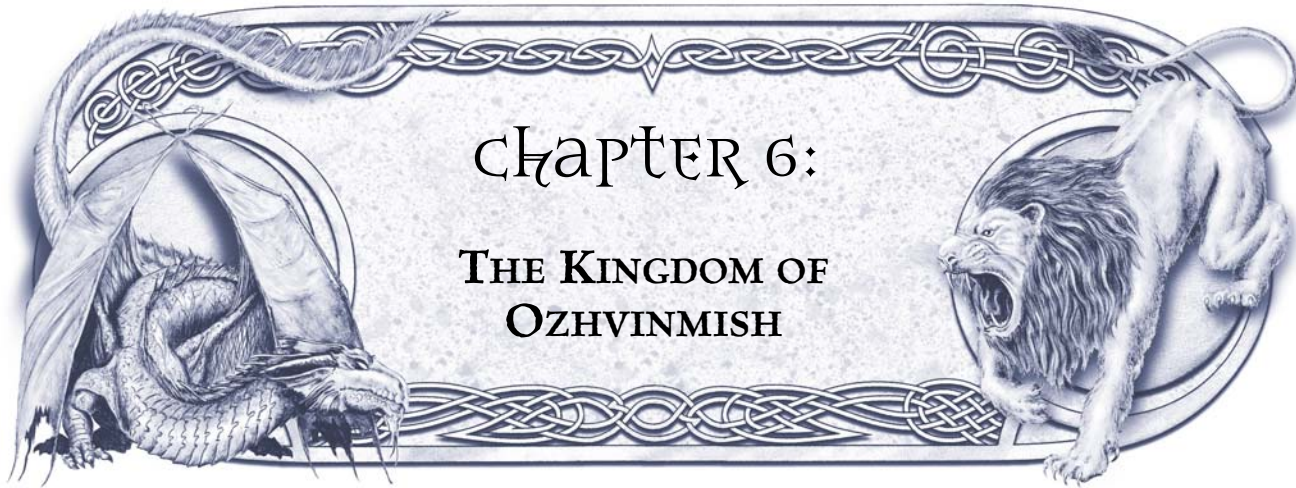
In between two ranges of hills is a long valley some 50 miles long. The hills' slopes are gradual and drop into fetid swamps fed by the water draining from the neighboring hills. Carved from the run-off, the valley begins in Ahznomahn and travels south into the Vohven Jungle, its namesake. Here, Ahznomahn trades heavily with the Vohven Jungle natives, exchanging shoddy goods for lumber, herbs and spices. The trading hub is Zha-Vaznahn, an ugly outpost at the southern end of the Confederacy. Further south is the military fortress and penal colony, Norzhahn. Norzhahn is where Ahznomahn sends its worst criminals; they are expected to guard the nation from an invasion from the south. This community is brutal and savage, filled with some of the most dangerous people on the island. A sentence to Norzhahn is regarded equivalent to a death sentence.

WEATHER

Ahznomahn is subtropical and humid. In the early summer months, high-pressure systems push moisture up from the south, bringing torrential rains to much of western Svimohzia. The storms are deadly and destructive to communities and do not slow in intensity until they reach Ozhvinmish. The Fozhor Hills on Mezh-Vowmi Isle block much of the ugly weather from hitting the capital, though occasionally the trough shifts to blow through the Miznohsho Channel. When this occurs, Zhanehzmish always suffers from the torrential rains and mast-snapping winds. Despite the severity of the weather, trade in the city never stops.

Given the island's proximity to the equatorial band, high pressure tropical warm winds from the south blow moisture through the southern portion during the summer months, bringing periods of heavy rain through the early summer and only halting when they encounter the Imomena Hills and the Tanezh Mountains. This results in exceptional downpour over much of the Vohven Jungle. Heavier rains occur along the eastern coastline, inundating the area with heavy and dangerous downpours, making rains pouring down on the Vohven Jungle appear mild in comparison. The western seacoast regularly faces hurricanes during the warm seasons.

In the winter, the isle dries out. The moisture from the South Tradewinds meets the Imomena Draft and generates a fair amount of rain in the lower elevations, with snowfall in the highest elevations. The only moisture the Vohven Jungle receives at this time of the year comes through the natural gap between the Tanezh Mountains and Imomena Hills, from which cold air chills portions of the jungle. Cold currents, spinning off from the Elos Breeze, form the Vohven Jungle Wind, producing cooler conditions in the north and chilly rain in the south.



CHAPTER 6:

THE KINGDOM OF OZHVINMISH

The largest nation on Svimohzia and the one with the largest military, Ozhvnmish dominates the island's northern coastline. Serving as a buffer between two sworn enemies, Meznamish and Ahznomahn, Ozhvnmish has the advantage of being able to maintain peace and enjoy profitable trade with both. However, tidings of war are on the horizon, as tensions escalate between eastern Ozhvnmish and Ahznomahn. Worse, Meznamish has made an alliance with Zazahni warlords, an act that now threatens Ozhvnmish's southern borders. Their position as a friend to both now threatens to embroil the kingdom in a war that could last for many years.

HISTORY

The land that became Ozhvnmish is also the birthplace of Mewzhano, the origins of Meznamish, and the source of Svimohzia's current political atmosphere. Scholars who believe in the legends of the ancient serpent kingdom identify the Miznoh Forest as the place the humans fled after they threw off the shackles of their aggressors. Some speculate that the land bridge (see History, in Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish) flooded before the remainder of the peoples could flee to the continent, but others think that it was more likely that, with the fall of the serpent masters, there was no further need to leave. Instead, the Zassho people survived by using the shelter of the woods and fishing the waters off the northern shore for food.

Steeped in the mysticism of the ancient culture, the Zassho people had little interest in exploring the rest of the island, fearing the discovery of more of the hated serpent people who once ruled them. Instead, they competed with neighboring tribes, raiding villages, stealing the rare livestock, resulting in a weakening of the villages so none could conquer the other. After Mewzhano left in disgrace with his followers, records are scarce, although what archeological evidence remains suggests he had little influence on these arboreal people. Instead of people looking beyond their borders, the disparate and warlike tribes unified in a sort of loose confederation that emerged

about 10 years after Mewzhano's departure. These tribal centers remained roughly within the boundaries of the Miznoh Forest, but over the next half century, increasingly more disaffected individuals left to establish new settlements outside of the wooded land.

The Coming of Miznoh

When Miznoh's armies crossed the Menamo Hills, the Zassho natives were awed. Miznoh's legions were well equipped, organized and disciplined. They were something the Zassho had never before seen, and they had a cruel and bloodthirsty bent far more potent than the people's resolve to defend their homelands. With each village conquered, Miznoh encouraged his men to take women and blend the bloodlines, merging the Meznam-Zassho blood with the indigenous Zassho. In his wake, he left a swathe of destruction taking over a century to repair.

The worst of the wars occurred in the Miznoh Forest itself. Axes felled the trees of the woodland, broke through the wooden palisades and allowed the warlord an easy conquest, even against the organized confederacy in the woods. His armies spared no one, burning villages and killing all until only the village of his grandfather remained.

Just as he would do in Ahznomahn, Miznoh appointed Ozhnohz as Duke of the conquered north, demanding fealty forever after. Ozhnohz held the lands of the northern coast, from the Menamo Hills to the eastern coast. Miznoh liked him the least, however, and so gave this duke the most-ravaged lands. Ozhnohz, knowing his place, accepted the honor and insult with grace, vowing to rise in his lord's esteem. Yet he never did, for Miznoh died before the duke could repair the land and bring honor to Miznoh's name.

The Years of Growth

After the majority of Miznoh's troops withdrew, there were few citizens left in Ozhvnmish, and those who survived the depredations were angry and unruly. Ozhnohz affected the role

Chapter Six: The Kingdom of Ozhvinmish

of a benevolent ruler, presenting a sharp contrast to Miznoh's brutality. He founded Ashoshani to the west, where the greatest concentration of survivors lived. He used his personal wealth to rebuild many of the towns and took wives from the daughters of tribal chieftains, to secure a hold over the resentful people. His efforts consumed his entire life, trying to repair the damage done by the wars, and secure a name for himself in Meznamish history.

Ozhnohz made several inroads into court life, bonding with Miznoh the Lesser and working together to establish a solidified nation. Ozhnohz also proposed building the Great Coastal Highway as a means to transfer goods overland and connect the many coastal fishing communities. Miznoh the Lesser agreed, and they became fast friends. In fact, they became so united that Miznoh the greater, who had little love for the loyal Ozhnohz, began his despoiling work secretly, starting in the Duchy of Ozhvinmish.

When Ozhnohz I passed after a half of century of rule, his people, who once reviled him, mourned his passing, for he did more for the scattered tribes than any tribal leader in the past, while still maintaining their values. Ozhnohz II, the first son and heir, was middle aged by his coronation. Educated and intelligent, Ozhnohz II continued the work of his father, working to repair the damage done during the conquest. One significant difficulty the heir faced was the growing presence of gnolls in the Imomena Hills. Not content to merely blight the countryside, these fierce and destructive warriors pressed into Ozhvinmish, sacking outlying farmsteads and hamlets and sparing no one. Lacking the sizeable military of Meznamish, and with Miznoh III on the throne, Ozhvinmish received little help from the capital. However, help did come from the Mewhi people of Zazahni, who allied with the Duke after too many years of raiding. Between the warriors of the tribes to the south and Ozhvinmish's highland dancer cavalry, they crushed the ravaging gnolls.

The friendship established between Ozhvinmish and Miznoh the Lesser (and his son Izvan) soured with the emergence of Emperor Miznoh III. A warlike military-minded despot, he thought to gain the same glory as his grandfather Miznoh I. Miznoh III ignored the warnings of the venerable custodian Duke Zahnoz I, ignored Ozhnohz II's protests, and locked the empire in a foolish quest to conquer the unconquerable. Two of every three men were called to join the legions to the south, emptying the lands throughout the empire, leaving harvests in the fields, women and children behind to keep the nation intact. The vacuum left by the soldiers created a need for slavery, and so throughout the nation, the empire purchased slaves or made slaves from the tribes of the Vohven Jungle.

The situation worsened when Miznamvho assumed control. Believing this new monarch would extricate the soldiers from the Vohven Jungle, Ozhnohz II supported the young emperor. However, it soon became clear that darker forces were at work. The Knights of the Black Pit spread through Mewzhano Bay

then expanded into Ozhvinmish and the rest of the empire. Black altars dedicated to the Dark One drank the blood of human sacrifice. Ozhnohz II was powerless to stop the spread, for the emperor overturned any bans he decreed. In response, the duke founded a secret order, the Order of Daybreak, to combat the Dark One's priests. The duke's men contained the expansion of the religion without showing the monarch's hand, or so thought the duke.

When the Knights of the Black Pit seemed contained and their sacrifices slowed, Miznamvho sent assassins to kill the disobedient duke, for the emperor knew of Ozhvinmish's subversive activities. Riots spread throughout the duchy, but the priests of the evil faith dealt with the disturbances by dragging more of the populace to their bloody altars. Over the next two years, Ozhvinmish was under the direct rule of the Knights, but this came to a sudden and bloody end when Izvan murdered his father and liberated the empire from the Dark One's cold grasp.

Selztris filled the vacuum left by the Knights of the Black Pit, leading the effort to eradicate the foul priests' presence in the duchy. Reinforced by the clerics and paladins of the Courts of Justice and the Halls of the Valiant, the Order of Daybreak and a legion of commoners left behind by their spouses who went to fight in the Vohven Jungle, they crushed the Knights, driving them from the lands. With the theocrat dead and his church fallen, Selztris became duke in 86 C.M.

While a quick succession of emperors vied for the throne in Monam-Ahnoz, accompanied by a brief resurgence of the Church of the Endless Night, Ozhvinmish focused on stabilizing the duchy. Selztris distanced himself from the bloody infighting to the west and focused on repairing the damage done by the clerics. To separate himself further, he moved the capital to Svowmahni, where he oversaw the continued work on the Great Coastal Highway.

The Hundred Years' Peace

Duke Selztris' soon began a tempestuous and torrid love affair with Daresvim, the duchess of Miznohsho (now Ahznomahn). They kept the affair secret, fearing an imperial denouncement because of the difficulties in the capital. They also supported Onsar the peasant hero's claim to the Meznam imperial seat, thus ending Miznoh's line and influence on the empire. Both Selztris and Daresvim made the long journey to his wedding and became close friends to the new emperor. When Selztris died in 99 C.M., Daresvim withdrew from the pomp and splendor of her station, disdaining the emperor's courts. While she governed, she became the most beloved monarch in Ahznomahn history, but she was now no longer the same carefree lady.

The golden age of Meznamish passed on to Ozhvinmish, as they extended offerings of friendship and peace. The road to national recovery was clear, and Ozhvinmish enjoyed a succession of excellent leaders. Nehzro I, who followed Selztris,

focused on developing the duchy's infrastructure and funding the development of roads throughout. His heir, Mahlzan I, restored the capital at Ashoshani in the middle of his reign and began construction on Vinahn, a coastal citadel (some 50 miles north) so exquisite it would not be completed for 30 years.

A series of inept rulers in Miznohsho compromised the safety of the southern island, as Vohven Jungle natives ran free. Ozhvinmish developed a favorable relationship with Meznamish, forgetting the one-time closeness shared by the dukes of Ozhvinmish and Ahznomahn. The estrangement deepened with the ascension of Duke Iznashan, whose actions were so violent and bloody that Ozhvinmish threatened to send troops to temper his excesses.

Even though Ozhvinmish enjoyed an excellent trade relationship with the capital, its size and neighbors affected the nation at a cultural level. Eastern Ozhvinmish began to sympathize with the merchant princes who suffered at the hands of the monarchy. Their distance from their own duke also bred resentment and disdain for the institution of the monarchy, although few spoke of it. Despite the seeds of unrest developing in the duchy, this good period saw reform, advancements in the arts, more tolerance for different cultures, and expansion as a mercantile power.

The Decline

Duke Shahn I had the dubious honor of reigning in Ozhvinmish during the first stages of the ancient empire's decline. At the beginning of his reign, he faced pressures from the eastern lands to grant them sovereignty, and had little recourse but to station more soldiers in the east. At first, this tactic worked, for the populace feared the military might. Yet, it soon became clear these were not the soldiers of old; the troops were rabble, poorly trained and inept, grown soft after a century of seeing little action.

After 20 years, riots erupted along the eastern coast. People strung up effigies of the duke, burned government buildings and toppled statues. Shahn responded by committing increasingly more forces until 260 C.M., when he recognized the eastern Ozhvins would never respect his authority. His final resolution was to appoint a steward from an eastern noble. The population, seeing this act as autonomy, accepted the steward and the duchy stabilized once more. In Miznohsho, the merchant princes and the new Parliament emerged as a significant political force, eroding the legitimacy of the duke. Fortunately, Shahn's concessions allowed his duchy to remain intact while his neighbor Miznohsho disintegrated.

Suvohl gained the ducal seat in 271 C.M., and a more incompetent duke could never be found in Ozhvinmish's history. A dandy and fop, Suvohl lived for his vices. He withdrew to fortress Vinahn, where he sampled the delights of the world, hosted grand parties for the elite, and where drugs and sweet wine flowed like water from a mountain stream. His reign is

marked with decadence and a further distancing of the dukedom from the people.

Duke Shahn II, however, brought some prestige back to the ducal seat after Suvohl bungled his office. The new duke had more power than any of his predecessors, and used the boost to his coffers to build his military. He sent one of his sons to Svowmahni to restore the ducal presence. Shahn intended on rescinding the edict that allowed a steward to rule in his stead but, before undertaking such an action, he decided to test the political waters. While he prepared to retake his realm, news of Emperor Hilanohz's suicide, and the crowning of Vhohmi in 287 C.M., reached him. While at the capital, it was clear the young emperor had ambition. This concerned Shahn, who suspected his free reign was about to end. Shahn used the opportunity of his time in the capital to warn the young emperor of the admiralty's plot against him. He thought to distract Vhohmi III and, by distracting him, ensure his continued authority in Ozhvinmish. Yet, there was no way for Shahn to foresee the debacle at Zhano Cape (see *The Decline*, in Chapter Four: *The Kingdom of Meznamish*). Shahn's steward in the east demanded action from the duke but, despite the severity of the situation, he was still loyal to the throne.

Fortnight's Battle

Brog-Tuuakh's armies caught Duke Shahn II by surprise. He had heard rumors of developments to the south, but he did not expect the ragged untrained tribes to march to war. For the first time the empire as a whole was threatened and, after centuries



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of complacency, the military was ill prepared. The emperor called for the dukes to raise their armies and meet the hobgoblins. It took three weeks for Shahn to rally support and, failing to cut off the hobgoblins he thought would be routed, he divided his armies. He sent half to meet the horde head on while the other half (in command of his son) would press south and cut off the hobgoblin retreat. What did not surprise the duke was the secession of the eastern duchy, and the people in the east celebrated Ahznomahn's boldness, ignoring the betrayal.

Duke Shahn's forces joined with the Zazahni troops and halted the hobgoblins' advance. The eastern troops, who harbored little love for the foolish emperor, decided to prevent the hobgoblins from striking the eastern territories. They remained there for the entire war, grew fat on Zazahni stores and vented their lusts on the Zazahni women. When word reached them that the hobgoblins had only been routed, not crushed, they withdrew to Ozhvnmish, leaving the land ruined in their wake. Duke Shahn learned this at the same time he discovered his son perished during the war. In his grief, he withdrew to his fortress.

The Collapse

The army from eastern Ozhvnmish returned home after spending several months "protecting" Zazahni. With them, they brought women, slaves, food, cattle and anything else that caught their eye. The Ozhvins left Zazahni as despoiled as if the hobgoblins themselves had invaded, and these actions hastened hostilities between the two duchies. The acting duke of Zazahni demanded restitution, and went to the emperor to see he gained it. Vhohmi III commanded Ozhvnmish to replace what they had stolen and pay a heavy fine. In response, Duke Shahn, who still grieved for his personal losses, forgave his son his actions, and with the economic support of Ahznomahn, refused the emperor's demand. A week later, Ozhvnmish was an independent state, with its own king.

Meznamish, desperate to retain its holdings, launched an invasion into Ozhvnmish. Vhohmi lacked the dwarven support of old, as they themselves suffered heavy losses from the hobgoblins and the Meznamishii military was far too weak to mount a significant offensive. The promised units from Zazahni were so battered and broken from Fortnight's Battle, the fresh Ozhvins from the east rebuffed the attack after a single engagement.

The troubles with Meznamish would not end there, however. Onsar III, a brash general and war hero, mustered his legions - this time without the help of Zazahni, who declared independence in 305 C.M. Neither did he have the aid of the dwarves, who had almost withdrawn. Onsar, forced to rely on bronze (for he could not afford the now high prices of dwarven iron and steel) was doomed before his armies marched.

King Shahn's son was ready for King Onsar, for emperor he would never be. The crown prince mobilized his cavalry and

harried the supply lines from Nezormish to the front. Disrupting the lines of food, water and equipment, Ozhvnmish demoralized the Meznam. As the invaders marched, deserters fled by the droves. Finally, Ozhvnmish cut off Onsar's retreat, leaving the warlord stranded in hostile territory. The Meznam king force marched his troops towards the Miznoh Forest, intent on restoring their supplies and launching an attack against Tezsvahn.

The crown prince, perhaps with careful advice from his generals, emptied Tezsvahn and launched a surprise attack, slaughtering the remains of Meznamish's armies and killing their king in the process. Ozhvnmish moved to take Meznamish and, aided by Ahznomahnii privateers, they gathered at Ashoshani to strike against their former capital and put an end to such imperial designs. Ozhvnmish had the strength, the will and the gold to succeed, but they had not anticipated King Whensvish.

The new Meznamishii king robbed the coffers of the Svizohr class to buy off Ozhvnmish, thinking the integrity of the nation more important than the bankruptcy of a few nobles. Unfortunately, his brash action resulted in a series of stab wounds, ending his month-long reign. Ozhvnmish called off the invasion, accepted the offered peace and watched from afar as Meznamish descended into bloody contests of grasping lords.

After the War

King Shahn II ruled for 30 more years, commanding from the quiet of his coastal fortress. He left most of the important tasks of governing to his counselors, steward and advisors. Ozhvnmish entered several trade agreements with Ahznomahn, although they always came out on the short end. The new nation struggled with hostile Zazahni on the southern borders as land disputes and age-old grudges emerged. Ozhvnmish maintained its military, something Meznamish could not afford to do and Ahznomahn had no interest in doing. Fearing another war, King Shahn II devoted much of the tax revenue to maintaining hobilar and cavalry.

King Mahlzan IV emerged to take the throne upon Shahn II's death. There was little ceremony, as Ozhvnmish was still unused to the idea of a true monarchy. Mahlzan IV ruled fairly and justly, and directed his nation to gain recognition from the rest of Tellene. With strong trade alliances with the cities along the Elos Bay, and Ozhvnmish's brisk business in shipbuilding, a strong economic upswing, and an established presence on the island marked Mahlzan IV's reign.

Another significant develop was a renewed peace with Meznamish. Their king, Onsar IV, helped fund the lapsed Great Coastal Highway and, as a show of good faith, connected it to his own road system. His liberal views toward religion offered a stronger bond between the neighbors, and while Onsar did not recognize Ozhvnmish as its own state, they formed the ties of friendship.

During King Shahn III's reign, the bonds of friendship continued, although not as strong, for King Warven II is a grasping and ambitious lord who openly declares his intentions. Shahn III, however, is somewhat distanced from Meznamish's plots against Ahznomahn, and their presence in Zazahni. He sees a stable south as a genuine effort to restore Zazahni as a buffer against the monsters of the Vohven Jungle. While his advisors warn that Warven II trains troops and readies for war, King Shahn III is reserved about his reaction to this knowledge.

Ahznomahn, who urged Ozhvinmish to secede from the empire, has grown increasingly competitive, securing a monopoly over much of the trade in eastern Tellene. With each success of eastern Ozhvinmish, Ahznomahn is there to slow or halt its effects. Their rivalry has turned from a good-natured competition to a sinister one, weakening trade ties between these neighbors. Yet, at the same time, Ahznomahn has a greater presence in this state. Merchants, diplomats, and soldiers have free reign to move about the country, for with them comes gold and goods.

Finally, King Shahn III is a bigot; he despises elves. Since ascending to the throne, he has passed a series of harsh and oppressive measures against the elven populace, creating tensions throughout the land. The result has been a mass exodus of elves, away from King Shahn III and his racist ideology.

WHO'S WHO IN OZHVINMISH

The major figures in Ozhvinmish naturally cluster in the significant population centers, such as Ashoshani, Svowmahni, Anowhizh, Nenehi and Zomo-wim. Most national decisions come from Ashoshani, while eastern concerns (under the careful guidance of the steward) come from Svowmahni. There is some conflict of interest in both sides of the nation, as eastern Ozhvinmish continues to assert itself as an independent entity, while King Shahn III directly rules the western state.

Lords of Ozhvinmish

Like the Svizohr caste in Meznamish, the lords of Ozhvinmish originate from Mewzhano's loyal followers. Granted their status 300 years ago, they comprise an exclusive group as the men and the families of those who first followed him are now some of the most powerful people in Ozhvinmish.

KING SHAHN III

King Shahn III (NG aristocrat 17) is the nephew of King Shahn II, and bitterly aware of his uncle's struggles with the loss of his sons. He has had the mantle of the king thrust upon him by manipulation through foreign powers and a series of events that once threatened to tear Svimohzia apart. He watched King Mahlzan IV save the new nation from the hostility from the south and west, establish a competitive relationship with Ahznomahn and snatch the Ozhvinmish from the jaws of demise. Yet, with these role models, King Shahn III does not

take an active hand in the politics of his country, relying on his advisors (like the powerful Onahu Wisha and the Council of Ashoshani) to govern the state. Instead, his spite for elves occupies his time.

Shahn's hatred for elves stems from his adolescence, when he became obsessed with an elf maiden from the Svomawhom Forest. He pined for her, and when she and her family came to the capital to trade, he watched her from afar. Finally, when she reached age 13, he approached the girl, professed his love and demanded she consent to wed him. She rebuffed him publicly, unaware or uncaring of his station, to the derision of the onlookers. Shahn was mortified and fled to his home.

Since the rejection, he spends less and less time in Ashoshani, paranoid of the laughter of his people, even though no one recalls the occurrence. When he assumed the throne, his shame and self-loathing drove him to hate elves, though they had long been allies with the duchy and lived in harmony with them for the past three centuries. With each measure the king passes, the more estranged the elven people become, and they move to the outlying regions of the nation to escape the persecution of the king.

King Shahn III is a thin, middle-aged man with large brown eyes, a short beard and drawn features. When he speaks, his voice is tremulous. He is strong in mind and will, and although he has the best interests for his people in his heart, he keeps to himself, nursing his childhood shame. He almost never visits Ashoshani anymore, instead biding his time in his citadel (Vinahn, a stronghold 50 miles east of the capital city). King Shahn remains unmarried and has no heirs.

AHZIMIAN

Ruling the eastern half of Ozhvinmish for the last 8 years is the steward Ahzimian (LG aristocrat 15), of the House Nhasahm. King Shahn III appointed him because of his values and cultural commitment to the old ways of doing things. Shahn III feared Ahznomahn's influence, believing a strong and conservative leader would corral the eastern territory and curb their rebellious impulses. Ahzimian struggles to meet the demands of the monarch, but the growing Assembly of Guilds stalls his efforts.

The preservation of the Svimohzish culture is the impetus for Ahzimian's political action. Since gaining his position, he has taken the fight to the guilds by passing legislation to limit the powers of the growing merchant class. His efforts have been for naught, however, as the Assembly of Guilds remains more than just a powerful organization monitoring craftsman and artisans - it is a political force opposed to the Steward's rule. Dodging three assassinations already, the merchants he opposes have not deterred Ahzimian. He is committed to preserving the monarchy, keeping Ozhvinmish intact, protecting the values he holds dear, and safeguarding his son Merazan from harm.

Where King Shahn is unimpressive, Ahzimian is the iconic figure of the "man on the horse." Tall and muscular, with good

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looks and a touch of gray over his ears, he is a striking figure, unbroken by the obstacles he must overcome to do his duty. He speaks with a commanding and resonating voice, intimidating to most, but the merchants' wealth and depthless arrogance makes them nearly impervious to his imposing looks. Ahzimian resides with his son in the Steward's Keep in Svowmahni.

DUKE NISHMANI

Ruling much of southern Ozhvinmish is Duke Nishmani (CN aristocrat 9), a capricious and dangerous man with a tenuous grip on his territory. He gained his title 20 years ago, and has grown more erratic since. His current agenda is enforcing the mandatory tithe to a church of choice. He believes in the proximity of the gods, and expects everyone under his rule to have the same reverence for the gods as does he.

Nishmani is something of a scoundrel, a brazen and cocky lord, who tempts fate with his antics. Before gaining the throne from his father, he mounted forays against the Zazahni in the Imomena Hills to raid their settlements under the cover of night. He stopped these attacks since becoming Duke, but remains unfriendly to his southern neighbors. In the last 10 years, he underwent a religious conversion and claims the gods personally visited with him. After his conversion, he passed a law requiring residents of Zomo-wim, the seat of his lands, to pay tithes regardless of religious inclinations.

Nishmani is a man of good physical proportions. He has an open face with small eyes set far apart. He disdains armor, and wears comfortable clothing of traditional Svimohzish styles. He rules his land from Zomo-wim, and lives in a fortified manor with his three wives and ten children.

DUKE ROSHANAZ

Duke Roshanaz (LG aristocrat 12) is the popular lord of Nenehi. As second cousin to the king, he enjoys a good life full of privilege and comfort. Such a life normally spoils a youth, but this was not the case for Roshanaz, who is famous for his sense of humor. Unconcerned by eastern Ozhvinmish's leanings towards adopting a government akin to Ahznomahn, he has the loyalty of his people, the respect of his nobles, and a steady economy.

Friendly and jovial, Roshanaz lacks the ambition of other lords. He has no interest in the throne and only wants to serve his people as a good duke. Unmarried, he lost his heart to a cleric 16 years ago. The torrid romance ended after she gave birth to his daughter. Not interested in continuing the affair, she left with their daughter, Daresvim (named after the famous duchess of ancient Ahznomahn), to pursue a life of pious devotion. Being a good man, he let her leave, but vowed to remain faithful in her absence. They were never reunited. Instead, Daresvim came to live with her father when her mother died under mysterious circumstances near the Awhom Forest. Daresvim's relationship with the Duke was somewhat strained

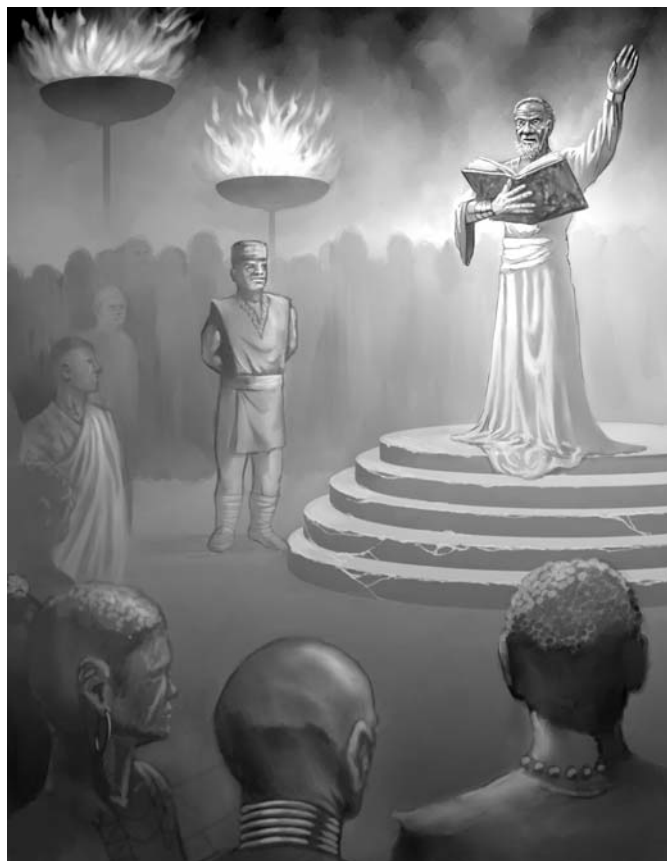
at first, but any problems were soon mended when he proclaimed her as his intended heir. Nenehi, who fell in love with the tragic tale of love lost, generally accept Daresvim, but there have been rumblings among the nobles in the city as to her right and ability to rule.

Tall and muscular, Roshanaz could have succeeded as a warrior, and might have done so had he not had the mantle of dukedom thrust upon him. Just past 40, he shows little sign of his age, having the exuberance of someone half his age. He does not like King Shahn III, and avoids going to the capital whenever he can. Duke Roshanaz resides in his keep, in Nenehi.

ZINH ZHAMISH

Though King Shahn III directly rules Ashoshani, he is rarely there to see to the constant maintenance required to keep the city running. Following a tradition first established by Duke Mahlzan I, the king appointed a council of five holy men to govern the city. To keep the council from grasping too much power, each member represented a different faith. Unfortunately for Zinh, his plan did not work, for he also appointed Zinh Zhamish (LG cleric 17), the senior priest of the Halls of the Valiant. Recognizing the tendency of the Council to lapse into arguments over theology and philosophy, Zinh took charge, explaining they need strong leadership to let them do their jobs, and to keep such religious debates quiet until after their day's work was accomplished.

Since ascending to the head of the Council, Zinh Zhamish has succeeded where his forbearers failed. With firm laws, a



pious watch and a number of other measures, Ashoshani is one of the safest cities on the island. Public works are advanced, with an elaborate sewer system, aqueducts for clean water, and renovations to many of the civil buildings. On the other hand, many of the public improvements owe their funding to increased taxes. This increase, along with the King's intolerance towards elves, has caused the city to adopt a sullen atmosphere despite the urban advances.

Zinh Zhamish has coal black skin and dark brown eyes. He wears his hair cut short and wears robes of blue, white and gold. Short and slight in frame, he does not impress people until he speaks. It then becomes clear he is an intelligent and compassionate man. The Head Councilor lives in a small, but nice, home attached to the Halls of the Valiant temple in Ashoshani.

MILHAVIN THE EAGLE-EYED

Appointed by the city of Anowhizh to rule as monarch, is Milhavin the Eagle-Eyed (LN aristocrat 14), patriarch of the Mizani noble family. For as long as Anowhizh stood, it always appointed its ruler. However, for the last 200 years, the Mizani family held this position, and now it is unthinkable for the position to fall to someone else.

Milhavin has ruled Anowhizh for 40 years and now, just after his 73rd naming day, he has lost much of the keen eyesight of his youth, and his mind has begun to weaken. In his youth, he was a great leader, defending the city from piracy and raiding from sahuagin, and working to make the city self-sufficient in the tumultuous times following the secession. Although beloved by the people, the city is unsure whom they will appoint next, as the Mizani family holds so many prominent positions in the government that the lines of successions are unclear.

Milhavin is an old and stooped man, but he is still able to travel around the city by himself without help. He is stern and serious, and many who do not know him think of him as a tyrant. However, his people know the truth; Milhavin is a man dedicated to the perseverance of his community. He lives in his home city of Anowhizh with his extended family.

Upper Class and the Politically Powerful

Beneath the King and the dukes of the key population centers, there are several influential people in Ozhvinmish. As the largest nation on the island, it is home to a myriad of characters, many having a certain amount of advantage with the king and the rest of the leadership. These characters are scattered throughout Ozhvinmish, and spend most of their time in their home cities.

ASHABORAN RENORAZ

Like in Meznamish and Ahznomahn, the Golden Alliance has made impressive inroads into Ozhvin society. Having established a powerful network in Svowmahni by controlling the Assembly of Guilds and successfully resisting the Steward, the Alliance turned its attention towards Ozhvinmish's capital,

Ashoshani. They planted an agent in Ashoshani's Parliament (a small governmental body created as a concession to the burgeoning merchants), who reports directly to the Golden Alliance. Ashaboran Renoraz (LE rogue 7/Alliance merchant 3) is that agent. However, to gain his seat, he had to murder the other holder. Not having the will to do it himself, he turned to Zohshanam, a House of Thieves member, who performed the task without a problem and then carved up the Parliament member into small chunks of flesh. In exchange for the task, Ashaboran had to sponsor the cleric to join Parliament, requiring the removal of yet another member. The Golden Alliance agent has distanced himself from the killer as best he can, but fears him still.

Ashaboran is a treacherous man - a Svimohz who sold his soul to the Alliance years ago. He manipulates the rest of the Parliament to gain greater influence over the governmental body. King Shahn III, because of his hesitance to spend time in the capital, recognizes the slow ascent of what once was only a minor political body. The Council suspects Alliance activity but have no proof, and they dare not disband the Parliament lest they either damage their economy, or worse, find themselves facing reprisals from the powerful merchant princes in the city.

Ashaboran is short for a Svimohz, being just less than 6 feet tall. He has a large belly, slender fingers and quick eyes. He is crude, vocal and has a filthy mouth. In all, he is distasteful and base, but his riches ensure his power. He has a townhouse near the Parliament building although he is infrequently in the city. Rather, he spends much of his time going to surrounding villages and smaller settlements to build an Alliance network in the west.

CAPTAIN NAHLAVI

Serving the capricious Duke Nishmani as military advisor and captain of the guard is Captain Nahlavi (CG fighter 9), who descends from an important and prominent military family serving Zomo-wim for centuries. Nahlavi commands the Duke's 600 hobilar, and leads these forces to fight those strange creatures of the Awhom Forest, and the Zazahni settlers who seize Ozhvinmish land. A scarred veteran, Nahlavi has seen many battles, and spent a brief stint as a mercenary in his youth, when he sold his sword to any Zazahni warlord who could afford him.

Duke Nishmani and Nahlavi have long been friends. Both share the same love of freedom and disdain for oppression. Nishmani's recent, erratic, piety has driven a wedge between the two, and although the captain remains loyal, he spends now little time with his lord and, instead, devotes himself to the protection of his city.

A good strategist, Nahlavi is brilliant in warfare and innovative on the battlefield. Students study his strategies in war colleges in Ashoshani and Svowmahni. Using tactics he learned from his experience as a jungle fighter in the Vohven Jungle, where he received the ugly scar marring his otherwise good

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looks, his soldiers are famed for their individual heroics against the moss trolls and other mysterious creatures that inhabit the nearby Awhom Forest. Once a friendly and carefree spirit, he affects a grim and serious disposition, as he is unsure how long he can be victorious against this enemy. Captain Nahlavi lives with his men in the barracks within the walled city of Nenehi. However, he often leads missions against the terrors of the Awhom and is gone for weeks at a time.

DARESVIM

Although she is illegitimate, as the sole daughter of Duke Roshanaz, Daresvim (CG aristocrat 4) has stolen the hearts of her people. She was born from a romance between her father the duke and her mother, a free-spirited cleric of the Shimmering One. When her mother gave birth, she ended the relationship, leaving Nenehi and breaking the duke's heart. In the twelve years she spent with her mother, never knowing her father, she learned much of the values of freedom and liberty, traits not always well suited to the nobility.

However, she was unsuited to being a cleric, as her mother had hoped, lacking the depth of insight needed to draw upon the power of the gods. Their brief time ended when her mother died near the Awhom Forest while fulfilling a task for her church. How she died, Daresvim never learned. As soon as word reached the temple, the priests sent Daresvim to live with her father, a man she had never known, in accordance with her mother's previously stated wishes.

When she arrived in Nenehi, it was difficult at first. She hated the restrictions, and despised what she saw as an injustice - the rich living such pampered lives while the poor were forced to live in squalor. The life of a noble was so foreign to her, the despair of urban life eroded her spirit. For the first two years, she wept for her fate, but she and her father grew closer when he saved her from an assassination. She realized then that enemies filled the world. The relationship between father and daughter improved, and she warmed to a future as a duchess, despite the plots of nobles who balk at the idea of an illegitimate girl as their ruler.

Daresvim is the duke's closest advisor. She is smart, with a quick wit and an infectious laugh. Her sorrows long left behind, she has the same sense of humor as her father, and is far prettier. She has no interest in marriage, preferring instead to keep at least this freedom. Her unwillingness to meet with suitors concerns the Duke, but he does not press the issue. The true reason for her reticence is that she loves Zehnim, the leader of the engineers who protect the city from threats from the sea. The heir of Nenehi lives with her father in his castle, but frequently goes riding alone on her favorite horse - a highland dancer named Whisper.

HIGH FIELD MASTER HOCHUL EMFID

Hochul Emfid (NG cleric 11) oversees the Church of the Life's Fire in Anowhizh. He would not be as important as he is, except for his constant appearances at banquets, gatherings and

parties of the city's elite. Inheriting the charge of maintaining the sacred temple, rebuilt after the earthquake of 239 C.M., on the foundation of perhaps the oldest building in Tellene, he shoulders his responsibility with a degree of pride. His attention to the workings of the political forces in the city is a result of his fear of the Church of Endless Night and other evil religions. He watches the political leaders for outward signs of corruption, intrigues and conspiracies. Although he has thus far found none, he is vigilant, and beloved for his concerns.

Friends of the Field Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Fielder	1-4
Field Leader	5-7
Field Master	8-9
High Field Master	10

Hochul Emfid's misgivings and (understandable) fear of evil religions stems from his youth. When he was a small boy, Brolenese slavers captured him and his family, and sold them to a cruel warlord in Ul-Karg. Hochul watched his mother and sisters raped while a Dark Friend watched. He saw his father crucified for trying to stop the villains, and his only brother beaten to death by a Pit Master for spilling three grains of rice. He alone survived, thoroughly hating hobgoblins for their cruelty and the Brolenese for selling humanity to such monsters, and terrified by the evil gods who permitted such behavior in their name. At 15, he escaped into Zazahni, but did not stop running until he reached the shores of the Straits of Svimohzia. There, having some skill with agriculture and a deep reverence for the good gods who gave him freedom, he studied the theology of the Raiser, slowly advancing until he finally became High Field Master.

As the head of the church, he is a principal figure in the city. He performs almost all the marriages, advises Milhavin the Eagle-Eyed, and is a sociable figure and friendly to all. He is plump, with dark brown skin, soft eyes and a benign smile on his face wherever he goes. Despite the effectiveness of his façade, the demons of his past haunt him still.

MERAZAN

As the son of the steward, Merazan (LG aristocrat 3) has much to fear. His father's constant bouts of conflict with the Assembly of Guilds places a strain on the stewardship, and assassination attempts are a regular occurrence. Still, Merazan respects his father's beliefs and values, and strives to abide by those same principles, following the old Svimohzish customs. Merazan, despite his station, leads a quiet life, suffering under the necessary restrictions to ensure his safety.

Merazan is a scholar of history. He loves learning about Meznamish history, but his true interests lie in ancient Svimohzish history and the old legends of the serpent kingdom. His father allows him to go to the Miznoh Forest with several squads of guards to perform archeological studies. While not

skilled, he shows promise and has made a few discoveries about the culture of the people living in the forest during Mewzhan's time.

Just under a lanky 6 feet tall, Merazan has his father's height but not his build. He appears awkward and ungainly, although he has his father's voice and many of the same mannerisms, such as popping his knuckles and tapping his fingers when he is angry. He wears his black hair in braids, and dons clothing of the classic style - patterned robes and sandals. Merazan spends most of his time in the libraries of Svowmahni, studying old texts and maps.

Leaders of the Underworld

Ozhvinmish is a large nation, with plenty of places to hide, ideal locations to commit terrible crimes, and just enough woodlands, hills, and caves to vanish into quickly. Consequently, Ozhvinmish's cities feature thieves' and assassins' guilds, Golden Alliance merchants, secret societies, cults of evil gods and worse. In the rural stretches of the country lurk bandits, expatriates from other lands and slavers, ready to prey upon isolated communities for their harvests.

AMIHN GHANIM

Although the Council of Five banned dark faiths, the House of Scorn (among others) survived. Perhaps the reason for the Emperor of Scorn's continued presence is due to King Shahn's bigoted views towards elves. On the other hand, the king's spite may be the result of Purger influence. In any event, Amihn Ghanim (NE cleric 11) is the head priest of the faith in the capital.

A more despicable man would be hard to find in Ashoshani, especially one with as much influence as Amihn. He has foul tastes, haunting the city streets, where he corners and beats to death any rare lone elf he comes across. He urges his followers to start riots and single out innocents. A few months ago, he scraped together enough money to build a temple in the city, something the Council of Five no doubt watches.

Amihn has a broken nose, is missing a few teeth and walks with a limp. He dresses like a common laborer while spreading hate in the city, frequenting taverns and bars to instigate fights and instilling intolerance and hatred in others. During the quarter moon, he dresses in the gold robes of his faith and gathers his followers for a special service in his church in the working class district of Ashoshani, where he whips them into a terrible frenzy.

GUILDMASTER VORHOL

In eastern Ozhvinmish, one name stands above others - Guildmaster Vorhol (NE rogue 13). Commanding six smuggling vessels, Vorhol and his crew journey to the small islands north of Mezh-Vowmi Isle, where they bargain for illicit goods with slavers and other black marketers. In addition to his power as a smuggler, Vorhol also oversees the Sordid Bunch, possibly Svimohzia's largest thieves' guild. With its large size,

the guild can afford to take light shares from its members and, given the extent of its contacts throughout the island, these members can stand to make quite a fortune.

Vorhol got started in Zha-nehzmish. As the son of a Kalamaran exile and a disgraced zurena, he knew the hard life from his earliest days. Beginning his eventual profession as an urchin, he would offer to "guide" visitors to various parts of the city. The rude ones he would lead into ambushes and the nice ones he would just personally steal from. In time, though, he met his match; he guided a thief like himself. He stole his charge's purse and fled through the streets. Impressed, the victim followed young Vorhol, and caught up to him. However, instead of killing the youth, he took the boy back with him to Svowmahni and let him join his guild. Vorhol never once looked back.

Ten years later, he killed the thief who brought him into the Sordid Men, and assumed control of the guild. As the Guildmaster, he improved operations to a level of organization no one on the island had ever before seen. There have been many attempts on his life, but he has so far evaded capture and assassination with ease.

Vorhol is a slight man with light brown skin and blond hair. He looks far younger than he is due to his easy smile. Beneath the amiable exterior, he is hard and dangerous, with his own interests at heart. The Sordid Bunch operates out of Svowmahni, with its base of operations right in the center of the commerce district.

ZOHSHANAM

Most who know Zohshanam (NE cleric 14) would say he is an honorable member of Parliament and a figure of authority, despite the slight influence Parliament actually has. He gained his seat three years ago on the recommendation of Ashaboran Renoraz (see above). Since then, Ashaboran has kept his distance. When they do speak, their conversation is short, and Zohshanam's sponsor leaves trembling.

Zohshanam is the leader of a cult dedicated to Imohn, the Unseen One. In Anowhizh, this large body of killers comprises the local House of Knives, a murdering band of religious fanatics. At their head is Zohshanam. Part of what makes Zohshanam so fearsome is his choice of weapon for murder. Where most clerics of the Seller of Souls use daggers, poison or garrotes, Zohshanam uses a large butcher knife. His followers know of this preference, and many tremble in his presence.

Zohshanam is a tall man with an olive complexion and black hair. Standing just less than 6 feet tall, he has a large build, weighing about 200 pounds. He has large, calloused hands.

ONSAR YAHUL

Cousin to the infamous Admiral Whensow Yahul of Meznamish, Onsar Yahul (NE ranger 11) is the grandson of a former Meznam Admiral who turned pirate after the Battle of Zhano Cape. Although his grandfather was never a blood-thirsty pirate, Onsar has become so. Reviled throughout the

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Straits of Svimohzia, he goes where he pleases. So far, he has yet to meet the wily Admiral, though he intends to kill him whenever he does.

Onsar has a presence in Ashoshani because he comes to port there frequently with at least a dozen men. His reputation safeguards him throughout his stay, and everyone knows Yahul and his men use poisoned blades in combat. Gathering at the Last One Inn just off the docks on Sailor's Woes Alley, he has developed a good relationship with the innkeeper, who apprises the pirate of developments in the city - in exchange for gold, treasure and a few other illicit items.

At sea, Onsar is a brutal pirate, offering no mercy, selling captives to Brolenese slavers or throwing the injured survivors to the sharks. However, at port, he is polite and soft-spoken, disdaining confrontations and keeping to himself. Many believe Onsar works for someone, and his frequent stays in the capital are nothing more than information gathering.

Onsar is a mixture of Svimohz and Brandobian, for his mother was a Mendarn slave. He has light brown skin, curly black hair and brown eyes, and a soft voice that can turn hard when angered. He wears blue breeches stuffed into the tops of his leather boots, a loose shirt and a red naval commander jacket taken from a Meznam ship captain.

Other Notables

In addition to the legal and illegal powers in Ozhvnmish, there are many other important figures, from artisans and scholars to spellcasters, who have some presence in the lives of the Ozhvins. What follows is a survey of the other notables whose lives may or may not have influenced the nation's development, but for one reason or another are not significant enough to play a notable role in day-to-day politics.

AMAR SHACEL

Leading the troops in Anowhizh is Commander Amar Shacel (LG fighter 12), and a more honest and forthright man can hardly be found. Amar has not always been an Ozhvin, having gained his citizenship in the last decade. He was born in Zazahni and lived in Zenshahn, serving as a caravan guard for years. In his time, he traveled to many cities of the northern nations, transporting goods and building a network of contacts and allies. His life took a dramatic change when he and his caravan of six wagons made their regular journey to Anowhizh. Along the way, a horde of carnivorous apes ambushed the caravan, harrying the soldiers the entire way. Yet, despite the frequency of attacks and the high casualties, Amar managed to bring all six wagons to the city intact. His skill impressed the Mizani family who, in turn, offered the traveler a position as the head of their militia.

Amar's time as a caravan guard took him across Svimohzia, introduced him to a myriad of people and cultures and gave him a special insight into how they relate. One of his more important adventures occurred when he and a caravan made an

overland trek to Ahznomahn along Zahnzor's Line. Just outside of Zha-Mohroz, Amar caught a glimpse of an insubstantial being flitting through the woods. As commander of the forces, he could have sent scouts in to investigate, but left the caravan and scouted on his own. While the train of wagons continued to roll eastward, he followed deeper and deeper into the Vohven Jungle, lured by the mysterious figure. It seemed like days since he followed the spirit, but his trek ended in the ruins of an ancient city. He looked around for three days, fascinated by the ancient architecture, intact. He explored buildings, coliseums, and old museums, astounded by the treasure trove to be found. He realized he had been gone from his caravan for almost a week and not wanting others to see him as a deserter, readied himself to leave.

As he prodded his highland dancer, a voice (speaking a dialect of Svimohzish he had never heard before) urged him to wait. Turning, he noticed an unusual bronze sword sticking out from beneath a pile of rubble. He dismounted and pried the blade free. To his amazement, the sword announced it was the *Protector of the First Empire*, and it agreed to serve Amar for as long as the young captain led a life of honor. Amar agreed and has wielded the sword ever since.

Amar is just entering middle age, and has short salt-and-pepper hair, a moustache and beard. He favors clothing of black and green, and is a confirmed bachelor who prefers to keep the company of his soldiers.

AZHANIMAH SHENSHAL

While Desveminh the warlord musters mercenaries to rebuff a possible Meznamishii invasion, the pragmatic captain of the hobilar, Azhanimahr Shenshal (LN fighter 12) works to upgrade the kingdom's footmen to serve as cavalry. Although some see his actions as foolish, as he is eliminating his own position, Azhanimahr sees it as his duty to protect the capital and king. He believes cavalry is the modern weapon and the days of the infantry have ended. Furthermore, given the fact that Ozhvnmish has the largest herds of highland dancers, it makes sense for his country to take full advantage of its national resource.

Before King Shahn III gained the throne and promoted Azhanimahr to captain of the hobilar, the young captain was a successful lieutenant, having earned his laurels in a border skirmish with a band of exiled Meznamishii horsemen spoiling for a fight. After the skirmish, Azhanimahr approached his captain and explained that even rabble on horses can be a threat. They ignored his complaints until word reached Shahn III, who saw the rightness of the lieutenant's words. Hence, when Shahn ascended, Azhanimahr gained his current post.

Azhanimahr is a middle-aged man with weathered dark brown skin, black hair and brown eyes. He has the physique of a lifelong soldier. He is an effective leader and his men and officers give him the respect he is due.

When not training his men, Azhanimahr spends most of his time in his office (attached to his men's barracks) or in the company of his favorite escort in a brothel on the docks.

DASHAHN

For three years, officials in Anowhizh have struggled to catch the street thief, Dashahn (LE half-elf rogue 12). In the city's history, there has never been a slicker or cannier thief than the half-elf. However, Dashahn is not his name, for *dashahn* is the Svimohzish word for "tall", as in the Dashahn Mountains of Meznamish. Anowhizh's most wanted took the name to suggest he was the pinnacle of knavery.

Dashahn (no one knows his birth name) suddenly emerged in Anowhizh about four years ago when, at first, he was just another street punk with quick hands. His fame began when he robbed one of the Mizani brood, taking the marketplace profits for a month. While the Mizani did not suffer (they are the wealthiest people in the city), it created uproar among the city's elite. The young half-elf rose from anonymity to the most notorious thief in town.

Since this extraordinary theft, he has honed his skills in thievery to exceed any of his peers. In fact, he is so good at picking pockets that his friends claim he could steal the virtue of a woman without making her blush. In addition, he is a skilled actor, able to change his appearance and stance in a moment. Armed with roguish talents, he no longer struggles in the city and needs only to work once in a tenday to maintain his near regal lifestyle.

Most believe (rightly) that Dashahn has elven blood, but no one knows for sure. He has chestnut-colored skin and light brown hair, but with a few dabs of face paint, a quick change of clothes, he can become anyone. For those seeking information, secrets of the city streets, or how to snatch a well-guarded object from the hands of a watchman, Dashahn is the best man for the job.

HIGH PRIEST HILANO AZIRI

The largest temple of Svowmahni is the Hall of Oaths, housing one of the three largest libraries in Svimohzia. As the seat of the Speaker of the Word's faith, the church's High Priest, Hilano Aziri (LG cleric 16) oversees the copying and illumina-

tion of their canon, "The Word." People respect the Hall of Oaths throughout Svimohzia, and while they it does not take part in Ozhvinnish politics, it leads by example.

Hilano Aziri is new to his position, having spent much of his life as a successful merchant. About five years ago, he had an epiphany. He left his career, packing up his family to move to Svowmahni, where he planned to enter the church. With his quick mind, practical business skills and pious devotion to the faith, he quickly climbed the ranks. When the former High Priest passed on, Hilano was the obvious choice.

As a partial celebration of his promotion and partial show of power, Hilano conducted a mass wedding of some 2,000 couples from around the island. Following the ceremony (held in the market the day of a double new moon), Hilano appealed to the newlyweds and guests to participate in a faith magic spell that protected the entire city with a magic circle against evil spell. For a full year, no undead or magically summoned creatures may enter the city. He intends to renew it as needed.

Hilano's show of power polarized Svowmahni. As a progressive and liberal atmosphere, the result of the ritual was to hedge out those clerics of the evil faiths, like the Knights of the Black Pit, who have a significant following in the city's underworld. On the other hand, other clerics, such as those following the Knight of the Gods and the Eternal Lantern support Hilano's stance and show solidarity against the darkness.

LESHAN SHAZAHN

Leshan Shazahh (NG cleric 12) performs the wedding ceremonies in Zomo-wim. She is a Servant of Love dedicated to the Pure One and a longstanding citizen of the city. She is also a staunch opponent of the Temple of Armed Conflict, which has a church in Zomo-wim.

Leshan grew up in Bronish, the daughter of a freed Mendarn slave and a Svimohz tribesman. Her parents, in love, taught her the importance of unity and formed the foundation of Leshan's devotion to the Pure One. At 16, she entered the Parish of Love and studied its canon before spending a year in Emosvom, where she studied the people there and worked to encourage family and unity among them. Having achieved marginal success there, she returned to the Parish and gained a post in Zomo-wim, where she lives to this day.

Keepers of the Word Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Servant	1-2
Advocate	3
Esteemed	4
Venerable	5
Reverend	6
Esquire	7
Grand Esquire	8
Priest	9
High Priest	10

Children of Love Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Initiate	1 2
Servant of Harmony	3
Advocate of Harmony	4
Keeper of Harmony	5
Servant of Love	6
Advocate of Love	7
Guardian of the Heart	8
Advocate of the Heart	9
Grand Advocate of the Heart	10

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The Servant of Love is a beautiful woman with exotic features and a slim physique. She wears the vestments of her faith, a thin pink robe embroidered with two silver roses. Duke Nishmani desires her, and goes to any length to gain her affection, even going so far as to pass the mandatory tithing in the city. Leshan, although she respects the Duke, feels no romantic attraction and fears his growing madness.

MASTER BUILDER BORLI THE BALD

After the earthquake shook Anowhizh, few buildings remained standing. Of those intact structures, only one escaped damage - the Temple of the Founder's Creation. Many years later, the temple is still intact. Its former Master Builder stands in front of the building as a stone statue; he requested that he be encased in stone and left standing in front of his building when he died. Now, in the shadow of this master stands the current Master Builder, Borli the Bald (LN hill dwarf cleric 16).

Borli, a dwarf from a distant enclave far to the north, was a world traveler and adventurer before settling down to a life of a high priest. Always a cleric of the Founder, he sought the fabled First Temple to unlock its secrets. Borli believes he once found the temple and wormed his way into its heart, where he faced a puzzle he could not solve, but never disclosed its location to anyone else. In response, the temple transported him to the northern tip of Svimohzia, where he has worked ever since to find himself worthy to enter the temple once more.

Borli has never forgotten the First Temple and struggles to find it again. Because he offers a premium price on any detailed maps of the Vohven Jungle, some folk whisper that the First



Builders of Law Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Builder	1 2
Stonemason	3
Architect	4
Upholder	5
Lawman	6
Constable	7
Enforcer	8
Commander	9
Master Builder	10

Temple stands intact amidst the Emerald Sea. It is also rumored that Borli sends certain clerics on expeditions to find the First Temple, so he can unlock its secret.

Borli is a muscular dwarf with a bald head but with a full, braided, gray beard. His face is a mass of wrinkles, and his sparkling blue eyes look out from beneath craggy eyebrows. He wears durable breeches and (sometimes) a work shirt with a leather apron over top. Cinched around his ample waist is a large belt, often bristling with the accoutrements of stonemasonry.

SISI MIZANI

One of the rising stars of Anowhizh is Sisi Mizani (CG wizard 6), a younger member of the powerful Mizani family ruling the city. Not interested in politics, she spent almost half of her inheritance on learning to become a wizard. Friendly, playful, and mischievous, she is beloved by the commoners and hated by the nobility.

Sisi grew up in a privileged home, with servants and slaves at her disposal. She never had to work for anything; she needed only to state her wants and they appeared. As she grew, she felt constrained by her station, as well as a intended boring marriage to some pedantic bureaucrat and the expected continuation of her social confinement. After she underwent her coming-of-age ceremony, she abruptly moved out from her parents' home and began studying the occult. From her master, she learned amazing things that fed her thirst for more. For the first time, her abilities and not her station measured her successes. In time, she outgrew the meager skills of her master and now spends considerable sums of gold to learn from other wizards.

Sisi is a young woman in her twenties. She has creamy brown skin, hazel eyes and long black hair worn in braids. She wears a short white tunic, with blue trousers, and soft leather shoes. She carries a staff - she sees staves as wizardly - where her ferret familiar often perches.

ZARAKHIL

Zarakhil (LG hill dwarf expert 12) is well known in Svowmahni, as well as in the dwarven lands, for he forged the ceremonial hammer for a crown prince of his people. Although beloved there, Zarakhil has a soft place in his heart for children, and the dwarven enclave had few. Having accumulated enough wealth to retire, he left the enclave for Svowmahni where he makes horseshoes and toys for coppers.

The dwarven smith established his relationship with the crown when he was far younger than he is today. In his youth, he traveled the tunnels looking for bands of mithral. On one of his forays, he heard sounds of fighting coming from a nearby tunnel. He crept forward to investigate, and found the end of a battle between a handful of dwarves and a knot of humanoids that Zarakhil describes as "dark creepers." Just as his brethren were about to surrender, Zarakhil launched himself into the combat with a scream, swinging his pick. He dropped two of the dark creepers, giving the dwarves a chance to regroup. Among the dwarven company was the crown prince, who would one day become king. Discovering their savior was a minor metalsmith, he demanded Zarakhil be rewarded for his service. Thus, Zarakhil gained a substantial amount of gold and gems, and became a close companion and friend of the future dwarf king.

Zarakhil is about 4 1/2 feet tall, with a powerful build, blocky features and graying red hair. He is always in the company of children, making toys freely. Zarakhil's fame has spread even among the human lands, and he is a popular character in Svowmahni.

ZEHNIM

Duke Roshanaz relies on Zehnim (LG fighter 4) to defend Nenehi from raiders and pirates. Zehnim commands Nenehi's corps of engineers manning the array of catapults and trebuchets facing the sea. Used against the occasional sea drake and other monsters, Nenehi has had success in defending itself from threats from the sea. The engineers attribute their skill to their commander, Zehnim, whose eye for range and accuracy is unmatched in the land.

Thin and tall, Zehnim is lanky, none-too-pretty, and appears awkward. However, he is skilled with the longsword in addition to siege weapons, and his quick mind and forceful personality have made him popular with the men. Zehnim loves Daresvim, who also has similar feelings for the would-be paramour, but he lacks the courage to approach her.

ZHULURAHN

Six miles west of Zomo-wim stands a monastic Temple of the Three Strengths. There, Zhulurahn (LN cleric 14), an Aspirant of the Three Strengths, trains over two dozen students to perfect mind, body and spirit through rigorous training and meditation. The remoteness of the temple keeps it from being embroiled in the Duke Nishmani's capricious politics.

Zhulurahn tried to contain the violence between Nishmani's duchy and the settlers of Zazahni. He believed a strong ordered mind, with the voice of reason could cause the raids to stop and solidify the boundary agreements. Unfortunately, Zhulurahn underestimated Nishmani, who says and does as he pleases. Whenever Zhulurahn approached the duke, the cleric would present a well-reasoned argument for peace and the duke would appear to agree, yet when the priest returned to his monastery, the duke would lash out against the Zazahni out of spite.

Zhulurahn approached the duke a few times more before he realized the duke would never relent.

This placed the cleric in a predicament. While loyal to his country, he would not see the south thrust into war for the pleasure of one bellicose lord. He believes that if Nishmani abdicates, the south will stabilize. Having no luck there, Zhulurahn trains Zazahni and Ozhvins together to strengthen peace and brotherhood. He has had remarkable success, but if Nishmani discovered Zazahni inside the temple, Zhulurahn's monastery would be in jeopardy.

Seekers of the Three Strengths Ranks

Title	Temple Rank
Aspirant of the First Strength	1
Keeper of the First Strength	2
Aspirant of the Second Strength	3
Keeper of the Second Strength	4
Aspirant of the Third Strength	5
Keeper of the Third Strength	6
Aspirant of the Three Strengths	7 8
Keeper of the Three Strengths	9
Master of the Three Strengths	10

Zhulurahn is a short muscular man with dark skin, wide facial features and a serious demeanor. Like all followers of the Powermaster of his rank, he wears sleeveless blue robes and a silver girdle to denote his station.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Ozhvnmish, the largest nation on Svimohzia, turns its eyes inward to maintain its holdings more than it looks beyond its borders. Since its secession from the empire, Ozhvins have fought for a national identity, something establishing Ozhvins as different from the rigid Meznams to the West, and the cutthroat modernists to the east. Given its size, the nation incorporates many different values, from warlike expansion to reserved conservatism. The result of this melting pot of ideals is a stoic nation well steeped in its history, but one striving to attain prominence in the modern world.

Threatening the value system of the old cultural standards is the emergence of the east as an economic force that, if unchecked, could eventually eclipse Zha-nehzmish. In Svowmahni, the steward struggles to retain his feudal authority, but is challenged with the growth of a new middle class comprised of the merchant princes and the competing guilds. Buyers flock to the markets from all over the isle, and the attained wealth tends to flow straight into the pockets of non-nobles - mostly common freemen with business sense and shrewd negotiation skills. With so much of the resources falling directly into the hands of the middle class, they now resist new tariffs, laws and just about any legislative act posited by the steward.

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The resistance to the monarchy spreads through Ozhvnmish like a disease. Farther and farther to the west, merchants establish new holdings, whereby they form new hubs for trade in even the most remote communities. As the larger population holds more gold, the lords of the old Svizohr caste find their power and influence diminishing to such an extent that most Svizohr of old are indistinguishable from the merchants themselves.

With the shrinking upper class and with the influx of goods and services from distant ports, people abandon the old customs. No longer do the parents arrange the marriages; the youth make their own choices. Reverence to the gods declines, as an atheistic intellectualism taught by modern philosophers takes hold. Magic is regarded as a mere superstition, while science gains a stronger grip throughout the northern cities. The result of this new thinking creates social tension between the members of the older generation, who remember and respect the social hierarchy of the empire, and the younger generation, who idolize wealth and the upward mobility.

Most of the strain arises from the proximity to, and regular contact with, Ahznomahn. Merchants and Golden Alliance agents spread stories of wealth in the Kingless Land, and many stories about common folk rising through their own ingenuity and hard work. With each telling, Ahznomahn becomes more attractive and citizens clamor for more freedoms.

Of course, western Ozhvnmish is also not without difficulties. In fact, its problems are far more severe than those in the east. Beyond the Menamo Hills, King Warven II mobilizes his troops and expands the ranks with legions of slave soldiers and Brolenese mercenaries, well armed with dwarven steel. King Shahn II orders press gangs to scour the countryside and gather conscripts, employing vicious and disreputable mercenary captains to build companies of fighting men to fill the gaps. With them come mercenaries from other lands, drawn by the promise of gold. With the influx of these hardened men, the common people feel less secure than ever, lending to the nation's melancholy atmosphere.

Worse, King Shahn II's edicts against elves divide families, put strains on friendships and add to the unfriendly air in the west. Elves, half-elves and sympathizers moved away from the capital to distant lands in the kingdom, such as the Miznoh Forest, or out of the kingdom altogether.

Finally, to the south, old evils stir in the Awhom Forest, as strange monsters prowl the lands of men once more. As the Ozhvin military must divert patrols from the Zazahni border to contain this new threat, the southern lands are left open to Zazahni prospectors and settlers (as well as bandits and monsters) to enter the country unopposed.

Status

Ozhvnmish has a similar social structure to Meznamish, which inherited its social structure from the indigenous people living in these lands before Miznoh's conquest. During

Miznoh's conquest, he created the elite class from his most loyal men and servants, parceling the land out as spoils to his fellow conquerors. The royal families of the modern nations descend from these loyal officers, who shaped their duchies to fit within their own conception of a country. Today, King Shahn II represents the remains of the royal family.

Unlike Meznamish, the modern caste system is looser than was the rigid hierarchy of the former empire. In fact, the Miznoh caste vanished within 10 years after the secession, absorbed by the Svizohr and Sohrihz castes. Now, beneath the king, there are four major classes of variable influence and power in Ozhvnmishii culture.

Ozhvnmishii Castes

Name	Peoples
Nehzrin	Non persons (slaves) or criminals
Sohrihz	Freemen, clerics and warriors
Mehzrin	Merchant princes and high priests
Svizohr	Powerful rulers

The first and lowliest caste is the Nehzrin, or non-persons, who are slaves or criminals. Like Meznamish, most of the slaves in Ozhvnmish come from Brolenese slavers, so people from other lands toil here. Punishment for criminal behavior results in enslavement to the victim, so most transgressors wind up serving those they offended. Violent criminals become slaves of the state, and work as miners, soldiers, or maintainers of city structures, such as sewers, roads, or anything else the state may require. Ozhvnmish differs from Meznamish in that it has an open-slave system. A slave's children are born free, although considered to be of the same caste as their parents until they may be able to better their standing through wealth or some special achievement. Slaves can purchase their way out of slavery by meeting their "body cost" (a value assessed by a Profiteer), although few slaves have a legitimate means of income. If they wish to earn any actual money, they must work an additional job besides the mandatory labor they must perform for their owners. Slaves account for about 10% of Ozhvnmish's population.

The Sohrihz is the next highest caste, and is the largest and most ambiguous. Comprised of freemen, clerics and warriors, the Sohrihz ("contributors") make up the bulk of Meznamish's populace. Ozhvin Sohrihz are not as diverse as are the Meznam Sohrihz, for most merchants are of their own caste. Instead, most Sohrihz are laborers, farmers, adventurers, soldiers, shopkeepers and private businessmen or those who are not wealthy enough to advance to the next caste. The Sohrihz caste also includes the bureaucrats, advisors, and other positions required to keep the country's government in working order. People can descend to the Nehzrin caste, or advance to the Mehzrin caste, depending on their situation and economic viability.

Merchant princes and some successful and powerful clergymen make up the Mehzzrin caste. They have the greatest freedoms in Ozhvinmish and may interact with individuals of any social level. This caste is unique to Ozhvinmish, as they represent the manifestation of the mercantile class into Ozhvinmishii society. Because of them, the social rules binding Mezznamishii society have all but vanished.

The last and highest caste is the Svizohr. Once the most powerful in the land, Svizohr power now wanes in the face of the unruly Mehzzrin. Comprised of the descendants of warlords loyal to Mewzzhano or Miznoh, they once had extensive land holdings, wealth and peasants. However, after Ozhvinmish seceded from the empire, and with Ahznomahn's influence, many Svizohr lost their land to the rising merchant class. As peasants gained more freedoms, the Svizohr had to rely more on slaves to meet the labor shortages. Slave acquisition is expensive and, along with their costly maintenance, ultimately forced many Svizohr into bankruptcy. Thus, many Svizohr became merchants themselves, establishing guilds and trading networks throughout Svimohzia. Those few remaining Svizohr are powerful, commanding the largest cities and population centers throughout Ozhvinmish.

The King

Ozhvinmish uses a modified version of Onsar's system of ascension to appoint kings. Each monarch must name an heir before abdicating the throne, so the title passes to the recognized heir. If a monarch dies unexpectedly before being able to name his heir, the throne goes to the eldest legitimate child. If no legitimate child exists, the throne then goes to the eldest illegitimate child. If the heir is too young to rule, a Svizohr of the closest familial relation serves as steward until the heir's coming-of-age ceremony. The Council of Five always adjudicates who has the strongest ties to the last monarch in case of conflict.

In the rare event no heir exists because there was no issue from the monarch nor a surviving heir, the dukes meet in Ashoshani to vote on who among them is most worthy of the throne. A candidate must be nominated by two dukes to be recognized. When the Svizohr nominate the candidates, they vote in secret, and the one with the majority of votes is proclaimed the new monarch.

The Dukes

As in Mezznamish, the days of the Svizohr dominance are ending. More and more Svizohr families give up their titles to found merchant companies, blending into the emerging middle class. When Ozhvinmish seceded from the empire, twenty-two Svizohr families spread throughout the kingdom. Less than a century later, only seven houses remain. Unlike the Svizohr of Mezznamish, the Svizohr families of Ozhvinmish function more like traditional nobles, ruling their cities and lands but having far lesser impact on a national scale.

HOUSE MIZANI

The powerful House Mizani has ruled Anowhizh for so many generations, most cannot conceive of a life without a Mizani presence. Unlike many other Svizohr, the Mizani have adapted to mercantilism by becoming merchants themselves. A large family with its members in all types of professions, they have solidified their power base in the city and have retained their holdings since before Ozhvinmish seceded from the empire. The current patriarch is Milhavin the Eagle-Eyed. House Mizani controls Anowhizh and the lands west of the Miznoh Forest, south to House Ozhnohz, and east to House Nhasahm.

HOUSE NHASAHM

The traditional lords of Zorshahn, House Nhasahm claims by law Svowmahni, although in fact, this city is under the jurisdiction of the Assembly of Guilds. The most noteworthy of this small house is Ahzimian, the Steward of Eastern Ozhvinmish. They control the seat of eastern power and the surrounding lands, bordered by House Ozhnohz to the south and House Mizani to the west.

HOUSE OZHNOHZ

The royal family of Ozhnohz claims ancestry back to the first duke of Ozhvinmish, from whom they take the name. Prominent members include King Shahn III, his second cousin Duke Roshanaz of Nenehi, and his illegitimate daughter Daresvim. House Ozhnohz owns the lands surrounding Nenehi, the eastern coast south of Nenehi to the Ahznomahnii border, and westward to Wazin-Ahnozh. In addition, King Shahn III claims the western half of Miznoh Forest as his family's lands.

HOUSE REWHEN

Controlling most of southern Ozhvinmish and battling the Zazahni to the south is House Rewhen. Most famous of this wealthy family is Duke Nishmani, who rules Zomo-wim. House Rewhen claims the land south of the Svomawhom Forest border to the northern reaches of the Awhom Forest. Rewhen's western border extends through the contested lands to the Imomena Hills and to the east to the edge of Ozhnohz territory.

HOUSE SMOHNSOW

Another minor noble family, House Smohnsow rules Sahzshahni and the lands around it. During Fortnight's Battle, this House is said to have suffered greatest. Loyal to the Empire, they committed troops to the front lines before the rest of the Ozhvinmish armies arrived. Consequently, the hobgoblins shattered their lands, destroyed many of their warriors and left the House reeling for generations. Now, like so many other Svizohr, House Smohnsow teeters on the verge of bankruptcy and must sell off many of its holdings to retain control over what little they have left.

HOUSE VOHMVO

Established in Miznahn, House Vohmvo is a waning power in the nation. The family has sold most of their lands to the

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peasant population, teams of woodcutters and anyone else with coin to get them out of debt. Once, they controlled eastern Ozhvnmish, but no more. Indigenous elves and squatters fight for land rights, while the Svizohr lords rot within the city walls.

HOUSE WHEMONA

This minor house rules Tezsvahn, the city made famous in the brief Meznamish-Ozhvnmish war. It was here King Shahn's son laid the trap destroying the invading army. However, it cost House Whemona dearly when the Meznamishii forces ravaged the lands from Nezormish through the Miznoh Forest to the walls of the city. Although their sacrifice saved the nation, the King never compensated them. House Whemona has suffered ever since and never returned to its previous level of prosperity.

FOREIGN POLICY

King Shahn III suspects treachery from Meznamish and has responded by amassing troops near the Meznamishii border. Worse, both kings know Ahznom spies use Ashoshani as a base of operations to launch espionage attacks against the Meznams. There is an unspoken acknowledgement on both sides that as long as Meznam continues to build its forces, Ozhvnmish will take no direct action against Ahznomahn and their spies. Tensions continue between these two powers for, in recent days, Warven II's obsession with restoring the empire becomes clearer. Shahn hopes Ul-Karg derails the Meznam king from his efforts of conquest. Still, the two nations remain amicable, and trade continues between them. Both feel confident that if Ul-Karg does attack, they each have an ally in the other, at least for now.

Ozhvnmish has a good relationship with the cities along the coast of the Elos Bay and has been able to find trading partners in Prompeldia, U'Rudaketa and Bet Seder. More and more merchants from across the sea have need of Ozhvnmishii ships, creating a brisk trade in the east. While these channels remain clear, Ahznomahnii merchants reduce their prices to lure merchants, an act frustrating merchants in the east.

Shahn III is not certain what to do about Ahznomahn. He knows of their association with the Golden Alliance, and Alliance agents already work in many locations throughout his nation and attempt to undermine the authority of his crown. Any military response would jeopardize his standing with the Kalamaran and Reanaarian markets, eastern Ozhvnmish would never support a confrontation, and he would face a civil war. With aggression against their long-standing allies, his position as king would weaken and he would seem a puppet of Meznamish (which does not recognize Ozhvnmish as independent).

Last, Ul-Karg is a constant, although distant, threat in the eyes of Ozhvnmish. King Shahn III has done little to stop Ul-Karg from amassing its hordes because he concludes that the Ul-Karg invasion would again target Zazahni first, thereby stalling the hobgoblins in a quagmire of petty dukes and barons vying for dominance. If Ul-Karg wins (and remains) there, Ozhvnmish might even have a more secure border, for the hobgoblins, if

anything, are orderly. Of course, few have any hope that the Kargi would be content to remain in Zazahni. For Zazahni to win, the fractured state would need to be reunited, with a strong king possibly being just enough to contain Meznamish's ambitions toward reforming the empire.

Foreign Interests

Diplomacy is vital to Ozhvnmish's economy. On one hand, they have the vibrant markets of Ahznomahn, with its greater selection and lower prices than any other marketplace in Svimohzia - causing Ozhvnmish ports to be hard-pressed just to keep up. On the other hand, Meznamish enjoys long-standing relationships with many of the established kingdoms on the continent. Therefore, Ozhvnmish spends a lot of gold to fund their embassies in other cities, where they bargain with foreign merchant princes and nobles alike to make Ozhvnmishii ports seem more attractive. Most of these diplomats court the cities of the southern Elos Desert, though a few have a presence in Kalamar, Meznamish and Ahznomahn as well.

MONAM-AHNOZH

Tensions rising between Ozhvnmish and Meznamish force King Shahn III to divert more attention to developments in the Meznamishii capital. Under the pretense of strengthening the ties between the two countries, Ozhvnmishii diplomats are there to watch the training camps and merchant activity, and the comings and goings of foreign dignitaries, and report to Shahn. What King Shahn has discovered is the development of slave warriors, driving him to expand his own military resources by hiring mercenaries to defend the capital.

PROMPELDIA

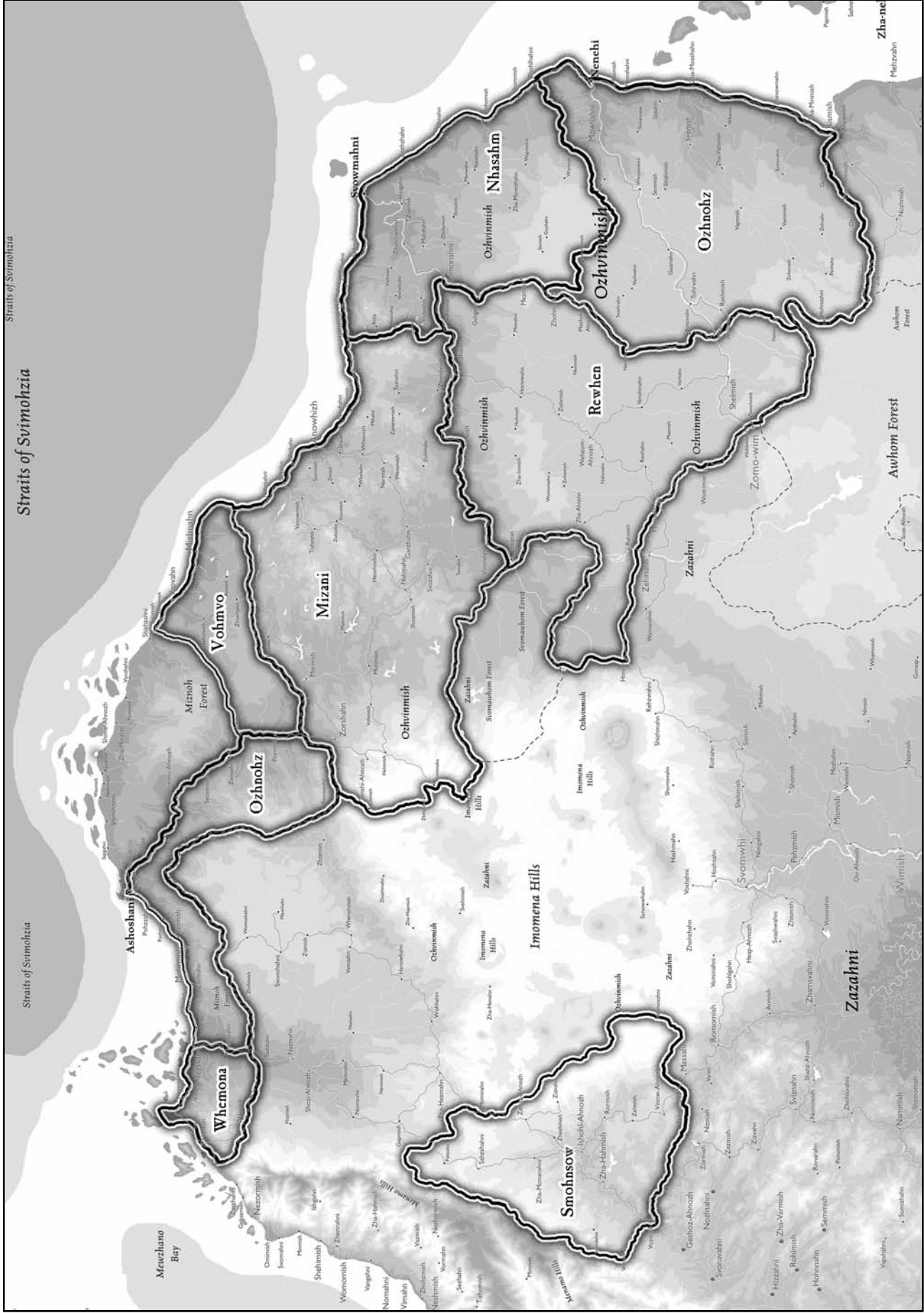
The slave market here has too strong of ties with Meznamish and Ul-Karg to be able to give Ozhvnmish a fair price, but Ozhvnmish keeps several ambassadors there to build ties of friendship with the distant city and to attract merchants to Ashoshani and Svowmahni. However, Prompeldia is a dangerous city, and the casualty rate among Ozhvnmishii officials is high. Furthermore, the Golden Alliance has a strong influence there, forcing Ozhvnmish representatives to deal directly with the Alliance, gaining them nothing.

U'RUDAKETA

As this is a popular stopping point for Ozhvnmishii traders, diplomatic relations with U'Rudaketa have improved. Unfortunately, Svimohzish captains tend to be at odds with Kalamaran merchants, although the diplomats and Ozhvnmish merchants try to keep their tempers cool. King Shahn III believes that with the right offer, he could gain a favorable trade status with the city and create a strong market for Ozhvnmishii goods on the mainland.

ZHA-NEHZMISH

King Shahn III has a small diplomatic presence in Ahznomahn, mostly to watch the political developments of



their neighbor, but also to monitor economic trends there to assist the Ozhvinmishii markets. His diplomats have marginal successes, and Shahn believes Ahznomahn is aware of their purpose and feeding them false information. Most Ahznoms see this as healthy competition.

National Opinions on Foreign Affairs

Public opinion varies, depending on whether the citizen is an easterner or a westerner, due to physical distance, outlooks, and even the type of speech used. For example, the nearness to Meznamish makes most western locals uneasy. Furthermore, as rumors of war float on the wind, people begin to hoard their goods, find weapons, or even volunteer to serve the king. On the other hand, easterners welcome war with Meznamish, for they see the coming conflict as an opportunity to declare their independence. People even take to the streets, burning King Warven II in effigy, in the Ahznomahnii fashion. Even those citizens loyal to King Shahn III find it difficult to believe the feeble Meznamishii King could be capable of mounting an invasion.

Easterners have a different attitude towards Ahznomahn. Ozhvins in the east respect and admire their cousins, seeing them as being the very epitome of civilization, wealth, and success. Ahznomahn represents freedom from tyranny, the ability to advance one's station, and to live like a king. They do not see Ahznomahn's poverty, the hypocrisy involved, or the entanglement of their king being yoked to the Golden Alliance.

With admiration, however, comes jealousy. Easterners hear the success stories of the common man becoming a zurena, and look to their own lives with their fixed castes, with a ruler who passes laws at his whim, and the squalor of their own lives. Next to the glory of Ahznomahn, Ozhvinmish looks poor indeed.

Finally, easterners have relapsed in their thinking to the days when people saw hobgoblins as brutish savages, preying upon one another. Word reaches them of the hobgoblins gathering forces, but most laugh away the news as exaggeration. Westerners, however, are even more frightened by Ul-Karg than they are of Meznamish. Some people recall stories of that war, the terror following as the empire collapsed, and the difficult work necessary to rebuild their communities.

CURRENT EVENTS

Ozhvinmish begins to feel the weight of its size. The cost to maintain the roads, police the regions and modernize the towns has become prohibitive. Law extends only to a community's borders, so brigands and highwaymen can make a lucrative living preying upon travelers, and then quickly and safely escape over the closest border. The result of the national erosion is a distancing and division of culture. The less easterners and westerners interact, the more their values diverge.

Widening the gulf is the influence of Ahznomahn on the eastern region. Ozhvins there have begun to emulate Ahznomahnii customs, while fewer and fewer people speak

Svimohzish and use only Merchant's Tongue instead. The caste system has eroded to such an extent that people of any social level feel free to look any others directly in the eye. Ahznomahn's social system has also precipitated the emergence of a powerful merchant class. Unprepared for this development, the distant capital has been too slow to respond and the steward alone lacked the authority or the respect of the people to curb the class' swift growth. Government offices crumble from poor maintenance or are sold off and converted into private sector businesses. Most notably, the Assembly of Guilds, a body designed to oversee imports and export and to check the excesses of guilds, now represents the interests of the burgeoning merchant class and stands in direct competition with the steward. If the King does not act soon, Ozhvinmish could face a civil war.

Ozhvinmish also faces an immigration problem, for refugees have been flooding in. Ozhvins resent these Zazahni, who expect citizenship and equal rights, but do not embrace Ozhvin culture. Uneducated and poor, the workers take semi-skilled labor-intensive jobs from Ozhvins for lower wages and conditions. Consequently, riots erupt in smaller outlying communities - often resulting in lynchings or beheadings. King Shahn III is powerless to stop them, as he lacks the funds to patrol the hamlets in the nation. He hopes to slow or perhaps stop the deaths by bringing new industry to the nation. He also justifies the harsh political actions against elves by claiming the removal of the elven population would leave an employment vacuum the immigrants from the south could nicely fill.

Another tactic the King has used is to support powerful warlords in Zazahni, with the hopes they gain the crown and stabilize the nation. By returning some semblance of order to the land, its people would stop escaping into other lands, and perhaps establish Zazahni as another power on the island to help defend against Meznamishii aggression. Shahn believes that if Meznamish attacks, the eastern territory will seize the opportunity to secede. Thus, he builds mercenary legions, not to defend the capital but to crush opposition in the east.

Ozhvinmish is aware of the threat posed by Ul-Karg but, like Zazahni, it is powerless to stop it. Hobgoblin scouts are seen, and it is just a matter of time before the trumpets of war blow to the sounds of marching feet. Ozhvinmish waits to see what Meznamish does before committing troops to its southern territories, lest Warven take advantage of their unguarded capital.

The last significant threat and development in the recent years originates from the past. Something awoke the terrors of the Awhom Forest, and Shahn believes it was Ahznomahn. Ozhvins have always respected the ancient wood, never venturing too far inside, and only taking fallen trees there for wood, relying instead on the northern Miznoh Forest. Nevertheless, towns along the border of the ancient forest report raids and missing people, and the entire population of hamlets vanishing in a night. Diplomats to Ahznomahn request information regarding cutting of the forests on their borders, but the zurenas deny any knowledge of trespassing and claim they have had no problems with the forest.

ECONOMY

Ozhvnmish's economy relies on the eastern markets to thrive. Svowmahni is easier to access than Monam-Ahnoz and draws merchants from Kalamar, Elos Bay and Pel Brolenon. When compared to Ashoshani, the merchants in the east are friendlier and more tolerant of other races. As a result, most of Ozhvnmish's buying and selling occurs far from the capital and, for this reason, the government has lost ground controlling the emerging mercantile class (who compete with the steward for control over the region).

Trade routes

Merchant's Run, the trade route running from Mendarn to Kalamar, is the strongest source of trade for Ozhvnmish. Many merchants dock in Ashoshani or Svowmahni along the way to the distant ports. Ozhvnmishii merchants need these traders to transport finished goods, selling their wares to other merchants who, in turn, sell in the bustling markets of the empire. In the cities of Elos Bay and Desert, Ozhvin merchants do well, having opted to sell their goods at a lower price there rather than openly compete with Ahznomahni merchants in Kalamar. Still, Ozhvnmish does have a presence in the empire, and their finished gemstones exhibit some of the finest craftsmanship in the world.

A smaller, but established, route carries commodities from Pel Brolenon to Meznamish and to the coastal cities in Ozhvnmish. Although the prices are not as good as the Meznamish get, they are avid buyers. Ozhvins are suspicious of the Brolenese because of their good relations with Ul-Karg, but they always await news from the south and the word is often dire indeed.

Meznamish and Ozhvnmish have established routes through the Menamo Hills, and Ozhvin merchants sell their wares to the towns and cities on the eastern side of the Mewzhano Bay. To the east, Ahznomahn and Ozhvnmish continue their business dealings in the north of Ahznomahn. Despite the frequency of the trading, Ozhvins resent the high prices charged for their necessity goods.

Overland travel is important to Ozhvnmish as it has the greatest stretch of the Great Coastal Highway along their coastline. Goods from as far away as Ashoshani travel in caravan trains across the nation to sell in Meznamishii markets. Likewise, Meznamishii merchants enjoy safe passage through Ozhvnmish's northern road and the isolated communities along the way are willing to pay premium prices for Meznamishii goods.

Being a large nation, with many natural resources and a thriving agricultural industry, Ozhvnmish has few requirements to keep their nation alive. Instead, jewelers and metalworker import raw resources, such as uncut gems and ingots of silver, gold and platinum, fashioning them into fine jewelry to sell. Armor and weaponry are in high demand, as Ozhvnmish

has little in the way of metal resources, aside from some tin mines in the southern Menamo Hills. With the nation's large urban population, there is a demand for perfumes, oils and incenses to cover the stench of urban life.

While Ozhvnmish takes in little, it offers much. As mentioned, the nation has a few tin mines and sells ingots of tin at reasonable rates. They also sell wheat, oats and sometimes barley, depending on the type and success of the growing season, for they have extensive farmlands stretching from one side of the country to the other. Ozhvnmishii fishermen make a good living selling pickled fish, but tend to sell their fresh catches to their own people.

Aside from the smaller markets, Ozhvnmish is well-known for two other commodities. First is the highland dancer, an intelligent horse, easy to train and popular with cavalry worldwide. Herds of these magnificent steeds roam the hills in the east, and animal handlers do well taming and then selling the steeds to foreign markets. The second commodity the nation is famous for are its ships. Thanks to lumber culled from the Miznoh Forest, shipbuilders can easily procure the materials for their trade, and sell high quality warships and galleons to buyers from any of the coastal kingdoms on the continent. For more details on Ashoshani ships, see the Ashoshani Merchant template in *Salt and Seadogs: The Pirates of Tellene*.

Taxation

Ozhvnmish needs to raise the taxes, but each time such a measure is put forth, the merchants in the east block it. Furthermore, competition with Ahznomahn forces the nation to keep its tariffs low to enhance the allure of their ports. Using the tax structure it has maintained for years, Ozhvnmish applies a 2 copper piece per pound flat tax on imports and exports. However, in order to buy or sell in the marketplaces, vendors and citizens must pay 1 copper for a monthly license.

Ozhvnmish Taxes

Caste	Annual Tax
Nehzrin	1 cp per person in family
Sohrihz	5% of property value
Mezhor	5% property
Svizohr	5% property
King	1% property

With the light tax system, Ozhvnmish has not been able to maintain national services like road maintenance or security patrols, so more and more the private sector assumes control. In fact, many merchant houses have grown wealthy by charging citizens to repair the roads, or hiring mercenary guards to protect only their own goods and patrol only their own streets. Prices for goods and services are normal as listed in the *Player's Handbook*, *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*, and *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*.

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In addition to the import/export tariffs, citizens must pay an annual tax assessed and collected by a tax collector during the month of Reaping. Status dictates the amount of taxes to be paid just as in Meznamish, but since the merchant class has become the dominant force, they use this advantage to reduce the amount of taxes they actually pay. Ordinary citizens have up to three months to pay their taxes. If they do not pay them within that time, they become Nehzrin until they repay their debt to the state.

Currency

Ozhvnmish, like all Svimohzish nations, uses slightly rounded, eight-sided coinage minted with copper, silver, gold and platinum. Ozhvnmishii coins vary in size, the copper being largest and the gold being smallest. The platinum is the same size as the gold. The obverse of all coins shows a large, flat galley loaded with cargo. The reverse of each varies, as follows: the Zarvim displays a shining gem; the Dancer, a running horse known as a Highland Dancer; the Champion, a soldier standing amid the bodies of fallen foes; and the Sanovar, a wide three-tiered fountain in a city plaza.



The Sanovar is the most valuable coin, minted from pure Brolenese platinum. Given its prohibitive cost, Ozhvnmish produces only small quantities of these coins each year, and King Shahn III has entertained the idea of taking it out of circulation altogether. Each of the images on the reverse appears below the words “1 [name of coin]” in Svimohzish.

EXCHANGE RATES

Ozhvnmish accepts currency from other nations as long as the type of metal used and the weights are the same. In western markets, currency must be Ozhvnmishii, although in the east, Ahznomahnii and Imperial Kalamaran currency are accepted. Imperial coins have no exchange rate, but coinage from other continental nations are imposed a 10% exchange fee. To exchange Zazahni, Meznamishii or Ahznomahnii coins, there is a 5% fee. Kargi currency, interestingly, is accepted anywhere.

LANGUAGE

The primary tongue in Ozhvnmish is a dialect of Svimohzish. It differs from the Meznam dialect in that the language finds its roots in the simple Zassho tongue, having developed from a mixture of the Meznam dialect further west and the Mewhi dialect to the south. When the tribes began to interact and intermarry after Miznoh's conquest, many words from the Zassho dialect bled into the common Svimohzish tongue, but it itself remained unchanged as the people living in these lands held true to their culture and heritage. Over the generations, the original Zassho tongue died out because it lacked the vocabulary to meet the needs of the developing nation, leaving modified Ozhvin Svimohzish in its place.

Use of Merchant's Tongue is sporadic, as noted above. In urban centers, most citizens know enough of the trade language to communicate and negotiate for goods, but use of this languages falls off the further west and south one travels. There, the Meznam dialect remains common, as many Meznamishii merchants do business there, and few people there have much love for Ahznomahn.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

When Miznoh led his armies across the island to crush the native Zassho people of the northeast, he also eliminated the old value systems and culture, thus creating Mewzhano and the foundations of the empire. With him came a violent and rigid culture, mutated from that present in the Miznoh Forest and its surrounding lands.

However, with the impositions placed on the native Ozhvins, they too affected the social structure of the empire. The Svimohzish value on family is said to originate with the Ozhvins, who place their highest loyalty on their family members, before matters of state. Consequently, throughout Ozhvnmish, the government mirrored the family structure, with the patriarch as the head of the family and state, as represented by the duke and later the king.

Ozhvins adopted the rules of social behavior still upheld in Meznamish, and in many ways, mirrored Meznamish, except for differences in language. Yet, when Ozhvnmish seceded from the empire, the importance on social status began to erode, with the growing influence of Ahznomahn in the east, the disintegration of the southern borders, and the impropriety of King Shahn's son in Zazahni undermining the respect for the nobility among the commoners. With the relaxation of social graces such as the meeting of eyes and intricate rules for bowing, the castes became permeable, allowing upward ascension from lower castes into higher ones. Finally, the merchant class collapsed the religious and warrior castes and all but eliminated the Svizohr caste in the east. Now, the enforcement of the social rules of touching, bowing and meeting of eyes depend on where one is in Ozhvnmish. To the east, Ozhvins are more like Ahznoms in this regard, with little to no emphasis on caste, and where commoners can look nobles straight in the eye and bowing is outdated. On the other hand, in the west, on the slopes of the Menamo Hills, Ozhvins abide by the old social rules to such an extent there is almost no difference between the Meznams and the Ozhvins in this regard.

Style of Dress

Although much of Ozhvnmish no longer recognizes the castes of the former empire, in the west people still adhere to the old customs. There, the style of the individual's apparel signifies his or her social standing. In the east, styles are more cosmopolitan and a reflection of fashion tastes in Ahznomahn, Kalamar and the cities of the Elos Bay.

In western Ozhvinmish, both genders of the lowest caste, the Nehzrin, wear plain tunics of white or beige with black breeches. During festivals and holidays, owners permit Nehzrin to wear flowers or simple jewelry to enhance their appearances for the festivities. Nehzrin wear headscarves or badges to signify their allegiance to their houses.

In the east, slaves and criminals are not required to wear the attire of their counterparts in the west. They have far more freedom in the clothes they wear, although many masters still require their slaves to abide by the traditional clothing restrictions. Those able to wear what they wish seem to favor intricate patterns and designs woven right into the clothes. They dye their clothes to be of one color, because of the expense of such materials, though the clothing still features complex woven patterns into the fabric. In summer months, men may go shirtless. Women wear long skirts, similar to the clothing worn by men of their station. They wear revealing shirts, cut low and short, to keep cool in the warmest months. In the rainy seasons, they don shawls or cloaks with woven patterns. Like the men, they go barefoot, except in the rainy season when they wear straw sandals.

The Sohrihz, the middle class, wear whatever is in fashion for the year. Most clothing is colorful, of no more than two colors and with the fabrics having intricate whorls and patterns. Like Meznams, they wear loose cool cotton or linen clothing. In the east, the Sohrihz wear whatever they like, such as the fashions of the west, or even clothes by Kalamaran designers. Eastern Ozhvins wear whatever was “in style” in Ahznomahn in the previous year, being somewhat behind their cousins.

The Svizoht wear whatever clothing they wish, although most don the colors of their house. Fashions change each season, including such things as the cut of a jacket or the length of a dress. Their clothing bears the intricate dyes and weaving as common to many Svimohz. Many political elites wear traditional styles and cuts of clothing, in the west, disdaining the capricious styles of the east for the stoic dedication to Svimohzish principles and culture. At formal events, the king and his family wear long crimson cloaks lined with fur. The crown is a thin circlet of platinum studded with rubies.

The merchants in the east are the trendsetters. They interact with tradesmen and cultures from across Tellene and so are the most open-minded of the Ozhvins. They wear whatever is in fashion in the larger cities, watching the styles of Bet Kalamar and the distant port cities of Reanaaria Bay, Ahznomahn and even those urban centers on the Elos Bay. Currently, the Reanaarian long coat, vest, breeches and sandals are fashionable (the fashion of Ahznomahn's previous season).

Festivals

Like other aspects in Ozhvinmish, festivals vary by region. The festivals of the west are solemn political or religious events, commemorating a king or duke, and share many things in common with those celebrated in Meznamish. Eastern revels are expensive, exciting and beloved by the citizens. They are

moments when the population comes together to celebrate independence, a birthday, the gods or even something as simple as a good trading season or trend.

SEASONAL FESTIVALS

Long Night: On nights of a lunar eclipse, the Order of Light funds a large festival in most of the major urban centers in Ozhvinmish. They spend the day erecting lanterns, torches and lamps, and supply food, drink and entertainment for the people. The festival continues throughout the night until dawn. This event is so popular that people from nearby lands make pilgrimages to the city to join the celebration.

New Trade: Though originating in Meznamish, the Ozhvins continue to celebrate New Trade during the last week of Famine. Throughout the nation, merchants display their wares at a discounted rate, to give locals first choice of merchandise before the actual trading season starts in earnest. In the west, people relax the social customs and all are equal. In the east, merchants provide free food and drink to the poor, supplementing the costs from the Steward's treasury.

REGIONAL FESTIVALS

Fortnight's Memory: A great holiday in the west, the people acknowledge the sacrifice of their warriors during the terrible Fortnight's Battle. Unlike the similar festival in Meznamish, all people join in. The festival lasts for one week, and while business continues as normal, people gather each night in the homes of their patriarch to light a candle for the fallen soldiers to help them find their way home.

Vhohmi Day: Inherited from Ahznomahn, Vhohmi Day is perhaps the most offensive holiday in Svimohzia. Celebrated in eastern Ozhvinmish, and in Svowmahni, the Assembly of Guilds funds the event as a direct insult to the Steward, the King and their nation's ally Meznamish. As in the Kingless Land, Vhohmi Day falls on the second Godday of Mustering, and is a riotous holiday full of carousing, free-flowing food and drink and humor. While it employs the ribaldry and dark humor of the Ahznomahnii version, Ozhvins never lynch anyone and the festival is generally nonviolent.

CASTE FESTIVALS

Reward: The last week of Reaping, the Truthseekers collect gold from the citizens in Ozhvinmish's western and central regions for sacrifice. Normally, the Truthseekers themselves sacrifice gold once a month, but the gold collected from the people goes to fund a dramatic play for the poor, and the excess goes to the slaves and poor citizens alike. They stage the play before of the Courts of Justice in cities with this religious presence. It always tells the same story, of the common man who lives justly and his rewards in the afterlife. At the end of the night, the Truthseekers supply the poor with food, clothing, oil for their lanterns and other necessities for the sake of charity. As a holy event, the church heals the sick and the injured for no fee.

Birth Customs

Like in Meznamish, family is of paramount importance and the birth of a child is the ultimate expression of a family's blessing. It is customary in Svimohzia for expecting mothers to invoke blessings from Moimivam the Holy Mother, Shanano the Pure One and Movan the Fate Scribe to aid in the birthing process. Mothers make these prayers each week of the pregnancy. The birth of a child draws the immediate family to the home for visitation and blessings. Such visitors also come bearing gifts. For families of lower castes, the local Svizohr sends a boon to the family to congratulate them on the newest addition. Thereafter, the parents take the child to the church of the god or goddess they venerate the most. Noble houses keep the same customs as the Meznamish, branding the newborn after birth to prevent any disputes about the child's origins.

Coming of Age

Coming of age is the most important step for Ozhvins during their development and is celebrated at their 16th birthday. It represents the passage from child to adult and, as with many other life events for Ozhvins, individuals undergo a special ritual to gain the acknowledgement of others. Ozhvinmishii men and women are equal in the eyes of the state, so the coming of age ceremony is the same for adolescents of either gender.

The ceremony itself is simple, whereby the child must swear three oaths before the extended family, and the priest of the family's principal deity. The first oath is to the gods, where the candidate vows to serve his god to the best of his ability, in accordance with the edicts of his faith. The second oath is to the family, whereby the candidate vows to honor her family, to protect them as she can, and never to betray the trust bestowed by them. The final oath is to the state. The candidate vows to serve the country and king with devotion and in accordance with his station. Once the candidate speaks the three vows, the priest blesses the candidate and the family welcomes the youth as an adult.

Aside from the formality of recognizing adulthood, the coming-of-age ceremony is also an opportunity to announce the youth's availability to wed. Parents use these ceremonies to find suitable matches for their children in marriage. Hence, families always invite other parents and potential suitors to these ceremonies to advertise their child.

Eastern Ozhvins of the merchant class incorporate many Ahznomahnii rituals into their coming-of-age ceremonies. A large celebration including music, gifts and entertainment accompanies these rites of passage, and merchants are careful to invite business associates and their children to begin the process of courtship between their sons and daughters. In any event, regardless of geography, this event rarely signifies the young adult's actual departure from home as the youth usually remains in the parents' home until married.

Marriage

Although Ozhvinmish does not have as rigid a caste system as Meznamish, and is even nonexistent in the eastern region of the country, marrying out of caste is impossible in the west; Svizohr wed Svizohr and Sohrihz wed Sohrihz. In the east, there are no restrictions, and in some cases, it is fashionable to marry outside of one's caste for the sheer scandal. In the west, marriages are always arranged as in the Meznamish fashion. In the east, marriages are the products of love.

Whether the union forms from careful selection and a long courtship process, or after just a few weeks of knowing one another, sweeping a slave girl off her feet to elevate her to the status of a merchant prince, the wedding ceremony is the same. In the bedchamber of their new home, the bride and groom conceal themselves behind a sizhu, or "marriage curtain." The priest speaks the wedding ritual, blessing the couple in the name of the preferred god, and asks for promises of devotion, companionship and courage in their marriage. When both parties agree, the priest blesses both, and withdraws, leaving the couple to consummate the marriage.

Divorce is illegal in western Ozhvinmish and simply does not happen. In the east, however, divorce is common. Furthermore, it is simple to divorce there, only requiring both parties to petition their case for divorce in the office of the local justice, who determines who is at fault. Both parties may call witnesses, but no one is required to appear except for the couple. The justice always finds one of the parties at fault, requiring the person at fault to pay a small fine to the state and rules their marriage severed.

Death Customs

According to Ozhvinmishii beliefs, when a mortal dies, his soul remains trapped within the flesh, caught there unless someone else intercedes on its behalf. Clerics are mortal intercessors; they facilitate the soul's passage to whatever plane the mortal's god resides. Without a cleric to speak the death rites, the soul remains caught in the remains of the body, hence the explanation of undead. Some souls have such ties to the mortal world that they become wandering spirits, wraiths, banshees, spectres and so on. Seeing undead as the greatest blasphemy, Ozhvins make certain there is a priest present whenever anyone dies. In large battles with many dead, a priest says a litany over the corpses to compel the spirits to move on to the afterworld.

Once a priest of any faith invokes the spirit, they burn the corpse in a pyre using wood soaked in special aromatic oils. The family gathers before the pyre and wishes the spirit safe journey to the afterworld. Each family member throws something into the fire to aid the spirit on its journey, sometimes giving gold, a meal, a weapon or some other object to assist.

According to Ozhvin belief, several things can interfere with the spirit's journey to the afterworld. Ozhvins believe the spirit takes the form of the body as it died. Therefore, if the body had lost its sight, the spirit would be blind and unable to see the path

to the afterworld. A decapitated corpse would lack any sense of where it was and would be confused, unable to hear the litany sending it on to the afterlife, and unable to see its way. Before Miznoh's conquest, a family member would sacrifice his own eyes and give them to the fire to help the spirit see, or take his own ears, so the spirit could hear the invocation. The person who sacrificed a leg, arm or senses would receive the same from a descendant and during the remainder of their day be honored and cared for by their people for making the sacrifice. In later days, they fashioned wooden carvings of eyes, ears, or whatever missing part of the corpse, to help the spirit reach its destination.

Food and Drink

Of all the lands in Svimohtia, Ozhvnmish may have the greatest diversity of foods. With a strong fishing industry, rice production rivaling Meznamish, supplemented with barley, Zazahni cattle, and wheat fields east of the Miznoh Forest, Ozhvnmish produces a wonderful assortment of dishes. From the grains, Ozhvins make pastas, couscous, rice noodle dishes, breads, pastries, and more. Finally, through steady trade with Ahznomahn, and from harvests in the Awhom Forest, Ozhvins have at hand a diverse selection of seasonings, including turmeric, paprika, cumin, coriander, and pepper.

Ozhvins supplement their diet with beef, goats and sheep, occasionally importing additional animals from northern Zazahni herders. Ozhvins do not eat pork. They import a steady supply of salt from the Elos Desert to help preserve their meat.



Ozhvins enjoy a spicy cuisine, as something to help flavor bland vegetables before the next growing season. Unlike the Ahznoms, however, Ozhvins do not use coconut milk as a sweetener but rely primarily on honey.

Fruit and vegetable availability varies, based on the season. Onions are available throughout the year, for they can be stored underground and keeps well. Broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, beans and tomatoes, plus a variety of gourds, melons and other vegetables are usually available at reasonable prices in the market.

For beverages, water is common, but most prefer wine or other alcohol. Inland vineyards produce some of the best wine on the island, dry reds akin to cabernet and syrah. Beer is a more common beverage, however. Commoners drink beer with most meals, supplementing lean diets in hard months of bad crops. Most Ozhvin beers are stouts or porters, but the lighter and fruitier wheat beers are coming into fashion. Ozhvins also have a healthy appetite for mead, a product learned from Ahznomahnii beekeepers.

MEALS

The quality of food varies depending on income. The poor consume meals of rice and boiled barley, and soups with fish. The middle class has a variety of foods, as they are able to afford the spices and seasonings representing the complex taste of the Ozhvins. The wealthy citizens can afford the widest selection of foods, as they are able to purchase the most exotic seasonings like ginger, and rare fruits from the Vohven Jungle. Other average meals and dining etiquette are similar to those of Meznamish (in the west) and Ahznomahn (in eastern Ozhvnmish).

One popular dish in Ozhvnmish is *ehrizh*, a vegetarian dish popular with commoners after a poor catch. After heating peanut or sesame oil in a heavy pan, the cook adds a pinch of turmeric and a dash of salt. Other ingredients added at various stages of cooking include potatoes, more oil, chopped onion, a bay leaf, a dash of cumin, ginger and red chilies, followed by four chopped tomatoes and a handful of sliced cabbage. The dish is served on a bed of rice or wheat noodles, accompanied by a crisp sweet wine.

Architecture

Ozhvnmishii cities are beautiful places with wondrous gardens filled with sweet smelling flowers, paved roads shaded by swaying palm trees, with gateways and large arches featuring religious and secular events defining their history. Many intersections feature a platform where stands the statue of a powerful king, famous wizard, priest, or statesman. Most cities still feature Mewzhano and Miznoh as popular subjects, for they figure in Ozhvnmish's development. Domes and minarets form the architectural forest of the skylines, blending the styles of the old world and new in a complex society that values aesthetics.

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Common homes are flat brick buildings with shutters over the windows, and sturdy doors barring entrance. Ozhvin décor features art, even in the most mundane objects, like doors, lintels, and signposts feature some intricate scrollwork or patterned design. In fact, the cobbles used to pave the street are often in patterns and whorls, denoting the direction to certain important locations in the city.

Even smaller towns and rural communities have the same attention to detail as in the large cities. Some towns lay like a wheel, where the central government building or the home of the Svizohr occupies the center, and the homes, shops, temples lie along the major roads, serving as the spokes. Nearly all communities in Ozhvinmish are enclosed by a wall, be it a wooden palisade or a magnificent stone wall.

Recreation

Though Ozhvins enjoy gladiatorial contests, they are generally more peaceful than are the Meznams and Ahznomns. Most of the larger cities have a coliseum where crowds turn out to watch gladiators combat other fighters, slaves, monsters and more. These games, though, are far less common than horse races, javelin tossing, discus throws and other diversions.

Blood sports: Ozhvins, like the Kalamarans just across the Straits, enjoy gladiatorial sport. An Ozhvinmishii coliseum or fighting field is a favored attraction for those with a taste for violence. Standard gladiator matches continue until one gladiator surrenders, but sometimes they are death matches between two popular combatants. The cities send slaves or criminals to fight wild animals, like lions and other great cats, exotic creatures such as giant lizards and more. Merchants sell food and refreshments, as well as carved toys representing famous gladiators and monsters, to the spectators.

The most famous arena is in Ashoshani, and is known as Zo-Rehzhizh, the Halls of Doom. Here, many famous gladiators met their dooms. The best match in recent memory was between Och-Rax, a terrible ogre gladiator from Bet Kalamar who was famous for eating his foes after killing them. The ogre's owner brought him to Ashoshani, believing he would make a fortune destroying Ozhvinmish's best. As expected, Och-Rax killed twenty gladiators on the first day. Their deaths were so gruesome that many lost their stomach for such fighting and fans left in droves.

Fearing no one would stand against the fearsome opponent again, the Ozhvins sent a missive to the gladiators in the land, promising a reward of 1,000 gold pieces to the man or woman able to defeat the fearsome ogre. Even with the steep reward, no one turned out to meet the challenge. Weeks passed, and the Kalamaran slavers readied themselves to leave, thinking Ozhvinmish a land of cowards. On the day before they were to leave, a challenger did appear - a young man named Zhezrihn. He was not a seasoned fighter, but saw the ogre as an affront to all Ozhvins. Although he seemed to lack the skill needed to defeat the ogre, he had heart.

Fans turned out from all over, gathering in the streets to catch a glimpse of the combatants. To the roars of cheering fans, Zhezrihn came out unto the sandy killing floor, gripping his sword. His opponent, Och-Rax, despicable in appearance and heart, laughed at the upstart, and patted the rotting head that was his codpiece, saying in his brutish tongue that the youth would make a good trophy.

With a battle cry, the youth charged the ogre, swinging with his blade, but before he even touched the ogre, the monster clipped the boy in the head with a gnarled club, spattering the city's champion all over the arena and ending the fight, to the wails of the crowd. As usual, the ogre feasted on the twitching remains. Och-Rax ripped the boy to pieces, consuming his remains, as weeping citizens filed out of the arena. However, they stopped when they heard the ogre's cries of pain, his clawing at his throat and his succumbing to the poison, for he failed to notice the boy was covered in a (toxic) paste. People still remember the boy's sacrifice throughout the country, and a statue of him stands before the coliseum to warn foreigners of Ozhvin tenacity.

Horse Races: Highland dancers are common in Ozhvinmish, and Ozhvins enjoy horse races as much as their neighbors. Most races are simple, with riders racing from one town to the next; the winner gains a prize such as a small sum of gold, but other prizes are available, like gems, a sword or simply status. These small races never exceed 10 miles.

The Great Race, *Desve-Roh*, occurs once every six years, as riders race the almost 400 miles from Svowmahni to Ashoshani. Speed is important, but also good planning, for food, survival skills, and defense are also needed to finish the race. Anywhere from 100 to 300 contestants are known to compete. Riders can bring one weapon, enough food and water for one week, a bedroll and whatever coin they wish to bring. The riders set out at dawn on the first Diaday of Arid for the distant capital. Along the way, riders must brave bandits, monsters, storms and each other to reach their goal. The government sponsors the race, and riders have the protection of the King, although monstrous humanoids, beasts and brigands rarely respect that protection. Fewer than half of the riders ever make the full distance.

Sulzdeh: Another physical sport, far less lethal than blood sports, is *sulzdeh*, or "fists." A combination of boxing and wrestling, combatants wears hand wrappings to protect the knuckles and to minimize the damage to their opponent. Both contestants get into a circle some 10-feet in diameter. With the striking of a bell, both combatants attack. The first combatant to fall outside of the circle loses. The match continues with the victor winning the best of three.

Sulzdeh matches occur throughout Ozhvinmish, from taverns to town centers. Some use the sulzdeh matches to resolve disputes, determine a proper course of action, or as a diversion. The commonness of these matches means most citizens have either participated or at least watched a match in their lives.

RELIGION

In many cities in Ozhvinnish, the citizens ban evil religions, forcing them beyond their walls, or in secret temples in basements or in caverns below the cities. Despite the persecution towards these faiths, they persist throughout the nation; in some regions, they flourish. Most citizens, though, tolerate priests of any religion, and embrace those of good or neutral alignment.

The Halls of the Valiant

Thanks to hero Zinh Zhamish, the Halls of the Valiant have a powerful influence over Ashoshani and its environs. Under the careful guidance of the senior priest, temples of the Knight of the Gods are in most major cities, including Svowmahni and Zomo-wim. Part of this religion's success in establishing a hold over the population is in the values upheld by the church and its members. Notions of chivalry and honor appeal to rigid structure of the western region, reflecting their notions of justice and piety. In the east, Whenhesh is not as popular of a god, though he retains a sizeable following.

Servants of the Swift Sword work to promote honor and justice, traveling the lands in search of evil. Many travel south to Zazahni to offer relief and aid to the people there, but also venture into the war-torn lands to fight on behalf of those warlords of principle. Several shrines and orphanages dedicated to the Knight of the Gods stand in the south to offer respite, food and shelter to those who seek escape from Zazahni. By committing themselves to the stabilization of the southern nation, they hope to staunch the flow of immigrants into the north.

The Courts of Justice

When Ozhvinnish began purging the Knights of the Black Pit from the land following the fall of Miznamvho, the Truthseekers gained the respect of Ozhvins through their self-sacrifice and valiant effort. Since then, the Courts of Justice have enjoyed a sizeable following in Ashoshani, Nenehi and other smaller population centers throughout the country.

A Justifier sits on the Council of Five in Ashoshani and has great influence over decisions made on behalf of the citizenry. Truthseekers also serve as judges, using their own inspired abilities to protect the innocent and punish the wicked. Those not in service to a lord usually travel the countryside and search for evil in its many forms.

The Assembly of Light

The rise of the theocracy during the first century of the Meznamishii Empire brought crusaders of the Order of Light to come to the land to help overthrow the Knights of the Black Pit. After the dark theocrat fell, many clerics remained in Ozhvinnish, distressed by the undead plaguing the elves in the Miznoh forest. Over the last two centuries, the Order of the

Light has been successful in containing the darkness of the Miznoh forest and other locales threatened by minions of darkness.

The Assembly of Light has temples in most of the major cities, and in Nenehi they have converted Duke Roshanaz. From these population centers, the Order of Light sends young clerics into other communities to gain converts and establish new churches. Thus far, they have enjoyed modest success, but the popularity of the Courts of Justice (along with the recent moral failings of their senior priests) hamper their expansion to becoming one of the principal faiths in the country.

The Order of Thought

The Seekers of Sagacity have established temples throughout Ozhvinnish, such as in Svowmahni and Zomo-wim. The Order of Thought has no overreaching design except to acquire more knowledge and information. About half of all Seekers of Sagacity remain with their temple, learning and teaching, offering advice to those in need, and contenting themselves with a scholarly world. The other half adventure, traveling into neighboring countries, or into the deep south to explore the Vohven Jungle and uncover the riddle of humanity's origins. Others leave Svimohzia altogether, in search of more knowledge. The Order of Thought has few followers and little influence in the nation.

The Temple of Sleepless Nights

The Fellowship of Terror was once a powerful group of clerics. Natives would make sacrifices to the Prince of Terror, and madmen would move among the sane, gibbering in their perpetual fear. From these ancient customs, people learned to avoid the Sultan of Fear and prayed to their gods to spare them the horror.

When Miznoh came through the lands, he destroyed much of the Temple of Sleepless Nights, scattering the Fellowship to the far corners of the world. Those who remained clustered in cities to practice their dark religion in secret. Over several generations, the Ozhvins eliminated most Fellowships. The last prominent group worked in Ashoshani, and the Council of Five forced them out of the city.

Today, the Fellowship of Terror are little better than brigands, haunting the ruins of Zazahni to the south, or the wilds of Ozhvinnish plotting revenge and terrorizing rural Ozhvins. They are a sad and pathetic lot, but retain enough power to be a threat if ever organized.

SECRET SOCIETIES

In a nation as large and diverse as Ozhvinnish, it is no surprise there are several powerful organizations at work. These range from cults who serve terrifying gods of absolute darkness to noble orders dedicated to fighting the Dark One's minions behind the scenes. Finally, an organized resistance fights against the oppression aimed at driving elves from the country.

The Songs of Liberty

Most of Svimohzia knows of King Shahn III's bigotry towards elves; he passes laws restricting their freedoms, prevents them from owning property or starting businesses, and monitors their movements. He strips them of any rights as citizens and makes them something akin to slaves. What is worse, he does this with nothing more than the flimsy reason that elves represent a threat to Ozhvinmish. He claims they undermine the Ozhvin commitment to order and vows leaders of the elven community threaten the security of the nation by making pacts with dark forces in the Miznoh Forest.

The elven situation divides Ozhvins. Some demand evidence for the King's accusations, claiming elves have long been allies of the Ozhvin people and had helped them rebuild after Miznoh's Conquest. However, others remind them the elves did nothing to help the empire when Ul-Karg marched to war. Some claim elves contribute to society, worship the same gods, and many share the same values. The response is often that elves live longer, and their plots may extend back several generations. Perhaps, some suggest, the elves sided with the hobgoblins, supplying intelligence on troop movements.

Those siding with King Shahn often have little sense of history and are suspicious of other cultures. They mostly live in the west, where the laws are the harshest, while those in the east shelter elves in their homes or even ignore the edicts of the king altogether. In Svowmahni, a collection of intellectuals, priests and former soldiers have banded together to form the Songs of Liberty, a group dedicated to the protection of elves.

Activities: Members of the Songs of Liberty are watchdogs for unfair laws passed by local governments. They also pay funds to help transport elves wishing to return to the Miznoh Forest, placing agents in the western region of the country. The extreme members target supporters of the anti-elf laws with intimidation tactics, such as extortion, coercion, or sometimes murder.

Short-term goals: The Songs of Liberty seek to protect elves from unfair treatment by a hostile government, to protect their rights, their lives, and to uncover the injustices of the new laws by revealing the lack of evidence to support the King's actions.

Long-term goals: The end this organization seeks is to allow the elves self-governance. While it depletes the national resources, it ensures a safe haven for the sylvan folk and creates a boundary Ozhvins would respect. Finally, through careful negotiations with Meznamish and Ahznomahn, Ozhvinmish would comply with the new state, as the neighboring nations would add unbearable economic pressures to ensure Ozhvins respected the new borders.

Locations of greatest activity: The Songs of Liberty have cells operating in Ashoshani, Zomo-wim, and in many of the larger towns in the west.

Location of headquarters: The Songs of Liberty's base of operations is in Svowmahni.

Knights of the Black Pit

The Council of Five banned evil religions, and many think the Knights of the Black Pit extinct within Ozhvinmish. No one has hunted for the elusive Knights in over a century, and most do not even know the signs to identify a Knight. Preceding the invasion, the Kargi Knights have reactivated the cells lying dormant in Ashoshani and Svowmahni to prepare the way for the legions of Krarag-Randatk.

Activities: In Ozhvinmish, the Knights of the Black Pit work to remove officials. Infiltrating the lower ranks of the government with spies allows the Knights to watch kingdom developments. In addition, the Knights murder Ahznomahnii spies heading into the country and replace them, developing a spy network that even watches the neighboring Kingless Land. All of the subterfuge and assassinations are to prepare the nation for the armies from Ul-Karg, for they believe the fall of Svimohzia would trigger the beginning of the Time of the Void. Ozhvin Knights have no contact with the Meznamishii cells.

Short-term goals: The Knights want to insinuate themselves into the Ozhvinmishii, and Ahznomahnii, government. Once established, they report on troop movements, supply lines, food stores and water reservoirs, and any other valuable intelligence they can uncover.

Long-term goals: Once situated in lower ranks of the government, members work their way up, building contacts and allies unconnected with the cult. After they have achieved control over much of the governmental functions, they plan to shut down and confuse orders, thus crippling Ozhvinmish and preventing a response to the approaching hordes.

Locations of greatest activity: The Knights of the Black Pit operate in Ashoshani and Svowmahni.

Location of headquarters: The Knights of the Black Pit do not have a central headquarters, receiving orders from messengers hidden in the Awhom Forest or beneath the Tanezh Mountains.



Members of the Songs of Liberty plan their next move.

The Order of Daybreak

In the first days of the Empire of Meznamish, the Dark One established a theocracy to rule through his mortal agents, the priest-king, Miznamvho. With his rule came Knights of the Black Pit, who spread like spilled ink through the empire erecting their foul altars, casting their sacrifices into the darkness of the pits, maiming and torturing all that opposed them. Duke Ozhnohz II lacked the authority to stop the emperor, and his duchy was not yet recovered enough to mount an attack on the crown. In response, he established the Order of Daybreak to fight the Church of Endless Night. Formed from Truthseekers, Servants of the Swift Sword, members of the Order of the Light, paladins, and good-hearted rogues and wizards, the duke demanded oaths from the member knights to commit their lives to thwarting the efforts of the Dark One. Since their founding, they have fought the Knights of the Black Pit, gathering members from those fallen, and fighting the battle in secret, so as not to reveal their true strength or weaknesses.

Activities: The Knights of Daybreak employ spies, thieves and other contacts in the underworld to watch movements of the Knights of the Black Pit. Agents of the Dark One are then isolated and removed. Sometimes the knights make a collective stand, but even in these instances, knights work to hide from the eyes of the citizens, concealing their identities so as not to compromise their efforts in fighting the Dark One.

Short-term goals: The knights maintain their vigilance in protecting Ozhvins from the evil of the Dark One. Containing the Knights and minimizing their impact on the government and other influential citizens, they hope to curb their activities. They also want to infiltrate the Church of Endless Night, gaining their trust to uncover the Knights objectives.

Long-term plans: The knights want to eradicate the threat posed by the Church of Endless Night. The protection of Ozhvins was the purpose for their creation. Should the knights succeed in driving the Church from the borders of this nation, they would pursue the knights into other lands.

Locations of greatest activity: The Knights of Daybreak operate in Ozhvinnish, scouting the foothills of the Imomena to skulking the narrow streets in the poor quarter in Ashoshani.

Location of headquarters: The Order of Daybreak is headquartered beneath the King's residence in Ashoshani.

POPULATION CENTERS

Most population centers in Ozhvinnish appear along major rivers and roads, such as the Great Coastal Highway. Rivers and roads make for easier transport of goods, and so are attractive locations to settle. Larger towns and villages dominate the northern coastline, becoming smaller and more remote the further south one travels. Larger communities serve as major trade stops, where farmers sell their grains and fishermen sell their catch, or where finished products travel across the nation.

Settlers founded these small communities, and their remoteness keeps them small.

Ozhvinnishii villages are ancient, many over 300 years old. Most began as small tribal communities, with a ring of huts in the center around an idol, a communal gathering place, and the leader's hut. Surrounding the small settlement are the fields and garden where the community farmed their staple foods when game was unavailable. As the community developed, wooden or stone homes replaced huts with roads and alleys between them. The center of town remained important, but as new religions established, the temples moved farther from the town's center. The chieftain's hut became a fortified house or, in some cases, a tower, and smaller structures to manage the town's affairs were required.

Today, modern settlements feature wide cobbled roads through the town's center, with often unpaved side streets and alleys. In western communities, towns follow the organization patterns of Meznamish, with the elite in the center, the warriors with their own estates just outside of the Svizohr, and temples cordoned off in their own neighborhoods, while the commoners and slaves keep to themselves. Custom restricts movement through the town, preventing commoners away from the central Svizohr estate, though contact between these people still occurs in the markets.

In the east, merchants absorbed the Miznoh estates and relaxed the restrictions of movement through the towns. The Svizohr caste still guards their compounds, but the rest of the city encroaches on their lands. Furthermore, priests do not have the same degree of respect as in the west, and live among the rest of the people in the town, divided by income rather than station.

A town's defense also varies by geography. Though towns have walls, western towns have a larger militia than those in the east. This militia patrols the lands beyond the towns, and protects crops from thieves, raiders and worse.

ASHOSHANI

Population: 87,900 mostly Svimohz humans, plus approximately 1,000 nonhumans (few of which, if any, have elven blood).

A Closer Look: Compared to Svowmahni, Ashoshani (33°30'N, 12°0'W) appears old and small, despite its robust population. Situated north of the Shahni River, with an ideal location for merchants, one would think the capital of Ozhvinnish would be a thriving metropolis, but is instead a solemn place of unfriendly citizens, suspicious of outsiders and frightened by elves. The city has evolved over the centuries, and signs of its modest origins have vanished in the wake of this urban center.

Most overland traffic comes from along the Great Coastal Highway or up from the nation's interior along the Zorshahn Route, a road traveling alongside the Shahni River. Three gates allow access to the city's interior, and all three are open most of the day, closed from midnight until just before dawn. The

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Shahni River passes south of the city and, to meet the needs of the river merchants and travelers, small towns to the east (Vazahni and Zhohlzan) have taverns and hostels open throughout the night.

The Miznoh Forest is cleared where the city stands, except for a few stands of pine and spruce. The wall surrounding the city stands 15 feet tall, and is made of blocks of limestone extracted from the hills to the south. It features watchtowers spaced along its length, as well as are parapets allowing guards to patrol and watch for escapees or unsavory types sneaking in. The walls are 10 feet thick and reinforced with iron bars between the large blocks and interior plinths. The watchtowers have single iron doors granting access from the interior of the city and rise 40 feet tall. A given watchtower can house ten men, and ten guards can make ranged attacks either from within using arrow slits or from atop the crenellated battlements. The city posts two guards per three watchtowers, rotating the schedule each night.

Five guards (warrior 1) man each of the city's three gates during the regular hours of operation, with three guards after hours. The guards interrogate visitors, requiring travelers to divulge their intentions, who or what they are coming to see, and how long they plan to stay. Merchants often have their wagons searched for contraband. Finally, travelers must pay a gate tax of 2 cp per person and 1 cp per animal. After hours, the great doors are closed and a heavy bar placed on the opposite side. The exteriors of these doors show the crest of the current king (the crest of Shahn III is a dragon shark).

Inside the city, the brooding architecture reflects the atmosphere of its citizens. Lacking the openness of Svozmahn, Ashoshani is a grim city built of gray stones and brick, and though the buildings are ornate in form and function, they lack the variety of Monam-Ahnoz or the levity of the eastern capital. What décor is present is typically religious or political, with saints and martyrs admonishing the populace, or Ozhvnmishii dukes and kings astride horses looking ready to lead their nation to war. Unlike Monam-Ahnoz, however, Ashoshani has consistent architecture throughout.

Two interior walls divide the city into three districts. The northern district comprises the manufacturing area, where the shipyards are established, and where merchants can dock to sell their wares in the many markets in the city. In addition, most of the middle class lives on this side of town, keeping close to the markets to buy and sell their goods. Homes here are of the traditional stone construction, but with a gothic flair, replete with unusual statues, grinning gargoyles atop roofs, and cobbled streets.

The middle district houses the government, the temples, and the upper class, although the latter tend to reside in the northernmost arm of the middle district, away from the petitioners, bureaucrats, and minor officials who congest the King's Thoroughfare. In the neighborhoods of the rich, the homes and businesses are far more attractive, with countless narrow paths, small gardens, and little shops. Intricate scrollwork decorates

doors, lintels and paths and, if anything, the northeast section of the city is by far the most interesting.

The southern district, or laborer's district, houses the contributors. Almost all of Ashoshani's industry lives here and those working in the shipyards must make the long walk from the south side of the city to the north. Here the homes are far more modest and meager. While simple, they are of quality, single story buildings or multilevel apartments capable of house several families. The city is cramped here and only the major roads are paved.

Outside the northern and southern gates are several small businesses and dwellings of those who are either too poor to live within the city, or temples and merchants who situate themselves outside to be sure to catch the eye of every traveler entering or leaving.

Although each district has entertainment such as bars, theaters, and art houses, the coliseums are in the northern third of the city, away from the commoner and noble, and drawing crowds from across the city, encouraging them to spend their coin in the northern markets. The streets throughout Ashoshani are safer than most, with thieves and shady types restricting their movements to the northern side of the city, or at the extreme end of the southern city near the banned temples on the other side of the southern wall. Crime does occur, of course, and Ashoshani is no stranger to thievery, murder, and worse.

Government: As the capital of western Ozhvnmish, Ashoshani is home to many powerful and influential men and women, including the elusive King Shahn III, who spends little time here and resides in Vinahn, a coastal fortress 50 miles to the east. The affairs of the city fall primarily to the King's advisors and the Council of Five. They handle many decisions in the city, from raising or lowering taxes to funding the many state departments, and even to overseeing the city's defense. The King approves any decision affecting the kingdom before it becomes law.

Of the active governing bodies, the Council of Five has the real authority in the city, against the intentions of King Shahn, who selected clerics of differing faiths to create dissent and undermine the advancement of agendas other than his own. He did not expect Zinh Zhamish to be as successful as he was in commandeering the Council and making real advances in Ashoshani. All five council members oppose the recent laws against elven citizens, but are powerless to stop them. Instead, they use minor legislative action to establish severe penalties to those who commit crimes against elves, slowing the aggressive stance of the government against the elven people.

Working against the Council are King Shahn III's advisors and the Royal Sage Onahu Wisha, whose spies watch the Council and the effects of their influence on the city. The growing influence of the five clerics in the city worries Wisha, but Shahn assures the Sage that all is working according to his plans.

Economy: Ashoshani's principle trade is the sale of fine jewelry and cut gems. While the city does not produce the raw materials, they import large quantities of gold, silver and precious gems from many other lands. Characterized by an uncommon attention to detail and durability, Ashoshani has the reputation of being the jeweler's capital.

Supplementing the jeweler trade are Ashoshani's shipyards. Carpenters and shipbuilders take lumber from the Miznoh Forest. Famous for their ships, their large galleys are in high demand. Better still, Ashoshani makes the ships, but also helps the rest of the nation's economy by importing Nenehi sails, and rope from Anowhizh and other lands.

Military: Meznamishii aggression and military expansion forced King Shahn III to make difficult decisions regarding the future of his country. The Assembly of Guilds interferes with revenue collection, thus slowing the taxes coming into the capital and making it hard to build and train an army of conscripts. Furthermore, any action of this kind would alert the populace of the threat of war, plunging the nation into a recession. Fortunately, Azhanimahr Shenshal, the captain of the city's hobilar, is training his men as cavalry and thereby strengthening the army.

King Shahn III passed a number of harsh laws against the elves, a people he has little love for anyway, to divert attention from his preparations in the city to the persecution of the elven citizens. He does not force the entire nation to comply, because he plans to rescind those orders after he deals with Meznamish. Therefore, he secluded himself in his stronghold, but not before hiring Desveminh the Warlord to gather a mercenary force of trained warriors; it appears that the Council of Five hired them, because of the King's absence.

Should Meznamish invade, King Shahn III suspects the eastern regions will attempt to secede from the Kingdom. Shahn plans to respond with the mercenary forces, using them to hold the Meznam invaders alongside his footmen and archers protecting the city. The cavalry, however, would ride for Svowmahni and, aided by soldiers loyal to the steward, put down the rebellion by killing the leaders. Shahn has already shared his plans with the steward, who agrees this is best for the nation.

With the nation under control, Shahn III plans to use the merchant gold to fund a counterattack against Meznamish and not stop until their capital is razed and all Svizohr dead. Shahn then will establish Meznamish as a province of Ozhvinmish, and work towards battling the hobgoblins for the last time.

Temples: The Council of Five banned the practice of religious rites made in the name of evil gods within the boundaries of the city, forcing the dark churches to build temples outside of the city. Public outcries quickly swept through the city, as citizens complained that they could no longer worship their ancestors or bury their dead according to traditions, many of which were set by the Congregation of the Dead. Other folk even demanded the banning of some good or neutral religions in retaliation, but the Council's ban held. Some followers,

wanting to avoid persecution, abandoned the dark paths of evil, and converted to the faiths of neutral or even good deities. The evil churches lost much of their congregations, and are in severe decline or eradicated altogether after local nobles raised opposition to the darker sects.

Those evil faiths that somehow survived the ban and still practice within the city include the Congregation of the Dead, the Church of Endless Night, the Conventicle of Affliction and the Temple of Strife. Knights of the Black Pit prowls the sewers beneath the city, creeping up after dark to snatch the unwary and drag them back for sacrifices or converts to their foul religion. The Pestilent Ones move into the poor sections of the city and spread disease, hoping to start a plague to sweep through the island and bring the Rotlord into power.

Interestingly, the House of Scorn has grown since the Council's ban, and ranking Purger Amihn Ghanim (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above) has recently garnered enough funds to build a temple for his hundred or so followers. His ability to influence the emotions of his followers will undoubtedly cause acts of hate and riotous discontent.

The dominant good religions in the city include the Halls of the Valiant, the Courts of Justice, the Temple of the Three Strengths, and the Assembly of Light (which has suffered some recent setback after several scandals emerged regarding a senior priest and the thieves' guild). Each of these religions has a member on the Council of Five, along with the Order of Thought.

Mages and Sages: Most spellcasters find the influence of the clerics in the city oppressive, and leave to pursue their goals in distant cities. Even Wisha's fellow apprentices left for friendlier environs; Wisha and the Warlord remain because they both serve the king.

The first is Onahu Wisha (LN wizard 12), Royal Sage and King Shahn III's closest advisor, though Wisha is hardly ever in the King's presence. Instead, he uses his magical skills to establish the wards on the king and his citadel, before moving on to his own projects - mostly consisting of building golems. In addition to creating constructs, Onahu spends a portion of each day patrolling Ashoshani's streets.

Onahu, for his lofty position and power as a spellcaster, is not a popular figure in Ashoshani. He is nosy and rude, with a high opinion of himself and his abilities. A fawning sycophant when in the presence of his betters, he hides his selfish tendencies behind an image of superiority. Beneath the pomposity is a spellcaster of significance, whose power and understanding of magic is unmatched throughout Svimohzia. King Shahn III tolerates his airs because he recognizes the Royal Sage's value.

Onahu is tall and thin, with the common dark skin of the Svimohz. He has short black hair, spaced features and a broad nose. He wears fine clothing of a Kalamaran cut, and displays the insignia of his office. He divides his time between the citadel to the east and the city, working, on average between 12 and 16 hours each day.

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Onahu Wisha's rival, in King Shahn III's personal employ, is Desveminh the Warlord (LE Brandobian wizard 14), a famous wizard of exceptional skill - and a talented strategist. Desveminh began his career as an adventurer and mercenary. At first, he braved ancient dwarven strongholds, faced the terrors of the Vohven Jungle and explored the nations of the continent. After five years, he returned and hired on with Duke Whanavi, helping to defend the city from the gathered armies of jealous warlords. Afterwards, he sold his service to whomever could afford him. Finally, his fame grew so great that a group of mercenaries approached him for training. He consented on one condition - they would form a mercenary company. Thus were the Blood Eagles born.

The Blood Eagles grew in renown, notorious for their effective blending of arcane magic and steel. Word of their exploits reached the ears of Ozhvinmish's monarch who, after several unfortunate conversations with King Warven II and despite Meznamish's promises that the mustering troops were not for war with Ozhvinmish, hired the Blood Eagles to defend the capital. There, Shahn gave Desveminh the leeway needed to build an effective Ozhvinmish fighting force.

Desveminh is a pale man, with long brown hair. He has a perpetual smirk painted on his face, and an air of cocky arrogance about him. Unlike other wizards, he dresses more like a soldier, wearing breeches, sturdy riding boots, shirt and jacket. On his right hand, he has a tattoo of a dagger with blood dripping from the blade. He keeps his trusted heavy crossbow nearby at all times (the heads of the bolts are carved to resemble screaming faces).

Though Ashoshani lacks a university, it does boast a few sages. Those scholars in the city specialize in history, geography, politics and government. Lack of work, however, forces many of these characters out of the city, for Wisha has the king's ear, and is a self-styled expert on most subjects.

Underworld: With religious turmoil as a backdrop, the watch has few resources left to devote to the docks. There, thieves prey upon merchants, pirates come to shore to regain their supplies unchallenged, and a growing criminal underworld flourishes. Like a disease, these unsavory organizations spread throughout the city, some opposed to the religious zealots bent on revenge, while others exploit the circumstances of the city's current instability.

Of far greater import is the presence of a cult of serpent men led by Jinazsu Han. He and two other leaders are away from their Vohven Jungle home in search of a band of thieves who entered their temple two years ago and made off with several religious artifacts. The artifacts are not magical, but they are of foremost importance in an upcoming ritual, and the cult grows anxious. The trio also actively recruits human followers - and sacrifices - for their cult.

Interesting Sites: One of the most famous wizards ever to live in Ashoshani was Tonaku Izahn, a peerless golem master and mentor of Onahu Wisha. Sought by wizards and sorcerers

from all over Svimohzia to learn the secrets of the craft, he maintained a small number of apprentices to whom he trained to continue his work. However, before he could divulge his most complex secrets, he died. All that remains of his work are a collection of statues. These statues of nine strong men in ancient swords and armor line Ash Cloud Street near the Temple of the Three Strengths. Many people attribute them with magical or mysterious powers, but they radiate no magical aura. Wisha says his mentor was not finished with them, and he claims not to know their purpose. He cannot explain why one was found half a mile away one day in a different pose than it had held the previous night.

Special Notes: As racial tensions rise in the city, with religious discord and military escalation, Ashoshani is on the verge of boiling out of control. The Council of Five is competent and enjoys some success against the grumbling factions vying for control. However, it remains to be seen what King Shahn III intends with the city should it be attacked by the Meznams, for though he expands his forces, the placement of the troops suggests he is willing to sacrifice the city to prevent the Warven from taking the country.

SVOWMAHNI

Population: 123,100 Svimohzish humans, gnomes and dwarves. Fewer than 5,000 of the citizens are humanoids.

A Closer Look: The largest city in Ozhvinmish, Svowmahni (32°10'N, 8°5'W) has so many citizens it nears Zha-Nehzmish in size. Standing on the shores of the Kalamaran Sea, it has a booming port, with merchant vessels filling the docks year round. In addition to the trade it enjoys with the other nations, Svowmahni has several satellite towns around it that produce finished goods to sell in the city. This city is one of the fastest growing places on the island, and may one day surpass Ahznomahn as the mercantile hub of Svimohzia. The single port facing the northeast is always busy with merchants from all over Tellene, buying and selling goods ranging from the mundane to the exotic.

At first glance, the city rivals Bet Kalamar in size and spectacle, but a visitor soon notices that the houses are larger and the poor section of town does not sprawl outside of numerous walls like in the larger city. Instead, the city's walls surround nearly all of its buildings, and towers full of armed guards stand vigilantly atop them.

Visitors from the inland travel the Great Coastal Highway, but congestion is thick during peak travel times as merchants bring goods from Anowhizh or from Nenehi. Loads of felled trees, tons of rice and barley, or other goods make these caravans slow and ponderous, delaying other travelers planning to reach the city in haste. For those needing an easier entry, they can take the southwestern road and enter the city through Tanner Gate. The smell in this area is terrible, so not many people use it. Like the other gates, it too is guarded.

Though Svowmahni's 20-foot tall wall surrounds the city, its gates are always open, regardless of the hour. Each district has a company of soldiers to serve as the watch. They man the gates, walk the parapets, and patrol the streets to control and eliminate crime. Watchtowers double as barracks for these men, so most towers are manned all the time. The gates themselves, if they should close, are made of solid iron, inlaid with the image of a dragon shark.

The city itself has four quarters, each divided by a wall as thick as the exterior wall. Between these walls, housing, shops, temples and government offices fill the city. Despite the proximity of its citizens, the city features wide streets to accommodate heavy traffic, and the government and citizens do their best to maintain the beauty of the city. Beyond the city are acres of rice paddies where slaves toil in backbreaking labor to cultivate the staple food source.

The Poor Quarter, the largest of the four, occupies the west and southern regions of the city. However, most people here have a higher quality of life than the poor of other cities. Houses are simple, well maintained, and some have small gardens. Small restaurants, shrines and shops line the major thoroughfares, while side streets are kept mostly clean by hardworking slaves.

Svowmahni's clergy occupies the northern Temple Quarter. This district houses the churches and their servants and families, and features many hotels for visiting dignitaries. Like the Poor Quarter, the streets are well maintained, with numerous shops and cafes on street corners. Merchants sell their goods out of the backs of wagons, offering fresh pastries, fruits, and some even offer meat pies, and other foods for travelers.

Comprising the docks and the northeastern half of the city, the Merchant Quarter is now one of the richest in the entire city. Vendors spill over from the port and onto the streets, and citizens and foreigners clamor for their goods. It is an exciting place to be, but given its dense population, it is harder for patrols to maintain order. When crime does occur in the city, it happens here.

The southeast quarter is the Nobles' Quarter. Once only Svizohr lived here, but as merchants controlled more and more of the city's resources, they began buying up the property in the district. Now the Svizohr hold less than 10% of the homes owned in this quarter. Regardless of who owns the land, it is an attractive area of the city. A few houses even seem as opulent as palaces, with multiple stories and private gardens in the fashion of Zha-nehzmish.

Svowmahni features entertainment for the masses, or for discerning connoisseurs. Expensive brothels stand in the Merchant Quarter, while drugs, poisons and illegal goods are available in the seedier parts of town. Still, Svowmahni, despite its size and political tensions, is a wonderful city and the jewel of the kingdom.

Government: The Ozhvnmishii monarchy recognized that it would never be able to protect the west from Meznamishii aggression, while governing the burgeoning merchant cities in the east. To address the growing gulf between easterners and westerners, the crown appointed a steward from one of the Svizohr caste to govern Svowmahni and the eastern regions in the king's name. Today, the steward has grown in position and notoriety to be a veritable king in his own right, but the tensions from the now influential merchant class and Ahznomahnii pressures compromise his authority.

While the steward is the nominal ruler, he cannot pass laws without approval from both the king and the Assembly of Guilds, an organization come to far more power than its original intention. The Assembly, as most know it, was to monitor craftsmen and artisans, to ensure fair competition and set pricing. However, with the surprising acceleration of trade in the city, the Assembly gained control over the ports, the city gates, training and licensing of craftsmen, mercenaries and hiring of crews. Members of this swollen body even have their own small mercenary armies. Should they demand it, the steward is not certain he could stop them from taking over the city.

Economy: As the center of trade in Ozhvnmish, the markets in Svowmahni never close. Trading goods are acquired from all over the island, as far away as Emosvom, and there is a growing attraction for foreign merchants to trade in this city as opposed to Ashoshani and Zha-nehzmish. In the former, the climate is not hospitable to merchants; the people there are terse and unfriendly. In the latter, the merchants are cutthroat and the influence of the Golden Alliance is obvious in marketplaces of the capital of Ahznomahn. Consequently, Svowmahni's influence is on the rise.

Ozhvins do well selling gemstones from the Imomena Hills in this city rather than Ashoshani, as foreign merchants pay good prices for Ozhvnmish gems, even if unfinished. These stones make their way to the nation's capital where they are polished or set into jewelry to resell in other cities in the nation. Horses are also in high demand, as other nations favor the highland dancer to their native steeds, though Ozhvnmish controls the numbers of these steeds, rarely allowing other nations to benefit from the Svimohzish advantage. Dry goods like wheat, oats, and sometimes barley have a good market in the city.

Merchants dealing in precious metals, armor, weapons and perfumes can make a fortune selling these goods to the city's population. The slave trade is not strong here, although there are auction blocks near the ports. There is a definite cultural shift in Svowmahni, and many wonder if slavery will survive.

Military: Nearly a thousand each of Ozhvnmish's formidable heavy cavalry (lamellar armor, large shield, sword and heavy flail) and light cavalry (padded armor, lance and scimitar) patrol the city and roads nearby. Another thousand crossbowmen (leather armor, heavy crossbow, and hand axe) and a

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like number of marines (leather or no armor, longsword, and one or more daggers) support them. The number of soldiers stationed in the city is huge, but half the marines stationed there are actually at sea at any given time, and a third of the other troops are in the field.

The steward, informed of the King's intentions, has put those soldiers he suspects loyal to the Assembly into the field, keeping the majority of them away from the city. While good hearted, the steward hates the Assembly of Guilds to the core of his being, seeing them as the antithesis of the Ozhvinmishii way of life. Though he expects to die fighting the Assembly, he will do what he can to rid them from his city. He has about a dozen loyal lieutenants who know of the plan and have vowed to serve king and country to the death.

Temples: A cosmopolitan city with a diverse religious presence, people can find temples and shrines to almost all of the gods in Tellene's pantheon. The Halls of the Valiant, the Assembly of Light, the Church of the Life's Fire, the Temple of the Three Strengths, the Order of Thought and the Church of Endless Night have strong followings. Some thrive in the open, like the Halls of the Valiant, and others in secret, like the Knights of the Black Pit. People of Svowmahni are not judgmental about an individual's faith, and tolerate any religion so long as it does not interfere with their own beliefs.

Perhaps the most influential church in Svowmahni is the Hall of Oaths, run by Hilano Aziri (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above). In this church, there is one of the three largest libraries in Svimohzia and one of the largest in the world. Aside from serving as a repository of knowledge, the church also serves as the head of the faith, overseeing members all over Tellene. The church employs many citizens of the town, but does not pay well, and in most cases offers housing in exchange for services.

The Hall provides witnesses for major contracts and treaties, and they have a representative in Ashoshani to fulfill this duty, as well as Venerables, in most major cities. Most of the church's income, though, comes from copying books. Their scribes are the best in the country, and lawyers, historians, and scholars purchase most of their tomes from Svowmahni.

Mages and Sages: In Svowmahni, there is no shortage of wizards. Many are native Svimohz, some trained at the University of Zha, but others have come to the island from other lands, as in the case of the wizard Hreathwrot (NG Fhokki wizard 10). This pale skinned, blond haired northerner is something of a curiosity in the city. Five years ago, in his native land among the Kartorr clan, he made a name for himself as a scholar and wizard. His two sons were promising wizards in their own rights, and his wife was a clan wise woman. They lived comfortably under the protection of the tribe. Then, a pair of greedy thieves came upon the lair of a great white dragon, and inside they found a clutch of eggs. Thinking of the fortunes they would gain for snatching such a prize, they stole one of the eggs and hid it in the village.

When the white dragon discovered the egg missing, she followed the obvious trail left by the thieves and retrieved her young, with a thief in either claw to torture for days. The village, not knowing the cause for the dragon attack, implored Hreathwrot to confront the dragon and rescue the young men. Filled with arrogance and confidence buttressed by his neighbors, he made the trek north and into the dragon's cave.

What he found disturbs him to this day. The dragon had forced the thieves to feast upon each other's living flesh other while the dragon watched. Hreathwrot destroyed both young men out of mercy, and fled for his life.

Her sport destroyed, the white dragon grew enraged. She took to the air, following the fleeing wizard down the mountain slopes, freezing the ground with her icy breath. Hreathwrot proved to be a canny foe, with defensive spells in place to protect him from the dragon's own spells and cold. Thwarted, the dragon flew on ahead of the wizard and destroyed his village, leaving him stranded in the cold with nowhere to go. The dragon murdered the entire community, taking relish in their screams, all before Hreathwrot could return.

With his family slain, and the dragon returned to her lair, Hreathwrot fled south, away from the snow and from the demons haunting his past. His travels took him to Svowmahni, where he now lives in an apartment in the city. He hires himself out to adventurers, as a spellcaster or to identify an item, but he does this to pay for his rent and his recent love of wine.

Another important spellcaster in the city is an expert navigator named Shazan (CN wizard 13). Careful, methodical and effective, he was once the most renowned pirate hunter in all of Svimohzia. He has worked for many nations, been responsible for the capture of over 30 pirates, and traveled far. His status, and arrogance, has priced him out of most people's range, for he requires a great deal of gold per voyage.

Shazan honed his magical skills on board the *Abyss*, a vessel commanded by Captain Dorn Shemmal, also the ship on which served the infamous pirate "Ruthless" Jythel, now the terror of the Windy Straits. In fact, Jythel caused Shazan to take up the life of a pirate hunter. The story of their feud is simple. Both men served on the same ship, and Shazan, like the rest of the crew, avoided the young hothead for his sadistic bent to his personality. In the last year Jythel served on the *Abyss*, the crew came upon a floundering brig caught on the rocks of the Straits. The captain, who was a good and decent man, was ill with dysentery, and left the ship to his first mate. Jythel and Shazan wanted to loot the ship, and take the sailors as slaves, but the first mate would have none of it, commanding the men to help the stranded sailors on board and save what they could. Jythel and Shazan were to lead the rescue.

When they boarded the other ship, they helped transport the surviving cargo. However, when the two leaders went into the hold, they found a young girl who had been ill used by the crew. Shazan, in a rare act of compassion, wanted to rescue her and bring her back the ship. Jythel, however, wanted her for

himself. When Shazan refused, Jythel slaughtered her. Shazan never forgave the young killer and plotted to murder him, though the opportunity never arose. Jythel soon left the Abyss, but Shazan never forgot him. He would most likely charge little or nothing for any job involving Jythel's capture.

Just over 6 feet tall, he has the swarthy skin of a Reanaarese, but the red hair of a Kalamaran. He walks with a limp, gained from an open fracture in his sailing days. He wears hooded long blue robes and sandals, and operates out of his offices a block from Svowmahni's port.

Underworld: Smuggling, thievery and the black market are typical features of a large city, and Svowmahni is no exception. However, Svowmahni is also home to the largest thieves' guild on the island. The Sordid Bunch, as they are known, meet in an old building in the Poor Quarter. There, in secret tunnels, they keep contraband that has been imported or stolen from foreign ports. From here, they ship these goods to other ports, such as Zhanehzmish, Ashoshani, Nenehi or any other place where there are buyers. Guildmaster Vorhol (see *Who's Who in Ozhvinmish*, above) hopes to expand his influence southward and take advantage of the fiefs in Zazahni to expand his power base.

However, citizens do not revile the Sordid Bunch, despite their illicit dealings. The light share it demands of its members, the potential for real wealth, and its extensive resources (the guildhouse has maps of virtually every warehouse, noble home, and worthwhile target in the city) combine to make it a benevolent guild up to which the competition cannot stand.

Interesting Sites: Svowmahni has the resources to maintain the beautiful architecture and gardens that make this city famous. For example, in the heart of the Temple Quarter is a

wondrous three-tiered fountain that all citizens in the city enjoy. In the summer months, people fill it and its gardens, where they enjoy the cooling spray. Serving as the backdrop for paintings, church and wedding ceremonies, and even as the start of the parades for the various minor festivals, the fountain of Svowmahni is an important monument to the city and its people.

In addition to the décor in the city, Svowmahni also has some of the most beautiful architecture anywhere. With its large streets, clean, whitewashed buildings, unusual styles and a forest of minarets dotting the city's skyline, it is a gem among the urban centers of the island. Even mundane structures are elaborate and exotic. Ghatha, a local entrepreneur, runs such an establishment - a hotel and tavern called the First Inn. A massive five-story building, with baths in each room, the best food in the city, and prices to exclude all but the richest citizens and travelers from enjoying it, the First Inn defines the merchant culture that grips eastern Svimohzia, and shows how a common man can rise to the riches of kings through hard work and ingenuity.

Finally, the city also keeps the dead kings of Ozhvinmish. Six dozen black-and-silver garbed fighters in full plate and eight clerics of the Speaker of the Word guard the Royal Tombs. Their fancy longswords are not just ceremonial, however, and the guards have no sense of humor when it comes to protecting the kings. Over 200 kings and royal family members are entombed behind and below them, and none of the guards wants to let grave robbing or desecration occur on his shift.

Special Notes: Though the city is a cultural center and safe from many problems affecting smaller communities, the



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countryside around the city faces threats from bandits and humanoids of the Svomawhom Forest who waylay rich merchants for the treasures they carry. Though patrols help to contain these highwaymen, they seem more organized than other common brigands, and rumor holds a bandit king, named Crimson Suzehl, declares the entire forest as his kingdom.

The current High Priest of the Hall of Oaths, a former merchant named Hilano Aziri (see *Who's Who in Ozhvinmish*, above) protected the entire city with a special magic circle against evil spell. For a full year, no undead or magically summoned creatures may enter the city. He intends to renew it as needed.

ANOWHIZH

Population: 22,200. About 2,000 of these are gnomes, dwarves, or halflings, in that order of prominence. The humans are pure Svimohzish.

A Closer Look: Believed to be one of the oldest cities in the world, Anowhizh (32°25'N, 9°30'W) is a testament to the rich history and culture of the island. It stands on a mound almost a mile wide, and speckled throughout the city are stone ruins the people refuse to tear down; they expand outward instead. Anowhizh is unique in several regards. Though part of the Kingdom of Ozhvinmish, the city never adopted the primacy of the Svizohr class to rule, and have always elected their officials throughout the city's long history.

Anowhizh has two walls. The interior wall, now crumbling and in poor condition from age and frequent earthquakes, marks the outer edge of the Old City and the beginning of the new. The exterior wall protects Anowhizh's inhabitants from raiders, bandits or the potential army, though the city has not faced a war since Miznoh's day. Two gates breach the outer wall. The western gate, Newgate, leads into the New City, while the southern gate, Oldgate, leads to the Old City. Away from the city, the southern road branches off to the interior, while the western portion serves as the continuation of the Great Coastal Highway.

Ruins of ages past litter the Old City. Columns and arches, shells of ancient temples stand side-by side with modern buildings. Where the old is crumbling stone, the new buildings are made from granite, limestone or sometimes brick. The streets are the original tiled streets, and the city spares little expense in repairing the streets with tile similar to the original.

Few of the buildings in the New City are completely new. Most are made from plundered materials from old ruins, so many buildings feature unusual designs in the bricks. These may include gargoyle faces, or part of a mosaic or bas-relief from a structure almost a thousand years old, peering out from the middle of a wall. The further west one travels, the less one sees these buildings. Newer ones feature modern materials like fitted bricks, modern art, architectural styles and so on.

Government: Unlike much of Ozhvinmish, Anowhizh does not have a hereditary ruler; instead, they elect a governor for life. The Mizani family has held this position for so many gener-

ations that most of the citizens cannot imagine a time without the Mizani to guide them. Now ruled by the Milhavin the Eagle-Eyed, people are starting to think about who should replace him after he dies. There are several Mizani candidates throughout the city holding positions as merchants, justices, guards, and even military officers. It is not certain who will emerge when the day comes, and many people are concerned about the succession keeping their city intact.

Fortunately, the Mizani family rules justly and fairly, having earned the people's love and affection. Ruling from Mizani Tower near the center of the city, the building serves as their home and governmental offices. During festivals and holidays, Mizani Tower is the most decorated building in the city.

Economy: Anowhizh does not rely on foreign goods to survive. They produce enough food to feed their people, and what surplus they do have goes to the neighboring smaller communities scattered throughout the countryside. Much of their self-sufficiency is forced, however. Though the city lies along the Great Coastal Highway, most merchants do not remain there long, hoping to get the better prices in Ashoshani, Monam-Ahnoz or Svowmahni. In addition, Anowhizh's port is dangerous, plagued with sea devils, dragon sharks, sea wolves and worse. To sail through those waters puts their crew and cargo in jeopardy; sailing the Straits of Svimohzia is dangerous enough. Consequently, few merchants do business in this city.

Military: Anowhizh has a modest military, consisting of 200 pikemen (breastplate, pike, shortsword) and another 100 heavy infantry (half-plate, shield, longsword). Their commander, a former caravan guard and war hero, is Amar Shacel (see *Who's Who in Ozhvinmish*, above). With his expertise, and that of his ancient magical sword, he has turned the rabble defending the city into a competent fighting force. Amar suspects something wrong to the west, but keeps his suspicions to himself.

Temples: Most of Anowhizh's success as an independent and self-sufficient state comes from the influence of the Friends of the Field. The largest and oldest religion in the city, it traces its roots back to the founding. In 239 C.M., though, a terrible earthquake shook the city, leveling many of the city's oldest structures. The Friends of the Field, along with many generous citizens, rebuilt the temple larger and greatly improved over the prior one. Now, the great building holds over a thousand worshippers, their singing filling the area with moving music.

Though not as large as the Church of the Life's Fire, the Builders of Law have an important temple in Anowhizh, where the Master Builder of the entire church resides. Part of the temple's fame is because it withstood the earthquake nearly leveling Anowhizh, but also due to the Master Builder, who claims to have entered the First Temple and was teleported away when he failed to solve its puzzle. Borli, the Master Builder (see *Who's Who in Ozhvinmish*, above), now mounts expeditions to search the Vohven Jungle for the location of the First Temple. The Builders avoid politics and religious debates, not intending to compete with the followers of the Raiser. Instead, most of

their efforts go into unlocking the greatest mystery of their faith. Some maintain the city, doing what they can to keep the old ruins in as good of repair as they can. Others serve as justices, but most avoid this role, as they do not want to become too embroiled with the city's government. The Builders need the freedom to leave the city when necessary, venturing into the heart of the Vohven Jungle where they hope to recover the First Temple and learn the fundamental truths of the world.

Mages and Sages: Anowhizh is isolated from the rest of the world, and offers little to spellcasters aside from a few curiosities of ancient architecture. There are a few spellcasters, however, who call this remote city home. Some claim the city because it was ever their home, while others haunt the streets searching for forbidden knowledge in the ruins.

For those in Anowhizh looking for unusual and rare herbs, oddities or antiques from ancient civilizations, one has to go the shop of one Whemi Salpron (NG adept 4). In addition to the curiosities he collects, he is a competent scholar, versed in over twelve languages, an expert on religion, weaponry, architecture and Svimohzish royalty. Finally, he serves as something of a hedge wizard, using his meager skills to identify unusual objects, create alchemical concoctions and produce minor magic items.

Despite his modest successes in his mundane studies, Whemi is something of a failure at spellcraft. He could never master the traditional methods of spellcasting, and instead cobbled together his own system. He trained at the University of Zha as a student of linguistics, theology and a myriad of other subjects, but he never gained mastery over a single field. He cannot commit himself to being a collector, or a sage, or even a wizard,

preferring to dabble. While not the most competent individual in his chosen fields, he serves as the starting point to many investigations, for he knows a little bit about many things.

Whemi Salpron is easily distracted. Tall and soft around the edges, with hard features, and skin with an olive hue, he always has a distant look. His absentmindedness is most evident in his apparel; he often simply tosses a cloak over his nightshirt or forgets to wear shoes and other routine apparel.

Another important spellcaster in Anowhizh, important because of the danger he represents, is Mawhal the Foolish (NE wizard 15). Having led an unfortunate life, many would claim his bad luck stems from his poor choices; he got his start as a scholar of the black arts. His poor fortune, however, stems from an accident in his youth leading to 25 years of incarceration.

In his native city of Anowhizh, Mawhal was a promising wizard, who was unmatched in his skills in conjuration. He could summon the most beatific creatures, or the most horrible monsters to do his bidding. With his skills came prominence and status in the city, and an exalted position as advisor to Milhavin the Eagle-Eyed. However, demons and devils always held interest for the young conjurer. He collected rare manuscripts on the subject, ancient scrolls containing forbidden magic, and even letters exchanged between demonologists. Eventually, a succubus, Mezrael, took an interest in the conjurer.

Mezrael promised the young wizard pleasure, power and riches in exchange for his loyalty and service. With her physical allure, and the promise of carnal pleasure, Mawhal quickly accepted. At first, the demon demanded the conjurer steal a few



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objects from rivals, then he was to murder a few apprentices that learned of her identity. Eventually, this grew into a desperate effort to conceal his own identity and that of his fiendish lover from suspicious peers and the authorities. His criminal acts came to a sudden conclusion while on a busy street in Anowhizh. Several foul cultists, posing as slaves and peasants, cornered Mawhal on the street and threatened him with excruciating torture. Desperate, he used one of his forbidden scrolls to call a demon from the Abyss to destroy his enemies. Mawhal was able to dismiss the demon before it hurt anyone else, but in the eyes of the authorities, the demon had killed four people, albeit unimportant people. For his crimes, he was committed to a local prison for 25 years.

Mawhal gained his freedom just last year, but when he returned to his home, his spellbooks and notes had been stolen, and his apartment ransacked. Destitute, with no means for feeding himself, he wanders the city. Mad, suspicious of crowds, and having a tendency to gibber to himself, he offers to train apprentices in exchange for a spell, scroll or spellbook (perhaps to regain something of his former glory). He is an older man with a stooped posture, long white hair, and bleary eyes. His time in the dungeon did little for his health, and he now has a terrible wracking cough. His hands tremble, and he rarely goes out of doors into the streets for fear of the sky.

Underworld: The House of Knives has a large following here, apparently all members of the same cult. They answer to High Backstabber Zohshanam, whose reputation even causes his own followers to tremble in fear. Instead of using poisons, Zohshanam uses a large kitchen knife, with which he can butcher a victim in a matter of moments.

The city's two largest bazaars are home to a few busy freelance thieves, one of who is a fabulously adept half-elven pickpocket, Dashahn (see *Who's Who* in Ozhvnmish), that city officials have been trying to catch for three years.

Interesting Sites: Ghosts haunt the site of the new Church of the Life's Fire. Manifesting during religious events and holy days, they seem to impart some dire warning, though no one has been able to identify what it is they say. Some speculate they carry the message of the Raiser, while others believe they are doomed spirits of thieves who thought to steal from the church's tithes, killed by the high cleric when discovered. The church affirms the former and denies the latter. They uphold the belief the church is blessed by the Raiser and the spirits are divine servants come to bless the people. During religious festivals and holy days, many commoners move among the spirits to gain their blessings, and no one has been hurt.

An engineer named Ansvn (CG expert 9) discovered a natural cave complex while digging out a foundation for a temple a few years ago and then mysteriously cancelled the project, earning an expulsion from his guild and serious financial penalties for breaking the contract. Ansvn considers all the trouble worthwhile, however, because he believes that the cave complex might connect to the Grottos in the Ubikokeli

Highlands. About once a year, he recruits adventurers to trek into the complex and explore as far north as the caves go.

Ansvn is a nervous little Brandobian-Kalamaran, who came to Anowhizh twenty years ago to start a new life and build a name in the exotic land of Svimohzia. His career was successful. He is a likeable fellow, with many solid friendships, but his findings in the temple's foundation have used up the allies he once had. Now, old friends cross the street when they see him coming. His children no longer speak to him and his wife left last year. Recently, however, he found strange cave paintings, unusual symbols and runes. Seeing these as a confirmation of his suspicions, he has redoubled his efforts.

Special Notes: It is a common belief among Anowhizh's citizens that their city was the seat of Tellene's earliest empires. In fact, they are so confident that over each gate is a sign proclaiming it as the Oldest City on Vohnazni (the Svimohzish word for Tellene). Whether true or not, Anowhizh citizens take pride in their city and are resistant to change it. Unlike many other eastern cities, they abide by strict social customs upheld in the furthest western reaches of the nation, and in Meznamish. All marriages are arranged. Rules for bowing, eye contact and touching are enforced. Many of the younger generation feel restricted by these social rules, and flee to the east to live in the cosmopolitan modern world, leaving the ruins of the old behind.

NENEHI

Population: 25,700 Svimohzish humans, elves, halflings, and half-elves.

A Closer Look: Nenehi (30°50'N, 7°25'W) is a spacious city growing at a steady pace, but not so fast that it cannot grow with its population. With wide streets, enormous markets, parks and ponds, many compare Nenehi to Svowmahni, calling her the larger city's younger sister.

Nenehi lies at the center of an inland road and the Great Coastal Highway. Having the advantage of an accessible port, it is a popular place to trade merchandise while on the way to Svowmahni, or to pick up a ship to travel to Zha-nehzmish, for there are light tariffs on trade commodities and the city has a friendly and open atmosphere.

Several fields are set aside for popular sports or races. At least once a week there is a spectacle where athletes compete against one another for a modest prize awarded by the duke. Citizens of Nenehi sometimes compete in the horse races in Ahznomahn, doing well against those expert riders. Nenehi is a lighthearted city, free from the troubles of the rest of the world. Part of Nenehi's success comes from its excellent leadership; the people love Duke Roshanaz.

Government: Duke Roshanaz is the second cousin to King Shahn III and enjoys much latitude in governing his city as he pleases. He is a kind and jovial man, and his people love him. With unmatched loyalty, they rally to his defense whenever anyone speaks ill of the monarchy, and the Ahznomahnii insur-

gents encouraging insurrection in eastern Ozhvinmish have little luck turning this populace against their lord.

The only difficulty facing the monarch is the question of succession. He and the commoners support his illegitimate daughter Daresvim, who has come to live with her father following her mother's disappearance and presumed death. The nobles, however, are uncertain of this girl taking the throne from her father, and block the Duke's formalization of her claim. While not ready to step down, the Duke believes the people need to know someone of the royal blood will ascend.

Economy: Nenehi requires nothing in quantity, having a well-established agriculture, plenty of artisans and craftsmen who make good livings selling their goods to the people of the city. Still, Nenehi does play some role in the Ozhvinmish economy. Famous for their sails, Nenehi has large open areas needed to produce them. Most of these are near the ports, where tailors gather to assemble some of the best sails produced anywhere. On the far side of the city, huge corrals hold highland dancers for sale, often trained for war and purchased by the military. Surplus grains, horse feed and alfalfa sell in bulk.

Military: Nenehi has little to fear from the inland, with the rest of the nation at their backs, but a few pirates have made failed landings in the fair city. To combat the threat from the seas, Duke Roshanaz hired Zehnim, a skilled engineer trained in Kalamar. To the Duke's surprise, Zehnim and his daughter have begun a romance, although she refuses to wed.

Even as secure as Roshanaz is toward his internal defenses, unsettling rumors from the Ahznomahnii merchants prompted him to step up patrols, diverting the usual troops who patrol the Great Coastal Highway towards Svowmahni, to double the number of soldiers watching the old path to Zomo-wim. So far, his patrols have encountered a few groups of goblins and ogres, but little else as of yet.

Temples: A pious city, Nenehi has a tolerant view towards the gods, though not to the same degree as Zomo-wim. Most faiths have at least a shrine somewhere in the city, though these pale when compared to the august majesty of the Courts of Justice, whose temple overlooks the ocean. Another beautiful structure is the Assembly of Light, whose brilliant white church funds crusaders of the Order of Light to eradicate the followers of the Dark One, with its large following among the bored aristocracy.

In addition to the good faiths that strive to eradicate evil and injustice, there are those who seek to improve themselves. Though the Temple of the Three Strengths has a public temple within the city walls, a few miles outside the walls is a private monastery. Founded by one of Zhulurah'n's (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above) students, it holds a certain appeal to those who have little interest in the ongoing struggle between good and evil.

Nenehi also has a small Temple of Armed Conflict, though they are out of style with most citizens. The city does not boast a large military, and has little reason to support a god of war.

Still, many warriors from the now-extinct Miznoh caste attend services and there is a growing discontent towards the merchants spreading through the land.

Some other religions also have a modest presence. The Order of Thought, far more influential in Svowmahni and Zomo-wim, retains its congregation because the Taster Seeker serves Duke Roshanaz as a trusted advisor. The Conventicle of Affliction, however, is declining as people begin to fear the Rotlord less.

Mages and Sages: Nenehi, being smaller and in the shadow of great Svowmahni, does not have the powerful wizards of its sister city. Instead, the city attracts wizards and scholars of unusual ideas and interests, sometimes at odds with their fellows. A perfect example is the one-armed wizard Anarvis (LG wizard 8), the world's foremost authority on slimes and oozes. Having lost his arm to a vicious ochre jelly early in his career, he committed himself to learning all he could of these unusual creatures. Unfortunately, the loss of his arm has reduced his power as a spellcaster, restricting the spells he can cast to those without somatic components.

The conjurer's knowledge and work has made him one of the more famous sages in the land. His collection of specimens, though illegal in Nenehi and overlooked by the constable, is fantastic, ranging from green slime to even a small gray ooze. He has catalogued over two dozen varieties of specimens, complete with their weaknesses, attack forms, and regions. His diligence in collecting this data has captured the attention of a powerful demon lord of slimes and oozes. The fiend is content to watch the human's experimentation, but one of his secret cultists recently joined Anarvis as his apprentice.

Aside from his one arm, Anarvis is a nondescript man, just short of 6 feet tall and of an average build. Unpretentious, he wears simple brown robes and sandals. His Reanaarese ancestry is apparent, for he has blonde hair along with his Svimohz father's coloring, evident in his dusky skin. Anarvis has a small shop in Nenehi, and except for a few adventurers with questions in regard his area of expertise, Anarvis keeps mostly to himself.

Another unusual figure in the city is a horse trainer, Dunhive Whan (CG adept 8), who is also the city's foremost scholar of magic - though he is himself little more than a dabbler. Most of his skills come from generations of folk magic passed on from a long line of hedge wizards and witch doctors. Dunhive, however, is somewhat different than his ancestors. For one, his mother was a native Svimohz who was something of a wizard herself, and she introduced a more formalized approach to magic. Dunhive also takes a scholarly approach to magic.

Though gifted with the necessary skills to become a powerful wizard in his own right, an accidental pregnancy and an ailing father prevented him from pursuing wizardry. Instead, he focused on the practical side of training horses, a profitable occupation in Ozhvinmish. He also developed some magical skill, starting to catalogue sources of magic and unique forms of spellcasting. He has uncovered many sorts of strange magic, exploring the paths of arcane and divine magic, and many of the

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derivatives, supposedly including some powerful world-altering magic. Although psionics are not magic, he includes psionics in his catalogues for completeness.

Dunhive has dark skin with fine brown hair and brown eyes. He has a solid build, which he gained from working with horses. His keen mind and inquisitive personality make him a beloved member of his community in Nenehi.

Underworld: Nenehi normally boasts little crime. The thieves' guild actually oversees all legal locksmiths as well, and is known as the Locksmith's Guild - making it a standard and open part of society. This awkward arrangement means that a thief has access to every lock in the city, but it also means that the government knows where to look for anything that turns up missing.

Pirates are a much larger problem in the city. Nenehi is open to travelers, even pirates. Aside from the chaos and discord they bring to the docks, they also scout out merchant ships to pursue when at sea. Merchant princes from Ahznomahn have complained to the Duke, and he has tried to restrict the ports, but with little success thus far.

Interesting Sites: Though without the grandiosity of Svowmahni, Nenehi is an attractive city with gardens and pools throughout. Buildings and streets are well maintained, and pride shows in everything its people do. Of course, with all the museums, taverns and arenas, there is still room for the seedy places. The Peg Leg Tavern caters to those who make their living on the sea. The place has a reputation for helping people find work, so a person seeking to hire a crew could find a captain, officers, and deck hands within a matter of hours. However, the Golden Alliance seems to sneak a spy into every crew.

Special Notes: A party of six adventurers recently came to town boasting of some artifact they uncovered in an undisclosed place in the south. They seemed to be looking for a buyer. Rowdy, uncouth, and rude, they spent their gold, got into fights and were general pests. After a week, they began to disappear, one by one. The last one vanished a week ago, and now other citizens are missing.

Also, a mysterious figure walks the streets of Nenehi at night. The figure is Terrus Dyrn, a lich in search of his stolen phylactery. The lich has tracked the thief to Svimohzia from distant Bynarr, where the lich normally resides. Dyrn uses seeming to appear as a Fhokki ivory merchant, and his natural accent and history makes the ruse very effective. He does not willingly fight anybody because of the dangers involved with an absent phylactery, but he is no pushover if a battle ensues.

ZOMO-WIM

Population: 19,100 Svimohz humans. Though other races may visit here, none live within the city.

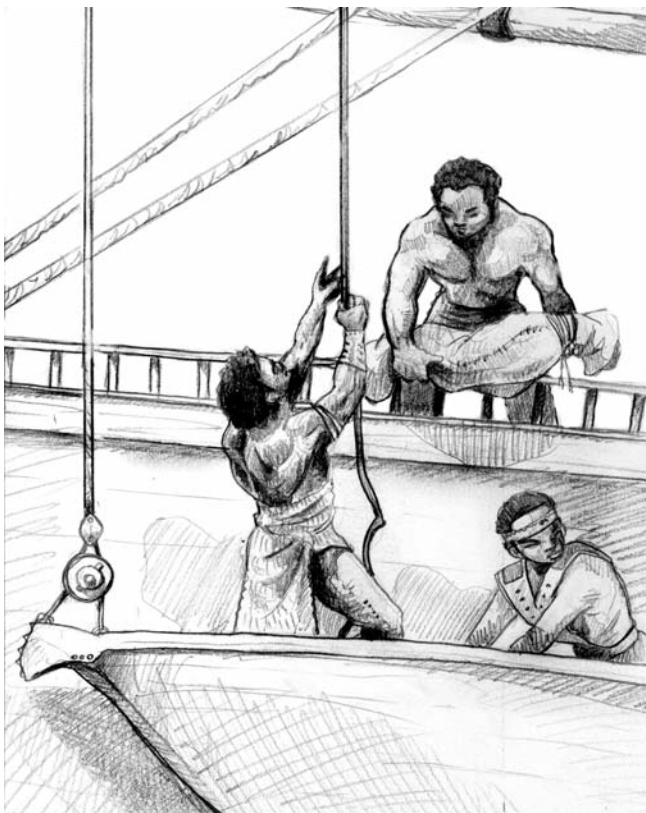
A Closer Look: Zomo-wim (29°55'N, 9°25'W) stands in the shadows of the Imomena Hills and north of the ancient Awhom Forest. Its inscrutable Duke Nishmani has adopted a serious stance towards religion in his city, requiring all citizens to pay homage to the gods in the form of tithing. Since his edict, religions from other lands established themselves in the city, hoping to gain converts from the people who must now tithe. The idea that some might not want to practice any religion has never even occurred to the Duke.

The city sits on a high mound, and a wide earthen ramp leads to the only gate in the city's thick walls. Narrow arrow slits conceal watchful crossbowmen and tiled turrets spear the sky. Unlike some cities, no peasant homes lean against the outside of the walls; the archers have a clear shot for a hundred yards. Roads extend east to Nenehi and north toward Anowhizh.

Inside the city, despite its confined size, Zomo-wim has plenty of room for its population, not yet expanding to touch the outer walls. Many buildings are small fortresses in themselves, made of stone and with flat roofs so archers can fire on invading troops should they breach the walls. Even the churches are fortified.

The reason for these defensive measures is that Duke Nishmani's land is dangerous, wild and uncivilized, and the number of monsters emerging from the Awhom Forest is increasing. His effort to bring temples into the city lends support to his already impressive defenses, and some suggest the Duke looks to utilize arcane arts as well.

Government: Duke Nishmani's extensive territory is filled with bandits, gnolls, horrors from the Awhom Forest, and wandering Zazahnii mercenary companies seeking fatter lands to plunder. Though a capable, if unpredictable, leader, the Duke's rakish image compromises his authority, for the true power lies with the myriad of churches clustered in the city. The churches have a lot of influence over their Duke, who listens to their council and sees the priests as holy mouthpieces for the gods.



Economy: Zomo-wim gains most of its trade resources from the Awhom Forest, logging the outskirts for lumber. Merchants and adventurers make occasional forays into the woods and return laden with ancient artifacts from an alien culture, perhaps dating back to the theorized Serpent Kingdom. In any event, with each foray, the monsters of the forest push back, ambushing travelers and patrols, though no force has yet emerged that Zomo-wim could not handle. Objects from the Awhom Forest get an excellent price from historians, antiquarians and archeologists. Despite the dangers of continuing, Duke Nishmani funds many expeditions, eager for the next discovery.

In addition, Zomo-wim is a leading dealer in horses. Ranches outside the city raise hundreds of horses to sell throughout Svimohzia. A recent buyer who would not give his name purchased two hundred horses, paying nearly twice what they were worth. Concerned, Duke Nishmani dispatched two rangers to track the buyer. Only one returned, and he reported the buyer headed southwest, toward Ul-Karg.

Military: Zomo-wim's cavalry has always been central to the city's defenses. In fact, this city prompted Miznoh to incorporate the highland dancers into his military. Expert horsemen from Zomo-wim are often hired by other cities to train their cavalry. Duke Nishmani retains 300 heavy horsemen to protect Zomo-wim. They patrol much of his lands, working with his ally to the east (Duke Roshanaz) to keep the roads safe and to contain the dangers posed by the Awhom Forest.

Zomo-wim's cavalry is useless inside the Awhom Forest, and the goblins within launch arrows and javelins at the riders from the safety of the tree line. To combat these harassments, Duke Nishmani expands his city's defenses by recruiting hobilar. Led by the grizzled Captain Nahlavi, a man instrumental in the design of Zomo-wim's defenses, the numbers of the city's infantry has swollen to 600 men. Their initial forays into the woods seem to driven back the ogre-led goblins within.

Temples: Zomo-wim is friendly to all religions. The Halls of the Valiant, the Assembly of Light, the Temple of the Three Strengths, and the Temple of Armed Conflict are popular, especially with the soldiers. Other influential faiths include the Order of Thought, the House of Solace, and the Parish of Love.

Shrines represent smaller faiths, while others are established temples with high ranking priests, spreading the word of the canon and converting followers. Seemingly a potential problem, the Halls of the Valiant, the Assembly of Light and the Order of Thought stand next to the Church of Endless Night, the House of Scorn and the Congregation of the Dead, all on Gods' Road. However, Duke Nishmani decreed no cleric could use the power of his god against a follower of another faith, punishable by death. So far, no one has tested the Duke, and most clerics (though they argue on the streets) raise no hand against one another.

The Temple of the Three Strengths operates a sprawling monastery six miles west of the city. Its 25 followers practice prayer, exercise and train in the faith's exotic martial arts daily, regardless of weather. The Aspirant of the Three Strengths who

leads the monastery in its daily rituals and training is Zhulurahn, a short man muscled from head to toe known for his gentle touch when healing and his iron fist in combat (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above). Zhulurahn's influence extends into the military, since he is responsible for the hand-to-hand training of all of the soldiers in Zomo-wim.

The Parish of Love, under the leadership of Leshan Shazahh (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above), performs nearly all wedding ceremonies in the city. Leshan admirably manages to retain many of those couples that enter her temple intending only to be wed under the eyes of the Pure One.

Mages and Sages: Zomo-wim is home to many scholars, such as Wherahzni (LG Svimohzish wizard 10), a self-style expert on the Astral and Ethereal Planes, though he specializes in extra-dimensional spaces. While there is a small demand for this kind of information, he has managed to make a living to support his family, by casting spells to identify magical properties, brew potions, and scribe scrolls.

Wherahzni, as an apprentice, witnessed his master's death at the hands of an astral hunter conjured in the wizard's tower. It made a meal of the wizard and escaped. Wherahzni, powerless to stop the creature, hid. From this ordeal, he learned there is no limit to the amount of knowledge one can have and yet still be unprepared for what awaits beyond the mortal coil.

In the later years, Wherahzni married, became a wizard of his own right, and thought to found a library in Zomo-wim, where scholars from other lands would come to study the nature of the Astral and Ethereal Planes. Few scholars ever came, and he turned his attention to more practical matters, like feeding his children and keeping a roof over their heads. Therefore, he abandoned the library. Still, he has a number of rare books on the subject, locked in his disorganized and dusty attic.

An old withered man, with coal black skin, bloodshot eyes, and a mouth bereft of teeth, Wherahzni has grown maudlin in his old age, decrying his misspent youth. He buried his wife last year, and his sons have moved away, leaving Wherahzni to himself and the few people who respect him. The wizard owns a small house near the east wall of Zomo-wim.

Another important scholar in the city is one of the nation's most famous historians, Adurmas (NG hill dwarf expert 7). Sought by nobles who can afford his price to record their family's history, the dwarf has a flair for dramatics. When not working on a commissioned piece, he spends time recording the history of Svimohzia, with lavish detail on the role of dwarves in the rise of the human kingdoms.

With his fame, it is curious Adurmas resides in Zomo-wim, a city empty of dwarves and other races aside from the Svimohz. The reason for his isolation stems from his exile from his homeland. Those who know of it speculate on a familial conflict over a marriage. Adurmas is closemouthed about the subject.

Adurmas is a great lover of Svimohzish history, and keeps a correspondence with Merazan (see Who's Who in Ozhvinmish, above). Although the two have yet to meet, Adurmas plans to make the journey as soon as he finishes his current manuscript.

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The chronicler has deeply tanned skin, long black hair, brown eyes and a great hooked nose. He wears somber brown robes, and ink often stains his hands. He lives with two apprentices.

Underworld: The best way to get rich in Zomo-wim is to steal a highland dancer from one of the stables. The best way to die is to be caught. Horse thievery is a big problem in the city of temples, because of the price the steeds bring in Svowmahni and Nenehi. A horse thief stands to earn a couple of hundred gold pieces for a single steed. However, the punishment is severe - exile for stealing one, and drawn and quartering for two or more. Of course, the lure of gold is enough to tempt many desperate men. Whenever the constables catch a horse thief, the execution is always public.

Interesting Sites: The King's Mound is a round hill in the city that supposedly holds the buried dead of a forgotten monarchy. No homes or shops adorn it, and a low fence keeps children away. The story of the Mound tells of several bodies buried in it. Supposedly, the bodies are those of a group of pilgrims who were beset by dire wolves eons ago. They beseeched the gods for help. Help came.

At least a dozen gods responded to the call. Some were good and sent aid, some were evil and dispatched more monsters. Irritated, the Mother of the Elements caused the ground to rise up and swallow the whole mess. The story cannot be verified, but the Mound does radiate strong divine magic from all schools.

Special Notes: Many people think that Zomo-wim is responsible for the awakening evil in the Awhom Forest. Too many merchants and adventurers have plumbed the forest's depths to unearth its mysteries, too many relics and artifacts were stolen, and now the malevolent forces within organize legions of goblins and ogres to destroy the city and the surrounding lands. A few scouts have returned from investigating the disturbances, and their stories are disturbing, claiming the forest houses a number of goblins, ogres and lizard men, led by snake-like priests. So they say, the army of the depths is nearing readiness to march on the lands of men.

OTHER POPULATION CENTERS

MIZNAHN

Population: 7,300 (5,000 Svimohz humans, 2,000 wood elves and 300 half-elves).

At a Glance: Miznahn (33°5'N, 10°5'W) has the unfortunate problem of being a small city caught between Anowhizh, famous for its architecture, and Ashoshani, famous for its hatred of elves. With such a large elven population, the citizens are nervous. Many Svimohz have elven spouses and half-elven children, and the harsh measures taken against them place the city on the defensive.

Incorporating elven design and architecture, Miznahn is an attractive city built inside the forest. Paths through the city use wood chips instead of straw or stones, and the atmosphere is tranquil and quiet. People use the few clearings outside of the

city to grow barley, wheat and vegetables, making the city mostly self-sufficient.

Government: Miznahn has two rulers, both elected - one for the Svimohz and the other for the wood elves. Each rules for ten years and, many times, the couple wed during their time as rulers. The current rulers are Lord Dorvehn (CG ranger 8) and Lady Senthelos (CG wood elf wizard 8), who ruled for just one year, became lovers, and wed in the last month in a wonderful festival.

Economy: Lumber and hides are the principle resources for this small city, but they do not see much trade except from the Great Coastal Highway. The coastline is dangerous with ravenous sea monsters, making this northern city an unattractive port. Their efforts to contain the problem have driven some of the threats away, but most merchants remain unconvinced.

Ashoshani's aggressive stance against elves does not help the city's economy either. Western merchants, who once traveled to Miznahn for furniture and lumber, visit other cities with smaller or non-existent elven populations. This hinders Miznahn's growth and adds to the air of suspicion and paranoia now plaguing the country.

Military: Elven archers comprise the bulk of Miznahn's defenses. About 50 strong, they are some of the best in the area, skilled at blending into the forest, using guerilla tactics to strike and fade until their foes are dead. Human archers also participate, and whether or not they are as good as their elven counterparts, there are more of them (about 150).

Temples: Though many faiths have shrines here, and a few have established temples including the Halls of the Valiant and the Assembly of Lights, none is as powerful and influential as the Face of the Free. Rejoicer Aezelmahn Moehzo (CG half-elf ranger 2/cleric 6) serves alongside the city's defenders. However, he also leads his congregation in the heart of the woods, celebrating their liberty from oppression and their resistance to the tyrant of Ashoshani. He believes the elves would be better off with their own nation, and is working hard to convince the people of Miznahn to join his cause.

Mages and Sages: Aside from Lady Senthelos, Miznahn has many wizards, and its local school emphasizes the union of magic and warfare, blending magic with swordplay. The headmaster of the school, Elanara (CG female half-elf fighter 3/wizard 4), is practiced in her craft, though her preference for heavy armor limits her usefulness to the city's militia.

Underworld: Several drow from beneath the Krimppatu Mountains have established themselves in Miznahn. There, under a magical disguise, they have insinuated themselves into the community, plotting to rule the potential elven nation from the darkness. One dark elf, Xoxia Rol (NE female dark elf fighter 3/wizard 9) appears as an attractive wood elf and works hard to convince many elves of the need for a homeland.

Interesting Sites: In the center of Miznahn is a circle of ancient menhirs atop a large mound. Each of the stone blocks has elven runes carved onto the surface, but the words themselves make no sense, seeming to be meaningless scrawl.

On certain nights, the runes glow and motes of light, like fireflies, rise from them, only to fade moments after they appear.

Special Notes: Elves and half-elves from other parts of Ozhvnmish are converging on Miznahn for protection. The numbers of refugees grows, and the city is having difficulty housing them. Lord Dorvehn and Lady Senthelos are not yet convinced war is the answer, but are worried about the stories they hear from the western lands.

ENVIRONMENT

Ozhvnmish is bordered on the west by the Menamo Hills, on the south by the Imomena Hills and the Svowmahni Forest, to the north by the Straits of Svimohzia, and to the east by the Kalamaran Sea. Ahznomahn and Ozhvnmish contest ownership over the island chain in which Mezh-Vowmi Isle is a part, though such debates never amount to hostility - merely adjustments in their trade relationship. Ozhvnmish's southern border is in a state of flux; both Ozhvnmish and Zazahni warlords claim the Imomena Hills and the Svowmahni Forest.

Just as the people differ by region, so too does the land. Where the westerners are strict and severe, hiding under the trappings of custom, the land is mountainous, rocky and imposing. To the east, where the social restrictions have almost vanished, the lands are rolling, calm and serene.

Western Ozhvnmish

The further west one travels, the more the ground rises. The Menamo Hills dominate the western horizon, with their green heights forming a natural border between the former seat of the dead empire. The Menamo Hills curl southwestward until they meet the Tanezh Mountains, shielding the human lands of the north from the terrifying hobgoblin hordes far to the south.

A valley separates the Tanezh Mountains from the smaller, volcanic Lozhen Mountains, sprouting from the barren Imomena Hills. Despite its foreboding appearance, life does exist on those slopes. Zazahni warlords battle the gnoll tribal leaders for dominance, while clans of the hill dwarves and rock gnomes plumb the earth to coax ancient treasures from its depths.

Midway between the Imomena Hills and the Svowmahni Forest, a bleak wood of scrub, briars and thickets, lies the unofficial border between east and west. To the north sprawls the Miznoh Forest, a dense woodland of pine and spruce trees spreading along the northern coast. Inside this woodland are the major western cities of the Ozhvins, using the protection granted by the western hills and mountains and the natural defenses of the forest to protect them from the jealous lords of other lands who would take the nation for its own.

Eastern Ozhvnmish

The rolling hills of western Ozhvnmish give way to deep valleys crisscrossed with rivers and streams carrying rainwater out to the Kalamaran Sea. The Miznoh Forest halts just inside the territory of the east, and most of its cities lie on the coastline

and waterways to facilitate trade. The ships fill the harbor, laden with goods and treasures from distant lands, eager to sell to the wealthy merchants and dealers of the east. Though similar in speech, outlook and mannerism to the Ahznoms across the narrow channel, easterners are separate people in themselves.

TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands

MIZNOH FOREST

This pine forest marks the northwest area of Ozhvnmish. The native Svimohz hew a large number of trees but the forest's rapid growth rate mitigates most of the effect. Roads cross much of the distance, and where roads do not travel, there is no shortage of small rivers and streams to follow. Throughout the forest, there are remains of old villages, ruins lost to any modern map. These are the last signs of Zassho people who lived here, crushed by Miznoh's legions during the conquest. In addition, there are small communities of reclusive wild elves, who, lacking permanent settlements, follow game in and out of the forest with the seasons, to press into the southern hills to follow antelope herds.

The Miznoh Forest is also home to the island's population of wood elves, who lived in the forest before the Zassho. Through an achieved peace with the Emperor Miznoh, he spared their small settlements in the forest. Now, few villages remain, leaving Miznahn as a testimony to their former greatness.

SVOMAWHOM FOREST

This collection of thickets and briars lies along the eastern side of the Imomena Hills. In stark contrast to the beautiful Miznoh Forest, the Svomawhom Forest is a dense forest filled with goblins, ogres, moss trolls (see *Dangerous Denizens*) and more, it has an air of evil that keeps most Ozhvins far from its borders. The creatures of the Svomawhom Forest are stirring, striking out from their arboreal homes in well-orchestrated attacks weakening the patrols from Nenehi and Zomo-wim, and distracting these cities from the larger problems growing in the far south and southwest.

WEATHER

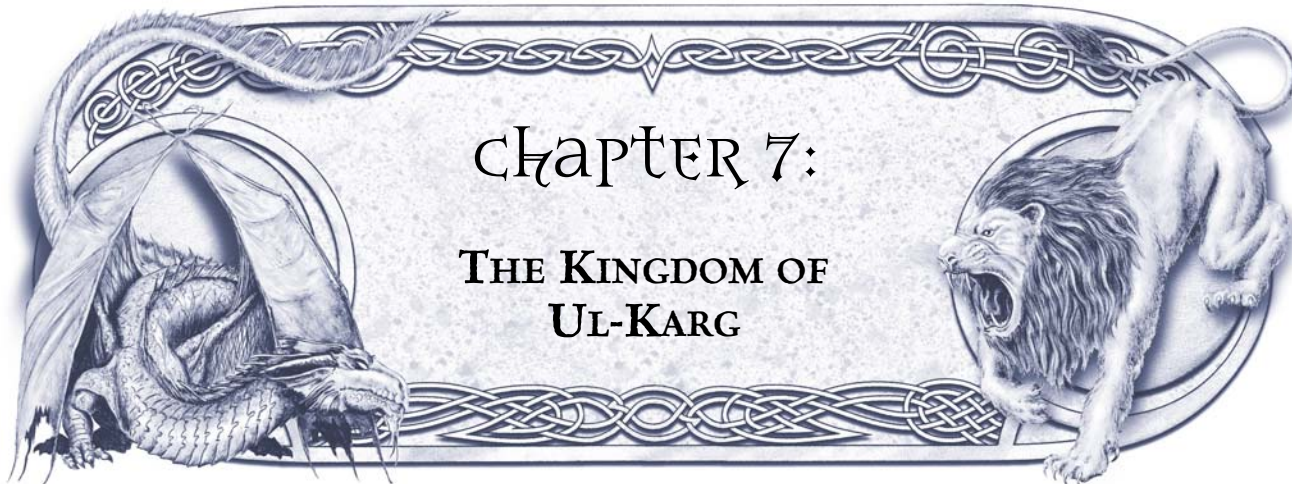
Ozhvnmish is warm, especially in the summer. It is only slightly cooler beneath the shadows of the Miznoh Forest, while a light breeze blows over the Menamo Hills throughout the summer months. In the east, they often receive rain from forceful storms, although the winds coming across the Straits tend to send the most dangerous weather away towards the northern continent.

In the winter months, the east and west receive cold rains from the north, though the central regions of the country are usually spared. The heavier rains in the west flood the valleys in the east, as the hills drain. At times, a heavy storm blows through as the Elos Breeze shifts to the west, bringing nastier weather to the island.



III E III

CHAPTER 7:

THE KINGDOM OF
UL-KARG

Responsible for the disintegration of the once mighty human empire, Ul-Karg remains a constant threat to the human lands. This nation of hobgoblins is bent on domination and conquest, full of a people who want nothing more than to see the Dark One devour the sun and thrust the world into the prophesized Time of the Void. Since Fortnight's Battle, they regrouped, founded cities and looked beyond their own borders to grow mighty enough to wipe away the human presence from the island forever. This chapter highlights information already presented in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* supplement, *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene*, expanding where necessary. For more information on Kargi and other hobgoblins, consult that source. Updated racial information can be found in the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

HISTORY

For ages, the hobgoblins of southwestern Svimohzia were little more than tribes of bloodthirsty barbarians, consumed with infighting and warfare. Nomadic in culture, they followed the antelope herds in the rich plains of the Zhano-mewhi Bay, where they competed with the native Mewhi people. These hobgoblins had little success against the Svimohz, however, for they lacked organization. Consequently, there was little other contact with these tribes until the fall of Miznamvho in 83 C.M.

THE COMING OF MIZNOH

Miznoh's 15-year march across Svimohzia left the southwestern lands mostly untouched, for he recognized the dangers of the hobgoblin savages. Before he led his armies east, it is said that he met with the heads of the hobgoblin tribes. There is no exact record of what transpired, but it is thought that the hobgoblins helped him conquer the island by blocking the flight of the Mewhi people from the southern lands and forcing them to surrender to the armies of the conqueror. After the island's conquest, Miznoh never led his legions south of the Dashahn Mountains, leaving the lands for the previously cooperative tribes who were to help keep the peace.

THE YEARS OF GROWTH

The years following the conquest were quiet for the hobgoblin people, who returned to raiding the Mewhi people in Zazahni and striking against the dwarves in the Malachite Heights to the north. While the tribes had little use for the humans beyond the mountains, they were content with the accords brokered by Miznoh, and honored their side of the bargain. This state of uneasy truce continued until Miznoh III sent his legions into hobgoblin territories, burning and looting as they went. The ending of the non-aggression pact and their violation by such a brash human made enemies of the hobgoblins for all time. They began an aggressive campaign, though still disorganized, against all their human neighbors. Hobgoblin raiders traveled as far as Miznohsho, burning and looting small settlements as they pleased. However, still lacking strong leadership, the hobgoblins were not yet a significant threat.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' PEACE

With the fall of the theocracy, it is believed that some surviving Knights of the Black Pit fled to the tribes of hobgoblins where, at least, they shared a common faith. Most of these evil priests fell prey to the more powerful and nastier hobgoblin shamans, but a few survived, actually breeding with the hobgoblins. Of course, the hobgoblin culture did not afford full status to these sil-karg, whom they saw as weak and inferior. Some legends say this introduction of humans into the tribes formed the bloodline that would one day produce King Brog-Tuuakh.

During the relative quiet of the human empire, the hobgoblins also experienced some changes. Smaller tribes interbred, forming larger tribes. These new tribes established permanent settlements, like wooden fortresses, for a safe haven between battles and as a place to protect their gains from enemies. This resulted in the emergence of tribal states within the territory, each with its own chieftain and hierarchy. While the land now only lightly resembled what it would one day become, it formed the necessary foundation for a powerful and charismatic warlord to lead.

THE VISION

In 250 C.M., so it is said, the Knights of the Black Pit received a vision from Zhanvim. They saw a hobgoblin child born, killing and devouring the mother as he came forth. They watched this child develop in the epiphany, and as he grew, shadow bloomed from him. Wherever he gestured, there was darkness. They watched him conquer the soft human lands, topple their buildings and enslave the race. They saw him pluck the sun from the sky and plunge the world into blackness. When the vision ended, they knew the champion would soon be amongst them, he who would lead them to destroy the humans and make good on the theocrat's dying words. They called him Brog-Tuuakh, roughly translating as "first of many," and watched for signs of his coming.

For over two decades they waited and watched, tracking changes in the night sky. They watched all pregnant females, waiting for an infant to turn on its mother. Then, in an isolated village on the slopes of the Krimppatu Mountains, a Dark Friend witnessed with his one good eye a most awful birth. As soon as it was born, it attempted to devour its exhausted mother. Driven mad by the scene and its significance, he threw himself from a cliff, shortly after reporting his findings.

The priesthood, however, did not get the child. They scoured the land, searching, but to no avail; somehow, the child had vanished. What happened, so it is believed, was a desperate and starving human slave took the infant for food while he escaped. With this burden in hand, he fled, but a cloud of bats sent directly from the Dark One ripped the slave apart on the slopes. Like birds feed their own young, the bats fed the child on the ribbons of flesh to make him strong. After the infant consumed the slave's body, an old hobgoblin sorcerer found and raised him as his own.

Nineteen years later, and after what must have been a miraculous childhood, Brog-Tuuakh descended the slopes of the Krimppatu Mountains. Within three years, Brog-Tuuakh had defeated the chieftains of all the tribes, and organized the warriors into a cohesive fighting force buttressed by the fawning Knights of the Black Pit and those who served him. The hobgoblins were prepared, and the nations to the east were soft enough to fall to their swords.

THE DWARF-HUMAN WAR

In the autumn of 301 C.M., Brog-Tuuakh led his soldiers east into Zazahni, using the Tanezh Mountains as a shield to bulwark against any Meznamishii response. At first, it appeared Ul-Karg would roll over all of Svimohzia, for battles ended with far more Svimohzish dead than hobgoblins. However, with the hobgoblin troops in the grip of a death struggle with Zazahni, and the Ozhvinmish cavalry mounted on highland dancers, Brog-Tuuakh's advance was stopped as his troops became entrenched in Zha-Hezmahn. Then, Emperor Vhohmi III's troops arrived from Meznamish, buttressed by dwarven warriors and a division of gnome artillery. For two weeks,

Svimohzia fought for its life. Dead were stacked like cordwood all around, and land within 50 miles of the battlefield was ruined. At the end of the Dwarf-Human War (as the hobgoblins called Fortnight's Battle), Brog-Tuuakh withdrew his weakened army back to the west.

AFTER THE WAR

Still, the hobgoblins claimed victory in their engagement with the humans, for although they were first to quit the field of battle, their invasion brought about the end of an empire and established Ul-Karg as a nation. While great chunks of territory sloughed off the human empire's carcass, Brog-Tuuakh founded three cities: Ronazagh, Kazullagh and Burzumagh. Brog-Tuuakh also recognized the value of organization to the success of his military.

Although the official word in Ul-Karg was victory, Brog-Tuuakh simmered, not content with leaving the humans free to choose their own destiny. In the end, he committed himself to their ruin and focused his nation's attention on creating warriors, spreading the worship of the Dark One and constantly reminding the rest of the island of the hobgoblin threat.

The kings who followed Brog-Tuuakh upheld the same vision as their former leader. The acquisition of slaves, training of soldiers, and construction of war machines represent this oppressive nation's goals. Using slave labor, they develop the nation, produce food and entertain themselves. Ul-Karg's armies swell with new recruits each year, and the hobgoblin legions grow unruly, striking against Zazahni with a frightening regularity. So far, their human neighbors have yet to react, except by building their walls higher and stationing more soldiers to defend their borders.

WHO'S WHO IN UL-KARG

Rulers of Ul-Karg

The majority of Ul-Karg's lords come from those of Brog-Tuuakh's line and the heirs of the conquered chiefs. The lords are not loyal to one another, as each has designs on seizing the crown for himself or herself. In fact, almost all hobgoblin society in Ul-Karg is involved in some level of plotting and treachery.

KING KRARAG-RANDATK

Having killed Kul-Grinlak in a *kroka-gul*, or "leader fight," King Krarag-RandatK (LE Kargi fighter 19) renounced his tribe to gain the title of *kathrak* (or "king"). A brutal warlord, he believes the spirit of Brog-Tuuakh possesses him, and that it is his destiny to enslave all of Svimohzia. Hence, he gathers his armies to form a new horde. This time, though, his armies outnumber those of the former hobgoblin warlord.

Krarag-RandatK is intelligent and pragmatic. He holds his title through the fear and respect of his *kronaghs* (translates as "captain" or "Grand Duke") and tribal leaders. So far, he has

killed over two dozen warriors who thought to challenge him, and during those contests, he was injured only once. In battle, Krarag-Randatk is cruel and heartless and never offers any quarter. He wants just one thing: Svimohzia.

The king of the hobgoblins stands over 7 feet tall and weighs about 350 pounds. He has leathery, pale yellowish-brown skin, with black coarse hair bristling on his arms and the sides of his face. He has a wide mouth, with large brown tusks protruding from his bottom jaw. He is fearsome, radiating a presence of raw power and destruction.

When not ruling from Kurseghaz, his capital city beneath the Krimppatu Mountains, he stays in Ronazagh, where he kills slaves for sport.

GRAND DUKE ATTHRAK

The Grand Duke Atthrak (LE Kargi fighter 7) commands the coastal city of Kazullagh, and focuses on establishing his city as a major port in Ul-Karg. Unfortunately, his city suffers from the same difficulties as the Zazahni city of Zensahn, for the Zhano-mewhi Bay is an unattractive bay for merchants, due to its remoteness and the dangers found in its waters.

Just as vicious as the other Grand Dukes, he is a capable commander but a terrible ruler. His ineptness at rule forces him to rely upon his aides and attendants to oversee the administra-

tive duties of his duchy. However, he does so with confidence, as he surrounds himself with sycophants and yes-men, who are too weak to contest his position.

Like most Kargi, Atthrak has yellowish-brown skin, but he also has splotches of brown, with coarse black hair over much of his body. Thinner than most Kargi, his gauntness belies his strength and speed. He braids human finger bones into his long sideburns. Finally, he is famous for his rusty full plate armor, made so by the blood of his victims, which he proudly never cleans.

GRAND DUKE GRULLAGZ

A capable commander, the Grand Duke Grullagz (LE Kargi fighter 16), is the ruler of Ronazagh in name only, deferring the administration to his lackey Governor Vulak. Though he is brother to the current king, Grullagz receives no special attention for this. Krarag-Randatk severed all ties, as is the custom, when he seized the throne. Instead of immersing himself in the politics of state, Grullagz readies his troops for war. The king promised the Grand Duke the right to lead his forces into Meznamish, an opportunity that promises honor and additional notoriety.

Grullagz is interested in the acquisition of power but not in the responsibilities they entail. Hence, he wars against human



Chapter Seven: the Kingdom of Ul-Karg

and hobgoblin settlements and villages alike but then abandons them as soon as he is finished breaking them. He is a fearless warrior, but his courage sometimes results in needlessly sacrificing his troops. A well-known terror throughout Svimohzia, the people of the human nations have grown to fear him nearly as much as they do the king.

The resemblance between Grullagz and Krarag-Randatk is striking. The Grand Duke has the same yellowish-brown skin, severe features and many of the same mannerisms, though Grullagz is shorter and not as imposing. The Grand Duke spends much of his time training his soldiers in Ronazagh.

GRAND DUKE MAGBEK

Readying for the eventual offensive is Grand Duke Magbek (LE Kargi fighter 9), whose responsibility it is to prepare Gesagh as the launching point for the invasion into Zazahni, then western Ozhvinmish and Meznamish. He uses slaves acquired from Brolenese slavers to raise grains on all the lands surrounding the town, to help in feeding his armies. The town itself is little more than a fortress surrounded by barracks; its most common religion is the Church of Endless Night.

Magbek takes his responsibility seriously. Controlling all of eastern Ul-Karg, his soldiers frequently raid Zazahni settlements for arms, slaves and supplies. While overlooked as a minor player in just a preparatory role for the upcoming invasion, he harbors a secret desire to seize the crown for himself - although when he speaks with Krarag-Randatk, he is all manners and politeness. He agrees with General Zurgak Krage's plot to use a navy to move troops around the island and he does what he can to help the upstart general realize his plans.

The Grand Duke Magbek is a giant of a hobgoblin, over 7 feet tall and weighing at least 300 pounds. He wears black full-plate armor, with silver symbols of the Dark One on his armor. His great ram's horn helmet inspires fear among his own men as well as all those who see him. Though he has this fearsome appearance, most of his men fear more the devils Magbek is said to consort with, for their hunger knows no satiation.

GRAND DUKE PATUKHAR

Of all the tribal leaders in Ul-Karg, Grand Duke Patukhar (LE Kargi fighter 7/aristocrat 7) is the best. Ruling Burzumagh with an iron fist, he is more dangerous than the constant afflictions plaguing the city. Despite his skill, he faces a threat from his captains, who lust for the power and prominence of his title.

Patukhar complains about the minutia of rule. He hates managing the economy, dealing with the trade agreements, and taking legislative action, all of which are parts of the responsibility of his position. He would rather lead troops into war against the soft humans. As much as he despises his duties, however, he performs them with brutal efficiency.

Standing just over 6 feet tall, Patukhar weighs about 250 pounds. He has dark yellowish-brown skin and reddish hair. With all the recent threats to his station, he always wears armor, sometimes even when he sleeps, adding to his sour disposition.

The Grand Duke rules Burzumagh from his keep near the center of the town, where he keeps a stable of female slaves.

GRAND DUKE RAZORAGH

Grand Duke Razoragh (LN hobgoblin fighter 8/ranger 7) rules from the coastal town of Neevukkagh. Though still a Grand Duke, he lacks the authority and voice of the others because he resists the national plan to invade the human nations. Many view his resistance as cowardice, though no one has been able to supplant him yet. Therefore, King Krarag-Randatk relegated him to ruling a minor fiefdom in southern Ul-Karg, just to keep him out of the way.

No coward, Razoragh is a warrior, but would rather exploit the humans for their wealth than try to destroy them at the possible cost of Ul-Karg's security. An invasion into the human kingdoms, he believes, could affect Ul-Karg's own fragile order. Furthermore, Razoragh believes the Church of Endless Night is using Ul-Karg to achieve its own ends, not to benefit Ul-Karg. For these reasons, Razoragh is in danger of incurring the wrath of the king. While not powerful enough to challenge the king, he keeps his distance. If war starts, though, Razoragh plans to fight alongside his brethren.

Razoragh is a tall hobgoblin, muscular, attractive and with intelligent eyes. He is calm and wise, thinking several steps ahead of his opponents. Though he is a minor figure in Kargi society, he may be the greatest threat to the human lands, as he is one of the best strategists on the island.

Upper Class and the Politically Powerful

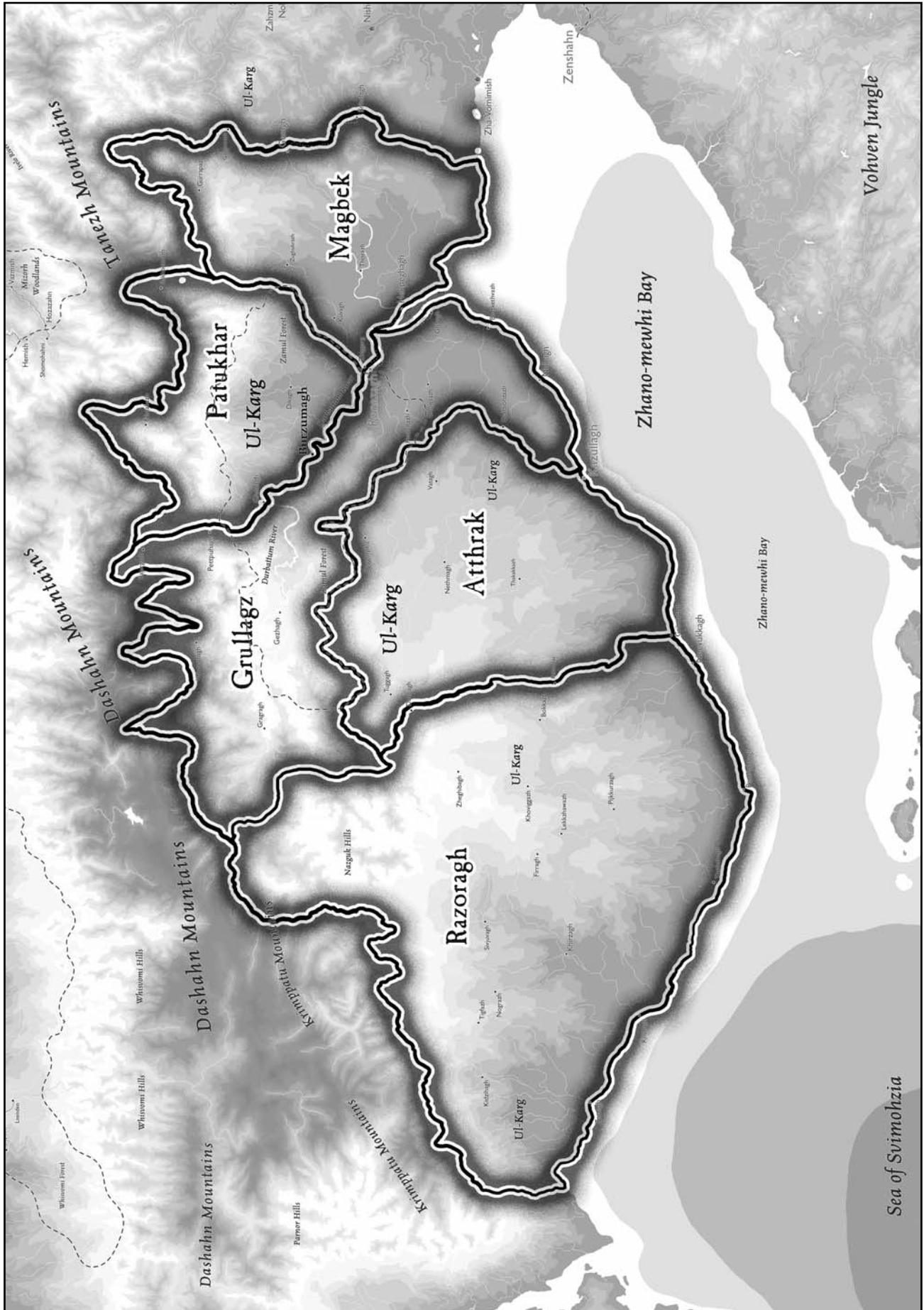
Ul-Karg is an autocratic militocracy with all power moving from the top down. To influence any of their decisions, one must be a leader and a warrior. In addition, to gain access to the upper echelons of Ul-Karg society, one must kill off anyone standing in the way to make room at the top for oneself.

GOVERNOR VULAK

As the Grand Duke Grullagz has no interest in having a hand in the minutia of Ronazagh's politics, he leaves the drudgery of governing to his second, Vulak (LE Kargi fighter 9), a wealthy Kargi who made his fortune in agriculture. His head for business makes him a valuable aid, but he is a poor leader of men. Like most hobgoblins with status, Vulak is a competent warrior who prefers to use large weaponry in combat, such as large greatswords and halberds.

Although a skilled governor, Vulak is a brute. He is crude and enjoys unfair gladiator contests, killing slaves and personally breaking the spines of criminals. Nevertheless, when it comes to managing a city's resources, he is one of the best in his land.

Vulak is short, muscular, with yellowish-brown skin, and black hair. He wears his beard longer than most, tied with beads made of human toe bones. He usually wears heavy armor, to stop the blade of an assassin's dagger or an ambitious warrior from seizing his position. Vulak administers Ronazagh from the Citadel of Bones in the city's center.



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PITMASTER GORNATT IRONWALL

An ill-tempered beast, Pitmaster Gornatt Ironwall (LE Kargi cleric 14) leads a black-robed cult leader, serving the Church of Endless Night in Ronazagh. Clerics of the Dark One in Ul-Karg, though not as powerful as are the tribal leaders, are influential figures, for all hobgoblins fear their evil god and his clerics. Gornatt is famous for having torn down the original temple after a rogue cleric of the Eternal Lantern desecrated it by placing a continual flame on the altar. Not content to just dispel the tongue of fire, he ripped down the structure's walls and erected a new temple beside the ruins of the old.

Gornatt is a terror. He takes pleasure in casting blinded children into animal pits, gutting slaves just to read portents in their entrails, and performing a myriad of other despicable acts in the name of Mravroshkha-Khielshor the Dark One. His seemingly bottomless rage and total devotion to the foul practices of his faith establish him as a significant member of Ul-Karg's brog-urkka (squad of high priests). Like many of the Kargi, Gornatt lusts for the fresh sacrifices that will be available to harvest when the hobgoblins conquer Svimohzia.

All Knights of the Black Pit are missing the left eye, and Gornatt is no exception. Night Holders frighten even Dark Friends with tales of Gornatt's ascension to Darkknight, when he destroyed his own right eye with a human thighbone, and scraped away the ruined flesh with a knife. Whether true or not, Gornatt dresses in black robes and wears the terrible eyeless mask as is customary to his faith. His mask, though, is the stitched-together faces ripped from human and elven slaves. The Pitmaster's temple stands in the shadow of the Citadel of Bones near the center of the city.

ZURGAK KRAGE

In the mysterious capital city of Kurseghaz beneath the Krimppatu Mountains, lives General Zurgak Krage (NE Kargi fighter 12), a warlord famous for his grudge against dwarves. He has led several successful forays against dwarven holdings beneath the Dashahn Mountains, a few against the dark elves of the Krimppatu Mountains, and many more against human and gnome miners. Not content to rest on his laurels, he plots to challenge his king and stake a claim to Ul-Karg for his own.

Zurgak believes he should lead the kingdom as he holds the key to conquering the island. Instead of just marching the legions into the heart of Svimohzia, as they did before, he envisions an amphibious assault would assure their victory. The first step in achieving the naval power required would be to form an alliance with the Brolenese, and annex Vrandol to Ul-Karg. Then, using Brolenese slave ships and merchant vessels, Ul-Karg would land troops in the major coastal population centers, timing the attacks to strike simultaneously, or close enough, so none of the nations could come to the aid of another. Meanwhile, the bulk of his forces would march into Zazahni and sweep up into Ozhvish, thereby dividing the island and cutting off all possible aid to Meznamish.

Though his plan has some merit, it relies on Brolenese assistance - a sign of weakness the current king is unwilling to show. Moreover, the Brolenese slavers are treacherous, and banding with them would prove to be too risky for an all out invasion. Thus, they reject Zurgak's plan with scorn and laughter. Zurgak withdrew, but has not abandoned his glorious plans. He has even contacted Brolenese diplomats to negotiate terms for when he takes over as king. In addition, he funded the development of the Kargi destroyers, the first hobgoblin warships, to serve as escorts for the transport vessels. For more information on the Kargi destroyer ship template, consult the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* supplement, *Salt and Sea Dogs: the Pirates of Tellene*.

Leaders of the Underworld

As a warrior culture, Ul-Karg leaves little room for a criminal underworld. Hobgoblins of worth are warriors; all else are weak. To contain crime, most cities in this nation employ secret police forces made of shady soldiers, no better than thugs. Brutal and efficient, they torture their suspects until they confess, before executing them in a public fashion. Therefore, those who profit from crime must be good at working beneath the notice of the elite or be suicidal.

KINSHAG

In the streets of Burzumagh, gangs of thugs prowl the darkened alleys, rolling drunks, murdering soldiers and doing whatever they please. These gangs form around charismatic leaders, only to disintegrate should he fall. Hence, these groups rise and fall in short order. Kinshag (NE sil-karg rogue 14), however, is an exception. As leader of the Plague of Locusts, he and his toughs have terrorized the commoners, for years.

Part of their success comes from always being on the move. They spend half of their time in the countryside, slaughtering Brolenese and Mendarn merchants, taking women for their own dark desires or terrorizing the plantations to the west. The rest of the time, they come back to the city to spend their fortunes, where few care if an old drunk dies in an alley or a hobgoblin woman disappears.

Old by hobgoblin standards, Kinshag is an amalgamation of hobgoblin and human traits. He has blotchy yellowish-brown and pink skin, ravaged by pox. He walks with a stoop and has long, greasy, white hair. In his wormy mouth, he has a few broken teeth, most having given way to rot. He is a powerful man, despite this, and controls an influential gang of thieves.

Other Notables

In addition to the legal and illegal powers in Ul-Karg, several important individuals figure in Kargi society. Some are slavers and merchants, while others are expert killers who sell the service of their knife to the highest bidder. What follows is a survey of the other notables whose lives may or have influenced the nation's development, but are not important enough to play a significant role in day-to-day politics.

KRAXOL "IRONTOOTH" MUG

One reason for Brolenese and Mendarn interest in Ul-Karg is their demand for slaves. Unscrupulous foreign slavers dock in Kazullagh, selling their wares in the busy auction blocks where hobgoblin masters bid for dwarven, elven and human slaves. Though most slaves are imported, several hobgoblins take to this profession to make their way through life. One vile slaver is Kraxol "Irontooth" Mug (NE Kargi fighter 5/dread slaver 4), with a presence (and many warehouses) in Kazullagh.

Kraxol is the dominant slaver in southern Ul-Karg, controlling over a dozen bands of slavers that regularly raid Zazahni and Ozhvinmish for chattel. He sends his buyers to Vrandol to purchase flesh cheaper than he can obtain in southern ports, and oversees the transport of his merchandise through his own channels. Although not of a higher caste, many kronagh come to him first to obtain their better slaves for pleasure, domestic work or for sport.

Repellent even to his own kind, Kraxol gets his nickname from his voracious appetite. He can eat anything. Weighing over 600 pounds, he can no longer walk on his own, and when he wishes to move about, he commands a group of nude elf males who are forced to carry his palanquin. He wears little more than silk pants and soft-shoes that curl up at the tips.

KURGAZ VAKHTAN

Operating in Burzumagh is Kurgaz Vakhtan (LE Kargi expert 6) who, like his rival Kraxol Mug, also deals in slaves. The difference, however, is Kurgaz takes an active hand in all his dealings and personally oversees his operation and the merchandise.

Kurgaz got his start in the trade by raiding a slave caravan from Vrandol traveling to his home in Burzumagh. He and several toughs crept into the camp and murdered all the Brolenese and hobgoblin slavers they found there. They then took the slaves and sold them in the capital city beneath the Krimppatu Mountains. With the gold he earned from their sale, he bought more slaves from pirates and other dealers and resold them at a higher profit in the more remote regions of the country. Thus began a profitable business that allowed Vakhtan to emerge as one of the foremost slave dealers in the nation.

Besides being a cunning businessman and always able to finagle the best prices, he is cruel. He knows his merchandise's breaking points and tortures them so they will be obedient and remember their place. Careful not to inflict obvious or lethal injuries, his product will retain its highest value while being broken of any thought of independence. His brutality is legendary and, sometimes, the political elites call upon him to use his torture skills so they can extract information from or inflict punishment on someone. Vakhtan only takes these jobs if the price is right.

Vakhtan is a bulky and muscular hobgoblin of average height for his kind. He has two rotten tusks protruding from his chapped and bleeding bottom lip. He has yellow eyes with black slits for pupils, perhaps evidencing otherworldly ancestry.

PITMASTER KURGAZ

The Church of Endless Night has suffered in the face of the contagions that are ravaging Burzumagh. Most hobgoblins living there have turned to the Rotlord as their god to help protect them from the devastation of these plagues. However, the Knights of the Black Pit are working to supplant the Rotlord and restore the city to the Dark One, and the cleric in charge of this crusade is Pitmaster Kurgaz (LE Kargi cleric 13).

Kurgaz operates a small church in the Grand Duke's basement. Terrible rituals are performed there, with capering devils dancing in the darkness to the screams of human sacrifices. Because the Church of Endless Night is no longer the principal faith in the city, the Sun Slayer of Ul-Karg commanded Kurgaz to defeat the minions of the Rotlord and restore the Dark One to his rightful place. This task, however, seems impossible, given the constant plagues. No matter what Kurgaz says or does, most of the city's populace turn to the King of Affliction and give him their prayers.

The Pitmaster knows he faces a nearly impossible task, and struggles to achieve his goals. However, he has come to terms with the fact that his efforts are for naught and, one day soon, the Church will have him killed and replaced with another overzealous fool.

Like all the people in Burzumagh, he suffers from the touch of the Rotlord. His face is a mess of warts and pits left by one of the worst plagues to hit the city in the last 10 years. Worse, he can no longer eat solid foods, for a contagion made short work of his stomach. Consequently, Kurgaz is thin and weak, with drawn features and wispy hair.

TULLUM

The plagues in Burzumagh affect all levels of hobgoblin society from the lowliest slave to the highest official. The greatest concentration of rampant contagions is in the poorer sections of the city but is also among the military. Tullum (NE Kargi fighter 11) commands a company of soldiers - the best in the nation. Nevertheless, no matter how well he trains his men, he cannot fight the invisible enemy that ravages his troops.

Tullum is a well-known swordsman, famous for his trickiness and unflagging stamina that allows him to defeat any enemy in a duel. In his personal contests, he will use any tactic to win, from throwing dirt to attacking dishonorable locations to demoralize his enemies. People in Burzumagh know of his skills and give the commander a wide berth.

Standing 7 feet tall and seemingly all of it muscle, Tullum cuts an imposing figure. Scars crisscross his face, arms and legs, the vast majority of which he obtained during his most famous duel where he suffered over 100 nicks, cuts and a few serious wounds before finally severing the head of his enemy. He lost an eye and part of his nose and is quite terrible to behold. However, already being so marked, he is ruthless and fearless in battle and will not stop fighting until he destroys his enemy.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Ul-Karg sees the continued human presence as an affront to their right to rule the island, and all recent military advances facilitate the formation of the greatest army in Svimohzia's history.

King Krarag-Randatk is also expending many slave lives and much gold to build roads throughout the country. He sees a powerful infrastructure as vitally important for moving troops and supplies to the front lines. Though substandard compared to the imperial roads in Kalamar, they will be good enough to move equipment year-round.

The next aspect to prepare for war is to expand and develop Ul-Karg's military. Though the soldiers are fearsome, the king does not want to repeat the debacle of the Dwarf-Human War. Instead, King Krarag-Randatk has developed stronger tactics that involve war machines, better arms and weaponry, and a stronger strategy (with numerous contingencies). A military genius, King Krarag-Randatk aims to win and not to stop until the entire island is under his domination.

While the king's goals are laudable indeed, they cannot happen without a strong internal economy. King Krarag-Randatk works to make Ul-Karg attractive to Brolenese slavers with its open-air markets, enthusiastic buyers and free-flowing gold. Cattle ranches in central Ul-Karg produce excellent beef that can compete with Zazahni markets, while Kargi-bred steeds are as graceful and powerful as the highland dancers of the east. Moreover, with the increased demand for slave labor, Brolenese and Mendarn merchants are becoming common sights in all of Ul-Karg's urban centers.

STATUS

The ruling caste is the top of Kargi society. Comprised of the *kathrak*, or "king," and the *kronaghs*, or "Grand Dukes," their word is law. In addition to the king and his dukes, all tribal leaders fall into this category as well. Combined, they form the ruling council, the squad of *brog-kronagh* ("captains"). The ruling caste oversees the military and civil government.

As military leaders, the *kathrak* is the commander in chief of the military. He makes all decisions of war, but may delegate these tasks to his seconds, the *kronagh* who, in turn, may delegate responsibilities to his underlings. While the word of the king is still absolute, he is expected to consult his seconds and the religious leaders before taking any dramatic actions. As for civil leadership, the *kathrak* is the head of the government, and the *kronagh* serve as his advisors. They make all policy decisions, although just as in the case of military decisions, they may delegate many concerns to lesser officials.

Beneath the ruling caste is the *brog-urkka*, or the "squad of high priests." It consists of the *urghaz*, "teacher of wild men," who is the Kargi Nightmaster, and the highest-ranking cleric of each of the tribes stands at the top of this caste. Those in service to the Dark One can hold a seat on this council. Other high-ranking clerics make up the *urkka*, with those in service to the

Dark One called *rag-urkka*, or "honored high cleric." Aside from being the religious leaders of the state, *urkka* are also members of the Kargi military, holding ranks in accordance with their ranks in the church. Most *urkka* serve as soldiers, although having higher status than that of regular army soldiers.

Kargi Castes

Name	Peoples
Rokk barg	Slaves
Gethrok gul	Commoners
Kazzak marg	Soldiers
Golma bek	Clerics
Grokka marg	High ranking officers
Brog urkka	High priests (high ranking clerics)
Brog kronagh	Kronagh (Grand Dukes) and Kathrak (King)

The next caste is the *grokka-marg*, or "group of leaders." Consisting of the Kargi officers, including the *kurgaz*, or "under-general," *arkkad*, or "captain," and the *urbrok*, the "high soldiers," they are responsible for tactics, field command and the application of the ruling caste's orders. All members of this caste hold positions in civilian society, as heads of the secret police or in an advisory role. *Kurgaz* have a defined role and often serve as judges, but will accept bribes to influence an outcome.

The lesser cleric caste, *golma-bek*, or "holy ones," follows as the fourth caste and its relationship to the *grokka-marg* is similar to the high priest and ruling castes. These clerics manage the daily affairs of the Church of Endless Night, such as ministering to the faithful, performing rites and ceremonies and all the



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minutia of an organized religion. Members of this caste who gain in status and prominence rise to the high priest caste, unlike members of the secular castes, who must remain in their castes unless they are able to challenge one of their betters.

Next is the soldier caste, or the *kazzak-marg* ("group of warriors"). This group forms the bulk of Ul-Karg's military, including trained soldiers and veterans, called *kazzak*. Above the *kazzak* is the *rag-kazzak* or "sergeant." They remain in this group regardless of whether or not Ul-Karg is at war. During war, the caste includes all able-bodied hobgoblins and *sil-karg*.

They choose members of the soldier caste almost immediately following birth and base their decision of making this one a soldier depending upon the infant's aggressiveness and violence. A *rag-kazzak* takes the most aggressive and violent youngsters and train them within a larger group of similar youths to learn the essentials of being a soldier. This caste is closed for the most part. Those seeking advancement must first become a respected *rag-kazzak* before being able to challenge a member of the *grotka-marg*.

The commoner caste, or *gethrok-gul*, "weaklings," is the lowest of the free castes. It consists of non-slaves not members of the higher castes. Among them are the merchants, farmers and any other non-clergy occupation. Most hobgoblins view these individuals with disdain for they are not strong enough to be warriors in their own right, though the conscripts for war come from these ranks, and can retain them in the military until the conflict ends. Those hobgoblins that can fight and still have all of their limbs but lack the formal training of a soldier are considered as *sil-kazzak*, or lesser soldiers. These hobgoblins stand in a better light than the rest of the *gethrok-gul*.

The slave caste, or *rokk-barg*, is the lowliest in Ul-Karg. Slaves, they are always controlled by a member of a higher or elite caste. They live miserable lives in the service to their masters, in either a backbreaking agricultural capacity or construction or some other labor-intensive task. Viewed as apart from and beneath Kargi society, they have no rights, and Kargi can kill them without fear of retribution. All slaves, regardless of race, are members of this caste and it is impossible to rise out of this level.

Kings

He who would be king must first wrest the crown from the previous king in a contest called *kroka-gul*, or "leader fight." These duels determine the leadership of the nation. Should a lesser warrior challenge a *kronagh* and win, he gains the titles and station of the individual. At his option, he can spare the defeated monarch to retain him as an advisor. Should the monarch win, he kills the challenger.

When the king dies outside of a challenge, the Grand Dukes call a *brog-karg*, or "squad of high men." During these meetings, any member of the *brog-karg* can make a claim to the throne. If unopposed, he takes the crown. Anyone who opposes the claimant can join in the fight and all the warriors fight until death. The victor gains the crown.

The Grand Dukes

Five duchies comprise Ul-Karg. Commanding each duchy are the most powerful tribal leaders, the Grand Dukes, who defeated their rivals to take command (see Who's Who in Ul-Karg). Grand Dukes retain their position until someone younger, smarter and stronger can defeat them in a *kroka-gul*.

The Grand Dukes are similar to the *Svizohr* castes in neighboring human lands, although within their own lands the Grand Dukes have absolute control over the lives of their citizens. Each Grand Duke is also head of one of the twelve Kargi tribes. A lesser chieftain leads the remaining seven tribes, controlling territory inside those controlled by the Grand Dukes, or land beneath the *Krimppatus*.

An example of a typical chieftain is *Dunag Sul-Mag*, current chief of the *Krolg*. The *Krolg* are a small but ancient tribe that has survived among the *Krimppatu* Mountains since the time when the dark elves tread the surface. They are a rugged breed and skilled mountaineers who sometimes clash with human, dwarven or gnome miners from the north. Since the *Krolg* reside within the mountain valleys and caves, their villages can be hard to find.

Chief *Dunag Sul-Mag* plots against the benevolent guardian of *Bronish*. He plans to exploit the vulnerability of the human city to, like most other chiefs, gather the resources and prestige he needs to make a personal bid on the Ul-Karg crown.

FOREIGN POLICY

Ul-Karg wants war. It wants conquest. It wants an unlimited supply of human slaves to build an empire to shatter the world, to pluck the sun from the sky and bring back the Time of the Void. To achieve this, Ul-Karg must establish itself as a viable nation with allies from the continent to support their crusade.

Pirates serve as the window for Ul-Karg to see the outside world. Due to their remoteness and isolation, hemmed in by the *Tanezh* Mountains to the north and *Zazahni* to the east, they lack any substantial ports to attract merchants. Therefore, buccaneers bring word of developments and occurrences in faraway lands. Though often unreliable sources, Ul-Karg listens to the rumors in its small port cities, learning the foreign nations for them to court and the ones to avoid.

In addition to the pirates, Ul-Karg has had a longstanding friendship with *Pel Brolenon*. Their willingness to sell their own kind into slavery is something the Kargi respect. Consequently, they gain many of their slaves from the *Brolenese*. Diplomats from *Pel Brolenon* come to Ul-Karg entreating them for assistance in ousting the *Mendarns* from *Vrandol*. King *Krarak-Randatk* has put off meeting these ambassadors because he has established trade with the *Mendarns*, who have no compunction about selling slaves to the hobgoblins. *Krarak-Randatk* sees the *Mendarn-Pel Brolenese* struggle as healthy for his kingdom as it keeps both nations from exploiting his own.

Foreign Interests

Ul-Karg does not use diplomats or ambassadors to forge trade agreements, non-aggression pacts or anything of the sort. If another nation is interested in making an agreement with Ul-Karg, they must come to Ul-Karg. The hobgoblins do not concern themselves with the petty problems of others, but are instead focused on readiness for war. A representative from Ul-Karg still lives in Vrandol but is there mainly to gather information about the city and the surrounding lands, should Ul-Karg be interested in annexing those lands as well as the rest of the island in the near future.

THE COLONY OF VRANDOL

Slez-Korud (LE sil-karg Rog 8) claims to represent the Ul-Karg's interest in developing trade relations with their Mendarn neighbors. In actuality, though, Slez-Korud is a thief and a cheat, secretly records troop movements, assesses supplies, the frequency of Mendarn vessels in the ports and anything else he believes would help Ul-Karg conquer the colony. King Krarag-Randatk is not prepared to wipe out the colony, seeing them as unimportant to the overall plan of seizing the island, but he reads each report, filing the information to use when appropriate, or to sell to Pel Brolenon if the price is right.

National Opinions on Foreign Affairs

There is a sense of anticipation in Ul-Karg for the coming war. Knights of the Black Pit gather more and more infants to train as warriors. Patrols gather sil-kazzak from villages, while they force slaves to work up to 20 hours in a day, to produce food, clothing and other commodities for the war effort. The King's will is reflected in the people, for through religious propaganda, intimidation and natural hobgoblin inclination, the entire nation works towards the ruin of the human lands.

CURRENT EVENTS

Ul-Karg escalates preparations for war and the armies could march at anytime. Priests of the Dark One sacrifice countless slaves each day on their stained altars, and blacksmith forges produce weapons and armor at a pace never before seen. As companies form, commanders solidify their positions by killing their challengers. Sil-kazzak gather in units with makeshift weapons and ill-fitting armor, while the kazzak drill them on discipline, honor and the particulars of combat. Overseeing the masses are the Grand Dukes, who nod with approval and look for the same from their king, who sits on a throne made of bones, with his booted foot resting on a slave's broken carcass. Let the humans beware - the horde of Ul-Karg is nearly ready.

The King sends raiders to Ozhvinmish to disrupt caravans, patrols and raze farms. With each attack, fear spreads like a plague through the land, demoralizing the weak Ozhvins and worrying their soft king, cloistered in the shell of his castle. The raiders grow bolder as they find less and less resistance, striking against hamlets, larger caravans and even watchtowers, and yet

Ozhvinmish has offered no response. She is ripe for the plucking.

Ul-Karg faces tougher opposition in Zazahni, however. Intending to use ruined towns as staging grounds and supply depots for the soldiers, the Ul-Karg frontrunners have found many of these towns are now held by expatriated Zazahni warlords and bandits, who are desperate and have nowhere else to turn. Death and violence are the only currencies in this blighted land, and warlords ally with bugbear squatters to hold their territory.

Meanwhile, Zurgak Krage, along with his loyal supporters, prepares to launch an attack against the Colony of Vrandol. Having secured the promise of assistance from Brolenese slavers, he sees glory and honor by taking the western lands just before the main legions strike inland. He hopes to draw Meznamish's attention west, while Ul-Karg launches an invasion from the south - without the King's consent.

Two weeks ago, in Ronazagh, the Knights of the Black Pit held special ceremony to bless the legions before the coming battle. There, at the sacred *Mal-krueg-ka*, the obsidian spire, they claimed the eyes of a thousand unwilling slaves, and buried the ruined organs at the base of the stone. The sun blotted from the sky in an eclipse, plunging the land into darkness. The stone spoke, using the blasphemous words of dark speech, driving mad the gathered hosts who witness the ceremony. When the sun returned, the insanity passed; the knights believe it was the voice of Mravroshkha-Khielshor himself, giving his blessing.

Golgagnazkorg (a.k.a. Bonethinner)

Where is the Disease Found? Bonethinner has never been reported anywhere on Tellene except in Ul Karg, though it may have existed for a while but remained dormant. An outbreak lasts just a few days (1d4) and usually kills everyone infected by it.

How is the Disease Contracted? Bonethinner is an airborne virus spreading by air or vapor, such as generated by a carrier's cough or the spray of infected blood into the air.

Who Carries the Disease? Seemingly only hobgoblins, for humans, elves, dwarves, and other slaves are yet unaffected by the outbreak.

Stages of the Disease

Stage One: Symptoms include aches in the joints and extremities, accompanied by a slight fever, and broken blood vessels in the eyes.

Stage Two: Aching worsens, resulting in uncomfortable pain in all the joints. Most victims have difficulty moving. The fever elevates, and there is blood in the urine caused by splintering bones in the pelvic area that pierce the bladder.

Stage Three: Symptoms are the same as in Stage Two, except the victim cannot move at all, internal bleeding as bones continue to shatter.

Bonethinner: Infection Inhaled; DC 18; Incubation 1d6 hours; Damage 2d6 Dex, 1d6 Con. Once the infection incubates, the victim must succeed a new save every 1d4 hours, as the disease ravages the body.

After the ceremony to the south, another virulent disease ravaged Burzumagh, killing hundreds in the first two days. The Pestilent Ones took to the streets, offering sacrifices to their foul god, but the plague struck them down just like any other mortal. Pockets of the plague still exist, though the majority of the plague has since died out. Some believe the disease is the Rotlord's anger at the Knights' sacrifice at the Mal-krueg-ka.

ECONOMY

Ul-Karg is self-sufficient for the most part, lacking trading partners on the island, aside from a tentative relationship with Vrandol. What external trade it does receive comes from Mendarn and Pel Brolenon. What the nation lacks is food. Hobgoblins are poor farmers, and have to use slave labor to produce grains, vegetables and other staple products. With the Zamul Forest emptied of game, they rely on Mendarn and Pel Brolenon to make up for their deficiencies. In all, Ul-Karg is not a great economic force, though it is learning how to become one.

Trade routes

The few goods coming into Ul-Karg come from one of two ways. The first is through Brolenese merchants, who transport salted meats and grains purchased in Meznamish, from Zazahni or from Pel Brolenon itself. The Brolenese merchants acquire ivory, spices and other goods from the coastal cities of the Zhanomewhi Bay.

The second route comes from the new trade route built by Vrandol to facilitate trade between hobgoblins and Mendarn merchants. Vrandol workers have made amazing progress in constructing the highway, and merchants are already using it to move equipment and goods to remote Kargi marketplaces. There is a faction in Ul-Karg seeing Mendarns as aggressors, and they sabotage the Vrandol effort to bridge the wilderness between the two states.

The biggest deficiency in developing Ul-Karg's infrastructure is feeding its citizens. The land is harsh, hilly and not suited for agriculture and while most hobgoblins can live well on its herds of cattle, their slaves cannot. When the Brolenese merchants first arrived looking for slaves to man their slaving ships, they found the Kargi amenable to trading much more than slaves, having metals, rare woods, spices and more. Brolenese merchants discovered Ul-Karg was in need of staple food commodities like meats and grains. Merchants brought in wool, wine, corn and salted meats for steep prices and took slaves, gemstones, ivory, spices, precious metals and more in exchange.

The Brolenese fees were so elevated because they were exclusive dealers, but with the emergence of pirates and Mendarn merchants who would accept far less, Pel Brolenon has had to reduce their prices. Furthermore, Brolenese merchants are having a difficult time getting past the Mendarn blockade thus reducing their exchange goods gains on their long and expensive voyages. Still, slaves are in high demand, and Ul-Karg has no shortage of them.

Taxation

Ul-Karg does not have a traditional tax structure. When a lord wants something, he takes it. The Kargi, when low on food or equipment, form a small army and approach a nearby community. They circle around the town and state their demands: food, weapons, women and so on. If the city refuses, the hobgoblins raze it to the ground. If the city complies, the hobgoblins take what they want and leave.

Currency

For generations, Kargi society relied on a bartering system for trade dealing. When Brolenese traders came to Kargi ports, the brog-kronagh realized to ensure equitable trading, they would have to have coinage of some form. Dealing with copper, silver, and gold mined from the Krimppatu Mountains, or melted down from plundered coins and jewelry from other lands, the mint in Kazullagh produces all coinage for the nation.

The hobgoblins of Ul-Karg use slightly rounded, triangular coins of a standard size and weight, though they rarely use coinage amongst themselves, preferring to rely on the barter system. Coins are primarily reserved for trading with other races. The obverse is marked with a shining crown, with the reverse displays the words "1 [name of coin]."



The copper coin, the Bandit, is often sharpened and used for cutting when a knife is not at hand. Of course, they are not practical in combat, causing mere scratches at most. Most bandits are corroded but, provided the weight is intact, merchants accept them.

The silver Chieftain also quickly tarnishes and remains so, as most hobgoblins see little reason to maintain a coin's luster. The final coin in Kargi currency is the gold Tuuakh, named after Brog-Tuuakh himself. The Kargi do not mint platinum coinage.

EXCHANGE RATES

Ul-Karg accepts any coin from any land. Kargi do not exchange coins, they simply melt the metal down and mint it as their own. For suspicious coins, Kargi weigh them, compare the weight to their weighted coins, and estimate whether the coin is made of copper, silver or gold. Ul-Karg expects all other lands to accept their coins at face and weight value, unquestionably.

LANGUAGE

The Kargi tongue finds its roots in Ancient Hobgoblin, along with all of the other hobgoblin dialects. After the tribes migrated from the lands that would become Norga-Krangrel, they settled in the Krimppatu Mountains and the languages of the Svimohzish and Dwarves corrupted the ancient tongue until it became a dialect of its own, diverging from the more intact Krangi tongue. While both languages share similar words, Kargi is far more convoluted, lacking grammatical structure. It also has overlapping definitions, and ambiguous declensions for verbs.

Goblins came with the hobgoblin migration, serving as traditional slaves for this ancient and powerful race. Goblins still function as such, but in much smaller numbers than in other hobgoblin societies, for Kargi prefer elves, dwarves and humans to their weaker and less predictable kin. However, though goblins are scarce, their tongue survives. All slaves must learn to speak the Goblin dialect of the Hobgoblin tongue, for they may not speak Kargi or their native language. Hobgoblins punish slaves who speak in an inappropriate tongue by cutting out their tongues. Eventually, all learn the language.

For more details on Hobgoblin languages, consult the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook* and *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene*.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Ul-Karg remains a militocracy, and one's rank in the military correlates with one's social standing. Thus, generals double as Grand Dukes, while grunt soldiers occupy a higher tier than commoners (or "weaklings" as Kargi know them).

The clergy of the Dark One also figure in Kargi society, being advisors, recruiters or mouthpieces for the government. The Knights of the Black Pit have regular interaction with Kargi citizens and occupy a caste level one step below their military counterparts. For example, high-ranking priests hold a social position one step below the Ruling Caste that is comprised of the Grand Dukes and tribal leaders.

Another key difference between Ul-Karg and the rest of Svimohzia is that Kargi society is male-dominated. Female hobgoblins have no rights. They live in communal houses and the males keep them for breeding purposes only.

Half-hobgoblins may access the higher ranks in the Kargi hierarchy, perhaps because of the role of the human Knights of the Black Pit following Miznamvho's murder in 83 C.M., when the clerics are said to have fled south to find refuge with the hobgoblins. The sil-karg may only advance to the officer caste.

Humans, elves, goblins and others serve as laborers, providing sport and training. These people have no rights, must speak a special language (the Goblin dialect of Hobgoblin) and never look a hobgoblin in the eye. Kargi culture is fully detailed in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* supplement, *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene*.

RELIGION

Though the Church of Endless Night is Ul-Karg's state religion, the Kargi tolerate just about any other lawful evil faith on Tellene. Other faiths are always subservient to the might of Mravroshka-Khielshor the Dark One (except in Burzumagh, where Azzabrak-Kathal the Rotlord currently holds sway). There is no room for religious debate. In fact, many Kargi believe the other gods to be manifestations, children or other relations of the Blacksoul, and thus few truly worship a god completely different from the Dark One.

The Church of Endless Night

The Church of Endless Night is an important component to Kargi government and culture. The Knights of the Black Pit occupy some of the highest echelons of society, and to most, their word is law, so they are able to mete out punishment as they see fit. These knights are the priests who select aggressive Kargi toddlers to become warriors, priests or gethrok-gul. They also sometimes serve as judges, fight alongside soldiers, and sometimes heal the injured or fight plagues as they boil up out of the Zamul Forest. Feared and respected, these knights represent the foundation of Kargi belief. The Knights of the Black Pit have temples in all communities.

The Fraternal Order of Aptitude

One of Ronazagh's myriad of small churches is one devoted to Mukli-Gurkkagh, the hobgoblin name for the Mule. As god of invention, mathematics, reasoning and logic, he represents an oft-overlooked aspect of Kargi psychology. Still, even with the hobgoblins' adherence to order, some subscribe to the beliefs of the Enlightener, lacking the intelligence to master the higher principles of the faith. Overseeing the small temple is a sil-karg graduate of the 4th State, who teaches promising gethrok-gul with an understanding of reasoning and mathematics. He risks execution by teaching female hobgoblins, who are eager to learn but then find it difficult to return to their oppressive lives.

The Temple of Armed Conflict

Vradhka-Khor-Vredhi, the Kargi name for the Old Man, is also a popular deity, with the largest group of followers among the military. Kargi soldiers claim that Vradhka-Khor-Vredhi is the son of the Blacksoul, and worship both. The Dark One holds the position of highest reverence, and Vradhka-Khor-Vredhi acts as his representative, interacting directly with the soldiers.

The Way of the Berserk

Skill at arms is central to the hobgoblin psychology. Advancement in society rests on an individual's ability to defeat his enemy, and to hold a given military position by defeating all challengers. Thallak-Shakarz the Battle Rager personifies excellence in battle and has a substantial following among the Kargi, despite the dominance of the Dark One. The Brothers in Blood have established churches in most large towns and cities.

The Congregation of the Dead

While not at odds with the Church of Endless Night, the followers of Domaadrik-Kanar the Harvester of Souls occupy a precarious position as members of one of the nation's more subversive cults. Their members include disaffected ex-Knights of the Black Pit, exiles from other lands, and a few commoners obsessed with death. They communicate by leaving marked bone fragments in conspicuous places, the meaning of which only another follower can understand and respond to.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Ul-Karg's powerful totalitarian government does not allow much room for secret societies to flourish. At most, some hobgoblins venerate other gods besides the Dark One. Those organizations present in the Kargi nation must be powerful like the House of Knives, or secretive like the Brothers of Isolation.

The Brotherhood of the Broken Chain

To the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, the triad of oppression of the west includes Mendarn, Pel Brolenon and Ul-Karg. Ul-Karg represents evil to the Brotherhood because of their slave practices and their oppressive society for their lower classes. The Brotherhood realize it is nearly impossible to infiltrate Kargi society and spark slave revolts. Instead, they work by secretly penetrating into the country and liberating slaves wherever they can be found and where it is possible to help them.

Activities: The key to liberating Ul-Karg is information. Unfortunately, the spies they send tend to die quickly. Instead, the Brotherhood relies on intelligence. With the information gathered, they scout the land to look for safe escape routes. Many times, they land ships in secret coves to the south and infiltrate the cities. Few crimes are beyond the Brotherhood in Ul-Karg, and they will resort to torture, arson and even murder, if necessary. They do whatever it takes to achieve their goals.

Short-term goals: The Brotherhood want the Kargi to realize the cost for protecting, maintaining and acquiring slaves is far greater than it is worth. With regular attacks and breakouts, they believe they can force economic change, making the Kargi abandon slavery and adopt a more humane system. Most realize these goals require almost impossible victories to succeed, but the task does not daunt those committed to the effort.

Long-term goals: Slavery is wrong and must be stopped, whatever the cost. The Brotherhood is committed to ending slavery throughout Tellene, and they will work to topple governments, use unsavory tactics like blackmail, assassination or theft to achieve these ends. By crushing Ul-Karg's slave system, the Brotherhood believes they can topple the entire trade.

Locations of greatest activity: The Brotherhood launches raids from their cells in rural Meznamish.

Location of headquarters: Agents meet in a camp hidden somewhere within the Whisvomi Forest.

The Veiled Priesthood

For all of their wickedness, the Kargi are honorable combatants. They prefer a fair fight to deception and subterfuge. They even give back an opponent's sword if lost during a battle. For these reasons, worship of the Unseen One is the antithesis of the hobgoblin conception of honor, yet many do worship - though only in secret.

The Veiled Priesthood is a holy order of clerics devoted to the Seller of Souls. The Father of Murder has cells throughout Ozhvinmish, but none as concentrated as in Ronazagh. Used to

eliminate rivals as far away as Zha-nehzmish, the Veiled Priesthood is a powerful organization operating in the shadows.

Activities: Murder and revenge are the primary concerns of the deity Guldarr-Thorbrog. The Veiled Priesthood takes revenge each month, both for serious acts and sometimes even for petty trifles. The House of Knives sells its services to distant clients, murdering targets and a few incidentals along the way.

Short-term plans: The Veiled Priesthood wants acceptance in Ul-Karg. They also want to have members without fearing persecution from the Church of Endless Night. To achieve this end, they murder one Knight of the Black Pit every month.

Long-term plans: The House of Knives seeks to supplant the Church of Endless Night. They do not intend to stop the murders, but to continue killing until they rule the nation. They are confident they can win if the Church of Endless Night resists.

Locations of greatest activity: The House of Knives operates in Ronazagh, and wherever there is a need for revenge and murder. Their missions take them as far away as Kalamar, or as near as the offices of a Pestilent One in Burzumagh. They conceal their identities as Veiled Ones, only revealing their true allegiances just before a murder, when they tell their victim Guldarr-Thorbrog will sell their soul to the Lord of the Underworld, or when they meet in the safety of their temple.

Location of headquarters: The Kargi Veiled Priesthood operates in Ronazagh.

POPULATION CENTERS

Each Kargi town is expected to be self-sufficient and, supposedly, has access to enough arable land and water to produce small amounts of needed grains and vegetables. There are also hunting grounds around the area, where hobgoblins can hunt herds of gazelle, wild cattle or other food animals.

At the center of town are barracks, also serving as the governmental offices for the administration of the community. Constructed of stone or of heavy wood (in the north), these barracks are defensible structures. In smaller settlements, these barracks, or *brog-turand*, are wooden. Within sight of the barracks is the community pen for housing slaves and prisoners. This allows the soldiers to easily contain slave revolts or prison breaks. These are similar to the barracks, but more austere, and enclosed by a spiked wooden wall.

Across from the barracks is the Church of Endless Night. These churches are unassuming simple structures, one-story buildings built overtop a deep pit. These temples radiate evil and outsiders can hear the screams of their victims throughout the night. Attached to the temple is the barracks for the clergy.

Surrounding the town's nucleus are shops and businesses arranged in a circular pattern. In fact, each band of a town houses different aspects of hobgoblin life. In the mercantile band, there are small buildings, rarely more than one-story in the smaller towns, but taller shops exist in larger communities. These shops also serve as the shopkeepers' homes. Outside the mercantile band and past the marketplaces are the farms and

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residences of the farmers and their slaves. These compounds feature two buildings. The first is a large building with a single central room where the farmer and his family cook, eat and sleep. The second building houses the slaves, and is shabbier and poorly constructed. Other buildings for storage may exist, but only for the wealthiest farmers.

Beyond the outer band is the farmland, where farmers and their slaves work soil unsuited to growing crops. The results of their labors are stunted plants with only a low yield. Labor is difficult, as some fields have many large rocks or the field soil is sandy and unsuited for much more than growing cacti or leeks.

Towns with populations around 500 or more, in strategic locations, have wooden walls encircling all of the interior structures. Watchtowers overlook the gates and major thoroughfares. In mining communities, the mine's entrance lies inside the town, under the watchful protection of the Knights of the Black Pit and several guards.



Coverings protect the body and conceal the ravages of disease.

BURZUMAGH

Population: 27,548 (9,500 hobgoblins and 18,048 slaves of assorted races and nationalities; most of the slaves live in the outskirts of the city).

A Closer Look: In the heart of the Zamul Forest and on the shores of the Durbattum River stands Burzumagh (29°10'N, 17°0'W), City of Plague. The streets of this old city are uncrowded, and those walking cover themselves in wrappings, both to protect themselves and to conceal the ravages of disease. As in most hobgoblin cities, Burzumagh structures are functional, but with their own form of savage beauty. Most of the poorer structures, made of baked mud and dung bricks, have a reddish cast and handle the frequent rainfalls well.

There are three ways to enter the city. The first is through the east gate on Durbattum Road. This road travels through the center of the city, passing the governmental offices, barracks, the Church of Endless Night, and the Grand Duke's keep before crossing the river on the north bridge and leaving the city through the second entrance at the west gate. The third route into and out of the city is by the river itself. Choked with filth, debris, and dead animals, it is not a safe way to travel, and accounts for half of the plagues sweeping through the city. The main road is paved with paving stones, slabs of granite placed by slaves to ease transportation of goods through the city. Other roads are straw-covered mud, filthy with trash, corpses and worse.

A 20-foot-tall, 15-foot-thick wall of stone surrounds the city. Atop its small watchtowers, hobgoblins mount the tar-dipped heads of slaves who tried to revolt or break free from their masters. After a few weeks, however, not even the tar keeps away the crows from feasting on the remains. The guards patrol the stone wall day and night, with the usual precision of all Kargi. The Kargi do not guard the gates into the city except when threatened or when at war. Most Kargi believe the plague is a serious enough threat to deter most outsiders.

The stench in this place is unbearable, between the polluted river, made foul by hobgoblin waste, to the sickness clinging to buildings, ever in the wet and dark, in this awful community. Along the river, there are several bars and brothels, promising strong drink and exotic pleasures. Here, Brolenese merchants spend much of their time, and any one seeking decent food, equipment or weapons must haunt the regular dives and wait for what they seek to bubble up from the morass of corruption. For most people, Burzumagh holds little of interest, and only the most desperate merchants do business here.

Government: The Grand Duke Patukhar rules Burzumagh and the surrounding Zamul Forest (at least nominally). He and his cadre control the city, but his utter disdain for politics keeps his position tenuous among his men, who see his complaints as a sign of his weakness and ineffectiveness as a ruler. His reputation suffers but, in reality, Patukhar, for all of his hatred of the responsibility, is good at governing a city - even a city as fraught with difficulties as Burzumagh. Yet, there have been six

TABLE 7-1: BURZUMAGH CARRIERS

Roll	Disease	Infection	DC	Effect	Source*
01 10	Goblin Pox	Inhaled	14	1d4 Int	PGttSL
11 25	The Black Plague	Contact	16	1d6 Str and Con, 1d2 Int	PGttSL
26 36	The Rotting Death	Contact	14	1d4-1 Str, Con, and Cha	PGttSL
37 47	Blinding Sickness	Ingested	16	1d4 Str	DMG
48 58	Cackle Fever	Inhaled	16	1d6 Wis	DMG
59 79	Filth Fever	Injury	12	1d3 Dex and Con	DMG
80 90	Mindfire	Inhaled	12	1d4 Int	DMG
91	Red Ache	Injury	15	1d6 Str	DMG
92	Shakes	Contact	13	1d8 Dex	DMG
93	Slimy Doom	Contact	14	1d4 Con	DMG
94	Deathsong	Contact	25	1d8 Str, Dex and Con	BoVD
95	Iron Corruption	Injury	24	1d4 Con	BoVD
96 00	Misery's Passage	Injury	15	1d6 Str	BoVD

*PGttSL = *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*; DMG = *Dungeon Master's Guide*; BoVD = *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not have one or more of these supplements, you may substitute a disease from another resource.

challenges to his position, and though he has defeated each one, he feels he cannot maintain control for much longer.

An officer, Koron-Malzurek (LE Kargi fighter 11), is intent on challenging the Grand Duke, but until he feels he is ready, he manipulates weaker soldiers to challenge the leader in his stead. Koron-Malzurek thinks he can snatch the throne if an average soldier can strike a lucky blow against the Grand Duke. Once the soldier takes command, Koron-Malzurek will challenge the upstart, killing him and taking the throne.

Economy: The Kargi have many resources in their lands, though they themselves have little use for them. Burzumagh, rich in exotic woods and herbs, has much to offer merchants, but their isolation and the plague make trading difficult. Burzumagh exports teak, vanilla, pepper and hides to Ronazagh, who in turn trades with Brolenese merchants. In exchange, the hobgoblins of Burzumagh pay any price for basic foodstuffs they are lacking, such as salted and dried meats and some grains. They have a difficult time producing their own, for animals sicken and die, and meat taken from the Zamul Forest is unsafe.

Military: Burzumagh has a garrison of about 1,200 heavy infantry and relies on the surrounding forest and mountains to serve as its primary physical defense. Large patrols of these soldiers march through the streets, cruelly imposing order on the populace. They are not afraid to make examples of those they think deserve it. Ul-Karg would use the city to train more soldiers, but the threat of disease undermines this effort. Instead, hobgoblins of questionable serviceability wind up on a tour of duty in Burzumagh - which weeds out many dissidents.

The garrison commander is a hobgoblin named Tullum (see Who's Who in Ul-Karg, above). Vicious, skilled and an expert trainer, he hones his units into the ultimate fighting force in Ul-Karg, and perhaps all of Svimohzia. Although it frustrates him to see his men succumb to plague, he understands his role as a disciplinarian, and each soldier that survives this hostile climate is better equipped to handle whatever conditions the nations of the north may employ. He has recently received good news that

is heartening him. The King named him leader of three battalions to encircle Zomo-wim and bring the city to its knees. Putting a damper on this honor is a strange pustule he found growing in his left armpit. He thinks if he ignores it, it will go away, but it is worrying him.

Temples: Burzumagh is unique, as its primary church is the Conventicle of Affliction. Plague sweeps through the city with terrible results, killing hobgoblins and slaves by the hundreds. The Dark One seems to have done nothing to protect these people, leading many to turn to the Rotlord for protection. While his worship has done little to alleviate the plagues, it has angered the leaders of the Church of Endless Night. Worse, each waning quarter moon, a sect of Pestilent Ones captures a healthy slave or hobgoblin, then tortures and disfigures the victim before infecting her with a terrible rotting disease. These sacrificial victims suffer for days, before succumbing to the disease.

The Church of Endless Night is underground, located beneath the Grand Duke's Keep. With a small congregation, he struggles to keep worship of the Dark One alive. The leaders of the Church pressure the priest to restore the Church's prominence in the city, but his efforts have made little progress.

Mages and Sages: Hobgoblins are not famous for their wizards; most lack the fundamental talents to master the demands of arcane magic. There are exceptions however, most notably Tanagazh (CN Kargi wizard 15). Legendary for his vicious spells, such as the *breath of Zamul* (just an enlarged *cloud-kill* spell), he selects lethal spells with spectacular effects.

Tanagazh lives in Burzumagh where he plies his trade, selling spells to the Grand Duke Patukhar or other notable citizens in exchange for piles of gold. While he has no shortage of work, he breaks just as many of his contracts as he keeps. In addition, compromising his effectiveness is his chaotic and capricious attitude towards Ul-Karg and its people. On the one hand, he is loyal to the nation, working for reasonable rates beneath the standard costs for such services. On the other, he is violent and

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kills with abandon. At the root of his contradictory personality is his temper and the underlying madness that taints his actions.

Tall and slender, he has yellowish-brown, unhealthy skin covered in weeping sores. He wears red robes trimmed with gold. He keeps two or three collared slaves to serve as enhancements for his spells. He cuts off a slave's finger, eye or other extremity to serve as components for his spells.

Underworld: Burzumagh lacks an well-organized or large criminal underworld. Most thieves operate in small groups, like gangs. They survive just so long as their charismatic leader can hold them together, and when he fails so, too, does the group.

Opposed to these gangs are the patrols of disgruntled, sickened soldiers who regularly march through the streets. Open combat between a gang and a group of soldiers is common, with the gang being decimated in the end. When not killing rowdies, these patrols search homes and shops, killing anyone who resists. In fact, the soldiers do not so much protect the city as terrorize it.

Interesting Sites: In the center of the city is an ancient building of black stone. Simple, unadorned, and lacking any defining characteristic, its original purpose has long since been lost. The wooden doors and shutters have long rotted away, leaving only a black skeleton of some ancient kind. Three stories tall, with an open area within for worship, the roof has a large, flat area - possibly for a shrine no longer there. No one seems to know the story behind this building. Strangers sense no residual magic, no unusual feelings, and no otherworldly presences, but hobgoblins are overwhelmed by an irrational fear of it, refusing to enter. Escaped slaves sometime hide here.

Special Notes: Almost all hobgoblins in the city carry some form of disease. Being resistant to most contagions, they may not manifest the symptoms of the plague but can give it to those non-hobgoblins they encounter. Each day a character is in the city, roll on Table 7-1: Burzumagh Carriers to see if they encounter any contagions.

RONAZAGH

Population: 14,808 (11,400 Kargi hobgoblins and 3,408 slaves of assorted races and nationalities)

A Closer Look: Before the hobgoblins settled in these lands, the Zamul Forest extended much farther southeast than it does today. However, when the hobgoblins began to claim the land for their own, they destroyed miles of forest to clear land for development. Marking the farthest they could push back the woods, they founded Ronazagh (28°55'N, 16°35'W), a large city free of the plagues slaughtering their neighbors in Burzumagh, and functioning as the semi-capital of Ul-Karg. (The actual capital lies beneath the Krimppatu Mountains in the City of Death, Kurseghaz.)

Using the felled trees to clear the land for the city, they formed a wall reaching 12 to 14 feet high. Surrounding it is a foul moat, fed by the Durbattum River through channels cut into the ground. These canals also supply the city with water for

drinking, washing, and getting rid of waste product. The water flows beneath the wall, but nasty wooden grates fitted with rusting iron spikes block passage into the city through the water. Two gates allow land travel into the city, but hobgoblin guards protect them all the time, with breaks coming at shift changes. Anyone caught trying to secretly enter the city through one of the grates is considered a spy.

Evidence of paved roads remains in the city, but the layers of mud and filth (along with moldy straw) have long since concealed them. Dogs, pigs and naked Kargi children wander the streets, with swine rooting for food and evading slaughter, dogs battling for a scrap of flesh from a dead slave, and children brawling with each other to show dominance at times, and at other times fighting swine and dogs for sustenance. Kazzak march through the streets, stopping to kill a slave whose appearance they find offensive. What makes strangers shudder is when the guards watch a struggle between two children, placing bets on the victor and cheering when death results.

Stone architecture shares similarities to Meznamishii structures. Many buildings bear inscriptions by their builders, dating them back to a time before the founding of the empire. These stone buildings occupy the center of the city and serve as the offices for the government, barracks and as the ducal palace. Surrounding the ancient structures are the traditional hobgoblin buildings resembling warehouses. Simple and functional, they house the commoners, their families and their slaves. Poorer and more pungent dwellings lie outside the city walls.

Ronazagh reeks of filth. Most of the commoners do not bathe, and when they do, it is in the septic water of the channels running through the city. Ronazagh has some problems with plague, but not of the supernatural variety as that striking in the north. They face outbreaks of Filth Fever, the Kiss of the Rotlord, and Goblin Pox among the human slaves.

Ronazagh features the normal disreputable establishments, serving to attract Brolenese merchants with disturbing tastes. Bars, brothels, opium dens and more stand outside of the city to keep temptation from the soldiers working inside the city. Deaths are common there; it becomes a problem only when an important merchant disappears.

Government: Grand Duke Grullagz rules Ronazagh, the surface semi-capital of Ul-Karg. Like any urban center in the nation, the military rules. Grullagz could have a direct hand in the city's rule, but he despises administration, so the duties devolve to his second-in-command, governor Vulak, a wealthy lord who owns acres of farmland producing sugar beets, timber and weaponry. Vulak thinks he has 300 slaves, but he rarely sees his home, leaving its management to his son.

Vulak is a competent leader, but he realizes his position remains so for only as long as the Grand Duke remains in power. If someone replaces him, Vulak would lose his position. Thus, the governor makes use of the House of Knives to eliminate those who speak ill of the Duke or represent a threat to his rule. Vulak could possibly challenge and defeat the Duke himself,

but prefers the relative anonymity and unchecked power of his office. In addition to using the Veiled Priesthood, he commands the city's secret police and its soldiers, who make regular sweeps through Ronazagh to hunt for dissidents and foreign spies.

Economy: Ronazagh, while no center for commerce, is the key trading location in Ul-Karg. Its southern market outside the southeastern gate features goods from Burzumagh, rough-cut rubies, copper, gold and iron mined by slaves in the Krimppatu Mountains, and plunder taken from raids are all for sale here. Most hobgoblins are not great farmers and so much of their efforts must go towards gathering goods Brolenese merchants desire. With Zazahni's instability, Kargi raiders have swept through the smaller towns taking slaves, gold and whatever they can find to sell to the Brolenese. Recently, Kargi spotted Mendarn merchants, but are suspicious of their motives.

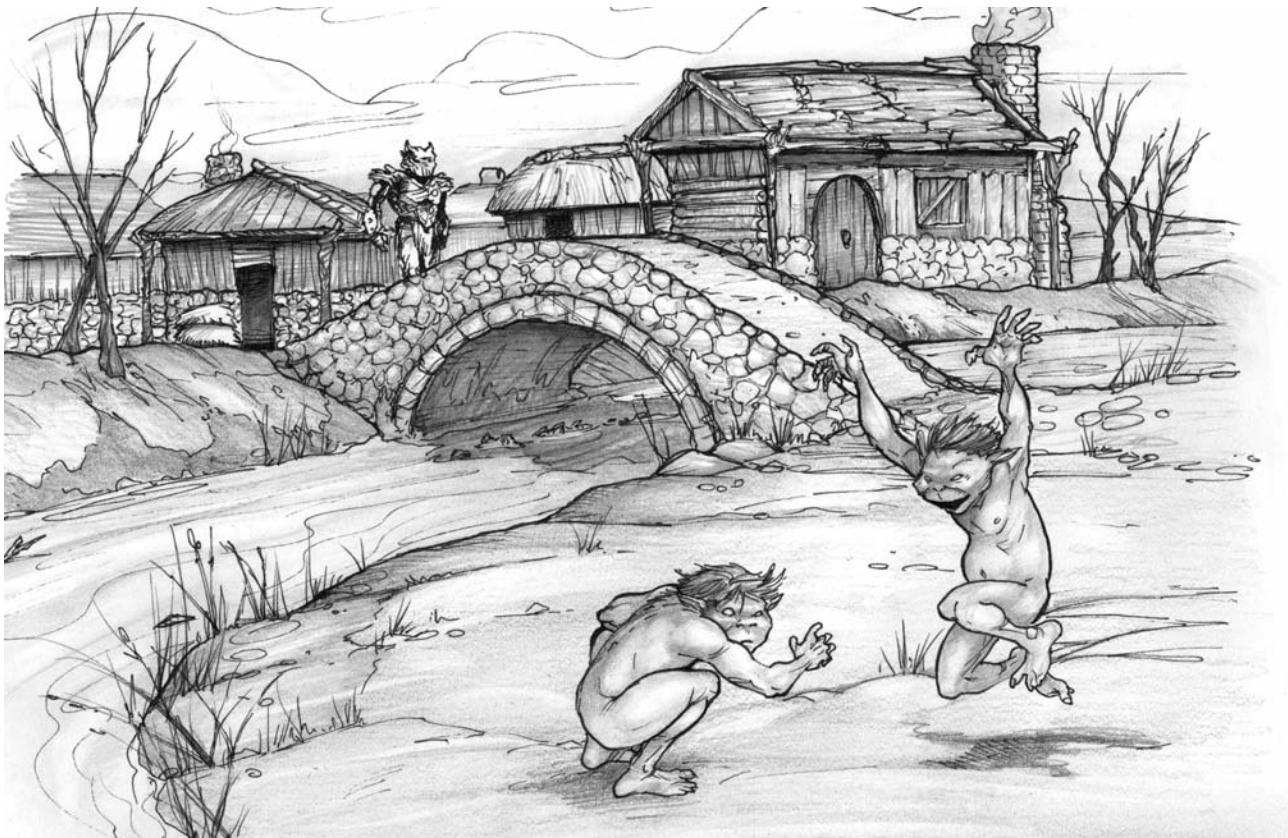
Military: Ronazagh has 6,000 soldiers garrisoned in the city, ready to move north at a moment's notice. The Grand Duke Grullagz received orders to move 1,000 soldiers to Gesagh to prepare the way for the invasion. The Duke intends to join his soldiers, leaving Vulak behind to manage the city. These soldiers are bored, waiting for war. Their few raids into Zazahni have done little to quell their hunger to take the north.

Temples: For the seat of power on the surface of Ul-Karg, one would expect its temple to the Dark One to be a grand structure, decorated with perverse and blasphemous symbols, representing evil in all its forms. Instead, Ronazagh has a squat building of black rock, poorly assembled and on the verge of

collapse. Pitmaster Gornatt Ironwall (see Who's Who in Ul-Karg, above) ordered the original temple, one as grand as the expectations of the priesthood dedicated to the Dark One should be. However, he turned around and destroyed the temple after an escaped slave (who was also a cleric of the Eternal Lantern) defiled the altar with a *continual flame* spell. The new temple stands beside the ruins of the old.

The Church of Endless Night does not rule uncontested, however. The Temple of Armed Conflict has also gathered a large following. The Church of Endless Night does not feel threatened, of course, because the training gained from the Order of the Pike can only help the Kargi cause. King Krarag-Randatk requires all rag-kazzak to train with the Order of the Pike for a month before gaining their promotion. The principal temple is located in Ronazagh, and the captain there has no delusions about his god's value to the Kargi people, but with the training they offer, their numbers still grow.

Ronazagh also has a small shrine dedicated to the Harvester of Souls, not much more than a mound of skulls with a symbol of a scythe burned onto the bones. The Harvesters and the Knights of the Black Pit are neither allies nor enemies, but the Church of Endless Night is dominant and has no interest in allowing a rival faith emerge to compete with the seniority of the golma-bek, the holy ones. Therefore, the Harvesters are little more than a secretive cult who leaves signs on street corners for other members to communicate in secret.



The outskirts of Ronazagh reek of filth and poverty - though only slightly moreso than the city itself.

Occasionally, the secret police make sweeps of the cities to uncover treasonous individuals and Harvesters.

Another one of Ronazagh's myriad of small churches is one devoted to Mukli-Gurkkagh the Mule. Overseeing the small temple is a sil-karg graduate of the 4th State, teaching gethrok-gul who have an understanding of reason and mathematics.

Mages and Sages: In a filthy shack just outside the walls of Ronazagh lives a hedge wizard named Grezat (NE Kargi bard 5/assassin 7). There he earns his living selling herbal concoctions, luck charms, and acts as a physician when necessary. He is most famous for the disease-repelling amulets he manufactures for his premium customers. Whether they work or not, they serve as a focal point for his crystal ball, with which he views the actions of those who wear his charms.

In truth, while Grezat developed enough skills to perform as a minor wizard, he is also a ruthless assassin for hire. His best customer is Grand Duke Grullagz, who uses him to eliminate rivals and insurgents. Though he works for the crown, he will work against it, provided the price is right. He has murdered several loyal captains, advisors and none too few Knights of the Black Pit.

Grezat, when in disguise, appears as a filthy old man with a bad leg and leprous sores all over his arms and legs. He wears a tattered cloak, torn breeches and a disgusting shirt held together by old food. However, when on a job, Grezat dons tight-fitting leather armor with a bandolier to hold an assortment of nasty, sharp knives.

Underworld: Ronazagh's underworld consists of the city's brutal and extreme police force, known as the Murder Brigade. Comprised of archers and assassins, these soldiers watch for dissention, civil unrest and spies, and respond with lethal effectiveness. They are always active, even during times of general political peace. In more stable times, they eliminate thieves' guilds and, from those they capture, add to their numbers.

Interesting Sites: The four canals entering the city are dangerous and filled with all sorts of trouble. From the crocodiles and dire rats, to the myriad diseases infecting the waters, they are unsafe for anyone foolish enough to enter them. They do stand, however, as a testimony to hobgoblin fortitude while they continue to use these waters for drinking and bathing.

In the center of the city stands a tower called the "Citadel of Bones." It stands several stories tall and is decorated with the bones of all types of humanoids, from humans to elves to other hobgoblins. From here Governor Vulak rules. Once a month he adds a new skeleton to those bristling out from the tower.

Special Notes: Ronazagh readies for war. King Krarag-Randatk orders troops to move out to the staging grounds and to continue training soldiers for the upcoming campaign. The city is active now, with slaves worked to death to meet the high demands from the elite. Soon, the hobgoblins shall march to conquest, and all of Svimohzia will tremble before them.

OTHER POPULATION CENTERS

KAZULLAGH

Population: 14,403 (11,132 Kargi hobgoblins and 3,271 slaves of assorted races and nationalities).

At a Glance: Brog-Tuuakh founded three cities when he returned from the Dwarf-Human War. The two most famous are Ronazagh and Burzumagh, but Kazullagh (27°45'N, 17°5'W) is a key trading center in Ul-Karg responsible for many of the slaves traded to the Brolenese. In addition, the city mints the nation's currency. With the nation's reliance on Kazullagh as a commercial center, it is no wonder they understate its role.

Despite its importance to Ul-Karg, Kazullagh is just as vile a city as other settlements in this country. Kazullagh stands on a sharp hill, with a large coliseum at the foot of the hill. Two of the three streams fed by drainage from the Nazguk Hills circle the city, forming a foul moat where the city dumps the dead, while the third cuts beneath the hill to spill out into the Bay in a pretty waterfall. Kazullagh's docks feature some of the most fearsome taverns and brothels in Svimohzia, catering to the diseased tastes of the most depraved slavers and smugglers.

Government: Kazullagh is poorly governed. Atthrak (see Who's Who in Ul-Karg, above) is a terrible ruler and his ineptness is apparent throughout the city. Buildings are shoddy and unkempt, soldiers are lax in their patrols, the docks are rife with thieves, beggars and scum haunt the docks. Unsafe at any time of the day, as murders, rapes and other terrible acts are common, the only thing keeping the city from disintegrating is the threat from Ronazagh and angering Krarag-Randatk. Once a month, Grand Duke Atthrak purges the docks, executing at least a dozen criminals. The best villains know about the Duke's purging and so disappear during this time of the month.

Economy: The slave pens of Kazullagh are some of the filthiest, dangerous and disease-ridden pits in all of Tellene. There is no mercy here, no hope, and death waits in the shadows. Kazullagh is said to be the nexus of slavery in Ul-Karg, and here is where Mendarn, Brolenese and Kargi slavers negotiate the price of labor. Kargi encourage pregnancies in their slaves because it adds to the labor pool, and slaves who use violence to achieve these results are rewarded with wine, fine food and limited freedom, though they are always returned to the pens.

Kargi trade gemstones, precious metals and loot acquired from old tombs or from Zazahni towns for more slaves. In turn, the slavers move their chattel overland to smaller communities who use them for agriculture. Those they do not sell, go to the mines in the Krimppatu Mountains. One can always identify a Kargi slave caravan by the dead they leave behind. Skeletons of many races litter the paths and roads of Ul-Karg.

Military: About 2,000 soldiers readied for war, armed as those in Ronazagh, are to protect the nation when the bulk of the armies march north. Not proud of their mission, this rowdy group of ne'er-do-wells entertain themselves by tormenting

slaves or releasing a slave and then hunting him down like an animal. Though the Grand Duke Atthrak enjoys their antics, each month he lectures his men about wasting good slaves.

Temples: The Church of Endless Night reigns supreme in this city. Boasting a pit 50 feet deep, the Knights of the Black Pit make sacrifices from the slave caste. Unquestioned in their authority, they even intimidate the Grand Duke.

Mages and Sages: Wizards in Kazullagh are as few as anywhere in Ul-Karg. The city has one of some merit, Morgad-Andrakk (NE Kargi necromancer 8), who lives in the fabled undercity amidst the creeping and skulking horrors emerging to snatch the unwary. Having long abandoned the Kargi culture for his necromantic pursuits, he builds an army of animated carcasses stolen from the streets above. He intends to conquer the city and make it an altar to the Harvester of Souls.

Underworld: Kazullagh lacks the discipline of the other cities in Ul-Karg, and despite the hobgoblins' value on order, the city features the largest thieves' guild in the country, the Black Bloods. This band of murderers particularly hates humans. Instead of stealing purses or breaking into homes like other thieves, the Black Bloods kidnap human slaves and drag them to their lair in the undercity, where they torture them for sport. The Black Bloods steal three to five slaves each month, enough to sate their sick desires, but not enough to draw undue attention.

Interesting Sites: Kazullagh stands on the remains of an ancient city, possibly human in origin. In this undercity, the ruins stand intact, long forgotten by the Kargi conquerors. The entrances to these ruins are all over the city, as a sinkhole on a street corner, or as a sealed door in a basement. Most Kargi no longer care about these and they are ignored by all but the most curious and distracted. A Kargi child might hide in an old tunnel to avoid the older or more vicious youths hunting him only to be snatched by something fetid and hungry in the dark undercity.

Special Notes: Grand Duke Atthrak has no respect from his underlings and many plot to kill him. One powerful hobgoblin, with a chance to save the city from obliteration is Korg-Andratk (LE Kargi fighter 16). He has been content to watch the Grand Duke, analyzing his rival's mistakes to learn what to avoid. He plans to strike soon, just before the war, to draw attention away from his actions and give the city a strong leader in a time of crisis.

ENVIRONMENT

The lands would have a breathtaking beauty had not the brutal regimes of the Kargi kings despoiled it. Mountains fill the landscape to the north, their peaks softened by time and the harsh storms blowing in from the south. The newer mountains of the Krimppatu provide a natural barrier to the populated west coast, and cover terrible evils festering beneath the earth.

Descending from the mountain heights are the Nazguk Hills, where Kargi shepherds often lead their flocks. Spilling down from the mountains is the Durbattum River, the unofficial border of Kargi lands, running its course across the land to drain into the Zhano-mewhi Bay, a sparkling sea of cerulean waters

crashing against the black sands of the coastlines. However, before it reaches the Bay, it first travels through the rotting expanse of the Zamul Forest, above which hang rolling mists stinking of death and decay.

TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands

ZAMUL FOREST

This terrible place is filled with nasty creatures, poisonous mist, and foul diseases carried by the water, in the animals, and in the air. Yes, the Zamul Forest is an enemy to life. The whole forest seems on the verge of death, consumed by fungus, moss, and prowling beasts. Few sylvan creatures can be found here. Yet, the appearance of death is misleading, for the Zamul is much alive, and deadly to interlopers.

Mountain Ranges

KRIMPPATU MOUNTAINS

These peaks are the western portion of the Dashahn-Tanezh range. The Krimppatus are obviously rich in gemstones and metals because the Kargi trade these valuables to Vrandol and others for slave labor. Under the Krimppatus is a vast city, Kurseghaz, wherein the king resides. Escaped slaves claim (and rightly so) that other wicked races such as illithids and dark elves also dwell and prosper beneath the Krimppatus.



It pays to stay on guard, especially beneath the Krimppatus.

Chapter Seven: the Kingdom of Ul-Karg

TANEZH MOUNTAINS

These tall and rugged peaks form an impressive barrier between Ul-Karg and Meznamish. Iron is common here and has attracted a dense population of mountain dwarves (mostly on the northern slopes).

Hills

NAZGUK HILLS

These hills are located on the southern slopes of the Krimppatu Mountains in the northern marches of Ul-Karg. The Durbattum River meanders its way through this region (the native hobgoblins are immune to most diseases carried by this stream) on its way to Burzumagh. Some metallic ores must be located herein for the hobgoblin armies employ weapons of both iron and bronze. There is little of interest to most travelers, as the hills are blighted and empty of much life. Small ruins exist, however, seemingly of a people who once lived in these lands. Unfortunately, so little of the ruins remain, any details about them are all but lost.

Bodies of Water

ZHANO-MEWHI BAY

The shores of this gentle bay feature rolling dunes of black sand. During winter, whales come here to mate, though the few Zazahni who appreciate their beauty fear this will end with the growing fleet of Kargi warships. Already hobgoblin whalers have ruined the waters as a breeding ground, for the whale blood in water makes the bay unattractive and unsafe for the whales, and fewer come each season.

Rivers

DURBATTUM RIVER

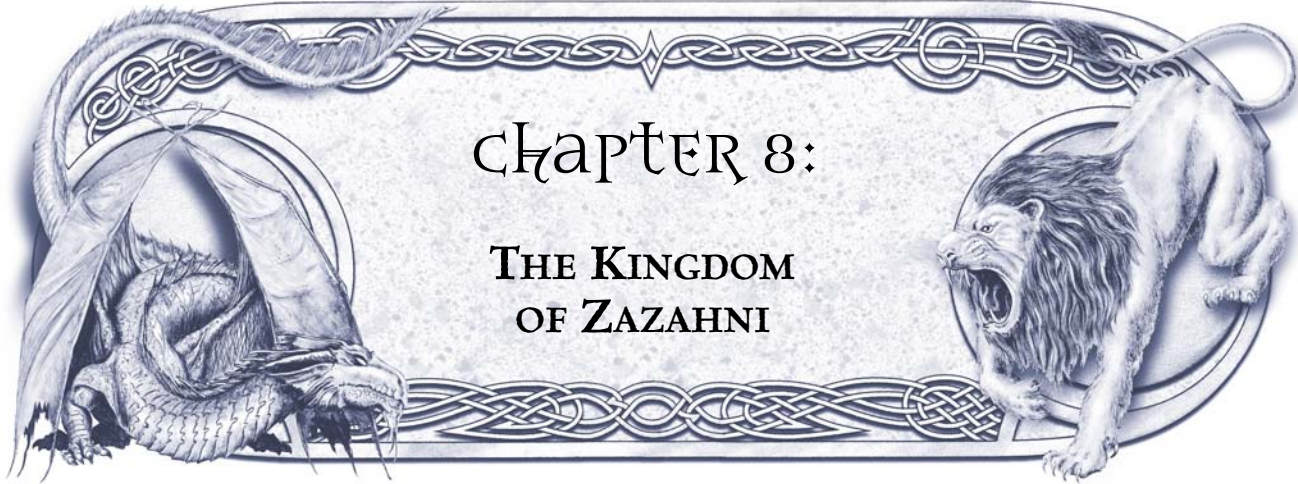
This is the largest river in Ul-Karg, with pure and clean waters, except where it picks up contaminants in the Nazguk Hills and awful diseases in the Zamul Forest. By the time it passes through the Burzumagh and Ronazagh, the waters are filthy and repellent. Still, it is the primary source of water for the native Kargi, who seem immune to its killing effects.

WEATHER

Ul-Karg is hot and humid for most of the year, though its inhabitants long ago learned to bear it. The summer monsoons bring rain to the land, but the nation is spared much dangerous weather, for Zazahni withstands the worst of the west monsoon winds. The mountains to the north, along with the winter doldrum winds, also keep Ul-Karg from much harsh weather - although no foreigner would ever describe its weather as pleasant.

CHAPTER 8:

THE KINGDOM OF ZAZAHNI



Filling Svimohzia's center is the Kingdom of Zazahni. The last to secede from the empire, it lacked a strong ruler and a cooperative merchant class able to survive the secession intact. Since gaining independence, the land has dissolved into constant war as 27 families fight for control, and petty barons and self-styled kings make foreign alliances with the hopes of securing a fresh supply of troops to aid them in the next battle. Yet, hope lies ahead, as some nobles and commoners desire to restore their allegiance to Meznamish and make alliances towards that goal. Ahznomahn, who fears this development, foments distrust and influences national policy with their promises of gold, slaves, and anything else they can offer. Finally, Ozhvinnish lies uneasy to the north, unsure of Zazahni's future, for the combined might of Zazahni and Meznamish could be strong enough to conquer even them.

HISTORY

The indigenous people of the lands were the Mewhi people, a peaceful society of shepherds and farmers, who avoided conflict unless pressed. For ages, they have come into regular contact with hobgoblins and fought against them, as evidenced in pottery fragments and scrolls. Accompanying the threat from the hobgoblins, the Zazahni were vigilant against the dangers from the Vohven. At least one out of every five of their youths would be called to patrol those borders to prevent the horrors within the jungle from decimating the tribes.

The Coming of Miznoh

The Mewhi were one of the last to fall to Miznoh's armies, for they were sickened by the useless slaughter and accepted the people's unconditional surrender. The emperor held the lands for a year, learning what he could of the Vohven Jungle to see if he should next turn to that expanse of greenery after he secured the north. What he learned caused him to avoid the jungle altogether and leave it alone to fester in its own sickness. Instead, Miznoh's cousin Zahnzor gained this territory, for Miznoh placed great faith in the commander for both his

prowess in battle and his ruthless command over his men. He charged Zahnzor with guarding the Vohven to prevent its inhabitants from invading the rest of the island. Zahnzor succeeded well, considering the territory he governed remained untouched by war, although somewhat low on food and warriors. The people appreciated their Duke, though few actually liked him, because the raids from the wild elves and savages lessened and because he maintained peace with the hobgoblin tribes to the west.

The Years of Growth (11-83 C.M.)

Unlike many other lands conquered by the Meznamishii Empire, the Zazahni was intact after its conquest. Except for the drain on its equipment, food and other commodities by the legions, the now-Duchy of Zazahni was able to supply fresh troops and raw materials to build outposts along the northern border of the jungle. A road soon connected the outposts and small settlements surrounded the watchtowers. While many of these sentry points no longer exist, a few towns remain, clustered around the crumbled watchtower remains. In the center of the protective band known as Zahnzor's Line, he founded the city of Emosvom to serve as a command center, mercantile hub and keystone for the Duchy's defense. Zahnzor spent the first 50 years of his reign fulfilling his charge, but then coming to an abrupt ending and thrusting the Duchy into war with Miznoh III's ambition.

When Miznoh III gathered his armies for a foolhardy invasion of the Vohven Jungle, Zahnzor I was an old man, tired from his efforts as a military commander, a duke and defender of a realm. Having faced many of the creatures from the Vohven, he implored the headstrong emperor not to mount such a wasted conflict. He argued there was nothing worth the strain on the Empire, and that inside the Vohven Jungle the emperor would find his doom. Miznoh III regarded the Duke's reluctance to invade the jungle as cowardice, so he commanded Duke Zahnzor to lead the legions himself. Having no other recourse, Zahnzor left the throne to his grandson Zalzor, and

Chapter Eight: the Kingdom of Zazahni

led the first legions into the dense jungle, following the Izhoven River. Zahnzor fought well for five years, defeating many of the savage humans and elves, repulsing some of the moss troll tribes and avoiding many other threats such as pestilence, adverse environments and hunger. The first duke of Zazahni fell in 63 C.M., after an attack at the Miznoh Spire (a fortress now in ruins), where the Izhoven divides.

Zalzor had no choice but to funnel his duchy's funds into the war effort. Thousands of Zazahni gave their lives for the worthless war to find their doom either in the maws of the feared lizards, pierced by poisoned arrows from wild elf bows, or dancing at the end of spears. Zazahni, once a profitable land, realized its future would be as a war-torn ravaged countryside filled with a citizenry caught in the net of unrelenting despair.

Furthermore, Monam-Ahnoz was too far away for most Zazahni to much care about its dark religion. The Knights of the Black Pit did have a presence, but they focused their attentions on the western hobgoblin tribes, as they found few sacrificial victims among the Duchy's people. Instead, prisoners captured in the conflict found themselves hoisted atop Zhanvim's ziggurats with their eyes and hearts robbed from them. Even when Izvan killed the Theocrat, few noticed. After the emperor recalled the troops from the jungle, the Zazahni took notice of the events in the capital. Unlike other parts of the Empire, the people did not take forceful action against the clerics of the Dark One. Instead, almost all of their priests left of their own accord and vanished into the myriad tribes to the west.

The End of Miznoh (84-87 C.M.)

Duke Zalzor weathered the succession in the capital, but when Izvan withdrew his armies from the Vohven, there were few left to protect the duchy from reprisals by the wild elves and savage human tribes. For three long, bloody years, Zazahni became a killing ground, as swarms of savages and all manner of wild beasts poured into the lands, all bent on destruction. The watchtowers along the southern borders fell as wave after wave of avengers overtook them. Many Zazahni fled north, some as far as the Imomena Hills, while those surviving troops (aided by volunteers from neighboring Miznohsho – later called Ahznomahn) rallied and re-established the borders. By winter of 88 C.M., the Vohven natives were only a minor threat, the Duchy was secured and the long road to national recovery began anew.

The Hundred Years' Peace (88-215 C.M.)

Zazahni spent the remaining years of Duke Zalzor's reign rebuilding Zahnzor's Line. These were dark and hungry years, with population centers shrinking, disease running rampant, and a vast population migration to Meznamish and Ozhvinmish. When Zahnzor II took power in 106 C.M., he made it illegal for Zazahni citizens to emigrate from the country, enforced mandatory military service for two years, and devoted tax revenue to repairing the roads and communities. For 40 years, the Zazahni hated their duke and his harsh laws.

They looked to Daresvim's reign to the east, her romance with Ozhvinmish, and the familial relationship of the northern lords with longing, seeing their own duke as a backwater warlord who took no pleasure in life. Despite his sour public opinion, Zahnzor II saved Zazahni from the hobgoblin raids that threatened to escalate in the subsequent years. The full restoration of Zahnzor's Line prevented most of the dangers from escaping the jungle, and the economic discipline he enforced established the basis for an economy that, while never booming, allowed the state to survive for another two centuries.

If the Zazahni thought Ansha I would be a more lenient dictator, they were wrong. Soon, they longed for the former harshness of Zahnzor's rule for, under his guidance, at least there had been no corruption. With Ansha, Zazahni saw the emergence of a new noble class - privileged individuals exempt from the duty of the common people. Still Ansha adhered to the edicts of his forebears, and watched the southern border for the stirrings of evil so feared by Miznoh.

What followed was a string of alternating strong and weak dukes. Even in the best of times, Zazahni had not been able to compete with the markets of the Empire, for it lacked a port easily accessible to the rest of Tellene. In response to the economic pressures, Salzaran I founded Zenshahn, a port city overlooking Zhano-mewhi Bay. Despite a barrage of attacks from hobgoblin warships and raiders, it survived its early years and later proved to be one of the key ports in all of Svimohzia.

The Decline (216-300 C.M.)

By the dawn of the second century, Zazahni had nearly recovered from the trials and tribulations of its first century. Whereahzni I was a strong and charismatic duke, instilling loyalty and pride in his people. During his reign, he focused on developing natural resources, for his duchy's ports could never compete with Monam-Ahnoz and Zha-nehzmish. With government funding of the agricultural business in southern central Zazahni, herders were able to purchase more cattle, provide better grains and establish a thriving cattle business. In time, Zazahni even emerged as a principal dealer in cattle.

Then, in 221 C.M., another plague swept the duchy, killing the duke and most of his immediate family. One out of every five people died from Vohven Boils, a hideous, disfiguring plague that first maimed, then killed. Zahnzor IV took the throne that year, but he too died early, at the hands of a jealous lover. Mohz-Izveh, a distant cousin, stood to gain the throne as the last of the current line. He brought healers from all over the world, at exorbitant cost to help combat the plague. Between their expertise and assistance from the clergy, they beat back the plague, but there was still a significant loss of population.

The rest of the century found Zazahni sliding into disorder. Noble houses turned warlike, gathering mercenaries to fight on their behalf. Skirmishes between families turned into open conflicts, and soon the duchy's attention turned inward to face the threat of anarchy. A short succession of weak dukes

worsened the situation, and when the hobgoblins of newly formed Ul-Karg went on the march, it was all Zazahni could do to rally together and answer the empire's call.

Fortnight's Battle (301 C.M.)

It fell to Duke Zhobrin, who had held the Duchy together for nearly two decades, to answer the call to war. He recalled his soldiers garrisoned on Zahnzor's Line, conscripted soldiers from all over the Duchy and marched to war in just two weeks. Zhobrin's forces moved towards the marching horde, until the siege of Romomish, where they fought a brutal conflict with the occupying hobgoblins. This battle lasted four days and, although they killed every single hobgoblin warrior, they suffered terrible casualties. Zhobrin, undeterred and still loyal to the empire, pressed on to join Ozhvinmish and Meznamish at Fortnight's Battle. Weakened from the previous conflict, the Zazahni forces fell with regularity until, by the end of the battle, Duke Zhobrin lay dead. Worse, as he was without an heir, Zazahni was now without a leader.

The Collapse (302 C.M. to present)

But worse was yet to come. Many Ozhvinmishii troops had become distracted at the undefended forts of northern Zazahni, and began what they called "protective occupation." The soldiers consumed most of the fall harvest and all that season's beer. When news of the hobgoblin defeat arrived in northern Zazahni, the Ozhvinmishii forces withdrew. However, they took home with them much of the Zazahni livestock, and left behind many pregnant women.

The Great Rape of Zazahni, as it is known, incensed the people. Soldiers returned home to find their families kidnapped or scattered and their homes destroyed, with only a swirl of ashes to mark where their lives once stood. With this pent-up anger, Zazahni was on the verge of disintegrating into a land of bickering warlords, with no one strong duke to keep the elite in check. The most powerful warlord approached the Emperor, demanding restitution. Unfortunately, when Ozhvinmish refused and seceded from the collapsing empire, Zazahni was powerless to respond. Soldiers marched against the rebels, but their efforts were for naught as Ozhvinmish was too strong.

When Zazahni gained its independence, following the debacle of Meznamish's invasion of Ozhvinmish, King Adasvero I emerged to rule Zazahni. Although as a former duke, he had the largest military force, the other nobles believed they still had stronger claims to the throne. Thus, civil war erupted. The fighting has gone on now for almost 70 years.

The intervening years since the start of the civil war and the current year were fraught with battles, treachery and intrigues. Warlords rose and fell, cities and towns burned, and the dead choked the rivers. Zahnzor's Line is long neglected, and only the settlements serve as a reminder of Zazahni's original task.

Armies, always on the march, define the current climate of this fractured and broken land.

Zazahni has been without a ruler since the last king, Whereahzni II, was assassinated in his sleep. Until his death, he held sway for 26 months, the second longest reign in Zazahni's brief history. Despite his central Zazahni heritage, King Whereahzni II was very popular in the north because he authorized the sacking of several Ozhvinmishii villages by the northern barons. Ozhvinmish positioned troops along the southern border, prepared to retaliate, but before they could, killers smothered King Whereahzni II in his sleep. Thereafter, Zazahni has known no peace, has taken little part in the politics of Svimohzia and still suffers under the weight of anarchy.

Today, there are still 27 competing noble families, seven of which seek to place the head of their house on the throne. All but two of the smaller houses have declared either complete neutrality or allegiance to a more powerful lord. The many allies of these two weaker houses allow them to continue to compete for the throne. Many of the lords have secret alliances with Meznamish.

WHO'S WHO IN ZAZAHNI

Lords of Zazahni

Most of these houses come from the Meznamishii Empire's Svizohr caste (see Chapter Four: the Kingdom of Meznamish), but now, after 70 years of fighting, the strength of the social class has faded. The following three lords are the most powerful in this fractured land, as they control the major population centers.

DUKE DOVIZHEM III

Duke Dovizhem III (LG aristocrat 13) is the decadent warlord of Svomwhi. Having few allies in Zazahni, he has even fewer in the neighboring countries. The reason for his unpopularity stems from his father's resistance to unification of this region. In fact, Dovizhem II went so far as to sabotage any unification efforts by manipulating smaller warlords into attacking Duke Whanavi, who strove for unity. There is still bad blood between Zenshahn and Svomwhi, for Dovizhem III blames Whanavi for murdering his father. While in no position to mount another attack, Dovizhem has begun negotiations with Meznamish to restore the empire.

Dovizhem did not inherit his father's anarchist tendencies, and sees value in unity, but only if he is in charge. He is undecided as to whether he should ally himself with Meznamish, but he accepts their treasures to fund his elaborate palace. Likewise, he is not too certain about independence for all the warlords, for Dovizhem III suspects Ahznomahnii treachery. Even with his penchant for excess, he cares for his people, although he does not give them anything he feels they do not deserve - hence the sharp division between the wealthy and the common folk. Still, the people much prefer the son to the warlike and chaotic father.

Chapter Eight: the Kingdom of Zazahni

Dovizhem is a pampered lord with soft hands, never having touched a weapon. He has brown skin, dark eyes, and long black hair. He does never goes into public without fine clothing and expensive jewelry. He rules Svomwhi from a marble palace surrounded by gardens.

DUKE INAWHIL

Ruling Emosvom, independent city-state that is the former center of government of early Zazahni, is Duke Inawhil (N aristocrat 5). Inawhil relies on popular perceptions regarding his city's worth, that is to say it is worthless, for it allows him to rule uncontested and does not draw him into other disputes.

Inawhil's life and comfort are more important to him than the state of the nation, the contentment of his people or the developments of the island. Although selfish, he is an efficient ruler. He supports the acquisition and sale of exotic monsters from the Vohven, keeps tariffs low to attract merchants, and forms alliances with Vohven Jungle natives, when possible.

Inawhil is a short man with bland and unspectacular features, who dresses in simple and comfortable clothing. Having such an innocuous bearing, he moves through his city with ease, never drawing attention to himself. Emosvom is home for this petty duke, his oft-ignored wife and one small child.

DUKE WHANAVI

Duke Whanavi (NG aristocrat 15) despises Dovizhem III, blaming him for his father's work to undermine the unity of the nation. Furthermore, Whanavi is a problem for Meznamish, for his is the most powerful family in Zazahni, with no interest in reforming the empire. Whanavi also has allies in Ahznomahn

and Ozhvinmish, buttressing his position. While he lacks the military strength for a solid claim of kingship, he believes his son can take the throne on his behalf.

Whanavi wants unity and peace for all Zazahni. He believes his family has the strongest claim, for he controls the center of commerce and the largest seaport, even if it is mostly bereft of ships. Unlike the soft and unconscionable Duke Dovizhem III, he is willing to make sacrifices on behalf of his people. Moreover, with the growing strength of Ul-Karg, Whanavi fears that if Zazahni does not soon unite, no one can stop the hobgoblins from invading.

His biggest impediment is his family's history. Whanavi's father used dishonorable means to achieve his title, lying, cheating and manipulating his peers to advance his station. He made a bid for the crown several times but rivals blocked him. Whanavi still shoulders the ambition of his father.

Whanavi is of average build, with dark brown skin and eyes, and he keeps his head shaved. Zensahn is the seat of his power, and he resides there when not patrolling his lands.

The Upper Class and the Politically Powerful

In this nation fraught with infighting and civil war, several powerful and not-so-powerful lords control the various factions struggling for the throne. Aside from these warlords (discussed later), there are the usual religious and mercantile factions that can influence the direction of their respective lords. These characters can nearly always be found in their listed locations.

BARON SVEMAHNI

The popinjay of Duke Dovizhem III's court, Baron Svemahni (CN aristocrat 7) is the consummate courtier. Serving as the duke's seneschal, he is the most invasive presence in the lives of the common people. They blame him for their sorry state and the juxtaposition of riches and destitution so visible in Svomwhi. The duke allows Svemahni to oversee tax collections that go to fund road construction, fortifications and even the Ministry of Faith. The Duke knows he steals from these revenues but is awaiting the proper moment before crushing him.

His self-inflated ego, pompous beliefs and brazen ambition have made him famous in Svomwhi. He has few allies, and only the bored protection offered by the city's ruler protects him from an ignoble end in an alleyway. Those who hate him the most are the churches, for the Baron has passed several laws taxing faiths. He also forces them to comply with absurd laws, such as recording their attendance and submitting it to the Ministry, keeping their holy symbols within certain size specifications, and even getting ministry approval before any renovations can be made to their temples.

Svemahni is a fat man, with dark skin and long hair, which he wears in curls. He wears the most absurd clothing, making him the target of Svomwhi's talented bards. He always keeps a young



man to attend to his needs. The Baron has a pleasant estate, even larger than Dovizhem's, in Svomwhi.

COUNT VORHZEL MASHEN

The Count in Exile, Vorhzel the Mad and the Count of Ruin are all monikers for Vorhzel Mashen (CN fighter 7/warlord 3). Having lost his lands through Duke Dovizhem II's manipulation, he and the tatters of his army fled to the ruins of western Zazahni, where they fight to survive attacks from Kargi raiders, bandits, and monsters haunting the shells of the former cities. Although he lacks lands, as his former allies divided his lands up amongst themselves, he is still a significant force, for he ambushes merchants, sacks small towns and is the principal figure in negotiations with Meznamish to bring Zazahni back into the empire.

The duke has a legitimate claim on the throne of Zazahni for he is the great grandson of Duke Adasvero I's bastard. However, because of this illegitimacy, no other lord recognizes him and some even go so far as to betray him by stealing his lands. Vorhzel believes he can gain the throne through Meznamish's backing. So far, he has received mercenaries, supplies, iron weapons and horses to aid his cause. Yet, each time he would mount an offensive, he faces some other disaster, such as a new attack by hobgoblins, an outbreak of the Rotting Death or desertion.

Vorhzel is belligerent. He believes Zazahni is due him and he is capable of any act to get what he wants. His character flaws aside, he is a solid commander, and most of his men have stayed with him since they were routed in Zenshahn. He is an excellent speaker, inspiring the most unscrupulous mercenary to deeds of greatness. In another era, perhaps Vorhzel would have been a great duke, but now he is just another petty dictator fighting over the scraps of a former kingdom.

Mashen and his armies move from ruin to ruin, rarely staying in one place more than a few weeks. In each place, they hide a small cache of arms and equipment to fall back on should they need them. Currently, his forces are holed up in the crumbled remains of Zahzmish.

MIZOVOHR ARHOMVEN

When not drinking, playing cards and whoring, Mizovohr Arhomven (CN fighter 10) commands Emosvom's garrison. He is a wreck of a man, having seen too many campaigns, fought in too many battles and lost too many men. If he did not need the money for alcohol, he would have abandoned his post years ago.

Unfortunately, Duke Inawhil has no interest in committing funds to his militia. Mizovohr commands just 160 men to defend the city from the Vohven threat or the rare warlord bent on conquest, while maintaining some semblance of order in the decrepit and sodden town. A perpetual pessimist, he has just about given up on life, awaiting his inevitable demise in the depths of a bottle or at the end of a sword.

Still, Mizovohr is an excellent commander when sober and in control of himself. The fact Emosvom still stands intact throughout the years of minor skirmishes and monstrous

attacks from the south is testimony enough. He demands Inawhil give him funds for new armor, horses and weaponry to defend their city but, until he gets more funding, he is content to live a life of bar brawls, cheap prostitutes, and drunken binges for weeks at a time.

Mizovohr shows the ravages of his indulgences. His eyes are yellowish and his hands tremble when long from drink. Food and sweat stain his uniform, and he stinks of beer and vomit. He is not a pleasant man to be near.

YAHAN

Heir to Duke Whanavi of Zenshahn, and possible future monarch of a united Zazahni, Yahan (LG cleric 10/aristocrat 2), learned well from his father. He spent his youth studying the doctrine of the Knight of the Gods in the Halls of the Valiant, where he trained alongside paladins and great warrior-priests of the faith. There he learned notions of chivalry, truth and honor.

Yahan grew in prominence during the war with his hated enemy, Duke Dovizhem II, when he arrayed many warlords against that House. He led the paladins who struck against the black-robed knights of their enemy, crushing and routing them. With his city secured, he worked for an entire week administering to the wounded, friend and enemy alike. In the end, he proved his valor and secured the role of Zenshahn's champion.

As the son of a popular duke, Yahan realized he would never escape his father's shadow as long as he followed in the same path, so he joined the clergy instead. Already a noble spirit, the Knight of the Gods defined the principles he already held and drove him to further heights of virtue. His ideals, kindness and mercy continue to help him grow in the estimation of his subjects, and although he does not hold a rank among the Servants of the Swift Sword, he is a valued ally and serves as a spiritual advisor, if not a leader.

Yahan is short and stocky like his father, with dark skin and eyes. Also like his father, he keeps his head shaved. Yahul, however, wears white robes when not garbed for war.

Leaders of the Underworld

Without a formal government, Zazahni lacks a cohesive body to police its citizens. Consequently, brigands roam the countryside, thieves slip through in the cities, and other undesirables move unchecked through the land. Fortunately, most of these folk are minor annoyances, and true leaders are few and far between. Isvanosh is a typical example of what is arguably Zazahni's greatest underworld threat – merchant thieves.

ISVANOSH

Isvanosh (CE rogue 15) is a worthy businessman with a head for what the public demands. After years of fighting, commodities are getting nearly prohibitive. With the cost of transport, a lack of interest from foreign vendors, and no exports, costs continue to rise. Isvanosh recognized this as a business opportunity, and so began smuggling in wines, weapons and cloth at prices a third less than the usual market. Of course, his business

plan undermines the city's economy and makes the prices climb higher, for no merchant can come to Zenshahn and make a profit. This is the plan. For once competition dies, Isvanosh plans to increase his prices and break Zenshahn's populace.

Reprehensible and corrupt, Isvanosh does not care about the long-term effects of his business plan. He wants wealth and sees Zenshahn as the place to earn it. Slim, dark and handsome, when he flashes his gap-toothed smile he charms his customers into buying more. His thieves' guild, the Dark Omen, has contacts and agents throughout western Svimohzia.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Where most nations have strong domestic agendas, Zazahni is contradictory. Only the acquisition of power unites all of the dukes to a common cause. Because of the constant civil wars, the populace suffers from lawlessness, pestilence and famine. Until a strong leader emerges, these difficulties will continue to ravage the land, leaving personal agendas based on region to dictate the nation's domestic achievements.

In the north, most barons struggle against each other and their Ozhvin neighbors. While conflict is common, this region is far more stable than mid and southern Zazahni, where the fighting is far fiercer. Most lords in this area focus their efforts in building agricultural resources, horse breeding, and mining resources from the Imomena Hills. Many fields and towns fall to enemy torches, leaving this land in perpetual turmoil.

If the north is bad, mid-Zazahni is far worse. The warlords here long since abandoned fair play, employing assassins, poisoning water sources, killing peasants and doing whatever it takes to destroy their enemies. There is no domestic policy other than to decimate the enemy.

Southern Zazahni faces warlords, hordes of Vohven Jungle savages, trolls and worse. Fortunately, the southern lords have better trained and seasoned soldiers. Unfortunately, their numbers are fewer. They give much of their attention to defense and espionage. Occasionally, southern lords field armies to face a northern or mid-Zazahni threat, but these conflicts have fallen off as the Vohven grows into a significant danger.

To the east, Zazahni is more stable. Steady trade with Ahznomahn offers an improved economy, although most lords squander their wealth on excesses or warfare. They still fight among themselves, but some are slowly becoming established provinces in their own right.

Western Zazahni is a land of ruin, with shattered towns and the shells of ancient cities overrun by bandits, humanoids, and fell monsters. Western Zazahni bore the brunt of the Kargi invasion and never fully recovered; the land looks much like a battlefield reclaimed by nature. Great stretches display partially buried skeletons of fallen soldiers, horses and war elephants. Most people here are in exile (of their choosing or of circumstance). Many barons are little more than brigands themselves, spending their time moving from one encampment to another, and selling their swords to the warlords of central Zazahni.

Status

Zazahni had the same caste system as Meznamish but, when Zazahni disintegrated, so did the social structure. Social status is now as chaotic as the politics, with little to no real difference in status between clerics, merchants or soldiers. Only the poorest and wealthiest members of society are truly affected by being a member of a caste.

The Svizohr caste consists of the warlords. These individuals comprise much of the old Svizohr caste prior to the governmental collapse. With titles like baron, duke, prince, or even count, each warlord has a claim to the throne of Zazahni. A large caste, it also extends to the warlord's families, their advisors and generals. Furthermore, almost anyone with a sword and a few followers can claim membership in this caste, including brigands, mercenaries and wizards. Due to this state, most members of this caste do not gain any special treatment for being Svizohr.

Zazahni Castes

Name	Peoples
Nehzrin	Non persons (slaves)
Sohrihz	Commoners
Miznoh	Warriors
Svizohr	Warlords

Next is the Miznoh, or warrior, caste. Anyone who can wield a weapon with some proficiency in combat is a member of this group. Warriors are perhaps the most feared of all people in Zazahni, for they do as they wish and are not bound by any laws, except as specifically ordered by their warlord. Mercenaries are the worst, for unless they are under orders, they take what they please, kill whom they wish, and do what they perceive is right.

The Sohrihz caste is the largest caste of all, and includes freemen, merchants and laborers. This caste also includes all the minor functionaries, such as the bureaucrats, advisors, and other attaches working for the warlords.

The last caste is Nehzrin, or non-persons. These people are slaves. Zazahni slaves may be captives sold by professional slavers, or victims taken from villages that allied with a defeated warlord. Slaves work in the barley and wheat fields for long hours and the fruits of their labors only benefit their warlord owner. Individuals bound into slavery remain so until liberated by the warlord to whom they have had to swear allegiance, or until they escape. Most warlords have no way of knowing who swore to whom, so many captive citizens remain slaves for their entire lives. However, if they escape to another warlord's domain, they may easily claim membership in a higher caste and only an old acquaintance would know differently.

Children of slaves gain their freedom at 18 years of age, provided they swear allegiance to their warlord. Slaves account for 20% of Zazahni's population.

HOUSE RANKS

A House's rank reflects its economic, military and social strengths when compared to other houses. Currently, in order from greatest to least powerful, these houses are as follows.

Major Houses

- House Whanavi
- House Inawhil
- House Dovizhem
- House Ewheshosvehz
- House Whishimvish
- House Zhashesh
- House Whoshom

Minor Houses with a claim

- Duke Whenshomi
- Duke Whazha

Minor Houses

- House Mashen
- House Ushohz
- House Hashaphesh
- House Ehezna
- House Imazsvow
- House Awhasha
- House Anihm
- House Ogohly
- House Whanhez
- House Whonoh
- House Whoshohz
- House Monohz
- House Havam
- House Mehesh
- House Zhehzvem
- House Vuy
- House Zhoshorohz
- House Whanohz

**Svizhør
Houses**

Descending from members of the former Svizohr caste, the dukes, also called warlords, vie for control over Zazahni. As the last territory conquered, and as the territory bordering the Vohven Jungle, Miznoh named more Svizohrs in this former duchy than he did in the other two areas. He carved up Zazahni into small baronies to have the greatest concentration of warriors in this region. What Miznoh did not foresee was the break-up of the empire, thus precipitating the disintegration of the Zazahni duchy. Now, of the original sixty-three Svizohr families, there are only twenty-seven competing families left, with just seven seeking to place the head of their house on the throne. Eighteen smaller houses have declared

neutrality, or have bound their house to another. The remaining two, although weak and insignificant on their own, buttress their poor resources by making alliances with other houses and allowing them to compete for the right to the throne.

Each of the following entries includes brief details of the warlords fighting for the throne, and provides the basic information needed to run a campaign in Zazahni. Major lords, like Duke Dovizhem III, may also be listed in the section "Who's Who in Zazahni," above. Each house includes the following information, organized by the head of the family:

Colors: Like Meznamish, Zazahni nobles use colors to signify their House and status. Their soldiers wear uniforms incorporating the same color, and on the battlefield they wear short flags on their backs to help identify friend from foe. Thus, Zazahni warriors are colorful, and wars, while terrible, are

beautiful as they unfold, with bright House colors arrayed against the other.

Lands: This entry describes lands under the house's direct control. Borders shift as skirmishes erupt throughout the fractured land, so this entry refers only to their home population center. If none, the house is likely attached to an established House, or living off the land (often as brigands).

Taxation: As Zazahni lacks a formal government, each lord claims a certain amount of wealth from his citizens. Under each entry, there is a percentage and frequency. Paper is scarce, so records are hard to keep. Lords just claim a percentage of a citizen's worth. Unusual tax collections are noted individually.

Alignment: The overall alignment of the house and leader.

Allies: Those nobles listed here are those loyal to the house, and does not include houses that are simply friendly or tolerant.

Enemies: Those nobles listed here are the sworn enemies of the house, those who either are at war, or are plotting war.

HOUSE ANIHM

Head of House: Baron Anihm

Colors: Black, brown, purple and yellow

Lands: Hahshahn (27°50'N, 13°0'W; map area 1)

Taxation: 18%, yearly, net worth

Military: 68 heavy cavalry, 118 light cavalry, 35 hobilars, and 20 archers

Alignment: LG

Allies: Dovizhem III

Enemies: Ewheshosvehz, Imazsvow, Inawhil, Mehesh, Monohz, Whanhez, Whoshohz, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz.

Baron Anihm (LG paladin 6) pledged service to Dovizhem II, and despite the losses and subsequent break-up of the allied forces, he remains true to his vow - a loyalty that rewarded him with no shortage of foes. He sends small patrols of his troops to patrol Dovizhem III's lands, to watch for enemies and assassins.

HOUSE AWHASHA

Head of House: Count Awhasha

Colors: Brown, blue, yellow and red

Lands: Zozhwahni (28°10'N, 10°25'W; map area 2)

Taxation: Flat 3 cp per month.

Military: 68 heavy cavalry, 119 light cavalry, 36 hobilars, 20 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Whenshomi.

Enemies: Anihm, Havam, Mehesh, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshohz, Zhehzvem.

Duke Whenshomi has several loyal supporters, and Count Awhasha (LN aristocrat 10) includes himself as one of them. Seeing strength and numbers, no matter his regular disagreements with his liege, he tied himself to the Duke because of the enemies surrounding him. Once a supporter of Dovizhem II, he distanced himself from the other Duke after the debacle at Zenshahn. He fields soldiers against Havam, who has raided his lands and freed his slaves.

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HOUSE DOVIZHEM

Head of House: Duke Dovizhem III

Colors: Gray, purple and white

Lands: Svomwhi (29°55'N, 12°5'W) and outskirts (map area 3)

Taxation: 5%, monthly, net worth

Military: 300 heavy cavalry

Alignment: LG

Allies: Anihm, Zhehzvem

Enemies: Ewheshosvehz, Imazsvow, Inawhil, Monohz, Whanavi, Whanhez, Whenshomi, Whoshoeh

Duke Dovizhem II is famous for the rout at Zenshahn, where he thought to block Duke Whanavi from gaining the Zazahni throne by manipulating noble houses to fight against him. Dovizhem III lacks his father's treachery, but has his ambition.

While Zazahni remains fragmented, Duke Whanavi retains power. As such, Dovizhem III has fallen from second in rank to third, and may fall further unless he repairs the damage to his family's reputation. Dovizhem III courts Meznamish more than the other houses, but has not decided whether he will actually support them. For now, he is content to take their gold, slave women and other treasures in exchange for vague promises.

HOUSE EHEZNA

Head of House: Lord Ehezna

Colors: Gray, brown and yellow

Lands: Zha-Mohroz (28°0'N, 9°30'W; map area 4)

Taxation: 5%, monthly, net worth

Military: 85 heavy cavalry, 148 light cavalry, 44 hobilar, and 25 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Awhasha, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Vuy, Whanohz, Whenshomi.

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mehesh, Duke Ushohz, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshoeh, Whoshom, Zhehzvem.

Another lord in service of Whenshomi, Lord Ehezna (LN fighter 8) stands in the shadow of the more vocal Duke Hashaphesh. Unlike his ally, he operates quietly, allowing his vociferous rival to steal all the attention while he works behind the scenes to reinforce his holdings. His best ally is Baron Vuy, though he cannot support Vuy, for it would damage his own position. Instead, he provides food, supplies and shelter when possible, though both know Ehezna cannot come to his aid.

HOUSE EWHESHOSVEHZ

Head of House: Duke Ewheshosvehz

Colors: Gray, brown and white

Lands: Zhanohven (28°30'N, 14°10'W) and outskirts (map area 5)

Taxation: 10%, twice yearly, net worth

Military: 136 heavy cavalry, 239 light cavalry, 73 hobilar, and 40 archers

Alignment: N

Allies: Inawhil, Zhoshorohz

Enemies: Zhehzvem

For all of his wealth and resources, Duke Ewheshosvehz (N aristocrat/warrior 8) has no hope of actually claiming the throne, and fears falling lower in rank. His position is tenuous because he lacks a plan, has no goals and no objective. He emerged as a contestant for the throne because all the other lords continue to struggle for it, and because his father wanted it more than anything else. He would rather read, debate, and govern than lead his troops on the battlefield.

Consequently, few respect him, and those allied with him do so for his wealth. He has been deluded into believing Zhoshorohz has his best interests at heart, and thinks to use him as a tool. Of course, Zhoshorohz (colloquially nicknamed the Lord Assassin) has done nothing to disprove this belief.

HOUSE HASHAPHESH

Head of House: Duke Hashaphesh

Colors: Blue, red and white

Lands: Vapshahni (29°5'N, 14°5'W; map area 6)

Taxation: 6%, monthly, net worth.

Military: 85 heavy cavalry, 148 light cavalry, 44 hobilar, and 25 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mehesh, Ogohly, Duke Ushohz, Whanhez, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshoeh, Whoshom, Zhehzvem

Part of a coalition of houses, Duke Hashaphesh (LN fighter 9) is an honorable warrior and champion. Though he would take the crown for himself, he realizes he is not powerful enough in his own to make a solid claim. Instead, in exchange for lands, he swore allegiance to Duke Whenshomi.

He believes Whenshomi would make a fine king, going so far as to offer his daughter's hand in marriage to the lord. On the other hand, Hashaphesh's boisterous arrogance and bluster is not beloved by other houses, and he no shortage of enemies - including Whenshomi's rival, Duke Whazha.

HOUSE HAVAM

Head of House: Lord Havam

Colors: Brown, green and red

Lands: None

Taxation: Donations only

Military: 34 heavy cavalry, 59 light cavalry, 17 hobilar, and 10 archers

Alignment: CG

Allies: Whazha

Enemies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Ushohz, Whanhez, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Whoshoeh, Zhashesh, Zhehzvem

Lord Havam (CG ranger 5/wizard 2/aristocrat 1) wanders Zazahni in the service of Duke Whazha. He is a champion of the common people, but he has many enemies among the noble houses. He desires a united Zazahni, but does not see how it can be possible with so many villains grasping for the crown.

HOUSE IMAZSVOW

Head of House: Baron Imazsvow

Colors: Purple, blue and orange

Lands: Noszhahni (27°55'N, 13°35'W; map area 7)

Taxation: 10%, weekly, net worth

Military: 85 heavy cavalry, 148 light cavalry, 44 hobilar, and 25 archers

Alignment: NE

Allies: None

Enemies: Anihm, Awhasha, Dovizhem III, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Mashen, Ushohz, Vuy, Whanavi, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Zhehzvem

Another rogue House, Baron Imazsvow (NE ranger 5/wizard 3) is a brutal dictator prone to fits and random aggression. He is just powerful enough to be able to declare war against all, and possibly survive. With few friends, he has managed to win several engagements against Ehezna, Mashen and Vuy. He fights for no cause other than to spread suffering throughout his lands. His city, Noszhahni, reflects evil in its architecture and malevolent atmosphere.



HOUSE INAWHIL

Head of House: Duke Inawhil

Colors: Gray, brown, blue and green

Lands: Emosvom (28°0'N, 11°15'W) and outskirts (map area 8)

Taxation: 8%, bimonthly, net worth

Military: 90 infantry (brigandine armor, shield, and spear), 40 cavalry (cord armor, shield, lance, sword), 30 heavy infantry (lamellar/scale/splint, heavy shield, sword or axe)

Alignment: N

Allies: Ewheshosvehz, Ogohly

Enemies: Zhehzvem

Perhaps the reason Duke Inawhil lacks enemies is that he also lacks ambition. He has no interest in ruling Zazahni; he wants to hold what is presently his. He reduced his armies to present less of a threat to his neighbors, and does not resist when raiders loot his nearby fields for food. Interestingly, Inawhil is still the second most powerful lord. His power source is his wealth, for he is by far the wealthiest lord in all Zazahni, perhaps even in Ozhvinmish and Meznamish. However, he does not advertise his resources (much of it gained from selling exotic creatures culled from the Vohven) and watches the events unfold in the nation. Some speculate that Inawhil will emerge from the ashes of the other powerful lords to sweep all of Zazahni, but none know for sure.

HOUSE MASHEN

Head of House: Count Mashen

Colors: Black and Brown

Lands: None

Taxation: Plunder

Military: 102 heavy cavalry, 178 light cavalry, 53 hobilar, and 30 archers

Alignment: NG

Allies: Whanavi, Whonoh

Enemies: Imazsvow, Mehesh, Monohz, Whanhez, Whoshohz, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz.

Count Mashen is one of Duke Whanavi's strongest supporters, after being manipulated by Duke Dovizhem II and losing all of his lands and much of his wealth. Although not strong enough to have a solid claim to the throne, he believes it is owed to him. Ever pragmatic, he defends his neighbor Duke Whanavi from the hobgoblin scouts to the west. Mashen also claims domination over the ruins of western Zazahni. King Warven II has approached the "Count of Ruin," but Mashen has not agreed to service yet, awaiting future developments.

HOUSE MEHESH

Head of House: Lord Mehesh

Colors: Gray, black and yellow

Lands: Nizmish (28°0'N, 11°20'W; map area 9)

Taxation: 1-100%, monthly, net worth

Military: 17 heavy cavalry, 30 light cavalry, 9 hobilar, and 5 archers

Alignment: CN

Allies: None.

Enemies: Monohz, Vuy, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Zahahesh, Zhehzvem.

Nizmish is the home of mad Lord Mehesh (CN bard 3/druid 3), who serves the land he rules more than the people who serve him. Consequently, Nizmish is poor and shabby and in desperate need of repair. Burnt skeletons of homes and shops speckle this town, which stands in the shadow of Emosvom.

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Instead of caring for his people, Lord Mehesh wanders the Mewhi Marsh, giving succor to the monsters of the haunted fen. His lack of responsibility and strange alliances puts him at odds with Baron Vuy, who is launching attacks against the feeble garrison protecting the city. Lord Mehesh has no stake in the future of Zazahni, and does not care what happens to the nation.

HOUSE MONOHZ

Head of House: Lord Monohz

Colors: Black, purple, blue and white

Lands: Svehnmish (28°15'N, 13°55'W; map area 10)

Taxation: 30%, monthly, net worth

Military: 34 heavy cavalry, 60 light cavalry, 18 hobilar, and 10 archers

Alignment: LE

Allies: None

Enemies: Anihm, Dovizhem III, Ewheshosvehz, Havam, Imazsvow, Inawhil, Mashen, Mehesh, Ogohly, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshom, Zhehzvem.

Lord Monohz (LE fighter 9/blackguard 3) is a blackguard without peer in Zazahni. A cruel, heartless and foul villain, he has few friends, and no committed allies. As soon as he came to power in Svehnmish, he converted the town into a war camp, using conscripts from slaves and commoners to fill the ranks of his small army. Worse, he relies on his personal thaumaturgy to summon and bind devils to protect his holdings. Monohz supports Zazahni's return to Meznamish, and secures trade routes for Meznamishii merchants and diplomats to enter the fractured nation. His open alliance with a foreign power puts him at odds with all houses in Zazahni, even those secretly supporting Meznamish.

HOUSE OGOHLY

Head of House: Baron Ogohly

Colors: Brown, green, yellow and white

Lands: Hinahn (28°10'N, 13°10'W; map area 11)

Taxation: 10%, monthly, net worth

Military: 68 heavy cavalry, 118 light cavalry, 35 hobilar, and 20 archers

Alignment: N

Allies: Inawhil

Enemies: Whonoh, Zhehzvem

Suspicious of other houses' motives, Baron Ogohly (N aristocrat 8) rules the small town of Hinahn. His alliance with Inawhil is due to similar outlook and believing in letting Zazahni work out its own problems. Nevertheless, the Baron has not been able to keep out of the fighting, and fights Duke Whonoh over control of the Mewhi Marsh (not that there is much to fight over). Insofar as the national future is concerned, Ogohly will support the victor, regardless of whether the crown lies in Monam-Ahnoz or anywhere else.

HOUSE USHOHZ

Head of House: Duke Ushohz

Colors: Purple, blue and green

Lands: Wistahni (28°15'N, 10°35'W; map area 12)

Taxation: 15%, yearly, net worth

Military: 102 heavy cavalry, 177 light cavalry, 52 hobilar, and 30 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Whanohz

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mashen, Mehesh, Whazha, Whoshohz, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz

Although Duke Ushohz (LN fighter 6/aristocrat 4) is friendly towards many of the higher-ranking houses, he has yet to commit himself or his town to a particular house, relying on his close alliance with Whanohz for protection. His inability to commit to another House has made others suspicious of his motives, creating more enemies than friends. Currently, he is at war with several houses, but he focuses the majority of his efforts on defeating House Havam. Duke Ushohz, believing Zazahni can never prosper as a single state, wants the nation divided into three or four smaller provinces.

HOUSE VUY

Head of House: Baron Vuy

Colors: Black, blue, yellow and white

Lands: None

Taxation: None

Military: 17 heavy cavalry, 29 light cavalry, 8 hobilar, and 5 archers

Alignment: LG

Allies: Awhasha

Enemies: Ewheshosvehz, Imazsvow, Inawhil, Mehesh, Whanhez, Whoshohz, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz

The life of Baron Vuy (LG paladin 11) has been nothing if not tragic. He tied his fate to Dovizhem II, and led the attack against Zensahn, while other houses held back their troops. His courage rewarded him with being the first casualty on the battlefield, captured by Duke Whanavi himself. In a rare act of mercy, Whanavi stripped Vuy of his lands and wealth, and banished him and his surviving men out into the wilds. Disgraced and penniless, Vuy wanders Zazahni, committing his sword to fighting the evil and ambitious lords of the shattered nation. He is in Count Awhasha's employ. Although he does not bear animosity to many other nobles, his weakened position, and high character puts him at odds with those in power. Vuy is indifferent as to whether Zazahni rejoins Meznamish; he wants a strong monarchy to restore order to the wounded land.

HOUSE WHANAVI

Head of House: Duke Whanavi

Colors: Black and red

Lands: Zensahn (27°50'N, 14°50'W) and outskirts (map area 13)

Taxation: 3%, monthly, net worth

Military: 2000 heavy cavalry (half in Zensahn)

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Alignment: NG

Allies: Mashen

Enemies: Imazsvow, Mehesh, Monohz, Whanhez, Whoshoeh, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz

Duke Whanavi continues to hold the premier rank in Zazahni, although even he recognizes he is not powerful enough to hold the throne itself. At the height of his popularity, he had thousands of loyal followers willing to die for his cause, but before he could claim the throne, Dovizhem II and a coalition of minor houses attacked the city of Zenshahn. The fighting lasted months, and when Whanavi emerged as the victor, he captured Dovizhem II and had him executed, which cost him dearly in popularity. Whanavi works to rebuild his city and lands so one day his son can claim the throne for his own.

HOUSE WHANHEZ

Head of House: Lord Whanhez

Colors: Gray, brown and green

Lands: Vimnish (28°20'N, 11°5'W; map area 14)

Taxation: 25%, weekly, net worth

Military: 51 heavy cavalry, 89 light cavalry, 27 hobilars, and 15 archers

Alignment: LE

Allies: Ushohz, Whoshom, Zharesh

Enemies: Anihm, Dovizhem III, Ewheshosvehz, Havam, Imazsvow, Inawhil, Mashen, Mehesh, Vuy, Whazha, Zhehzvem

Slightly more important than the other weaker houses, Lord Whanhez (LE aristocrat 4) avoids becoming embroiled in the conflicts of other houses. To ensure his continued security, he negotiated several alliances, including some with Duke Whoshom and Duke Zharesh, using them against each other to protect his meager holdings. His tactics are opportunistic and obvious, gaining him the enmity of many other houses. Whanhez has an alliance with King Warven II and works to reunite Zazahni with Meznamish.

HOUSE WHANOHZ

Head of House: Baron Whanohz

Colors: Black, brown and purple

Lands: None

Taxation: 20%, monthly, net worth

Military: 8 heavy cavalry, 14 light cavalry, 4 hobilars, and 2 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Vuy, Whenshomi

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mashen, Mehesh, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshoeh, Whoshom, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz.

The weakest member of a coalition of houses who serve Duke Whenshomi, Baron Whanohz (LN fighter 6) knows his place. Being a minor house with no recognized lands of his own allows him to relocate with no warning. Duke Whenshomi knows this, and keeps the minor Baron in his employ because of the added military and the coins the Baron brings. Whanohz was

once loyal to Whanavi, but claimed neutrality when Dovizhem II attacked. Baron Whanohz wants a united Zazahni, but not as a part of Meznamish.

HOUSE WHAZHA

Head of House: Duke Whazha

Colors: Blue, yellow and orange

Lands: Wenshoel-Ahnoz (28°0' N, 9°5'W) and outskirts (map area 15)

Taxation: Flat 4 cp per month.

Military: 110 heavy cavalry, 192 light cavalry, 57 hobilars, and 32 archers

Alignment: CG

Allies: Havam

Enemies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Ushohz, Duke Vuy, Duke Whanavi, Whanhez, Whonoh, Whoshoeh, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Zharesh, Zhehzvem

The power and influence of Duke Whazha (CG aristocrat 3/ranger 4) collapsed after he sided with Duke Dovizhem II against Whanavi. Like Duke Whenshomi, Whazha led a coalition of smaller houses, but after Whazha fled the battlefield with his retreating soldiers, most of the coalition abandoned him. In fact, only Lord Havam has remained loyal. Whazha still has designs on the throne, but being lord of one of several smaller states would content him.

HOUSE WHENSHOMI

Head of House: Duke Whenshomi

Colors: Gray, brown, red and white

Lands: Asmish (28°15'N, 10°10'W) and outskirts (map area 16)

Taxation: 12%, monthly, net worth

Military: 119 heavy cavalry, 207 light cavalry, 61 hobilars, and 35 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mashen, Mehesh, Ogohly, Whazha, Whoshoeh, Whoshom, Zhehzvem.

Not powerful enough in his own right to make a strong claim on the throne, Duke Whenshomi (LN fighter 8/warlord 5) coerced or convinced a number of smaller houses to support his efforts. With the added support from these lesser families, the Duke has become a viable opponent for the seven leading families struggling for dominance. He is viewed as presumptuous by his peers. Now, Asmish is the target of regular conflict, as Lord Havam, Baron Imazsvow and Duke Whazha raid the surrounding lands, and sometimes the city itself. Still, Duke Whenshomi will never stop fighting until he controls Zazahni.

HOUSE WHISHIMVISH

Head of House: Duke Whishimvish

Colors: Brown, blue, green and yellow

Lands: Wimish (29°0'N, 11°50'W) and outskirts (map area 17)

Taxation: 1 sp per acre of land, minimum of 1 sp, yearly.

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Military: 136 heavy cavalry, 237 light cavalry, 70 hobilar, and 40 archers

Alignment: CG

Allies: Whoshom

Enemies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Ushohz, Whanhez, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Whoshoh, Zharesh, Zhehzvem

Duke Whishimvish (CG cleric 16) has not always been an ally of House Whoshom. In fact, they were once heated enemies. However, after the sack of Wimish, when Zharesh crucified followers of the Guardian, Whishimvish joined Whoshom in the crusade against Tyrant Duke Zharesh. Duke Whishimvish is single-minded and unwilling to bargain, with good or evil.

HOUSE WHONOH

Head of House: Count Whonoh

Colors: Gray, purple and white

Lands: Zha-Hinoz (27°45'N, 12°10'W; map area 18)

Taxation: 10%, weekly, net worth

Military: 51 heavy cavalry, 88 light cavalry, 26 hobilar, and 15 archers

Alignment: LN

Allies: Whanavi

Enemies: Havam, Imazsvow, Mehesh, Whoshoh, Zhehzvem, Zhoshorohz.

Count Whonoh (LN aristocrat 8) vowed to serve Duke Whanavi 10 years ago. Since the alliance, he pays 10% of all his earnings to Whanavi every spring and helps defend Zensahn from attackers. More importantly, Whonoh watches for developments in the heartland of his country, sending soldiers and mercenaries to fight against Duke Havam, Mehesh and others. Whonoh secretly supports the restoration of Zazahni into the Meznamishii Empire.

HOUSE WHOSHOSH

Head of House: Baron Whoshoh

Colors: Gray, brown, yellow and red

Lands: Shapshan (27°45'N, 11°45'W; map area 19)

Taxation: 50%, weekly, net worth

Military: 51 heavy cavalry, 88 light cavalry, 26 hobilar, and 15 archers

Alignment: CE

Allies: None

Enemies: Anihm, Awhasha, Dovizhem III, Ewheshosvehz, Hashaphesh, Mashen, Monohz, Ushohz, Vuy, Whanavi, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Zhehzvem.

Loosely allied with Duke Inawhil of Emosvom, Baron Whoshoh (CE barbarian 12) is a terrifying warlord who does anything he can to win. Hated, he breaks as many alliances as he forges. He double-crosses his friends before they can do the same to him, and trusts no one. He and his small band of warriors have an encampment just inside the boundary of the Vohven Jungle. Whoshoh does not care what happens to Zazahni, as long as he holds power.

HOUSE WHOSHOM

Head of House: Duke Whoshom

Colors: Black, blue, yellow and white

Lands: Romomish (30°5'N, 12°55'W) and outskirts (map area 20)

Taxation: Flat 5 cp per month

Military: 119 heavy cavalry, 208 light cavalry, 62 hobilar, and 35 archers

Alignment: CG

Allies: Whishimvish

Enemies: Awhasha, Ehezna, Hashaphesh, Monohz, Ushohz, Whanhez, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whonoh, Whoshoh, Zharesh, Zhehzvem

Rogue Duke Whoshom (CG sorcerer 12) operates out of Romomish, having vowed to destroy Duke Zharesh at any cost, even the nation. Allied with the influential Whishimvish, who has likewise sworn to defeat the evil tyrant, their combined might makes many other houses tremble. Part of Whoshom's hatred for Zharesh stems from the defilement of churches in the towns the dark lord passes through. Zharesh is famous for locking townspeople in the buildings and burning down the temples, immolating all inside. Whoshom's dedication to eradicating the rival Duke has created many enemies, and his forces are starting to feel the weight of their mission. If someone kills Zharesh, Whoshom promises to renounce his claim to the crown.

HOUSE ZHAHESH

Head of House: Duke Zharesh

Colors: Purple, red and white

Lands: Zhamsvahni (29°30'N, 12°45'W) and outskirts (map area 21)

Taxation: 25%, weekly, total value

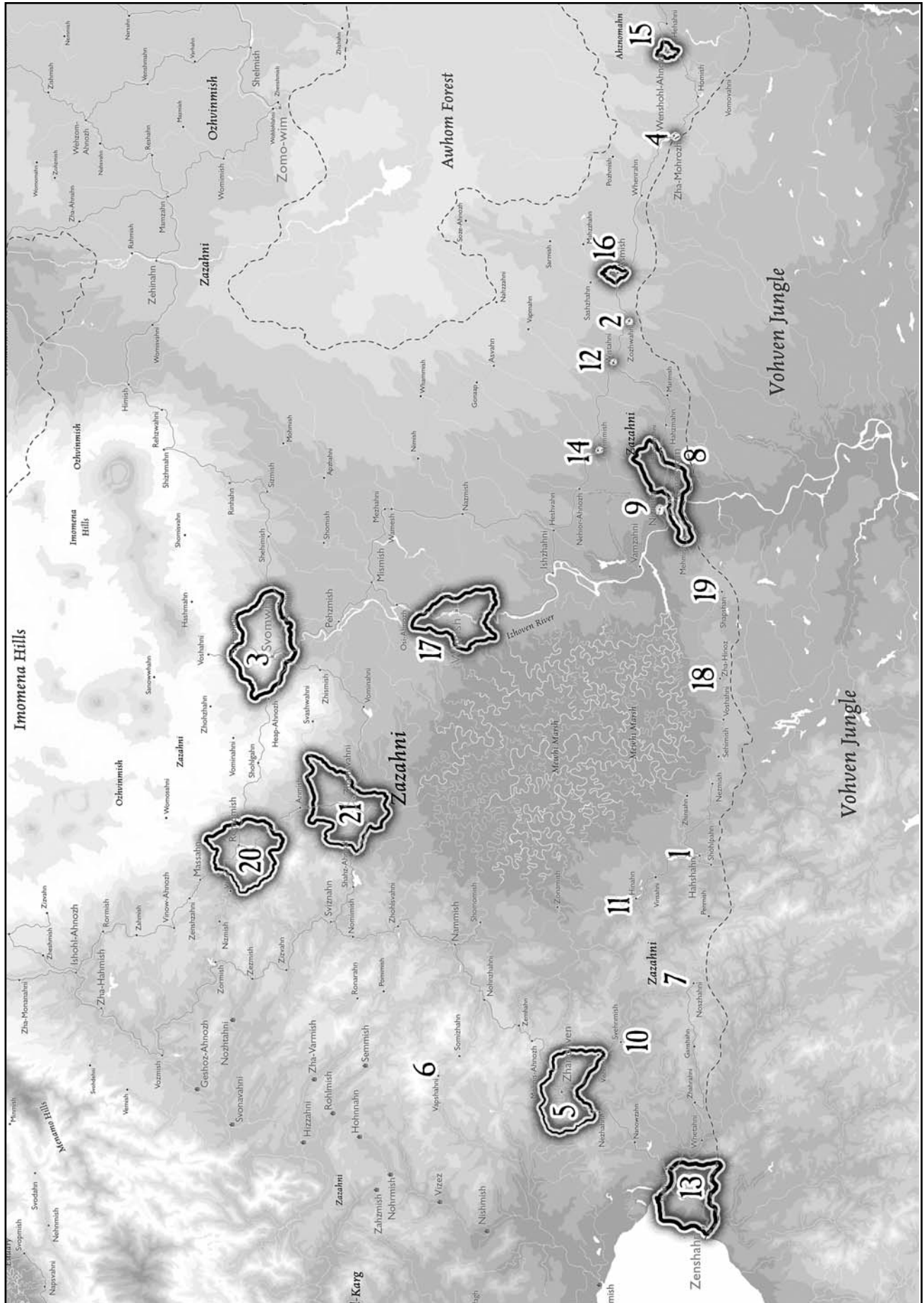
Military: 128 heavy cavalry, 222 light cavalry, 66 hobilar, and 38 archers

Alignment: LE

Allies: Whanhez

Enemies: Anihm, Havam, Mashen, Mehesh, Whanavi, Whazha, Whishimvish, Whoshom, Vuy, Zhehzvem

Commanding loyal soldiers and ranks of powerful mercenaries gathered from across Svimohzia is the tyrant Duke Zharesh (LE fighter 14). He and the loyal Whanhez present a serious threat to Zazahni's future, for Zharesh would kneel to Ul-Karg before giving up his claims to the throne. His armies patrol the lands, hunting the encampments of their enemies. He offers no quarter to his enemies, and promises a reward of 5,000 gold Anvims to whoever slays one of his enemy lords. Zharesh's forces are easy to identify, for slave warriors taken from enemy villages precede the soldiers into battle.



HOUSE ZHEHZVEM

Head of House: Duke Zhehzvem

Colors: Gray, purple and white

Lands: None

Taxation: Plunder

Military: 17 heavy cavalry, 29 light cavalry, 8 hobilars, and 5 archers

Alignment: CE

Allies: Dovizhem

Enemies: Anihm, Awhasha, Ehezna, Ewheshosvehz, Hashaphesh, Inawhil, Mashen, Monohz, Ogohly, Ushohz, Vuy, Whanohz, Whenshomi, Whishimvish, Whonoh, Whoshom

Without a doubt, Duke Zhehzvem (CE fighter 4/rogue 4) is one of the most unpopular Svizohr in Zazahni. He owes the existence of his House to the tolerance of his liege, Duke Dovizhem III. Zhehzvem convinced Dovizhem II to gather the other houses and topple Duke Whanavi, costing Dovizhem II his life and the trust of the other houses in Zazahni. Zhehzvem and his lackeys were the first to leave the battlefield. Dovizhem III only spared the family because they offered him their lands, lands he could have taken anyway. However, weakened in standing and in arms, he could not turn away allies, no matter what form they took. Zhehzvem wants Zazahni to become small independent states instead of one unified kingdom.

HOUSE ZHOSHOROHZ

Head of House: Lord Zhoshorohz

Colors: Brown, blue, yellow and red

Lands: None

Taxation: None

Military: 9 heavy cavalry, 15 light cavalry, 5 hobilars, and 3 archers

Alignment: NE

Allies: None

Enemies: Anihm, Mashen, Vuy, Zhehzvem.

Neutral in the affairs of Zazahni, Lord Zhoshorohz (NE ranger 3/rogue 3/assassin 2) is a shadowy figure content to watch the affairs of the other nobles. As head of a minor house, he has no claim to the throne, and instead supports Duke Ewheshosvehz in subtle ways, such as killing messengers, servants and other notables who stand in their way. Despite his allegiance to the Duke, Ewheshosvehz sees Zhoshorohz as a dangerous tool - one he handles with respect, but never forgets the so-nicknamed "Lord of Assassins" is useful as long as the Duke needs him. Other houses regard Zhoshorohz and his small house with suspicion, unsure why Ewheshosvehz retains him. Some, such as Lord Vuy, hold him in such disdain for his unscrupulous tactics they have declared war against him. Lord Zhoshorohz has no lands of his own, and is a regular sight at Zhanohven's court as an honored guest. Zhoshorohz does not care whether Zazahni unifies or not.

FOREIGN POLICY

Understandably, Zazahni's focus is internal. With each lord vying for control over the nation, few have the inclination or the presence of mind to look abroad. Yet, Zazahni, in its typical contradictory fashion, does interact with its neighbors.

Meznamish has long courted Zazahni, trying to convince the fighting lords to return to the imperial fold. While most of these negotiations serve as additional funding to weak lords without a viable claim to the throne, whom powerful houses then destroy, Meznamish continues to support Zazahni lords, courting several houses at once to help bring the nation back into the empire. It has been speculated that Meznamish needs allies for the time when they choose to invade. There may be some credence to this theory as Meznamish has denied its military escalation for use against Ozhvinmish. With Warven II's ambition, the armies could march on Zazahni.

To the east, Ahznomahn promotes disharmony, funding smaller lords and encouraging them to found independent states. Ahznomahn's motivation in this is questionable, because a divided nation is weaker and less able to resist an invasion. Yet, on the other hand, a unified nation friendly to Meznamish would be disastrous to Ahznomahn's economic superiority, to say nothing of their national security. Zazahni, who has been friendly towards Meznamish, would form a strong alliance, and perhaps even rejoin the empire. With added support, and a stronger alliance, Meznamish could invade Ahznomahn's mainland territory, bypassing and then surrounding Ozhvinmish.

Foreign Interests

Lacking a formal government, there is no national agenda to pursue. Zazahni has no diplomatic presence outside of its own borders. Treaties between the individual lords and foreign powers typically occur if the foreign power sends an ambassador to Zazahni, such as is the case with Meznamish.

National Opinions on Foreign Affairs

The common person is far more concerned with finding enough food to feed their family than with the developments of their next-door neighbors, let alone other countries. They fear the uncaring soldiers who rob them of their food, defile their daughters and take from them anything of value. Zazahni is a sad and broken land, struggling to survive.

Most in the country wants a resolution to the perpetual civil war. Some speak of returning to Meznamish, and many have. The native Mewhi are mostly gone, having fled to the foothills of the Tanezh Mountains. Others ventured elsewhere to merge with the Ozhvins, and even the Ahznoms. Some of those who remain pray for a strong lord to emerge and end their suffering. Most, though, long for the days of the empire. When funded by Meznamishii gold, they gather in small pockets of rebels and fight against their former masters, in the name of Warven II.

Those Zazahni living in the east know Ahznomahn is not much better, for the mainland grapples with such problems as the awakening of the monsters in the Awhom Forest, and the oppressive weight of the Golden Alliance. Unlike the eastern Ozhvins, they are not seduced by the Ahznomahnii way of life. They, too, beg for a return to the empire and want to be free from the hell Zazahni has become.

CURRENT EVENTS

Zazahni has not seen a major battle in three years, since Dovizhem II led the assault against Zenshahn. Most of the battles have been little more than skirmishes or raids, though many commoners have perished. The houses continue to field armies but the fighting has relaxed.

The reason for the lull is simple. The warlords hold back their forces for the next great offensive. The larger and more influential houses, such as House Whanavi, focus their efforts on rebuilding their lands. Others fortify their towns and cities, awaiting the next noble to stake a claim to the throne.

The lesser houses still fight amongst themselves, destroying an isolated farmstead or razing crops to lure their enemies onto the battlefield. While the landless houses march through the smoking ruins of mid-Zazahni, their soldiers clash in small raids and skirmishes, feinting and avoiding a direct conflict, for with their depleted numbers and lack of supplies, none can afford to lose a single man.

Lord Zhoshorohz has grown tired of Duke Ewheshosvehz' inability to act, and adds small amounts of poison to the duke's food. When Ewheshosvehz dies, Lord Zhoshorohz plans to attribute the duke's death to an assassin in the service of Baron Anihm. Zhoshorohz plans to seize Ewheshosvehz's lands and swear fealty to Duke Zhahesh, who is ready to take the throne. Zhahesh is drawing other houses to his banner, sending emissaries to Duke Hashaphesh, Duke Zhehzvem, Baron Whoshoe, Lord Whanhez, Baron Imazsvow and Lord Monohz. Although not yet allied, almost all find Zhahesh's terms agreeable. He offers to divide Zazahni into large duchies, granting each House almost total sovereignty of their lands in exchange for an oath of service to the crown. The formation of this new coalition could force the other houses to overcome their differences and meet the new threat on the battlefield, lest Zazahni fall into the hands of a great and powerful evil. However, an alliance against Zhahesh is unlikely, for the grudges and distrust shadow their eyes from seeing the truth of the threat.

While battle lines form in Zazahni's interior, the houses to the west are embroiled in the first stages of a new Kargi invasion, for hobgoblin raiders and scouts seized several of the ruined towns and cities to use as supply depots. What the Kargi did not expect was for several landless houses to use many of these ruins as bases for their operations. The most notable resistance comes from Count Mashen. He and his men are somewhat successful against the invaders by enlisting the help of bugbears from the Tanezh Mountains. Their desperate

struggle has caught the attention of some lords, who would rather give up their claim to the crown than see hobgoblins rule Zazahni and (eventually) the rest of the island. Both Lord Havam and Baron Vuy relaxed their raids against the evil houses and turned to bolster Mashen's forces with a temporary alliance.

The Kargi invasion is not the only danger Zazahni faces. Though trade between the savage tribes of the Vohven Jungle improved in the last decade, traders and travelers from the Emerald Sea have now slowed. Attacks from the south increase in severity and frequency. Great lizards, unseen for generations, emerge from the depths of the jungle in the thrall of wild shamans bent on vengeance. Terrible things climb out of the depths of the trees to waylay travelers and destroy settlements while wild elves draw no distinction between the Ahznomns and Zazahni as they slaughter their enslavers.

Population retention has always been a problem in Zazahni. Since the first civil war, commoners have fled the nation to find a more peaceful life in the neighboring states. The flood of refugees has not endeared Zazahni with Meznamish, Ozhvinmish or Ahznomahn, who claim that the refugees are creating a larger burden than these nations are prepared to handle. Meznamish claims to lack the room, Ozhvinmish claims a lack of infrastructure, and Ahznomahn cannot tax the immigrants who become brigands, thieves or beggars who only serve to clog their city streets. With mounting pressure from the organized nations, Zazahni nobles are withdrawing from the island politics with growing resentment to the demands of their supposed allies. With the growing threat of the hobgoblins to the west, some lords are suggesting allying themselves with Ul-Karg, although none have taken this idea seriously.

ECONOMICS

Zazahni is generally poor, with a sluggish economy and little resources to make the nation attractive to foreigners. Sheep, cattle, barley and some rice are mostly kept for internal use rather than export. What other resources they do have consist mostly of minerals taken from the Imomena Hills, although prospectors must contest against Ozhvinmish prospectors and the dwarves living there. They have been able to use the exotic woods and herbs from the Vohven, but increasing hostilities now make the acquisition of such resources difficult.

Trade Routes

The fractured nation is not appealing to foreign investment, so few merchants brave the brigands to sell their goods in what few markets remain. Most goods that come into the nation originate from Meznamish, which courts the warlords to gain their allegiance.

Ahznomahnii merchants, before the savage attacks from the Vohven Jungle began, traded along the Ahznomahnii-Zazahni border. With the heightened dangers, fewer and fewer merchants brave the attacks for the modest gains they can attain in Zazahni. In fact, so few merchants make the journey, the only

Chapter Eight: the Kingdom of Zazahni

Ahznombs that the Zazahni see are agents urging the warlords to found independent states rather than a unified nation.

Almost all trade with the people of the Vohven Jungle occurs in Emosvom, where the natives are less hostile. Exotic monsters, poisons, drugs and other illicit goods come up from the Emerald Sea to distant markets all over the world. In fact, people know Zazahni for three things: its political situation, its soldiers and its poisons.

Lastly, Brolenese merchants who trade in the Zhano-Mewhi Bay sometimes do business in Zenshahn. As Duke Whanavi's duchy rebuilds, the need for raw building and construction materials and tools increases. However, even more valuable than equipment is information. Zenshahn and the rest of Zazahni fear a military build-up in Ul-Karg, and most lords are willing to pay premium prices for any information regarding King Krarag-Randatk's plans.

Currency

Shaving coins is a big problem in Zazahni, made worse by the fact that there is no single source for coins. In fact, Zazahni has not minted official coins in 20 years, and all that remains in circulation are those manufactured during the brief rules of the petty kings. Most lords melt down and recast coins with their image and name on the face in an effort to legitimize their claims.

Zazahni, like all Svimohzish countries, uses slightly rounded, eight-sided coinage. The copper Onzar, silver Azhvar, gold Leshvim and rare platinum Svohr are of equivalent size and weight. Each features the words "1 [name of coin]" in Svimohzish on each side, above a sword crossing a throne.



These somewhat plain coins are one of the few topics ever agreed upon by the many warring noble families. However, it is still possible to find a wide variety of older Zazahni coins imprinted with the visage of the then-current ruler. These are the coins that escaped melting down and reminting when a new ruler came to power.

EXCHANGE RATES

Zazahni merchants accept coins from any nation and any denomination, as long as the coins are of the same metals as those in circulation. (For example, they rarely accept bronze or electrum coins.) There is no national system for exchange, and many people use a barter system, trading goods and services.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Though once part of its empire, Zazahni never adopted the rigid social structure of Meznamish. As the last lands conquered in Miznoh's Conquest, the original Mewhi peoples embraced their conquerors, accepting the customs and rules imposed by Meznam culture. However, after only a few years, they reverted to their former customs.

The Mewhi people, as do their Ozhvin neighbors, place greater emphasis on family than state. The family structure is far more important than ambiguous and detached notions of government. This belief may help explain the fragmentation of the current day, as clans and house hold a greater position in Zazahni society than the contested crown. After generations of Mewhi influence, all Zazahni regardless of heritage adopted the Mewhi customs.

The most important position within the family is the matriarch. She makes all of the important family decisions, such as food, shelter and settling disputes. At her side is the patriarch, who functions as the war leader and spouse. Non-Zazahni sometimes are confused about who is in charge of the household, seeing the warrior and defender of the family as the head of the house. However, the patriarch must always accede to the matriarch's wishes (or pay the marital consequences).

At the Svizohr level, the relationship between the two authority figures blurred as the houses battled one another for generations. Nearly all of the houses have adopted a patriarchal system, reflecting the Meznamishii imposition on Zazahni government when that empire conquered these lands. The head of the house combines the roles of the matriarch with the patriarch to create the warlord, who oversees all levels of the household. The emergence of the warlords was one cause of the Mewhi migration after the collapse of the Zazahni kingdom.

Style of Dress

Attire is not a reliable indicator of status in Zazahni, as war drove many nobles and merchants to destitution, thereby enabling bandits and criminals to resemble lords in their own right. Hence, one can only suggest clothing as generalizations in a nation full of exceptions, where a commoner might find and wear a silk shirt, and a noble might be wearing Kargi armor. Although Zazahni has expected attire based on station, few adhere to the notion of clothing as a means to reflect power or wealth.

The non-persons of Zazahni wear whatever they can. Most dress in rags, stolen clothing from dead soldiers, or homespun clothing from reclaimed fibers. They are destitute, far worse off than the slaves of many other human nations, though certainly their wretched lives surpass those of the slaves of Ul-Karg.

In larger communities, the Sohrihz class is nearly indistinguishable from Sohrihz of other nations. They wear the patterned clothing of other Svimohzish, wearing bright colors, with as many colors as they can afford.

Women wear knee-length skirts and sandals that lace up to their knees. They also wear loose blouses with short capes in the rainy weather. Men, on the other hand, wear vests without shirts underneath. They wear loose, baggy breeches of bold colors and patterns. They, too, wear sandals but the open-toed variety. In rural environments, or in lands hard hit by the wars, the Sohrihz wear clothing little better than slaves, being forced

to wear whatever they can, be it rags or stolen clothing and with all of it being worn and dirty.

Warriors of the Miznoh caste often wear their light cord armor even when not on duty, though even they forego their pride on the hottest days. Most warlords outfit their soldiers with cord armor, and successful or famous warriors often wear beautifully crafted cord armor worth at least double its normal price. All warriors have some sort of badge or icon to signify their rank.

Furthermore, they incorporate the colors of their House into their off-duty uniforms, cotton shirts and breeches, or into their armor.

The warlords, on the other hand, all wear the finest clothing they can afford. Landed nobles wear the best clothing, in traditional Svimohzish style and cut, incorporating the geometric styles and patterns in their house colors. Landless nobles are shabbier, with worn clothes, armor and weapons. Warlords wear armor wherever they go, as they are in constant danger from assassins.

Festivals

In a land as ravaged as Zazahni, there is little cause for celebration. What festivals that are still celebrated are feeble compared to the pageantry of old. The reason for their scarcity comes from the widespread despair gripping the citizens, the lack of resources to sponsor a large event, and the frequent raids on villages and towns by unscrupulous lords. Consequently, people no longer celebrate holidays and holy days like they once did.

Crowning: The Festival of Crowning always falls during the first three days of Harvest. Commoners celebrate this holiday to mock the warlords for their hubris. While this is offensive to the noble houses, they dare not stop the event, for they remember that when others tried, their citizenry revolted. Each day of this three-day revelry has a significant purpose. On the first day, called Promise, the commoners elect one of their numbers as the Fool. This is a great honor, and the Fool is crowned with a laurel of poppy flowers, and given a "thyrzus" (a cloak made from the hide of an ass). That evening, the community celebrates the good fortune to have such a king. At the height of the evening, they expect the Fool to make a speech full of promises for the future, rewards for loyal followers, and general nonsense as is appropriate. The Fool also can select loyal cohorts from the crowds. The evening culminates with a drunken revelry and ends when people are too sick to drink and eat anymore, or pass out wherever they are.

The second day, called Lies, begins in the afternoon with the loyal cohorts donning masks depicting grotesque parodies of famous lords in Zazahni. At the start of this second day, they take the Fool and dump him in a river, pond, lake or even a tub filled with water. Throughout the rest of the day, each of the cohorts make promises, distribute food and drink, and choose their own loyal followers, making jests at the expense of the

Fool. Lies continues until the revelers are too sick to eat or drink any more, or pass out wherever they land.

The final day of the festival is sowing. The revelers fast, and no one works. The streets are empty, and all citizens cover their faces with the ashes of the bonfires. The town affects a somber air. At the end of Sowing, they bury the masks face down.

The Week of the Snake: In eastern Zazahni, particularly in wilderness areas and small communities bordering the Vohven Jungle, they celebrate the Week of the Snake. It is almost identical to the festival of the same name practiced by those on the other side of the Zazahni-Ahznomahn border. See Chapter Five: the Confederacy of Ahznomahn for details.

Festival of the Cat: Celebrated in Svomwhi and the surrounding lands, the Festival of the Cat is a springtime celebration, with food distributed by the Dream Weaver and with free-flowing wine. Only members of the Church of the Silver Mist participate, for they say the Coddler visits the faithful in the night to guide them towards the church's future in the coming year. The clergy invites the lesser clerics and parishioners to share their dreams and ideas, and much of the church's actions come from these meetings.

Birth Customs

Zazahni retain the importance of family regardless of their social status or condition. Where they differ from other human nations in Svimohzia is that a child is considered a burden to an already beleaguered family. With food, shelter, clothing and all the other necessities for life being as scarce as they are in this war-torn land, many see the life of a child as a terrible cruelty. Pregnant Zazahni women without a means of support for their child often leave Zazahni (or die trying), braving the ravaging soldiers and other dangers threatening the land. Poverty in Ozhvinmish or Ahznomahn is far better than destitution in Zazahni. Like women of other nations, Zazahni women invoke blessings from Moimivam the Holy Mother, Shanano the Pure One and Movam the Fate Scribe to aid in the birthing process, making prayers each week to stave off bad spirits. The extended family does not come to the home bearing gifts, for many cannot afford such luxuries nor risk themselves in traveling to the home.

Coming of Age

The ravages of war have destroyed much of Zazahni culture, as evidenced by the Birth and Death customs (see below). The coming-of-age customs are no less affected; life is too sad and brutal for most to celebrate the passage to adulthood, as the ruling warlord is likely to conscript the child for war. Yet, some vestiges of the old ways remain, having evolved from the Mewhi people living here before the Miznoh's Conquest but corrupted by the desperate lords' need for more men.

When a male child reaches 13 years of age, the parents must notify their warlord by registering the youth with a conscriptor. If the warlord is in need of soldiers, the conscriptor conscripts

the youth and sends him to a training camp where he learns how to fight with a spear, shortsword and to serve his lord. Wealthy parents and unscrupulous conscriptors can reach a financial agreement in the form of a bribe to overlook the youth's age until the next year. To avoid treachery from the population, some warlords require registration of the child upon birth. Many families send their children away to distant relatives or out of the country altogether. If the family does not register their child at birth, or when he comes of age, the patriarch (or matriarch, if no patriarch is available) receives twenty lashes and the lord takes the youth, whether needed or not. A family is not required to give more than three of their sons to the service of their warlord.

Females often (but not always) avoid conscription, though many suffer a far worse fate. When a girl reaches 13 years of age, her parents must register her for marriage, which often takes place around age 15. Warlords must approve all marriages, some going so far as to arrange them. Some warlords wed the daughters of their community to maimed soldiers who can no longer fight, in order to have some usefulness left in those soldiers by procreating and creating a new generation of conscripts. Good (and some neutral) warlords rarely use these tactics.

The children of the warlords are too valuable to undergo a rite of passage like the Miznoh caste in Meznamish. Instead, many warlords send their sons to war colleges all over Tellene to hone their skills in battle. Those not wealthy enough to send their sons to school may apprentice the youth to a knight or mercenary, so the child can learn the art of war. A warlord sees his daughter's coming of age as a means to use her to gain alliances with other houses, relegating these girls into a form of currency.

Marriage

After young adults reach middle adolescence, they are expected to marry. With the burdens of feeding, sheltering and clothing, many families push the marriages of their children, just to relieve themselves of having to provide for them. Thus, Zazahni marry young, so young that wedding couples just 15 years of age are common. Marriage ceremonies are simple, as few have the money to pay for elaborate weddings. The groom pays "rezil," or daughter price, to gain the right to marry the girl. The amount of rezil varies, depending on the status of the family with the daughter having the greatest control of setting the starting bid for a particular suitor. The payment can be in goods, services or currency, depending on the groom's finances. Before the negotiations are over and the marriage is finalized, the couple must gain approval from their lord. Good warlords approve multiple marriages at a time, while evil warlords eliminate the rights of Zazahni females, forcing the daughters to marry whomever he wishes. The Mewhi custom, as some Zazahni of Mewhi heritage uphold, allows women to take multiple husbands. While frowned upon by some Zazahni warlords, polygamy remains a practice still employed. Divorce does not occur in this country except by death.

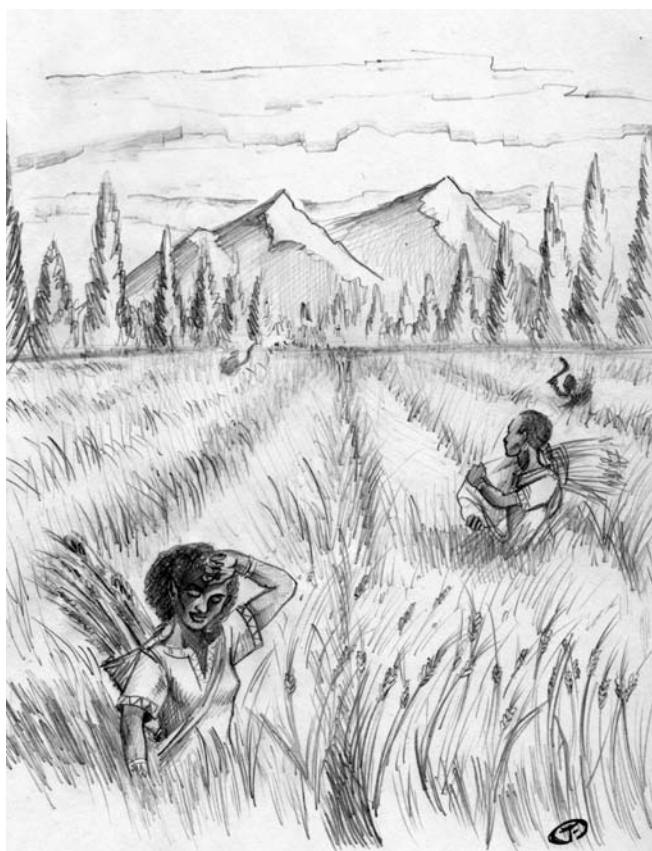
Death Customs

The constant wars in Zazahni have eroded the respect for the dead, ending most of the old customs for dealing with death. Death is so common that the ancient rituals have lost their power. Now, corpses are dispatched to prevent the spread of plague and to keep away the scavengers who would glut themselves on the dead.

Natives of strong Zassho blood usually burn their dead in a pyre, scattering the ashes over their land or the land of their masters. Those of pureblooded Mewhi heritage, however, favor burial. They believe a person wears his or her body temporarily and, when the body dies, it must be given back to the Earth Mother so she may fashion a new one to house the spirit of the dead. Failing to bury the dead is a great travesty as it strands the spirit, forcing it to wander the world amongst the living, ruing its fate and cursed to never know life again. Mewhi burial mounds dot much of the Zazahni territory, the Menamo Hills and the southern slopes of the Tanezh Mountains.

Food and Drink

Like the rest of Svimohzia (see Chapter One: Races and Regions), the quality of food varies by income. With only one major port, Zenshahn, they have little access to fish and most seafood is consumed right along the coastline, although Zenshahn does pickle fish for trade throughout the country. Zazahni, instead, relies on beef and mutton as its primary meats. Through almost negligible exports of wool and cattle to Ozhvinmish, they are able to supplement their diet with some



wheat. Southern plantations and the southern slopes of the Imomena Hills produce barely enough barley to feed the country, but when blight occurs, all go hungry. The marshy wetlands of the west produce some rice, but not enough to feed the nation.

Ever a tough land for agriculture, constant warfare made it worse. Armies plunder gardens and fields for food, stealing from the mouths of the commoners. The shortages are so severe in many regions, starvation is the leading cause of death.

To compensate for the shortages in food, Zazahni cuisine has had to adapt. In tough seasons, horses, lizards, birds, insects and other creatures from the Emerald Sea become viable food sources. Commoners sift flour contaminated with weevils as best they can, but the dark insects still appear in bread. During the lean times, Zazahni even strip bark from trees, eat grass or devour whatever they must in order to survive.

However, despite the bad years, Zazahni does produce fine cheeses valued for their spiciness. By incorporating unusual seasonings from the Vohven, they concoct exotic tastes. Zazahni also use butter and lard instead of oil, and most dishes have cheese or butter in or on it. When Zazahni has a successful crop, they make wonderful deserts, rich in chocolate, honey and fruits for sweetening.

Though with all the food shortages, the Zazahni are never short of tea, which is grown in the north. Red and green teas are preferred, with added aromatics like ginger helping add body to the drinks. Zazahni are the most frequent tea drinkers, for the rest of the island prefers coffee. Zazahni distillers make a potent spirit from grains to cleanse water and their equipment. They also make excellent ales.

Architecture

Ruined castles, roads, aqueducts and statues reclaimed by a hungry earth and overgrown by the vines of the jungle stand as evidence of Zazahni's former greatness. After a century of constant war, what was once a stirring land of architecture and beauty rivaling Ozhvinmish has been replaced with the skeletons of a once great society. Now pockets of civilization stand in the shadow of this former glory, with small thatched huts clustered around a crumbling tower or an ancient city still smoking from the last raid. Roads are typically narrow, overgrown stretches of muddy ground often laid out with little regard for order or direction. In short, much of rural Zazahni is ruined.

In place of many once grand towns, we find groupings of rough wooden buildings with sod roofs. Towns or cities with a ruling Svizohr family or warlord may have a small central fortress for these wealthiest of folk.

As is usual for this nation of contrasts, however, the cities and towns vary from quite wealthy to quite poor. Still, most cities have a similar style of architecture. In the greatest of these, narrow roadways wend their way between tall buildings, with apartments housing extended families who cannot afford a lush home of their own. Arched pedestrian walkways crisscross the

city, eventually leading to the center where large fortresses with slender towers pierce the sky. From here, it is said, ruled ancient knights of a long lost era who rode giant winged beasts or eagles to war. Now, those few towers remaining offer no insight into their former function or inhabitants.

Recreation

Zazahni lacks the resources to sponsor great spectacles such as those in their neighboring countries. In addition, with the threat of war, there is little room for idle pursuits in the drudgery of Zazahni life. Instead of huge events, where famed gladiators might fight monsters or slaves might fight another with gleaming weapons and other effects, people here enjoy smaller and less involved games.

Four Kings: This game is similar to a four-player version of chess but with four colors and sets of the standard chessmen. There are also some subtle rules changes to the standard game. For example, pawns can move forward and backward, and a special move called a coup allows the player to sacrifice his highest-ranking piece in exchange for two pawns. Pawns reaching the opposite side of the board can be swapped for a second cohort (queen). Finally, losing one's king does not remove another player from the game. The only way to eliminate a player is to capture all his pieces.

Pit Fighting: A common way to deal with criminals (aside from imprisonment or execution) is to use them for entertainment. While some warlords abhor the use of such means for disposing of undesirables, many others do not. Two combatants, always hardened men who make for a good fight, are lowered into a 10-foot pit with two daggers, short swords, or some other form of weaponry. The audience gathers around the mouth and watches them fight to the death. At the end of the fight, the survivor is released. After he buries his opponent, he is free.

Other Sports: Zazahni have an appreciation for javelins, discus throwing and some horse racing. While these contests were once common all over Zazahni, the political conditions have all but erased these events. Furthermore, able-bodied men serve either as soldiers or as laborers and so have no time to practice these arts or participate in such contests.

MAJOR RELIGIONS

All religions in Tellene have a presence in Zazahni. Good faiths go to relieve the suffering of the innocent, while those committed to righteousness lend their services to lords. Clerics of chaos and evil spread misfortune and woe, undermine treaties, aid in assassinations and do whatever they can to make Zazahni the darkest land in the world. With the varied faiths competing for souls, it adds to the confusion and animosities gripping the land. Some of the more common religions, however, are mentioned here.

The Halls of the Valiant

Among the honorable houses, the Knight of the Gods has a devout following. Many warlords have not withdrawn their claims because of their allegiance to the Valiant, and cannot abide the rise of dark forces within their homeland. Unfortunately, the spread of dark religions leads many people to become cynical of such concepts as honor and justice. Most are suspicious of those proclaiming to serve such a cause. Many shrines now stand in ruins, shattered by ravaging marauders, wars or defiled by irreverent youth.

The Temple of Armed Conflict

Many houses hire the Order of the Pike to train their troops, but the monetary cost prevents many from doing so for long. Fortunately, many of the Order offer their services freely. The Order hopes to meet their Kargi brethren in battle, and they sense that war is coming soon.

The Way of the Berserk

The Battle Rager is popular among the landless houses, where warriors fight long past any legitimate cause to do so. The Way of the Berserk also flourishes among the savage tribes of the Vohven.

The Thunderer's Temple

The Storm Lord has few established temples in Zazahni, although it does have quite a following. Some Zazahni call on the Lord of Thunder and Lighting in hopes of rain for their crops, though others are simply desperate for the god to spare their farms when the monsoon season ravages the countryside. Many Zazahni farmers keep a small idol of the Storm Lord somewhere on their property.

The Congregation of the Dead

The Harvesters are a living nightmare for Zazahni. They skulk in the shadows, emerging in the depths of night to claim souls for their evil god. They follow armies, flocking to the fallen to slash their throats in the name of Zazimash. Most warlords see the Harvesters as scavengers, little better than the carrion crows and jackals that worry the corpses after a battle.

The House of Hunger

Few things in Zazahni are more fearful than a warlord. However, certainly nothing here is more macabre than the thin, smiling faces of the gaunt, wandering Zazahni with their polished brass skullcaps, and gray and burgundy robes hanging from their bony frames. The Gaunt and their followers exult in the glory of their god, spreading misfortune and destroying the food of Zazahni's people. They have no mercy. A starving child or an emaciated mother is part of the plan. The House of Hunger grows as food becomes scarce and desperation sets in.

The Courts of Inequity

Zazahni represents the dreams of the Queen of Inequity come to life, where hardworking commoners lose their homes and possessions through no fault of their own, just lords fall to the knives of misled followers, and priests are wrongly accused of horrible crimes, casting doubt onto the whole church. The Covetous Ones occupy the highest-ranking warlords, drawing in many and corrupting them. Many warlords use the Covetous Ones as judges for their lands, but members of this religion usually operate only in the courts of the richest lords. Notable warlords in their thrall include Duke Zhashesh, Duke Whenshomi, Lord Monohz and Lord Whanhez.

The House of Knives

Zazahni is a land known for murder, where one can purchase poisons in most alleys, and hire a knife to kill and hide the body of a rival. The House of Knives thrives in this country, working for little gold simply for the opportunity to serve their deity. What money they do earn returns to the organization. Most cities in Zazahni have a secret enclave of the Veiled Priesthood.

SECRET SOCIETIES

As chaotic as Zazahni is, most secret societies and independent organizations could act in the open without fear. Many evil religions practice openly, with churches standing in the hearts of cities and towns. Slavers move about uncontested, harvesting their crops from isolated towns, while others work to keep them free. Only the most dangerous cults and organizations warrant concealment - and those are dangerous indeed.

Fiend Cults

Demon and devil worship is not common on Tellene. With a pantheon of gods representing almost all of the interests a mortal could desire, there is little need. For individuals wanting to revel in vice, the Vicelord is willing to answer their prayers. For those seeking power, the Seller of Souls is an excellent choice. In fact, all mortal sin has representation among the evil gods. So, what need is there for anyone to worship a fiend?

In some areas of Zazahni, there is a growing trend towards renouncing the gods altogether. For example, the infamous Vessels of Man deny the rights of the gods to be worshipped and that the only solution to ending human suffering was to cease their veneration. While the Vessels of Man base their beliefs on logic and reason, there are those so disgusted with the gods and yet are still fearful of them, they have turned to the servants of those beings to grant them power. In the most remote and desperate lands these cults survive and even flourish.

One such group is the Cult of Ragg'rt, a perverse organization that demeans humanity. They are experts in seduction and guile, evil and so blasphemous in their acts that they can never hope for redemption - though they do not. Those involved in

the cult engage in unspeakable acts involving orgies, human sacrifice and cannibalism.

Activities: The cult seeks to please a powerful (supposedly – one only has his word for it) demon known as Ragg'rt, by making blood sacrifices, participating in obscene orgies, and cavorting with summoned demons, all for the promise of power. They lure unsuspecting individuals into their coven, where they immerse their victim into the rites and rituals associated with their “god.” Found lacking, the cultists torture and mutilate the victim, calling forth demons to entertain them. They sometimes animate their victims to serve as undead guardians for the most profane chambers in their temples. They invite the best subjects, those with a depthless capacity for guile and evil, to sample the pleasures and pains of the cult.

Short-term goals: All members of the cult seek to glorify the name of the demonic master Ragg'rt. In exchange for their unquestioning service, the demon lord gives them treasure, power and trivial things. The cultists embrace the profound evil of the cult as an act of rebellion against the gods they feel abandoned them.



Long-term plans: The highest-ranking cultist is aware that Ragg'rt intends on entering the Material Plane with demonic legions to conquer the island. As his worshippers grow in numbers so, too, does his awful power. Each sacrifice made in his name advances him towards the realization of his goals. Should he escape the Abyss, the problems with the Golden Alliance and Meznamishii aggression, the Ul-Karg invasion would pale before the threat posed by an invasion from the Lower Planes.

Locations of greatest activity: Most cultists come from the upper social classes, and small pockets of worshippers can be found in all of the larger cities.

Location of headquarters: The High Priest of the cult is a half-fiend lamia named Rarshezzra, who lives in the heart of the Mewhi Marsh.

MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

In Zazahni's center is the Mewhi Marsh, a great swamp that has little value to anyone. Due to the treacherous ground and old terrors of the swamp, most communities keep a good distance away from it. In the extreme west of the country, the ruined shells of cities and towns serve as havens for brigands, monsters and rogue dukes. Communities in the rest of the nation feature some damage, if not from a terrible summer storm, then from raiders and war.

The basic structure of a Zazahni town is simple and similar to other communities in Svimohzia. At the town's center is the warlord's keep or the location of the town's government, if they lack a warlord. In the case of the former, the keep is a fortified tower or castle, depending on the lord's wealth, reputation and notoriety. It is the structure in the best condition, as warlords are quick to repair their fortifications after an attack.

Beyond the warlord's home are the shops and markets. These are small shabby structures with some fire damage. Ruined buildings account for a third of all structures here. Great rocks flung by catapults still stand amidst the destruction of a home or shop. Those building still intact often double as a residence for the proprietor and as a place of business.

Beyond the shops, the devastation is far more apparent. Three out of every five homes stand in ruins, either burned or shattered by a war machine. Trash and debris clutter the streets, and forlorn citizens spend some part of each day looking for friends and relatives buried beneath the boulders and ashes. Temples were not spared in the destruction either, for many a ruin once housed ancient religious relics and artifacts. The people have learned the hard way they can expect no special protection by hiding within the walls of a temple.

Many commoners in Zazahni have constructed small cellars where they can hide during a battle. When not used as a hiding place, they are used to store vegetables and meats to carry them through the lean times. Many of these pits have secret rooms where they can hide their sons from press gangs and their daughters from licentious mercenaries.

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Although walls protect most cities, few are intact. Many have damage created by siege weapons. Gates are as often ruined and few are intact. Repairing the walls is a common project for many warlords and at least a tenth of any population serves their warlord in trying to maintain the community.

EMOSVOM, DOORWAY TO THE PAST

Population: 8,000 (7,800 Svimohz, 200 wild elves)

A Closer Look: Sitting on the edge of the Vohven Jungle, the city of Emosvom (28°0'N, 11°15'W) straddles the sluggish brown waters of the wide Izhoven River. Stinking of rot, garlic (which the people believe has strong powers), waste and a myriad of other smells, it is a blighted community of little value to most warlords, explaining why it escaped unscathed from the civil wars.

Most travelers coming to the city come from lands to the north, around the central part of the kingdom and then along Zahnzor's Line, a long stretch of road linking the towns bordering the Emerald Sea to the south. This old road has been paved but the jungle has reclaimed much of it. Few travelers come from the east, as the center of the fractured nation is where the fighting is the heaviest. Those that do enter through Inawhil's Gate, renamed for the lackluster duke when he ascended the throne. Some people enter the city by the river, but it is so slow moving and beset with mosquitoes that most prefer the available overland routes.

Travel within Emosvom is difficult. Refugees, merchants and the homeless congest the streets, adding to the stench with their cooking, body stink and wastes. When the main road reaches the river, people take ferries to get to the other side. The foolish swim across, braving the crocodiles and piranha inhabiting the waters. Once on the far side, the city is cleaner, although not by much. Roads throughout are just straw-covered mud mixed with animal and human wastes, blood and debris.

A low wall contains this small city but is not tall or solid enough to provide many defenses. A few lazy guards under the command of Mizovohr Arhomven patrol the perimeter, but many shirk their duties to find companionship late at night in the arms of one of Emosvom's many prostitutes. Crime is high, and citizens disappear often, their bodies fed to the monsters of the river.

Buildings in Emosvom are crowded, seemingly piled up on top of one another. Most are wooden, built with lumber taken from the jungle or surrounding groves. Few homes have doors or shutters for their windows, relying on hides to keep out the worst weather.

Government: Under the neutral and lackluster rule of Duke Inawhil, Emosvom avoided much of the fighting and managed to survive intact after 70 years. The Duke never contributed to their survival, for other lords see little reason to conquer the city and because Inawhil made it clear he has no designs on the throne. His self-interest is evident in the city's condition. With a large refugee problem, high crime rates and poorly equipped

soldiers, the structure and former beauty of the place slipped into a shoddy urban sprawl. Inawhil intends to keep the city in this condition until most of the other warlords have overextended themselves, after which time he plans to emerge as conqueror of the country. Until these conditions unfold, he is content to rule the Doorway to the Past.

Economy: Emosvom's legitimate market deals in selling barley at high prices to northern cities like Wimish and Svomwhi, while supplementing their sales during good seasons for their neighbors with spices and exotic animals. As a supplier of foodstuffs to much of central Zazahni, Duke Inawhil makes considerable sums of money as he controls all of the farmland around the city. Although the city could do well with the sale of common commodities, Inawhil supports monster hunters who prowl the depths of the Vohven Jungle, capturing exotic and terrible monsters to sell to nobles in distant cities like Zhanehzmish, Zenshahn, Svowmahni and even as far as Monam-Ahnoz. This is a profitable venture, for Inawhil funds the expeditions and claims 25% of any sale.

Though it is a shabby, stinking community, Emosvom produces the world's most virulent poisons and has a fair trade in selling exotic animals, drugs and slaves. The coins of passing adventurers are also important in supplementing the city's economy.

Military: Poorly funded, shoddily armored and without a shred of discipline, Captain Mizovohr Arhomven is so disillusioned that he spends most of his time loafing in bars, gambling, drinking and haunting the many brothels bordering the Izhoven River. Emosvom has about 90 hobilar, 40 light cavalry, and about 30 heavy infantry with appropriate armaments. When he emerges from his stupor, he complains that his men lack the appropriate tools to defend the city. The Duke ignores his complaints, for Inawhil has no interest in building his army up much larger than it already is. He fears an uprising against him or the belief of other warlords that he is readying for a claim for the crown. What his sot of a captain does not realize is if the city falls under attack, Inawhil plans to flee to the east with all of his wealth in tow, leaving the decrepit city to whatever fate the gods intend.

Temples: The citizens of Emosvom, for all of their failings, are dedicated to their respective faiths, tithing, following the edicts of the faith, which explains the city's inaction towards the events in the country. Even with this amount of commitment, they rarely attend services (particularly at the Conventicle of the Great Tree, for the temple lies a few miles to the east). Moreover, the Brotherhood of the Bear allies itself with several wild elf tribes and openly aids them in their attacks against Ahznomahn.

Belief in the Mother of the Elements is strong in the Vohven and many Keepers travel to the city to trade goods and information. The Keepers oppose the stirring forces in the heart of the Emerald Sea and warn the Zazahnii to halt their depredations against the people there. However, their warnings remain

unheeded. In the recent months, the Keepers appear less often and are quite closemouthed about what is coming. Some suspect that the Keepers are leaving Svimohzia for distant lands - and some think they have the right idea.

From their temple, the Merciful Fates assist the sick or injured by using their healing arts to help those in need. Pilgrims from all over the world brave the battlefields to pay homage to the Lord of Silver Linings in this sacred place, and many miracles are said to have occurred here. The courtyard where they practice is situated directly in front of the ducal palace but Duke Inawhil does not seem to mind their presence.

The Merry Muses operate from the Theater of Arts in Emosvom, where they worry Duke Inawhil by mocking his inaction to alleviate the suffering of those around him. He does his best to secretly remove them through the House of Knives to kill its boisterous members. Inawhil cannot openly oppose them much, for the commoners attend performances in droves. The Home Foundation has a smaller, though popular, following.

Mages & Sages: In a small house just outside of Emosvom lives Miznamvho the Elder (N druid 10), a local herbalist who makes frequent forays into the Vohven Jungle. Although known for his herbal mixtures, people know him best as a storyteller, for he tells the most fantastic tales of adventure, recounting the lives of bold heroes who met terrible ends within the clutches of the woodlands.

At first, many believed that the druid's tales were nothing more than stories, but his tales include actual known people in Emosvom who disappeared. While most were adventurers, others were merchants, woodcutters or travelers. Furthermore, Miznamvho can recount details with uncommon insight into the victims' actions, emotions and dialogue.

According to the druid, their lives are not his responsibility and by living to tell their stories, he brings back news of their fates to families or to do them honor. His coldness and unwillingness to avert painful and terrible deaths make many citizens suspicious of whether he has a hand in these deaths.

Miznamvho is an older man with long tangled black hair and green eyes. He wears homespun brown robes and sandals, and carries a gnarled wooden staff capped with bronze. Never far from him are the pet vipers he raised from their leathery eggs.

Underworld: Emosvom has a powerful criminal element. The organization known as the Brothers in Alms is Emosvom's influential beggars' union, a collection of individuals (many of whom are thieves) making a living begging for coin at the city's gates. They control all imports and exports that come through the city, collecting their alms from merchants who would set up a stall in the overcrowded markets. The corpses of merchants failing to pay off the guild often finish in the Izhoven River.

Interesting Sites: Another reason Emosvom has survived intact all of these years is because of the prison on the southern side of the city. Enormous and secure, it houses over 1,000 of the most dangerous criminals, rebels, insurgents and incarcerated nobles of fallen houses. This is a bad place to be - dirty,

dangerous, with no regard for gender or age. The guards working the prison are hardened murderers themselves, and enjoy the power they command over their charges. The prison is unpopular because Emosvom receives no funding from other warlords to house the prisoners, and so the burden of feeding and clothing them falls on the people in the city. Hence, little food and less clothing make it inside.

Special Notes: Emosvom gained its moniker of "Doorway to the Past" from its placement at the mouth of the Izhoven River, where it provides easy entry into the Vohven Jungle. Many of the city's thriving businesses sell equipment and gear for expeditions into the jungle. In addition, boatmen are willing to carry a group downriver for the right price. Adventurers can also hire guides, additional guards and just about anything else they might need to survive the jungle.

SVOMWHI

Population: 18,900 (18,100 Svimohz, 800 hill dwarves, halflings and gnomes)

A Closer Look: One of the few cities to escape much of the damage and destruction of the civil wars, Svomwhi (29°55'N, 12°5'W) is a city divided by wealth. To the east, it is a beautiful park, with exquisitely landscaped buildings of peerless design, conceived by the best architects in Svimohzia that are surrounded by greenery of gentle arches, fountains and statuary. The crowning jewel on the east bank of the Izhoven River is the ducal palace, the Duke Dovizhem III's home. The Duke does not live on this side of the city alone, as several minor lords and priests also have homes near Duke's Gate.

The wide stone bridge connecting the halves of the city takes the traveler to the poorer west bank and urban sprawl of Svomwhi's commoners. While not poor in their own right, they appear destitute when compared to the excesses of their Duke. Away from the wide thoroughfares are tight twisting alleys and side streets, perfect for criminal elements to stalk their prey. Furthermore, citizens clustered in the western part of the city must contend with an unfriendly dwarven element that has taken up residence in the heart of the city. Most buildings in the western half are stone with peaked roofs and shingled with tile.

Svomwhi has three gates (known as the Duke's, Low, and Common Gates) leading into the city, as well as a wide entrance for the sluggish Izhoven River. Dovizhem's personal guard protects the Duke's Gate, where white marble tiles pave the street all the way up to the stone bridge that connects the two sides of the city. Rumor has it that a local dwarven artisan crafted the statuesque columns with the ability to detect evil. The constructs will attack anyone they detect as evil that seeks entry through the gate.

Low Gate faces south and is protected by mundane means. This gate is the one used by the clerics who travel south to offer what succor they can to the suffering people of the nation. Most merchants also use this gate.

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The last gate is the Common Gate. Interestingly, it is left to the citizens to protect this gate. Civilian soldiers take turns watching the gate during the day and locking it at night. Some merchants use this gate because many of the civilian guards accept their bribes to let the merchants pass without question.

The Izhoven River is much cleaner here in the north than it is in Emosvom. Although still slow moving, it supplies the city with fresh drinking water. People discard wastes and clean their clothes downstream of the city.

Government: To an outsider, Duke Dovizhem III appears to be a decadent warlord, growing fat off the industry of his people. The current duke inherited this from his father, the infamous Dovizhem II, who fought against reunification and led a coalition of warlords to crush Zenshahn. Dovizhem III, however, is neutral towards reunification and desires a return of stability in the fractured kingdom - with him in charge, of course.

To facilitate the reunification under Svomwhi, he courts King Warven II, avoiding commitment to the Meznamishii crown but accepting the gifts the former empire sends. Given the opinion of the other warlords in Zazahni, he believes he may have to commit himself to Meznamish to bring order to the land once more. He justifies his treasonous inclinations by thinking of the lives saved.

As a ruler, Dovizhem III is fair and makes little demand on his people. He allows Baron Svemahni, his seneschal, to handle all of the unpopular duties of administration, such as tax collection, construction of roads, and the management of the Ministry of Faith, a governmental bureau whose responsibility it is to ensure the temples' compliance with the city's laws. Baron Svemahni believes he is the true master of the city, taking gold from tax revenues to repair and expand his home. As head of the Ministry of Faith, he makes unpopular decisions, such as levying taxes against the churches, dictating the appropriate hours for worshiping and a number of other pedantic rules.

Still, Dovizhem allows the Baron his excesses. After all, with each new scandal, the Duke diverts attention from himself to the seneschal. This allows Dovizhem to build a better reputation, while avoiding the unpopular duties as the city's monarch. Soon, though, Dovizhem plans to crush the Baron and emerge as a strong force in the north, buttressed by a new image as liberator and champion of the people.

Economy: Svomwhi is a wealthy city, having a monopoly on the wool trade their merchants sell in Ozhvinmishii settlements to the north. Highland dancers roam the eastern plains, and are often supplied to Meznamish much cheaper than Ahznomahni traders can afford. Svomwhi makes some of the best beer, having excellent hops harvests. Mills line the waterway, grinding wheat and barley into flour. There is no lapse in demand.

Despite the wealth, much of the labor resources and tax revenue goes into maintaining Duke Dovizhem III's palace and gardens. Over 500 people work in the eastern half of the city, contributing nothing to the city's well-being, but ensuring that the Duke's lands are the most exquisitely beautiful anywhere. A

small minority of merchants grumble about labor shortages, so slavery in the city is on the rise. Where the slaves come from, no one asks, but a few resemble those of pure Mewhi blood, and some claim to have been taken from the west. Most ignore their laments, as most slaves claim they were taken illegally (whether true or not).

Military: Betrayal by his supposed allies and by the mercenaries he hired is why Dovizhem II failed to capture Zenshahn. This route cost the house its reputation and its might, and it is all the son can now do to recover its losses. From his father's errors, Dovizhem III learned some valuable lessons. First, he rarely makes alliances with other warlords and only looks beyond the borders for assistance. Second, he almost never hires mercenaries. Those who seek extra protection are free to do so, but not with coin from the Duke's coffers.

The soldiers directly serving the Duke include the 200 heavy infantry that man the gates, patrol the streets and serve in the watchtowers, and the 300 heavy cavalry patrolling the lands around the city. Natural protections, like the Imomena Hills to the north and the Mewhi Marsh to the southeast, provide additional fortification against normal routes of attack. Short-of-work mercenaries sometimes spend their time prospecting for gold in the nearby hills.

Temples: Svomwhi is the religious capital in Zazahni. This was intentional, for Duke Dovizhem II believed that, by allying with the churches, he would gain the hearts of the people. The Duke's son retains his friendly attitude towards the faiths that call Svomwhi home, and encourages churches of all faiths to establish here.

The Home Foundation organizes teams of clerics to travel to the worst places in the land and bring families out to safer locations. Many Ozhvins do not look kindly on this, for they blame the temple for the recent influx of immigrants to Ozhvinmish. Another possible culprit for the emigration of Zazahni to Ozhvinmish is the Temple of the Stars, one of the more prominent churches in Svomwhi. Situated within the consortium that trades cattle with Ozhvinmish and Meznamish, they encourage trade with Zazahni by serving as guides or escorts. In addition, many Journeymen accompany Zazahni merchants to trade with neighboring nations or in distant ports in the continent. Overall, though, they encourage the Zazahni to leave the blighted lands, in order to be free from the oppression and danger of their homeland.

Built alongside the Home Foundation is the Hall of Oaths, a modest structure that, while still powerful and influential in Zazahni, has declined since the start of the civil war. The reason for this decline comes from the broken oaths and promises by the lords of the land that plunged the nation into its century-long conflict.

Another powerful religion is the Courts of Justice. The Truthseekers have a difficult time making inroads into Zazahni, however, as most citizens seek justice from their lords and

nowhere else. Still, Dovizhem employs Truthseekers to assist in governing provinces.

The Temple of the Three Strengths, although lying outside the city on the slopes of the Imomena Hills, has a growing congregation. Led by an Aspirant of the Third Strength, it teaches the central ethos of the Three Strengths: Mind, Body and Spirit. A former student of Zhulurahn, Shazon, hopes to continue his master's work in containing the difficulties in Zazahni.

Minor faiths, like the Church of the Silver Mist and the Inevitable Order of Time, have small followings because of their uncertain goals. Risk, too, has a presence in Svomwhi. Most of his followers, the Challengers of Fate, are thieves of the worst kind - individuals who throw their fortune to the wind and risk it all to achieve the ludicrous. The Church of Chance operates a small thieves' guild that meets under an old burned-out warehouse on the western bank, dodging Truthseekers when they can. Evil churches are present in the city, too, but in smaller numbers. The Gaunt strives to empty the city's food stores, while the Minions of Misfortune use Svomwhi as a base to launch their efforts to keep Zazahni a violent land.

Mages & Sages: Weithaelin (NG high elf expert 11) lived much of his adult life in Zazahni, serving great dukes as a historian. His first post was in Zenshahn, where he recorded the events of the ducal family, but his relationship with the lord turned sour after he refused to reveal his work. The elven chronicler loves his work and is meticulous in his details, drawing from the events he has read about or witnessed firsthand. He claims that Zazahni is on the cusp of entering its most important stage in history, for he has identified several developments over the last 300 years that point to the current day as the

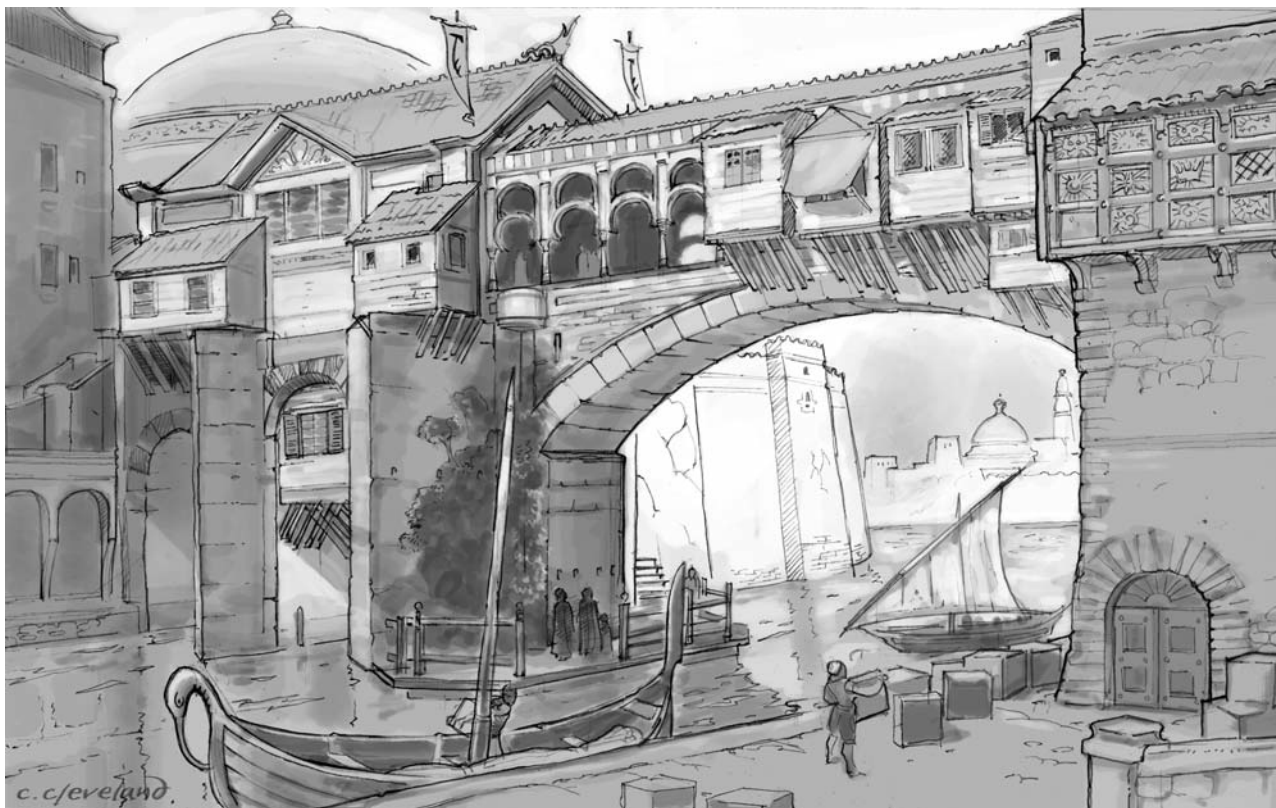
time of their fruition. He believes the next development will drastically change the lives of islanders.

Weithaelin has delicate features, a thin frame and long wavy blond hair. He appears disheveled because he has not sought a tailor to make clothes to fit him properly. Instead, the historian wears clothing he found in a wardrobe, in his rooms provided by the Duke.

Underworld: Aside from the usual assortment of thugs, pickpockets and murderers haunting alleys in Zazahni, Svomwhi has a different kind of underworld presence: the Ahznomahnii spy. Ahznoms fear a united Zazahni almost as much as they fear a Zazahni reunited with Meznamish. Therefore, to prevent these developments, the Kingless Land sends spies into the country to spread dissent against other warlords and to spread word about the horrors of the Meznamishii regime.

One such spy working is Mesvanish (N bard 8), who preaches independence for each Zazahnii duchy, depending on where he happens to be at the time. Mesvanish has no other goal than to serve Ahznomahn. He despises the Zazahnii and sees them as gullible fools. Yet, he is honor-bound to fulfill the parameters of his mission: to keep the nation divided. To sate his desire to mock the Zazahnii, he targets Baron Svemahni with scathing satirical song and verse.

Interesting Sites: Amidst the beauty of Dovizhem III's gardens stands the Tomb of Kings, a granite building designed to hold the remains of King Adasvero, the last king to rule the fractured lands. This two-step pyramid stands only about 60 feet across and 50 feet high. It has a small altar at the top. Decorated with images of content farmers, the tomb holds what is required



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to rule the country, the ruby-tipped scepter, the book of laws, and the crown of King Adasvero. Protecting these artifacts is an arcane locked door, strange illusions and the protection of the Truthseekers (who await a strong contender before unlocking the door and crowning him king in the name of the gods).

Special Notes: Svomwhi was once the national capital and the seat of power for the last true king, Adasvero. No one recognizes the reign of King Whereahzni II, for his reign was fraught with excesses and corruption. Its central location, access to the Izhoven River, the nearby mineral wealth of the Imomena Hills, and the productive central farmlands make Svomwhi a logical choice for a center of government.

WIMISH

Population: 20,600 Svimohz

At a Glance: Wimish (29°0'N, 11°50'W) still struggles to recover from House Zhahesh's attack. The tyrant's attacks shattered the city's walls, torched homes and businesses, enslaved a quarter of the population and massacred many clerics. Nevertheless, despite the severity of the attack, the citizens have put away their sorrows and work to rebuild their city. Over a third of Wimish stands in ruins, and pestilence carried by mosquitoes infests many of the poor and homeless. Food and potable water are scarce, but clerics from Svomwhi make several pilgrimages to help their neighbor to the south.

Government: Duke Whishimvish is an unpredictable leader, led by his passions and his conception of what is best. Despite the condition of his capital and the weakness of his troops, he rallies people to his banners and fights against the evil warlords tearing the kingdom apart. Although he has the support of his citizens, many fear his zeal will lead to ruin.

Economy: Wimish relies on agriculture to survive. They export only small quantities of wheat, oats and barley, for bad crops, blights and the depredations of competing houses make it difficult for citizens to feed themselves. Supplementing their meager farming, Wimish is also notorious for its unusual elixirs. The Mewhi Marsh is home to rare specimens of plants, from which herbalists create several concoctions useful for repelling insects, healing minor injuries, fighting diseases and more. They also produce an array of nasty poisons.

Military: Nearly 500 soldiers work for Duke Whishimvish, with about 250 being light cavalry, 125 being heavy cavalry, and the other 125 divided between archers and heavy infantry. Each soldier is fiercely loyal and commits his life to upholding the Duke's ideals. Zealous in their admiration for their lord, they are fearless in battle, never backing down from any foe, regardless of the odds. It is with these men Duke Whishimvish hopes to defeat his foe Zhahesh.

Temples: The Duke's opposition to evil and his current crusade brought several faiths to Wimish to help rebuild and aid his efforts. Temples to the Traveler and the Pure One have strong followings, but neither as much as the Face of the Free. Emancipator Alrius Desvehn (CG Brandobian-Svimohz bard

4/cleric 4) leads a group of Messengers who joined the Duke's cause in exchange for the liberation of all of his slaves. Needing available men, he consented. The Messengers of Liberty prove strong allies in his cause, and with them come the promise of hundreds of liberated slaves, disaffected citizens, and anyone else opposed to tyranny.

Mages & Sages: The murder of so many good clerics and heroes at the hands of the deplorable Zhahesh is an unpardonable affront to the good people living in and around Wimish. Concerned citizens and people of the wild come to the city to assist in rebuilding, while others join Duke Whishimvish's soldiers, swelling their numbers, and bringing many unique weapons to bear against the unchecked evil. One such individual is Alosho (NG ranger 3/druid 5). Throughout her adult life, she avoided the entanglements of Zazahni politics, preferring instead to repair the lands ravaged by war. The wholesale slaughter of Wimish's priests, many of whom were her friends, forced her hand. Now she leads a detachment of light infantry to hunt down Zhahesh's men and execute them in the name of righteousness.

Underworld: There is a growing market for fresh corpses in the Mewhi Marsh. There, necromancers are always short of subjects for their black arts. Wimish, who has no shortage of corpses after a raid, has grave robbers that may remove bodies from their shallow graves to resell to the gaunt warlocks.

Interesting Sites: In the great open courtyard of Wimish, it is said that the avatar of the Lord of the Blue Sky once appeared and spoke with the people of the city, offering them guidance and words of encouragement to build the fortitude to withstand the trials faced in the land. Whether true or not, during a rainstorm, one can often see a rainbow from this courtyard. Since this supposed visit, the Church of Everlasting Hope has claimed the space as part of their church.

Special Notes: Wimish is the staging ground for the largest crusade in Zazahni's recent history. Ahznomahn, who fears this movement as the first step towards reunification, has several spies working against their efforts, even going so far as to hire Minions of Mischief to disrupt efforts wherever they can.

ZENSHAHN

Population: 24,700 Svimohz. Most humanoids that survived the tumultuous civil wars have left.

A Closer Look: Zenshahn (27°50'N, 14°50'W), Zazahni's largest port city, rebuilt their collapsed walls (shattered by Duke Dovizhem II's forces) just a few years ago. The walls are new, tall, and vigilantly guarded by veteran soldiers with longbows and a full range of siege equipment. Now, with the basic defenses restored and loyal legions to defend it, the population can turn to rebuilding their lives, something they do with enthusiasm and good spirit.

As Zenshahn lies on the far western end of Zahnzor's Line, and situated as it is on Zhano-Mewhi Bay, the people of the city are used to living a remote existence. Most merchants rarely

make it as far west as Zenshahn, and the Zhano-Mewhi Bay is far too remote and dangerous to be of much interest. The few travelers coming to this city come along Zahnzor's Line through the so-named King's Gate. Most of the markets and shops line Commerce Street with a few businesses and the general market situated along the docks.

The buildings, wooden on stone foundations with peaked roofs, are in variable condition. Most of the damage struck the outer edge of the city during the siege, destroying hundreds of homes. These ruins were cleared away to repair the shattered wall, but few have moved to build new houses there yet. Most homes and shops still have some fire damage or cracks in walls, and a few are derelicts, dangerous and unstable.

Government: Duke Whanavi was once the most powerful duke in Zazahni and stood to gain the crown, but a betrayal by Duke Dovizhem II and an attack by a coalition of warlords put to rest any immediate dreams of becoming king. Since the war, he has focused on rebuilding his city and securing his land. He looks to his son, Yahan, to be the king and devotes his efforts to prepare the way.

Duke Whanavi has several plans to achieve the throne. The first is to rebuild the duchy's power base. Through recruitment, hiring mercenaries and building fortifications, Whanavi intends on repelling any aggressive act directed at his people or city. So far, he has the largest army in the country, but still not enough to have a viable claim on the throne. His numbers grow by the day, but many recruits are farmers, sons of merchants and ex-slaves, which adds to the expense of their training.

No warlord can make a claim to the throne without allies. Whanavi faced many former friends on the battlefield and, although he has secretly sworn vengeance, he has had to put aside these grudges in an effort to repair the damage wrought by the last war. He has sent emissaries to many of the powerful houses with hopes for a new alliance.

Finally, he must repair Zenshahn's economy. He cannot rely on Brolenese merchants because of the Mendarn blockade, and those managing to slip through usually frequent the Kargi ports instead. Therefore, Whanavi trades directly with Mendarn, as well as with the Vohven natives. Because he treats the natives honorably, he avoids many skirmishes. He has also funded caravans to export Zenshahn goods to other parts of Svimohzia and even has a broker in distant Ashoshani.

Economy: Zenshahn's primary trading partners are Vohven natives. Merchants trade weapons, armor and finished metal goods for materials to manufacture the city's famous poisons. Occasionally, mud-painted savages emerge from the forests, bearing cages holding monstrous tree spiders, scorpions, bushels of colored flowers and a variety of other unusual substances and horrifying visitors. As Zenshahn merchants carve trade routes into the jungle, many natives express resentment, sometimes resulting in violence. Duke Whanavi insists on tolerance with these people as they provide the necessary materials to keep his city alive.

The finished product, poisons, veteran mercenaries, and jet mined from the foothills to the northwest are the chief exports to other lands. Even as a port, they do not see much traffic because of the distances and dangers involved. Occasionally, though, Brolenese merchants make a detour to do business, but the most valuable product they sell is information about the Kargi military and trading powers.

Military: Heavy cavalry forms the backbone of the Zenshahn defenses. Their black-garbed knights astride the nimble highland dancers were enough to route several of the smaller houses by their presence alone. However, the wars were expensive, reducing the Duke's knights to just 2,000 men and horses. He keeps about half of that number in the city, while the rest patrol his lands, looking for survivors from the armies that attacked him. Unfortunately, for all of their prowess and reputation, they are a drain on the Duke's coffers. They spend his coin and use much of their free time in the inns, brothels and taverns, swapping war stories and lies with abandon. Whanavi accepts their behavior because he knows that, without them, Zenshahn would have fallen.

After the war, Whanavi gained Dovizhem's infantry as part of the terms for peace. They have low morale, are belligerent and are costly to maintain, but they recognize the makings of a king in the Duke's son, and few desert. As Yahan moves among the men, loyalty stirs and the men curb their excesses, seeing the potential for glory and honor in their futures.

Temples: One of the more important churches in the city is the Temple of Armed Conflict. Duke Whanavi places much trust in them, for they train his soldiers in the art of war and ensure they are ready for battle.

Opposed to the Order of the Pike is the Way of Berserk, mostly represented by Vohven barbarians who come to trade in the city. The Order and the Way avoid each other, but when they meet, the results are always spectacular and bloody. In their last meeting, the Order of the Pike defeated the Brothers in Blood, and since then the city has suffered a few raids from the Emerald Sea. The Order of the Pike claim the situation is in hand, but their deaths are on the rise. Whanavi's spies suggest that the Brothers in Blood work for Baron Whoshoeh.

More important than either of the previous two religions is the Halls of the Valiant. Supported by Yahan, a cleric of no small measure in his own right, their congregation has tripled since the war, and over two thirds of the cavalry claim the Knight of the Gods as their own. Whanavi himself is not as pious, but his son's good deeds comfort him with the knowledge that when his son takes the throne, all of Zazahni will prosper.

The Church of the Life's Fire is another vital faith, whose assistance in blessing the fields has provided food for the city's citizens. When the coalition attacked Zenshahn, the Church of the Life's Fire protected the rice paddies, tended to the sick, and gave shelter to the children. The Field Leader in charge of the temple fears a great loss of influence with the ducal house if Yahan ascends to the throne, for he follows the Knight of the

Chapter Eight: the Kingdom of Zazahni

Gods. Although not at all evil, these followers do believe vigorous fighting against darkness is the only way to achieve its defeat.

Not all of the churches in Zenshahn practice as do those above. The Messengers of Liberty use Zenshahn as a springboard for their activities in Zazahni and Ul-Karg, working to liberate slaves wherever they find them. In addition, the Messengers insinuate themselves into the Kargi government by posing as hobgoblins to overthrow King Krarag-Randatk. Finally, they lobby Duke Whanavi to liberate all of his slaves, something the Duke claims to agree with on principle but cannot do. They maintain a shrine beyond the walls of the city.

Whanavi also opposes the Inevitable Order of Time, which has tried for years to get close to him. Having little interest in what the future holds and not believing in fate, he refuses to talk to them. Still believing they can somehow reach the Duke, the Prophets maintain a small shrine on the outskirts of the city.

Also outside of the city, an old, dilapidated shrine leans against one of the walls. Small, overgrown and in poor repair, most people now believe it to be haunted.

Mages & Sages: After years of civil war, wizards are scarce in Zazahni. In response, Duke Whanavi of Zenshahn founded the University of Arcana to train wizards loyal to the Duchy, placing Mushahnohz (CG wizard 12) in charge of designing the campus, establishing the curriculum and managing the entire operation. Mushahnohz is the fledgling school's only instructor as other wizards are content to remain in their more stable nations.

Pedantic and arrogant, Mushahnohz despises teaching, but realizes to ensure the survival of the duchy, he must expand Whanavi's magical resources. Worse, he is a terrible administrator. Mushahnohz grows more frustrated and makes frequently less progress in maintaining finances. He is searching for an assistant to help him manage the mundane duties and looks forward to the time when one of his students grows competent enough to help teach some of the classes.

Mushahnohz is in his thirties and has short black hair and plain facial features. He wears the robes of his office, long and blue, with arcane runes sewn onto the cuffs of his sleeves.

Underworld: Zenshahn has a large black market operated by the Dark Omen, a significant thieves' guild that imports wine, weapons and cloth at two-thirds the price other merchants must charge. Because of these low prices, the population riots whenever Duke Whanavi tries to take action against them. Led by a vicious, but dashing, rogue named Ispanosh (see Who's Who in Zazahni, above), the Dark Omen has contacts and agents throughout western Svimohzia.

Interesting Sites: Rubble is strewn around much of Zenshahn, but some of its former grandeur remains intact. Perhaps one of the most impressive structures is the palace. Still undergoing renovation at the behest of the Duke's son Yahan, it has suffered setback after setback. Accidents have plagued the construction as well, including the drowning of six workers in the moat after their scaffolding fell from a wall and its entangling ropes trapped them underwater.

Special Notes: As the Dark Omen succeeds in bringing in merchandise at such a low price, the tax revenues collected from the markets is shrinking. Those rare few merchants who hazard the risks of traveling to this distant port find no buyers. If Whanavi does not find some way to raise income, his dreams of seeing his son crowned will turn to ashes.

ZHANOHVEN

Population: 8,300 Svimohz

At a Glance: Zhanohven (28°30'N, 14°10'W) suffers from an ambivalent leader, corruption amongst its nobles and from an association with one of the most dangerous lords in the land, Lord Zhoshorohz. The city features its center of government, a huge castle standing on a hill overlooking the area, with the rest of the shattered town scattered below it. The city's outer wall lies collapsed and half its fields lie burned and salted. Duke Ewheshosvehz does not seem to care that his people are starving and appears unable to take action of any kind. While still a powerful house with an impressive army, many think that the death of his own city would eliminate him from contention.

Government: Duke Ewheshosvehz's government is weak and ineffectual and is sliding to its doom. Minor nobles exploit the local population, taking what they want whenever they desire. Lord Zhoshorohz' black-cloaked killers prowl through the streets, searching for signs of dissent and rebellion and making those they find disappear. Terror grips the city, with people mourning the destruction of their homes and lives and the perceived abandonment by the gods. Unless Ewheshosvehz does something, the peoples' grumbling may turn into rebellion.

Economy: Zhanohven deals with selling mercenaries to smaller warlords. Having few resources of its own, other than a few small fields of stunted barley and wheat, and with scrawny cows and starving peasants, Duke Ewheshosvehz sells his soldiers as mercenaries. With some convincing from his ally, Lord Zhoshorohz, he sends soldiers to raid neighboring settlements like Zenmahn to the north and Zonamish to the west.

Military: The soldiers in service to Duke Ewheshosvehz have been deserting over the last year until only a few hundred remain. Buttressed by the small force Duke Zhoshorohz brought with him when he declared his House to Zhanohven, those that remain are a hard lot of cruel men. Unlike their master, the Duke, they each want power, wealth and the satiation of their desires, and are willing to do whatever it takes. Calling themselves the "Dihzri" (roughly translating as the "Haters" in Merchant's Tongue), they earned a grudging respect from their peers in other houses for their bloodthirsty tactics.

Temples: While several shrines to a number of gods, both good and evil, stand in this city, the Temple of the Fate Scribe is the most powerful. Here, Shazeh (N cleric 9) has the Duke's ear. She whispers to him the truths of the world, and with each prophecy she manipulates the Duke into inaction. She earnestly believes she is best serving the Duke's interests by urging him to let Fate resolve his difficulties.

Mages & Sages: Malthien (NE half-fiend/half-Svimohz wizard 7) serves Lord Zhoshorohz, using his uncanny ability to anticipate the intrigues and motivations of his enemies. Malthien appears human, although his skin is nearly coal black, and he has yellowish eyes and stark white hair. He conceals his leathery wings as best he can under heavy black robes.

Underworld: Lord Zhoshorohz works to undermine the Duke's authority and claim his lands. He brought the Prophetess to the city to confuse Ewheshosvehz, and insinuated himself into the Duke's good graces to advise inaction. He also spread his men amongst the Duke's to corrupt them. Zhoshorohz plans to murder the Duke once he eliminates the Duke's relatives.

Interesting Sites: The Road of Spirits is the central thoroughfare through Zhanohven. On either side stand old bronze statues of demonic-looking dogs with spiked manes and fearsome jaws. On the foreheads are sinister runes, though no one can translate them. Stranger still, the statues are said to have just appeared in the middle of the night 10 years ago. No one is sure what this means, but most have grown accustomed to their presence.

Special Notes: Duke Ewheshosvehz's nephew, Alarz (NG ranger 6), knows what the evil Lord has in mind, but is, so far, powerless to stop his uncle's corruptive acts. Alarz pretends ignorance but Zhoshorohz suspects the youth works against him. Alarz recruits loyal men to overthrow Zhoshorohz but he does not have enough men to topple the Duke's favored advisor.

ENVIRONMENT

Zazahni suffers from years of warfare. Blackened farmsteads dot the countryside, victims of cruel soldiers or careless warlords. Cities show signs of the fighting with crumbling walls and collapsed buildings, brought low by a hurled boulder from a catapult or by a spellcaster serving an unscrupulous master.

Zazahni has one coastal border far to the southwest, along the remote Zhano-mewhi Bay, where few merchants dare to sail. North of the bay there lies a great stretch of land called the Graveyard of Cities, the terrible remains of those communities destroyed during Fortnight's Battle. To the north, smoking volcanic peaks atop the Imomena Hills form a natural border between Ozhvinmish and the fractured lands to the south.

In the east lies a great depression, filled with brackish water and containing stunted trees. The Mewhi Marsh, a tributary of the Izhoven River, lacks any strategic value to the warlords, so they leave it alone. Further east are the destabilizing lands of southern Ahznomahn, where wild elf savages wage a guerilla war against the Ahznom slavers.

TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands

VOHVEN JUNGLE

Mountain Ranges

LOZHEN MOUNTAINS

Among the Imomena Hills are towering volcanoes that smoke year around. Though there has been no eruption in generations, they pose a threat to the smaller communities around the base of the hills. Though gemstones are rumored to abound herein, few intrepid souls ever venture into the peaks, and those who do find terrible creatures lurking in the superheated environs. Among certain circles, rumor states one grotto is a gate to a fiery realm.

Hills

IMOMENA HILLS

This rugged plateau lying between Ozhvinmish and Zazahni is claimed by both kingdoms, yet controlled by neither. A few petty Zazahnii nobles actively patrol the southern hills, but the rest of the territory is unguarded. Few humanoids remain, the majority long ago driven off into the Svomawhom Forest or under the Lozhens. The tough yeomen who inhabit the region are mostly shepherds. Prospectors are also here as the region yields some quantities of semi-precious stones.

Wetlands

MEWHI MARSH

The Mewhi Marsh is a tributary for the sluggish Izhoven River. Few humans, other than the odd witch and hermit, live in this mire, finding little reason to compete with the native lizardfolk for the scant resources available. The lizardfolk are neutral about the wars of men, and as long as their lands are undisturbed, they are content with the relationship. A few hedge wizards and alchemists come here to collect rare herbs for unguents, tinctures and poisons.

Rivers

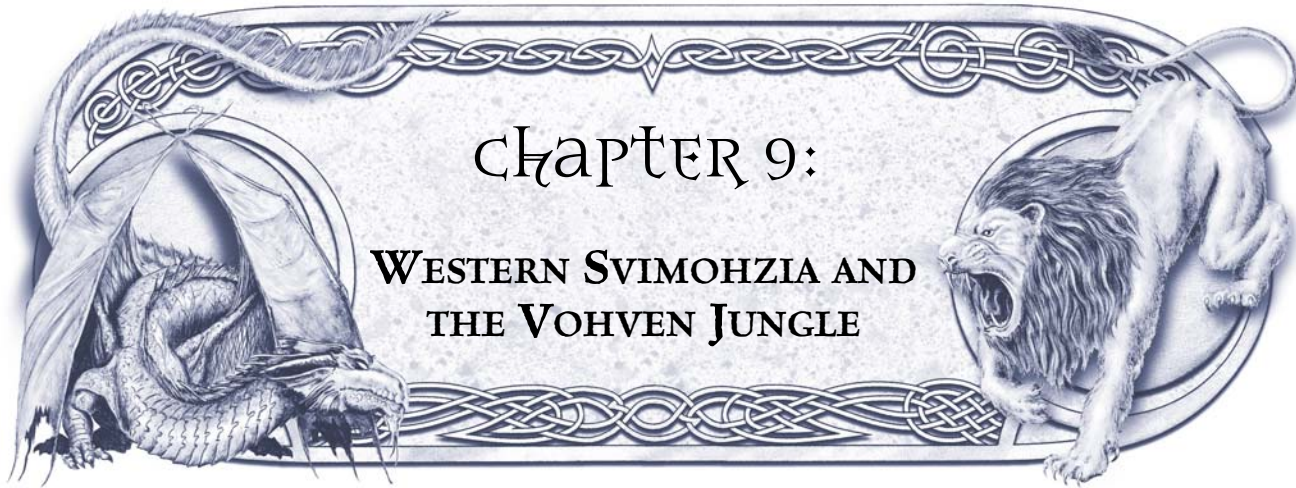
IZHOVEN RIVER

Draining rainwater from the Imomena Hills, the Izhoven meanders across Zazahni, collecting in the Mewhi Marsh before flowing southward into the Vohven Jungle. The Izhoven is a great muddy smear that stretches across the land. Travelers use the waterway to travel to and from Emosvom.

WEATHER

Zazahni has a dangerous climate. Hot and humid year around, monsoons break periods of long summer heat. These severe rains blow over the Vohven Jungle and settle over the region to rain for months. Valleys flood, becoming dangerous breeding grounds for disease-carrying insects. However, during the winter, Zazahni receives little rain except in the west. For those unused to it, Zazahni can be a terrible place to remain for long.





Although Svimohzia's central and eastern lands are home to many peoples, the west and far south are home to others as well. To the west is the colony of Vrandol, a former Brolenese slaving outpost that later fell to Mendarn. Having conquered the land, Mendarn opted to retain the colony for their purposes, creating a successful trade relationship with Ul-Karg. Vrandol is a prominent foreign presence on the island, and, though they are at peace with Meznamish, their presence makes many wary.

Also along the western coast is the independent city of Bronish. Refugees from Mendarn and Pel Brolenon founded the free city of Bronish (population 8,000) about 100 years ago. Fearing racial persecution or enslavement, the founders came by boat to the northwest coast of the Svimohzish Isle. Here they met Meznamishii nomads and developed a small community.

Along the southernmost portion of the Svimohzish Isle lies the massive sprawling jungle that is the Vohven. Beneath the emerald canopy are secrets of fallen empires, ancient civilizations, and horrors that make even the bravest warrior cringe. Although many have led armies into the jungle, the Vohven has always managed to avoid conquest. It is home to tribes of savage men, wild elves, snake-like men, and worse. The Vohven is no place to explore without caution.

Within this chapter is a brief overview of the colony of Vrandol and the free city of Bronish, both partially or mostly made up of Mendarn inhabitants. For more information on the Brandobian Kingdom of Mendarn, see the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook*.

Following Vrandol is an overview of the Vohven Jungle, describing its history, inhabitants, possible encounters and adventure ideas. The Vohven is a place of great mystery, and this book leaves the extensive details to those who wish to explore it. Thus, while details are sparse, the seeds are present for your own campaign there.

Note that Bronish and Vrandol typically use the Brandobian calendar, which lists years by Y.K. (Year of the King). The Svimohzish dating of C.M. (Coming of Miznoh) follows these listings.

HISTORY OF THE WEST

Western Svimohzia has long been an unpopular place for the Svimohz. Few tribes settled there, leaving the land to a few human and humanoid tribes (mostly dwarves, gnomes and halflings). Even Mewzhano, and later Miznoh, had little interest in exploring these lands, preferring to focus on conquering the eastern lands from which they came. In fact, the far west did not greatly figure into Svimohzish history until Pel Brolenon founded a colony in 1027 Y.K. (317 C.M.)

The wars of men to the east had little impact on the indigenous people in western Svimohzia, who were dealing with the resurgence of the troll population, the emergence of the mongrelfolk and the constant attacks from the hobgoblins. However, when the Meznamishii Empire began its fifteen generations of (relative) peace, the Meznams could deal with threats to national security before they escalated into serious problems. Small bands of Meznamishii nomads moved further west, not interested in the dynasties of emperors, but to find freedom in the barren reaches of land.

Occasional skirmishes between the Meznams and the indigenous peoples (particularly the halflings) occurred and, by the end of the second century, most of the halflings withdrew back to the Whisvomi Forest and the Zhano Headlands where they live in small settlements to this day. Otherwise, most of the indigenous peoples made peace with the intruders and managed to live in relative harmony.

POPULATION CENTERS

Aside from Bronish and Vrandol (detailed below), most settlements in western Svimohzia are small, with populations rarely exceeding 1,000 people and often no larger than a few hundred. These communities have similar patterns, built to be self-sufficient and maximizing the land to survive in their isolation. Many of the towns have some defense, such as a low wooden wall or fence around the outskirts, sometimes expanded to accommodate growth but solid enough to offer some protection against raiders.

The center of town usually features four buildings clustered around the community's market, and a well where the townspeople draw their water. The first building is the temple of the dominant religion. Smaller shrines are scattered throughout the rest of the town. Next to the temple is the Town Hall, a long wooden building filled with benches and a podium at the far end. The halls have open windows and sometimes even lack walls, with only simple pillars to support the roof. Across the market is the home of the town's mayor, lord or ruler, depending on the government of the town. This home is a modest wooden building with a thatched roof. Next to it are the barracks for the watchmen. Encircling the center of the community are the shops and homes of the common folk. There are no distinctions between caste and class and the homes are all simple structures. The wealthy have no interest in drawing attention to their success, as it makes them targets for thieves and pirates.

RACES AND NATIONALITIES

The Meznam inhabitants, who once dwelled on the Zhano-mewhi Bay, left their original civilization, fleeing either from the hobgoblins or from some of other threat and settled in the Mewzhano Bay area. However, their time there was brief, for Mewzhano and his followers crossed the Menamo Hills, conquering the entire valley in the name of war and greed. Many Meznams fell to their conquerors, but a few fled to the west, establishing the free cities of the western coast, including the lost barony that would become Vrandol. These Svimohz have suffered at the hands of one oppressor after another, from the Zassho conquerors to the Brolenese and now the Mendarns. It remains to be seen if the last of the pureblooded Meznams will fight against their oppressors or not, for few free places remain on Svimohzia.

In addition to the western Meznams, western Svimohzia is home to Mendarns, Brolenese, halflings, half-orcs, hobgoblins and more. For more information on these and other races, consult the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook* and the *Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*.

TOPOGRAPHY

Western Svimohzia has little to offer the rest of the island, explaining why there has been almost no effort to dislodge the foreign presence settling on those shores. Most of the north is rocky and inhospitable, poor for agriculture but good for hiding trolls, goblins and wild men. Farther to the west, the jagged hills give way to a vast bog, the Whiven Marsh, unfriendly to travelers, as it is home to giant crocodiles, swarms of stinging insects carrying lethal diseases, and sea scraggs who like to feast on human flesh.

Alongside the swamp is the Whisvomi Forest, growing on the slopes of the Dashahn Mountains and the Whisvomi Hills. It features a variety of flora and fauna, many beautiful, some terrible, and others both. Locals cultivate fruit trees to make hard spirits popular throughout civilized lands.

WEATHER

The northern reaches of Western Svimohzia are humid and muggy, with most winds blowing to the north across the Straits of Svimohzia. Rain that passes over this area stalls, blocked by the Zhano Headlands. The heavy downpours flood the area, driving many of the creatures living there south. The western tip has far milder weather, a constant breeze spinning off from the South Doldrums. The winds continue throughout the year, keeping its environs cool, but wet.

BRONISH, THE FREE CITY

There has been a trading settlement of Mendarns in the area of Bronish for almost three hundred years, though until the last century it was little more than a small Meznam fishing village with a Mendarn trading house. Mendarn merchants traded finished goods for the raw gems and gold that the local Meznam nomads acquired from the dwarves and gnomes of the Dashahn Mountains. The settlement was also a major source of raw materials for rope and basket making, though most of the materials traveled to Mendarn for manufacture. All that changed 98 years ago, in 946 Y.K. (276 C.M.), when boatloads of Mendarn and Brolenese refugees arrived in the small settlement.

The refugees were followers of Bronish Vromlond, a Preacher of Peace (Cleric of Ranas the Peacemaker) who escaped from slavery in Pel Brolenon. Bronish taught that all peoples should live in harmony, regardless of race, and that all should enjoy the fruits of their own labors. This earned him not only the love of his many followers but also the enmity of many merchants and noblemen. Bronish was slain, as were many of his followers, during an attack in northern Mendarn fostered by merchants and nobles and tacitly approved by the king of Mendarn. The remnants of his followers in southern Mendarn (humans and halflings) fled the country; most took ships in Dayolen and sailed for Svimohzia, where they landed in the small, nameless village where now stands the Free City. The five and twenty score settlers gave thanks to the Peacemaker for their deliverance, and immediately named their settlement Bronish, after their martyred leader.

The new settlement had some difficulties, notably bad relations with the merchants that originally possessed the settlement. However, the Meznams were friendly to the new settlers and quickly allied with them, as they felt that the Bronish (as the Mendarn refugees had taken to calling themselves) would only help improve their lot in life. Troubles with Mendarn merchants were quickly resolved when the merchants discovered that the Bronish were more than happy to trade with them, as long as they were fair, and that the profits from the increased trade more than made up for the loss of control over the simple settlement. Hundreds of other Mendarn settlers joined the Bronish during the first ten years, finding their way of life to be far superior to that which they lived in the motherland. Then,

in 958 Y.K. (288 C.M.), a group of Bronish explorers/miners made an incredible discovery in the Dashahn Mountains.

Seven explorers/miners, three Mendarns, two Meznams and two halflings, stumbled upon the lair of a gold dragon while prospecting in the Dashahn Mountains. They immediately paid tribute to the great beast; they gave him all the gold and gems they had, and flattered and serenaded him with prose, poetry and song (for one of the Meznam miners was a bard). The dragon, whose name was Rhingoryx ("shimmering gold" in the language of dragons), befriended the miners. He had watched the development of the new city with interest, and wished to become involved in their society. The dragon gave each of the miners a magical charm, so that they might call upon him in times of need.

No one believed the miners' tale when they returned to the city - none that is, until a fleet of pirates and slavers landed on the city shore and proceeded to loot and pillage the settlement and capture the citizens for slavery. Then the seven miners called upon the dragon, and the dragon came to their aid. Only one pirate survived; he returned to his compatriots and told the tale of the gold dragon of Bronish; raiders have never again bothered the city. The citizens were most grateful for the dragons' help, and gave him tribute of all manners of goods, mostly gold (gold was not available in the city for months afterward). Since that time, Rhingoryx has effectively been the king of the Free City.

Lords of Bronish

With the exception of the great gold dragon himself, Bronish has no lords. Only an elected Council of Seven control the social structure of this city, which is generally fair with most citizens bearing equal rights.

RHINGORYX

Also known as Eminent Divine King, Lord and Protector of All Righteous Creatures in His Demesne, Rhingoryx is the 250-year old gold dragon protector of Bronish. The townsfolk treat him as a god and those who have had the honor of viewing the creature tell grand tales of its magnificence. In fact, the main reason that the people of Bronish have little wealth is because they give such a large portion of it to the dragon. Rhingoryx lives in a cave in the Dashahn Mountains, but may travel in humanoid form in order that he might better understand the people he protects.

Leaders of the Underworld

With the exception of a few pirate gangs that routinely put to shore in secret, there are few underworld dangers in the Free City. The goal of most citizens is simply to maintain a good and just place to live, and they will quickly band together to fight anyone who disrupts their dream. However, at least one evil person - a cleric of the Emperor of Scorn - has so far evaded the notice of the good citizens of Bronish.



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BRAVA TORIST

Brava (NE Brandobian cleric 8) maintains a small hidden temple to Mormov, the Emperor of Scorn, in the Foreign Quarter. She and her few followers are disgusted by the peaceful nature of Bronish, and they attempt to breed hatred and anger among its people. Her most common tactic is to spread rumors of unfair prejudice against one race or another. At the moment, she is distracted by rumors of a second Purger temple in the area – one that she knows nothing about.

Other Notables

SHAVAZHA AZIRI

Shavazha (NG expert 4) is the proprietor of the Sea Breeze. This Meznam woman has a kind heart that belies her gruff appearance. She is very popular with the local women, providing free room and board to any female suffering from severe marital problems.

VERLO RELNMAN

Verlo (LG Brandobian expert 5) is the proprietor of the Merry Merchant Inn. One of the oldest buildings in Bronish, it is said to have been one of the original trading houses of the early Mendarn merchants. Verlo inherited the tavern from his father, who inherited it from his own father. He is a cheerful, portly man who makes every effort to ensure the comfort and the needs of his guests. He is very popular with both the locals and visitors, and as such, he has many friends in the town who take an interest in ensuring that his establishment succeeds.

Verlo has two sons, Estind and Malbren, and a daughter named Sabeleen. He is a middle-aged man with a good physique, light brown hair and penetrating green eyes.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Since the founding of the Council of Seven, the Free City has experienced few major troubles. Thus far, the only force that has threatened the city was a small army of hobgoblins from Ul-Karg, which invaded the region in 1020 Y.K. (350 C.M.). Fortunately, the city had recently completed the city walls. Rhingoryx insisted that the people build the walls, for he knew that he could not be everywhere at once. Rhingoryx and the forces of the city were eventually able to stamp out the invading force, but many of the nearby villages and nomad clans suffered heavy losses. The memories of the Hobgoblin War (as it is known in Bronish legend and history) have faded for most, and the city folk have once again cut back on their forces (once twice the size of the current police force), though the villagers have not forgotten nor forgiven the hobgoblins.

The laws of the Free City are not that different from the laws elsewhere, however the mode of punishment differs from that of most cities and states. A heavy fine and exile from the city punish crimes that warrant death or mutilation in other lands. Exile is always permanent. Clothing from the offender is given to Rhingoryx; one sniff and he remembers the person for life. If

an exile ever returns to the lands of the Free City, the dragon will hunt him down and eat him (distasteful, but necessary). Note that all Crimes against Nobility, Freemen and Peasants apply to all people in the Free City and surrounding territories, from the lowliest farmer to the Speaker of the Council of Seven. Crimes against the Crown apply to crimes against the dragon, the Council of Seven, the Order of the Golden Wyrms, and the Watch (the city guard). There is hardly any racial preference or persecution in the city; citizens will not tolerate anyone that would stir up racial hatreds, and those that do are exiled. If they return, they may have to answer directly to the dragon.

Other unusual laws in the city include:

- Relieving oneself in the street or emptying a chamber pot into the street: fine of 1 sp to 1 gp.
- Mistreating slaves: loss of all property and exile.
- Defacing a public statue or work: imprisonment and fine of twice cost of repairs.
- Bearing illegal arms in the city: confiscation of the weapon and fine of 10x value of weapon.

Bronish cares little for what happens outside its own area. "Leave foreigners to their own," is a commonly heard phrase.

FOREIGN POLICY

The city is on good trading terms with Meznamish, Eldor and the colony of Vrandol (though Mendarn's hope to create a stranglehold of naval trade from other nations around the western coast of Svimohzia threatens Bronish's naval trade). While many fear the imperious nature of Eldor and Mendarn, they also know that they can do little about it, and trust in Rhingoryx to see them through the dark times. While many outsiders think the people place too much faith in their gold dragon protector, they know better than to say so in Bronish.

CURRENT EVENTS

The lizardfolk of nearby Whiven Marsh have been peaceful for generations out of mind, and most are too primitive to be of any real threat. However, a new pattern of lizardfolk activities has been developing in the last couple of years. These lizardfolk use advanced tools and weapons; they are also more aggressive than their predecessors, and actively hunt humans and sometimes raid outlying villages. Rumor has it that these lizardfolk are capturing humans for their horrific ceremonies. These lizardfolk reside in the ruins of an ancient marsh-hidden city, much of which is still unexplored. Perhaps some formerly friendly tribes might be opposed to these more savage lizardfolk, but this too has yet to be determined.

Other current events focus mainly on the common tasks needed to run a city, or other rumors of threats listed in the Special Notes section of the city itself (below).

ECONOMICS

TRIBUTE

Most of the good people of Bronish pay great tribute to their protector, offering ten to twenty percent (or more!) of their income to him. The Council stores these until a significant quantity is amassed. At this point, a wagonload of wealth (under heavy guard) travels along the Dragon Road into the mountains, where the tribute is left at the dragon's cave. Part of the city's taxes (see below) funnels into the dragon tributes.

TRADE ROUTES

Most of Bronish's goods travel back and forth along the coastal shipping path from Vrandol or Meznamish, though traders also come from as far away as Eldor. Land roads travel only to small logging villages in the nearby Whisvomi Forest, as Bronish is isolated and overland routes can be quite hazardous.

TAXATION

The citizens of Bronish pay a flat monthly tax of 1 sp and 5 cp per adult. Merchants (mostly from Meznamish, Eldor and Vrandol) are charged 3% of the total worth of all goods they are importing or exporting. These taxes pay for military protection, road upkeep, city upkeep, and so on. A total of 1% of all combined taxes adds to the dragon tribute.

CURRENCY

All Bronish coins are round, unlike the coins of most other parts of Svimohzia. They are also of a standard size and weight, with each displaying the image of their gold dragon protector on the obverse. The copper Tollpiece displays the High Gate, in the southeastern section of the city wall, while the silver Bard

features the visage of Mizhamo Izhamoni, the Royal Bard of Bronish (regarded as the founder of the modern city). The gold Dragon coin shows a flying golden dragon, and the platinum Vromlond, the visage of Bronish Vromlond (martyred cleric of Ranas the Peacemaker who led refugees from slavery in Pel Brolenon, and after whom the city is named).



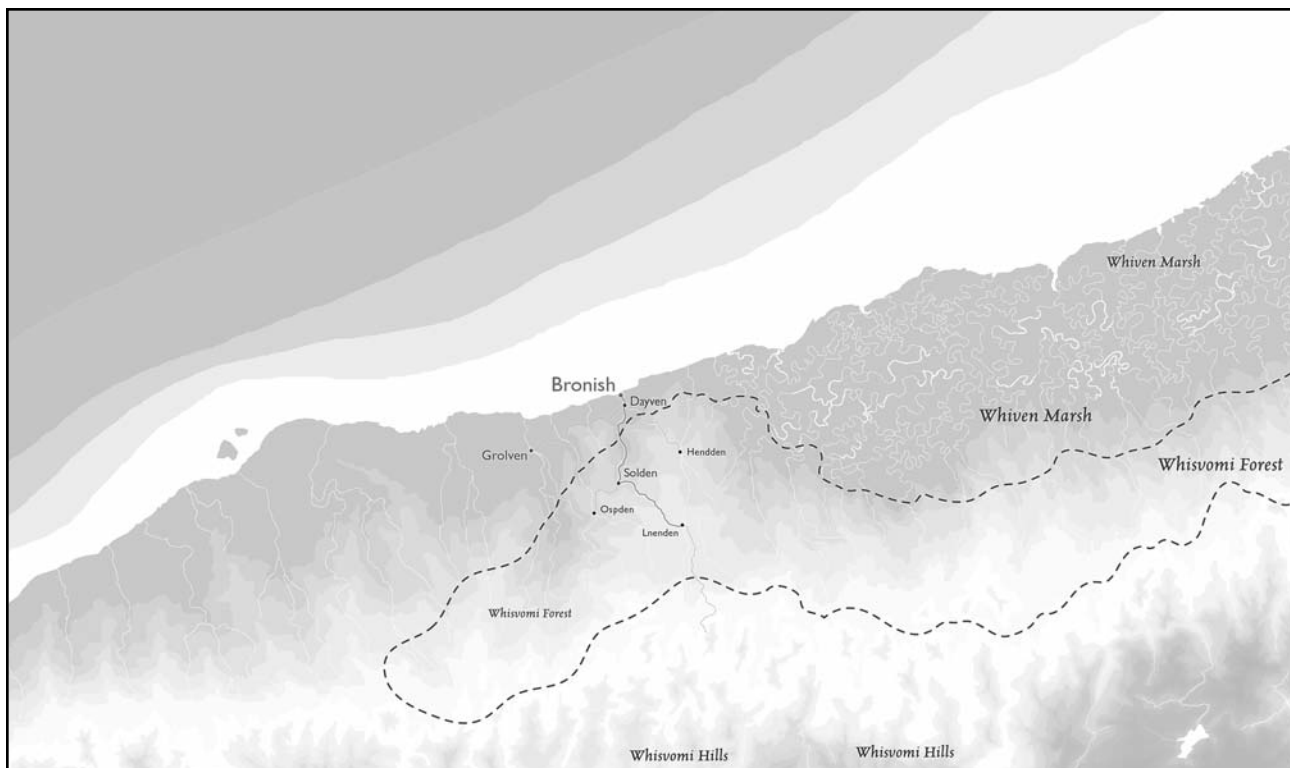
Exchange Rates: Bronish merchants accept coins from other lands, though when they do so, they commonly charge one-and-a-half times as much for their goods or services. Change is given in the local monies. The foreign coins are reminted, or given as tribute to the dragon.

LANGUAGES

The official language is Brandobian (the Mendarn dialect), and all city records are written in it. Svimohzish is commonly heard, for the nomads never took to the written word, and thus the local Meznams are not upset at the lack of the official status of Svimohzish as a written tongue. The halflings had always spoken Brandobian as a native tongue; they use their old tongue, known as Oldor, only among themselves when they do not wish the "Big People" to understand what they say. Thus, like the Meznams, the halflings have no problems with the status of their language. Merchant's Tongue is commonly spoken in the city, but rarely elsewhere.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

In general, the people of Bronish combine a mixture of old Mendarn and Brolenese customs with those of Meznamish (see



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status of their language. Merchant's Tongue is commonly spoken in the city, but rarely elsewhere.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

In general, the people of Bronish combine a mixture of old Mendarn and Brolenese customs with those of Meznamish (see that chapter), and even some halfling customs are beginning to seep into the culture. Bronish welcomes all, provided their intent is not evil.

STYLE OF DRESS

Svimohzish style has intruded greatly into Brolenese and Mendarn fashion. People of all walks wear loose and comfortable clothing, with bright colors and patterns. All citizens, regardless of social class wear this style of clothing as it best keeps the individual cool in this torrid climate.

FESTIVALS

The offices of the Order of the Golden Wyrm (see Important Sites, below) organize most celebrations. Ceremonies of the Order fall into two categories, public and private, with the public ceremonies being some of the most popular holidays. The most popular ceremony is "Song of the Dragon King," an annual event in which the Dragon is serenaded in the King's Glade by the youth choir of the Order, the Order gives out gold coins to the poor and ceremonially crowns the dragon as King of Bronish.

Dragonstand: Another popular event began as a holiday to commemorate the victory of the city's draconic protector over the Brolenese slavers, but has since expanded into the countryside, to the smaller settlements dotting northwestern Svimohzia. The festival of Dragonstand lasts for two days, with frequent re-enactments of that famous fight. Townspeople dress up as cruel slavers, while a line of people dress up as a paper dragon of gold and move up and down the streets of Bronish "chasing" the fleeing slavers. The dragon does not always come down to the city to watch, but when he does, the celebrating is even more lavish and where the dragon himself chases the "slavers" through the city, to the cheers of the people who worship him as a god.

CITY DETAILS

Population: 8,000. The people of Bronish (31°5'N, 20°30'W) are primarily of Brandobian (Mendarn or Brolenese) descent, with a large minority of Meznams and halflings. The breakdown is about 55% Brandobian (Bronish or otherwise), 25% Meznam, 10% of mixed heritage and 10% halflings. A very small number of citizens are from elsewhere, and include elves, dwarves, gnomes, other Svimohz, Brandobians and Kalamarans.

Most foreign residents stay in the Foreign Quarter or the Merchant's Quarter. As they are not citizens, they are not counted in the city population (there are maybe 100 to 200 foreigners in the city at any one time). Foreigners may become citizens after a period of seven years of official residence (or

DM's Note: Why Bronish?

Though there are many wonderful cities in Svimohzia, their inhabitants and cultures are often quite different from anything that existing player characters may have encountered on the northern continent.

Thus, we present Bronish a city with ties to the northern lands of Brandobia, and a perfect stepping stone with which to bring the PCs into a new land of epic adventure.

three and a half years if they are members in good standing of the city militia). Prospective citizens that perform extraordinary deeds may gain automatic citizenship.

The people of Bronish are mostly middle class. There is no true nobility in Bronish, though members of the Seven High Clans (descended from the seven miners and their families) are usually afforded the respect reserved for nobles. They also have many of the responsibilities of nobles though they hold but few of the privileges. A small underclass, mostly of foreigners and lackadaisical Bronish, live in the Old Town and Foreign quarters of the city. A large number of citizens live in the city proper; approximately 25 to 30%, between 2,000 and 2,400 all told. Most citizens live on farms or estates in the nearby area, live in logging villages in the Whisvomi Forest or mining villages in the Dashahn Mountains, or, in the case of many Meznam families, still live the nomadic lifestyle of their ancestors. The city folk are mostly craftsmen, merchants, clerics or city functionaries. Literacy is quite high among the city residents, and is not uncommon among the rural residents.

At a Glance: The city rests on the shores of the Brandobian Ocean (Known as the Northern Sea of Svimohzia to locals). A small river, the Vromlond, passes through Bronish, and divides the High Quarter from the rest of the city. The city is "protected" by a low stone wall; it is a mere 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall, and is used more to keep animals and undesirables out than as a means of protection from invasion. The top of the walls are accessible only from the gatehouses. There is an area in the northeastern section of the city, known as "The Keep," which is actually little more than a walled area at the highest point in the city; it houses a few sheds that contain stores of grains and weapons. No buildings stand against the walls of the city, nor may any structure be built outside the walls within one long arrow flight of the walls (per the orders of Rhingoryx; he has studied many tomes on battle tactics and sieges). Wall Street follows along the walls on the inside. Many city folk use Wall Street to bypass the more crowded traffic of the streets and alleys further in the city.

The city walls have two main gates and two side gates. The Golden Gate, also known as the Dragon Gate, opens to the Dragon Road, which travels south past various farming villages and logging villages until it ends at the dragons' lair in the Dashahn Mountains. The High Gate, in the southeastern

Free City of Bronish

1. Hall of the Dragon
2. Hall of the Council of Seven
3. Merry Merchant Inn and Tavern
4. Sea Breeze Inn
5. Temple of Bronish (House of Solace)
6. Hall of Harmony (Parish of Love)
7. Temple of St. Mroin (Temple of Stars)
8. House of All Gods (Many faiths)
9. Freedom Hall (Face of the Free)
10. Court of Justice
11. House of Order (Home Foundation, Hall of Oaths, Assembly of Light)
12. Merchant's Guildhall (Prolific Coin)
13. Sea Queen Temple (Water Corner)
14. Hall of the Valiant (Halls of the Valiant)
15. Golden Orb Inn
16. Royal Bronish Arms Inn
17. Lord Drake Tavern
18. Seven Coin Tavern
19. Dragon Road Inn
20. Wyrms and Crown Tavern
21. Hall of Slumber Inn
22. Bywater Tavern
23. Healing Hearts Tavern
24. Wall Street Inn
25. Neshvani Crown and Thorns
26. Copper Pot Inn
27. Gold Flagon Tavern
28. West Gate Tavern
29. Dirk and Dagger Tavern
30. Sword and Spear Inn
31. Old Wall Inn
32. The Grapevine Tavern
33. Traveler's Rest Inn
34. Homely House Hostel
35. Pegleg and Parrot Arms Inn
36. Twilight Rest Tavern
37. The Merry Maid Tavern
38. The Sea Hag Tavern
39. The Sea Dragon Tavern



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section of the wall, opens to the High Clan Road, which passes by all seven estates of the Seven High Clans of Bronish. Smaller gates in the east and west walls serve local farmers and merchants; the West Gate and the East Gate are unremarkable. Entry to the city is free for simple travelers; merchants must pay "one copper per horse, mule, ox and axle." Large weapons, such as greatswords and battleaxes, bows and crossbows, remain at the gate. They may be claimed when their owner leaves the city. Travelers receive a receipt for their weapon, inscribed with the symbol of the Speaker of the Word. The watchmen grant their word "upon the honor of the Speaker of the Word" (one of the most potent oaths in the Sovereign Lands) that they will guard the weapon and return it to the owner when they leave the city.

The city streets follow the general north to south, east to west grid that is common throughout the Sovereign Lands. North to south roads include: Lance Lane, Center Street, Freedom Road, Cart Way, the Street of Gold, Weaver Way and Seven Street. East to west roads include: the Old Road (a.k.a., the Old Wall Road), Spear Street/Sailor Street, the Long Road, and the Street of Craftsmen. Wall Street follows the entire inside circuit of the city walls, while Sea Street follows the entire shoreline and the river (often called "River Road" along the river). Most alleys are unnamed. Most streets are hard packed dirt covered with gravel, and tend to get muddy in spots during the rainy months, the alleyways even more so. Freedom Square, the Plaza of the Dragon, the Street of Gold, East Long Road and the entire High Quarter are paved in large cobblestones; eventually all the city streets will be paved as part of another of Rhingoryx's long-term improvement plans (West Long Road is next on the list).

The city has a very advanced sewer system, especially considering its size and wealth. The sewer system, like the walls, was built at the insistence of Rhingoryx, who firmly believed that a clean city would be a better city. He drew up the plans himself. With the assistance of several Builders of Law brought in from Meznamish, the sewers were constructed in a mere three years. With the sewer system in place it is illegal to dump refuse or relieve oneself in the streets of the city (1 sp to 1 gp fine). Every street corner has a sewage shaft where citizens dump chamber pots every morning. Several services pass by every street every morning and collect chamber pots for a monthly fee. Most temples, inns and taverns have their own connections to the sewer system, as do many wealthy homes in the High Quarter. Rainwater enters the system through street culverts and washes the sewers clean periodically. The sewer system dumps everything into the sea, the bay or the river. Most drinking and bathing water comes from the river, although a cistern can be stopped atop some buildings. Rumors abound of giant rats and alligators from Whiven Marsh living in the sewers, but such rumors have not yet been substantiated.

City Quarters: The free city of Bronish is divided into five sections: the Old Town Quarter, the Merchant's Quarter, the Foreign Quarter, the Craftsman's Quarter and the High Quarter (the quarter naming system predated the construction of the

High Quarter, though the names stuck). There is also the Hall of the Dragon, at the center of the city, flanked by Freedom Square and the Plaza of the Dragon.

City Quarters (Craftsman's): The Craftsman's Quarter is the heart of the city, and the largest of the five quarters. Here live all the local craftsmen, from the basket weavers and rope makers to blacksmiths, armorers, weaponsmiths, butchers, bakers, chandlers and folk performing every other craft and profession that is needed to run a city. Most artisans live in apartments above their workshops; the wealthy artisans own separate homes while their assistants and servants live in various clean, though cramped, tenements. This quarter is home to the Temple of Saint Bronish, the Hall of Harmony, and Freedom Hall. Travelers from the surrounding area and adventurers alike frequent the Dragon Road Inn, a good inn and tavern on the Gold Market. The Gold Market is where most of the gold (and other minerals and gems) enter the city with prospectors, miners and merchants, and where they are traded. A fountain sits in the middle of the market; it has seven statuettes of gold dragons, each of which holds a "gold nugget" in its claws and spits water out from its mouth into the fountain. Miners, prospectors and merchants toss coins into the fountain for luck in their hunt for wealth. The watchmen collect coins every week. These coins go into the fund to pave the streets of the city. The Wyrm and Crown Tavern, an excellent tavern, also sits on the Gold Market. The more successful fortune hunters frequent it; rumors about the Dashahn Mountains and the Whisvomi Forest abound in this tavern.

The Healing Hearts Tavern, next to the Hall of Harmony, is the place to go to find love and companionship; sometimes for a price, but more usually only with a free spirit. The Wall Street Inn is an average inn, known for its peace and quiet. The Neshvani Crown and Thorns Tavern is owned and operated by a Meznam cleric of the Passionate Peoplehood, and is known as the wildest tavern in the quarter. The Copper Pot Inn is a low class, if serviceable hostel. Artisans and merchants alike frequent the Gold Flagon Tavern (the only tavern on Freedom Square and the Plaza of the Dragon). On the other hand, the West Gate Tavern is usually crowded with farmers and other locals who come into town on festival and market days. Weaver Square is the spot where basket weavers and rope makers used to ply their trade in the early days of the city. Now, they continue to do so, though most actual production takes place in the forest villages where the raw materials are collected. The tallest tree within the city walls stands in the center of the square. It is the target of every child in the quarter, as rumor has it that only the bravest and most talented child can climb the Weaver's Tree.

Most homes in this quarter are two or three stories, usually with two or three rental flats. Most businesses are two or three stories, with the second story being home to the owner and operator and the third being a rental flat. The Temple of Saint

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Bronish is three stories, with a steeple rising another four stories high. The other temples and inns are three stories high.

The Long Road runs the entire length of the northern border of the quarter, while the Street of Craftsmen runs through the heart of the quarter and Wall Street borders the quarter on the south and west. Freedom Road, the Street of Gold and River Road (Sea Street) all pass through the quarter from north to south. Alleys are usually quiet and well kept though a burglar or two might lurk in them in the deep of the night. Torches light inns, taverns and temples, though the Street of Gold and the Gold Market stay well lit during warm summer nights, when businesses stay open longer. The watchmen frequently pass through the quarter and often check the alleys.

City Quarters (Foreign): The Foreign Quarter received its name back when the city was yet young, and non-Bronish Mendarns settled in this area of the city. Today it truly lives up to its name, as it is home to the largest concentration of foreigners in the city. As such, most shops in the area either cater to foreigners or are owned and operated by foreigners selling foreign goods. The most prominent building in the quarter, the Temple of All Gods, reflects the nature of the area in that it has shrines to dozens of foreign deities (some of which are the same deity under a different name). The Temple of All Gods mostly houses shrines to good and neutral deities, but several evil shrines are said to exist in the basement levels. The Dirk and Dagger Tavern is renowned for its infamous brawls, usually over foreign politics or faiths, and avoided by Bronish folk. The Sword and Spear Inn is the undeclared home of foreign mercenaries and adventurers in the city, and the Old Wall Inn is home to the less savory and roguish foreigners. Spear Street and Lance Lane are infamous for their hawkers by day and muggers by night, though they are far safer than the streets of many other cities.

The majority of homes in this quarter are two-story tenements, usually with three or four rental flats. Most businesses are two stories, with the second story being home to the owner and operator. The temple and inns are three stories. The Old Road, Spear Street, East Long Road, Wall Street, Lance Lane and Center Street all pass through the quarter; most are safe, save Spear Street and Lance Lane, which are the most notorious streets in the city. Alleys are often home to destitute foreigners, most of whom would not think twice of slitting a purse or two. Torches light inns, taverns and the temple. Watchmen frequently pass through the quarter, though they rarely venture into the alleys ("leave foreigners to their own" is their attitude).

City Quarters (High): The High Quarter is the wealthiest district of the city. Every street and alley is paved, the buildings are of the finest construction and most ostentatious appearance and the services and shops are quite expensive. However, the people in the quarter are not as arrogant and self-serving as most upper class folks are elsewhere; they definitely have a sense of noblesse oblige, and act upon it most of the time. The residents come either from the Seven High Clans of Bronish, or from one

of the several other wealthy families of the city. The High Quarter, however, is not famous merely because of the residents; it is physically the highest section of the city. The east bank of the Vromlond River averages 15 to 20 feet higher than the west bank; steep cliffs or inclines fall from the embankment down to the river. A 4-foot-high mortared stone wall along the embankment keeps people from falling over the edge when they get too close. The point on the east bank at which the High Bridge crosses the river is 10 feet higher than the west bank; a stone ramp leads to the bridge on the west bank, whereupon the bridge then crosses the river at a level point. There is a charge of one copper coin per person, creature and axle to cross from the west side to the east side, except on Godday (though no carts may cross on Godday). There is no charge to cross from the east to the west. The High Bridge is made of stout wood, but collapses in a few moments with the proper key (another device developed by Rhingoryx).

The High Bridge ends at Seven Square, home to the most expensive shops in the city. A statue of Mizhamo Izhamoni, the Royal Bard of Bronish, stands in the center of the square. Mizhamo was one of the seven explorers/miners that "discovered" Rhingoryx and led the group in their reverential singing and flattery. He later founded the Izhamoni Clan, one of the Seven High Clans, was the first Speaker of the Council of the Dragon, and regarded as the founder of modern Bronish.

The most notable structure in the High Quarter is the Hall of the Council of Seven, where the government of the city and the Watch (see below) reside. The Hall gleams with fine marble of golden veins and striations; gold-plated statues of dragons watch from the roof of the Hall like benevolent gargoyles. The Court of Justice lies at the opposite end of the quarter, and built of expensive woods. It is a most impressive and imposing edifice. The House of Order sits in the center of the quarter, and is the most popular spot for commoners to visit; it is a pleasant building, with great stained glass windows, fine statuary, pleasant music and a peaceful atmosphere. The Hall of the Valiant sits across Council Plaza opposite the Hall of the Council of Seven, and is home to the Servants of the Swift Sword.

Council Plaza is one of the finest spots in the city, a pleasant boulevard cooled by small trees and flowers. A gold plated 15-foot-tall statue of Rhingoryx stands in the center of the plaza, facing south toward the Dashahn Mountains where he lairs. The Golden Drake Tavern also sits on the Council Plaza, and public servants and watchmen alike frequent it. The Royal Bronish Arms Inn stands near the Council Hall, and is usually home to those members of the Council from the countryside that do not own their own townhouses in the High Quarter. The Golden Orb Inn, the finest inn in the city, stands on Cobblestone Plaza across from the Seven Coins Tavern, the most expensive tavern and restaurant in the city. Cobblestone Plaza was the first section of the city to be paved with stones.

A small market of gem dealers, jewelers and purveyors of other fine goods sets up in the plaza on Godday and during

major festivals in order to take advantage of the large number of High Clan and other wealthy patrons that enter through the High Gate.

The Sea Breeze Inn stands about a quarter of a mile down the road past the East Gate, and is an excellent yet affordable inn.

Most homes in this quarter are three stories, each owned by a wealthy family or one of the Seven High Clans. Most businesses are one or two stories, with the second story usually being storage and only rarely being home to the owner and operator; most shop owners live in the Craftsman's or Merchant's Quarters. The House of Order is five stories, with four small Brandobian-style steeples that rise another three stories high, making it the tallest structure in the city. The Hall of the Council of Seven is four stories tall, while the other temples and inns are three stories. Seven Street runs the entire length of the quarter north to south, and the "alleys," which compare well with the roads of the other quarters and are named after the most prominent house or building along the way, are extremely clean and well maintained. Lanterns hang on inns, taverns, temples, and most houses, though torches are more common in alleys. Watchmen are a frequent sight in the High Quarter, for they live here in large numbers.

City Quarters (Merchant's): The Merchant's Quarter takes up the northeastern section of the city, and is home to the merchant docks, warehouses and the Merchant's Guildhall. Most foreigners pass through this quarter to go to the Foreign Quarter; only the wealthier foreign merchants stay in this quarter, as the local merchants like to keep their area clean and quiet. The upper middle class houses in this quarter are very well maintained and moderately opulent, though not ostentatiously so (local merchants prefer moderation). Many of the middle class merchants live above their shops. The shops in this quarter mostly deal in imported goods or are actually export

houses that sell Bronish goods and raw materials to foreign merchants. The Merchant's Guildhall, which is also the home of the local Parish of the Prolific Coin, is the most opulent building in the quarter and, except for the Hall of the Dragon, is the most extravagant building outside of the High Quarter. Coin Court, shaded by small cherry trees and fragrant vines, sits to the west of the Guildhall. A small wishing well sits in the middle of the court. Rumors say that whoever casts coins into it will receive luck back in proportion to their generosity. The coins are collected weekly through a small tunnel from the guildhall, and all coins collected go to the Merchant's Guild Widow and Orphan Fund.

The Temple of St. Mroln is very popular among merchants, who go there and make offerings to ensure the safety of their ships, cargo and crew. The Hall of Slumber is an inn owned by a Dream Weaver; he holds services for a few locals and a number of foreigners every Godday at the inn. The Bywater Tavern is a very popular stop; Bywater Brew, a sharp ale derived from Meznam formulas, is exported to Meznamish, Mendarn, Eldor and even Kalamar and Tokis. The Traveler's Rest Inn is a good, inexpensive inn, while the Merry Maid, Sea Hag and Sea Dragon taverns are good, average and low quality respectively, home to all manners of clientele.

The Sea Market is continually busy with incoming and outgoing cargoes, criers, vendors and factors, and is usually frequented by ne'er do wells and pickpockets from the Old Town Quarter. A marble statue of Rhingoryx stands in the market at the spot where he slew the foul pirates in 958 Y.K. (288 C.M). Local merchants leave a gold coin at the foot of the statue when they ship out, hoping that the gesture will bring good luck and keep pirates from their ships. The coins disappear every night, and none know where, as local beggars and thieves are too superstitious to try to take them.

The Sea Breeze Inn

Sign: A flat, thick piece of wood carved in the outline of a ship, complete with masts and cloth sails attached. The name is written in Merchant's Tongue on both sides.

Description: This idyllic little sanctuary lies just a bit off the beaten path apart from the hustle and bustle of the main city, about a quarter mile down the road from the East Gate. The front of the establishment is decorated with a wide variety of wind chimes. These can be heard for a great distance, continually chiming soothing songs.

The rooms and food are of average quality, but atmosphere is soothing and relaxed. The most crowded time is at noon when local and traveling merchants begin to grow hungry for a drink and a meal.

Lodging: Common room 3 sp/day or 20 sp/week, private room 3 gp/day or 20 gp/week, semi private (2 beds) room 6 sp/day or 41 sp/week

Food: Average meal 3 sp, ale 5 cp/mug, mead 3 sp/mug, Roshova cordial 1 sp/mug, spiced tea 3 cp/mug, common wine 2 sp/pitcher, fine wine 10 gp/bottle

Regulars: While patronizing the Sea Breeze, the PCs might meet a female Mendarn human named Shamira. If approached in a polite way by a well mannered group, she would be willing to give them directions, information and local city gossip.

Another local one might encounter is young Tyresh. Having grown up in the city, he often seeks out travelers who tell of lands far away. Although he has no formal skills beyond fishing, he wishes to leave Bronish to learn exotic skills and find wild adventure. He occasionally goes so far as to secretly tag along with a group he suspects will lead him to such adventures until he is sent back in disgrace.

Crew and Customers: The proprietor of the Sea Breeze is a Meznam woman named Shavazha Aziri. She is a dark skinned woman with a kind heart that belies her gruff appearance. She is very popular with the local women, as she provides free room and board to any female suffering from severe marital problems.

Shavazha's staff are all Meznam. She has one hostess, Hava, and two serving girls, Savinah and Laravim. A tall Dejy man, Kodar, serves as cook and occasional bouncer. The Sea Breeze usually has 5 to 10 customers in the morning, and 10 to 20 patrons in the afternoon and evening (mostly humans).

Most homes in this quarter are two stories, with a rental flat on the second story, though the wealthier merchants keep both stories to themselves. There are a few two-story tenements, usually with three or four rental flats. Most businesses are two stories, with the second story being home to the owner and operator. Warehouses are usually two stories, though the second tends to be open to the first. Both temples and inns are three stories. Sailor Street is the main thoroughfare through the quarter, from the Sea Market to the Plaza of the Dragon. The Old Road, East Long Road, Sea Street (River Road), Center Street, Cart Way and Weaver Way also cross through the quarter; and torches light most streets at night. Alleys are usually clear of refuse and troublemakers, though the odd drunken and belligerent sailor stagger through the alleys behind the Sea Hag and the Sea Dragon taverns. The Watch presence is firm in this quarter, and the watchmen brook no nonsense.

City Quarters (Old Town): The Old Town Quarter is the section of the city that represents the original village of the Meznam and Mendarn merchants; part of the old wooden palisade can still be seen in places along the south side of Old Street. This quarter is home to the city's fishermen, lower class and small underbelly; it is rather peaceful as such areas go, but still is known for the occasional brawl and mugging. The most prominent feature of the quarter is the Merry Merchant, one of the oldest inns in the city.

Fishermen and sailors commonly frequent the Temple of the Sea Queen. The Homely House Hostel is a fair inn, connected to the Twilight Rest Tavern, which is the haunt of local fishers and scalawags.

The Pegleg and Parrot Arms Inn is a contact point for pirates and buccaneers, and has an unsavory reputation, while the Grapevine Tavern is an excellent place to find rumors and hear local legends. The Fish Market rests on the shore, where dozens of fishermen tie their small crafts to rickety wharves; an old

wooden statue (which predates the coming of the followers of Bronish) stands in the center of the market. The statue is "The Old Fisherman," and apparently represents a legendary Meznam fisherman who "caught the one that everyone else said got away." Fishermen leave small offerings at the statue, hoping that the "Old Fisherman" would help them catch the "Big One."

Most homes in this quarter are one story, though some are tenements with two or more flats. Most businesses are two stories, with the second story being home to the owner and operator. The Merry Merchant is the only three-story building in the quarter, while the other inns are two stories. Sea Street, the Old Road (known as Old Wall Road locally) and Center Street are the only true streets in the quarter; all other byways are cramped, twisting alleys, the most notorious of which is the alley behind the Pegleg and Parrot, which is informally known as "Pirate Pass." Torches are rare at night, and most alleys are dark with unknown, possibly unfriendly denizens. The watchmen rarely pass through this quarter, usually leaving the fisher folk to themselves; they will readily investigate any grievous crime, but generally leave the local drunks to find their own fate in the morning.

Government: The seven miners and their families formed

the Council of the Dragon shortly after Rhingoryx defeated the pirates. This council then led the city in all things under the eye of the dragon (for the former leaders of the city were slain in the early hours of the pirate raid). For a generation, the people were happy with the arrangement. Then, in 978 Y.K. (308 C.M.), the

The Merry Merchant Inn

Sign: A smiling Brandobian merchant holding a mug in his outstretched right hand. The name is written in Brandobian above and Merchant's Tongue below.

Description: This is one of the major inns in the city, and the most likely place for new arrivals to stay. The Double M, as the regulars call it, is a well maintained inn and tavern on the seashore in the Old Town Quarter. One of the oldest buildings in Bronish, it is said to have been one of the original trading houses of the early Mendarn merchants. Local fishermen frequent the tavern while foreign merchants frequent the inn.

The rooms and food are god quality and very affordable. Consequently, it is possible that there will not be any rooms available at certain times. The most crowded time is daily just after dusk when the local fishermen in come to relax.

Lodging: Common room 2 sp/day or 13 sp/week, private room 2 gp/day or 13 gp/week, semi private (2 beds) room 5 sp/day or 34 sp/week

Food: Average meal 4 sp, ale 4 cp/mug, mead 3 sp/mug, rum 4 sp/mug, common wine 2 sp/pitcher, fine wine 10 gp/bottle

Regulars: Moretam is a Meznam merchant who deals in the catch of the day and sells fishing supplies. He is friendly to outsiders and likes to hear of far away lands. In return, he is often willing to share whatever local information might be of use to an unaccustomed traveler.

Fenshishy is an inquisitively paranoid Meznam/Brandobian fisherman. Both friends and newcomers alike often call him a fool. With the local dragon protecting the city from obvious threats of force, he believes that pirates, Vrandols and Brolenese spies secretly walk the streets in an effort to subvert Bronish from within. Though he has no proof of any of his conspiracy theories, no one has ever been able to prove him wrong.

Crew and Customers: The proprietor of the Merry Merchant is a Brandobian/Meznam man named Verlo Relnman (see "Other Notables" above). Verlo inherited the tavern from his father, who inherited it from his own father. He is a cheerful, portly man who makes every effort to ensure the comfort and the needs of his guests. He is very popular with both the locals and visitors, and as such, he has many friends in the town who take an interest in ensuring that his establishment succeeds.

His sons Estind and Malbren assist him at the bar and in the kitchen. He has six serving girls: Ananesh (Meznam), Brava, Lelten (both Brandobian), Mari (halfling), Mirashez (Meznam), and Sabeleen (Brandobian - Verlo's only daughter). A burly male Meznam fighter named Svezahni keeps order when patrons get too rowdy. The tavern often has 20 to 30 customers in the morning, and 30 to 40 patrons in the afternoon and evening (mostly humans).

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Council of the Dragon opened to elections. The people of Bronish remembered the grief that absolute power caused them in the past and saw again its evil in the Meznamishii Civil War. Thus, after much discussion and debate, and after consultation with the dragon, the people founded the Council of Seven in 980 Y.K. (310 C.M.). The Council of Seven is open to any citizen of Bronish age 45 or older (50 for halflings), and all Bronish citizens age 21 and older (33 for halflings) can elect members. Councilors serve for a period of seven years. The people elect a new councilor every year, rotating out the oldest member. To date, no less than four members of the council at any one time are from the Seven High Clans. However, all clan members sit on the council because of their own abilities, not necessarily due to their money or influence.

Economy: Local food and lumber from the Whisvomi Forest are in adequate supply, as is metal from the Dashahn Mountains. The chief export of the city, however, is the fine rope and basketry made from vines found in the marsh and forest. The city is on good trading terms with Meznamish, Eldor and the colony of Vrandol, though many fear Eldor's imperious nature.

Military: The Bronish Militia only barely deserves the name. The people of the Free City are just not fighters, which is appropriate for a people descended from pacifistic refugees. The militia consists of all volunteer citizens aged 16 to 60 that decide to show up every fourth Fireday of the month. Resident foreigners may join the militia; honorable service usually halves the remaining time required in order to become a citizen. Usually only about 50 people show, though the entire city muster is about 150; village musters, however, have a better turnout, as many villagers remember the hobgoblin war, and up to half of the adult population of the outlying villages attend the militia meetings. Most militiamen (and women) are barely trained and count as "green." They learn the basics of spear use and some swordplay. Militia members are required to keep a short sword and spear in their home; most are unarmored, though some wear leather or padded armor, while a very few wear studded leather or ring mail. Anyone who owns a longsword and can show that he knows how to use it holds the title *ilvend*, or "corporal" and leads groups of ten to twenty militiamen during drills and emergencies. The militia has not been called up in over three years; the last time was when a lion somehow entered the city and the Watch needed assistance in hunting it down.

Military (The Royal Dragons): Both Rhingoryx and the Council of Seven understand that there are problems and situations where the dragons' attention is either not possible or impractical; thus, the city keeps a standing army of 150 men. The army of Bronish is known as the Royal Dragon Company, and consists of ten lances, or squads of seven footmen and ten lances of seven mounted warriors. There is one *vendl*, or "lieutenant" for every two lances, while the *vendlond*, or "commander" oversees the entire Company. The various units are usually scattered throughout the villages in the surrounding area, with only a

quarter of them in the city proper at any one time. It is an honor to enter into the Company; most Royal Dragons are followers of the Swift Sword, while the *vendlond* and most *vendlen* are Servants of the Swift Sword.

The footmen wear chainmail, shield, and carry longswords and daggers, while the cavalry sit on light warhorses and wear chainmail and shield and wield spears and longswords. *Vendlen* wear plate mail and carry bastard swords; mounted *vendlen* usually ride medium warhorses wearing ring mail barding. Most footmen and cavalry can use the short or composite bow, but forgo its use, considering it "ignoble." Rhingoryx and the Council of Seven are currently considering the development of a third martial element, a standing corps of halfling slingers, but such is only in the initial discussion stages.

Soldiers of the Royal Dragon Company wear white tabards that bear the coiled golden wyrm of the Council of Seven. Most wear the most expensive armor possible, usually filigreed with gold or silver; some carry a backup weapon, such as a mace or short sword. The Royal Dragon Company operates out of the Hall of the Valiant. Common footmen receive a stipend of 5 gp per month and cavalry receive 10 gp per month. *Vendlen* earn 20 gp per month, while the *vendlond* performs his duties as a part of his faith. Many of the common warriors and most of the *vendlen* are members of the Seven High Clans, or Servants of the Swift Sword, and forgo their stipend, seeking service in the Company as part of what they consider to be their duty to the city. Most members of the Company are lawful and good, with the balance being neutral and good or lawful and neutral.

Military (the Watch): The Bronish Watch is an honest, hardworking organization dedicated to the common good of the city and its citizens. There are a few bad apples among the lot, but most watchmen deal honestly with citizens, though they are suspicious of foreigners; they also tend to be competent and usually get their man if possible. The watchmen, named *rhiln* in Brandobian, wear leather armor and caps and carry clubs; they wear blue tabards that bear the coiled gold wyrm device of the Council of Seven. They operate in teams of five men, one of who is a *rhilnd*, or "sergeant" that wears ring mail, a metal helm and carries a short sword. The Watch is not equipped to deal with well-armed foes, and they will not hesitate to call in the Royal Dragon Company to handle troublesome and deadly adversaries.

The Watch operates from the Hall of the Council of Seven, with offices and cells at the North, East and West Gates. The *rhilnond*, or "city commander," has an office and small staff in the Hall of the Council of Seven. *Rhiln* receive 2 gp per month, while a *rhilnd* receives 5 gp per month. All are Bronish citizens of 25 years or older; most are lawful good or neutral good, while some are lawful neutral and a few are lawful evil.

Temples: Most good and neutral religions exist within the city, though only the major faiths have actual temples. The most popular temples among the middle class are the House of Solace and the Parish of Love, which have the largest temples in the city. The Temple of Saint Bronish (House of Solace) follows the

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Brandobian profession of the faith and the traditions of Bronish; most clerics are Preachers of Peace, though the number of Pacifists has grown over the last few decades. The House of Solace holds its ceremonies and services in Brandobian, though a fair number of Meznams attend. The Hall of Harmony (Parish of Love) is firmly rooted in the Meznamishii population, though ceremonies are held in both languages and about half of the attendees are Bronish Brandobians. Other temples frequented by the middle class include Freedom Hall (Face of the Free) and the Merchant's Guildhall (Parish of the Prolific Coin).

Temples found in the High Quarter include the House of Order (hosting shrines for the Home Foundation, the Hall of Oaths and the Assembly of Light), the Hall of the Valiant (Halls of the Valiant) and the Court of Justice (which functions as the official legal court for the city). The families and friends of the Seven High Clans and members of the upper middle class in the city primarily frequent the "High Temples"; others attend services when they require inspiration or services of the deity in question. The Temple of St. Mroln (the Temple of Stars) is frequented by merchants and sailors, while the Temple of the Sea Queen (Water Corner) is frequented by fishermen and sailors. The Temple of All Gods, usually frequented only by foreigners and the few other native worshippers, contains shrines to most other good and neutral Gods, as well as a secret shrine or two to various evil faiths. Small groups or individuals that have shrines in their own homes or places of business represent other good and neutral faiths, and represent only a fraction of the entire population of the city. Most city folk attend two or more weekly services at different temples, usually at the Temple of Saint Bronish and one other personal favorite.

Mages & Sages: Glanden Strom (Sor 5), a short Mendarn, makes potions for sale. He charges all foreigners 110% of list price, though he deducts 10% from the list price for Bronish citizens, and 20% for friends. He can also create magic arms and armor, though he charges a minimum of 5000 gp, regardless of the spell to be cast.

Amera, a female elf, makes an excellent living creating and selling spell scrolls to passing adventurers and other travelers. Amera is the sister of Jelena, protector of the elven community of Ellerfast located in the distant Rokk Woods. Amera left the Rokk after harsh words with her sister on the subject of racism (Jelena is very xenophobic). She has not talked to her sister in several years. Amera's specialty is in scrolls that involve spider-like abilities,

such as *giant vermin*, *insect plague*, *spider climb*, *summon swarm*, *web*, and so on.

Underworld: Several pirate gangs routinely put to shore in Bronish, often disguising themselves as merchants to avoid the dragon's eye. They use the city as a meeting place or a stopover while avoiding naval vessels, assuming it is the last place their pursuers would look.

Of greater import is the fact that the amount of exiles (because of racism) is on the rise. This is due to the House of Scorn, who maintains at least one hidden temple in the Foreign Quarter. They hate the general peace and lack of bigotry they see among the citizens, and are subtly attempting to stir up trouble between neighbors.

Interesting Sites: The Hall of the Dragon is at the physical and spiritual heart of the city. It was built shortly after the people of Bronish sealed their alliance with Rhingoryx and has been continually upgraded and expanded over the decades since. The Hall of the Dragon is four stories tall, and constructed of the same white and gold marble as the Hall of the Council of Seven. A 40-foot-diameter golden dome rises from the center of the roof, reaching another two stories into the sky; the peak of the dome is topped with a 50-foot pole, upon which flutters the banner of the Council of Seven, a white field with a



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coiled golden wyrm. Fifteen-foot-tall gold-plated statues of gold dragons grace the roof at the four corners of the building, and similar, smaller statuettes stand all along the edge of the roof. Fifteen-foot-tall doors open out in the middle of three of the walls, onto the Plaza of the Dragon, Freedom Square, and the Long Road. The inside of the hall primarily consists of one large ceremonial chamber, which is replete with statues of the heroes of Bronish. These include Bronish Vromlond, the members of the first Council of the Dragon, major past members of the Council of Seven, heroes from Fortnight's Battle, and others that have served the Free City in remarkable ways. Ceremonies take place at the Hall of the Dragon on a monthly basis, and are well attended by all.

The Hall also contains the offices of the Order of the Golden Wyrn, an organization founded and controlled by the Seven High Clans of Bronish; members are either members of the High Clans or friends and allies that have proven themselves worthy. The Order is dedicated to the service of the dragon and the Free City. The Order performs charitable works, supports the Royal Dragon Company and the Watch, helps organize the Militia, assists the government of the Council of Seven and leads the city in festivals and ceremonies centered on reverence of the dragon.

The Plaza of the Dragon lies to the east of the Hall of the Dragon, and is the site of many ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Wyrn. Years ago the dragon used to meet with the people of the city in this area, but the city grew up around the Hall; thus, all such meetings were moved outside the city, to the area known as the King's Glade. A statue of Rhingoryx stands in the center of the Plaza of the Dragon; it is the twin of the statue in Council Plaza, though in this case the statue faces the Hall of the Dragon. Small vendors and stands that sell everything from food and drinks to jewelry and woodcarvings of the dragon ring the plaza.

Freedom Square lies on the western side of the Hall of the Dragon, and is dedicated to the memory of Bronish Vromlond and other martyred leaders of the Bronish movement. It is a quiet and peaceful area, with small trees and a fountain in its center. The fountain has a statue of Bronish surrounded by statues of human and halfling children; the children bear cornucopias that squirt water back into the fountain. The square is home to the farmers market every Pelsday and Homeday.

Special Notes: Unknown intruders in the dark of the night are attacking the mining villages of the Dashahn Mountains near Bronish. All evidence points toward hobgoblins from Ul-Karg, but something is not quite right. A few citizens believe the raids are actually being conducted by dark elves opposed to the alliance with the Kargi - in the hopes that the attacks will create a counter-offensive before the alliance is ready. Of course, this is probably paranoid delusion.

Recently, a lone, ancient dwarf stumbled into the city with a map that he claimed would lead him to Imdar Tum, (or "Mother Lode"), the largest vein of gold in the Dashahn Mountains,

which was lost ages ago. However, he also whispered something about a long lost tribe of dwarves, now evil and steeped in strange magicks. Various factions tried to buy or steal the map and hire, kidnap or kill the dwarf. He then went into hiding and disappeared.

Finally, as mentioned above, the lizardfolk of the Whiven Marsh have been very active lately. Several homesteads to the north and east have been destroyed, but no one can say whether these were merely raids, or something more ominous.

THE COLONY OF VRANDOL

The events of the third century are demonstrative of how weak Meznamish became after Fortnight's Battle. Pel Brolenon, who had long been sacking Meznamish ships for slaves, established a foothold on Svimohzia, founding Vrandol in 987 Y.K. (317 C.M.) to serve as a port for slave raiding with the hobgoblins of Ul-Karg. It also served to launch slave raids against other Meznamish merchant vessels. The Kingdom of Meznamish had no response, as it relied on Pel Brolenese gold to stabilize the capital in 978 Y.K. (308 C.M.). However, the king was not aware that Brolenese slavers had been working with Ul-Karg as well. Vrandol gained a reputation as a terrible city of exploitation, and became a word whispered on the lips of slaves and commoners alike.

Mendarn, the principal target for Brolenese slavers, reacted aggressively to the depredations. King Aldorn III declared war. Gathering their hosts, they realized that an invasion against the City of Oppression would be far too expensive, with no place to port because of the rocky coasts, and the dangerous weather of the Straits of Svimohzia. Instead, he turned his attention farther south, to the Colony of Vrandol. Four years ago, in 1040 Y.K. (370 C.M.), the Mendarn forces swept south and crushed the Theocrat's forces there, burning the temples to the ground and executing the leaders of the city. Vrandol became a Mendarn colony and port for selling their own captives into slavery and establishing profitable trade with merchants bound for Ul-Karg. Mendarn also uses it as a naval base to destroy whatever Brolenese slave ships they encounter. In fact, they hope to create a stranglehold of naval trade from other nations around the western coast of Svimohzia, especially Brolenese merchants who know the waters well.

LORDS OF VRANDOL

Vrandol's elite are a blend of Mendarn and Brolenese, although Mendarn rules. Vrandol is under martial law and the strict hand of General Cavdrol. Any political leaders from the previous regime were executed, or fled into the city's underground.

GENERAL CAVDROL

When Mendarn sacked Vrandol, King Aldorn appointed General Cavdrol (LN Brandobian fighter 11/aristocrat 2) as governor. Cavdrol sees the occupation of this distant port as a grave responsibility, for Brolenese depredations against Mendarn vessels is a threat to his homeland's sovereignty.

A native of Mendarn, Cavdrol served his country for 20 years, and this post represents an opportunity to advance his family's status to achieve true nobility. He greatly resents the Brolenese, for their slavers abducted his wife while en route to join him at the colony. He is committed to finding her, but thus far has had no luck. He controls his emotions well, considering his predicament, but when drunk he may haul a Brolenese off the streets and beat him to death with his bare hands.

General Cavdrol stands about 5 1/2 feet tall, with the build of a man accustomed to fighting. He has tanned olive skin and curly black hair dusted with gray. He has a commanding voice and severe features to match. He always wears his uniform.

General Cavdrol rarely leaves the city now. He appropriated a merchant prince's house to serve as his office and barracks for his officers. A squad of Mendarn soldiers stands patrol for the house to protect their leader.

Leaders of the Underworld

Vrandol's underworld consists primarily of a Brolenese movement to retake the city and surrounding lands. Aside from the rebels, it has little criminal activity, as the Mendarns and Brolenese are both people whose interests are strong enough to muscle out those who would profit from crime. Still, there are a few pickpockets, burglars and the like, but none organized yet.

Other Notables

In addition, a few other important figures deserve mention. What follows is a survey of the other notables whose lives may or have influenced the nation's development, but for one reason or another, are not significant enough to play a significant role in day-to-day politics.

CAPTAIN BOLGDRAN

Captain Bolgdran (LG Brandobian fighter 8) enjoyed a successful career as General Cavdrol's right-hand man, serving as the voice of conscience when needed and using his sword when times demand violence. Bolgdran has changed, though, ever since he and his men investigated a wreck of an old Brolenese slaver caught on the rocks. Bolgdran and his men rowed out as usual to check for booty, survivors or spies, but when they arrived, a squirming mass of tentacles broke through the hull of the ship, dragging a few of his soldiers down to a watery grave. In his usual bravado, Bolgdran leapt off the ship, knife clenched in his teeth, and swam to free the captured guards. What he found was a foul aboleth that charmed him, and now keeps him in its thrall.

The captain returned shaken, but otherwise intact. His crew put to sail and returned to the city to report. Since then, Bolgdran serves in his usual capacity, but he cannot account for the people who have, of late, gone missing. Furthermore, he has an odd smell of the sea around him at all times. General Cavdrol, while concerned, has other matters to occupy his attention.

Bolgdran is a young man, in his twenties, with black hair and tanned skin. He has blue eyes and a lantern jaw. His strong build, despite a short height, completes the image of a fearless hero.

PURGER NALBAN

Under the Brolenese rule, the House of Scorn was an influential church in Vrandol. Since the Mendarn occupation, its membership has fallen off until about 150 loyal followers remain (and of them, only a third show up for major unholy days). Commanding this small church is the Purger Nalban (NE Brandobian cleric 8).

Nalban hates halflings, gnomes, dwarves and elves. He tolerates hobgoblins, and suffers the Mendarn occupation because he values his life over his freedom. He stalks the streets or countryside to lynch a halfling when he finds one, choking the life from him with his bare hands or stringing the body up in a tree (or both).

Nalban himself has just the faintest hint of elven blood in his otherwise pure Brandobian heritage. He denies this connection, although some have deduced it from his slightly pointed ears and upswept eyebrows. To prove his purity, he makes it a point to buy one elven slave a month to beat it to death before a gathered congregation. One wonders how long General Cavdrol can tolerate this behavior but, so far, he has taken no overt action against Nalban.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

When Mendarn seized Vrandol, they did so to halt the Brolenese practice of waylaying Mendarn vessels and enslaving the crew. However, what they found was an ideal trading hub for dealing with the Kargi. Trading slaves to Ul-Karg in exchange for gems, metals and rare commodities (such as exotic woods and spices) actually made the venture profitable. Mendarn wants to make Vrandol self-sufficient.

King Aldorn charged General Cavdrol with removing all Brolenese influence from the city. Guards patrol the streets, secret police listen for insurrection, and Mendarn officials work to build a government mirroring that of their parent nation. The Mendarns uncovered most Brolenese loyalists and either executed or sold them to Ul-Karg, but a few still remain and commit acts of arson, murder and theft whenever possible.

To ensure the colony's survival, Cavdrol devotes much of the colony's tax revenue to rebuilding destroyed structures and renovating its defenses. The general uses press gangs to gather "volunteers," and hard labor is the most common punishment for a crime. In addition, Cavdrol wants an overland road from the city into Ul-Karg to strengthen trade between the two peoples.

STATUS

Vrandol is under marshal law, giving the Mendarn military total control over the city. General Cavdrol does not recognize rank, social class, or caste among its citizenry. All status relies on military rank. General Cavdrol rules and his word is law. He

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receives his orders from King Aldorn III of Mendarn, to whom he sends regular reports. Second in command is Captain Bolgdran, whose responsibilities include securing the shores and capturing Brolenese escapees. Beneath the captain are three lieutenants who, in turn, command 100 heavy footmen and about 150 Svimohz conscripts each. No one else has any real authority.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mendarn wants to strengthen its hold on Vrandol. To achieve this end, it must sever connections between rebels working within the city and their allies in the countryside. Mendarn sends reinforcements to stabilize the region, consisting of conquering the free Svimohz settlements further inland. General Cavdrol suspects that Brolenese Loyalists lurk in the hills and sneak food, equipment, and other supplies into the city. With enough men, he hopes to take all of these smaller communities, establish marshal law, and burn away the Brolenese taint.

While Cavdrol secures the lands around the port city, crews work night and day to build the overland passage to Ul-Karg. Brolenese merchants and slavers sneak past the naval blockade and retain their strength in trading with the hobgoblins. With an established road system, Vrandol hopes to strengthen their influence in Ul-Karg by controlling the transportation of goods and slaves to the inland cities.

Meznamishii trade agreements with Mendarn keep Vrandol free from difficulties with their Svimohzish neighbors. Meznamish has no claim to the independent villages on the western coast and they do not have any particular loyalties to the halfling nomads. Vrandol may act with impunity as long as Meznams are unharmed.

In most diplomatic matters, Vrandol defers to its parent state, Mendarn. General Cavdrol lacks the authority to make peace or start war without his King's assent. However, Cavdrol does station a few lesser officers and officials in Meznamish and Ul-Karg to watch the leaders and keep the peace between the colony and the larger nations.

BURZUMAGH

Vrandol sent a young officer and staff to Burzumagh over a year ago. His reports (mostly intelligence) about the city and possible alliance with the warlords were regular and timely. However, after four weeks, there was a gap in the regularity, and Vrandol did not receive another report for a month. When the late scroll arrived, the handwriting was different. The elegant script of the diplomat had changed to a childish scrawl, and the language was less than proper and filled with false information. General Cavdrol stopped reading the reports soon after, although they still arrive about every two weeks. No one knows what has occurred.

MONAM-AHNOZH

General Cavdrol dispatched a young officer to join King Warven II's court. There he was to watch, learn and above all

else, encourage peace between the Colony and Meznamish. Warven II liked the amiable young man and took him under his wing. The two became fast friends and soon the diplomat became Warven's creature. Cavdrol receives a regular report, but it contains nothing of value. The general tried to recall the officer but Warven will not let him go.

NATIONAL OPINIONS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

There are two types of people in Vrandol. The first are the Nationalists who, regardless of heritage, support the current regime. They are satisfied with General Cavdrol's administration and many cheer when he kills a Brolenese sympathizer.

The second group is the Loyalists, disaffected and disenfranchised people who once occupied a position in Vrandol's government. Common Brolenese citizens held captive by Mendarn oppressors are also included in this group. Regardless of the type of person, all are afraid of Ul-Karg, for too many Svimohz have spoken of the famous Kargi cruelty.

As far as Meznamish is concerned, most people living in Vrandol see the venerable nation as toothless. While it may look fierce, they believe Meznamish is just a corrupt sinkhole of old politics, desperate to reclaim its youth.

CURRENT EVENTS

Since the Mendarn conquest, Vrandol concerns itself with maintaining law and order within the city and surrounding lands. In the first few weeks of the Mendarn occupation, General Cavdrol publicly executed the vast majority of the Brolenese officials. The effects of this aggressive show of power was to cow the citizens of the city into accepting Mendarn, but it also gave resolve to the dissidents hiding within the Brolenese underground. The aristocracy that survived this public execution quickly vanished from the city by keeping low profiles, faking their deaths or whatever else it took to stay alive and defy the occupying force.

Not all of the Brolenese citizens remained in Vrandol. At the sight of the Mendarn warships, many citizens packed their belongings on their backs and fled. Some traveled north to Bronish, seeking the protection of the great gold dragon guarding the city. Once established in their new environments, they set up a network of spies and Loyalists to assist those people trapped in the city.

Within months after the mass execution, Loyalists began a campaign of terror to oust the Mendarns. Brolenese spellcasters placed spells on doors to government buildings, and explosive runes in missives sent to officers. Meanwhile, necromancers animated fallen Mendarn soldiers to terrorize those soldiers remaining there. Riots are a regular occurrence in the city, with commoners whipped into a state of violence after hearing the demagogues and propagandists rail against the injustice of the occupation. Cavdrol and his soldiers struggled against the rebellion, but it seemed they would soon lose the struggle.

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The situation reversed when fresh reinforcements arrived at the city. Cavdrol tightened his grip, murdering suspected Loyalists by beating them to death with his bare hands. Soldiers prowled the streets, slaughtering groups of Loyalists in their hidden meeting halls. Suspicion was good enough for Cavdrol, for too many Mendarn soldiers had already died. Violence escalated until dejected citizens took to the streets and marched on Cavdrol, threatening to kill him if the injustices did not stop. Cavdrol met with the leaders of this mob and came to terms with them, agreeing to halt the public executions if people would hand over suspected Loyalists. Both parties agreed.

With a semblance of stability restored in Vrandol, Cavdrol turned to the Brolenese ships passing by his city to trade with Ul-Karg. Cavdrol established a blockade of ships to slow the slavers, but somehow they manage to slip by. Suspicion among the military even blames treason!

Mendarn demands Cavdrol ally with the hobgoblins to cut off the Brolenese from southern markets. Along with this, Cavdrol began construction on a road from Vrandol to Ul-Karg. The construction of the road has met with some resistance from Kargi who believe the road threatens their sovereignty. Against the orders of King Krarag-Randatk, hobgoblin raiders strike against the road crew, destroying their progress and enslaving the workers. Cavdrol stations more soldiers, but the more he moves from Vrandol, the more lax his local patrols become.

In addition to the hostilities with Ul-Karg and the Brolenese rebels who remain in the area, Vrandol must contend with the Svimohz natives who came west to be free from the tyrannies of

the east. Independent, they do not intend to bow their heads to any crown, let alone a general. Proving to be so difficult that even the Brolenese had trouble combating, and allied with the halfling nomads who claim the lands as their ancestral hunting grounds, they raid caravans and work crews with regularity. Vrandol responded by fielding armed patrols to drive off the natives, but they have had marginal success.

Ultimately, the Mendarn invasion has not gone as many wanted. Between negotiating trade agreements with the stoic hobgoblins, constant warfare with the natives, and the hostility between the Mendarns and Brolenese, one wonders if Mendarn realizes they are throwing lives and gold away for a stretch of land they cannot control. Still, the Mendarns act as if they mean to stay. Wooden buildings give way to stone structures; slaves work day and night to remove the wooden palisade and replace it with a sturdy stone wall. If Vrandol can get past the pains of rebirth, it could prove to be a significant presence in Svimohzia.

ECONOMICS

The Mendarn conquest shattered Vrandol's economy. Trade all but halted and the city stagnated as its stores of food disappeared at an alarming rate. However, with Cavdrol's leadership, Vrandol entered a period of recovery using funds generated by the sale of Brolenese to Ul-Karg, in exchange for gemstones, metals and several other valuable objects, hastening the town's recovery.

TRIBUTES

Vrandol pays 10% of its income to its host nation once per month. These funds go towards Mendarn's war effort against Pel



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Brolenon, financing troop training, new ships and the continued effort to maintain the colony. Vrandol, to compensate for this loss, collects tribute from all the surrounding towns that, while they pay the required amount (5% of their gross income) receive nothing in return.

TRADE ROUTES

Most of Vrandol's supplies come from Mendarn merchants who detour from the Merchant's Run to dock in Vrandol's ports. It is from these vessels that General Cavdrol receives his orders and dispatches his reports to the Mendarn King. Mendarn rotates soldiers stationed in Vrandol to keep morale high, so transport ships dock once every so often to exchange beleaguered and demoralized soldiers for fresh-faced youths ready to take on any threat.

As for overland routes, crews are making progress on the road to Ul-Karg. With each mile, they come closer to breaking the Brolenese stranglehold on the Kargi market. Cavdrol commits more soldiers to protect the workers from hobgoblin and Brolenese saboteurs.



TAXATION

Vrandol cannot collect taxes from Meznam ships as most of those vessels are under royal command, bearing supplies from the parent nation. Citizens pay a flat tax per month of 1 sp per adult and 5 cp per child. The few merchants coming to port pay a fee based on the weight of their cargo, similar to the rates imposed in Meznamish.

CURRENCY

Vrandol continues to use the round coins of the Kingdom of Mendarn, though they also accept coins from other areas, such as Meznamish, Ul-Karg and Pel Brolenon. The coinage of Mendarn is imprinted with the image of a sheaf of wheat atop three gems. The copper piece is known as a Rube, while the silver piece, or Gent, is a shortened form of the Merchant's Tongue word, "gentleman." The gold is called a Lord. It is also interesting to note that Mendarn's platinum coin, or Dremin, is a shortened version of the name Endremin, that of the royal family of Brandobia.

EXCHANGE RATES

While Mendarn coins are the official currency, Vrandol does accept coins from Meznamish, Bronish and Ul-Karg with no exchange rate. Although Brolenese coins are also acceptable, most Mendarn merchants charge a 5% handling fee for other foreign coins.

LANGUAGES

As a land of colonists, exiles, and freethinking people from all over Svimohzia, the people living in and around Vrandol speak a number of tongues. The Mendarn dialect of Brandobian is the most common tongue spoken in the region, with speakers as far

north as Bronish, and as far south as the northwestern border of Ul-Karg. Although this language is intact, it has started to see Svimohzish intrusions in vocabulary, borrowing Svimohz words for locations, flora and fauna, foods and more. The Svimohz tongue and the Meznam dialect, in particular, are making inroads into the otherwise pure Brandobian tongue. Other languages in this region include the island dialect of Halfling from the halfling nomads haunting the Whisvomi Forest and Hills, and Merchant's Tongue.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

While the upper echelons of Vrandol society are Mendarn in attitude and outlook, the Brolenese influence on the lower classes remains intact. At the heart of Brandobian culture is a deep sense of pride of Brandobian exploration and conquest. This sense of pride is sometimes misconstrued as arrogance and sometimes as out-and-out disdain. Socially, Brandobians are aloof and distant, rarely showing affection in public.

Vrandol's leadership tolerates other races, keeping them in low estimation. Cavdrol encourages trade with the Svimohz freemen, halflings and hobgoblins, seeing them as additional sources of treasure. However, as in Mendarn, Vrandol frowns upon interracial marriages, and cordons off Vrandol into racially segregated neighborhoods to reduce the interactions between races.

STYLE OF DRESS

Svimohzish style has intruded into Brolenese and Mendarn fashion. People of all walks wear loose and comfortable clothing, with bright colors and patterns. All citizens, regardless of social class wear this style of clothing as it best keeps the individual cool in this torrid climate. Off-duty soldiers and officers wear clothes of the Mendarn style, including long blue cotes with white tunics, navy breeches and black shoes. When on duty, they wear chain shirts, blue cloaks and are always armed. Officers have badges to signify their ranks. Given the oppressive heat, Cavdrol is working on new uniforms for his men, for many have succumbed to heat exhaustion.

FESTIVALS

Here, most celebrations reflect Mendarn victories, conquests, and religious events. The most popular is the festival of Conquest.

Conquest: General Cavdrol proclaimed the anniversary of the Mendarn conquest of the city a holiday. Although intended as a means to generate loyalty to the Mendarn crown, it now serves as an excuse to lynch suspected Loyalists. During the festival of conquest, most citizens stay inside and lock their doors, avoiding the drunken soldiers on the prowl for a fight. General Cavdrol, to contain the violence that sweeps the city during this revel, releases three Loyalists. The soldiers see a released Loyalist prisoner as quarry, sometimes hunting the him down so that they can string him high up on a city wall.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Of all of the communities in western Svimohzia, Vrandol has the largest concentration of secret organizations and foreign agents. The city of Bronish has no criminal elements and the other settlements are too small to support much activity.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE BROKEN CHAIN

Vrandol represents an excellent location for inciting slave revolts. The city is isolated, lacks a cohesive infrastructure and deals with a large number of slaves. Therefore, the Brotherhood makes Vrandol a regular target for their agents, who insinuate themselves into the city as buyers, slaves or disinterested parties, building a network of agents. In the last year, the Brotherhood has led over a dozen slave revolts in Vrandol alone, and another 20 in Mendarn. However, Mendarn refuses to give up slavery, as it is far too profitable a trade. As a result, each revolt results in harsher treatment of the slaves, gruesome abuses and terrible consequences for those forced to live their lives under these conditions.

Activities: The Brotherhood infiltrates the city posing as slaves and spreading dissension among their fellow captives. In addition, members of the Brotherhood also come to Vrandol as buyers, purchasing valuable agents out of slavery after a revolt. Occasionally, Brotherhood members introduce a contagion in the slaver barracks to winnow their numbers just before a revolt.

Short-term goals: Reducing morale among the slavers and soldiers in Vrandol is critical to the Brotherhood. While the Brotherhood adds pressure to the city, they also gather information regarding the movements of notorious slavers, so they can eliminate those targets on the open seas.

Long-term goals: Slavery is wrong and it is up to the Brotherhood to stop it, no matter the cost. The Brotherhood is committed to ending slavery throughout Tellene, and is willing to use unsavory tactics like blackmail, assassination and theft to achieve these ends. Ending the trade in Vrandol would give the Brotherhood a definitive victory over the Mendarn operations, perhaps toppling the balance of power between Mendarn, Pel Brolenon and Ul-Karg.

Locations of greatest activity: The Brotherhood divides their efforts between Ul-Karg, Meznamish and Vrandol.

Location of headquarters: Agents of the Broken Chain meet in a camp hidden somewhere in the Whisvomi Forest.

CITY DETAILS

Population: 9,700 (7,600 Svimohz, 1,900 Brandobian, 200 hill dwarf)

A Closer Look: A fresh stone wall surrounds Vrandol (29°50'N, 23°0'W), rebuilt over the ashes of the wooden palisade that failed to ward off the Mendarn invasion of 1040 Y.K. (370 C.M.). Serving as a key trading post for the Kingdom of Mendarn, Vrandol is developing as an influential state. Despite improving trade relations with Ul-Karg and Bronish to the north, the ambition of its leader limits Vrandol's potential.

Aside from the large docks where most trade occurs, Southgate allows entrance into the city. Aldorn Road passes through the city's center where it ends at the governor's castle, occupied by General Cavdrol. Wide roads and open fields divide the city into neighborhoods bound by social class.

To the northeast of the city, where the land is hilly, wealthy merchants live in large sprawling homes with delicate gardens tended by slaves. The excesses of the merchants pale before the nobles, for their expensive manors dominate the eastern side of the city, with paved roads, statues, columns and aromatic gardens.

The remainder of Vrandol's citizenry comprises two groups: the craftsmen (who live south of the docks in the southwestern district), and the laborers (who live around the docks and in the city's northwest). There is little visual difference between the two communities, except the artisans have specialized shops and boutiques. Artists make a good living painting the portraits of the upper class and the soldiers and sculptors beautify the city. The laborers, on the other hand, live in small, single story homes - often with a small vegetable garden behind their house.

The roads, fields and sharp architectural distinctions maintain the integrity of the social groups. People tend to respect their betters and stay within their own self-imposed districts. Those who overstep their bounds find themselves followed by the constables and pressured to return to their respective part of the city.

Government: Vrandol is under military rule, and as long as rebels continue to resist the Mendarn government, it shall remain so. King Aldorn appointed General Cavdrol to govern the city, a task in which he has thus far excelled. Having



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supplanted the Brolenese leadership, who, in turn, ousted the Svimohzish barony, he has many enemies and must be vigilant in protecting himself from frequent assassination attempts.

Vrandol's major concern is to monopolize trade with Ul-Karg. To reach this goal, Vrandol maintains a strict naval blockade to capture Brolenese merchants and pirates trying to slip past the colony. While Mendarn ships restrict passage to the south, Cavdrol employs hundreds of slaves to build an overland road from the city to Ul-Karg. Unfortunately, Brolenese ships still manage to slip past the blockade and hobgoblin raiders and Brolenese rebels sabotage the progress of the road crews by attacking supply caravans, the workers themselves, or destroying the road behind them, forcing crews to backtrack and redo what they have already done.

Cavdrol has requisitioned more troops and ships to see his mission completed. Triple the original patrols engage rebels and hobgoblins along the road. He court-martialed the admiral in charge of the blockade when he accepted bribes from Brolenese ships to let them slip past. Cavdrol has a handle on the colony, but disturbing rumors of a hobgoblin force mustering in the Krimppatu Mountains disturbs him and makes him question his duties.

Economy: Slavery is the cornerstone of Vrandol's economy. Merchants sell Brolenese slaves and their harvest to Kargi buyers in the south in exchange for gems, iron, precious metals, exotic woods and more. Ul-Karg is a veritable treasure trove of potential wealth and Mendarn intends to be the ones to benefit.

Despite their efforts to contain the Brolenese, for every ship they scuttle or board, three more manage to slip past their blockade. Ship captains claim the slavers use magic to conceal their vessels. To avoid this, the colony works to build a wide highway to Ul-Karg, but the highway project pulls more soldiers and workers from the colony to work on the road. Between the Brolenese ships, and the frequent attacks against the road crews, the cost to maintain Vrandol is eclipsing the rewards gained from Ul-Karg, regardless of what Cavdrol claims, and Mendarn displeasure grows.

Military: With mounting pressure from the King to complete the grand highway connecting the colony to Ul-Karg, and with the increasing raids targeting the free villages and the crews themselves, Cavdrol is becoming desperate. To meet these demands, he commits his entire garrison to overseeing the road construction, ordering each man to take turns working, while the rest spend their time being watchful for bandits.

This decision crushed the soldiers' morale, as they are some of the best warriors Mendarn can offer, and being relegated to the work of slaves dishonors them. On the other hand, they realize Ul-Karg has no goodwill in mind, and may well be behind the attacks. Thus, although it is an affront to their station, they understand they are well into hostile territory and need to co-operate for now.

Temples: Vrandol has seen a number of religions come into town, one of which has retained a presence against all odds.

Purger Nalban his and three junior clerics lead a shrinking congregation of the House of Scorn, a once popular religion before the invasion. It currently claims a meager 150 members, of whom a third show up for major holy days.

Inherited from Mendarn, the Temple of Stars has a small shrine located in Vrandol. Travelers, merchants and slavers alike make a point to stop there and say a prayer to the Nimble Navigator. A single Quester, who spends a few weeks a year in Vrandol, maintains it whenever he returns from one of his long travels. General Cavdrol has tried to recruit Journeymen to serve as guides to Ul-Karg, but there has been no agreement, for they see the nation of hobgoblins as evil and that even by facilitating trade with them compromises their Mendarn ethics.

After Mendarn sacked Vrandol, a squad of the Order of the Pike came to the plundered city and established themselves as trainers and servants to General Cavdrol. The general does not trust them at all, but sees them as a useful tool. He keeps the Order divided, placing each sergeant with a separate squad. The reason for his distrust is that they counsel him to mount an attack on Bronish. Cavdrol knows that such an attack would be foolish, considering the gold dragon his soldiers have spotted a few times above the distant city.

When the Mendarns conquered Vrandol, they eradicated the House of Shackles and the Bringer of the New Order from the city. Fire destroyed all priests and all the churches except one, and all symbols of the Overlord. Thinking the Oppressor's influence removed, General Cavdrol turned to other things. What he did not realize was that Velmn, the Brandobian name for the Overlord, retained some of his servants. Many of the slaves in the city are avid worshippers of the Overlord, having succumbed to the propaganda of the Brolenese. These slaves, promising service to their liberator, twisted the General to continue the service to the Enemy of the Free, encouraging him to sell slaves to the Kargi. With each slave sold, the General's soul darkens. The Bringers of the New Order hope to one day make Cavdrol their creature, and restore their place in the city.

Mages & Sages: Although Vrandol is in the hands of the Mendarns, they retain agents in the city to report on the conqueror's activities. One spy, Wenvert (LE Brandobian wizard 8), poses as an artist and smuggles out his reports within his paintings, selling the artwork to a dealer who returns the information to Dowond-Brandel. Wenvert has been successful because he does not take risks. He would rather work slowly and methodically than endanger his cover. His tactics have made him the most important agent in the city. Wenvert lived in Vrandol when the Mendarns took it, but at the time of the conquest, he was examining Meznamish activity to the east. He hastened back to Vrandol to report his information, but when he arrived, the city was burning, and Mendarn troops had gathered the Brolenese leaders and put them to the sword. Thinking fast, Wenvert concealed himself with magic and entered the city as a Svimohz artist. With luck, he escaped the purges and became

something of a local personality, painting portraits of merchants, officials, and even General Cavdrol himself.

Hendrad (N half-Brandobian/half-Svimohz druid 11) is the son of Mandast, a Brolenese slaver, and a Svimohz slave-woman. He is vocal in his support of the Mendarns and aids the General in his effort to suppress civil unrest. Well-known for his temper, he patrols the city and the surrounding land with his rod of thunder and lightning and a quick backhand. Hendrad is angry. He hates his father, Mandast, for his sire's poor treatment of Hendrad's mother. Mandast beat the mother and son within inches of their lives, took lovers and killed them, and was all around a despicable man. When Mandast died, or so Hendrad believed, the druid celebrated for two weeks and called in a foul storm that sank four slave ships.

Despite his hatred for the Brolenese, Hendrad has no particular position on slavery. He sees it as a necessity to fill agricultural labor shortages. However, he does not tolerate mistreatment of slaves, and has killed slavers who were too quick with the lash.

Hendrad wears long black robes stitched with animals and ivy. He is never without the cudgel he uses at the slightest provocation. With fierce features, and a nasty jaw line scar given to him by his father, he struts through Vrandol as if he owns it.

Underworld: Mandast (NE Brandobian bard 7) once ruled Vrandol before the Mendarns annexed it. Now, in hiding, he leads a rebel force called the Loyalists, a group of disaffected nobles and influential people loyal to Pel Brolenon. Most of these rebels held a position before the sack, and somehow, through their ingenuity or assistance, other supporters managed to escape the purges.

Mandast hates General Cavdrol and went so far as to orchestrate the capture and enslavement of the General's wife. Better still, Cavdrol does not know Mandast holds his wife captive just under his nose in Vrandol. Mandast is not certain what to do with his prize, although he tortures her for the pleasure of it. The Loyalists, realizing their potential advantage, do not want to see it squandered. Part of Mandast's hatred originates from the death of his own wife when the Mendarn ships conquered the city. He uses the death of his spouse to justify his own evil acts.

A pureblooded Brandobian, Mandast stands nearly 5 1/2 feet tall, with a slim build and fierce blue eyes. He has a nasty scar on his right cheek from when a burning rafter fell on him as he tried to escape the attack.

Interesting Sites: An old temple to the Overlord remains from the colony's previous owners. The reason for its existence is a mystery to most people in Vrandol. While Cavdrol claims that he honors all religions, he is secretly afraid of retribution if he orders the temple's destruction. The cause for his fear could be traced to a nightmare involving the temple the night he arrived in Vrandol. He believes it was a threat from the Overlord.

Nobody is known to enter the temple through the wooden planks that cover its doors and windows. Inside, however, are rumored to live a band of ghosts and many shadows. The ghosts are thought to be former clergy of the temple, killed during the

Mendarn invasion. The shadows are undead remains of the worshipers inside the temple at the time of the slaughter.

Special Notes: The Svimohz, the truly rightful owners of Vrandol, resent their Brandobian leaders. Most of the problems stem from the fact the Svimohz do all the work, while the Brandobians (Brolenese or Mendarn) have always ruled. Without representation in the government, the Svimohz feel they are little better than slaves. A few Svimohz leaders have approached General Cavdrol, and he has promised to ensure Svimohz representation in the government just as soon as they secure the city. No one knows when, if ever, this will occur.

THE VOHVEN JUNGLE

What mysteries does the Vohven hold? What terrors hunt humanoid flesh in the shadows of the great trees? Why is it after so many wars that the Vohven stands as one of the last bastions of the true wilderness? Historically, the Vohven has always proved to be a foreboding stretch of jungle, occupying half of all Svimohzia. The earliest human civilization flourished under the canopies of this massive jungle and failed with equal regularity. From the heart of this awful den of pestilence, predators and death is said to have emerged the great Serpent Empire, a sprawling culture that once enslaved the first races of humanity. Moreover, it was there that it fell, overthrown by the lowliest of its slaves. There is no official history of the jungle, just a collection of speculations and testimonies of those forced to venture within. The monarchs of the isle are content to leave it as it is, to let sleeping terrors lie undisturbed, and to pretend it does not exist at all.

The Coming of Miznoh

Miznoh's occupation of the southern lands taught him to respect the Vohven. During the year he spent along its border, he sent small squads of men to test the jungle, to gauge what dangers lay within and the likelihood of its conquest. What he found was a more dangerous threat than the trolls ravaging Mewzhano Bay, for inside the steaming jungle lived tribes of wild elves, savage men and worse, all accustomed to fighting guerilla warfare. Miznoh abandoned any plan to invade the Vohven, believing it best to leave it undisturbed.

The Rise and Fall of Meznamish

While it is true that the Vohven Jungle houses Svimohzia's most dangerous predators, it is also home to many tribes of wild elves, savage humans, and representatives of most races on the Svimohzish Isle. While Zazahni established Zahnzor's Way, the Zazahni traded with the natives as they always had, becoming friendly with the Jynavi, Yeruji and Shuz-Rahl tribes especially. They exchanged gold, herbs, woods and more for refined goods. Zahnzor encouraged friendly relations with the natives, believing they could be useful allies against the dangers of the jungle.

Trade continued, relationships flourished and the peoples even intermarried. This all ended, however, when Miznoh III

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marched south to invade the Vohven. With him came the sicknesses of the urban north, completely wiping out the Shuz-Rahl tribe. Miznoh III used the Yeruji, conscripting them as scouts and guides for his soldiers. Soon, all inroads into the people of the Vohven ended and war began.

The wild elves proved the most dangerous threat to the Meznamishii soldiers. Skilled in concealment and guerilla fighting, they used poisonous arrows to bring down troops from afar. They disrupted supply lines, poisoned water sources, and used the flora and fauna to their advantage, employing shambling mounds, assassin vines and worse.

The jungle itself reacted to the foreign presence. Great lizards and other monstrous plants and animals attacked with eerie precision, as if guided by some intelligent force. In short, the war was costly and foolish, setting back the nation's cultural and societal advances back a century and setting the stage for a reactionary and evil government to seize the empire.

The Vohven bled the Meznamishii Empire for almost 40 years when the war marked the end. It was the sowing of these seeds that flourished into fracture and death of the following centuries. From it, all doubts about the jungle ended; it is a place alive and aware, dangerous and deadly, a mystery best left unsolved.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Vohven remains a mysterious threat, even today. After many ill-conceived plans to exploit the jungle for its resources, to conquer it as any other land, it and its inhabitants have always emerged the victor, repulsing colonization. For a century, the jungle stood quietly, with the occasional trader emerging from its depths to trade wondrous relics and artifacts uncovered from vine-choked cities in the jungle's depths. No longer did the terrible lizards emerge to destroy civilization. The serpent men and their legions became a distant nightmare, forgotten by the warring kingdoms.

However, that quiet is no more. The northern Vohven natives, particularly the wild elves, enjoyed peace with their Zazahni and Ahznomahn neighbors, trading exotic woods and herbs for finished products of civilization. Then, greedy slavers turned to this tree-shrouded land. With each raid, villages fell to sword and fire. The slavers rounded up the survivors and marched them the long distance to Ahznomahnii ports, where elven slaves carried high prices.

Peace gave way to anger as the tribes worked together to destroy their human neighbors. The resentment and hatred spread throughout the jungle as far west as the Zhano-mewhi Bay. Old masters, the revenants of the past awoke and gathered armies of plant creatures, trolls and giants. As one cohesive force, the jungle awoke, and now the terrors of the past prowl the lands of the humans once more.

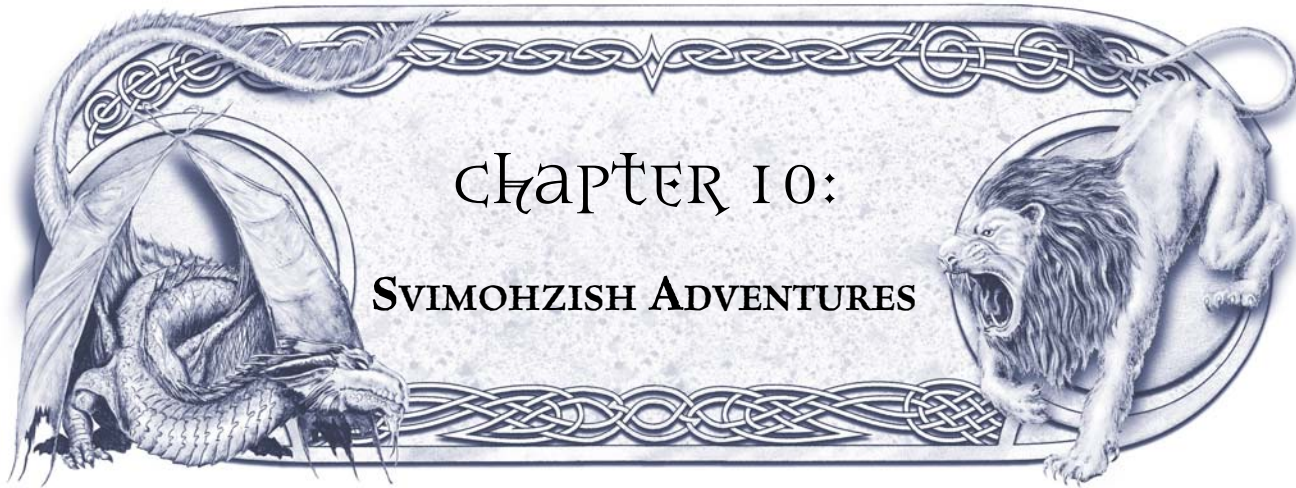
CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

The Vohven Jungle encompasses many (perhaps hundreds of) tribes, each with their own belief systems, superstitions and values. Where one tribe might venerate a serpent idol, others may worship the spirits of their ancestors. Each tribe traces their histories from some particular event - some, perhaps, from the rumored Serpent Empire that once controlled Svimohzia, some from vast planar distances fleeing worlds of genocidal dangers, and others with forgotten roots.

RACES AND NATIONALITIES

Some sages believe that all life originated in the Vohven. After all, most sentient races in Tellene have a presence in the jungle, from savage humans to hobgoblins, orcs and even a few dwarves (though no jungle dwarves have been seen in over a century). The dominant races are humans, wild elves, yuan-ti and trolls, though stranger creatures also dwell here. Some of the better known human tribes are detailed in Chapter One: Races and Regions. However, the DM has dozens, if not hundreds, of options for this mysterious land.





CHAPTER 10:

SVIMOHZISH ADVENTURES

With all of the information presented in this book, you will find hundreds of possible adventures seeds to build your campaign. Whether you want a campaign set among the six bazaars of Zha-Nehzmish, alongside King Warven II's armies marching across the Tanezh Mountains, in the heart of evil but honorable Ul-Karg, or mired in the political intrigue and assassination of the Zazahnii civil war, the options are yours to explore.

Published *Kingdoms of Kalamar* adventures that deal with the Svimohzish Isle include *Garden of the Plantmaster*, *A Foe in Need* (*Harvest of Darkness*), the *Sirocco's Kiss*, and *Unguarded Hoard* (both from *Lands of Mystery*).

This chapter offers a few suggestions for running campaigns in Svimohzia, showing how each nation is suited to a different style of play. Details on adapting the essential building blocks into campaigns focus on Ahznomahn and Meznamish, but are easily adaptable to fit any of the other nations.

Adventure Ideas

ANCIENT EVIL

One of the most common campaign story objectives is stopping the return of an ancient evil. Sometimes the malevolent force is a lich who creates an obscene host to destroy the living. On the other hand, PCs may try to halt the return of an evil god to the Material Plane or prevent a band of cultists from uncovering an ancient artifact that would spell doom for the land.

COMMERCE AND CUTTHROATS

Commerce is the heart of many Svimohzish societies. The struggle to establish and build a merchant house and build an empire, while dodging Golden Alliance agents, local thieves' guilds and rival merchants is a campaign in itself. Merchants rise and fall in Svimohzia, but their lives are never dull.

In the merchant campaign, the characters own a merchant house. The characters enter the cutthroat markets of their local city and battle their rivals and, perhaps, with success, rise to local prominence and political power, thereby having a say in their land's future. A common hook to get this campaign

started is for the party to perform a service, such as security for a caravan, recovery of an important slave, or saving an expensive shipment. The merchant, instead of paying the PCs outright, gives them raw materials they can sell on the open market, thus beginning their careers as a new merchant house. Adventures could include selling the product in the markets, fending off rivals who would put down this upstart merchant guild, or even fending off thieves, depending on the nature of the goods.

After the PCs sell the initial product, they can purchase more raw goods from the mainland, reselling the commodities in high-demand markets. PCs may journey to different lumber, mining or trading sites, and even personally trade with the wild elves or primitive Deji tribes of the Vohven Jungle. Seeing the wild elf exploitation, the PCs may take the side of the humanoids or ruthlessly bargain with them and take their valuable goods for their own profits.

Successful PCs could earn enough coin to draw the attention and respect of local citizens and political figures. With the prestige of this position comes great responsibility and offers of jobs, for now the PCs have a hand in ruling the land from behind the scenes, offering their services in exchange for political favors. These higher-level games could thrust Svimohzia into war or save it from certain doom, depending on the characters' goals and alignments.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Intrigue and politics are excellent campaign options because character level is less important. In fact, it is preferred if the characters are of a low level, for low-level characters do not have access to powerful divination magic. In this campaign, the players receive scraps of information as they wade through the complexities of the plot to reach the campaign's nemesis. These campaigns are the most memorable, but require more effort, requiring a host of NPCs and detailed plot maps.

Chapter Ten: Svimohzish Adventures

INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE

An exciting option for high-level characters is to have them take part in the intrigues between nations, serving as diplomats, ambassadors or spies. This style of play allows the campaign to see multiple locales, using Ahznomahn as a base of operations. In addition, it also adds a dynamic, living element to the campaign, where PC actions in one location have far-reaching consequences throughout the world.

WAR

Svimohzia's history is full of war. If not a battle against brutal humanoids, then it was a war of conquest, with one warlord seeking to crush all others. A war campaign is difficult to adjudicate, for characters must either lead the armies or serve in them. To lead the armies, the PCs should come from nobility, or be high-ranking officers. To serve in the armies, the characters serve best as special operatives, such as scouts, spies or an elite task force to trail blaze through hostile territory.

AHZNOMAHNII ADVENTURES

For campaigns centered on the development of international intrigues where the characters are (or serve) merchant princes, Ahznomahn is the ideal nation. Grappling with a destabilizing mainland territory, Meznamishii aggression, slave revolts and more, Ahznomahn is perfect for adventure.



THE SERPENT MENACE

Yuan-ti are active once more in the Awhom Forest, and hope to dominate the nation, the island and eventually the world. As their power grows, they draw all manner of reptilian allies, from lizard men and dinosaurs to dragons and their spawn.

A merchant house, either on the mainland or Mezh-Vowmi, hires the PCs to escort a caravan bearing a valuable object from Zha-Nozhnahn (29°15'N, 8°40'W) to Rismish (29°25'N, 7°40'W). The object carried is, in fact, an ancient relic of the yuan-ti, stolen from the ruins of the forest. Yuan-ti scouts are desperate to retrieve the object and have infiltrated many of the population centers throughout the land to gather information as to the relic's whereabouts. The yuan-ti scouts learn the merchant house has the object in its possession, and ambush the PCs to learn the merchant's route. Their overwhelming force surely will defeat the PCs and steal the object, but if not, the PCs safely reach their destination only to find the relic has vanished.

With the relic missing, a merchant hires them to get the object back, offering double the initial payment (if necessary). Examining the clues left by the raiders (or marks left by an incredibly stealthy thief), and listening for local rumors, the PCs determine the Awhom Forest should be their next port of call. The heroes track the thieves through the haunted forest, battling the horrors within until they come to ancient ruins. Inside the city, the heroes explore a massive dungeon, facing innumerable dangers and horrors. They must use guile and wit to snatch the item from under leader Ssrith Ko's nose.

When the heroes return with the relic, they find the merchant prince awaiting them at the forest's edge. He takes the relic and pays the heroes before leaving. What the PCs soon learn is the merchant is Ssrith Ko's rival, and he plans to use the relic to raise an army of undead and scour the land clean of human infestation. This new development becomes evident when corpses rise out of the earth all over the nation and these terrible armies sweep towards Rismish, and at their head is the merchant.

The PCs could confront them, taking the legions of dead head-on. They could return to Sizra to learn from Ssrith Ko the purpose of this relic and perhaps enlist his aid, for even his people are threatened. Regardless of how the PCs handle the threat is up to them, but in any event, this campaign should provide months of exciting play.

SHADOWS IN THE STREET

In Ahznomahn, there is plenty of opportunity for the PCs to act as spies, advisors, diplomats or even make national decisions themselves. For example, the transfer of power from Izenmas to his successor is a campaign in itself, involving extortion, coercion, and perhaps assassination. In the domestic intrigues, the characters become embroiled in a complex tangle of zurena politics as they take part in determining the next "greatest among equals."

One of the PCs, perhaps a noble or rogue, overhears two shadowy figures speaking in an alley off a main street, or in a hall

of the parliament building, where the conspirators plot to kill Izenmas. The character hearing this information serves as the hook to enlist the PCs, who must now decide what they want to do. If the PCs assassinate Izenmas, the matter of his successor is put to a secret vote in the parliament. On the other hand, they could spy on the conspirators to learn their identities and force them out of Ahznomahn, or even destroy them, to keep Izenmas secure. As the PCs take their first steps in resolving the moral quandary, Izenmas is murdered. The PCs may suspect the conspirators, even going so far as to accuse them in public. Yet their suspicions are false, for the conspirators admit to the plot, but claim they had not yet attempted the murder.

Parliament requests the PCs uncover the murderers and bring them to justice. The PCs spend time interviewing zurenas, and in time, they discover plots within plots, depravity and corruption all around them. Caused by their probing, one of the zurenas hires a band of Gray Cloaks to eliminate the threat. After the PCs defeat the assassins, they discover evidence linking the Gray Cloaks to Izenmas' murder, leading them into the black heart of Zha-nehzmish's underworld. Eventually, they find Helshan Zide, who admits his people killed Izenmas, but at the behest of a certain zurena.

The PCs return, armed with the information gained from Zide, but soon discover two of the zurenas missing. One of zurenas they find dead in his home, and of the other there is no sign. Confident they have found the guilty party, they go to the estate of the zurena fingered by Zide, where they face the zurena's minions, traps and other defenses. The campaign concludes when the heroes bring the guilty zurena to justice. However, instead of executing him, the parliament fully reinstates him, thanks to the Golden Alliance working behind the scenes. Soon after, they call for a vote to determine Izenmas' successor, and elevate the guilty zurena to the seat, a problem for the PCs indeed.

BROTHERHOOD, WHERE ART THOU?

It is important to remember Ahznomahn does not pursue a political agenda outside of Svimohzia. Instead, Ahznomahn's concern centers on developments with their neighbors. Ozhvinmish, and its gradual division into two nations, could weaken the port cities in that powerful nation, thus improving Zha-nehzmish's position as a dominant trade center in Svimohzia. In addition, Ahznomahn is interested in Zazahni and the rumors of warlords siding with Meznamish.

After a riot in Ashoshani, the Ahznomahnii embassy burns to the ground. Concerned, the zurenas turn to the PCs, noted for their heroics. They hire the PCs to journey to the city to uncover the culprit behind the arson, rebuild the embassy and to restore good relations with the Ozhvin King. The heroes, if they agree, board a ship bound for Ozhvinmish's capital. Along the way, pirates from the Straits of Svimohzia attack. If the pirates win, they capture the ship and take the PCs as prisoners.

Whether the pirates win or lose, after speaking with the PCs, they realize that the heroes may be of some use. The PCs learn the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain instigated the riots. However, in exchange for their freedom (or in exchange for the information about the Brotherhood) the pirates demand the PCs help smuggle some illicit goods and stolen slaves out of Ashoshani to sell in other cities. If the PCs agree, they sail to Ashoshani, accompanied by a small number of pirates to move the "merchandise" onto a waiting ship. Good PCs may use this opportunity to double-cross the pirates and thus gain their enmity for a long time.

In Ashoshani, the PCs confront the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain. If the PCs betrayed or slew the pirates, the Brotherhood sides with them. Otherwise, they attempt to drive them from the city. The PCs could join the secret society, or fight the Brotherhood - all the while working to gain the King's favor and restore the Embassy.

MEZNAMISHII ADVENTURES

Meznamish is a nation on the cusp of change. In the center of all the turmoil are various factions and powers, shifting alliances as they build armies and amass treasure. In Meznamish, commoners walk with head bowed and Svizohr lords exult in their own decadence. The king, desperate to be emperor, sells the nation's soul to realize his dream. Brolenese slavers buy and sell Meznamishii citizens, while Svizohr purchase slaves to meet the growing agricultural demands. Beneath it all, secret societies fight to command Meznamish's underworld. War is near, and the characters may well find their characters in the center of it all.

PLANAR PERIL

The PCs work for Prince Vurlan's attaché, serving as his spies. Suspecting disloyalty among certain members of the Svizohr, he sends the characters to investigate Homish (32°35'N, 15°15'W). There, the PCs become embroiled in a strange conspiracy, where commoners and slaves alike disappear. Breaking into the Zalden House, they defeat the Svizohr's minions and manage to save the kidnapped people. Unfortunately, the Svizohr escapes. A search through his notes reveals a connection to a monastery of evil monks on another plane.

Pursuing the Svizohr, the characters must find a way off the Prime Material Plane, and a way back. Scouring the land, they finally enlist the aid of an important wizard who holds the key to breaching the planes. Before he agrees to transport the party, however, he demands they perform a service for him first. He requires the adventurers to retrieve a stolen journal pilfered by an old apprentice, who fled the master's cruelty. The wizard knows the direction his former pupil took, but not his ultimate destination. The characters must pick up the old trail, question the common folk and gather rumors and information to follow the apprentice and ultimately find the journal. The heroes will journey to the Zhano Headlands where they find the appren-

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tice's corpse, but no sign of the journal. The apprentice has been murdered and robbed. Following the robbers' trail into the heart of rugged hills and ravines, where the characters face an evil cult. The battle takes them through the complex, facing the countless horrors, but ultimately, they recover the journal to return to the wizard.

The wizard gladly sends the characters to their destination plane, opening a gate with a scroll. The characters must now explore this new land, find the monastery, defeat its monks and capture or kill the Svizohr. Returning to the gate, the PCs find it closed, betrayed by the wizard who sent them. The characters must find some way to return home or spend their lives in this strange new plane.

THE SACRED VAULTS OF SULDARAK

Several political undercurrents form the intrigues inside Meznamish. Like many nations on the isle, there is concern regarding a growing reliance on Brolenese slaves. Meznamish gives more and more of its gold to slavers to fuel their own deficiencies in meeting the demands of agricultural labor. In addition, since Fortnight's Battle, the relationship between Meznams and the stone dwarves has grown strained, especially with human and gnome miners occupying the old mountain strongholds in the Dashahns. Finally, the Knights of the Black Pit want nothing more than to break Meznamish's spine.

Recently, an outspoken dwarf denounced the Meznams as the cause of dwarven suffering since the first accord. At first, the dwarf does not gain a lot of support, but when word reaches them that humans and gnomes breached the sacred vaults of Suldarak, a tomb buried deeply beneath the Dashahn Mountains, the dwarves rebel. Stone dwarves arise from deep beneath the Dashahns, killing humans and gnomes with abandon. A Svizohr with interest in continuing trade with the dwarves, asks the characters to investigate. The PCs explore the old tunnels, fighting greedy human prospectors and vengeance-seeking dwarves until they reach the vault. After some investigation, it is clear it was not human or gnome hands that breached the ancient tomb. The characters bring this information to the dwarves and halt the aggression.

With the bellicose dwarves in check, it becomes clear there is a malevolent force at work, causing cave-ins, outbreaks of disease, and more. This is a Knight of the Black Pit, who manipulates the dwarves, getting them to abandon their own tunnels to fight against the humans. Worse, the Knight of the Black Pit actually serves the fiend possessing Warven III. When the PCs defeat the knight, they learn that Warven III is possessed. They must return the king to normal, while combating the many servants of the foul outsider.

OZHVINMISHII ADVENTURES

Adventures set in Ozhvinmish reflect sweeping social change, a nation at risk of losing its tenuous identity, caught between the traditions of the west and the ambitions of the east. As Svizohr

families enter the twilight of their authority, an exciting merchant class rises to replace them. Elves flee the hostilities of a king, their fomented hatred used to divert attention from the monarch's plotting. Evil rides in the open, undermining the efforts of good people, while goblins, Zazahni warlords, and Meznamishii soldiers probe the borders to test the nation's defenses. Yet, Ozhvinmish also holds many secrets, from the restless spirits in the Miznoh Forest to the gathering hosts of the Svomawhom. There is no shortage of adventure here.

ROYAL ASSASSINATION

In this scenario, the characters just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Assassins attack the inn where the PCs are staying, intending to kill an informant. The characters defeat the assassins and learn they are Meznams. With a little investigation, they uncover a Meznam spy ring operating in Ashoshani. The heroes, driven to put a stop to it, go to Monam-ahnoz. There, they uncover a plot to kill King Shahn III, but the details are not in Monam-ahnoz; they are with the assassins' leader in Svowmahni, many leagues away.

Taking passage to the distant city, either by sea or by the Great Coastal Highway, the characters must battle many dangers (such as bandits, pirates and horrors from beneath the waves or from the Miznoh Forest). Once in Svowmahni, they enter a corrupt and dangerous underworld. Having little luck in locating the head of the organization, an agent of the Blue Salamanders approaches them with an offer of assistance. In exchange for finding the head of the assassins, the Salamanders ask the PCs to help them eliminate a rival faction. Having little choice, the characters agree and with the help of the Salamanders, locate the assassin leader, but too late, as he already gave the order.

Impelled by duty to save the king, the heroes must enlist the aid of the Salamanders once more, deepening their debt to the secret society. The Salamanders assist the heroes in saving King Shahn III, thereby thwarting the murderers, but calling in their favor at the same time. The Salamanders demand the PCs kill the head cleric of the Courts of Justice. In this moral crisis, the heroes must agree and gain the enmity of a powerful force for good, or refuse and make enemies of the Blue Salamanders.

KARGI ADVENTURES

In Ul-Karg, evil rules. Characters may be escaped slaves seeking freedom in the human lands, or explorers thinking to unravel a mystery behind the human migrations and the secrets of the rumored Serpent Empire. Alternatively, the adventurers could be hobgoblin spies, leaving Ul-Karg to gather intelligence in Meznamish, Zazahni and Ozhvinmish. Whether the players take the roles of good or evil adventurers, campaigns set in Ul-Karg promise unique adventure opportunities.

RAISING AN ARMY

Most Kargi hate the Svimohz with a passion. They rightfully believe that to conquer the world, they must first conquer the isle, and the Svimohz are the people standing in their way. The Kargi excel at large, formal battles, and the humans are more than happy to oblige them. The Kargi's greater size and toughness make the individual Kargi soldier superior to the average human soldier. Only the greater number of humans keeps the two races evenly matched. Since Fortnight's Battle, conflicts between humans and hobgoblins have been raids and other small skirmishes, but the PCs could start to build a force for a new invasion that will be ready to open a major war soon.

ZAZAHNII ADVENTURES

If you want a game where the players contend with the shifting alliances of petty warlords vying for control over the ruins of an ancient kingdom, Zazahni is perfect. Here, the characters have a strong impact on the nation's future. Caught between rival factions, the characters must choose sides in an effort to restore stability to a wounded land. Perhaps one of the characters is a descendant of the last king and wishes to stake a claim to the throne. Simply negotiating between the warlords could be a campaign in itself. Alternatively, Zazahni is a good land for PCs who wish to play evil mercenaries, selling their sword arm to the highest bidder and caring for nothing other than a pouch full of gold.

Meznamish is on the verge of mounting an assault to seize Svimohzia and place all of the lands under the rule of an emperor. Two things block this inevitable conflict, however. Ul-Karg could strike first, crippling Meznamish's offensive, or attack while Meznamish is committed to the Ozhvinmish front. Also, Ahznomahn could actively work to undermine Warven II's efforts to win over Zazahni and bring them back into the fold. Whether you want an island-wide war where Meznamish and their Zazahni allies fight against Ozhvinmish, a Zazahni conflict against the hobgoblins of Ul-Karg, or simply want to involve your PCs in the ongoing Zazahni civil war, this land is rife with possibilities.

THE FLAMES OF WAR

One adventure could begin when a government building erupts in flames that quickly spread throughout the city. Believed to be the work of spies from a neighboring nation or house, the PC's ruler declares war, calling in favors from allies. The land quickly amasses its troops, and prepares for an invasion by

stationing soldiers along strategic border points. The PCs directly serve the ruler of the land, or a local noble, and rally troops, build supply lines and revenge the initial attack.

Meanwhile, slavers reap plenty, siding with no one and collecting slaves in unprecedented brazenness. The hobgoblins, too, may see this as their chance to take land while the humans are distracted by this other war. Special units of dwarven guards try to protect the flanks to prevent an Ul-Karg invasion, but are not enough to stop the hordes of screaming hobgoblins sweeping east. In the thick of the action, the PCs capture a spy and discover the enemy truly had nothing to do with the arson. After extensive investigation, the heroes learn the Blue Salamanders started the fires to provoke war.

Armed with this knowledge, the PCs may try to convince their lord to end his invasion and turn his attention to Ul-Karg and the Brolenese slavers. However, he may refuse, ignore the true cause of this battle and focus only on winning. Meanwhile, the other rival lords may be too weak, too apathetic or too insular to worry about the hobgoblin threat. In this worst case, the hobgoblins could build the momentum needed to seize the entire island, condemning the Zazahni to a grim future of oppressive slavery.



WESTERN SVIMOHZIA ADVENTURES

If the campaign takes place in the Colony of Vrandol, the characters may be Brolenese loyalists working to overthrow the Mendarn oppressors. Alternatively, the characters could be Mendarn soldiers, struggling to complete the road south and to stave off saboteurs undermining their efforts.

On the other hand, the citizens of Bronish may be dealing with a threat from the hobgoblins or dark elves of the Krimppatu Mountains, but their gold dragon protector is nowhere to be found. With a land largely unsettled, adventuring in western Svimohzia allows the characters to function outside of the delicate balance of powers in other nations.

You can find an adventure dealing with Bronish and the gold dragon in the Unguarded Hoard adventure, in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* multi-adventure product *Lands of Mystery*.

VOHVEN JUNGLE ADVENTURES

Many adventures await those who dare to enter the Vohven Jungle, from battles with savage tribes to archeological forays into ancient cities. One such adventure can be found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* adventure, *Garden of the Plantmaster*. Included here is a new minor artifact that could be used as an adventure hook to lure your players to the garden.

PROTECTOR OF THE FIRST EMPIRE

Ahlziz, an ancient Svimohzish wizard, forged the protector of the first empire to house the spirit of the king, should he perish before his allotted time. When the City of the Elders fell, claiming the lives of the council and king, the monarch's spirit transferred to the king's falchion where it remains to this day.

Protector of the First Empire: +6 flaming ghost touch falchion; AL LG; Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16; Speech, 60 ft. darkvision and hearing; Ego score 23.

Lesser Powers: Bless 3/day, *command plants* 3/day, *detect magic* at will, 10 ranks in Diplomacy (total modifier +14).

Greater Powers: Foresight 1/day.

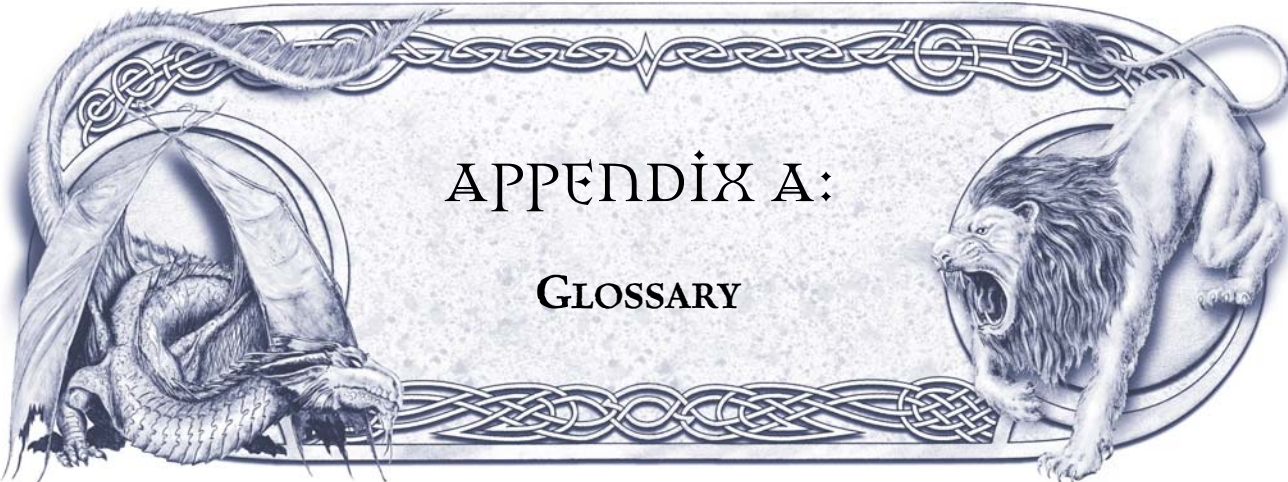
Special Purpose: Protect the creatures and inhabitants of the Vohven Jungle when they cannot protect themselves.

Dedicated Power: Sword can use *regenerate* on wielder, 2/month.

Personality: The king, although he has forgotten his name and many memories of his life, retains much of his personality. He is boisterous and confrontational, but good and honorable despite all of his bravado. The sword brooks no evil act by his wielder. Should his wielder succumb to the temptation of darkness, the protector fights to gain control of the body. If it wins, it forces the host to commit suicide.

Strong conjuration; CL 19th; Weight 8 lbs.





APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

This appendix includes a variety of words in Dejy, Kargi and Svimohzish, as well as brief descriptions for prominent locations, and words in other languages (such as Merchant's Tongue) occasionally heard on the Svimohzish Isle.

Adajy: Dejy name for the god of fear and nightmares.

Adasvero I, King: Former king of Zazahni.

Ahzimian, Steward: Ruler of eastern state of Ozhvinmish.

Ahznom(s): Resident of Ahznomahn.

Ahznomahn: A small confederacy on Svimohzia.

Ahznomahnii: That which is of Ahznomahn.

Akdren-thall: A Kargi strength-boosting drug; loosely translating as "laughing rage."

Amarahn: A Svimohzish spear common to Meznamish.

Amehz: Svimohzish name for the god of travel and stars.

Anamvho: A type of Svimohzish axe.

Anarvozh: A Svimohzish battleaxe common to Meznamish.

Anowhizh: City on the Ozhvinmishii coast.

Anvim: The gold coin of Ahznomahn.

Arboretum of Clahz: An area in the heart of the Vohven Jungle, where intelligent vegetable creatures are said to have originated.

Arkkad: Kargi word loosely translating as "captain."

Asha: Dejy name for the god of oppression and slavery.

Ashoshani: The capital of the western state of Ozhvinmish.

Awhom Forest: Densely wooded area in east central Svimohzia.

Azhvar: The silver coin of Zazahni.

Azirmohn: A Svimohzish longbow.

Bajyr: A Dejy club common to the Vohven Jungle.

Bandit: The copper coin of Ul-Karg.

Bard: The silver coin of Bronish.

Bisibopaki Hills: The foothills of the Lopoliri Mountains east of the Obakasek Jungle.

Blackfoot Society: An organization whose goal is the overthrow of all monarchies.

Blojyk: Dejy name for the god of law, order, and cities.

Brandobia: A western land of Tellene.

Brog-Karg: The name for the Kargi high council; translates as "squad of high men."

Brog-Kronagh: The name for the Kargi ruling council; roughly translates as "squad of captains."

Brog-Turand: Kargi military barracks; translates as "squad house."

Brog-Tuuakh, Chieftain: Founder of Ul-Karg.

Brog-Urkka: The Kargi sacred council, which consists of all clerics of Nightmaster and Sun Slayer rank plus the highest ranking cleric from each tribe; translates as "squad of high priests."

Bronish: Free city-state in northwest Svimohzia founded by refugees of Mendarn and Pel Brolenon.

Burzumagh: Kargi city located in the Zamul Forest.

Bylenyr: Dejy name for the god of nature.

Byrko: A two-handed Vohven Dejy weapon similar to an axe.

Champion: The gold coin of Ozhvinmish.

Cheap: The copper coin of Ahznomahn.

Chieftain: The silver coin of Ul-Karg.

Couzez: A dish of rice with spicy vegetables and/or meat.

Cradle of Civilization: The Svimohzish Isle.

Damonesh: A spear-like weapon common to nomadic Svimohz.

Dancer: The silver coin of Ozhvinmish.

Darevish: A club often found on the Mezh-Vowmi Isle.

Dashahn: Svimohzish word for "tall."

Dashahn Mountains: Mountain range on Svimohzia, nicknamed the Malachite Heights.

Dazurk-Razkamel: A type of Kargi warhammer.

Dejath-sasan: A Dejy phrase loosely translating as "out of the great earth", or "one with the land" in Merchant's Tongue.

Dejfo: Dejy name for the god of chivalry and valor.

Dejy: Language of the Dejy, a human race.

Desve-Roh: A race from Svowmahni to Ashoshani; also known as "the Great Race."

Dezonesh: A type of barbed spear used by the Zazahni.

Dezoran: A type of spear common to the Mezh-Vowmii Isle.

Appendix A: Glossary

- Dezorozh:** A type of Ahznomahnii spear.
- Dihzri:** Name for the soldiers in service to Duke Ewheshosvehz of Zazahni; roughly translates as “haters” in Merchant’s Tongue.
- Djahn:** Dejy name for the god of magic.
- Dofededejy Shynadyr:** The Zhensha (Dejy) tribe of the Vohven Jungle worship an entity that they call by this name, which roughly translates as “the Lightning Eater.”
- Dofededejy:** Dejy name for the god of storms, thunder, and lightning.
- Dofejy:** Dejy name for the goddess of hunting, archery, and patience.
- Dokarek:** Dejy name for the god of battle, berserking, courage, and storms.
- Dokshy:** Dejy name for the god of wisdom.
- Dotogyr:** Dejy name for the god of murder and revenge.
- Dragon:** The gold coin of Bronish.
- Dragon’s Teeth:** Rock formations protruding from the Straits of Svimohzia.
- Dremin:** The platinum coin of Vrandol.
- Durbattum River:** River running through the Zamul Forest in Ul-Karg.
- Durvalk:** A stone dwarf, common to the Dashan Mountains.
- Dwarven:** Language of the dwarves.
- Ehniven Marsh:** Low-lying area on the western shoreline of Mewzhano Bay.
- Ehnovam:** Svimohzish name for the god of magic.
- Ehrizh:** A vegetarian dish; popular in Ozhvinmish.
- Ehsiwhomnesh:** Svimohzish name for the goddess of harvest, life, fertility, and agriculture.
- Ehzhimahn:** City-state just off the western coast of the Straits of Svimohzia.
- Emerald Sea:** Nickname of Svimohzia’s Vohven Jungle.
- Emosvom:** Zazahni city located on the Izhoven River and bordering the Vohven Jungle.
- Feyd:** Dejy name for the god of moons and beauty.
- Fortnight’s Battle:** Battle in the history of Svimohzia wherein the hobgoblins made war upon neighboring Zazahni, drawing the rest of Svimohzia into the conflict.
- Fyjner:** Dejy name for the god of honor, oaths, and ethics.
- Garko:** A primitive Vohven Dejy tool.
- Gent:** The silver coin of Vrandol.
- Gethrok-Gul:** Kargi word for their commoner caste; translates as “weaklings.”
- Gohlnim:** Svimohzish name for the goddess of money, business, and greed.
- Golden Alliance:** The largest merchant’s guild on Tellene.
- Golgagnazkorg:** Kargi disease; also known as “bonethinner.”
- Golma-bek:** Kargi word for their cleric caste; translates as “holy ones.”
- Goryen:** A Simay (Dejy) club.
- Grazgul-Roshkel:** A type of hobgoblin battleaxe primarily used by Kargi or Krangi combatants.
- Grohz:** A cetacean resembling a dolphin without a snout; often seen in the Straits of Svimohzia.
- Grokka-Marg:** Kargi officer caste; “group of leaders.”
- Hawker:** The silver coin of Ahznomahn.
- Hezhovozh:** Svimohzish name for the god of peace and comfort.
- Hilmahni:** A simple Svimohzish spear variant.
- Hilzorahn:** A type of barbed Svimohzish spear.
- Hobgoblin:** Language of the hobgoblins.
- Hydary:** Dejy name for the goddess of money, business, and greed.
- Ilvend:** Brandobian word for “corporal”; found in Bronish.
- Imdar Tum:** Dwarven phrase for “Mother Lode.”
- Imohn:** Svimohzish name for the god of murder and revenge.
- Imomena Hills:** Hills on eastern central Svimohzia, between Ozhvinmish and Zazahni.
- Iriz:** A Svimohz’s main meal of the day.
- Ivelo River:** A meandering river in the southern part of the Meznamishii Valley.
- Ivez Estuary:** Swampy area at the mouth of the Ivelo river on Mewzhano Bay.
- Izaresh:** A Meznamishii throwing iron.
- Izhanaz:** A type of Ozhvinmishii dagger.
- Izhanan River:** River flowing through the heart of Meznamish.
- Izhoven River:** River flowing south from the Imomena Hills through the Vohven Jungle to the Sea of Svimohzia.
- Jilipsi:** A powerful narcotic found in the Vohven Jungle.
- Jolamaris:** A wood elf throwing iron.
- Jora:** A type of Vohven Dejy spear.
- Jungle Wars:** Wars between the Kalamaran army and the natives of the Obakasek Jungle.
- Jy:** Dejy name for the god of vice and sloth.
- Jynavi:** A Dejy tribe of the Vohven Jungle.
- Jynondish:** Dejy name for the god of mercy, hope, and healing.
- Kalamaran Sea:** This body of water is located between Ahznomahn and the Kalamaran Bay.
- Karg:** The Kargi word for “squad.”
- Kargi:** A hobgoblin of Ul-Karg.
- Kathrak:** The ruler of the Kargi; “king” or “general.”
- Kazullagh:** A city in Ul-Karg.
- Kazzak:** A trained Kargi soldier; translates as “warrior.”
- Kazzak-Marg:** The Kargi soldier caste; “group of warriors.”
- Kelukhar-Graz:** A type of Kargi war knife.
- Knights of the Black Pit:** Priesthood of the god of dusk, darkness, and moonless nights.
- Kokyt:** Dejy name for the god of discord, foul weather, and misfortune.
- Koyenja:** A spiked Vohven Dejy club.
- Koyrash:** A tooth-fitted club found in the Vohven Jungle.
- Kozranga:** A plate of beef and potato stew.

Krarag-Randatk: The current hobgoblin king of Ul-Karg.

Krimppatu Mountains: The western portion of the Dashahn-Tanezh mountain range.

Kroka-gul: The name for the Kargi Rite of Leadership; roughly translates as “leader fight.”

Kronagh: The advisors to the Kargi kathrak, and chieftains of the major Kargi tribes; roughly translates as “captain” or “grand duke.”

Krullarr: Dwarven city beneath the Dashahn Mountains, possibly abandoned; also known as the City of the Damned.

Kurgaz: A Kargi commander; “under general.”

Kurseгахz: Mysterious Kargi capital city beneath the Krimppatu Mountains.

Kygyryr: Dejy name for the god of death and the underworld.

Kyrkshynad: Dejy name for the god of war, tactics, and strategy.

Leshvim: The gold coin of Zazhani.

Lord: The gold coin of Vrandol.

Lozhen Mountains: A collection of a dozen active volcanic peaks within the Imomena Hills, on Svimohzia.

Lydthesh: Dejy name for the goddess of justice and truth.

Maboza: A light, thin cornmeal bread.

Malachite Heights: Another name for the Dashahn Mountains on Svimohzia.

Mal-krueg-ka: An obsidian spire in Ronazagh.

Maziwaya: Slightly sour skimmed milk.

Meldiz: A savage killer, or “killer man.”

Menamo Hills: The ring of hills that define the eastern Meznamishii border.

Mewhi Marshes: Swamp in southwestern Zazahni.

Mewhi: The native peoples of what would one day become modern Zazahni, now mostly found in the foothills of the Tanezh Mountains, Ozhvnmish and (occasionally) in Zazahni.

Mewzhano Bay: Rocky inlet of the Straits of Svimohzia.

Mewzhano: Early conqueror in the history of the Svimohzish Isle.

Mewzhor: The platinum coin of Meznamish.

Mezh-Vowmi Isle: Island where the Ahznomahnii capital, Zha-nehzmish, resides.

Mezنام(s): Resident(s) of Meznamish.

Mezنامish: Kingdom on the Svimohzish Isle whose borders reach from the Whisvomi Forest to the Menamo Hills.

Mezنامishii: Things of Mezنامish origin.

Minammozh: Svimohzish name for the god of battle, berserking, courage, and storms.

Minmehw: Svimohzish name for the god of pain, torture, and cold.

Minmivozh: Svimohzish name for the god of law, order, and cities.

Mizahniz: A type of ritual Svimohzish axe.

Mizar: Svimohzish name for the god of thievery, gambling, and luck.

Miznahn: A city in Ozhvnmish.

Miznoh Forest: Forest in northwestern Ozhvnmish.

Miznoh I: King in early Svimohzish history.

Miznor: The gold coin of Mezنامish.

Mizohr Woodlands: Forest in southwestern Mezنامish, stretching from the foothills of the Tanezh-Dashahn mountain ranges into the Mezنامish Valley.

Mohrah: Svimohzish name for the goddess of the elements.

Moimivam: Svimohzish name for the goddess of home, industriousness, and marriage.

Mombazah: A dish of hot oysters on a bed of rock salt.

Monam-Ahnoz: Capital city of Mezنامish.

Monamasho: A type of Svimohzish polearm.

Monawhom: A type of barbed Svimohzish spear.

Moshohn: Svimohzish name for the god of disease, plague, and vermin.

Movan: Svimohzish name for the goddess of prophesy, fate, and time.

Mozawhom: A barbed Svimohzish throwing spear.

Mravrosh-Tukhar: A variant Kargi sword.

Namona: Svimohzish name for the goddess of injustice, envy, and jealousy.

Nangohl: A type of barbed Mezنامishii spear.

Narkako: A Simay (Dejy) axe.

Nazguk Hills: Hills in northern Ul-Karg, at the southern slopes of the Krimppatu Mountains.

Nenehi: Svimohzish city on the eastern edge of Ozhvnmish.

Neshvan: Svimohzish name for the god of passion and wine.

Nindiz: The Svimohzish word for “dessert.”

Nyja: A type of Simay (Dejy) dagger.

Nyko: Dejy name for the god of dusk, darkness, and moonless nights.

Nyrsha: A type of Vohven Dejy sword.

Ohanurahn: A Zassho battleaxe.

Ojob: Dejy name for the goddess of injustice, envy, and jealousy.

Ony: Vohven Dejy name for the tribal leader.

Onzar: The copper coin of Zazahni.

Ordo: A bronze Vohven Dejy sword.

Owhzi: Svimohzish name for the god of fear and nightmares.

Ozhvin(s): Resident(s) of Ozhvnmish.

Ozhvnmish: Kingdom and largest of the Svimohzish nations that runs along the entire Svimohzish coast from Mezنامish to Ahznomahn.

Ozhvnmishii: Things which are of Ozhvnmish origin.

Pel Brolenon Marsh: The low stretch of land abutting the Straits of Svimohzia in southwestern Pel Brolenon.

Rag-Kazzak: A Kargi sergeant; roughly translates as “honored warrior.”

Rag-Urkka: A Kargi sacred council member that also holds the rank of Sun Slayer; “honored high priest.”

Rezil: What the groom pays to the bride’s family, also called “daughter price.”

Appendix A: Glossary

Rhilm: Brandobian word for a member of the City Guard; found in Bronish.

Rhilnd: Brandobian word for “sergeant”; found in Bronish.

Rhilnond: Brandobian word for “city commander”; found in Bronish.

Rhingoryx: Translates as “shimmering gold” in the language of dragons; also the name of the gold dragon of Bronish.

Rinwar, Fram: A cleric of the Oppressor who co-leads a group of Svimozh pirates with his brother.

Rinwar, Frim: A wizard who co-leads a group of Svimozh pirates with his brother.

Rohsowmi: Svimozhish name for the god of wanderers and loneliness.

Rokk-Barg: The Kargi slave caste; also translates as “group of things.”

Roshko: Deji name for the god of mathematics, science, invention, reasoning, and knowledge.

Rozele: A red or green plant cultivated throughout western Svimozhia, grown for their pleasant sour taste.

Rube: The copper coin of Vrandol.

Rurok: A mountain dwarf; common to the Tanezh Mountains and other highlands.

Ruvmahzni: A single-edged Ahznomahnii sword.

Ryaga: A Deji tribe of the Vohven Jungle.

Ryjnar: Deji name for the god of wanderers and loneliness.

Sanovar: The platinum coin of Ozhvinnish.

Sashoz: Svimozhish name for the god of freedom, liberty, and happiness.

Sealcoin: The copper coin of Meznamish.

Sedizehn: Expert killer serving Helshan Zide of Ahznomahn; loosely translates as “silent knife.”

Sevyer: Deji name for the god of thievery, gambling, and luck.

Shagrakk-Brogatu: A type of Kargi polearm.

Shahn III, King: Current ruler of Ozhvinnish.

Shamashno: A type of Zazahnnii sword.

Shamnan: Svimozhish name for the god of wisdom.

Shanano: Svimozhish name for the goddess of love and harmony.

Shanoh: Svimozhish name for the god of art, poetry, music, and humor.

Shanvim: Svimozhish name for the goddess of day, light, and dawn.

Shanydefyn: Deji name for the goddess of harvest, life, fertility, and agriculture.

Shapirozh: Svimozhish name for the god of mathematics, science, invention, reasoning, and knowledge.

Sharahznam: A type of Zazahnnii dagger.

Shardar: Deji name for the goddess of prophesy, fate, and time.

Sharynath: Deji name for the goddess of day, light, and dawn.)

Shathy: Deji name for the god of disease, plague, and vermin.

Shawhom: A barbed spear common to the Simay (Deji).

Shimz: Svimozhish name for the god of moons and beauty.

Shodaf: Deji name for the god of travel and stars.

Shomozh: A rarely found Svimozhish polearm.

Shoniz: Svimozhish name for the god of mercy, hope, and healing.

Shozhan: A shrimp and rice dish popular in Meznamish.

Shozhor: Svimozhish name for the god of honor, oaths, and ethics.

Shozor: Svimozhish name for the god of strength and medicine.

Shynadyr: Deji name for the god of famine, hunger, and starvation.

Sibora: A pointed wooden staff used by the Simay (Deji).

Sikora: A type of Vohven Deji spear.

Sil-karg: The Kargi term for a half-hobgoblin.

Sil-Kazzak: A member of the Kargi commoner caste that fights in large wars or campaigns; loosely translates as “lesser warrior.”

Silkra-Brazog: An ornamental Kargi dagger.

Simay: A Deji tribe of the Vohven Jungle.

Siriumno: Svimozhish name for the god of war, tactics, and strategy.

Sizhu: A Svimozhish marriage curtain; used in the Ozhvinnishii wedding ceremony.

Slazhozh: Svimozhish name for the god of hate and bigotry.

Slen: Deji name for the god of pain, torture, and cold.

Sohadowah: Svimozhish name for the goddess of restful sleep, dreams, and aspirations.

Straits of Svimozhia: Waters separating the Svimozhish Isle from the main continent.

Stryjor: Deji name for the god of strength and medicine.

Sulzdeh: An Ozhvinnishii sport; also known as “Fists.”

Suzrehl: Monam-Ahnoz’s most expensive and famous arena; loosely translates as “killing floor.”

Svaley: An Ahznomahnii honey wine.

Svimozhia: Name for the massive island dominating the southwestern portion of the continent of Tellene.

Svimozhia, Sea of: Ocean off the southwest coast of the Svimozhish Isle. This sea marks the far edge of the known world.

Svimozhish Isle: Name for the massive island dominating the southwestern portion of the continent of Tellene.

Svimozhish: Language of the Svimozh, a human race.

Svishozh: Svimozhish name for the goddess of justice and truth.

Svohr: The platinum coin of Zazahni.

Svomawhom Forest: Dangerous forest east of the Imomena Hills.

Svomwhi: Northernmost Zazahnnii city on the Izhoven River.

Svowmahni: Language of the Svimohz, a human race.

Tanezh Mountains: Mountains marking the eastern edge of Meznamish.

Thananany: Deji name for the god of hate and bigotry.

Thehzno: Svimohzish name for the god of oppression and slavery.

Thija: A Vohven Deji mace.

Thyryk: Deji name for the goddess of the elements.

Thyrzus: A cloak made from the hide of an ass.

Tollpiece: The copper coin of Bronish.

Trondar: Deji name for the goddess of home, industriousness, and marriage.

Tuuakh: The gold coin of Ul-Karg.

Ugazhi: A Svimohz's last meal of the day.

Ul-Karg: Hobgoblin nation located in the western portion of the Svimohzish Isle.

Urg haz: The Kargi Nightmaster; roughly translates as "teacher of wild men."

Urkka: A member of the Kargi sacred council; loosely translates as "high priest."

Vamsho: A popular Svimohzish polearm.

Vendl: Brandobian word for "lieutenant"; found in Bronish.

Vendlond: Brandobian word for "commander"; found in Bronish.

Vohm: The silver coin of Meznamish.

Vohmi III, King: Last King of Meznamish to control the majority of the Svimohzish Isle.

Vimanshimozh: Svimohzish name for the god of storms, thunder, and lightning.

Vinahn, Citadel of: Residence of the king of Ozhvinmish.

Vishnoz: Svimohzish name for the goddess of hunting, archery, and patience.

Vohven Jungle: Massive jungle covering the southern portions of the Svimohzish Isle.

Vraark: The name for a half-gnoll in Gnoll.

Vrandol: Mendarn colony on the westernmost tip of Svimohzia.

Vromlond: The platinum coin of Bronish.

Warven II, King: Current ruler of Meznamish.

Wazh-anh II, King: Last King of Zazahni. Wazh-anh was assassinated in his sleep.

Wejryn: Deji name for the god of peace and comfort.

Whamehzen: An Ahznomahnii chicken stew.

Whemin: A mixture of mashed potatoes and corn.

Whengohlzha: A coliseum in Zha-nehzmish; also known as "the House of Sport."

Whenhesh: Svimohzish name for the god of chivalry and valor.

Whenzor: A type of Svimohzish sword.

Whisvomi Forest: A subtropical Forest on the western slopes of the Dashahn Mountains.

Whisvomi Hills: Hills on the western slopes of the Dashahn Mountains.

Whiven Marsh: Swampland bordering the Brandobian Ocean, on the northwestern shores of the Svimohzish Isle.

Wimish: A Zazahni city on the Izhoven River.

Windy Straits: See Straits of Svimohzia

Yejda: Deji name for the god of art, poetry, music, and humor.

Yelajod: Deji name for the god of freedom, liberty, and happiness.

Yendaj: Deji name for the goddess of restful sleep, dreams, and aspirations.

Yeruji: A Deji tribe of the Vohven Jungle.

Yewaji: Deji name for the goddess of love and harmony.

Zamoam: A thick soup made of crushed peanuts, water and salt.

Zamul Forest: A forest in the northern reaches of Ul-Karg.

Zarvim: The copper coin of Ozhvinmish.

Zassho: The native peoples of eastern Tellene and the Mez-Vowmi Isle.

Zazahni: Kingdom in central Svimohzia. Currently kingless and in a state of civil war.

Zazimash: Svimohzish name for the god of death and the underworld.

Zek'ira: The lizardfolk name for themselves, meaning "the people."

Zensahn: Westernmost Zazahni city located on the Zhano-mewhi Bay.

Zhamaz: Svimohzish name for the god of discord, foul weather, and misfortune.

Zha-nehzmish: Capital of Ahznomahn.

Zhano Headlands: The northern terminus of the Dashahn Mountains.

Zhano River: A minor river in northern Meznamish.

Zhanohven: A Zazahni city on Svimohzia.

Zhano-Mewhi Bay: A bay near Ul-Karg characterized by black sand beaches.

Zhanvim: Svimohzish name for the god of dusk, darkness, and moonless nights.

Zhazaz: Svimohzish name for the god of famine, hunger, and starvation.

Zhensha: A Deji tribe of the Vohven Jungle.

Zhulurresh: A type of Zazahni sword.

Zo-Rehzhizh: The most famous arena in Ashoshani; also known as "the Halls of Doom."

Zohszi: Svimohzish name for the god of vice and sloth.

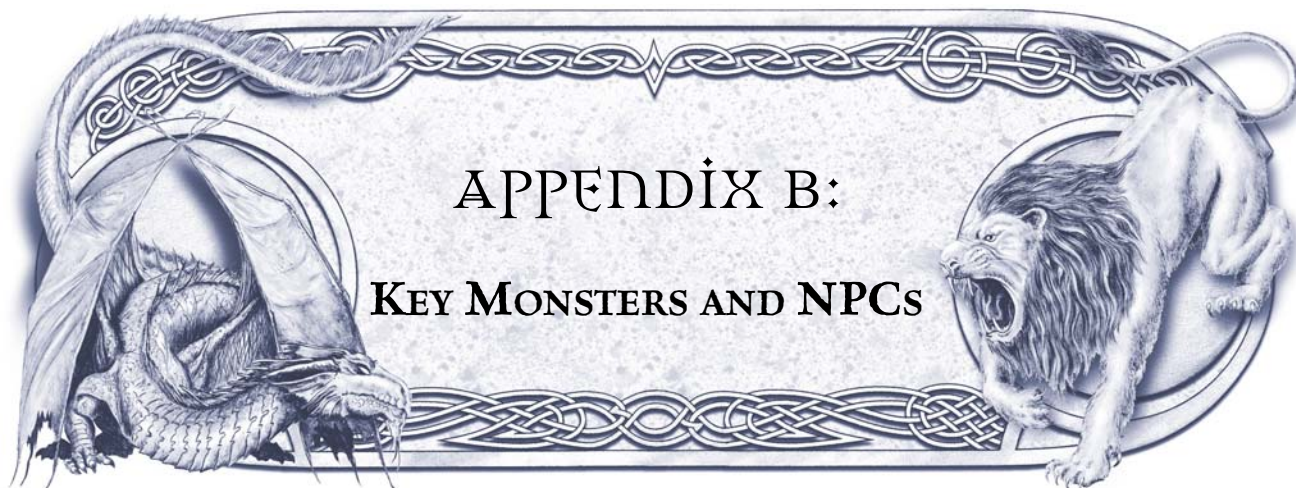
Zolansahr: The name for a half-gnoll in Svimohzish.

Zomo-wim: Ozhvinmishii city near the Awhom Forest.

Zova: The platinum coin of Ahznomahn.

Zurena: A member of Ahznomahn's Parliament.

Zymur: Deji name for the god of passion and wine.



What follows are some of the most notorious single creatures in Svimohzia. Use them as ongoing threats, or as important villains for your campaign.

Monster/NPC Locations

Name	Commonly found in
The Black Duke	Zazahni
Buutyrus	Straits of Svimohzia
Gorloth the Undying	Northern Vohven Jungle
Jinazu Han	Ozhvinmish (Ashoshani)
Malcan Halfast	Dashan Mountains
Mauriad the Cleaver	Ul Karg
Miznoh	Meznamish
Pichris	Meznamish (Monam ahnozh)
Xul	Krimppatu Mountains
Xykrathix	Awhom Forest

THE BLACK DUKE

After Zazahni gained its independence, the noble houses turned on one another, plunging the families into a terrible civil war. Nobles perished, towns were ruined and so many commoners were killed it is said the Holy Mother wept through the entire ordeal. Now, with only 23 houses left and ambition once more on the rise, the civil war continues.

Of those that died, all but the most dedicated scholars have forgotten their names. However, not all Svizohr who died stayed dead. Some arose from their graves to continue the war. One such Svizohr is Duke Halinozh, once a mighty warlord once close to stealing the throne, before his comrades turned on him at the Svomwhi gates. With his dying words, he cursed those houses, vowing to return and slaughter them all.

A week later, the former Duke Halinozh's enemies began to vanish. Stories of a black rider leading an army of skeletal warriors astride evil horses spread throughout western Zazahni. With each telling, the stories grew more elaborate, until the truth could no longer be distinguished from the fiction. Many claim they still see old Duke Halinozh leading his army of undead soldiers in the west, haunting the bones of dead cities.

THE BLACK DUKE

Male Svimohz death knight aristocrat 8 (CR 10)
LE Medium humanoid (HD 8d12)

Attack and Movement

Init +5

Melee +10/+5 longsword (1d8+4) or
+6 touch (1d8+1 plus 1 point Con)

Base Atk +6; Grp +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); 20 ft. (4 squares) in full plate

SA abyssal blast, fear aura

Defense

hp 54

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7

SQ damage reduction 15/+1, darkvision 60 ft.,
immunities, SR 20, summon mount, turn immunity,
undead followers, undead traits

Traits

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con -, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7,
Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +7, Ride +5,
Sense Motive +7, Spot +7, Survival +4

Feats Improved Initiative, Leadership

Languages Hobgoblin, Infernal, Svimohzish

Equipment

full plate armor, longsword

Constitution Damage (Su): Will save DC 16 (halves damage and negates Con damage).

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, the Black Duke may blast eldritch fire to fill a 20-foot-radius spread within 720 feet. The blast deals 8d6 points of damage, half of which is fire damage. The other half is divine and not subject to reduction by *protection from elements* (fire), *fire shield* (chill shield), etc. A Reflex save (DC 16) reduces the damage by half.

Fear Aura (Su): Creatures of less than 5 HD that are within 15 feet of the Black Duke must succeed at a Will save (DC 16) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by an 8th-level sorcerer.

Immunities (Ex): The Black Duke is immune to cold, electricity, and polymorph, in addition to his undead immunities.

Summon Mount (Su): The Black Duke rides a black highland dancer with reddish hair and mane, somewhat resembling a nightmare. If this highland dancer is lost or killed, the Black Duke may summon another one after a year and a day.

Undead Followers: The Black Duke attracts lesser undead creatures that happen to exist within a 200-mile radius. He may have up to 16 HD of followers, which arrive monthly in the following increments: 1d6 ghouls, 1d4 ghouls, 1d12 medium skeletons, 1d4 wights, or 1d8 medium zombies once per week. These creatures serve the Black Duke until destroyed.

Undead Traits: The Black Duke has the standard traits of an undead creature as described in the glossary of the *Monster Manual*.

BUUTYRUS

The Straits of Svimohzia are dangerous waters, not just for their treacherous winds, the Dragon's Teeth, or the Brolenese slavers and pirates who prey upon the honest merchants that trade with Meznamish and the rest of Svimohzia. They are dangerous for what lies beneath the waves, the hidden horrors that tear apart drowning sailors, and the creatures breaking the surface of the warm waters to climb on board vessels in the darkest night, dragging screaming crewmembers down to their watery graves. Dragon sharks, sahuagin and more, all claim the waters between Svimohzia and the continent as home. Perhaps one of the most fearful of all the underwater denizens, though, is Buutyrus the reaver.

Once, just another of the lobsterfolk who traded with the coastal communities in Meznamish, he spent much of his time exploring old wrecks on the ocean floor, scavenging what useful items he could to trade with merfolk and the visiting triton. After selling a good haul of treasure from a Mendarn merchant vessel that had run aground in the Dragon's Teeth to a merfolk trader, he learned of a ruin far to the west, a sunken city. Buutyrus, intrigued and believing it may hold some key to the ancient crustaceaolothrop city, gathered a small band of allies and swam to the west,

farther than his people had ever gone and where, after six months, he and his allies found the ruin.

A year later, they returned but were very different and would not speak of what they found in the west. Rumor suggests Buutyrus found a solid orb of darkness and speaks with it daily. The lobsterfolk who went with Buutyrus had black carapaces, decorated with strange designs and whorls. They were violent, irreverent and dangerous. The entire original band was loyal to Buutyrus, who was the most changed of all. No longer did the explorer hunt for lost ships and treasures, but a hunger for conquest and hatred of surface dwellers consumed him.

He moved throughout the communities of lobsterfolk, denouncing the air breathers as decadent scum, who should be mere slaves to them. He called for war. Most of the peace-loving people ignored him but the younger ones listened to the words and vowed service to the demagogue. So began the quiet rebellion of the lobsterfolk, with legions of his thralls emerging to strike against coastal communities throughout Meznamish. Serving him are merfolk, lobsterfolk, locatah and more, all driven by the same hatred for the people of the world of air.

The standard lobsterfolk can be found in *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*.



Appendix B: Key Monsters and NPCs

BUUTYRUS

Male lobsterfolk CR 3 (CR 5 with *Eye of Kurdol*)
CE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)
(HD 4d8+11)

Attack and Movement

Init +2
Melee +9 pincers (2d6+4) and
+4 tail slap (1d6+2)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8
Speed 5 ft. (1 square), swim 40 ft. (8 squares)
SA improved grab, squeeze, tail slap

Defense

hp 29
AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19
Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5
SQ all-around vision, blindsense 30 ft.

Traits

Racial darkvision 60 ft.
Abilities Str 19, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spot +7,
Survival +5, Swim +12
Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (pincer).
Languages Aquan

Equipment

Eye of Kurdol. This dark, glossy sphere is only 2 inches in diameter but very dense, weighing 5 pounds. It is said that the eye originated from a lost culture so evil that the gods sank their city beneath the waves. The eye is intelligent and malevolent - if a living creature touches the eye, the eye attempts to seize control. If successful, it works to create an army to war against the people of Tellene, whom it blames for its society's fall.

Minor artifact; AL CE; Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 19; Speech, telepathy, 120 ft. darkvision, blindsense and hearing; Ego 21.

Eye's Lesser Powers: Item has 10 ranks in Diplomacy (total modifier +14), 10 ranks in Knowledge (religion) (total modifier +14), can use *daze monster* 3/day, and *detect magic* at will.

Eye's Greater Powers: *Deeper darkness* 3/day, *fear* 3/day, *haste* 3/day.

Eye's Special Purpose: Destroy all surface dwellers of Tellene.

Eye's Dedicated Power: Item can use *contagion* (heightened to 8th level) as ranged touch attack at will.

Strong conjuration (evil); CL 21st; Weight 5 lbs.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Buutyryus must hit with a pincer attack.

Squeeze (Ex): When Buutyryus seizes an opponent, he automatically deals pincer damage, and an additional 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage each round the hold is maintained.

Tail Slap (Ex): Buutyryus can tail slap enemies once/round.

All-Around Vision (Ex): Buutyryus' eyestalks let him look in any direction, for a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Search checks. Opponents do not gain a flanking bonus when attacking him.

Blindsense (Ex): Buutyryus can locate creatures underwater within a 30-foot radius. Against creatures with no central nervous system (such as constructs, ethereal beings, oozes and

undead), Buutyryus' blindsense is limited to a 15-foot radius. Illusions or other figments do not fool Buutyryus while he is underwater.

GORLOTH THE UNDYING

Haunting the Vohven Jungle is a powerful moss troll who has ever been a threat to the towns in southern Ahznomahn. A great hater of men, he led his fellow trolls to raid deeply into the land, feasting on whomever they came across, be it man or elf. Soon, the soft towns grew wise to the ways of the vicious moss troll and his legions, and began to resist, using fire to drive away the monsters of the night. Everywhere Gorloth turned, he was repulsed. So great was his hunger, he turned on his fellow trolls, devouring them whole. Eventually, he killed and consumed his whole tribe, their bodies writhing in his massive abdomen. The pain created by the squirming trolls was so great Gorloth retreated to the Vohven, where his howls are heard to this day.

Should the PCs have the dubious honor of encountering Gorloth, he appears as a grotesquely obese moss troll (6 feet tall, short and stumpy with small arms and legs, pure green skin covered by short moss-like hair, red eyes, lavender tongue) with a distended stomach. On his abdominal surface, outlines of clawed hands seem to press from within, as if trying to break free. His massive head swivels on a flabby neck, and from slackened maws, ropes of slime leak onto his naked breast.

The standard moss troll can be found in *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*.

GORLOTH THE UNDYING

Male corrupted Moss Troll (CR 6)
CE Medium giant (HD 4d8+32)

Attack and Movement

Init +4
Melee +10 claws (2d6+7) and
+4 bite (2d6+4)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +8
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
SA disruptive attack, rend 2d10+8

Defense

hp 50
AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20
Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1
SQ acid immunity, damage reduction 5/+1,
enhanced power, fast healing 2, fast regeneration 6,
freeze

Traits

Racial darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision
Abilities Str 25, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 6
Skills Climb +8, Hide +14, Listen +2, Spot +2
Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Languages Giant

Equipment

none

Disruptive Attack (Su): This corrupted moss troll deals an additional 2 points of vile damage when he touches uncorrupted, living, corporeal nonoutsiders. This damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Rend (Ex): If Gorloth hits with both claw attacks, he rends his opponent's flesh, automatically dealing an additional 2d10+10 points of damage.

Enhanced Power (Su): The save DCs of Gorloth's special attacks increase by +4.

Fast Healing (Ex): Gorloth regains lost hit points at a rate of 2 per round. This does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst or suffocation.

Fast Regeneration (Ex): Fire deals normal damage to Gorloth. If he loses a limb or body part, he may regrow it in 1d6 minutes. He can reattach the severed body part instantly by holding it to the stump.

Freeze (Ex): Gorloth can curl up and hold himself so still that he appears to be a lichen and moss-covered rock or mound of dirt. An observer must succeed at a Spot check (DC 18) to notice the moss troll's true form.

JINAZU HAN

Merchants and adventurers have awakened an ancient evil in the Awhom Forest and the Vohven Jungle. By stealing artifacts from the era of the Serpent Empire, those sleeping evils have stirred and gathered their minions to destroy the humans who conquered them so long ago. The yuan-ti, of course, seek to regain what was stolen. One such agent is Jinazsu Han, a monstrous snake with human arms. Leading a cult of purebloods through the dark Svimohzish night, he tracked several objects to Ashoshani. While not magical in themselves, they hold clues to their ancient past and are of religious significance.

There were total of five objects. Jinazsu and two fellow high priests recovered three so far, killing the owners. He knows his masters are growing impatient, and he knows the remaining objects are in the city, but has been unable to locate them anywhere. They recruit followers to serve them, but these have failed as well. With growing desperation, the trio now acts in the open, risking much to appease the dark lords of the south.

Jinazsu's fellow high priests are male, thin, and with a reptilian cast to their otherwise flawless human features. They have several lovers among the Svizohr, both male and female, and manipulate them into serving Jinazsu.

The following statistics for Jinazsu Han replace those in the *Villain Design Handbook*.

JINAZU HAN

Male yuan-ti abomination Clr 12 (CR 19)

LE Large monstrous humanoid (HD 12d8+9d8+63)

Attack and Movement

Init +5

Melee +24/+9 large +1 falchion (2d6+6/15-20) and

+18 bite (2d6+2 plus poison)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +27

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft. (4 squares)

SA aversion, constrict 1d6+7, improved grab, poison, produce acid, turn undead 4/day

Defense

hp 164

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +16

SQ alternate form, chameleon power, detect poison, spell resistance 30, cast evil spells at +1 caster level (from Evil domain), cast illusion spells at +1 caster level (from Oblivion domain)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 10; save DCs are Charisma-based)

At will: *animal trance* (DC 16), *entangle* (DC 15)

1/day: *baleful polymorph* (DC 19; into snake form only), *fear* (DC 18)

3/day: *deeper darkness*, *neutralize poison* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17)

Cleric Spells (save DC 15 + spell level)

0 (6/day): *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance* (2), *light*, *read magic*, *virtue*

1st (7/day): *bane*, *cause fear*, *cure light wounds* (2), *doom*, *summon monster I*, *protection from good* (domain)

2nd (6/day): *aid*, *cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *hold person*, *silence*, *desecrate* (domain)

3rd (6/day): *bestow curse*, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic* (2), *speak with dead*, *magic circle against good* (domain)

4th (5/day): *discern lies*, *inflict critical wounds* (2), *spell immunity*, *unholy blight* (domain)

5th (5/day): *command* (greater), *flame strike*, *scrying*, *unhallow*, *dispel good* (domain)

6th (3/day): *blade barrier*, *harm*, *create undead* (domain)

Traits

Racial darkvision 60 ft., scent

Abilities Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 16

Skills Concentration +20, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +13, Heal +16, Hide +14, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (religion) +16, Listen +19, Spot +19, Spellcraft +19

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Elven (Low),

Merchant's Tongue, Svimohzish, Yuan-Ti

Deity Worshipped Gushz, the Confuser of Ways

Equipment

Large +1 falchion, divine focus (gauntlet).

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Aversion (Sp): Jinazsu can psionically create a compulsion effect (Will save DC 22 or gain aversion to snakes for 10 min) targeting a creature within 30 feet. See the yuan-ti entry in the *Monster Manual* for more information.

Constrict (Ex): Jinazsu deals 1d6+7 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): If Jinazsu hits a Large or smaller creature with his bite attack, he can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can constrict.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Produce Acid (Sp): Jinazsu can excrete acid from his body, dealing 3d6 points of acid damage to the next creature he touches (including a creature hit by his bite attack), or 5d6 points when grappling, constricting or pinning a foe. Jinazsu is immune to this acid, and it is inert when it leaves his skin.

Alternate Form (Sp): Jinazsu can assume the form of a Tiny to Large viper (see the Snake entry in the *Monster Manual*) as a psionic ability. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell, but Jinazsu does not regain any hit points for changing form, and he can only assume viper forms. Jinazsu gains the natural weapon of the viper form he assumes.

Chameleon Power (Sp): Jinazsu can psionically change his coloration to match his surroundings (+10 circumstance bonus to Hide checks).

Detect Poison (Sp): Jinazsu has the psionic ability to detect poison as the spell (caster level 6th).

Skills: Jinazsu can always take 10 on Climb and Swim checks, and has a +8 racial bonus to Swim checks to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. Jinazsu can use the run action while swimming in a straight line.

YUAN-TI HIGH PRIEST

Yuan-ti pureblood Clr 12 (CR 16)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (HD 12d8+4d8+32)

Attack and Movement

Init +5

Melee +16/+7 +1 falchion (2d4+2)

Ranged +14 light crossbow with +1 bolts (1d8+1/19-20)

Base Atk +13; Grp +14

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

SA rebuke undead 5/day

Defense

hp 109

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23

Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +16

SQ alternate form, detect poison, spell resistance 26, cast evil spells at +1 caster level (from Evil domain), cast illusion spells at +1 caster level (Oblivion domain)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 4; save DCs are Charisma-based)

1/day: animal trance (DC 13), cause fear (DC 12),

charm person (DC 12), darkness, entangle (DC 12)

Cleric Spells (save DC 14 + spell level)

0 (6/day): detect magic, guidance (2), light, resistance (2)

1st (7/day): cause fear (2), doom (2),

summon monster I (2), protection from good (domain)

2nd (6/day): aid, bull's strength (2), cure moderate wounds, hold person, desecrate (domain)

3rd (6/day): bestow curse, dispel magic (2), locate object, speak with dead, magic circle against good (domain)

4th (5/day): discern lies, greater magic weapon, inflict critical wounds (2), unholy blight (domain)

5th (4/day): flame strike, scrying, true seeing, dispel good (domain)

6th (3/day): blade barrier, harm, create undead (domain)

Traits

Racial darkvision 60 ft.

Abilities Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 14

Skills Concentration +15, Disguise +10, Hide +9,

Knowledge (religion) +17, Listen +11, Spot +11,

Spellcraft +14

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Combat

Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved

Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus

(Knowledge (religion)), Weapon Focus (falchion).

Languages Yuan-Ti, Svimohzish, Merchant's Tongue

Deity Worshipped Gushz, the Confuser of Ways

Equipment

+1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, masterwork falchion,

light crossbow, 10 +1 crossbow bolts, 2 scrolls of cure light

wounds, divine focus (gauntlet).

Alternate Form (Sp): A high priest can assume the form of a Tiny to Large viper (see the Snake entry in the *Monster Manual*) as a psionic ability. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell, but the high priest does not regain any hit points for changing form, and he can only assume viper forms. A high priest gains the natural weapon of the viper form he assumes.

Detect Poison (Sp): Each high priest has the psionic ability to detect poison as the spell of the same name (caster level 6th).

MALCAN HALFAST

When Mewzhano approached the dwarves of the Dashan Mountains to secure an alliance, not all of them agreed it was in their best interest to ally themselves with the warlike humans. Believing their association to be detrimental to their future, they argued with their brethren and demanded they rescind the truce. However, it was too late to withdraw from the treaty. The King had already vowed to aid the humans, and breaking his oath might lead to war between them. One outspoken dwarf, Malcan Halfast, led the opposition and, when it was clear the king had tied the dwarves to the humans, Malcan led the dissidents deep into the Dashan Mountains, swearing off any ties to their former home.

The exiles braved the dangers of the deep earth and avoided many of the perils and monsters lying in wait for fresh meat. They dodged the drow cities, moving beyond the swarms of illithids, until they came to the deepest bowels of the earth. There they founded Krularr, now the City of the Damned. Lacking food and water, facing monstrous enemies on all fronts, the dwarves fought to survive, but as many guessed from the beginning, they were doomed. As hideous deep-dwelling creatures overran their outpost, they invoked Dusur the Harvester of Souls to visit vengeance on their enemies. Dwarf men, women and children died as the walls leaked the god's poisonous hate, spilling onto the monsters and their minions, killing all. When the shrieks of the dying abated, the dwarves who gave their souls to the Lord of the Underworld arose from death. Maddened by their doom, they walk the land as living corpses.

Malcan swore vengeance, preparing the legions of his dead followers to visit hell upon their former kin. As mere shades of their former selves, their bodies long since rotted away, they wage a silent war against the dwarves of the Dashan Mountains. However, many descendants of the first king have long since moved on to new veins of iron, leaving the gnomes and humans to work the copper and tin mines. Halfast's kin attack all miners with equal fervor, savoring their screams and eventual transformation into shadows to fill their numbers.

MALCAN HALFAST

Male umbral stone dwarf fighter 3/rogue 5 (CR 11)
LE Medium undead (incorporeal) (HD 3d12+5d12)

Attack and Movement

Init +8
Melee +11 incorporeal touch (1d6)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** -
Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (8 squares; perfect)
SA sneak attack +3d6, strength damage 1d6

Defense

hp 57
AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14
Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2
SQ create spawn, evasion, incorporeal subtype, trapfinding, trap sense, turn resistance +2, uncanny dodge, undead traits

Traits

Racial darkvision 120 ft., stone dwarf traits
Abilities Str -, Dex 18, Con -, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 16
Skills Balance +10, Craft +5 (+7 stone or metal), Disable Device +, Hide +13, Jump +8, Open Lock +11, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Survival +7 (+9 to find/follow tracks), Tumble +11
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Stone Bones (PGttSL; racial bonus feat), Track, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (touch)
Languages Dwarven

Equipment

none

Strength Damage (Su): Malcan's touch deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living opponent.

Create Spawn (Su): An aberration, animal, dragon, giant, humanoid, magical beast or monstrous humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by Malcan's Strength damage rises as an umbral creature in 1d4 rounds, under the command of Malcan. Malcan can control up to six spawn. If he creates more than six spawn, the spawn longest under his command are released.

Incorporeal Subtype: Malcan can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities. Malcan has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source, except for force effects or attacks made with ghost touch weapons. Malcan can pass through solid objects, but not force effects, at will. His attacks ignore natural armor, armor and shields, but deflection bonuses and force effects work normally against him. He always moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if he does not wish to be.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Malcan has turn resistance +2.

MAURIAD THE CLEAVER

Although known for hobgoblins, Ul-Karg is also home to hundreds of plains minotaurs. The history between these people has been less than amicable, with frequent skirmishes bordering on open warfare. One of the largest herds, led by Mauriad the Cleaver, seeks to take Ul-Karg for themselves and enslave the Kargi. However, they have been unsuccessful in ousting the Kargi leaders, and the toll on the minotaur population has begun to show.

King Krarag-Randatk saw the potential in these people, despite their lack of discipline and unchecked rage. He approached Mauriad, offered an alliance, for Krarag-Randatk, in expectation of the coming war could not afford to continue the fight against their southern neighbors, and recognized their martial prowess and usefulness. The Kargi King offered the minotaurs a portion of the lands in exchange for their assistance against the humans. Expecting the plains minotaurs to betray them, Krarag-Randatk has no intention on awarding them land, and hopes to destroy them after the grudge with the humans has been settled.

Mauriad does indeed plan to betray the hobgoblins, for he knows they do not intend to give the minotaurs the promised lands. The minotaur chief agreed to the alliance to better position himself to kill the Kargi king. He and his kin await the opportunity to strike.

Nine feet tall and over 1,000 pounds, Mauriad has thick black fur over all of his body. Blasphemous runes decorate his long sharpened horns. In combat, he wears a metal mask with a demon visage, and an iron breastplate to match.

More information on the plains minotaur race can be found in *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*.

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MAURIAD THE CLEAVER

Plains minotaur barbarian 5 (CR 11)
 CE Large monstrous humanoid (HD 5d12+6d8+33)

Attack and Movement

Init +6
Melee +19 masterwork greataxe (1d12+10/x3) and
 +14 gore (1d8+3),
Ranged +13 composite [+4 Str] longbow (1d8+4/x3)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +16
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
SA powerful charge, rage 2/day

Defense

hp 101
AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 22
Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7
SQ improved uncanny dodge, natural cunning,
 trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

Traits

Racial darkvision 60 ft., scent
Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 4
Skills Climb +12, Intimidate +15, Jump +17, Listen +15,
 Search +10, Spot +15, Survival +13
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack,
 Weapon Focus (greataxe)
Languages Giant
Deity Worshipped Creator of Strife

Equipment

+1 *breastplate*, masterwork greataxe, composite longbow
 (+4 Str bonus), 30 arrows, 2 potions of *cure moderate*
wounds, 2 potions of *polymorph*, dagger

Powerful Charge (Ex): When charging, Mauriad may make a single gore attack with a +9 attack bonus that deals 3d6+6 points of damage.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Mauriad cannot be flanked except by a rogue of at least four levels higher than himself.

Natural Cunning (Ex): Mauriad is never caught flat-footed. He is naturally immune to *maze* spells.

Rage (Ex): +4 to Str, +4 to Con, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC for up to 6 rounds.

Trap Sense (Ex): Mauriad has an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, granting a +1 bonus on Reflex saves and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Mauriad can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when caught flat-footed.

MIZNOH

Though this ancient ruler has long since passed beyond the realm of the living, his statistics are worth noting here for NPCs who may claim to be the resurrection of the ancient king (true or not), or for campaigns set in Svimohzia's distant past.

MIZNOH

Male Svimohz human fighter 7/warlord 8 (CR 15)
 LN Medium humanoid (HD 7d10+21 plus 8d10+27)

Attack and Movement

Init +1
Melee +24/+19/+14 +2 *champion longsword*
 (1d8+12/17-20)
Ranged +16/+11/+6 +1 *composite* [+2] *shortbow* (1d6+2)
Base Atk +15/+10/+5; **Grp** +25
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), 20 ft. (4 squares) in full plate
SA heroic leader, lieutenant

Defense

hp 139
AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27
Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7
SQ fear immunity, fervor, outsider mount

Traits

Abilities Str 22, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 19
Skills Bluff +12, Climb +12, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +4
 (+6 acting), Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +15,
 Jump +13, Knowledge (art of war) +10, Knowledge
 (military tactics) +10, Ride +11, Sense Motive +9
Feats Cleave, Eyes of Fury (PG#SL), Great Cleave,
 Improved Critical (longsword), Leadership, Lightning
 Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Patience (PG#SL),
 Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge,
 Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword),
 Weapon Specialization (longsword)
Languages Svimohzish, Dwarven, Gnome
Deity Worshipped polytheistic

Equipment

+2 *full plate*, +2 *heavy steel shield*, *amulet of natural armor* +2,
ring of protection +1, +2 *champion longsword* (PG#SL), +1
composite [+2] *shortbow*, 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength* +4,
cloak of resistance +2, *brooch of shielding*.

Champion Longsword: Miznoh's longsword confers a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma and allows Miznoh to cast *command* as a spell-like ability, once per day, as a 1st-level caster.

Heroic Leader (Ex): On the first round of combat, all allies in gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls.

Fear Immunity (Su): Miznoh is immune to magical fear. All of his followers in line of sight gain this ability as well.

Fervor (Su): Miznoh's followers gain a +4 bonus to all saving throws against mind-affecting spells and effects.

Outsider Mount (Su): Miznoh rides a celestial warhorse.

PICHRIS

What King Warven II does not know is that his firstborn son, Warven III, has a nasty friend in the form of Pichris, a demon. Pichris possesses the young man, clouding his mind and preying upon his weaknesses. As a servant of the Dark One, Pichris spies on the royal court for the Church of Endless Night. By planting suggestions and using the young man as a vessel to commit all manner of atrocities, Pichris hopes to use Warven II to expand his military and entreaty to corrupt warlords and evil forces in Svimohzia to mount an attack to retake the island.

PICHRIS

Male kocrachon devil (Baatezu) (CR 9)
LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)
(HD 6d8+6)

Attack and Movement

Init +8
Melee +9 bite (1d6+3) and
+4 claws (1d4+1)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (12 squares; average)
SA disease, possession

Defense

hp 33
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16
Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7
SQ damage reduction 15/+1, immune to fire and poison, resistance to acid and cold 20, sadism, SR 17, summon baatezu

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; save DC 13 + spell level)

At will: *animate dead, cure moderate wounds, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, greater teleport, liquid pain, magic circle against good, major image, sorrow, suggestion, teleport without error (self plus 50 lbs. of gear only), wave of grief (BoVD), wither limb (BoVD), wrack (BoVD)*
1/day: *blasphemy*

Traits

Racial darkvision 60 ft. (in any darkness, even magical), telepathy 100 ft.
Abilities Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +5, Heal +11, Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Jump +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Spot +8
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative
Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Svimohzish

Equipment

none

Disease (Ex): Fortitude save (DC 14) or contract devil chills; incubation period 1d4 days, Strength damage 1d6. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.

Possession (Su): Pichris takes ethereal form to possess creature or object. CL 6th. *Protection from evil* spell (or similar

effect) blocks possession. Unprotected opponent must succeed at a Will save (DC 17) to avoid possession.*

Sadism (Ex): For every 10 points of damage Pichris deals in a round, he gains a +1 luck bonus on attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks during the next round.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): 2/day-summon one baatezu with a 40% chance of success (01-40 on a d100).

*For more details on the kocrachon devil or the possession ability, see the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not have or use this book, make Pichris a chain devil (see the *Monster Manual*) with the ability to cast *magic jar* once per day.

XUL

Crusty old dwarves tell of the drow cities beneath the Krimppatu Mountains, but few Svimohz pay them any heed, for the drow have had little contact with the people of the outside world for many years. As such, most Svimohz are also unlikely to care about a combined force of dark elves and illithids wreaking havoc on the small towns and villages near the Krimppatus. Unfortunately, this just might happen soon, for a small but growing segment of the illithid population has just that plan in mind. Ruling over this particular group of mind flayers is Xul, a rotting elder brain, the death lord of the illithid, attended by its brood of mind flayer servitors and minions. Xul plans to enslave the Underdark races, one community at a time, then turning his attention to the surface races.

Xul hungers for conquest and craves a return of mind flayer dominance in the planes. Corrupted by subterranean energies and his own matchless evil, he subsists on the brains of drow, dwarves and others that his minions obtain. Rotting in a pool of black fluid, he senses the surface world, watching the upstart humans with a quiet and simmering anger.

Currently, Xul keeps several illithid followers in Meznamish, hoping to capture the mind of King Warven II. This, Xul believes, will weaken the humans and allow screaming hordes of drow allies, grimlocks and worse to boil up out of the ground and take the island for their own. Unfortunately, Xul is quite mad.

Xul currently resides beneath the Krimppatu Mountains. If he were somehow transported to tunnels beneath Meznamish, the damage he could do might be incalculable.

XUL

Corrupted elder brain CR 28
LE Large Aberration (HD 26d8+419)

Attack and Movement

Init +5
Melee +22 tendrils (1d8+3 plus extract plus 13 points of vile damage)
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +26
Speed 10 ft. (2 squares); fly 30 ft. (6 squares; good), swim 30 ft. (6 squares)
SA disruptive attack, extract, improved grab, mind blast

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Defense

hp 536

AC 33, touch 9, flat-footed 32

Fort +30, **Ref** +14, **Will** +27

SQ blindsight 240 ft., bud brain golem, damage reduction 15/adamantine, enhanced power, fast healing 10, regeneration 10, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, spell resistance 34, telepathic awareness

Psionic Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; DC 21 + spell level)

At will: *astral projection*, *charm monster* (DC 27), *detect thoughts* (DC 29), *dominate monster* (DC 34), *mass suggestion* (DC 31), *plane shift*. (These DCs include the +4 bonus from enhanced power.)

Spells (save DC 18 + spell level)

0 (6/day): *acid splash*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *preserve organ**, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *slash tongue**, *touch of fatigue*

1st (8/day): *comprehend languages*, *identify*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *seething eyebane**, *shield*

2nd (8/day): *locate object*, *obscure object*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *touch of idiocy*

3rd (8/day): *absorb mind**, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *nondetection*

4th (8/day): *detect scrying*, *dimensional anchor*, *psychic poison**, *scrying*

5th (7/day): *dismissal*, *sending*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*

6th (7/day): *analyze dweomer*, *chain lightning*, *greater dispel magic*

7th (7/day): *insanity*, *summon monster VII*, *vision*

8th (7/day): *discern location*, *maze*, *screen*

9th (6/day): *energy drain*, *mindrape**, *prismatic sphere*

*These spells originate from the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not use this book, you may substitute other spells. Alternatively, you may substitute a selection of psionic powers appropriate for a 20th level psion (telepath).

Traits

Abilities Str 17, Dex 11, Con 42, Int 28, Wis 23, Cha 24

Skills Bluff +36, Concentration +45, Diplomacy +40, Disguise +7 (+9 acting), Intimidate +40, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (history) +38, Knowledge (the planes) +38, Listen +37, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +42, Spot +35, Survival +6 (+8 on other planes)

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*charm monster*), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*mass suggestion*), Toughness, Weapon Focus (tendrils)

Languages Draconic, Drow, Dwarven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Infernal, Terran, Svimohzish, Undercommon

Deity Worshipped none

Equipment

none

Disruptive Attack (Su): Xul deals an additional 13 points of vile damage when he touches uncorrupted, living, corporeal nonoutsiders. This damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Extract (Ex): If Xul begins its turn with an attached tendril and succeeds at a grapple check against that opponent, Xul automatically extracts the opponent's brain, killing it. Xul cannot use this power against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants or undead. Against foes with more than one head, extraction is not fatal.

Improved Grab (Ex): Whenever Xul hits a Small to Gargantuan creature with its tendril attack and gets a hold, it sinks its tendril into the opponent's head, trying to extract on the following round (see above). Opponents may attempt a single Escape Artist check or grapple check, but the elder brain receives a +2 circumstance bonus to the opposed roll. Even if the opponent is successful, Xul deals an additional 1d6 points of damage as the tendril rips free.

Mind Blast (Sp): Once per 1d4 rounds, 60-ft. cone; DC 31 Will save or be stunned for 3d4 rounds.

Enhanced Power (Su): The save DCs of Xul's special attacks increase by +4.

Fast Healing (Ex): Xul regains lost hit points at a rate of 13 per round. This does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst or suffocation.

Blindsight (Ex): Using psychic energy, Xul can ascertain objects and creatures within 240 ft.

Bud Brain Golem (Ex): Once per day, Xul can bud a brain golem. He may have a maximum of 3 active brain golems at a time. Use statistics for the brain golem from the *Fiend Folio*, or the flesh golem from the *Monster Manual*.

Regeneration (Ex): Xul takes normal damage from acid- and sonic-based attacks.

Telepathic Awareness (Su): Xul is aware of all creatures without some sort of mind shield, such as mind blank, in a 350 ft. radius extending through solid rock.

XYKRATHIX

Dragons are ever the most feared predators in all of Tellene. From the terrible aquatic dragons of the Kalamaran Sea to the deadly twilight dragons, all are feared and respected. However, Ahznomahn has one particular dragon to deal with. The black dragon Xykrathix lords over the domain, dwelling deep in the Awhom Forest. He emerges every few years to feed, but is otherwise content to remain in his lair, deep within the ancient forest. Some believe the family of this dragon once ruled the men of the continent, but if this is true, Xykrathix has never revealed it.

Since he rarely attacks humans, a coalition of Ahznomahnii merchants are entertaining the idea of approaching the dragon to see if he knows the identity of their mysterious attackers. Yet, none believe their situation dire enough to attempt it.

Xykrathix uses the statistics of an old black dragon as detailed in the *Monster Manual*.

Kingdoms of Kalamar

SVIMOHZIA The Ancient Isle

by Mark Plemmons and Robert Schwalb

Welcome to the island continent of Svimohzia, a land of diverse cultures, shining cities, terrifying dangers and ancient wonders. From mercantile Ahznomahn to war-torn Zazahni, Svimohzia encompasses great kingdoms, vast woodlands, hidden caverns and treacherous savannahs. Whether you hail from the massive hobgoblin kingdom of Ul-Karg, a savage wild elf tribe deep in the Vohven Jungle, or one of the vast human kingdoms, this supplement allows you to create and equip your character for endless adventures in this incredible setting.

SVIMOHZIA: THE ANCIENT ISLE contains all the details you need to play *Dungeons & Dragons* adventures in this setting, including:

- **Races and Regional Feats!** Learn about the variety of player character options for human, humanoid and monstrous races, and build your character with over a dozen new regional feats!
- **Classes and Paths!** With 15 starting packages, and 11 career paths with feat progressions, easily customize your character, whether hero, villain, warrior or scholar!
- **Prestige Classes!** Become a Disciple of Zhulurah, a ferocious Meldiz savage, a transforming Primal Warrior, a vigilant Savannah Stalker or an elite Sedizehn killer!
- **Weapons, Armor and Equipment!** These sections contain details on a wide variety of cultural weapons, tools, armor, ships, alchemy and other special items.
- **New Spells!** Learn about 26 new spells that originated on the Svimohzish Isle!
- **Detailed Towns and Cities!** Discover 24 fully detailed cities, with information on population, government, economy, temples, underworld, interesting sites and more!
- **Monsters and NPCs!** This ancient land can be quite dangerous for the unwary, and 10 of the most prominent dangers lie in wait for you here!
- **Easy-To-Use Quick Reference Sections!** Whether you need a new name for your character, a listing of ancient kings or how to translate an unknown word, these sections and more give you the information you need.
- **Culture and Society!** Learn about each land's noble houses, military forces, religion, clothing, culture, diet, trading practices, recreational habits, history, social castes and more!
- **Backwards Compatible!** Along with the new material, this book also includes ideas on how to utilize the existing information in your campaign.
- **Adventure Hooks and Tips, Detailed Maps of Svimohzia and Much More!**



Although usable in any campaign, this tome is especially suited for *Dungeons & Dragons* adventures in the official Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting - a realistic, dynamic world where complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids, and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Whatever type of adventure you seek, you can find it here.

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