

AGE OF TREASON: THE IRON COMPANION



LEGEND
COMPATIBLE

4G • ES

AGE OF TREASON COMPANION

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TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

This chapter describes conspiracies and plots already afoot in the Taskan Empire. Use these outlines to provide background motivation for high-level non-player characters, particularly those who might be the Adventurers' ultimate patron, or arch enemy. Each description provides the following information:

Chief Plotter: The character who is the guiding hand of the plot.

Hotbed of Intrigue: Where the treason has its genesis.

Treasonous Thoughts: The essential ambition and objective of the conspirators.

Personal Motives: What drives the plotters towards their ambition - whether it is greed, personal enmity or simply a romantic ideal. The zeal with which a plot is pursued may be driven by a character trait referred to as a *Passion*.

Cunning Plans: The plan of action that the plotters are pursuing to accomplish their goals; this is the most likely point at which Adventurers encounter the conspiracy, as they are caught up in events that they may not know the true purpose of, as actors or victims.

Plot Thickeners: Complications, elaborations and vulnerabilities inherent in the plot. This provides scope for setting up adventures, side plots and sub-quests as the conspirators attempt to clear their path to success and their enemies attempt to foil them.

PASSIONS

Those involved in the high level plots described here are usually driven by more than simple greed or lust for power, even if their 'altruistic' motivations are really an exercise in justifying to themselves why other people should suffer so they can achieve their ends. Many of these plots are also complex, and involve people who are deeply conflicted in their loyalties. In order to represent this, you can make use of the Passions rules. A Passion is a character trait represented by a percentage score that operates like a skill, and can be increased over time. Its base Characteristics are POW+CHA, and like all skills in *Age of Treason* its maximum value has a cap, in this case it is POW+CHA x5% unless it is augmented through some kind of magical effect.

USING A PASSION

A Passion test may be called for if an Adventurer is asked to do something that goes against his deeply held beliefs; if the roll succeeds the Adventurer's player must choose a course of action in keeping with the Adventurer's beliefs. If the role is failed the Player is free to follow the original course of action proposed, however if it is fumbled, there may be further consequences; roll on the Passion Fumble Table.

Passion Fumble Table

D20 Roll	Effect	Reduction in Passion Score
01-08	Feelings Examined	1D6
09-12	Beliefs Undermined	2D6
13-15	Faith Questioned	3D6
16-17	Scales Fall from Eyes	2D6+12
18-19	Loss of Faith	Passion Trait lost
20	Crisis of Faith	Passion Trait Reversed - e.g. Love (x) becomes Hate (x)

An Adventurer's or NPC's Passion score can be used to augment a skill roll where the Passion is relevant, by adding its critical range to the skill to be augmented. A Passion (Hate Sheng) might, in some circumstances, augment an Adventurer's attacks against their most bitter enemies. Alternatively a Passion (Abhor violence) might leave an Adventurer with a penalty at any attempt to use a skill for physical aggression. The influence of a Passion will not necessarily be beneficial - it may force them to take a more dangerous course of action than they would otherwise!

In normal play a Passion can be positive or negative (such as Love Family, Hate Barbarians); its object can be anything about which the Adventurer feels strongly, whether his god, family, people, country or cause - in *Age of Treason* it is often used for the last two of these. In some circumstances an Adventurer's Divine Magic Pact can act as a Passion, in so far as it reflects a sense of devotion to their object of worship.

The specific object of a Passion should be discussed with the Game Master, and some care taken both over how general or specific it is, and how likely it is to add colour to the game. It should not be so inconvenient a belief that it gets in the way of play as the Adventurer affected is continually confronted with impossible situations.

ACQUIRING A PASSION

A character can gain a Passion trait in a number of ways:

Player Choice: A player may want their newly created Adventurer to have a Passion in order to make an explicit statement about what drives that character's motivation and to reflect the back story they have created for the Adventurer. This costs one of the Adventurer's starting Hero Points, and produces a Passion score at POW+CHA +30%.

Game Master Fiat: Due to a specific set of events that have afflicted or affected the Adventurer during play, a Passion is generated at POW+CHA. If the circumstances call for a more extreme Passion - for instance if the Adventurer's entire family have been murdered by an enemy - the Passion should be increased by +20, +30 or even +50, as agreed with the Player.

Non-Player Character Intervention: Gaining a Passion can be an outcome of persuasion or seduction by a Non-Player Character. This could be a street prostitute attempting to convert a client into a patron and elevate herself to concubine status; a gifted political leader attempting to use oratory to convert people to his cause, or a deity directing a mortal to take up a cause in the interest of piety. Imparting a Passion into someone else is always the result of an Extended Task, and is always an Opposed Contest. The Passion is generated at POW+CHA plus the critical score of the influencer.

Possession: Being possessed by a Passion Spirit generates a Passion, and while possessed the Adventurer's Passion score is equal to the spirit's own Manifestation skill, however the Adventurer can resist the spirit's influence and oppose the Passion with his Persistence. Nevertheless when the spirit leaves its host it can leave a residue behind, imprinted on the heart and soul. The Passion is then gained at the spirit's CHA x its Intensity.

NPC Hit Locations

Unless otherwise specified, all the Non-Player Characters listed throughout this book use the standard Hit Location table:

D20	Hit Location
1-3	Right Leg
4-6	Left Leg
7-9	Abdomen
10-12	Chest
13-15	Right Arm
16-18	Left Arm
19-20	Chest

Hit points are shown in each profile like so:

5/5/6/7/4/4/5

L.Leg/R.Leg/Admn./Chest/L.Arm/R.Arm/Head

THE GREAT TREASON

CHIEF PLOTTER

Maresh Martek, 132 years old, high priest of the Emperor cult at Taskay, Patriarch of the cult of Taskan Thesh

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

Taskay, the Temple of Thesh

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

Martek actively seeks to ensure the downfall of the Iron Simulacrum at whatever time the Emperor should ascend to heaven, and stage a

coup ousting the Emperor-cult as the constitution of the Empire. He will replace it with something of his own devising that is based around the cult of Taskan Thesh, over which he is patriarch.

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Maresh Martek was one of the individuals responsible for the Iron Simulacrum's creation - and ever since that day he has regretted his involvement in an act that successfully brought peace and stability to the empire at a time of great turmoil and unrest. In Martek's view the price of peace has been an indefinite postponement of the day when the cult of Taskan Thesh replaces the Emperor cult at the helm of the empire, and his beloved home city of Taskay becomes not just the Emperor's place of residence, but a true imperial capital.

Passions: Loyalty (City of Taskay) 148%; Pact (Emperor) 122%

CUNNING PLANS

Maresh Martek knows that if one day he simply withholds or "fails" to provide the annual renewal of the magical enhancements that the Iron Simulacrum requires to effectively function, the Simulacrum can be easily subdued or destroyed. He has waited decades for the right moment, all the while laying his plans for how he will arrange matters in the way he wants them when the Simulacrum is out of the way. Those arrangements require that the cult of Thesh, which he controls, is ready to seize power and dispose of potential rivals and opponents.

PLOT THICKENERS

If Martek is to remain in a position where he is indispensable to the annual renewal of the Simulacrum's magical props until the time is right to show his hand, then given Martek's advanced age a key concern is simply staying alive. This is dealt with by the flagrant use of lifespan-enhancing spells and elixirs, and while this verges on treason on grounds of immortality, it is overlooked so long as there is no one else ready to step into Martek's shoes.

Martek regards control of the magical and mechanical resources of Sorandib to be an essential tool in his strategies, and intends to subject Sorandib's local deity, Sorantar, to Thesh. In this way his cult can gain such stature that it could achieve acceptance as the ruling cult of an Empire. Martek is always looking for spies and adventurers willing to dig into the secrets of Sorandib and recover for him any magic, artefact or information that will enable him to achieve his goal.

Martek's long term strategy of forcing all other cults of Thesh within the Empire to look to his own as their master is hoped to pay dividends when he (or his successor, should he not live so long) ultimately subverts control of the Empire. Each such cult is carefully sized up for its suitability to act as an instrument of his will in their local area, or at least to be a source of individual recruits to his cause. In order to ensure willing obedience, Martek invests in extravagant hospitality and patronage, but he does not shrink from engineering the disgrace or demise of someone who stubbornly resists his influence.

Martek's plot will one day hinge upon the readiness of the Imperial Guard - the Unconquerable Heroes of Taskay - to make the right choice between their loyalty to the Simulacrum and the Iron Companions, and their loyalty to the cult of Thesh and the city of their birth. However, soldiers might always choose to side with their respected generals against a wizened old sorcerer like himself, irrespective of their cult affiliation. So Martek is assiduous in reminding these men, through the use of pay, benefits, ritual and symbolism, that their hearts lie in Taskay; in effect all members of the Unconquerable Heroes gain the Loyalty (Taskay) passion as a trait, if they do not already have it, at POW+CHA+15.

While he would lead any interregnum following a successful coup, Martek intends to set up a monarchy. He would crown a senior officer of his cult as king following an electoral process akin to that practiced in pre-imperial times to select one of the leading aristocrats to be king for life. He has his eye on a number of different people, but he harbours reservations about all of them.

MARESH MARTEK

Arch Priest of Thesh, High Priest of Taskay's Emperor-cult and magus, Martek is the most important person in Taskay after the Emperor himself. He is a crotchety and bilious old man, for which he might be forgiven since he is 132 years of age. What most people have forgotten, but Martek still remembers, is that 60 years ago many of his family and friends were put to death on charges of treason while he stood by and did not intervene. Not because he was afraid, nor because he was not sympathetic to their cause - but because this intensely calculating conspirator thought the time not yet right for action and their treason doomed to failure. Martek is extremely influential, and by virtue of the fact he conducts the spell casting rituals every year that renew the Simulacrum's magical defences and enhancements, is vital to the Empire's security.

Characteristics:

STR10 CON10 SIZ13 INT17 POW16 DEX13 CHA14 SOC18

Attributes:

DM: -1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 15+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 4+12* (stored) +15 (familiar) **Dedicated POW:** 12

*Typically Martek has 10 MP points available to draw on from stored and 7 MP from his familiar due to the cost of maintaining long duration spells. This assumes no magnitude has been applied.

Common Skills: Athletics 25%, Brawl 24%, Brawn 24%, Culture 147%, Dance 33%, Drive 35%, Evade 32%, Evaluate 91%, First Aid 68%, Influence 150%, Insight 89%, Lore (Regional) 128%, Perception 54%, Persistence 155%, Resilience 68%, Rites 145%, Sing 32%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 35%

Advanced Skills: Craft (Enchanting) 89%, Craft (Alchemy) 67%, Diplomacy 101%, Mounted Combat 35%, Oratory 108%, Ride 65%, Teaching 87%

Combat Styles: Swordsmanship (Tarsenian School) 47%, Cloak and Dagger 43%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Warsword	M	M	D8, Bleed, Impale	6/10
Dirk	S	S	D3+2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour worn except on a formal field of battle, in which case a fine suit of Taskan lamellar armour will be worn, worth 6 points to all locations (SR-9). Habitually protected by Shield and Extension, allocated 6 points of Protection and 9 points of Countermagic. Maresh relies on his Banish spell (good against spirits of up to POW 39) to deal with spirit attackers.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Blessings: 1D3 Blessings that as Patriarch of Thesh's premiere cult he can use as a 10% bonus in any endeavour that is in the cult's interest.

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 159%):

The Burning Book (129%): Banish, Choke (=Smother), Dominate Salamander, Enhance STR, Form/Set Fire; Spirit Resistance, Summoning Ritual (Salamander), Wrack (Burning);

The Blue Book (97%): Banish; Damage Resistance; Dominate Citizen; Enhance CHA; Intuition; Mystic Vision; Neutralise Magic; Protective Ward; Spell Resistance; Spirit Resistance; Worship Zygas Taga;

Enchanting Tales (74%): Alarums, Create Familiar, Create Power Source, Enchanting Ritual, Write Grimoire

Divine Magic:

Lore (Emperor Cult Theology 162%), Pact (Zygas Taga) 98%: Command Human, Consecrate, Contact Emperor x2, Excommunication, Power Sharing; Lore (Taskan Rites 145%), Pact (Thesh) 155%: Call Thesh, [Extension], [Shield], Incinerate x2

Spirits:

Great Flame of Thesh (Intensity 4 Fire Spirit) INT 4 POW 28 CHA 5 Covert Possession

At a cost of 1MP Martek is immune to fire damage of up to 4D6, lasting 28 minutes; he can ignite combustibles by touch for 0MP, and deliver a Burning Touch with a successful unarmed Brawl attack for 4D3 damage at a cost of 1MP

Items:

The Kindling Staff: An ancient wooden staff of gnarled wood shod in bronze. Virtues: Provides the first Magic Point for any sorcery spell cast by the user, although the magic point cost of adding spell manipulations must still be borne by the sorcerer himself. The staff has a Golem POW with 8 Magic Points of its own, which replenish at normal rates irrespective of the duration of the spell that the staff was used to fuel.

Vizier's Diadem: An ancient relic from Taskay, worn in olden days by the king's appointed chief advisor in matters spiritual and temporal. Virtues: Stores 12 Magic Points; Adds a +30% bonus to Education skill tests. The diadem usually has only 10MP available, due to the cost of maintaining an Enhance STR spell on Maresh's familiar.



The Burning Book: Created by Martek himself, this grimoire is the distillation of his most important spells. All of the spells contained therein are memorised by the book itself, hence Martek has enough INT available to keep all spells from across his grimoires memorised at the same time. The Burning Book is beautifully illuminated, its letters formed in a grand archaic style. The book is kept in the temple of Thesh, and is well protected. Virtues: Holds the knowledge of 8 sorcery spells, and is an original work from which copies can be made.

THE BRONZE SALAMANDER, MARTEK'S FAMILIAR

This creature is a living bronze snake with jewelled eyes, created by forcing the spirit of a Salamander into an articulated golem constructed for Martek by the Artificers of Sorandib, then investing the result with the Virtues of Sapience and Empathy. The Bronze Salamander is a Devotee of Thesh. It is so cherished and pampered by Maresh Martek that it is often referred to as *The Small King of Taskay*.

Characteristics:

STR8+8=16 CON0 SIZ6 INT10 POW27 DEX11 CHA5

Dedicated POW: 12

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 2 SR: 11+ Mv: 8 MP: 7*

*Five of the Bronze Salamander's Magic Points are drawn on by Maresh to maintain the Simulacrum's protective and enhancing spells. Three more are used to maintain spells on the Bronze Salamander itself, and 12 points are dedicated to Thesh.

Common Skills: Athletics 45%, Brawl 45%, Brawn 23%, Evade 44%, Insight 74% Perception 111%, Persistence 40%, Resilience N/A, Stealth 84%

Advanced Skills: Education 50%, Rites (Taskan) 75%

Combat Skills: Bite 40%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	D3, Burn*	As for head

*If the bite penetrates or bypasses armour, it inflicts a further +4 heat damage

Armour and Defences: 8 Point armour from Bronze construction at no Strike Rank Penalty.

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-6	Tail	8/3
7-14	Body	8/5
15-20	Head	8/3

Maresh Martek maintains an Enhance STR giving +8 STR, and a Spell Resistance (proof against spells up to Magnitude 13). The Bronze Salamander provides the Magic Points

Divine Magic:

Taskan Rites 75%, Pact (Thesh) 77%: Call Thesh, Dismiss Salamander, Summon Salamander x3, Incinerate x4, Shield x3

Traits: The Bronze Salamander hates water, so misses out on the potential of being an excellent swimmer due to its serpentine form. However the Salamander spirit within gives it the ability to superheat his body, making it too hot to handle (D6 damage per round). This need not affect Maresh Martek due to his Fire Spirit covert possession

Treasure: The Bronze Salamander's eyes are worth 1,700 Taskeens each.

THE SIMULACRUM'S DREAM

CHIEF PLOTTER

The Iron Simulacrum, Emperor's familiar, Viceroy of the Empire, Patriarch of the Emperor cult.

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

The fortress-palace of the Simulacrum at Ashkor

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

The Simulacrum seeks access to magic that will allow him to persist in the world even after the Emperor has ascended to heaven. He senses that time may be near, and fears what will become of him. The Simulacrum hides these fears, and his plans to find a path to an existence independent of his maker, the Emperor.

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Nobody knows if the Simulacrum really does dream. But it is apparent to his closest advisors that the Simulacrum has personal goals and objectives. Among them are the desire to experience what it is to be a truly living being - and he is at least smart enough to realise that this is an ambition that his courtiers might sympathise with, while being one his master would not countenance. Above all he does not want to die before he has lived.

Passions: Desire (Immortality) 68%; Desire (Humanity) 81%

CUNNING PLANS

The Simulacrum intends to sever his psychic connection to the Emperor the moment the Emperor ascends to heaven. He intends the process to involve the transfer of his own soul into a human body. This of course means someone else's. Unsure if current magical technology will achieve the desired outcome using a corpse, the Simulacrum at present seeks the knowledge to ensure complete assumption of a living person's body with full functionality and no risk of becoming merely a covert possession.

PLOT THICKENERS

The Simulacrum relies on the loyalty and confidence of his Iron Companions. Without them his enemies can render him helpless and his own army could be used to destroy him. He knows just enough about human nature to realise that in their eyes he could in a moment switch from being an icon to being a monster.

The Simulacrum takes a great interest in magic that appears to prevent death, deliver immortality or achieve a transfer of a soul from one body to another. An understanding of any such magic may help him achieve his goals. As these magical practices are generally regarded as treasonous and are proscribed, the Simulacrum will, when he hears of a likely case, send someone out whom he trusts in the role of Inquisitor, and have the perpetrator brought to the dungeons of his own palace at Ashkor. There they are interrogated by whatever means will best reveal the truth behind their magical arts. If he discovers they have something he wants, they are detained indefinitely for future use.

THE PALACE COUP

CHIEF PLOTTER

Garan Varsang, 43 year old Emperor-cult priest responsible for relations with the community within the walls of the Emperor's palace. Widely known to be an ambitious schemer.

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

The Emperor's Palace and the Zygas Taga Temple Precincts at Taskay

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

Garan desires the destruction of the Simulacrum and his Iron Companions, leaving the capital's Emperor cult college - headed by himself, naturally - as the default seat of power upon the Emperor's ascension.

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Varsang understands better than almost anyone that the Emperor himself is powerless without the cult that supports him and enacts his will. To take control of the Emperor-cult is to take control of the Emperor himself. Varsang sees the Iron Companions as a rival court to the one surrounding the Emperor in Taskay in which he is a leading figure. He is in fact the most prominent of a whole slew of imperial officials and generals who feel their ambitions limited by the constitution of the Emperor cult as it stands.

Passion: Loyalty (Emperor) 58%, Pact (Emperor) 101%, Desire (Almost Absolute Power) 101%

CUNNING PLANS

Varsang has caught wind of some peculiar behaviour on the part of the Simulacrum, which leads him to believe there may be some hope of discovering and publicising some difference of opinion or interest between the Emperor and his familiar. With such information he hopes he can bring the Simulacrum down, staging a putsch on the part of the 'loyalist' faction.

To this end Varsang sends agents to investigate the movements of anyone who comes to his attention and is acting on direct orders from the Simulacrum.

PLOT THICKENERS

Varsang believes there should be one Emperor-cult hierarchy that brings all Tarsenians together no matter what city they are from, and of course that this hierarchy should be based in Taskay, respecting the Emperor's choice of that city to spend his final years in the mundane world.

Varsang believes that in order to give rebellion a chance he will need to somehow have Maresh Martek killed, thus weakening the Simulacrum, and also subvert the Unconquerable Heroes. Varsang has no idea of the treason that Martek himself is planning.

GARAN VARSANG, EMPEROR-CULT PRIEST AND SCHEMER

Characteristics:

STR14 CON8 SIZ13 INT15 POW14 DEX12 CHA12 SOC17

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 14+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 6 **Dedicated POW:** 8 (Zygas Taga)

Common Skills: Athletics 55%, Brawl 45%, Brawn 40%, Culture 109%, Dance 40%, Drive 43%, Evade 28%, Evaluate 108%, First Aid 52%, Influence 97%, Insight 73%, Lore (Regional) 82%, Perception 45%, Persistence 71%, Resilience 42%, Rites 137%, Sing 31%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 30%

Advanced Skills: Commerce 95%, Education 78%, Orate 91%, Pact (Zygas Taga) 101%, Ride 58%, Swim 29%

Combat Styles: Cloak and Dagger 51%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dirk	S	S	D3+2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Divine Magic (Emperor-Cult Theology 92%):

Pact (Zygas Taga) 101%: Absorption, Command Salamander, Contact Emperor x2, Excommunication, Extension

Gifts: Mastery (Commerce); Mastery (Orate)

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 58%):

The Blue Book (67%): Dominate Citizen, Enhance CHA, Mystic Vision, Protective Ward, Spell Resistance, Spirit Resistance, Worship Zygas Tag

THE COVENANTERS

CHIEF PLOTTER

Herol Fin, 37 year old actor, poet, seducer and revolutionary

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

The demi-monde of Merat

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS:

Fin's sect, known as The Covenanters, believes the removal of aristocratic privilege has not done enough to make merit the only qualification for political office – and high rank in the Emperor cult. In short, they want to break what is left of the power of the old aristocracy and seize control of the Emperor cult for the common man (and woman).

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Fin, like most actors, comes from a low estate – but his success has brought him face to face with the highest in the land. While much of their money and some of their manners have rubbed off on him, ultimately he harbours a secret rage against people who will never accept him as their equal. He has no trouble having their wives accept him into their beds, and while he takes great pleasure in scoring points against them in this way, it is not nearly enough. Herol Fin wants to bring the whole edifice of wealth, rank and class division crashing down. Probably to be replaced with another of his own devising.

Passions: Secret Loathing (Anyone with SOC 16+) 85%

CUNNING PLANS

Herol Fin is a regular and highly lauded performer at the annual festival at Merat, where he proposes one day to initiate a brutal slaughter of the “establishment” types who come there in their droves for the festival season. His ideal personal John Wilkes Booth moment would be the assassination of Maresh Martek – who epitomises everything to do with the old school tradition.

PLOT THICKENERS

The Covenanters are the extreme wing of a network of community cults active throughout the Empire honouring the founder hero of the Tarsenian race. These groups often seek to engage ordinary folk (SOC 10 and below) in political life as their core purpose. The most militant may come to the Covenanters' attention and be targeted for recruitment.

Every Covenanter is tasked with identifying and introducing more potential members to the group, each of whom must submit to a Covenant (as the divine spell) of terrible consequence to those who transgress. The cult will assassinate an apostate who fails to renew a Covenant upon its annual expiry. This is the sort of situation that Adventurers may find themselves becoming drawn into, either as executioners or bodyguards. There are currently 17 sworn members of the conspiracy, and this is regarded as being 4 short of the ideal number.

Followers of Hamath, the god who looks after the poor and downtrodden, are unlikely to join the Covenanters' revolution out of class solidarity; the lower orders traditionally seek ways to subsist out of the generosity of their social superiors (and if that is not forthcoming, then steal) and can be quite conservative about this; they rather aim to see lucky individuals catapulted to fame in a story of rags and riches than to tear down a corrupt social order.

Some of the fearsome spells provided to enforce the members' Covenants come from a sorcerer who is sympathetic to the cause, by the name of Arnust Sharom. Arnust may have his own motivations beyond being paid for his work - unknown to Herol Fin. Perhaps he simply wants to see the mass assassination of some of the Empire's great and good (and Maresh Martek in particular) for his own nefarious purposes. Or he may be a genuine sympathiser with the cause of the common man (and woman).

HEROL FIN, ACTOR, POET, SEDUCER AND REVOLUTIONARY

Characteristics:

STR12 CON10 SIZ12 INT12 POW16 DEX16 CHA19 SOC7

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 14+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Dedicated POW:** 4

Common Skills: Athletics 67%, Brawl 38%, Brawn 35%, Culture 96%, Dance 82%, Drive 55%, Evade 74%, Evaluate 74%, First Aid 32%, Influence 45%, Insight 53%, Lore (Regional) 52%, Perception 46%, Persistence 81%, Resilience 33%, Rites 45%, Sing 84%, Sleight 55%, Stealth 32%

Advanced Skills: Acrobatics 48%, Art (Acting) 152%, Disguise 77%, Education 68%, Fast Talk 66%, Orate 65%, Ride 38%, Seduction 125%, Swim 39%

Combat Styles: Stage Combat* 110%, Cloak and Dagger 56%, Swordsmanship 40%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	D6, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dirk	S	S	D3+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

*Stage Combat is a Combat Style that does not do any damage on a successful hit unless a CM is deliberately used for the purpose. Instead the participants compete to garner Combat Manoeuvres, including those such as Flourish, which does nothing other than impress the audience with a fine display of panache, or False Strike, which gives the appearance of a killing blow while merely applying stage blood or giving the opponent the opportunity to expire dramatically.



Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn. However Herol has many devoted admirers who would happily throw themselves between him and any slings and arrows that come his way.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Divine Magic:

Pact (Tarsen) 59%: Covenant x4

Heroic Abilities: *Irresistible to Women.* Herol can invoke this ability to cancel out a successful Persistence or Insight role opposing his Seduction skill, as long as the target is female and bisexual or heterosexual. In an extended task Seduction attempt it must be used separately in each Task Round.

WEEPING SILVER

CHIEF PLOTTER

Jonvel Samzin, 33 year old chief of Tarsang's smugglers, thieves and embezzlers. Jonvel's regular job is as a scribe of the Guild of the Purple Cloth, where he is employed in checking the quality, quantity and volume of goods offered for sale in the commodity exchanges to ensure fair trading, and assessing the goods for tax purposes.

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

Tarsang, where a network of courts serves as a marketplace and commodity exchange where bulk trades occur, regulated and taxed by the local Emperor-cult.

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

Jonvel's Samzin's pursuit of riches involves both tax fraud and dumping counterfeit and debased Taskeens onto the market, hence the treasonous and capital crime of tampering with the empire's money. Jonvel Samzin's criminal activities cost the Taskan treasury over 1.5 million Taskeens per year in lost revenues.

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Jonvel's driving force results from possession by a powerful (Intensity 3) Passion Spirit that fills his heart with a craving for riches. Jonvel mostly behaves in a normal fashion and can happily pass up small treasures – he is not obsessed with money, but with wealth. He is already very wealthy, however he desires to find a pathway to joining the true super-rich with their enormous

NEW SORCERY SPELL: WEEPING SILVER

Concentration, Touch

This spell was originally devised to extract pure silver from alloys, to a maximum of 1kg per 10% of the caster's Grimoire skill. It can also be used to force silver sitting within an alloy to concentrate itself on the surface of the mass or item within which it is contained, giving the appearance it is pure silver. As a result, it is an ideal tool for the forger who wishes to pass off an impure product as pure.

country estates. Unfortunately his acquisition of status with his money would instantly bring him under suspicion – so he must either invest in some enterprise that sees him at least appear to be elevated through merit or take his money - and eventually himself - abroad, where he can use and enjoy his riches without suspicion.

Passion: Desire (Unlimited Riches) 87%

CUNNING PLANS

Samzin's plot involves adding stolen goods to the large commodity transactions undertaken with foreign merchants for bullion, doctoring the records that are made for tax and accounting purposes so the Taskan side of the paperwork shows only the price and volume of the legitimate part of the deal. In this way he achieves a full market price for stolen goods, and receives high purity silver coinage in return for it.

With the silver thus earned and hidden from official view, Samzin then mints counterfeit Taskan currency, ensuring that he can convert each Sharranketan Dinar to between 2.5 and 3 Taskeens rather than the official exchange rate of 2 Taskeens to the Dinar.

To achieve this Samzin makes use of a sorcery spell imported from Sharranket known as Weeping Silver, with which he can replicate the secret alchemical process employed by the state to "blanche" the official coinage (giving it the outward appearance of pure silver when it is in fact alloyed with base metal), but of course using an even lower proportion of silver than the imperial mint.

PLOT THICKENERS

The proceeds of the Weeping Silver conspiracy have funded the development of a significant black market network, and pay for a small army of criminal enforcers, corrupt officials and compliant merchant corporations.

Samzin's network is sufficiently powerful to have 'relationships' with many warehouse owners from whom they steal fixed quotas of goods over an agreed period of time, incidentally protecting the target from the attentions of any other villains. His chief accomplice is the local agent of the Shippers' Corporation of Kispal and Nyrra (two small towns in Ashrum district), who organises the shipment and sale of the goods acquired. Most of these crimes do not fall into the territory of Treason.

The Weeping Silver conspiracy has started a rot among the merchants of Tarsang. Corruption has reached levels at which even some of the richest merchants are affronted by the potential stain on their honour, but all fear the consequences of bringing the situation to light.

The Sharranketans are unaware that they are embroiled in Jonvel's plot. Should they realise what is going on, they are likely to move against Jonvel. Their trade strategies may be aggressive and monopolistic, but they rely on conducting straight business and keeping conditions stable, and they can do without a major scandal erupting in Tarsang. Sharranketan money may become involved in paying for Jonvel and his crew to be broken up

without dragging the rest of the Tarsang merchant community into disrepute.

JONVEL SAMZIN, SCRIBE, COUNTERFEITER AND CRIME BOSS

Jonvel Samzin is short, bookish and dressed in simple clothes cut from the best quality cloth.

Characteristics:

STR10 CON15 SIZ11 INT16 POW12 DEX10 CHA14 SOC15

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 7 **Dedicated POW:** 5 (Tarsen 4, Zygag Taga 1)

Common Skills: Athletics 27%, Brawl 45%, Brawn 30%, Culture 75%, Dance 41%, Drive 75%, Evade 34%, Evaluate 125%, First Aid 41%, Influence 76%, Insight 62%, Lore (Regional) 99%, Perception 50%, Persistence 78%, Resilience 43%, Rites 45%, Sing 44%, Sleight 65%, Stealth 28

Advanced Skills: Commerce 138%, Education 77%, Education (Djesmiri) 45%, Fast Talk 55%, Language (Djesmiri) 57%, Orate 42%, Pact (Tarsen) 45%, Pact (Zygag Taga) 31%, Ride 30%

Combat Styles: Cloak and Dagger 45%, Militia Spear and Shield 50%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dirk	S	S	D3+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn. Jonvel is obsessed with living long enough to enjoy his riches and does not trust some of his cohorts, hence he is usually dosed up with an elixir that fortifies him against any ingested poisons (Potency 45% is added to his Resilience roll). In a violent encounter Jonvel uses his Sanctuary spell to buy time to make an escape or talk the situation down.

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Blessings: At any time he will have 1D3 Blessings from Tarsen the Founder, each of which can be used to add 10% to a skill roll in any commercial or legal negotiation.

Divine Magic:

Pact (Tarsen) 45%: Covenant, Sanctuary, Tongues

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 0%):

Weeping Silver (78%): Weeping Silver, Form/Set Silver, Sense silver

Gifts:

Golden Tongue (POW1, Common Magic effect), +5% to all Commerce, Evaluate and Influence tests

Heroic Abilities: *Creative Accountant.* Jonvel Samzin is incredibly good at assessing the impact of market conditions, running

numbers and scenarios in his head and working out the best possible deal. This he can then use to conceal or inflate the true market value of the contract being negotiated. The outcome of any financial negotiation will swing in his favour no matter who won the Opposed Contest, simply because Jonvel is so well ahead of the competition in assessing how the agreement will play out. In practice, this means a 50% increase to any discount on the market rate he achieves when buying, or on a premium he achieves when selling. If he has lost the Opposed Contest, this ability will reduce the discount given or premium paid accordingly. The other party will not feel any worse off, as Jonvel is very good at making people feel they have the best of him, and his skills often manipulate the deals to shed cost or deliver additional value in ways that are invisible to them. The benefit of Jonvel's Heroic Ability is actually found and converted to cash only when the book keeping is done, usually at the end of the season or at the end of the year in deals that take significant time to transact (such as long distance trades).

DOCTOR IMMORTALITY

CHIEF PLOTTER

This is not an organised conspiracy with a leader, but rather a recurring act of treason on the part of individuals who consider their personal desires too important to be frustrated by an inconvenient set of edicts issued by the Simulacrum.

HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

The highest social circles in Taskay, Zarina and Pryjarna; wherever it is currently rumoured that a physician, known to society gossips as Doctor Immortality, is plying his trade.

TREASONOUS THOUGHTS

Soon after the Iron Simulacrum appeared and took over the reins of the Empire, an edict was issued that made the pursuit of immortality an act of treason. Yet the existence of death-defying magic is an open secret, and there are always those who are rich enough to try and acquire it. The peculiar solution offered by Doctor Immortality is one by which the beneficiary is to some extent actually dead, yet manages to retain use of their body and to remain locked in the mundane world.

PERSONAL MOTIVES

Those who commit this act of treason are trying to cheat death, and their motives may range from the purely selfish desire to live longer, or may be to 'save' a loved one. Most such people are exhibiting a Love (Self) Passion rather than Love (Life) with the more sympathetic characters acting to secure the survival of someone else who they love.

CUNNING PLANS

A situation normally develops thus: a fabulously wealthy and well-connected individual finds himself at death's mercy, and decides there must be some way his wealth can save him. Eventually someone in the know refers him to a notary of Zarina named Taras Maroon, who it is said can introduce the individual to a doctor who can help. The client is informed that the doctor's remedies are unorthodox and expensive, but are so good you need to keep

quiet about the whole cheating death thing in case it raises official interest.

If convinced of his client's imminent demise, Doctor Immortality regularly attends the client in person over a period of up to a season, being on hand for the moment when the client dies, upon which he will force the client's spirit to remain with the body which he fixes in a state of stasis, thus giving the appearance of life.

PLOT THICKENERS

Doctor Immortality's true identity is Thul Radam, a very talented apprentice of the great Zarinian magus Thumastin Thumank. He is employing his unique arts, without Thumank's knowledge, to raise the cash that stops his master sliding into bankruptcy. His real concern is the disastrous consequences for the creatures kept in the famous menagerie his master has created and part of which is open to the public as Zarina's zoo.

Thul Radam is rarely able to spend extended time away from Zarina – one of the reasons he can treat no more than one client per year who requires travel.

Someone is stalking and killing Thul Radam's patients, and seems always to be a step ahead of any Inquisitor on the trail of illegally extended life. The assassin, a Hradori fanatic from Yegusai, is tracking down the abominations created by Thul Radam and destroying them in ways they cannot ever recover from. Once he discovers Thul Radam's existence, the necromancer will become his primary target.

The nature of the process Thul Radam has pioneered to bring life to the dead would be of significant interest to the Simulacrum if the sorcerer can be delivered up to him alive. Significant rewards can be won by whoever investigates this plot, apprehends the man at its centre and has the political nous to take him to Ashkor.

THUL RADAM

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE, NECROMANCER, UNDERTAKER AND ANIMAL WELFARE ACTIVIST

Many years ago, Thul Radam left his home city of Sorandib, where he had already studied the arcane arts, in search of new opportunities. After various adventures he secured an apprenticeship with Thumastin Thumank, the famous magus of Zarina. Thumank set him to work in his menagerie, where Thul began using his arts to try and keep the poorly looked-after creatures - ranging from the mundane to the magically bizarre – alive and well. This was always a struggle with dwindling funds, terrible living conditions and often huge gaps in knowledge of how the animals should be properly fed and cared for. He started moonlighting as an undertaker to try to make ends meet, at which he won a wonderful reputation for making corpses look the very image of health and beauty. He found himself using his undertaker skills to make dead or dying animals look good for the public, and ultimately started experimenting with magic to keep alive creatures which were key attractions at Zarina's zoo. Once he had done that

he found there was a lot of money to be made in transferring the process to humans. With a growing reputation as a mysterious doctor offering miracle cures, and developing a taste for being a celebrity man of mystery, he was carried away by his successes. Thul found himself landed with a seriously lucrative trade while his other-worldly master continued to run up enormous debts. Thul now keeps both the menagerie and Thumastin Thumank himself financially afloat.

His magical secret involves dominating a departing spirit and commanding it to stay by its corpse; repairing the body as best he can using Form/Set Flesh; Enchanting the body with the Soul Vessel and Golem Con virtues, which provides a means for the body to function irrespective of its former diseases or damage, and to trap the spirit; and forcing the spirit of the deceased back into its body. It seems to work so far.

Characteristics:

STR12 CON8 SIZ14 INT18 POW17 DEX11 CHA14 SOC12

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 3 SR: 15+ Mv: 8 MP: 16 Dedicated POW: 1

Common Skills: Athletics 35%, Brawl 28%, Brawn 30%, Culture 56%, Dance 32%, Drive 50%, Evade 26%, Evaluate 77%, First Aid 82%, Influence 35%, Insight 55%, Lore (Regional) 72%, Perception 36%, Persistence 91%, Resilience 42%, Rites 95%, Sing 29%, Sleight 35%, Stealth 27%

Advanced Skills: Craft (Enchanting) 63%, Craft (Surgeon) 35%, Craft (Undertaker) 87%, Disguise 57%, Education 98%, Healing 48%, Lore (Animal Care) 82%, Pact (Zygas Taga) 19%, Ride 31%, Spellcraft 72%, Swim 29%

Combat Styles: Sidearm 36%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	D6, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dirk	S	S	D3+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Grimoires: (Spellcraft 72%)

An Apprentice Manual (59%): Glow, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Telepathy;

Chapter 5 (45%): Enchanting Ritual, Create Familiar;

The Undertaker's Handbook (67%): Abjure Grief, Banish Ghost, Dominate Ghost, Form/Set Flesh, Worship Gomorg

Talents: Thul Radam has a *Genius for Disguise* that can also apply to his efforts to prepare a corpse for its funeral so it looks its best for the grieving relatives. This adds + 11% to his skills, and a further + 5% to his Critical range.

THE PRICE OF TREASON

An Adventurer who gains the rank of Inquisitor in the Emperor-cult not only needs to be skilful at rooting out treason, but also able to exercise good judgement in how the offender is dealt with once the truth is out. Not all acts of treason are punished with hideous torture and death. Some just warrant a period of exile, and others little more than a form of re-education and penance resulting in an increase of the culprit's Pact (Zygas Taga) score.

Irrespective of whether the Inquisitor finds and punishes you, getting involved in a treasonous plot can have a negative effect on a citizen's Pact (Zygas Taga) score. If this drops to zero without the intervention of an Excommunication spell (so simply through character actions and choice), the character concerned is considered an Apostate. Apostasy is a treasonous act, and the Inquisitors will busy themselves in otherwise quiet times rounding up such people.

The actual circumstances and severity of an act of treason will affect the penalties inflicted; use the Treason Table as a guide.

PENALTIES

An Inquisitor working in the field can usually decide the fate of those he investigates and finds guilty on his own authority. Of course when the object of his investigations is someone of importance and influence, or who enjoys popularity, and in particular when that person holds a more senior rank in the Emperor cult than the Inquisitor himself, there will need to be wider consultation on the matter and politics will play a significant part in the outcome. In general, the Inquisitor can be so lenient as to demand an act of contrition or penance resulting in an increase in the traitor's Pact (Zygas Taga) score. However if that is all there is to show for an investigation it suggests that the Inquisitor has been wasting his time with trifles. Most likely such trivial punishments are reserved for those tainted by association with the true traitor. For such a person, the following punishments are available.

Excommunication: A Divine Magic spell is used to remove the accused's connection with the Emperor by severing their Pact, and thereby strips them of citizenship. This can have a serious impact on the effects of other forms of punishment.

An Inquisitor with a Pact of 51% or more can temporarily suspend the target's citizenship with this spell in order that he may apply means of interrogation from which is a citizen is protected by law. The spell duration is 15 minutes and can be more if Extension is used. A Priest of the Emperor cult with a Pact of 76% or more can cast a permanent Excommunication spell, however it is normally only cast by the high priest of the local college at the Inquisitor's request.

Execution: Someone found guilty of Treason and condemned to execution is generally Excommunicated first, thus denied any public scrutiny of their fate, and then done away with. The killing may be done in private and the body returned to the family for

TREASON TABLE

Treasonous Act	Penalty	Pact Loss
Apostasy	Immediate performance of an act guaranteed to increase the offender's Pact score to a positive value. If this remedy is declined or failed, Exile.	N/A
Counterfeiting	Assuming the counterfeiting is of official Taskan coinage, then Execution and Proscription. It is not a crime of Treason to counterfeit foreign currency, however this is open to civil lawsuits brought by defrauded customers.	3D6+6
Divination	Divination in respect of the fortunes of the Emperor and the Empire is strictly prohibited. As it is the case that most people's futures are in some way bound up with these very things, Divination in general is frowned upon and its practitioners frequently purged. Someone who employs a seer from Jelhai to tell them about their love life prospects may get off lightly. In general however Excommunication, Exile and Proscription may be deployed.	Variable, from 1D6 to 4D6+6 depending on the nature of the enquiry.
Espionage	Passing information to a potentially hostile power may be punished differently according to how hostile the foreign power is and the level or type of information passed. Excommunication, Proscription and Exile are all options, as is Execution.	Variable, from 1D6 up to 2D6+6 in times of peace and perhaps as high as 5D6+6 in times of war.
Immortality	Denial of Anagathics and/or Exile; division of property amongst heirs while still living; Execution if any third party has been harmed or exploited in the process (this may mean people who have been magically tapped, but includes those denied an inheritance by the culprit's longevity if they bring a formal complaint!); otherwise Exile and Proscription.	1 Per Ageing Roll avoided. Full immortality results in an immediate 4D6+6.
Rebellion	Execution and Proscription of the active offenders, Excommunication and Exile of the passive members (the wider family and community) unless their association with the act of Rebellion is such that the remedy for Apostasy may be employed.	3D6+6
Tax Evasion	Exile until 1D4+1 x the sum evaded is paid. Proscription if the sum is not paid.	1D6+6

funeral rites, or may be very public, with the victim's body dragged through the street on hooks, suspended in a cage in a public place or dumped in a river or rubbish heap. There is no set means of execution and disposal where treason is concerned - it is up to the judgement (or whim) of the Inquisitor.

Exile: Exile comes in two forms. The lenient kind comes without Excommunication and simply forces the target to stay away from home, thereby suffering significant inconvenience, but usually accommodates them somewhere in the Empire - perhaps one of the newer provinces. The harsher sort is a removal of citizenship via Excommunication, and expulsion from the Empire (sometimes this extends to protectorates as well, and diplomatic treaties give teeth to the Taskan government to ensure their allies enforce the expulsion notice).

Proscription: A proscribed individual forfeits all of his property to the state. If combined with Execution, it means the state is the inheritor of the condemned man's property and his family

is ruined. If combined with Excommunication, Proscription subjects its target to the absolute removal of protection under the law, so while the state takes his property, any other citizen may take his life if he so chooses.

APPEALS

A citizen being investigated by an Inquisitor has the right to appeal to the Iron Simulacrum to intervene or directly judge their case. The appellant needs to make their appeal before they are Excommunicated, as it is a call upon their Pact for Divine Intervention.

The Simulacrum is deemed to be a creature who exercises pure reason, free of prejudice and personal motivation (although this is not entirely true). Likewise his decisions in the realm of punishment are considered 'dispassionate', which means they may in fact be extremely brutal, should it be his view that the public good is best served by making an example of the perpetrator.

MONEY IN THE TASKAN EMPIRE

Whether your Adventurers are idealists or mercenaries, sooner or later they will need to tackle the basic questions of how they pay their way or spend their loot. They might want to raise their Social Status by acquiring a land holding, invest in a trade venture, engage an entourage of henchmen and hangers-on, or simply equip themselves with the finest armour and weapons available. This chapter gives guidance on all these opportunities and provides some detail on how money is used in the *Age of Treason* setting.

The pricing used here varies in some important respects with the price lists provided in the *Legend Core Rulebook*. If you need a price for an item not listed here you can use the standard Legend cost, but bear in mind Age of Treason prices are in some categories significantly cheaper, so use some common sense and comparisons in other areas to make sure that it is not open to abuse.

CURRENCY

SILVER COINS

The *Taskeen* is the currency introduced by Zygus Taga when he became Emperor over a unified Tarsenia. It takes its name, but not its value, from the currency of the city of Taskay. As a symbolically democratic gesture Zygus Taga fixed the value of the standard silver coin on the daily wage of an unskilled worker. This is essentially half the value of the old standard unit of exchange, based on the pure silver piece. It also conforms to a traditional measure of value in Tarsenia - which is one kilogram of Blessed Barley. In order to keep the coin an acceptable size - although still a little smaller than other silver currencies - the silver is mixed with base metal, and a blanching process ensures the coins still appear to be silver. The actual purity of any Taskeen coins depends on the year of issue and the state of the treasury's finance at that particular time. Enquiring into the specifics of an issue's purity is certainly Treasonous.

GOLD COINS

The Taskan Empire does not mint gold coins; large transactions can be carried out using promissory notes for internal trades, or by weight of bullion in gold or silver for foreign trades.

COPPER COINS

Smaller copper pieces (pennies) are issued that trade at 5 to the Taskeen. These copper pieces have retained the same notional value from pre-Imperial days, so there are many very old, worn coins still in circulation. A healthy economy is one in which you can purchase a loaf of bread using a single penny.

EXCHANGE RATES

The international trade economy is still based on bullion coins, and more or less pure silver coins are still issued by mints in Sharranket (the Sharranketan Dinar) and across Korantia by the Syndics of the merchant societies, under the tutelage of the trade god Sabateus. The Korantine Emperor also mints gold coins that are little short of 100% purity, and a little larger than most silver coins. Despite the power and reach of the Taskan Empire these high purity foreign coins are still popular because they are easily moved and accepted internationally, without a money changer taking a cut.

The usual conversion rates are as follows:

10 pennies = 2 Taskeens = 1 Korantine Guilder = 0.05 Korantine Gold Imperials = 1 Sharranketan Dinar

1 Taskeen = 1 Djesmiri Dinar = 1 Morkeshite Dinar = 0.2 Yegusan Silvers = 5 Jekkarene Iron Bars

WAGES

An Adventurer may need to know what they can earn by picking up casual work - or alternatively what they need to pay hirelings for their services. The basic service that anyone can offer is their time and energy. An individual of sound body with no skills to offer expects to receive 1 Taskeen for a full day of his labour. An individual with a useful skill in excess of 50% may be able to earn double that - the wage of a skilled worker - as long as there is a demand for what they can do. Certain skills of course attract a premium as can particularly high (101%+) skill levels on occasion. Sample wages by day, month and year in Taskeens are given in the Wages Table on the following page.

While this table give an indication of precise rates of pay expected for certain professions, any job can be quickly priced by referring to the Lifestyle Table, which provides an average wage level for people in each SOC category.

HIRELINGS AND HENCHMEN

A *Hireling* is someone, often a complete stranger, whom you pay to do a job of work on a purely commercial basis and usually for a short period of time. The Adventurer seeks out the individual whose services they need and comes to an agreement on whatever sum he will pay and the hireling will accept to do the required work. The Hireling provides his services non-exclusively, at least in so far as he is able to fit other work in around whatever the Adventurer is employing him for. When the work is done and the money is paid there is no further obligation between the employer and the Hireling.

A *Henchman* is someone whom the Adventurer has hired on an exclusive and probably long-term basis. It is likely the Adventurer is not only paying them wages, but also providing shelter, tools for the job, and possibly one or more meals per day. In doing so the employer effectively shields the henchman from the vagaries of finding enough work or somewhere to lay their head at night for an extended period, and in such arrangements the roots of dependency and loyalty are laid down.

The cost of having a Henchman may be taken from the Wages Table or is based on the Annual Income for their SOC Characteristic on the Lifestyle Table, and the Adventurer must undertake a minimum commitment of one season. However it is normal that a large part of the Henchman's pay is provided in kind as subsistence, up to the Henchman's Lifestyle Cost.

WAGES TABLE

Profession	Daily Rate	Annual Rate*	Monthly Rate**
Skilled worker or craftsman	2	520	40
Unskilled worker or labourer	1	260	20
Elite Artisan (e.g. Artist)	8	2080	160
School Teacher	2	520	40
Messenger	1.4	364	28
Priest, Temple Attendant	2.2	572	44
Soldier, professional***	2	738	56
Soldier, militia	1	260	20
Army Officer	40	6,000	800

* Daily rates are higher than the annual income would suggest – this is because people do not work every day. Workers generally put in about 260 days per year – the remainder being one sort of holiday or festival or another.

**A Taskan year has 13 lunar months.

***The professional soldier receives 2 Taskeens per day, plus 10 Taskeens bonus for the Emperor Days at the end of the year. The basic cost of feeding them is deducted from their pay when not on campaign. Military rates of pay tend to be high. The income shown here is also expected to be boosted with cash bonuses, booty and even a grant of land at the end of service. This is because professional soldiers can cause a lot of trouble if they get fed up with their pay. Militia pay shown is net of the cost of rations.

A Henchman can be expected to have *Supportive* (+10%) Sympathies towards their Patron at all times.

In order to turn a hireling or henchman into a *Client* – who not only owes loyalty but a real debt of service that encompasses his employer's wider interests – requires an essentially permanent arrangement in which the Adventurer settles on the employee some means of earning a living, such as a farm, a business or a vocation, and potentially looks after their family as well. In doing so, the Adventurer becomes the Client's *Patron*.

A Client can be expected to have *Partisan* (+20%) Sympathies towards their employer at all times.

The cost of establishing a Client is equal to the cost of acquiring the land, business or sinecure they are granted, which must be capable of providing an income that covers a Lifestyle Cost appropriate to their SOC Characteristic, found on the Lifestyle Table. This is not money given for nothing, of course, but a grant of tenancy to land or a business owned by the Adventurer from which they can make a living. These things are sometimes gifts, but it is always better to be able to withdraw a favour if the recipient's gratitude starts to run dry.

LOYALTY

In addition to gaining positive Sympathies towards their patron, after a year of a patron/client relationship the Client gains a Loyalty (Patron) score, with a Basic Percentage of the Client's POW plus the Patron's SOC. This score will increase every year by 1D6–1% so long as it is maintained – and can be improved further by acts of generosity, or reduced by acts of neglect, arrogance and high-handedness.

If at any point the Adventurer undertakes to support and employ his client to a level that covers the full Family and Household Cost,

there is an immediate gain of D6+6% Loyalty. If the Adventurer somehow contrives that his client gains an increase to their SOC Characteristic, the new SOC (not just the increase) is added to the Loyalty score.

Loyalty acts as a Passion (see the Treasonous Thoughts chapter), and can be used for a skill test where loyalty is required – such as for when an individual is required to take his patron's side against his own interests; or else its Critical Score can be used to augment a Persistence test when the client is called on to resist persuasion or bribery.

LIFESTYLE AND SOCIAL STATUS

Two loaves of bread costing 1 penny each is the minimum daily food requirement for a working adult's subsistence. Once you take into account that food represents about half of all expenditure, 4 pennies (0.8 Taskeens) per day is approximately the absolute minimum required to get by on. This supports an individual in a life of grinding poverty but it is nowhere near enough if you have mouths to feed besides your own. To establish the absolute minimum needed to maintain a family it is assumed that the rest of the family (a wife and 2–3 children) require food and other necessities equal to roughly 150% of what the head of the household consumes. Hence 2 Taskeens per day can keep a whole family in the same grinding poverty offered by subsistence living - which is a normal existence for those with a SOC of 6 or less. A family operating at this level is frequently struggling even to have enough to eat and is typically dressed in ragged cast-off clothes or animal skins.

Example:

A skilled worker or artisan in regular employment is earning 520 Taskeens per year; he has a wife who devotes half her time to her family and the remainder to earning the equivalent of a labourer's unskilled wage through piece-work, spinning and so on. Between them they can scrape together just 650 Taskeens per year with which to raise a family. This means they will not starve, but is not enough to allow them to maintain a lifestyle appropriate to the SOC 07-09 range, representing a deficit of nearly 300 Taskeens per year. Theirs is a quite normal predicament. Their options include: keeping a small garden to reduce their overall food costs; working additional days and hours such as market and festival days; favours and hand-outs from the better off or even from the state; selling the labour of their children as soon as they are 7. Many people take the short cut of getting involved with crime. The alternative is living a poorer lifestyle, with the risk of a loss of Social Status, which has many consequences including making it harder to find work or for the children to be found apprenticeships. The family will have precious little for anything other than the most basic food and clothing. A temporary loss of paid work, or the appearance of another mouth to feed in the family, could spell disaster. On the other hand once the eldest child is a teenager and he or she can start earning an unskilled wage, this family becomes more or less solvent with a total income of $520+130+260 = 910$ Taskeens.

THE LIFESTYLE TABLE

The Lifestyle Table breaks down different social levels according to the SOC characteristic.

The **SOC** and **Lifestyle Category** columns are taken from the SOC table in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*.

The **Annual Income** column represents what a character of that background is likely to be generating each year from pay, business profits or rents. Unless your SOC is in excess of 12, at which point you begin to profit from the work of others, this income can only be secured by dedicating the necessary time to paid work or profitable labour.

Lifestyle Cost shows how much it costs to “live the lifestyle” of that category for an individual Adventurer. This may be helpful in calculating the cost of living for Adventurers who are in downtime and spending it idly rather than in respectable employment. It is of course possible to choose a lifestyle above your actual SOC in these circumstances, so long as you have the funds to do so. An Adventurer who is attempting to increase his SOC Characteristic should certainly do just that. Conversely, an Adventurer living on the cheap may eventually have a damaging effect on his reputation, resulting in the loss of one or more points of SOC. This is particularly true at SOC scores of 13 and higher where some sort of display of your wealth is expected.

Family and Household Cost shows the *additional* cost to the Adventurer to maintain a household with spouse and children in the Lifestyle to which he wishes to be accustomed. If an Adventurer is the head of a household, a failure to make at least these funds available every year may have disastrous consequences for the status of his whole family. Conversely, if he can show that achieving this level of income is within his grasp, he will have no problem finding a suitable spouse from that particular social class. Among the poorer classes it is usually impossible to support a family on one person's regular wage. In the middle range it starts being possible to do so through the efforts of a single breadwinner, and someone who does not take on such a responsibility may be regarded as a bit odd; and in the upper classes even the head of the household may aspire to not have to work. In effect, these are the broad social divisions behind the Social Status Characteristic.

At the end of a year in which an Adventurer has failed to deliver the needs of his household an Influence Test is required to avoid losing SOC permanently. For each lifestyle category below his target income that the Adventurer fails to meet, the test is penalised by -20%. A failure results in the immediate loss of 1D3 SOC. Should the player roll a fumble he loses 3 points.

SOC Increase Cost is the requirement for an Adventurer to increase his SOC Characteristic. Where Improvement Rolls are noted these are exactly as for raising any other Characteristic. Any Adventurer with a SOC of 9 or higher wishing to increase this Characteristic will also need funds available to acquire land or other assets that bring respectability and generate an income. It is

possible to use borrowed money to do this if the Adventurer can find a willing lender. The cost here is an approximation using the amount of good agricultural land you would need to acquire as a benchmark.

Starting Money is the money an Adventurer of that SOC begins play with. This is repeated from the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* for reference, as additional use is made of it here.

PRICE LISTS

The following tables provide an alternative price list, in Taskeens, for use in the *Age of Treason* setting, and outline prices for which items can be bought and sold in the Taskan Empire. Prices provided are those found in the major cities, although when shopping in rural areas discounts might be applied to commodities and foodstuffs of anything up to 50%, while similar premiums are paid for luxuries and trade goods if you can find them.

In general, items noted as being *Common* can be found almost anywhere in town or country; items noted as *Uncommon* can be found in outlying towns as well as the key cities; goods that are *Rare* are only found in the cities, and those that are *Very Rare* are usually only found in specific cities that are on the right trade

routes or that have a specialist outlet. *Special Order* indicates that no-one actually advertises this service, you have to track down someone who will provide it.

The prices given here are market prices in Tarsenia, so do not necessarily apply elsewhere.

METALS

The trade in metals is an important one, with vast quantities required for state purposes, particularly in the outfitting of the army. Rich ore deposits are found in Further Tarsenia; resources in and around Eastern Tarsenia are much depleted, however Merat still produces 19 tons of silver per year, worth over 6 million Taskeens. Merat's contribution to the exchequer means her (admittedly small) citizen militia is exempt from providing troops for the Empire.

Camtri is an important region for iron mining, copper is found in the White Hills near Pryjarna. Some metals are imported from the Jekkarid, and the Merchants of Sharranket bring substantial quantities from regions such as Thafna and Kitan, with which Taskan merchants have few direct connections.

LIFESTYLE TABLE

SOC	Lifestyle Category	Annual Income	Lifestyle Cost	Family and Household Cost	SOC Increase Cost	Starting Money (Taskeens)
01-03	Debt prisoner, destitute, starving	0	147	N/A	Improvement Rolls	1D10
04-06	Itinerant and unskilled labour, debt bondsman, indentured labour, land-tied peasants, urban poor	260	293	439	Improvement Rolls	1D6 x 10
07-09	Skilled labour in regular employment, tenant farmers; cooks and valets and others in service, peddlers and other low status professions	520	366	550	Improvement Rolls	1D6x50
10-12	Farmers with their own land or flocks, self employed artisans	1400*	550	824	Improvement Rolls + 5,000	1D6 x 100
13-14	Landowning farmers with hired workers or tenants, business owners, rentiers, elite artisans (goldsmiths, doctors, scribes and so on), traders, priests, professional soldiers (officers and elites), merchants	3,280**	1098	1647	Improvement Rolls + 20,000	3D6 x 100
15-16	Minor or local nobility/gentry, senior priests, wealthy merchants, magistrates, local officials	7,200**	1,756	2636	Improvement Rolls + 80,000	3D6 x 250
17-18	High ranking nobility, senior magistrates and officers of state, chief priests	24,000***	4,392	6585	Improvement Rolls + 144,000	3D6 x 1000

*Based on the return from an 8 Hectare farm

**Those who enjoy these incomes often do not have to work at all; the exceptions are senior public servants and army officers, many of whom receive pay at a level that enables them not to feel disadvantaged alongside those born into wealth and property.

***At this level, the individual concerned should have no trade, except war, politics, sorcery or the law. Anything else is regarded as undignified, unless it can be seen as a hobby.

METALS

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Bronze	Even though in the setting it is a metal that can be mined in its alloyed state, bronze is more expensive than iron as it is less common and also has useful properties such as being resistant to corrosion and able to be polished up to a shine	Uncommon	8 per kg
Iron	Desirable as the standard metal for practical use in tools, weapons and construction, iron is quite abundant and therefore relatively cheap	Common	5 per kg
Silver	Bullion value. 1 kg of silver can make 160 bullion coins (Sharranketan Dinars), and this provides the benchmark market price for the precious metal	Uncommon	320 per kg
Copper	Less useful than Bronze, copper's chief use is for cheap utensils and minting low value coins that have no real bullion value	Common	6 per kg
1 Taskan Talent	Bullion value of 1 kg of gold, traditionally 12 times the same weight of silver		3,840 per kg
1 Korantine Talent	1.875kg of gold, enough to strike 180 gold Imperials		7,200

THE COST OF MONEY

If an Adventurer needs money quickly, he can always try to find someone to lend it to him. Because the Emperor has done away with slavery, and thereby with offering one's own self as security for debt, the amount of credit available to poorer citizens and the rate of interest paid is likely to vary greatly according to true credit worthiness. Credit worthiness is governed by an Adventurer's SOC Characteristic. To arrive at a market annual percentage rate of interest for an individual, subtract the Adventurer's SOC from 21.

A bona fide money lender will extend an unsecured loan to an individual up to the average of their Starting Money on the Lifestyle Table. If offered security on the loan the money lender may extend the credit to about half the value of the collateral. Hence if a SOC 10 farmer offers a hectare of good arable land worth 1200 Taskeens for collateral, a moneylender may offer him 350 Taskeens (SOC 10) + 600 Taskeens = 950 Taskeens.

FUNDING VENTURES AND ADVENTURES

Significantly larger sums may be made available to fund a business venture – including an adventure if the objective is to come back with treasures, trade goods or the spoils of war. In this instance the lender sees himself as an investor, and while taking security over whatever assets the Adventurers are leaving at home, will be looking for a return of D4+1 times their investment, depending on how risky the whole thing sounds. Securing an investment is an exercise in Influence or even Fast Talk. Making sure the Adventurer himself still stands to gain from the process may require the application of some Commerce skills.

Loan terms are fixed and a lender expects to receive repayment plus all interest for the contracted period - there is no saving in repaying a loan earlier than agreed. Loan terms are usually set for a month, a season or a year, with only the state treasuries borrowing for longer contracts. If you extend a loan beyond the contracted period, interest rates rise sharply, typically doubling each time.

The amount of credit on offer may be negotiated using Influence Skills opposed by the lender's Evaluate skill, and the rate of interest may be negotiated using opposed Commerce skills.

FOOD AND DRINK

STAPLES

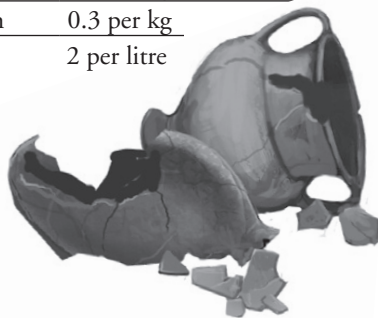
Tarsenians generally consume barley as their staple, although wheat is also known. This sets them and the Jekkarenes apart from the Korantines and Thennalts who prefer wheat and feed barley to horses. The penny price of a loaf of bread in the cities is a critical sign of economic well being, and the Simulacrum will intervene if this rises to 2 pennies or more.



A kilogram of flour is enough to bake two and a half 0.5 kilogram loaves of bread, which means there is a penny margin on the price of flour for every five loaves sold which has to cover labour, additional ingredients and fuel for the ovens before paying the baker any profits. Small wonder many bakeries mill the flour on site for additional margins. A commercial bakery in one of Tarsenia's cities produces at least 500 loaves per day and typically employs 5-10 people all told.

FOOD AND DRINK

Item	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Loaf of barley bread	Common	0.2
Wheat	Uncommon	0.4 per kg
Barley	Common	0.3 per kg
Rye	Common	0.2 per kg
Barley flour	Common	0.45 per kg
Wheat flour	Uncommon	0.6 per kg
Salt	Uncommon	0.3 per kg
Olive Oil	Common	2 per litre



TOOLS

These basic tools are manufactured by blacksmiths and carpenters and do not usually require the work of a specialist. Prices given here are for tools with metal fittings. Significantly cheaper, if less effective, versions can often be made without the benefit of metal parts, and may cost no more than a few pennies.

TOOLS

Item	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Adze or Hoe	Common	2
Axe, Hatchet	Common	4
Axe, Tree Felling	Common	6
Pick	Common	6
Ploughshare and Board	Common	15
Scythe	Common	3
Shovel	Common	3
Work Maul	Common	2
Yoke for Oxen*	Common	20

* Complete with tracers and harness. Can also be hired at a rate of 8 Taskeens per month

MEAT AND FISH

Meats are rarely consumed by the poor except on feast days, however the military always tries, often unsuccessfully, to ensure its men get a kilo of meat per week – it is best not to ask from what it came from in most cases. Game is hard to come by except in the more out of the way places – only in Further Tarsenia can the locals still assume they can kill game on a regular basis to supplement their needs at minimal cost. The prices here are for flesh with no particular distinction about what part of the animal the flesh comes from.

MEAT AND FISH

Item	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Pork	Common	1 per kg
Mutton	Common	1 per kg
Goat	Common	0.8 per kg
Beef	Uncommon	1.2 per kg
Game bird	Common	3 per bird
Poultry	Common	2 per bird
Venison	Uncommon	1 per kg
Crustaceans and Premium Saltwater Fish	Rare	1.6 per kg
Other Saltwater Fish	Rare	1 per kg
Freshwater Fish	Uncommon	0.6 per kg
Preserved (salted) Fish	Uncommon	0.4 per kg

LIVESTOCK

Tarsenians make use of a wide variety of animals, and like any other society do so at all stages of the lifecycle. Once a food animal reaches its optimum weight, or when a beast of burden passes the point at which its value as a carcass is greater than its value as a working animal, every part that can be is used or consumed. The poorest peasants often dress in hides because animal skins are a cheap by-product - much cheaper than cloth, which requires significant processing and man-hours to produce. Young animals are always less expensive as they have to be cared for and fed, and possibly trained, until they can be put to use. Prices here are for adult animals, ready for exploitation.

LIVESTOCK

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Kitan pony or pack horse	Tough little horses, although used by the Sheng as mounts others often buy them for burden	Common	200
“Escar” Riding Horse	Typical of the horses bought in bulk by the Taskans for training up as cavalry horses. Reared by Sheng tribes for the market, but only used by their nobility.	Common	400
Assabian Racing Horse	The finest horses are bred on the southern fringes of the Korazoon. The richest races are held each year at Ronispur in Sharranket where enormous sums change hands.	Rare	1500-3000
Draft Ox	Oxen are a vital resource for pulling both wagon and plough.	Common	140
Milk Cow	Tarsenians are not great dairy farmers, but many rural families will keep a cow if they can. The people of Camtri are famous for their love of cattle herds however.	Common	100
Bull	Usually kept to be rented out to other famers. A Camtric Bull is the gold standard, but rarely seen except on the estates of the wealthy.	Common	120
Mule	Favoured by the army for beasts of burden, bred mostly around Ashkor.	Common	240
Donkey	The most accessible beast of burden for a farmer, particularly in the South of Tarsenia.	Common	80
Camel	A regular riding camel or beast of burden from the Korazoon. In Rasputana highly prized camels trained for war or for racing can fetch many times this amount.	Common	130
Pig	A young pig may be 60kg when slaughtered, but fully grown they can reach more than twice that weight. A pig provides the best body weight to calorie ratio of any meat animal.	Common	50-120
Sheep	Massive flocks are kept in Eastern Tarsenia, mostly for wool, however mutton is also regularly eaten.	Common	20-40

DRINKS

Tarsenia is a land of wine drinkers rather than beer drinkers. Beer is used almost as an alternative to water, and is usually very weak. In Camtri beers are more highly regarded, but even there Tarsenian tastes are starting to take hold and the well-off make a show of consuming the best wines they can get their hands on.

DRINKS

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Wines, Fine	Probably from the hill country around Merat in a distinctively shaped jar and consumed by the well to do without the addition of spices or sweeteners.	Rare	2 per litre
Wine, Good	Produced across Tarsenia, with the territories of Felsang and Tarsang being the largest producers	Uncommon	1 per litre
Wine, Basic	Probably produced from a small vineyard and consumed locally, or mixed with wine from a variety of small producers and slightly diluted before it is sold to the market.	Common	0.4–0.8 per litre
Beer, Premium	A common drink even for the young, the poorer sort may be available at a penny for a large 2L pitcher, or free with food.	Common	0.4 per litre

WAR GEAR

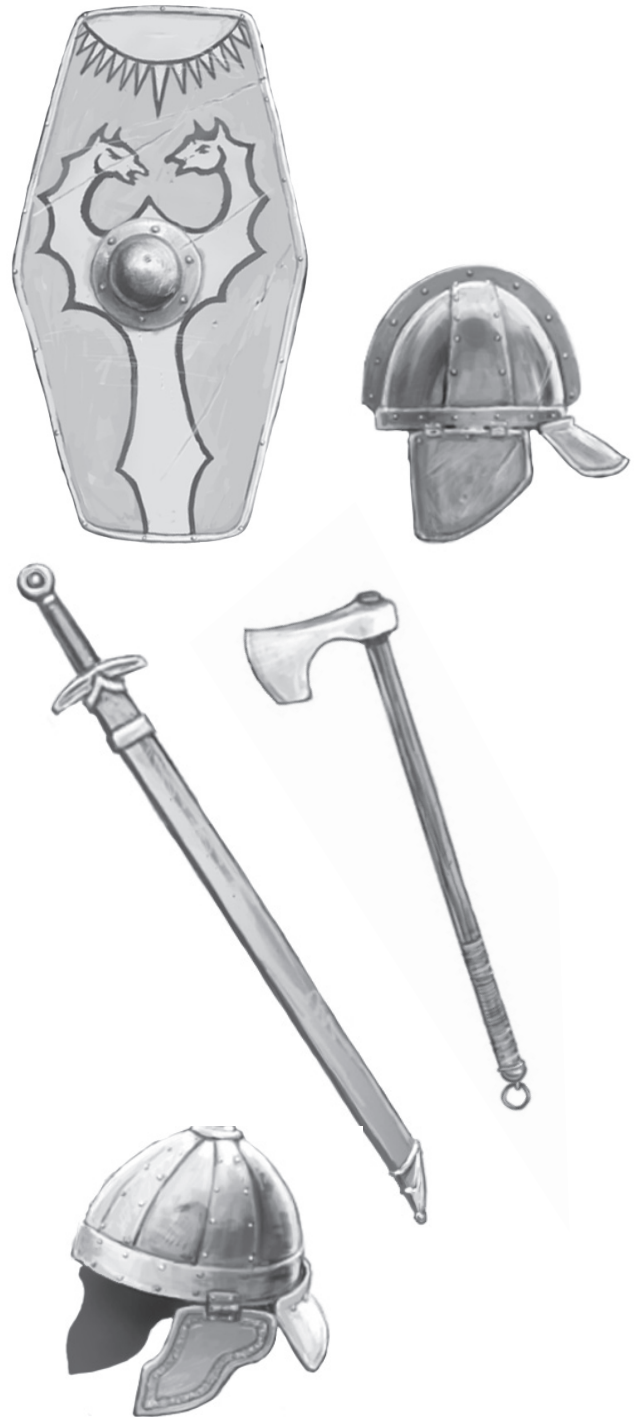
This table contains prices quite different from the usual *Legend* Price list. On the other hand the list of weapons and armour is restricted to those generally available. Weapons and armour types not on this list can be specially ordered or imported from the regions where they are made and used.

These prices are for basic, practical examples without embellishment. Prices are for iron weapons; bronze weapons may cost a little more due to the higher cost of metal. Prices for items such as swords include furniture, scabbard and hanging strap.

WAR GEAR

Item	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Tarsenian Dirk	Uncommon	50
Mace or Battleaxe	Uncommon	12
Shortsword or Falchion	Uncommon	60
Warsword	Uncommon	100
Club	Common	1
Ashkorian Pike	Uncommon	24
Militia Shield	Common	20
Pikeman's Shield	Rare	25
War Shield	Uncommon	30
Taskan Militia Spear	Common	6
"Kitanian" (composite) Bow	Rare	80
Hunting (flat) Bow	Common	4
Arrows	Common	0.2 each
War or Specialist Arrows, each	Uncommon	0.4 each
Simple Quiver	Common	2
Case and Quiver for comp.bow	Rare	10
Javelin or Hunting Spear	Common	8
Dagger	Uncommon	20
Metal or Composite Helmet, simple (3-4 points)	Uncommon	30
Metal Helmet, fancy (5 points)	Rare	60
Metal Helmet, premium, full face (6 points)	Rare	100
Lamellar Armour, Leather or horn	Rare	10 per Location
Lamellar Armour, bronze or iron	Rare	30-50 per Location
Padded Cloth or Leather Armour	Uncommon	4 per location
Taskan layered armour*	Rare	50-100 per location

* Lamellar armour being leather (2 pnt), leather and horn (3pnt), composite (4pnt) or metal (5pnt) backed with padding (+1 or +2 pnt) and with overlapping joints



LAND AND PROPERTY

Owning land brings respectability and an annual income so long as you work it, rent it out or pay someone else to.

The prices here are for good arable land. For marginal land suitable for olive trees and grazing goats multiply price by 0.4, for open pasturage, forestry or uncleared land multiply by 0.25. For unproductive land multiply by 0.01. Proximity to a temple or sacred site that provides reliable divine blessings to agriculture will increase land prices.

A Hectare of good arable land requires 40 Taskeens' worth of seed corn and will deliver a yield of six times the seed sown, generating crops worth 240 Taskeens. Rents on land average 15–20% of its produce. If you wish to gain status by living comfortably solely off land rentals, you need more than 20 Hectares to do so. This will give a SOC score of 13–14. A holding in excess of 100 Hectares brings with it a SOC of 15–16, while to attain the heights of a SOC of 17–18 requires land holdings of 200+ Hectares.

LAND AND PROPERTY

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
West Tarsenia	West Tarsenian land is easier to come by, but not so well suited to arable use. Highest prices are near the ready markets of Felsang and Ashkor.	Common	1200–1600 per Hectare
Eastern Tarsenia	While land immediately around the capital is prized, that close to the huge and hungry city of Zarina is the highest priced.	Common	1250–3500 per Hectare
Further Tarsenia	Always cheap, to encourage settlement from other cities in the Empire, this is the price for land in the vicinity of Ralmyra. In the back woods of the region it is possible to actually get a grant to take on virgin territory - sometimes in cash, sometimes in the form of a pair of plough oxen.	Common	600–1200 per Hectare
Camtri	Very rich land and blessed by the ancient Thennalt deities of the earth, the little land that comes on the market is generally freed up by confiscation from rebels or those who die without inheritors. Thennalts, even Taskanised Thennalts, do not like to part with their land.	Uncommon	1600–2400 per Hectare
Mature Vineyard	Planting a vineyard costs 5,000 per Hectare, and takes a year to prepare and plant and up to 3 more to be ready for cropping. A mature vineyard is therefore a premium. Each Hectare should generate 1500–3000 litres of wine per year.	Common	12,000–15,000 per Hectare
House	An urban house suitable for a family. Probably 2–4 rooms at most, flat or tile-roofed. It may have a very small yard or kitchen garden, and if in the country space for domestic animals.	Common	6,000–12,000
Fine House	A house that includes separated rooms for entertaining, cooking and sleeping, servants' area and possibly even plumbing.	Uncommon	30,000–80,000
Grand House or Palace	Capable of impressing any visitor, and home to a whole establishment of servants as well as the owner and his family. Expected to have well tended gardens, and if out of town those gardens may include a 'managed wilderness' in which the owners can pursue their leisure interests.	Rare	150,000–500,000

TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING

Transporting goods by land is vastly more expensive than doing so by sea. Cities of any size are almost always on or close to the sea in order to make shipping commodities and other goods in and out a viable process. The following costs give an idea of how much an Adventurer will have to pay to ship a big load from one place to another - or alternatively, the sort of money he can charge for doing so himself. These costs include all hands required to do the job, as well as the use of the ship, wagon or beast of burden. Guidelines are also provided here for acquiring watercraft and wheeled vehicles.

TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING

Item	Description	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Cost of moving goods by open sea	Typically by merchantman between major ports, each vessel carrying 75–100 tons, but some capable of carrying 250 tons or more.	6 per ton per 100 miles
Cost of moving goods overland	Usually by ox cart, each cart moving circa half a ton per ox, and some carts are so massive as to have 16 animals to draw them. Cost includes pay for driver and boy, fodder and so on. A ton of goods might need a string of 8 or more pack animals to carry it, depending on whether you are using donkeys, horses, mules or camels and how heavily you are prepared to load them. These are common where the road surface is too poor for a large heavy wagon.	160 per ton per 100 miles
Cost of moving goods by river or by daylight-only short coastal routes	Typically by small boat, barge or lighter; often an oared vessel. Capacity of 5–20 tons is typical.	30 per ton per 100 miles
Construction of merchant ship	To build and outfit a merchant ship, not including magical enhancements. Average vessels carry some 75–100 tons, with the biggest examples being 250–500 tons.	400 per ton of capacity
Construction of oared warship	To build and outfit an oared galley, not including magical enhancements. Taskan galleys rarely come in at more than 60 oars; however Korantine examples from before the Cataclysm are said to sometimes have multiple banks with up to 300 men at the benches.	400 per rower's station
Sharranketan Merchant Galley	A monstrous vessel capable of carrying up to 1,000 tons, as well as a crew of over 60 sailors and a similar number of marines and officials.	250,000–500,000
Fishing Boat	Small boat suitable for river, lake and coastal fishing, with a crew of up to 3 men.	350
Ox Wagon or Cart	A big vehicle with four solid wheels capable of hauling a ton or more of bulk goods, drawn by teams of oxen; assume a ton of capacity per two-ox team.	50 per half ton of bulk capacity
Litter	Used by people of rank in city streets where mounts and carriages are not permitted or not practical.	40

LUXURIES AND TRADE GOODS

The following table provides a sample of luxury goods available on the market, and demonstrates how far the Empire's trading connections can stretch. Any of these prices can be massively inflated or depressed according to supply and demand. Were even one Sharranketan merchant galley to be lost at sea on the route from Balbufera, you can expect pepper prices to go through the roof until alternative supply or transportation is set in place.

LUXURIES AND TRADE GOODS

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Korantine Shirt	Fine woollen tunics, with various levels and quality of colour dyes, often decorated with embroidered borders or patches.	Rare	40–80 per item
Assabian Robes	Lightweight cotton, wool or linen, full sleeved long robes sporting various degrees of colouring and embellishment. A barrel sash and some sort of turban usually set off the overall look.	Very Rare	75–150 per outfit
Blessed Barley	Corn crop blessed by the grain goddess. Nutritious and keeps well.	Common	1 per kg
Moon Barley	A special form of barley smuggled out of the Jekkarid and sought after by alchemists.	Special Order	30 per kg
Korantine Wines	A broad variety of imported wines, from vineyards situated on the ideal sun blessed slopes of Korantia. Morado (from Agissene) and Solarnian (from Himela) are the most celebrated.	Common-Rare	4–8 per litre
Camtric Wool	Regarded as the finest available, therefore priced at twice the going rate for raw wool.	Uncommon	6 per kg

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Beshorite Goatskin	Fine "kidskin" for the use in luxury shoes, hats and gloves.	Uncommon	3 per prepared skin
Zagreiot Cloak	Actually from anywhere in the Beshor valley, although the best are said to come from the city of Zagre. A linen cloak, distinctively decorated with patches of colour in bright, enduring dyes.	Uncommon	64
Dragoman Riding Cloak	A fine felt riding cloak with sleeves (usually worn hanging loose) and hood, richly decorated with Kitanian embroidery.	Rare	120
Jekkarene Sweetwine	Perhaps an acquired taste, this honey-sweetened and heavy wine is a growing export for the Jekkarenes.	Uncommon	6 per litre
Silk of Jelhai	Unimaginably expensive stuff, used by only the richest folk. In Assabia it is commonly illegal for anyone other than the Sultan and members of his household to wear silk.	Very Rare	1500 per metre
Assabian Crossbow	An exotic weapon, usually richly decorated with engraved metal or ivory fittings.	Rare	120–180
Assabian Spell-Slave	This is the price of purchasing the slave, but as slavery is illegal in the Taskan Empire the transaction involves freeing the slave in return for a contract of indenture, typically for at least 5 years, sometimes as long as 12, during which the purchaser also pays maintenance.	Special Order	5,000 or 1,000 per 10% of Spellcraft (Sorcery Manipulation) skill.
Fengo, Fresh	As dragged out of lake Barur and kept packed in lake water until used (Fengo soaked in river water from the Briga comes in a little cheaper). 1kg of fresh packed Fengo delivers 150g of raw Fengo once dried but loses significant value in the process.	Special Order	400 per kg
Fengo, Raw	After it is harvested from Lake Barur, most Fengo is dried and hacked into a fibrous litter. There is a readier market for this type because of its narcotic uses. A typical dose for smoking or chewing is 12g and retails at 1 Taskeen.	Special Order	65 per kg
Fengo, Refined, Narcotic	An expensive refining process involving soaking and mashing in water and stages of drying and grinding, leaving a dun coloured powder. 1kg of raw fengo delivers 100g of refined fengo. One dose = 5g and costs 4 Taskeens.	Rare	800 per kg
Turtleshell from Zarland	In raw form ready for use in production of combs, knife handles, plaques and boxes.	Very Rare	160 per kg
Rasputan Pepper	From the port of Babulfera in the deep south of the continent, a favourite spice.	Rare	300 per kg
Tansoceanic Ivory	Most likely from the Sharranketan trading colony at Janisdaron in Jandekot, most of which is destined for the small ivory carving industry now established in Homora. This is the cost for the raw material.	Very Rare	350 per kg
Sorandine Brightcrystal	A lump of this amber crystal will provide the effects of a Glow spell if Magic Points are fed to it, at an Intensity of 1 per 0.25kg.	Very Rare	0.25kg = 100 0.5kg = 300 0.75 = 600 1kg = 1,000
Exotic Hides and Pelts	For use in high status clothing, usually as trim, but occasionally to construct a whole garment. Price for a small (Racoon or Beaver) size pelt.	Rare	5–50 per pelt
Beshorite Honey	Simply the finest, from bees that enjoy the wild flower gardens of the Beshor Valley delta.	Uncommon	4 per litre
Marangian War Dog	A breed that looks like an oversized Rottweiler, famously vicious and used as guard dogs as well as for war.	Rare	200 each
Brotomagian Hunting Dog	Tough but sleek and graceful, these are prized animals for any man of status.	Uncommon	400 each

MAGICAL SERVICES AND ENHANCEMENTS

The market in spell casting is generally split between priests who see it as their duty (and business) to offer their services to the community, and sorcerers who pretend at least not to be interested in the market and sell their services to well-heeled private clients.

Some libraries have magical texts that can be accessed, but will charge an admission price and vet the enquirer for suitability. There is a market in magical literature (including grimoires), the main ones being in a street close to the Great Library of Zarina and by the College of Sorcery in Felsang.

MAGICAL SERVICES AND ENHANCEMENTS

Item	Description	Availability	Typical Prices (Taskeens)
Spell Casting (Augment)	To have a sorcery spell cast that benefits the buyer.	Rare	2 per Magic Point cost of spell
Spell Casting (Curse)	To have a sorcery spell cast on an enemy as a curse - this constitutes an assault under the law.	Special Order	10 per Magic Point cost of spell
Summoning	To summon up an otherworld entity, not including the cost of protective magic or control spells.	Very Rare	20 per Magic Point required to effect the summons
Spell Maintenance	Each day of duration maintained beyond the first.	Very Rare	2 per Magic Point cost of spell
Characteristic Point Donations	A shady business exists in which the poor and desperate submit to characteristic tapping to assist in the creation of an enchanted item. This is regarded as a form of oppression of the poor, and outlawed. The effect has been to drive the price up, which makes it even more attractive a proposition.	Special Order	Donated Characteristic Points, squared, x100, or x200 if INT or CHA
Bespoke Enchantments	For an item made to order, take the cost of materials and add the cost of the Characteristic Points (see above) and multiply by the total Intensity of Virtues applied.	Special Order	250 – 1,000,000
Worship Ceremony	Conducted by a priest hired for the day to officiate for a congregation.	Common	0.5 plus 0.2 per congregation member (minimum 2)
Divine Magic Castings	Conducted by a devotee of the god whose help is needed. Use the 'rank' of the spell - in <i>Legend</i> , the minimum cult status - as a guide to the minimum Pact skill required to sacrifice for the spell.	Varies	25–75 per Divine Magic spell according to spell rank
Exorcism of a Person	Tarsenians often trust in the power of immigrant holy men from the Beshor Valley, who are acknowledged masters of Spirit Magic. The price for their services is high, the premium driven by the cachet enjoyed by these exorcists among the moneyed classes. Some exorcists use these fees to subsidise charitable work.	Rare	50 per Intensity of the spirit.
Exorcism of a Place	In most cases Tarsenians turn to specialist priests of their own tradition to have a ghost banished from a haunted site, although if that fails they may turn to a Beshorite for this too.	Uncommon	5 for the priest and his retinue, plus a further 25 for the use of Divine Magic
Grimoire (also Alchemical Manuals)	The price of an existing, off-the-shelf grimoire is highly dependent on the rarity of its contents and its length; a grimoire may contain a single rare spell among many commonplace ones that drives up its value. This price as a rule of thumb for grimoires written in Tarsenian (Taskan).	Rare-Very Rare	25–75 per spell contained; add 1000–5000 if a very rare or powerful spell is included. An original manuscript created with the Write Grimoire enchantment may be priced at up to x10 normal value

TRAINING

One look at the cost of wages suggests that the training costs specified in the *Legend Core Rulebook* are very high indeed if used in the setting as they are. Also the Taskan Calendar does not use “weeks”, and so the weekly cost of training is an abstraction. For an alternative means of pricing access to training, the following modifications are suggested for use in the setting:



The basic cost of training is equal to the Adventurer's Cost of Living during the period of training, plus the wages of the instructor. There may well be additional costs in traveling to where the training is available, or paying an instructor to come to the Adventurer. Most training also requires access to the necessary equipment (such as weapons and armour for Combat Styles).

TRAINING TIME

Most Common Skills and Combat Styles can be

improved over the course of a week of study. Advanced Skills

take a month to acquire, following which

a week is required to gain an improvement. Magical Skills and some Lore or Art skills take a season (3+ months) to acquire, and a month to gain an improvement.

Should the Instructor have the Teaching skill, he will not offer a discount because the Teaching skill reduces the time required. The Adventurer pays the full price and only benefits by needing to spend less down-time to achieve the result, plus of course the enhancement to the skill increase itself.

SHARING THE COST OF TRAINING

If the instructor has the Teaching Advanced Skill, they can take additional students during the same time. The cost is not divided by the number of students, but discounted by 10% per additional student, to a maximum of 50%. In addition, each student will pay a premium according to the skill of the Instructor.

INSTRUCTOR COST MODIFIERS

Skill Range	Cost Modifier for / Instructor's expertise in the skill	Cost Modifier for the Instructor's Teaching skill
01-25	-50%	+25%
26-50	0	+50%
51-75	+25%	+75%
76-100	+50%	+100%
101+	+100%	+150%

Example:

Farsha Kitarang is paying for instruction in the Archery Combat Style. Her instructor is an experienced former soldier, who has an Archery skill of 50% and a Teaching Skill of 25%. During the week's training Farsha needs to support herself, at a cost of 10.5 Taskeens (her SOC is 11, giving a Lifestyle Cost of 1.5 Taskeens per day). The Instructor's wages are 14 Taskeens for the week (SOC9 = 2T/day x 7). His Teaching skill means that he can command an additional 25% fee, taking his total cost to 21 Taskeens. Farsha's total expenditure is therefore 31.5 Taskeens – round up to the nearest penny to 31 Taskeens and 3 pennies.

This of course may not be the whole cost of the exercise, given that the Instructor insists Farsha furnish herself with a bow, quiver and 20 arrows for a total of 10 Taskeens, and another 2 Taskeens are paid for the use of a farmer's field for a week.

Even so, the resulting training cost is still only 41.6 Taskeens, significantly less than the cost of training provided in the *Legend Core Rulebook*. An alternative to using this method of calculating the cost is to divide the training costs provided in Legend by 5. While this does not give exactly the same result, it is a quick and approximate way to put the Training Costs into the same general context of pricing used here and will be quicker to use in play.

PART TIME, EXTENDED STUDY AND APPRENTICESHIPS

PART-TIME STUDY

If an Adventurer cannot take a whole season to learn the Art of Sculpture, or Spellcraft (Sorcery Manipulation), it is possible to study part time over a longer period to achieve the same result. Part-time study takes 3–4 times as long; if the normal time required for training is a week, part-time study will take a month. If the normal training time is a month it will take a season, and if a season it will take a year. The actual cost of instruction is the same; however the Adventurer must cover his own cost of living for the entire period of training. Part-time study may occur because the Adventurer needs to be free to do other things at the same time (such as earn a living). However the most common reason for spreading the training out this way is that the Instructor is unable to give a student his undivided time, and requires the student to turn up for a couple of hours per day.

ACADEMIC STUDY

An Adventurer can participate in a course of study over an extended period that yields a range of related skills. This is an extremely expensive option chosen by those with significant funds available to spend on their education. The most likely source of extended study is an Academy, where either a general education or the key skills of a profession are acquired. The most famous Academy in the Taskan Empire is the Sorcery School at Felsang, but there are others including a Law School at Taskay, a Martial Academy at Ashkor and a Mercantile Academy at Tarsang.

Extended Study takes one year and provides the suite of skills granted for a profession in the previous experience section of the Adventurer Creation rules. The Instructor's critical score in the Teaching skill, plus or minus the Adventurer's Improvement Modifier, can be applied as Free Skill Points among those skills taught during the course of study. If an Adventurer has a positive Improvement Modifier, then a course of study can fruitfully be further extended to a second and third year, depending on the modifier.

Courses of Academic Study requires the Adventurer to maintain himself at a Lifestyle Cost expected by the establishment they are attending, which in most cases is equivalent to a SOC of 13 or more. The course of study is always very expensive, since the instructors are in this case usually men of status, and the student is expected to equip himself properly for the experience. A total cost including fees and resources in the range of 1,200–3,600 Taskeens per annum is not uncommon.

APPRENTICESHIP

An apprenticeship involves committing to work for a master at minimal wages in return for learning the basics of a trade. An Apprenticeship typically lasts three to five years. While this is a long learning experience, the Adventurer who becomes an apprentice can expect to be provided with room and board. He may even finish with a little pocket money saved up from his meagre earnings.

Apprenticeship yields the package of skills associated with the profession the Adventurer is apprenticed to. The professional skills are enhanced by the master's critical Teaching skill score, if any, for each year spent under his guidance (these points to be divided according to the player's wishes), and the Adventurer may also gain Free Skill Points during the period of apprenticeship equal to his (INT+ Improvement Modifier) x2 in each year of service.

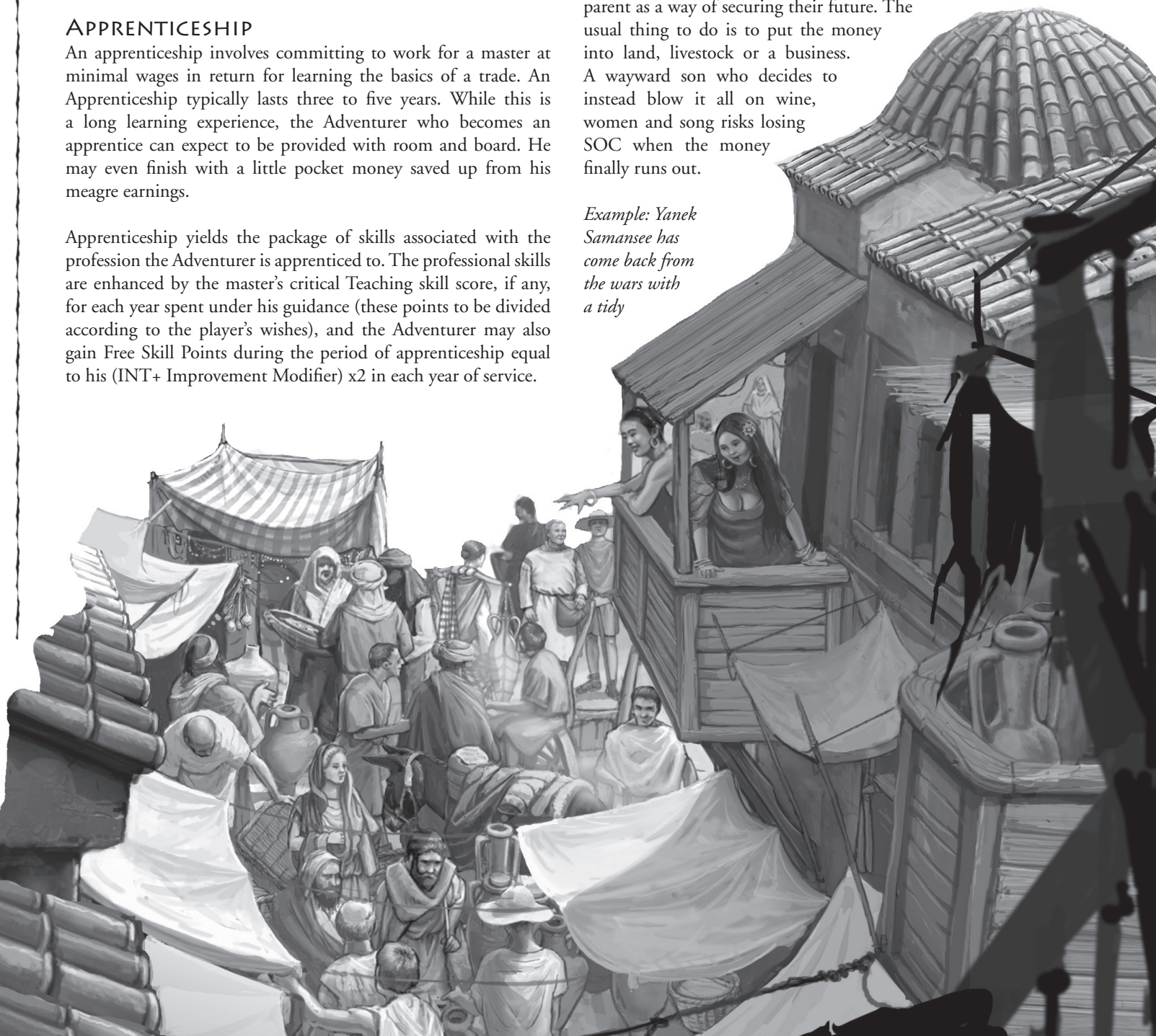
Apprenticeships in the Taskan Empire are generally private arrangements between apprentice and master. In Korantia they are part of a much more extensive system that is shaped by the state cults looking after each aspect of society, and rather than being a simple means of learning a trade they are an induction to a way of life.

ADVENTURES IN MAKING MONEY

An Adventurer who increases his SOC Characteristic to 10 or more does so by investing in an asset that they can exploit. In fact only possessions that generate wealth in some way count when it comes to establishing your place in society. Everything else is just showing off that you have enough money to waste some of it on luxuries. Those who are lucky enough to be born into the higher social classes may inherit these assets, or even be given them by a parent as a way of securing their future. The usual thing to do is to put the money into land, livestock or a business.

A wayward son who decides to instead blow it all on wine, women and song risks losing SOC when the money finally runs out.

Example: Yanek Samansee has come back from the wars with a tidy



nest egg of 5,000 Taskeens and 10 Improvement points. He spends the money and the Improvement points raising his SOC to 11 by acquiring a plot of 4 Hectares of farmland land near his father's farm - which he also expects to inherit one day.

If you are exploring what Adventurers do in the down-time between adventures or deciding where they had best put their ill-gotten gains and how their investments fare from year to year, the following rules give some guidelines.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Most assets should generate a *gross revenue* of 20% of their purchase cost in a year. Not all plots of land, shop sites or milk cows are equal, so this is simply an average. However this does not all go to the Adventurer unless it is a small business (worth 10,000 Taskeens or less) that he manages all by himself, and he devotes his time to doing so. Above that threshold, and at any time that he wants to walk away and do something more adventurous, he must turn the asset over to someone else and take a rent, from which he expects to get a maximum *net return* of 5% on his capital in rents or profits.

Assets can be split, so that an Adventurer who has reached the threshold of what he can directly exploit can acquire other assets that are rented out to others.

Example: Farsha Kitarang has also returned from the frontier with 5,000 Taskeens in booty. Her father has become ill, and he turns his business (worth 10,000 Taskeens) over to Farsha. There is only so much she can do alone - so she spends her 5,000 buying a farm near the village and hands it over to tenants. Farsha hopes to earn 2,000 Taskeens per year from the smithy, enough for her and her sick father to live off comfortably; and a further 250 Taskeens per year in rents from the farmland. She also now has enough property to raise her SOC to 12 when she decides it is time to spend the Improvement Points getting the villagers to recognise her new place in society.

RUNNING A FARM

The vast majority of people in the Taskan Empire depend on agriculture for their living. Land may not gain much in value unless money is invested in improving it, but it can usually be sold

for the price it was acquired and in the meantime pays dividends if planted with crops. Good arable land in Tarsenia typically returns a crop equal to six times the quantity used to plant it. The actual result depends on the precise situation of fields, soil type, water supply and drainage, not to mention the skill of the farmer, the weather and a host of other factors. Some farmers can achieve significantly higher yields, and some have to make do with marginal land that returns only four times. Yields below x4 are regarded by Tarsenians as being insufficient to provide a return on the labour - land of this kind is likely to be left uncultivated or turned to other purposes.

THE PRODUCTIVITY TABLE

The productivity of the land bears a direct relation to how much of it you need to own to support yourself, or to maintain a certain status in life. The Productivity Table provides a guide to how much a farmer can earn from his lands, and how productivity affects the price of land and the size of landholding required to support certain recognised lifestyle categories.

Yield is given as a multiple of the planted seed, expressed as gross product - before setting aside some of the produce for next year's seed or to cover the basic living costs of those working the land.

Produce is measured in Pecks (6.67kg dry measure) of grain. A Peck is usually worth 2 Taskeens, and therefore equates to a Sharranketan Dinar or Korantine Guilder as being a recognised unit of value. Planting one Hectare requires 20 Pecks of seed corn, which needs to be set aside from each year's harvest for the next year.

The **Land Price Modifier** can be used as a multiple to the land prices provided in the Goods and Commerce chapter.

Holdings refers to productive arable land only, although an actual holding may be rather bigger, encompassing marginal land that is not suitable for cultivation, but where goats can be grazed or olive trees planted.

Subsistence Holding (SOC 7 or less): The minimum amount of land required to provide the calories necessary for a family to survive in a state of poverty - with just enough food and no money

PRODUCTIVITY

Land Quality	Yield Multiplier	Produce Per Hectare (Pecks)	Land Price Modifier	Subsistence Holding (Hectares)	Yeoman Holding (Hectares)	Gentry Holding (Hectares)	Aristocratic Estate (Hectares)
Poor	x4	80	x0.5	2	NA	40+	400+
Good	x6	120	x1	1.5	8	20+	200+
Fine	x8	160	x1.5	1	6+	15+	150+
Premium	x10	200	x3	0.75	5+	12+	120+
Rich	x12	240	x5	0.66	4+	10+	100+

for anything more. Having direct access to the produce of the land is better than having to obtain cash to buy basic foods, so a rural family can get by on rather less than an urban one. Anything in excess of the amount of land given here contributes to a more tolerable existence or some defence against a bad year.

Yeoman Holding (SOC 11–12): This sort of landholding is the upper end of what an ordinary farmer might be expected to own, and is certainly at the upper end of what he can farm alone. To own a plot larger than this suggests a SOC of 13 or more, as it is assumed the farmer can take on hired help from outside his immediate family, or perhaps rent out the land he cannot work himself.

Gentry Holding (SOC 15–16): At this level a character almost certainly rents his land out to others, and often lives most of the year away from his farmland in the nearest town.

Aristocratic Estate (SOC17+): The great land magnates - hold estates at this level. Many of them still claim origins in the pre-imperial aristocracy, but others are those who have benefited from social mobility and won fame and fortune under the Emperor. There are some in this class (less than 100 families) who have estates across several provinces adding up to the equivalent of over 1,000 arable Hectares or more.

MAKING A LIVING ON THE FARM

To secure the yield promised by the land on which a farm is situated, a farmer should conduct an Extended Task with his Craft (Farming) skill augmented by his critical score in Regional Lore. Each Task Round lasts one season. For every successful Craft (Farming) test he gains 25% progress towards a successful harvest. For every critical success he gains 50%. If at the end of the year the farmer has achieved 100% progress, the yield is achieved.

- For every 25% below the 100% target, reduce the crop yield multiplier by 1.
- For every fumbled roll, decrease the crop yield multiplier by 2.
- For every 25% ahead of target at the end of the year, increase the yield multiplier by 2.

Bad or unseasonal weather – too hot and dry, too wet, too cold compared to what is normal for the region – can make the farmer's life more difficult, resulting in a Difficulty Modifier to one or more of the skill tests in the Extended Task.

If the Adventurer chooses not to exploit his land using his own labour, he needs to find tenants using his Influence skill. This is a Routine task in most of Tarsenia, a Simple task in Taskay, and Impossible in Further Tarsenia. Tenants pay a portion of the produce of the land as rent. The Adventurer's return is usually contracted at 5% of the land value or 20% of the actual product, whichever is higher. If a bad year's harvest means that the tenants cannot pay the rent they fall into debt with the Adventurer.

STOCK HERDING AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

In Tarsenia the better pastures can generally support 5–10 beef or dairy animals per hectare. The same territory could support anything up to 30 sheep. In either case a rule of thumb is that it costs roughly 1,000 Taskeens to stock a hectare of good pasture.

Most of the larger flocks of sheep are not kept in one place but are moved between uplands and lowlands according to the season in massive flocks that comprise animals from several major stockholders, as well as those belonging to the herdsmen themselves. The shepherds' trails are generally considered common land, so the investment brings with it a cost in herdsman but not a need to acquire land. At various points in the annual cycle different owners' animals are separated out and taken to milk, shear or slaughter. Private estates that dedicate significant land to pasture tend to be very much bigger than their arable equivalent, and located further from the local town or city.

If your Adventurer owns a herd or flock, the same Extended Task rules can be used to extract value from them. The trick is to generate milk, wool, hides, and meat and still have a bigger herd or flock than that with which you started the year. If at the end of the year the farmer has achieved 100% progress in the Extended Task he achieves a 20% return on the value of his flock. This may be in money, or in additional livestock, or some combination of the two.

- For every 25% below the 100% target, reduce either the return or the herd size by 10%.
- For every fumbled roll, reduce the value (size) of his herd by 1D4x10%.
- For every 25% ahead of target by the end of the year, increase the return by 10% or the size of the herd by 10%.

If the Adventure does not tend to the management of his flock personally, he needs to turn it over to professional shepherds. In this case his return is half of what the shepherds achieve, which can be taken as an increase in his flock or in cash earnings. Any losses to his capital because of rustlers, extreme weather, disease and predators are the Adventurer's own, unless he can take the shepherds to court and convince a judge they should be punished for their negligence.

RUNNING AN ARTISAN BUSINESS

An Adventurer may inherit or acquire an artisanal business such as a mill, bakery, workshop or inn. These businesses usually require a Craft skill of some sort to extract the value, in this case modified by the proprietor's critical Commerce score. The Adventurer's money goes towards buying and outfitting the business premises - for example acquiring and installing one or more millstones and the donkeys to turn them; paying the local authorities for the trading permits and setting up the supply chain.

In addition to acquiring a business, the Adventurer must also be able to furnish the Working Capital, funds that are used to acquire the necessary raw materials his business will process before reselling, pay the wages and attract business. Unless an Adventurer chooses to set up a business that requires exotic materials, the minimum Working Capital Requirement at the start of the year is equal to 10% of the business value.

The owner may deploy additional capital in the hope of getting more profits but this creates capacity issues because the business may not have the necessary resources to make use of it, and the skills tests increase in difficulty by one level for every additional 10% of working capital deployed above the minimum. Hence a business with a Working Capital requirement of 100 Taskeens attempting to turn 120 Taskeens of deployed Working Capital into profits does so at a -40% penalty. Additional funds can also be made available as a cash reserve to draw on if the business runs into problems rather than deployed as Working Capital.

A skill roll is made every season, each successful roll contributing 25% to the target 100% to run a good business for the year. If at the end of the year the Adventurer has succeeded in the Extended Task, he will earn a profit of twice the working capital actually deployed.

- For every 25% below the 100% target for the task, the year's profit is reduced by an amount equal to the Working Capital Requirement. Hence the business may make no profit at all, or even make a loss. Losses first eat into any cash reserves in the business, and then reduce the deployed Working Capital. The business eventually stops operating as raw materials run out and staff go and find work with someone who can afford to pay them.
- For any fumbled roll, the business immediately runs out of cash and goes into bankruptcy unless the Adventurer can inject a sum of money equal to the Working Capital Requirement $\times 1D4$ to plug the hole.
- For every 25% above the 100% target, the business gains additional profits equal to the Working Capital.

If the Adventurer chooses not to run the business directly with his own time and labour, he can hire master craftsmen to do it for him. In this instance his return is typically half of the profits achieved, so long as the remainder is sufficient to cover the annual pay of the manager. All losses are his own, unless he can prove in a court his people have been embezzling funds or wilfully working against the business.

TRADING

An Adventurer who sinks his money into a trading venture may make significant gains, but with much greater risk. Money spent on buying goods for resale cannot be used to contribute to the funds required for an increase in an Adventurer's SOC Characteristic, as an investment in 'trade' does not bring added respectability. The Adventurer acquires goods for sale, which are the Inventory from which he hopes to drive a profit. This task uses his Commerce skill, modified by his critical score in Regional Lore for the region he is trading in. If the Extended Task succeeds he nets a cash return of 20% on his Inventory, and still has stock to the value of his original outlay with which to continue trading.

- For every 25% below the target, his cash or inventory is reduced by 10 %.
- For any fumbled roll he suffers disaster and/or is forced into a loss-making sale to clear his stock, and reduces the value of his Inventory by half.
- For every 25% ahead of target the Adventurer makes an additional 10% profit, or increases the value of his inventory by 10%.

If the Adventurer puts his trading interests in the hands of someone else while he goes about other business he typically receives half the annual profit. He retains ownership of the stock and bears any losses to the value of the Inventory.

These guidelines do not apply to long distance trade, where the sums of money involved the returns to be made and the risks encountered are significantly greater.

ADVENTURING ON THE FRONTIERS

Many of the opportunities for adventure and reward are to be found on or around the Empire's frontier – this is often where the power of the state is weak, where opposing interests clash and where conflicts are often fought out between the proxies of rival powers.

The scenarios included in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* take place on the Empire's southern frontier, in and around the Korazoon desert. This chapter provides some adventure outlines and tools to help a Games Master expand on that campaign or to set up a set up a string of adventures on other frontiers.

SANDS OF THE KORAZOON

Should you wish to expand the adventures on the Korazoon frontier provided in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*, the next two years (1219–20) will almost certainly involve the Taskan army bringing sufficient force to bear to roll back the New Korazoon Movement and strike at Ankwar to remove Nergesh and Haljaf once and for all. If this supplies them with a new port, all the better, but the Taskans may also feel the need to reinstate the Sultan of Ankwar in order not to invoke the enmity and hostility of the other sultanates, nor to estrange their ally in the region, Tursiba the Lioness, Queen of Morkesh. This will not be a straightforward conquest, and the situation is, of course, rife with politics and intrigue.

Haljaf the Inconsolable has no intention of fighting a last stand in Ankwar alongside his protégés. He would rather escape into the desert and rise again at some future point, but not without causing the Taskans as much grief and misery as he can first. His statistics are given here should the Adventurers encounter his minions, or manage to corner the man himself. Adventurers may find themselves up against the Scourge when it is sent to destroy them or to attack a friendly community; or they may set out on a quest to free Zoerlana from Haljaf's control in order to use her to create a spring and bring new life to some parched corner of the Korazoon.

Even when stripped of human followers, as a supremely powerful shaman Haljaf and with the spirits he controls makes a complete

set of foes in himself. Haljaf is one of the most deadly adversaries Adventurers can face in this setting.

HALJAF THE INCONSOLABLE

So named because of his constantly streaming eyes, Haljaf is a holy man from Haran who has founded a cult (the New Korazoon Movement) and positioned himself as vizier to the cult's temporal leader, Nergesh of Ankwar. He now commands not just the loyalty of many fierce desert tribesmen, but also the resources, for use in war and peace, of a decent sized city. Haljaf's unfortunate eye condition is the result of calling down an as yet unfulfilled curse on the Taskan general, Count Balthus, who more than a decade ago killed Haljaf's favourite son in a battle fought for the physical remains of the Marble Simulacrum. Haljaf shall never stop weeping until Balthus lies dead.

Characteristics:

STR 8 CON 9 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 18 DEX 13 CHA 16 SOC 18

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 (from bound spirit) or –1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 15+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Dedicated POW:** 6

Common Skills: Athletics 25%, Brawl 30%, Brawn 28%, Culture (Beshor Valley) 65%, Dance 31%, Drive 75%, Evade 30%, Evaluate 72%, First Aid 57%, Influence 89%, Insight 146%, Regional Lore (Beshor Valley) 64%, Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Sing, Sleight, Stealth,

Advanced Skills: Regional Lore (Korazoon) 145%, Regional Lore (Assabia) 89%, Spirit Binding 141%, Spirit Walking 82%, Lore (New Korazoon Tradition) 125%, Lore (Qomite Witchcraft) 85%, Orate 78%, Survival (Desert) 95%, Teaching 76%

Combat Styles: Staff 38%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	M	L	D8+Stun Location	4/8



Armour and Defences: AP 3 all locations from bound spirit, no penalties (Great Grampus). Some protection provided against spells of up to Magnitude 8 cast against Haljaf by bound spirit (Welcome Shade).

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Heroic Abilities: *Spirit Walking:* Haljaf has the rare talent of Spirit Walking without the need for drugs or Divine Magic; *Second Sight:* This ability operates just like the Common Magic Spell of the same name, but costs Haljaf a single Magic Point to activate, and requires concentration for as long as it is operative.

Pacts: Korazoon 115%. Haljaf has dedicated a total of 6 POW to the spirit of the Korazoon and her key dependents, as part of negotiations through which he acquired the stable of Traditional Spirits that the New Korazoon Movement is able to access.

Common Magic (Qomite Witchcraft 85%): Visibility (2), Bearing Witness 4

Traditional Spirits (1): Qomite Witchcraft 85%

Stitching Sister (Intensity 3 Healing Spirit, INT14, POW22, CHA16, CA3, current MP 14): A spirit capable of healing a Major Wound, restoring it to 1 positive Hit Point. This ability takes one CA per and one Magic Point from Stitching Sister per HP restored. Stitching Sister cannot regenerate these Magic Points while bound, and is bargained to be released when she reaches 1 MP.

Traditional Spirits (2): New Korazoon Tradition 125%

Whipthorn (Intensity 1 Plant Spirit, INT1 POW7 CHA1 CA1 MP 5): Allows Haljaf to lash out with his tongue (literally), transforming it to a wickedly barbed tendril capable of inflicting 1D3 damage at range of up to 2 metres (Reach M). Can perform the Slash Combat Manoeuvre (see *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*) against unprotected skin. He can use this attack once per round. He tends to use this ability as a surprise attack or on defenceless underlings as a punishment – in combat it is not worth the risk of suffering a ‘Damage Weapon’ Manoeuvre.

The Scourge of Tubisa (Intensity 6 Dust Devil, INT 12 POW 40 CHA11, CA5 SR12+ MP40, Manifest 153%, Persistence 160%, Spectral Flaying 200%, Spirit Damage 3D10). This immense wraith can only manifest in an area of desert and dust, and forms a great and violent sandstorm with a shadowy humanoid figure at its heart. It is Haljaf’s most potent weapon and threat against his enemies. The Scourge of Tubisa was a principal agent of the destruction of one of the ancient kingdoms that occupied what is now the Korazoon Desert. Now it is under Haljaf’s power, lesser Dust Devils leave his followers alone when encountered.

THE SCOURGE OF TUBISA, PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION

Characteristics:

STR 52 CON – SIZ 6 cubic m INT 12 POW 40 DEX 11 CHA 11 SOC –

Attributes:

DM: +1D12 CA: 5 SR: 12 Mv: 10 MP: 40

Skills: Engulf 100%, Evade 30%, Manifest 153%, Persistence 160%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 50%

Combat Styles: Toss/Grind/Smother 55%. Spectral Combat 200%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Toss	—	T	2D6 Falling, Stun	—
Grind	H	T	1D12, Bleed*	—
Smother	L	T	Asphyxiation	—
Spectral Flaying	—	T	3D10 and Curse**	—

Traits: *Dark Sight; Immune to Normal Attacks:* Only magical damage affects the Wraith’s body; *Life Sense; Physical Manifestation*

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-20	Body	-/40

The Scourge can *Toss* one or more Adventurers within its volume as if a Sylph of half its STR and SIZ, (targets of up to a combined SIZ26 inflicting 2D6 falling damage to two locations to the victims).

The Scourge can *Grind* opponents with larger pieces of stone and grit whirling within its form, using its Damage Modifier to inflict wounds. Armour protects against this damage.

The Scourge can maintain its *Smother* attack against several targets within its volume simultaneously; each victim requires 1CA to engage with the attack, and each attack costs one CA per round to maintain as the victim suffocates.

* Bleed is a Critical-only Combat Manoeuvre for this attack.

**The Scourge can engage one opponent at a time who is engulfed within its volume in Spectral Combat (subject to available CAs) if it wins an opposed roll of its Manifestation Skill against the victim's Persistence. Anyone the Scourge destroys in Spectral Combat is cursed to return as a Dust Devil (see *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*) unless they successfully call upon Divine Intervention at the moment of destruction.

The Scourge can also move up to one third of its volume in dust, grit and small stones through its body per round; this gives it the ability to quickly fill a room or blanket a field in sand.

Claw Brother (Intensity 2 boost Damage Bonus Lion Spirit, INT5 POW14 CHA2), Claw Brother raises Haljaf's -1D2 Damage Bonus to +1D2.

Great Grampus (Intensity 3 boost Armour Points Grampus Spirit, INT3 POW21 CHA1). Great Grampus provides Haljaf with a chitinous skin giving him 3AP to all locations at no reduction in Strike Rank

Other Spirits (Spirit Binding 141%)

Welcome Shade (Guardian Spirit, INT8 POW23 CHA6, Persistence 64%). This spirit provides Haljaf with a defence against offensive spells of Magnitude 8 or less directed at him, which will be cancelled out if Welcome Shade makes a successful Persistence test. Welcome Shade is always active on Haljaf's behalf

Zoerlana the Lost Daughter (Naiad Spirit, INT16, POW22, CHA20, current MP 16) This spirit is that of an ancient naiad from the Korazoon, who was forced into a binding by Haljaf with the result that her spring dried up for good. Haljaf has promised that one day he will bring water back to the Korazoon, and when he does she will once more have a place to call her own. Because she is without a place, Zoerlana cannot Manifest independently, nor regain her Magic Points. Zoerlana's fetish is a simple leather jug that Haljaf wears hanging from his belt. She provides Haljaf with the following abilities, activated by touch:

- **Generous Waters:** for the cost of 1 MP from Zoerlana, Haljaf can turn the smallest natural source of water into an abundance that will flow or well up and from which many can drink. The effect lasts for Zoerlana's POW in minutes before the source returns to its original state. Haljaf sometimes makes a great show of putting a few drops of water into the leather jug she is bound to and then pouring out an endless stream.
- **Sweet Waters:** for the cost of 1 MP from Zoerlana, Haljaf can purge all mineral impurities from a volume of water equal to Zoerlana's POW in cubic metres.

Amthem (Ancestor-in-Waiting, INT12 POW14 CHA16, CA3 SR14+, Persistence 56%, Discorporate 70%, Spectral Fists 70%, Spectral Damage 1D8). This spirit is the soul of Haljaf's own son, who is currently in a state of limbo awaiting the establishment of the spirit home Haljaf has promised for followers of the New Korazoon Movement. Haljaf's tears are for Amthem, killed in personal combat by a Taskan soldier, now Count Balthus of the Iron Companions. Amthem must wait for a proper place in the afterlife until Nergesh of Ankwar and his sons depart their physical bodies and establish the first generation of Ancestors. Amthem has learned how to *Discorporate* a living enemy (the reverse of a living being learning to Spirit Walk). When (if) Haljaf finally confronts Balthus, Amthem will be released to Discorporate him, thereby gaining a critical advantage in Spectral Combat.

THE SORCERER'S SKIN

Gyodian Helom is a sorcerer-priest who once spent a considerable part of his life attempting to repatriate survivors of the Ralmyran disaster who were languishing as slaves in Kitan. Gyodian earned himself quite a following among those he has rescued and their families, making him something of a hero in his native Felsang, and he has been decorated by the Iron Simulacrum for services to his fellow citizens.

Sadly Gyodian's career as a good citizen was cut short on one of his expeditions. He had grown careless about security, thinking himself now a known face amongst the Sheng and unlikely to be attacked. However a young warrior by the name of Harangyun who came upon Gyodian bathing at a river took a great liking to the tattoos that adorned Gyodian's body. With the idea he could become famous for killing a foreign wizard, he ambushed the sorcerer and flayed him alive, leaving him to die. Gyodian failed to die as he was supposed to and, although horribly disfigured and in terrible pain, thanks to his sorcery skills he made it to safety and eventually back to Taskan lands.

Gyodian the Sorcerer-Priest is now a tortured individual, still missing most of the skin from his torso and head, and swathed in bandages and a thick layer of grease to stop them sticking. A Regenerate spell might replace his lost skin, but would make it impossible to graft the old skin back on, which is the plan he pursues with (possibly unhinged) determination. His existence is only tolerable as a result of an Abjure Pain spell that he reapplies every few days using a matrix made for him by an enchanter at public expense. He survives further through the use of an Abjure Skin spell, but the unfortunate side effect of this is that those areas where he still has skin attempt to shed it in sheets, and Gyodian engages in frequent and pathetic

attempts to stick it back on using a Form/Set Skin spell. One of the reasons that he lives this way is that Gyddian very much wants to get his skin back. It is, after all, his spell-book and he is keenly aware that its destruction could kill him.

Thanks to his many years of good deeds Gyddian lives a tolerable existence on monies raised by a public subscription that was very much oversubscribed by well-wishers. Some of this money he now intends to be diverted to the recovery of his skin and ideally the killing of Harangyun in the process, an uncharacteristic act of revenge for the sorcerer-priest, whose sufferings have turned his mind to darker places than he visited before his injury.

Helping Gyddian get his skin back could be an act of kindness to a famously selfless man who now needs help himself. It could be a pretext to get to the high plains with some other purpose in mind, or might just be a mercenary contract. Either way the Adventurers have to decide whether to simply use the connections and contacts that Gyddian can set up for them at Hamcha, the town at the Tengissian gates, or find their own way to the Kitan; and whether they accept Gyddian's demands to accompany them on their mission. This of course introduces a further level of risk, as if something happens to Gyddian, the Adventurers will not be paid.

The pay on offer is top rate for a mercenary contract, due to the inherent dangers of the High Plains; that is 4 Taskeens per day plus rations, 7 for a mounted man, funding to a maximum of 100 Taskeens for equipment needs and expenses, and a further bounty, to be divided amongst the team, of 4,000 Taskeens upon successful completion of the mission.

GYDDIAN HELOM, THE FLAYED PRIEST

Characteristics:

STR 11 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 15 POW 16 DEX 12 CHA 16 SOC 16

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 3 SR: 14 Mv: 8 MP: 15 (12 available) Dedicated POW: 1

Common Skills: Athletics 33%, Brawl 34%, Brawn 30%, Culture 88%, Dance 32%, Drive 58%, Evade 35%, Evaluate 77%, First Aid 82%, Influence 65%, Insight 46%, Regional Lore (Tarsenia) 75%, Perception 47%, Persistence 68%, Resilience 55%, Rites 91%, Sing 38%, Sleight 39%, Stealth 28%

Advanced Skills: Education 79%, Language (Sheng) 54%, Pact (Zygas Taga) 44%, Regional Lore (Kitan) 35%, Ride 53%, Swim 31%, Teaching 37%

Combat Styles: Cloak and Dagger 35%

Armour and Defences: None. Gyddian is almost always under the effect of an Abjure Pain spell, which means he is immune to the effects of Serious Wounds (he does not suffer the inability to attack for 1D3 Combat Actions due to pain. The Opposed Resilience

Test required to remain functional is made with a +30% bonus, being +5% for every 10% of the effective Grimoire skill).

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Blessings: A welcome visitor at many temples, Gyddian will usually have 4 Blessings in hand, from whichever deities whose help appropriate to the challenges he foresees over the coming days or months.

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 45%): *The Good Book of Gyddian* 68%: Banish, Mystic Vision, Sanctify, Treat Wounds, Worship Felsank, Worship Hoonvel, Worship Hamath, Worship Jarmost, Worship Merai, Worship Tarsen.

The Small Book of Enchantments, Revised Edition 47%: Create Familiar, Enchanting Ritual, Write Grimoire

The Forms of the Flesh 45%: Abjure Bone, Abjure Skin, Form/Set Skin, Form/Set Bone, Form/Set Flesh, Dominate Flesh Elemental

Items: *The Pain Cushion.* A small plush embroidered cushion that fits in the palm of the hand.

Virtues: Spellcharged. The cushion has 4 slots for stored spells, which are all castings of Abjure Pain at 57% with a one season Duration and Magnitude 4. The benefactor who gave Gyddian this enchantment has the spells replaced during the Emperor Days

Wealth: Gyddian is quite well off in his own right but no longer practices his trade, and depends on the earnings from his property and the resources of the generous donations made by others to honour his past good deeds. The subscription fund still has nearly 60,000 Taskeens available to him. He can therefore generously support the expedition to recover his skin, and will have no problem furnishing money for equipment, supplies and bribes.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE HIGH PLAINS

When travelling the High Plains of Kitan there is a 25% chance of an encounter, with two checks per day. Encounters here usually come with some risk attached, so the services of a good guide can reduce this to a once per day check by using Regional Lore to stick to the most favourable routes.



D20	Encounter
01–06	Animals
07–11	Hazardous Terrain
12–14	Extreme Weather
15–17	Nomads on the Move
18–19	Nomads in Camp
20	Special

ANIMALS

Predators: On the fringes of the plains it is possible to encounter the odd solitary lion, which will only attack loose or unguarded livestock (including mounts and pack animals) unless chased and cornered when it will turn on its pursuer. Wolves hunt on the plains in packs of D6+3 animals, and will attack anything that looks temptingly weak.

Game: From small prairie dogs and grouse up to gazelles and wild ox, there is game to be found on the plains. There are wetlands, particularly in the East, that are home to plentiful bird life, including geese stopping off on a migration route from the shores of lake Taung during winter.

HAZARDOUS TERRAIN

Bog: A broad bog that takes a day to pick a way around or through, or one which takes unwary travellers by surprise leading to the potential loss of a pack animal or wagon.

Gulley: The travellers hit a gulley or deep-cut stream, its banks crumbling and treacherous. A successful Drive roll is required to cross with a wagon or string of pack animals. Failure will result in loss of goods or damage to the pack animal or wagon. Alternatively a day is lost trying to find a viable crossing.

EXTREME WEATHER

Torrential Rain (Any season): A powerful rainstorm hits the travellers. Forward progress is near impossible, the best that can be achieved is finding safe ground away from any risk of flash flooding or mudslide, and getting some shelter. In winter this result indicates heavy snow.

Heatwave (Summer Only): An unexpected dry spell means that many sources of water are drying up. The effects will last for D4 months starting from when this result is generated. This means everyone is heading for the reliable sources, forcing groups hostile to one another – possibly including the Adventurers – into potentially violent contact. If not sticking to a reliable water source the Adventurers' leader or guide must succeed in a Survival test on behalf of the group each day to avoid the onset of thirst (as per the *Legend Core Rules*).

Cold Snap (Winter Only): While a cold snap does not necessarily bring snow, it does mean standing water sources are all frozen, and that anyone abroad who is unprepared with thick winter clothing or magic must either set up camp to see the weather through, or must have a team leader or guide who succeeds at a Survival test on behalf of the group each day to avoid the effects of Extreme Cold (as per the *Legend Core Rules*). The effects will last for D10 + 10 days from when this result is generated.

NOMADS ON THE MOVE

These encounters take place even if the Adventurers are in camp.

The Attitude towards Taskan travellers of any natives encountered will very much depend on which Tribe they are from. If using this table for encounters on the Little Kitan, any odd numbered result is changed to a roll of 01–05:

D20	Tribe	Attitude (Sympathies) to Taskans
01–05	Escar	Supportive
06–09	Dragomans	Impartial
10–17	Tsengir	Prejudiced
18–19	Kismeks	Hostile
20	Other*	Random

*One of the minor tribes, possibly comprised of a single clan. Roll D20 on the Attitudes table in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* to determine their Sympathies towards foreigners

Sheng people wear their heart on their sleeves, and their Sympathies towards Taskans tend to translate directly to the spirit in which they will deal with the encounter.

Family Group: A close kin-group on the move. The group comprises of 1D3+1 ox-drawn wagons, each carrying a fully assembled yurt or hut, with a total of D4+1 adults and twice that number of children, elderly and slaves, plus a number of horses. The adults will not engage in a fight unless forced to, or unless they have a very clear advantage.

Hunters: 1D3 adult warriors accompanied by a similar number of juveniles, the latter possibly on foot, being taught the skills of the chase. They will usually not attack unless threatened, but may rob, injure or slay vulnerable strangers if their mood is aggressive. However they may be in a better frame of mind and willing to indulge in a parlay which can lead to information, trade, or some sort of contest with a prize awarded to the winner by the loser or a forfeit demanded.

War Party: 2D6+4 mounted warriors, intend on raiding and robbing. They may attack if they outnumber the Adventurers and have a negative attitude but may shadow them for some time first, waiting for the right moment. If the Adventurers look too tough, an aggressive warrior may still try and call out one of the Adventurers in a challenge to single combat.

Trader: A local Dragoman trader, accompanied by 1D4 assistants/guards, driving 2D6+6 livestock for sale, mostly ponies but possibly including one fine stallion. Pack animals carry a variety of goods from civilised lands, including metal utensils and pots, and some edged weapons (spearheads and butts, sword and dagger blades).

NOMADS IN CAMP

If the party is stationary when this encounter is rolled, treat as a No Encounter result.

A small camp: A close-kin group of D4+1 adults and twice that number of young, elderly and slaves. They have set camp and are likely to remain in place for 1D4 months, unless forced to move on.

A bivouac: The camp of a small group such as hunters, raiders or traders. See Nomads on the Move for details.

A clan: With circled wagons gathered for a ritual: trading, initiation, wedding, funeral or politics. As above, multiply the numbers by 10. Unexpected outsiders may be treated as intruders and driven off, invited to join as guests for feasting or seized on as a handy source of victims for a ritual fight or killing.

SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS

A Sacred Burial Site: An area containing several burial mounds, visible from some distance away. Outsiders who approach and move among the mounds are regarded as trespassers and are likely to be attacked if they are found there.

A Tribal Site: A place with a scattering of permanent log-built dwellings with roofs of turf; close by are standing stones and there are always at least a dozen yurts, ten times that or more when there is a festival or major gathering going on. The Tribal Site is where you will find members of the Royal Clan, and a collection of tribesmen who have come to seek their services.

Taskan Slaves: Any one of the nomad encounters may involve meeting with a Taskan slave held by the Sheng. If the owners are Escars they are already conveying the slaves towards the Tsengissian Gates and repatriation in expectation of a reward. The only way to secure the release of the slaves otherwise is to buy them or take them by force. If the Sheng holding the slave are not overtly hostile they may be willing to trade. Slaves may be sold by the Sheng for anything from 250–1,000 Taskeens, depending on age, health and gender. Some of the younger ones may know nothing other than life on the High Plains and be unwilling to be taken away. A Taskan slave taken as an adult will be 40 or more years old. A very few have gone native, earned their freedom and been adopted into a clan. There are also the children of slaves, or of mixed descent, but the Sheng do not usually raise children in bondage, merely bring them up as their own.

Even the most lowly Taskan citizen is worth a minimum of 1,000 Taskeens if returned home, although this money may take some time to collect from the various funds that have been set up to buy them or compensate their rescuers.

Exotic Creatures: There is enough wilderness left on the fringes of the High Plains, and beyond to the wide open Wetlands bordering Lake Taung, for an exotic creature or two to be found in the region. The locals tell stories of dragons, although these creatures may be entirely mythical, exaggerations of the Wyrms that are known to exist if not hunted to extinction. Griffins are reported, venturing out from their eyries in the mountains of Gumathena to the north of the high plains, on the hunt for horseflesh.

Supernatural Encounter: Perhaps in combination with one of the above encounters, the Adventurers somehow perform an act or enter a space that triggers a manifestation attempt by a spirit. This may be a simple curse spirit, disease spirit or ghost, or it could be something more dramatic such as the father spirit of a lost clan or tribe or a powerful local spirit that wants to bargain for some service or favour from the Adventurers.

HARANGYUN AND HIS GANG

Since his encounter with Gyadian, the warrior Harangyun has attracted a small following of warriors who treat him as their war leader. They are neither the largest nor most dangerous party of Sheng warriors you might encounter, but they are difficult to track down and much trouble may be had with other tribesmen along the way. With this band he moves around the High Plains, and once in a while, perhaps for a few weeks of the year, he may venture into surrounding lands in order to search for plunder. It would be extremely difficult to predict these forays and intercept him on more advantageous ground, however the only alternative is to risk the High Plains and the significant dangers of negotiating a way through the potentially hostile natives who live there until Harangyun is brought to bay. Gyadian's experience tells him that a lengthy stop-over at Hamcha, the town situated at the Tengissian Gates, to recruit local scouts and informers and gather intelligence, will be necessary to keep the party's time in potentially hostile territory to a minimum. The Taskan agents there can be expected to be sympathetic and helpful.

Harangyun is accompanied everywhere by Angranga and Thiankrush who are kin, but can also pull together a band of D6+6 Henchmen, some of whom are kin, others of whom are outsiders along for the ride.

HARANGYUN'S HENCHMEN

Each of these warriors is mounted on a pony and carries a short bow as well as either a battleaxe or mace and a buckler. They can make use of a charge, swinging from the saddle and gaining a +D4 Damage Modifier. Unless caught off guard they will always soften the opposition with some multimirrored archery before closing to contact.

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 12+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 9 **HP:** 12, **Critical Wound:** 6

Skills: Brawl 35%, Brawn 35%, Drive 65%, Evade 30%, Mounted Combat 40%, Perception 40%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 55%, Ride 80%, Stealth 35%, Track 50%

Combat Styles: Archery 55%, Sidearm and Shield 50%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Short Bow	L	80m	D6, Impale	4/4
Battle Axe	M	M	D6+1, Bleed	4/8
Mace	M	S	D8, Stun	6/6
Buckler	M	S	D3	6/8

Armour: Generally only a thick fur cap for 1AP protection for the head, although in winter they may swathe their whole bodies in furs.

Fetishes (Rites 50%): Clan Magic (1): Bandit's Cloak, Multimissile

Treasure: 2D6 Taskeens value in coins, perhaps a mixture of silver Korantine Guilders or Sharranketan Dinars used as bullion with some Taskan coins. Each warrior may have one trade item, spare pony or treasure, to 1D4x100 Taskeens value.

HARANGYUN, TSENGIR WARRIOR

Characteristics:

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 11 POW 11 DEX 14 CHA 14 SOC 11

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 3+1 SR: 13-3 Mv: 8 MP: 5 Dedicated POW: 6

Common Skills: Athletics 70%, Brawl 65%, Brawn 56%, Culture (Sheng) 77%, Drive 62%, Evade 44%, Evaluate 38%, First Aid 53%, Influence 40%, Insight 35%, Kitan Lore 58%, Perception 81%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 63%, Rites (Own) 62%, Stealth 37%

Advanced Skills: Language (Thennalt) 28%, Mounted Combat 65%, Ride 84%

Combat Styles: Archery 72%, Sidearm and Shield 81%, Lance 66%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Kitan Bow	H	175m	D8, Impale	4/8
Lance	H	VL	D10+2, Impale, Sunder	4/10
Hatchet	S	S	1D6, Bleed	3/6
Buckler	M	S	D3	6/8

Armour: Leather scale cuirass, thick leather chaps and bracers. Harangyun also benefits from a Wound Ward, which negates 2 points of damage penetrating armour and cannot be bypassed. His Spell Ward fetish negates spells of Magnitude 1. 4 AP on limbs, 5 AP on chest and abdomen, and 2 AP on head.

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Fetishes: Clan Magic tattoo (3): Bandit's Cloak, Bladesharp, Detect Enemies. Healing, Multimissile Wound Ward tattoo(2) Spell Ward nose piercing (1)

Items and Treasure: Harangyun uses Gyidian Helom's skin as a saddle ornament. His horse is a fine example, and would fetch 500 or more Taskeens at market. He has a string of seven more ponies, each worth about 200 Taskeens. Harangyun's personal treasure is his bowcase, ornamented with embroidered patterns in many colours which could fetch 50 Taskeens. Typically carries the

band's treasure, being bullion coin or lumps of metal to another 800 Taskeens value

ANGRANGRA, FEMALE WARRIOR

Characteristics:

STR 11 CON 9 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 15 DEX 14 CHA 13 SOC 14

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 3+1 SR: 14-2 Mv: 8 MP: 11 Dedicated POW:4

Common Skills: Athletics 65%, Brawl 35%, Brawn 30%, Culture (Own/Sheng) 80%, Evade 32%, Kitan Lore 60%, Perception 55%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 40%, Rites 50%, Stealth 40%

Advanced Skills: Mounted Combat 56%, Ride 68%, Survival 35%

Combat Styles: Archery 75%, Ambidextrous fighting 60%*, Sidearm 60%

*Angrangra has learned to use weapons of matched size in both hands at no penalty

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Kitan Bow	H	175m	D8, Impale	4/8
LH War Club	M	S	D6, Stun Location	4/4
RH War Club	M	S	D6, Stun Location	4/4
Dagger	S	S	D4+1, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: Leather jerkin, light leather leg wrappings, composite helm. Angrangra is warded against spirits of Intensity 2 or less. AP 1 on legs, AP 2 on abdomen and chest, and AP 3 on head.

Hit Points: 4/4/5/6/3/3/4

Fetishes: Clan Magic Tattoo (2): Bandit's Cloak, Multimissile, Demoralise Spirit Ward Phylactery, a silver vessel containing horsehair worn on a band around her upper arm(2)

Items and Treasure: Phylactery is worth 12 Taskeens. Her horse is a good riding horse worth 400 Taskeens.

THIANKRUSH

Characteristics:

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 15 POW 11 DEX 12 CHA 12 SOC 15

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 3+1 SR: 14 Mv: 8 MP: 8 Dedicated POW: 3

Common Skills: Athletics 65%, Brawl 45%, Brawn 50%, Culture (Own/Sheng) 80%, Evade 35%, Kitan Lore 60%, Perception 55%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 45%, Rites 55%

Advanced Skills : Mounted Combat 55% Ride 68%, Survival 35%

Combat Styles: Archery 68%, Sidearm 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Kitan Bow	H	175m	D8, Impale	4/8
Sword	M	M	D8, Bleed, Impale	6/10
Buckler	M	S	D3	6/8
Dagger	S	S	D4+1, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None; protected by a Wound Ward, providing 1 AP on all locations and which cannot be bypassed.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Fetishes: Clan Magic Tattoo (2); Bandit's Cloak, Multimissile Wound Ward Tattoo (1)

Items and Treasure: Thiankrush rides an ordinary pony (200 Taskeens)

THE GRAVE FIELDS OF URMSK

The fabled tombs of the Thennalts come no richer than those situated a few miles from the royal seat of Timolay, at the cemetery complex of Urmsk. Already the scene of multiple attempts at robbery, a whole new breed of plunderer now appears in the form of Taskan adventurers. Thennalt tombs are often well furnished with precious grave goods, and even among the Thennalts themselves they are a key target for raiders from rival groups. Aside from the walled enclosures containing stone-lined cyst graves, each bearing a single corpse, there are splendid communal crypts hollowed out with the help of earth elementals, dressed and embellished by human hand, sometimes covering thousands of square metres in a single subterranean complex. The largest, thought now to be totally looted, is an ancient network of crypts created out of a yet more ancient and disused mine.

The richest grave fields are beyond the imagining of even the most avaricious tomb robbers. However Thennalts do not leave their tombs entirely without protection. Some have human guardians, members of some warrior society or lineage who still have the ambition to join their forbears in the communal mortuary complex. Many are still the focus of ritual, watched over by the local community that uses them. Others are now protected by ghosts, monstrous wardens carved from the stone and brought to life by magic, demons, undead and more. A few complexes have been appropriated by outlaws, beast-men and other unpleasant types as lairs.

Adventurers may be charged with policing or preventing tomb robbing activities within Taskan areas of control, or they may be heading into hostile lands in the hope of making a fortune themselves.

GRAVE FIELD TYPES

The different types of grave field reflect changing customs from one region to another and from one era to next. They all exhibit interpretations of how the earth mother receives back the bodies she has given to her children (the Thennalts) when they are done with them, and those interpretations are by no means consistent with one another. The tendency to provide grave goods is, however, very widespread. This is not because there is a belief the deceased will continue to enjoy an item buried with him, but because Thennalt traditions require the return to the earth of resources once taken from it for use by mankind.

Almost anything can qualify for inclusion with the burial, with pottery vessels being at the most frugal end of the spectrum, but metals and jewels, sometimes worked into the most exquisite form they will ever bear, being the most fitting.

TYPE 1 GRAVE FIELD

These places are the most common type of cemeteries in the northern Thennalt lands. Each is formed by a large enclosure usually ringed with a ditch and earth rampart, but sometimes by a dry stone wall or vertical stone slabs. At the centre is a grave mound containing a tomb which shelters the remains of the founder, leader or hero of whatever group uses that particular grave field. This tomb is usually elaborate, with several chambers, and deemed to be the meeting place for all the dead who haunt the place. Scattered over the rest of the enclosure are single burials in stone-lined cuttings (cysts). Whether there is any order to the arrangement and distribution of these graves depends on the specific site. The very largest cover an area of 2 or 3 Hectares, and if the boundaries are eroded or overgrown it is quite possible to blunder into one unawares.

Type 1 Grave Fields are still constructed today - in Camtri there are even examples where the dead are cremated before or during interment, borrowing from Taskan customs. Any of the graves may yield trinkets, but the best chance of treasure (and supernatural defences) is in the central tomb. These tombs may be close to the surface and covered by a tumulus, they may be dug into the earth as a deep shaft, or they may have an elaborate ramp down to a highly decorated portal set into the earth, with a tomb chamber behind.

TYPE 2 GRAVE FIELDS

Still in use in the region of Oster and Gort, but once much more widespread with examples found in the vicinities of Zathis, Timolay and Torestal, Type 2 Grave Fields consist of multiple subterranean tombs, each dug for a single family and used over many generations. Somewhere close by there may be



mass graves for poorer folk, for these “chamber tombs” are the preserve of the wealthy, to the extent that they often contain faithful family retainers as well as blood relations.

Type 2 Grave Fields are the favourite finds for greedy tomb raiders. The largest examples so far explored and presumed to have belonged to some forgotten royal houses, have had up to 40 rooms.

TYPE 3 GRAVE FIELDS

Long ago the ancient Thennalts lived in egalitarian societies where their leaders were elected for life and all land and livestock was held in common. From that distant era are the rarest of grave fields, the Type 3. The entire community is found buried in the same place without favour or preference, no matter what honour or status was achieved in life. These grave fields are really massive catacombs consisting of several large connected chambers, ideally using natural cave formations as a base, but otherwise gnome-carved tunnels. Type 3 Grave Fields seem to yield little by way of treasure, but tend to have some nasty supernatural defences and if the incumbents are really upset they have a habit of coming back to haunt (and pulverise) intruders.

The wild men of Gumathena are said to continue these ancient customs, even today.

MARANGIAN WAR DOGS

It is a common practice to allow a clan’s war dogs to have the run of the grave fields and treat the cemeteries as their home territory. This provides a very good basic level of defence, even more so if they are under the control of a Grave-Wraith. Any grave field that is still in use could be patrolled by a pack of D6+4 of these beasts. There may well be a whole gaggle of ordinary dogs (stats as per *Monsters of Legend*) who accompany them as lesser pack members.

	Dice	Average	D20	Location	AP/HP
STR	2D6+5	12	1–2	Right Hind Leg	–/5
CON	3D6	11	3–4	Left Hind Leg	–/5
SIZ	2D6+3	10	5–7	Hindquarters	–/6
INT	5	5	8–10	Forequarters	–/7
POW	1D6+6	10	11–13	Right Foreleg	–/4
DEX	2D6+6	13	14–16	Left Foreleg	–/4
CHA	—	—	17–20	Head	–/5

Combat Actions	2	Typical Armour: None natural; often equipped with leather armour to forequarters, hindquarters and head (1 or 2 AP)
Damage Modifier	+0	
Magic Points	10	
Movement	12	Traits: Leaping Attack
Strike Rank	+12	

Skills: Athletics 75%, Evade 40%, Perception 70%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 75%, Stealth 45%, Survival 30%, Track 60%

Combat Styles: Bite 50%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	M	T	1D8	As for head

DETERMINING THE VALUE OF GRAVE GOODS

As a rule of thumb the value of an individual’s unplundered grave goods should be of a similar order to the starting money appropriate to an Adventurer of that Social Status. Of course after even a short time in the ground much of this value simply decays, so this is only true immediately after burial. Much of the value is in perishables such as the deceased’s finest suit of clothes, in which the corpse is dressed, or even food placed by the body. Equipment such as weapons, armour and tools will rapidly tarnish, rust and then disintegrate beyond use. But inevitably there may be some precious metal fittings, jewels and suchlike that will preserve their value for many years, if not indefinitely. To quickly determine what treasure awaits a grave robber, assume that 1D6+4% of a grave’s goods are durable and will survive in the ground until unearthed. For the remainder, reduce the value of a grave’s contents by 30% for every generation that has passed – or 1% per year until the minimum value of durable contents is reached.

GRAVE GUARDIANS

Thennalt tombs are likely to be protected by supernatural means, either placed there by those who built them or furnished by whatever deity protects the cemetery and the dead who reside there. Some examples known to have been encountered by grave robbing adventurers are given here:



GRAVE-WRAITH

These daemons are servants of Sheagu the Corpse-Eater, an aspect, or perhaps a daughter, of the Earth Mother. They are not true wraiths but ugly hags, akin to nymphs, haunting a graveyard as a Dryad does a grove. A hag can manifest at will, forming a body from the graveyard soil. If her body is destroyed she cannot manifest physically again until the following sunset. She unerringly pursues intruders who desecrate her home, and may travel up to one kilometre from her haunting per point of POW, so long as her prey is in contact with some item taken from the grave field the wraith is protecting – even if it is just mud on his boots.

	Dice	Average	D20	Location	AP/HP
STR	5D6	18	1–3	Right Leg	–/5
CON	3D6	11	4–6	Left Leg	–/5
SIZ	3D6	11	7–9	Abdomen	–/6
INT	2D6+9	16	10–12	Chest	–/7
POW	1D6+18	22	13–15	Right Arm	–/4
DEX	2D6+6	13	16–18	Right Leg	–/4
CHA	3D6+6	17	19–20	Head	–/5

Combat Actions 3

Typical Armour: None

Damage Modifier +1D2

Traits: Dark Sense, Life Sense, Life Drain*, Recurring

Magic Points 16 (6 Dedicated POW)

Movement 8

Strike Rank +15

* The Grave-Wraith's touch drains 1D6 years from the victim's life, and may result in ageing rolls

Skills: Athletics 40%, Brawl 65%, Brawn 84%, Evade 45%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 60%, Rites 80%, Stealth 65%, Track 80%

Combat Styles: Claw 65%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	S	T	1D3+1D2+Life Drain	As Arm

Divine Magic:

(Pact: Sheagu 70%) Corpseworms x3, Fear x3

A Grave wraith can materialise at will within her home territory, however direct sunlight forces her to dematerialise, so for obvious reasons she will tend to appear at night.

She can command an incomplete creature within her area of control for the cost of 1 MP. If the spirits of any of the deceased buried in the cemetery are haunting the place, she can control those too so long as their POW is 3 points or more less than her own. She may also summon gnomes at will at a cost of 1 MP per cubic metre.

NEW DIVINE MAGIC SPELL

CORPSEWORMS

Ranged, Rank 50%, Duration 15

The Thennalt goddess Sheagu provides the *Corpseworm* spell to her devotees. This can be used to rapidly consume a corpse in the space of its 15 minute duration, as the spell triggers the appearance of a thick mass of these little white writhing maggots with their horrid biting mouths. The mass of Corpseworms have SIZ and CON equal to the Magnitude of the spell, and can consume up to 3 times their SIZ in flesh before they are completely bloated and stuffed.

Rather more unpleasant is the fact this spell can be used on a living target if it fails to resist with its Resilience. The worms materialise next to the target's skin (inside armour and clothing), affecting one location for every 3 Magnitude. For the duration of the spell they attempt to bite and burrow their way into their host. Magical protection will hold them at bay.

CORPSEWORMS

These little critters manifest spontaneously in the presence of corrupting dead flesh, their role is to consume it and return whatever goodness it contains to the earth. They begin to appear once a corpse has gone on the turn – a point at which many scavengers will begin to pass up the feast on offer. Depending on the climate and conditions, this may be at any point from about three days after death. They rapidly multiply, are voracious eaters and a man-sized corpse can be reduced to hair and bone in fairly short order. Once sated the corpseworms will eventually burst out of their fattened larval form and fly away.

If attacking a living victim that has been unlucky enough to be infested with them, the Corpseworms attempt to bore their way into the victim's flesh. Once the Corpseworms have gained a Combat Manoeuvre, they are through the skin and can subsequently start attacking soft tissue. They have no need to get through the skin if the location is already opened up with a Bleed, Slash or Impale manoeuvre. The location affected will continue to be eaten away, losing 1 HP at the end of any round in which the Corpseworms succeed in a Consume attack, and the victim suffers a –10% penalty on all skills as if impaled by a small weapon. During this time there is nothing the victim can do to resist the damage – he can only attempt to remove the worms, typically by immersing himself in water or by applying fire. This will not work on those worms that have already got inside – without significant self-harm.

A mass of corpseworms can attack a number of locations simultaneously, however each location affected requires a separate Combat Action to initiate a Burrow and Bore attack.

The statistics below are for a mass of corpseworms, which are treated as a single entity for combat.

CORPSEWORMS

	Dice	Average	D20	Location	AP/HP
STR	—	—	1–20	Worm Mass	–/2x CON
CON	As Magnitude				
SIZ	As Magnitude				
INT	1	1			
POW	1	1			
DEX	1D6	4			
CHA	—	—			

<i>Combat Actions</i>	1	<i>Typical Armour:</i> None
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	NA	<i>Traits:</i> Immune to most normal weapons and damage
<i>Magic Points</i>	1	
<i>Movement</i>	—	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+3	

Combat Styles: Burrow and Bore (SIZ x5%); Consume (SIZ x4%)

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Burrow and Bore	S	T	1+ Penetration	—
Consume	S	T	1	—

Corpseworms cannot realistically be picked off or killed one by one. The mass of worms attacking an Adventurer can be killed, dispersed or rendered harmless if they receive damage equal to their Hit Points from a suitable magical or mundane form of fire, acid, drowning or electrical attack. Once they have lodged in their victim's flesh, the only way to be rid of them is to attack the victim; damage will be applied to both victim and corpseworms, in the hope the victim survives and the corpseworms do not...

MAGIC

The Age of Treason setting has a huge variety of different approaches to magic, from the exotic pursuits of wizards to religious practices that define a whole culture or call upon divine help to sustain a nation. This chapter reveals a little more of that variety, beginning with a detailed look at Spirit Magic providing complete rules for use in the setting, these rules incorporate the relevant parts of the standard Legend approach with the modifications you need for use in this setting. You will also find here creature statistics for Elementals, the most commonly summoned type of otherworld entity, and a collection of Divine Magic spells used by civilised folk and barbarians alike to maximise or destroy the fruits of mother earth.

SPIRIT MAGIC

Spirit Magic is the practice of animism and ancestor worship. Spirit magicians call upon spirits which confer their powers on their summoner or binder. These beings have many names... dryads, nymphs, diseases, ghosts, nightmares, elementals and ancestors. A spirit does not teach or use magic, rather they are magic. Spirits flow between the mundane, or material, plane and the spirit plane. Spirit magicians interact with these beings, utilising the spirit's magic to augment or protect themselves. Such sentient, immaterial beings are powerful allies, being capable of independent action and manifesting their powers for unlimited periods of time.

THE SPIRIT PLANE

The spirit world is a place existing tangentially to the material world. Nothing physical can exist there, only the immaterial. The spirit world is populated by many spirits, which are linked to the natural geographical features, animals and plants of the material world on one side, and to the less familiar geography and life forms of The Many Hells on the other. Also present are the faint *souls* of mortal beings whose spirits are still bound to a material body. These appear as pale shadows and are hard to perceive. The landscape of the spirit plane is abstract, similar to the terrain of its counterparts, but the size, colour and vividness of individual features are dependent on the spirits that inhabit it. Thus a wild, craggy mountain in the real world may appear as a tremendous spirit on the spirit plane, whereas an urbanised region might be a grey lifeless area full of translucent apparitions.

A soul or spirit which inhabits a physical body or item in the material plane is defined as being *corporeal*. A corporeal spirit cannot enter the spirit world until drawn forth from its material

residence. A soul pulled from its physical body up onto the spirit plane, or a spirit which resides there, is considered *discorporate*. Whilst discorporate, souls are separated from the senses and sensations of their body.

A discorporate soul or spirit that is able to show itself to, and interact with, the material world is defined as being able to *manifest*.

SPIRIT TRADITIONS AND SPIRIT MAGIC

Those who are brought up as part of a *Spirit Tradition* – a culture where Spirit Magic is at the heart of religious beliefs and observances – may use their Rites (Own) Common Skill to allow them to interact with spirits with which their tradition has a relationship. These are referred to as *Traditional Spirits*. These relationships are ones that have been negotiated as pacts with certain spirits on behalf of the whole community by its spiritual leaders. This acts in the same way as other people might use Rites (Own) to deal with the pantheon of gods worshipped in their culture, except that it usually applies to types of spirits as well as individual entities. A member of a Spirit Tradition can also use this skill to cast any Common Magic or Divine Magic spells their tradition provides, to sense the presence of Traditional Spirits and also to command Traditional Spirits under their control.

An Adventurer from such a background who is given specific training in magical skills may also learn Spirit Binding, and even have revealed to him the secrets of Spirit Walking. The first allows them to summon, bind and dominate spirits in spirit combat. The second enables them to perceive spirits, whether part of their tradition or not, even if they are not manifesting. At high levels this ability allows them to project their soul onto the Spirit Plane.

HOW SPIRIT MAGIC WORKS

SPIRIT BINDING (POW+CHA)

Spirit Binding is used to summon, combat and bind spirits. A member of a spirit-worshipping tradition can use the skill to summon friendly spirits which are allied to his tradition (*Traditional Spirits*). He can also coerce a known spirit of any kind to perform a single deed for a mutually acceptable service.

The POW of the largest spirit that can be summoned and bound cannot exceed three times the critical range of this skill. Thus a character with a Spirit Binding skill of 45% could control spirits of up to 15 POW.

The binding skill is also used for spirit combat – using mental domination to overcome immaterial beings in a battle of willpower. In this case the value of the Spirit Binding skill is used to calculate the amount of damage inflicted by the spirit magician during spirit combat.

SPIRIT DAMAGE

Skill Value	Magic Point Damage Inflicted
01–20	1D2
21–40	1D4
41–60	1D6
61–80	1D8
81–100	1D10
101–120	2D6
121–140	2D8
141–160	2D10
161–180	2D12
181–200	3D10

If the Spirit Binding roll is a critical success, then maximum damage is inflicted. If the roll is a fumble, then the spirit magician overstrains himself and sustains the rolled damage to his own Magic Points!

SPIRIT WALKING

Spirit Walking represents the spirit magician's ability to navigate the Spirit Plane and his awareness of its denizens. It is not a natural ability common to all people. Entering the spirit world is, for a living person, an extremely difficult feat. There is no known way to do this through sorcery and those who are able to Spirit Walk usually do so using a Divine Magic spell or using a Heroic Ability or divine gift that is achievable by the most committed spirit worshippers, or with the assistance drugs.

SPIRIT WALKING (HEROIC ABILITY)

Requirements: POW 15+; Spirit Binding 70% or higher or Rites (Spirit Tradition) 90% or higher

Hero Points: 10

Duration: Several Hours

Your immersion in the ways of the spirits has opened your eyes to the other world and you are on the path to being able to disincorporate at will and walk among the spirits. You gain Spirit Walking as an Advanced Skill at your basic percentage and can advance the skill through study and Improvement Rolls up to your Aptitude.

Anyone with this ability can, with a successful roll, detect (but not observe) the presence of spirits within a range of their POW in metres. The ability is capable of far more – each further level of knowledge allows the skill to be used in new ways, permitting observation, communication and eventually freedom to travel the Spirit Plane.

A Spirit Walker's level of ability is driven by different factors according to how the ability is obtained:

- **A Heroic Ability or Divine Gift:** The spirit magician gains Spirit Walking as an Advanced Skill at the Basic Percentage (POW+CON) and can improve it through experience and training.
- **Divine Magic:** The spirit magician uses a divine magic spell to achieve the effect of Spirit Walking, with a skill level equal to their Pact score.
- **Drugs:** The spirit magician uses mind-altering substances to achieve the effect of Spirit Walking. The possible range of effects is based on the drug's Potency which cannot exceed 100; however to actually perform a function while in this state that normally requires a Spirit Walking skill test, the spirit magician must instead succeed at a Perception or Persistence test according to the circumstances.

Utilising any of the following abilities requires entering a trance-like state, which takes a number of minutes equal to the Species Maximum POW (21 for humans) minus their Characteristic POW and costs a single Magic Point. If the relevant skill test is successful then the spirit magician can perform the following dependant on his skill, the potency of the drugs he is using, or his Pact score, whichever applies in the circumstances:

- 01–25 Can sense the presence of spirits within range that are capable of manifesting.
- 26–50 Can see into the spirit world, and sense the presence of any kind of spirit; can see and communicate with spirits that are capable of manifesting.
- 51–75 Can project their own soul onto the Spirit Plane, and can there see and communicate with any kind of spirit.
- 76–100 Can project their own soul onto the spirit plane, and then *manifest* themselves as a spirit to people in the mundane world.
- 101+ Can Disincorporate the souls of others and drag them onto the Spirit Plane with them, at a cost of 1 extra Magic Point per additional person. Unwilling participants resist using their Persistence in an opposed roll against the Spirit Walking skill of the High Shaman.

Those who are able to project their own soul onto the Spirit Plane can travel up to the ability's value in kilometres away from his body. From the Spirit Plane a spirit walker who succeeds in a Perception test can also distinguish the spirits of corporeal creatures in the material world and thus hunt for particular species or even seek out specific people. If the roll is a critical success then entering

the trance is achieved in a single minute. If the roll is fumbled, the spirit magician is barred from entering the spirit plane for a full day.

LOCATING AND GAINING SPIRITS

Spirits can be found in the spirit world where they inhabit spaces that have a correspondence to objects, people or locations in the physical world that are relevant to their nature: subterranean caves for Darkness spirits, forests for Plant spirits and so on. A Traditional Spirit can be Summoned, using Spirit binding, to such places. If a spirit capable of Manifestation is lurking somewhere, it may be located by using a spell or ability such as Second Sight or Mystic Vision, and either goaded into manifesting or forced into it through use of a spell such as Visibility or with the Spirit Binding skill matched against the Spirit's Persistence. In some cases a spirit can be stumbled upon by complete accident, in others the home of a specific spirit may be a secret known to the seeker's tradition. The supplicant can alternatively use Spirit Walking, or be *discorporated* by another entity or the spirit itself, so that bargaining is performed directly on the Spirit Plane. Once located, the magician may attempt to gain control over the spirit, either by negotiation or binding.

NEGOTIATING WITH A SPIRIT

To bargain with a spirit for its aid, the spirit must be willing to negotiate and the supplicant able to communicate with it. Once communication has been established, the supplicant may either request the spirit's aid to perform a single task in return for performing a like service for the spirit; or he may offer to form an alliance with the spirit, in which case the supplicant gains its name with which it can be summoned in return for seasonal propitiation. Such bargains can be settled by Games Master fiat, or resolved with an Opposed Test of suitable skills, such as the supplicant's Influence skill versus the spirit's Persistence. Failure to reach an accord has no further effect. Fumbling the roll, however, may cause the spirit to react angrily.

Some spirits, particularly those with real ambition to be worshipped, may expect the Spirit Magician to dedicate POW to them and create a Pact. This is usually true of the most powerful ones (those of POW 39 and greater), and it is generally only done in instances where the spirit can offer some serious intervention in the Material World, such as a Gift or a Divine Magic spell.

Spirits usually have one or more Attitudes that can affect the outcome of negotiations, just as people do. The following table is repeated from the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*, and can be used to modify the chances of a successful outcome when negotiating with a spirit. To determine a Traditional Spirit's *Sympathies* towards a spirit magician, roll 1D10+10, and if a spirit magician encounters a spirit from tradition known to be hostile to his own, use 1D10. In general, using 3D6 rather than 1D20 to determine a spirit's other Attitudes will provide a more predictable result with less extreme outcomes than when using 1D20.

ATTITUDE TABLE

Random (D20)	Mood	Resolve	Sympathies	Modifier
1	Violent	Indomitable	Implacable	-40%
2-3	Angry	Determined	Hostile	-20%
4-6	Sullen	Confident	Prejudiced	-10%
7-14	Content	Indifferent	Impartial	0
15-17	Happy	Uncertain	Supportive	+10%
18-19	Cheerful	Wavering	Partisan	+20%
20	Ecstatic	Shaken	Fervent	+40%

BINDING A SPIRIT

To capture and bind a spirit instead of negotiating with it, the binder must engage it directly in spirit combat. If he is able to beat the spirit down to zero Magic Points and its POW does not exceed the limit set by his Spirit Binding skill, he may then bind it into a physical object, usually an item with ritual significance. Such objects, once bound with a spirit, are known as fetishes. The recipient of a bound spirit does not necessarily need to have captured it himself. Shamans may locate and bind spirits for other tribal members. However, once the spirit is passed over to another, the recipient must perform all duties and responsibilities concerning it, and once transferred the controlled spirit counts against the *recipient's* maximum number of spirits they can hold at any one time. The maximum number of spirits which can be held by a spirit magician depends on the magician's highest Rites (Spirit Tradition) skill:

MAXIMUM BOUND SPIRITS

Rites Skill	Cult Rank Equivalent	Maximum Spirits
01-50%	Follower	¼ of CHA
51-75%	Spirit Worshipper	½ of CHA
76-100%	Shaman	¾ of CHA
101%+	High Shaman	All CHA

If this number is ever exceeded, then the strongest spirit(s) break free, possibly extracting revenge if they were hostile to the binding.

Spirits which are held within fetishes are tied to the Material Plane. Whilst within its fetish a spirit cannot be harmed by hostile magic or other spirits, nor is it able to break free of its binding – if imprisoned against its nature. However, whilst contained within the fetish, the beneficial magical power of the spirit cannot be accessed either. To use a spirit, the magician must first call it forth from its fetish. This takes a single Combat Action. Once freed, the spirit manifests as a ghostly shape forming a whirling intangible aura about its owner. It is only *directly* observable to those who have invoked their Spirit Walking skill, or who are using appropriate magic, until and unless the spirit *Manifests* itself. Once loosed from its fetish the spirit becomes vulnerable to magical attacks, or the attentions of other spirits.

Only the Spirit Binding skill can be used to trap a spirit within a fetish in this way. Other types of magic, such as sorcery, need to prepare a Binding Enchantment, then use a Dominate or Command spell to force a spirit into it.

SPIRIT CHARACTERISTICS

A spirit's overall power can be described as its Intensity. In general, a spirit will have a POW of 1D6 plus 1D6 per Intensity. Hence the ghost of a human being with a POW of 3D6 is regarded as an Intensity 2 spirit. Many species of spirit are encountered that always have a POW in the upper range for their Intensity, in which case their POW is 1D6 plus 6 per Intensity. For example a typical Intensity 3 Ancestor Spirit has a POW of 1D6+18. Spirits of Intensity 6 or greater may possess the ability to provide Divine Magic spells or Gifts in return for a Devotional Pact in which the spirit magician puts one or more points of POW at the spirits disposal.

SPIRIT MANIFESTATION (POW+CHA)

This is the skill used by spirits to intrude into the physical world, much the same way as Spirit Walking is how a physical creature can intrude into the spirit world. To have this skill a spirit must possess the Manifestation Trait. If it does, its Spirit Manifestation skill is usually equal to its Basic Percentage x its Intensity. Spirit manifestations may involve all the classic signs of a haunting, but for spirits with a manifestation skill in excess of 25% can include attacks on physical creatures through Spirit Combat. Each type of spirit has to obey different rules about how, when and to whom it can manifest itself – it is unusual for any spirit to be able to manifest at will to any living, physical being it chooses. Spirits make themselves known in a variety of ways when manifesting – some of them appear as spectres, some as ghostly voices, others as a rush of air or change of temperature. The greater the spirit's Manifestation skill, the more extreme is the effect. Those with a Spirit Manifestation skill in excess of 100% might appear so 'real' that they can pass themselves off as a physical being and an Insight test is required to see through the illusion.

A spirit that possesses this trait can recover Magic Points while bound or manifest. The rate of recovery is based on their Manifestation skill, and uses the Natural Healing Table on page 86 of the *Legend Core Rulebook*. All other spirits can only recover magic points while on the Spirit Plane.

A spirit's Manifestation skill is also important as it affects what a spirit can hope to achieve in Spirit Combat with a physical being.

- Spirits with a Manifestation skill of 01–25% cannot attack a physical entity in Spirit Combat.
- Those with a skill of 26–75% cannot usually destroy their victim in Spirit Combat and will most likely possess a defeated individual instead.
- A spirit with a Manifestation skill at 76% or higher may be able to actually kill a corporeal victim in Spirit Combat without limitations by dissipating their spirit or severing their soul from their body.

USING BOUND SPIRITS

Someone who practices a spirit magic tradition can control spirits allied to that tradition (Traditional Spirits) with a POW of up to three times the critical range of their Rites (Spirit Tradition) skill.

All other spirits – those that are not allied to the user's tradition, and any that are potentially hostile, can be controlled using the Spirit Binding skill so long as the spirit's POW does not exceed three times the skill's critical range. If the spirit's POW is greater than the limit set by these skills, any attempt to command it fails. Commanding a released spirit is a free action but requires that the owner make a successful Skill Test to ensure that his instructions are understood and followed. Each attempt costs a single Magic Point. If the roll is failed, hostile spirits may act maliciously against the best interests of their owner. Fumbling the roll breaks the binding, returning the spirit to the Spirit Plane and potentially turning on him if hostile.

Spirits may range up to their owner's POW in metres. Recalling a spirit back to its binding fetish is automatic. The greatest strength of spirits is that their effects are *persistent*, lasting as long as it is let out from its fetish. This can make spirit magicians formidable foes, yet their spirits are vulnerable to spells such as Banish or Spirit Block, or even blasting them with some form of magical damage. Once dismissed or destroyed, the spirit is gone for good until a new replacement can be summoned. Thus most practitioners of shamanism tend to keep their spirits carefully hidden away in fetishes until the most propitious time to use them.

	Dice	Average		
STR	—	—	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
CON	—	—	<i>Magic Points</i>	13
DEX	—	—	<i>Movement</i>	20m flying
SIZ	—	—	<i>Spirit Damage</i>	<i>Refer to Spirit Damage table, using Spectral Combat skill</i>
INT	2D6+6	13		
POW	2D6+6	13	<i>Strike Rank</i>	13
CHA	2D6+6	13		
<i>Traits</i>			Life Sense, Magic Sense, Possession	
<i>Common Skills</i>			Common Magic, Influence, Insight, Lore (Shamanic Tradition), Lore (Spirit World), Perception and Persistence	
<i>Spirit Advanced Skills</i>			Discorporate (INT+POW), Manifest (POW+CHA), Spectral Combat (POW+CHA), Stealth	

SPIRIT COMBAT

Most mortal beings who find themselves in spirit combat are attacked by hostile spirits manifesting on the Material Plane. However, some spirits have the ability to *discorporate* the soul of a corporeal creature. This literally drags the mortal's spirit out of its body and fully into the Spirit Plane. Once there, they become vulnerable to spiritual combat at a significant disadvantage, being able to use only their Spirit binding skill or half their Persistence skill to defend themselves, whichever is greater. Many encounters, even with spirits who have discorporated a mortal, can be peaceful, mutually beneficial and informative. However, if the spirit is hostile then battle generally follows.

Spirit combat between two discorporated beings usually occurs on the Spirit Plane. So long as a mortal is discorporated, he has no control over his body and can take no actions in the Material Plane. Observers may see his body spasm and twitch in reaction to what is happening in his spiritual struggle, but he is in all ways helpless until his soul returns to its body.

Spirit combat progresses just like normal combat. Initiative is rolled and the character or spirit with the highest adjusted Strike Rank goes first, the second highest goes second and so on. Thus a Spirit Combat can be run simultaneously with physical combat using the same SR countdown. Spirit combat is run in a very similar way to physical combat, save that for entities that lack physical bodies including mortals who have been discorporated, Attributes are calculated using different characteristics. A spirit or discorporated soul's *spiritual attributes* are calculated the following way:

- **Combat Actions** are determined from its average of INT and POW, rather than the average of DEX and INT.
- **Strike Rank** is calculated from the average of INT and CHA, instead of the average of DEX and INT.
- **Magic Points** are calculated as normal but are used by spirits and souls as their Hit Points.
- **Spirit Damage** is based upon the value of a spirit's *Spectral Combat* skill or a soul's *Spirit Binding* skill; see the Spirit Damage Table. If a discorporated Adventurer lacks Spirit Binding, they use half the value of their Persistence on the table instead.

Instead of weapons, most spirits have a *Spectral Combat* skill that they use in spirit combat. Discorporated spirit magicians use their Spirit Binding skill instead, whereas those uninitiated in spirit magic must rely on half of their raw Persistence skill when discorporate. All material beings attacked by a spirit on the material plane can use their full Persistence skill to defend themselves.

Attacks are made by rolling an Opposed Test between the attacker and the defender using their relevant skills. If the attacker wins the Opposed Test they inflict an amount of damage equal to their Spirit Damage to the opponent's Magic Points. If the defender wins, then no damage is incurred. If the defender runs out of Combat Actions with which to defend themselves, then they are left wide open and the attacker may attempt to make an unopposed attack roll.

A character engaged in spirit combat may forgo their attack in order to cast magic instead. Combat continues until one of the combatants is reduced to zero Magic Points. At this point the loser may automatically be either Possessed (if mortal), Bound (if a spirit), Exorcised (if currently possessing a mortal) or Dissipated (destroyed). If the dissipated spirit was a discorporated mortal, then the physical body dies with the destruction of its soul. Some spirits can recover from being dissipated if they have the *Recurring* trait.

When an Adventurer is attacked in the Material Plane by a manifested spirit he must split his Combat Actions between Spectral Combat and anything else he is trying to do such as spell casting and physical combat. He cannot use any bonus Combat Actions gained for using a shield or a second weapon in the off hand for Spectral Combat. A physical entity attacked by a manifested spirit always gets to fight back using their Persistence at full value, or their Spirit Binding skill, whichever is higher.

POSSESSION AND EXORCISM

A possessed creature is one whose control of their physical body has been usurped by another spirit or soul. This is normally the result of losing a Spirit Combat, w There are two forms of possession, Dominant and Covert.

Dominant Possession occurs when the possessing entity literally takes complete control of the possessed body. The victim is fully aware that its body has been taken over but is absolutely helpless, unable to take any action at all. The possessor does not have access to any of the memories, skills or magic of the possessed but substitutes its own instead. To detect a dominant possession requires a successful, unopposed test of either Perception if viewed magically, or Spirit Walking.

Covert Possession is when the spirit hides in the body of the possessed, riding it like a hitchhiker. The victim retains complete control over his body. Some covert possessions are entirely benign, a result of a spirit being sent by a god as a gift to possess them and use their power to fortify the host against certain dangers or invest him with certain powers, in which case they function similarly to controlled spirits. These possessions are almost always known to the host, but may not be visible to the outside world except through magical senses and spells.

Some spirits that possess covertly are entirely malignant. They may assert their power over the victim at specific times, using their Manifestation skill. This may be to manifest a disease, inflict pain, drive the host mad, or even to take over the host's body at night when he is sleeping, keeping their existence secret save for the inevitable physical exhaustion and fleeting nightmares the victim suffers. In these cases the victim can remain completely unaware of his possession, unless the spirit chooses to inform him of its presence. No manner of magic or healing will stop the effects until the spirit responsible is somehow cast out. Detecting a covert possession requires a successful Perception (if viewed magically) or Spirit Walking skill test, which is opposed by the spirit's Stealth skill, if it has one.

EXORCISM

No creature can ever purge *itself* of a possessing entity. They may only be exorcised by a *separate* individual defeating the possessor in spirit combat, or by successfully casting a specific type of expulsion magic. If the original body of a mortal possessor has been killed in its absence, then its soul dies when it is exorcised. Spirits merely return to the spirit plane.

Needless to say, a possessing spirit or soul can willingly abandon a possession at any time – unless they have been maliciously *bound* to that particular body.

SPIRIT TYPES

There are many forms and types of spirits. They range in power from minor sprites all the way up to the Great Spirits who may be seasonal storm winds, plagues, turbulent rivers, terrifying wildfires or huge mountains.

- A spirit can be an incarnation of an abstract magical or natural effect.
- A spirit can be a collective soul of a species of plant or animal.
- A spirit can be the venerated soul of a dead ancestor.
- A spirit can be the vengeful remnant of a dead creature.

All spirits are sentient, although the degree of sentience and freewill is likely to be dictated by the nature of the spirit. Ancestor spirits, for example, will display all the intelligence and coherence of their mortal form; but nature spirits are likely to see, view and articulate themselves in ways that reflect their origin. Shamans are capable of communicating with spirits, interpreting their sometimes incoherent ways of communicating, through their training and exposure to the spirit world.

ANCESTOR SPIRITS

Ancestor spirits are the souls of family members who reside on the Spirit Plane after death, rather than being consigned to some corner of the Many Hells. A spirit magician who quests on the Spirit Plane will only ever encounter ancestors with whom he has a relationship, finding both venerated ancestors and despised enemies. Such spirits continue their existence in houses, halls, tribes or communities resembling those they occupied before death. Spirit magicians may ask questions or request aid from their honoured ancestors; or conversely attempt to bind and imprison an enemy ancestor, preventing it from being called upon by their foes. Ancestor spirits are a source of knowledge. They possess skills in which they excelled during their life, the mastery of which has prompted their continued veneration. Thus most ancestor spirits are noted heroes, remembered many generations after their death.

Normally an ancestor spirit may only be summoned to the material world by a spirit magician of direct descent. Once summoned or located, the spirit can be asked questions concerning the family line, or events which happened during its lifetime. Such requests only require the successful use of the Influence skill and cost nothing further. Alternatively, the spirit magician may request the ancestor's aid in performing an important deed. Such appeals come at a cost, usually involving a personal sacrifice (a treasured item, a habit, a relationship and so on) and votive gifts

to that particular spirit. This veneration keeps the memory of the ancestor alive, promoting his continued existence. In return the ancestor will possess the body of its descendant. This bargain places the supplicant at a dangerous disadvantage since he cannot prevent the ancestor from using his body in any way the spirit likes. Unsympathetic ancestors often succumb to long forgotten passions, or attempt extreme acts to further their renown – being in little danger of personal harm if their host dies. However, most venerated ancestors are content to remain in the peace of the afterlife. To prove both themselves and the task are worthy of its stature, the magician must defeat his ancestor in mock Spirit Combat. If the descendant is defeated, then the ancestor considers the request below their dignity and refuses aid. If the ancestor is defeated, it is roused into providing aid and will possess their descendant.

Whilst possessed, the spirit magician may substitute certain of his own skills for the heroic level skills of the ancestor. The older and more powerful the ancestor, the higher its skill mastery. They normally know 1D3+2 skills at a heroic level of 90%+POW. Warrior ancestors have combat skills, shaman ancestors have spirit skills, hunter ancestors have stealth and tracking skills and so on. In addition, every ancestor has 1D3 Heroic Abilities. Whilst possessing the body of a descendant, the ancestor cannot be called upon by other tribal members. For this reason, an ancestor spirit usually only remains until it has achieved the objective for which it was summoned. Since ancestors refuse to be bound into fetishes (unless forced to by an enemy shaman) they do not count towards the normal limit of spirit bindings.

INT	As per mortal of the species.
POW	Typically 1D6+Maximum rolled POW for the species, for example for a human it is 1D6+18 (Intensity 3).
CHA	As per mortal of the species.

Skills (at 90%+POW%): Choose from any skill relevant to the ancestor's profession and culture, plus Persistence at POWx4% and Spectral Combat at POWx5%. Ancestors know as many points of Common Magic as they have POW. Lacking fetishes, they do not have any bound spirits but can summon favoured spirit allies they used during their life.

An Ancestor's Manifestation skill is equal to its Basic Percentage x Intensity (99%), however for every generation that has passed, and every step removed from direct descent between Ancestor and descendant, the link becomes more remote and the Manifestation skill is penalised by –10%. To call upon an Ancestor's spirit and make use of its skills or abilities, once the request has been made, requires a successful Manifestation Skill Test on the part of the Ancestor modified by the appellant's critical Spirit Binding score. This may be attempted once per round, however if the test is fumbled the link is broken and the promised assistance lost.

APPARITIONS

An apparition is a fractured spirit – in fact nothing more than an imprint on the material world left by some past person or event. It has the ability to Manifest in order to reveal itself to an observer – but insufficient to force a physical being into spectral combat.

Apparitions commonly play out some brief moment in the past responsible for their creation, perhaps the moment of death or in the life of the individual that the spectre represents that was highly charged with emotion. Very rarely they may in fact foreshadow an event yet to occur. Some apparitions preserve a meaning that can be discerned by the astute observer, perhaps with an appropriate Insight Skill Test. Others may confer a curse (an automatic failure or even fumble on the next skill test) or a blessing (as additional Hero Point or an improved success at their next Skill Test) on the observer.

An Apparition has a fixed INT of 3, POW 1D6+6 (Intensity 1) and a CHA of 1D6.

BANE SPIRITS

Bane spirits strive to absorb the essence of other spirits usually at the behest of a more powerful entity who wants a spirit removed from somewhere it has no right to be. Due to their entropic touch, the Magic Point damage they inflict is permanent and spirits dissipated by them are forever destroyed. If constrained to a fetish, bane spirits can be sent against other spirits to engage them in spirit combat. If the Bane Spirit wins, it consumes the defeated spirit, destroying it utterly, including other bane spirits.

Their characteristics are 1D6 for INT and CHA and a POW of 3D6+6 (Intensity 3). Bane spirits cannot Manifest, but they can if necessary Discorporate other spirits that they have been sent to destroy, such as those currently possessing a mortal host.

ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Elemental spirits originate from the Elemental Forces of *Air*, *Earth*, *Fire*, *Flesh* and *Water*. They are the same beings summoned by such spells as Elemental Summoning but a spirit magician can invest their powers within his *own* body. For example, a shaman could bind a salamander and use it to give himself a burning touch, a gnome to move himself through earth and rock, an undine to survive underwater and swim fast and so on. Using a Flesh Elemental allows the spirit magician to shape-shift, or to make themselves a giant (gaining 6 SIZ and STR per cubic metre after the first).

An elemental spirit's INT, CHA and abilities are equal to an elemental of corresponding size. The spirit's POW is 1D6+6 for an Intensity 1 spirit, the equivalent of a 1 cubic metre elemental. Each further level of Intensity increases POW by +6 and its potential size by another cubic metre.

GHOSTS

Ghosts are the souls of those who fail to make the crossing over to the spirit world because something has happened causing them to be 'bound' to the material world, haunting a specific place, person or object. Ghosts typically are capable only of the weakest or 'spectral' forms of Manifestation – eerie lights and sounds, moving small objects; the more powerful include poltergeists capable of throwing furniture around a room – and some can engage in Spectral Combat if the target fulfils certain conditions that lay them open to attack, often to do with a transgression or desecration. When a Ghost does attack it will take dominant

possession of the victim if it wins, but this is usually only so as to be able to force the victim to do something they would never do of their own free will, such as commit suicide or attack a friend or loved one – or perhaps just to perform some action required to free the Ghost from its haunting.

Ghostly Traits

A Ghost often has a trait that it can activate through its Manifestation skill. The trait is a magical attack the Ghost can use against someone within a range of their POW in metres, or who is within the boundaries of the area to which the Ghost is bound. It can usually deploy a trait once per day for every five CHA it possesses. Some examples are included on the Ghostly Traits table.

GHOSTLY TRAITS

Trait	Effects
Spook	The ghost has the power to terrify; once per day it can deliver a Fear attack (as the Divine Magic spell) with a Magnitude of 1 per 10% of its Manifestation skill.
Poltergeist	The ghost is capable of moving or hurling objects of a total ENC equal to its POW with an accuracy equal to its Manifestation skill. It can also attempt to prevent an Adventurer from lifting an object, opening a door or similar by using its Manifestation Skill in an opposed Brawn test.
Sprite	The ghost has the power of Illusion (as the Divine Magic Spell) with a Magnitude of 1 per 10% of the Ghost's Manifestation skill.
Fury	The ghost has the power of Madness (as the Divine Magic Spell) with a Magnitude of 1 per 10% of the Ghost's Manifestation skill.
Revenant	The ghost has the power to cast Sever Spirit (as the Divine Magic Spell) with a Magnitude of 1 per 10% of the Ghost's Manifestation skill. It can only use this ability against an individual whose doom is the whole purpose of their haunting.

Ghosts sometimes have the ability to use their Manifestation skill to replicate a skill or ability that reflects the profession they pursued in life, a talent or genius they possessed, or just the thing that obsesses them most. Sometimes the ghost can be persuaded or forced to channel this skill in ways that allow a mortal to make use of it. These ghosts operate similarly to an Ancestor Spirit.

Ghosts have INT, POW and CHA of the same level as a living example of their species. Hence the ghost of a human, the most common type, has INT 2D6+6, POW 3D6 (Intensity 2) and CHA 3D6.

GUARDIAN SPIRITS

These spirits ward the summoner from hostile magic or supernatural attacks. They are often found in places where vast sorceries have been cast, or holy sites where a god has made frequent personal appearances. They can also be drawn to intense concentrations

of magic, large ceremonies or battlefields for example. A guardian spirit protects the holder of its fetish by interposing itself before offensive spells. The spell must first overcome the Persistence of the guardian spirit. If it fails, the spell is negated. If the spell overcomes the spirit, it continues onto the spirit magician, who may then also resist the spell. The spirit can neutralise spells of up to one Magnitude for every three points of its POW. If the spell's Magnitude is greater, the spirit is unable to affect it. If a magic spirit encounters an anti-spirit spell, such as Spirit Block or Banish, it may attempt to resist the spell before it is affected.

Guardian spirits characteristics are 2D6 for INT and CHA and have a POW which ranges from 3D6 (Intensity 2) up to 3D6+18 (Intensity 5).

HEALING SPIRITS

These spirits cannot manifest on their own and usually need to be captured and bound in the spirit world. An Intensity 1 healing spirit is capable of restoring one Hit Location suffering a Minor Wound to full Hit Points; an Intensity 2 spirit (POW 1D6+12) is capable of healing a Serious Wound and an Intensity 3 spirit (POW 1D6+18) is capable of healing a Major Wound, including reattaching a severed limb or fixing broken bones, while an Intensity 4 spirit (POW 1D6+24) can restore an entire body back to full health so long as there is some small sign of life remaining. Healing spirits are usually one-shot devices that are negotiated with to provide their services once before returning to the spirit Plane. If forced into a binding a healing spirit may be reused however each use of its power costs the spirit 1 MP per Hit Point it heals and the spirit will gradually be drained of Magic Points unless released to the Spirit Plane between uses to recover.

Healing Spirits usually have INT and CHA of 3D6 each.

PASSION SPIRITS

Found in the entourages of greater daemons and gods, passion spirits range from those that instil fierce feelings of love, fear or depression, to those that drive a warrior into an irresistible battle fury. Most Passion Spirits have the ability to manifest themselves to a victim who is already prone to whatever emotional state they are peddling. Winning Spectral Combat results in covert possession. Whenever a suitable situation arises for the Passion Spirit's particular emotion to assert itself, it will try to match its Manifestation skill against the host's Persistence and if successful the victim's actions will be completely driven by their emotional state.

Passion Spirits usually have a POW of 2D6+6 (Intensity 2), and INT and CHA of 2D6 each

NATURE SPIRITS

These are the spirits of natural things that live and grow in the material world. Sometimes specific animals or plants are worshipped as totems – the spiritual guardian and strength of a tribe. Spirit magicians who devote themselves to a particular species in this way are always on friendly terms with spirits related to their totem but suffer neutral or hostile reactions from other

nature spirits. Nature spirits can usually only manifest to the creatures they relate to, or to a follower of a spirit tradition with which they have an affinity.

Nature spirits embody a myriad of different abilities depending on the plant or animal they originate from. In general each spirit should encompass **one** of the following effects, something which represents a quality expressed by its species' corporeal form. If two or more nature spirits *with the same ability* are used at the same time by the same magician, only the stronger spirit will take effect.

- Boost an attribute – Armour Points, Damage Bonus, Hit Points, Magic Points, Movement or Strike Rank.
- Dominate species – Can control behaviour of members of its own species (even plants!).
- Increase a skill – Gain a bonus to a skill used by that species.
- Manifest a Trait – Use a Trait possessed by the species, such as a special sense or movement.
- Combat Manoeuvre – Grants a specific combat manoeuvre which can be automatically used if they succeed in the relevant attack or parry, in addition to any they may have gained for the better level of success.

Each point of Intensity possessed by the Nature spirit allows it to grant either:

- One step increase in an Attribute. For example an Intensity 2 spirit might increase Hit Points by 2 on each location.
- Control over one creature simultaneously.
- A 10% increase to a skill.

The Characteristic POW of nature spirits is based on the Intensity of their effect. An intensity one spirit has a POW of 1D6+6, an intensity two spirit a POW of 1D6+12, an intensity three spirit a POW of 1D6+18 and so on. Spirits which embody Combat Manoeuvres or Traits are the exception. Those which grant a Combat Manoeuvre have a minimum POW of 1D6+18 (1D6+24 for critical only manoeuvres); whereas those which grant Traits have a minimum POW of 1D6+12 and sometimes more if the particular effect warrants it.

The other characteristics of a nature spirit match those of its corporeal cousins. A lion spirit would have an INT of 5 and a CHA of 5, for example. If no example characteristics are available for the species, they can be randomly generated by rolling 1D4+2. Some example nature spirits follow. Remember that these are individual spirits and others of their kind may be more or less powerful.

Rhino Hide (Intensity 3 boost AP, rhino spirit): INT 3 POW 20 CHA 3. CA 2, SR 3, MP 20, Spirit Damage +1D10. Persistence 80%, Spectral Horn 100%.

Increases the natural Armour Points of the magician by 3 points. These do not affect the wearing of additional armour, or reduce Strike Rank.

Strong Claw (Intensity 1 boost Damage Bonus, bear spirit): INT 5 POW 10 CHA 5. CA 2, SR 5, MP 10, Spirit Damage +1D6. Persistence 40%, Spectral Claw 50%.

This spirit boosts the Damage Modifier of the magician by one step, a shaman whose Damage Modifier was normally +1D2 would be increased to +1D4.

Tawny Might (Intensity 2 boost Hit Points, griffin spirit): INT 6 POW 16 CHA 7. CA 2, SR 7, MP 16, Spirit Damage +1D8. Persistence 64%, Spectral Gore 80%. Adds an extra 2 HP to each location of the magician.

Green Vigour (Intensity 4 boost Magic Points, oak spirit): INT 1 POW 25 CHA 1. CA 3, SR 1, MP 25, Spirit Damage +2D8. Persistence 100%, Spectral Roots and Branches 125%. Increases the magician's Magic Points by 4.

Long Hoof (Intensity 3 boost Movement, horse spirit): INT 4 POW 22 CHA 5. CA 3, SR 5, MP 22, Spirit Damage +2D6. Persistence 88%, Spectral Hoof 110%. The spirit boosts the magician's Movement by 3 metres.

Swift Thought (Intensity 2 boost Strike Rank, mongoose spirit): INT 4 POW 17 CHA 5. CA 3, SR 5, MP 22, Spirit Damage +1D10. Persistence 68%, Spectral Bite 85%. Augments the Strike Rank of the magician by 2 points.

Fang Brother (Intensity 1 Dominate Species, wolf spirit): INT 5 POW 9 CHA 5. CA 2, SR 5, MP 9, Spirit Damage +1D6. Persistence 36%, Spectral Bite 45%. Spirit will allow the magician to dominate and control a single wolf.

Tenacious Life (Intensity 2 Increase Skill, ivy spirit): INT 1 POW 14 CHA 1. CA 2, SR 1, MP 14, Spirit Damage +1D8. Persistence 56%, Spectral Hoof 70%. Increases the magician's Resilience skill by 20%.

Sharp Ears (Intensity 2 Manifest Trait, bat spirit): INT 3 POW 18 CHA 3. CA 2, SR +3, MP 18, Spirit Damage +1D10. Persistence 72%, Spectral Squeal 90%. Magician gains the Echolocation Trait.

Savage Snip (Intensity 3 Combat Manoeuvre, praying mantis spirit): INT 3 POW 23 CHA 3. CA 3, SR +3, MP 23, Spirit Damage +2D6. Persistence 92%, Spectral Foreclaw 112%. Grants the automatic free use of the Choose Location combat manoeuvre whenever the magician succeeds in his attack.

SICKNESS AND CURSE SPIRITS

Sickness and curse spirits are malevolent beings which attack and covertly possess mortals. Once in possession they emulate specific disease effects (see page 78 of the *Legend Core Rulebook*). Sickness Spirits are usually found attached to an object (such as the corpse of their last victim, a dish, a well, a creature or a place) and can manifest to anyone touching that object. The spirit will try to force its victim into Spectral Combat by matching their Spirit Manifestation trait against the victim's Resilience, and if successful the victim is now polluted and cannot escape the spirit except by defeating it in Spectral Combat. If the spirit wins it covertly

possesses the victim who is thus infected with whatever disease it carries. Someone who defeats a Sickness Spirit in Spectral Combat becomes immune to it.

Curse spirits are similar in effect to sickness spirits but they are normally captured by spirit magicians at sites of great disaster and misfortune. Once bound they are used as offensive weapons to covertly possess the spirit magician's enemies.

Both types of spirit have an INT and CHA of 2D6. Their POW can range from 1D6+6 (Intensity 1) up to 3D6+6 (Intensity 3). The bigger the POW the stronger they are in spirit combat and the more difficult to exorcise once discovered.

SPIRIT WARDS

Some Guardian Spirits will agree to ward a person, place or thing against other spirits and daemonic entities. In this case the Guardian Spirit can completely block all intrusion or attacks by one specific *type* of entity agreed between spirit and spirit magician so long as the hostile entity is of a lower Intensity, or has a POW that is 3 or more points lower than the Guardian Spirit. If the hostile entity is of equal or greater Intensity the Guardian spirit may, depending on its binding, force it to engage in spirit combat.

The most common use for a Spirit Ward is to block the attention of Sickness Spirits or Curse Spirits. However Spirit Wards can be assigned to block any kind of being that does not normally inhabit the Material Plane, even if, like an elemental or demon, it has taken on a physical form. The Spirit will in this instance attempt to disincorporate the target, and attack them on the Spirit Plane.

Spirit Wards have the same characteristics as Guardian Spirits, but usually have a POW of at least 3D6+6 (Intensity 3), and have the Disincorporate trait.

DESIGNING SPIRITS

Most of the spirits listed here are simply examples of an almost infinite range of possibilities. To help Games Masters create new and unique spirits, use the following guidelines:

- A spirit usually provides a single advantage. This can be either knowledge, an attribute (not characteristic) boost, a Heroic Ability, domination of a particular species, control or resistance to a particular Rune, or inflicting a detrimental effect.
- Whatever the advantage, it has to be capable of being a permanent effect – being constantly on. The effect must also be balanced according to other comparable spirits, Divine Magic and Sorcery.
- The Magnitude of the spirit's advantage is always proportional to its POW. Since many spirits have a variable amount of POW, you can have weak to powerful versions of most sorts of spirit.
- The majority of spirits by default possess a minimum Spectral Combat skill equal to their POWx5% and a Persistence of POWx4%.

- Those which attack mortals by discorporation have a Discorporate skill of POWx5% and those which *covertly* possess victims also have a default Stealth skill of POWx4%.
- Spirits that can Manifest in the material world have a default Manifestation skill of POW+CHA x Intensity

ELEMENTALS

Elementals are otherworldly entities that manifest themselves as animate natural forces or materials. They represent the quintessential incarnation of a particular element. The most common are gnomes, salamanders, sylphs and undines, which form bodies from earth, fire, air and water, respectively.

Elementals are dimly intelligent entities that lack CHA or CON and are thereby immune to any effects which require Resilience rolls. An elemental's SIZ is represented as a volume rather than a number, as these nebulously formed creatures have no set proportions. For example, an elemental may be described as having a SIZ of three cubic metres. When a numerical value is needed for an elemental's SIZ, the elemental's normal Hit Points may be used as its SIZ. For example, if an elemental with 10 Hit Points climbed into a box and was lifted by an adventurer, its SIZ could be treated as if it was 10. Normally, however, salamanders and sylphs have little or no mass, composed as they are of fire or air.

As fixed INT creatures, elementals tend to act on very basic instincts. They do not have the base physical needs biological entities have, such as eating, sleeping and reproducing and are usually inactive. If threatened, elementals will defend themselves or flee, otherwise they simply do what is natural for their form: undines flow to the lowest spot and sit there, shades lurk in the shadows, sylphs float on the wind, gnomes stand immobile and salamanders lounge about setting fire to nearby objects.

Elementals are most often encountered when they are summoned and dominated by a spellcaster. Many spell users with the requisite knowledge make frequent use of elementals, as they are powerful creatures whose rudimentary INT is nonetheless sufficient to understand and carry out the orders of the summoner.

When an elemental is summoned, there must be enough of the appropriate raw material or force present for the elemental to manifest itself. For example, a 10 cubic metre salamander would require an inferno and would be unable to manifest in a rainstorm with no source of nearby flame larger than a lantern. Likewise, a one cubic metre undine would require a tub or cauldron filled with water and would be unable to manifest in a desert. No matter how much of the element is available, an elemental may not be larger than its SIZ. If insufficient material is available, the elemental will simply not form. The bizarre Flesh elemental is the exception to this rule. Earth elementals (gnomes) and air elementals (sylphs) are the most commonly summoned elementals, as there is almost always plenty of earth and air at hand.

All elementals, no matter their composition, may be struck and damaged with normal weapons, breaking up their construction

and eventually disrupting the underlying matrix. Elementals have only one Hit Location and no armour. When an elemental is reduced to zero Hit Points, the material being animated as its body immediately dissipates (or collapses, in the case of gnomes and undines) and its spirit returns to the other world. The spirit may be summoned again to inhabit another vessel of the appropriate type.

Elementals attack by engulfing their enemies and cannot be parried, only evaded. Failing to evade usually leads to being harmed by some secondary effect. A successful attack roll is always required to strike an elemental, even if the striking character is currently engulfed by one. Elementals do not parry or evade blows in combat, but are compensated by being naturally immune to most combat manoeuvres which might be used against them.

GNOME

A gnome is an elemental of the earth, composed of soil and pebbles. A gnome cannot be summoned or travel through areas composed of solid rock. Instead gnomes move through the earth, travelling just below the surface and often leave a trail of disturbed soil that marks their passage. A gnome cannot leave the earth and when seen in the open, it appears to be a slow whirlpool of dirt.

Abilities

A gnome can open up pits in the soil, make tunnels and find buried objects. It can also be used for holding objects stuck into the dirt, keeping loose tunnel roofs from collapsing and forming mounds, ridges and ditches in the soil no larger than the elemental's volume.

A gnome can carry a person with it as it swims through the soil, provided it is strong enough to lift the person. The gnome cannot, however, provide air for that person and unless the person being carried has some magical means of breathing, he may suffocate during the trip. A gnome can only carry an unresisting passenger in this manner. A gnome can carry as many people as its STR can handle.

Combat

A gnome attacks by dragging its victims into the ground. It can swallow up targets of up to 10 points of SIZ for each cubic metre of its volume. If it can engulf over half the SIZ of an enemy, the victim is dragged down to its waist (or fore and hindquarters) and cannot manoeuvre. A creature so trapped may make an opposed Athletics or Brawn test against the gnome's Brawn skill to break free. If the gnome can engulf the entire SIZ of an enemy, then he begins to suffocate. Escape requires the same opposed test but this time at a -20% penalty.

If the gnome is large enough, it may attack several enemies simultaneously, provided they are in close proximity to each other. Once a gnome has enveloped its victim, it may additionally crush them – inflicting the gnome's Damage Modifier to all Hit Locations engulfed every round. Armour protects against this damage.

The statistics provided are for a gnome of three cubic metres.

Characteristics & Attributes

All of a gnome's Characteristics except its DEX are predicated upon the size of the gnome. Each cubic metre the gnome possesses gives it 1D6+6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT and 1D6+6 Hit Points. All gnomes have a DEX of 1D6. A gnome's Brawn skill and Damage Modifier is computed with the gnome's STR x 2, rather than STR + SIZ.

SALAMANDERS

Salamanders are elementals of fire, composed of living, writhing flames. They must be summoned from an existing fire large enough to accommodate the salamander's SIZ. Once formed, a salamander can move about at will without being extinguished, except by a large amount of water or earth. A salamander does not even need fuel, though considering that setting things on fire is more or less the salamander's *raison d'être*, it is likely to ignite anything it can.

Abilities

A salamander will ignite any flammable object it touches. Given sufficient time it will heat (and eventually melt) metal, bake pottery or even crack stone. A salamander can be used to douse natural fires, so long as it has a volume equal to or greater than that of the fire. A salamander cannot quench other salamanders, nor can it extinguish a Fireblade spell or other magical flames. The salamander simply enters the fire and sucks it into itself, incidentally healing itself a number of Hit Points equal to a round's worth of damage from the quenched fire.

Salamanders can float through the air at the same rate as they move on the ground. A salamander must touch an object to ignite it.

The statistics provided are for a salamander of three cubic metres.

Combat

In combat, a salamander engulfs its foes in flame. It can swallow 10 SIZ points of an enemy per cubic metre of volume. For the sake of simplicity, if the salamander can envelop over half the SIZ of its victim then it has engulfed either the lower half of the body (both Legs and the Abdomen), or the upper half of the body (Chest, Arms and Head) if floating. If it can fully encompass its victim, then it affects all its Hit Locations.

Every round, a salamander inflicts one point of damage per cubic metre on all locations it has engulfed. For example, a five cubic metre salamander can completely engulf a normal-size human and will inflict 5 Hit Points of damage every round to every one of the human's Hit Locations. Armour protects against this damage at half its usual AP value.

Characteristics & Attributes

All of a salamander's Characteristics except its DEX are predicated upon the size of the salamander. Each cubic metre the salamander possesses gives it 1D6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT and 1D6+6 Hit Points. All salamanders have a DEX of 3D6. A salamander lacks any Damage Modifier since it never attacks with kinetic force.

SYLPHS

Sylphs are elementals of the air and thus can be virtually anywhere that is not underwater. They are tangible, formed out of what feels like solidified air. Sylphs are always invisible, though a sylph that wishes to be seen may pick up loose dirt or incorporate smoke into its body to make itself visible. Sylphs have no fixed volume and SIZ is primarily used to determine how much damage the creature can inflict in combat.

Abilities

A sylph can carry objects or people with a total SIZ equal to or less than the sylph's STR. A sylph may also be used in indirect ways, for example creating a cooling breeze, scattering dead leaves over a trail or blowing dust into the eyes of enemies.

Combat

A sylph's primary form of attack is by enveloping and tossing its enemies. It can seize and lift a number of victims with a total SIZ equal to or less than the sylph's STR. The victims are thrown two metres (vertically) for every cubic metre of SIZ the sylph possesses. Normal falling rules are used to determine damage.

If he cannot evade the attack, a victim can resist being lifted by a sylph by grabbing hold of a fixed object (such as a tree) and matching his Brawn against the sylph's in a standard opposed test. Alternatively, he may try to destroy the sylph through damage before the elemental can toss him into the air. A sylph can lift multiple targets by dividing its STR between them.

A sylph may also attack by hurling objects at its enemies. In the case of a flying creature, for example, picking it up and dropping it is likely to be ineffective. A sylph's chance to hit with a thrown object is always its DEX x 3. Damage is worked out normally depending upon the item the sylph hurls.

The statistics provided are for a sylph of three cubic metres.

Characteristics and Attributes

All of a sylph's Characteristics except its DEX are predicated upon the size of the sylph. Each cubic metre the sylph possesses gives it 2D6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT and 1D6+6 Hit Points. All sylphs have a DEX of 4D6. A sylph's Brawn and Damage Modifier is computed with the sylph's STR x 2, rather than STR + SIZ.

UNDINE

Undines are elementals of the water, their bodies composed of a formless mass of liquid. An undine may form in any liquid that is at least 95% water, such as beer, diluted milk or diluted wine. An undine moves overland like a huge, amorphous amoeba and moves through water like a rippling current. There is no difference between undines formed of fresh water and salt water.

Abilities

An undine can purify itself of sediment and insoluble substances by sitting and churning for a full Combat Round per cubic metre of the elemental. It cannot remove dissolved chemicals such as salt

or miscible liquids such as alcohol in this way, though it could purge itself of dirt or oil. They can also be used to form fountains, make fluids flow against gravity, acting like a pump, or form stable cavities in volumes of liquid.

An undine can carry objects or beings if its STR supports their SIZ, or conversely drag them under the surface of a large body of water. Spellcasters capable of summoning and commanding undines sometimes use them in the place of ships, sitting serenely atop the creature as it rushes through the water.

Combat

An undine can engulf 10 SIZ points of a creature for every one cubic metre of volume the elemental possesses.

An undine attacks by enveloping its victim and on each successive Combat Action forcing itself into the victim's lungs. If the victim fails to avoid being engulfed, he must succeed in an opposed test of his Resilience versus the undine's Brawn skill, to prevent it from forcing itself into his lungs. If he fails, the victim cannot hold his breath and immediately begins to suffocate. Even if the undine is unable to force itself into the victim's lungs, it may still cut its victim off from oxygen, though in this case the victim can hold his breath.

The statistics provided are for a three cubic metre undine.

An undine may attempt to suffocate water-breathing creatures by drawing oxygen away from their gills, a tactic that results in the usual drowning rules. Evading an undine when within a body of water requires the use of the Swim skill instead of Evade.

Characteristics & Attributes

All of an undine's Characteristics except its DEX are predicated upon the size of the undine. Each cubic metre the undine possesses gives it 2D6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT and 1D6+6 Hit Points. All undines have a DEX of 2D6. An undine's Brawn and Damage Modifier is computed with the undine's STR x 2, rather than STR + SIZ.

BLEMMYE

Blemmyes are elementals of flesh, their bodies a formless blob with a yellowish red-veined surface, capable of extending limbs and skeins of flesh or forming organs at will. A blemmye may form from any inert fleshy body or mass that is at least 3 SIZ per cubic metre of its final volume. It can extrude itself if the body in which it incorporated is larger than the elemental, or if smaller, it can (uniquely) grow to its full volume in the course of a single round before doing so.

Abilities

A blemmye can shift its shape to match that of the creature in which it originally formed, although it will not be a convincing representation, its surface remaining a rather blobby wet pinkish yellow. Alternatively its summoner can force it into a certain shape using Form/Set Flesh. Whatever form it is given does not affect its abilities.

A blemmye can *assimilate* a creature or person made of living flesh by merging with it, and can become an extension of their body or vice versa. It may also absorb all or part of the target within its own mass. They remain separate entities, but the combined forms will have hit locations apportioned according to SIZ (assume 10 SIZ per cubic metre of its volume). In this state it can act as a life support system for the creature that it has assimilated, keeping it alive so long as the Elemental has positive hit points at least equal to the extent of damage the creature has received. The blemmye can also absorb and excrete toxins in the incorporated creature's body. A Blemmye may distribute its potential SIZ across the target's Hit Locations, typically resulting in a bizarre giant version of the host, and adds its STR to the host's as well.

Combat

A blemmye usually attacks by assimilating its victim in its own mass and then disrupting it. The blemmye can completely assimilate targets of up to 10 points of SIZ for each cubic metre of its volume. If it can engulf over half the SIZ of an enemy, the victim cannot manoeuvre. A creature so trapped may make an opposed Athletics or Brawn test against the blemmye's Brawn skill to break free. Meanwhile the blemmye merges with and disrupts their form, inflicting 1D3 damage per location incorporated per round and increasing the difficulty of the test to escape by 20% each time.

If the blemmye is large enough, it may attack several enemies simultaneously, provided they are in close proximity to each other. It may well have parts of several unfortunate creatures protruding from its form.

Characteristics & Attributes

All of a Blemmye's Characteristics except its DEX are predicated upon the size of the elemental. Each cubic metre the Blemmye possesses gives it 2D6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT and 1D6+6 Hit Points. All Blemmyes have a DEX of 2D6. A blemmye's Brawn skill and Damage Modifier is computed with its STR x 2, rather than STR + SIZ.

RUSTIC MAGIC

One of the reasons that farmers tend to live together in villages and agricultural towns rather than in scattered farmsteads is the need for access to agricultural magic. Most towns will maintain a cult that nurtures devotees with sufficient Pact scores to access important Divine Magic spells, and even villages may have one or two devotees who can cast magic that benefits both their own and their neighbours' farms.

In addition to those spells listed in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* there are plenty of other Divine Magic spells accessible on a regional or local level. The Tarsenian gods, like many other deities, are able within reason to generate new spells for their devotees that are tailored to specific needs or circumstances which reflect some aspect of relevance to agriculture, even if they are not by nature

GNOME

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+18	29	1-20	Body	-/29
CON	—	—			
SIZ	3 cubic m	3 cubic m		Combat Actions	1
INT	3	3		Damage Modifier	+1D12
POW	3D6	11		Strike Rank	4
DEX	1D6	4		Magic Points	11
CHA	—	—		Movement	4m

Typical Armour: None

Traits: Earth Sense

Skills: Brawn 58%, Engulf 100%, Perception 35%, Persistence 43%

SALAMANDER

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6	11	1-20	Body	-/29
CON	—	—			
SIZ	3 cubic m	3 cubic m		Combat Actions	2
INT	3	3		Damage Modifier	—
POW	3D6	11		Strike Rank	7
DEX	3D6	11		Magic Points	11
CHA	—	—		Movement	8m

Typical Armour: None

Traits: None

Skills: Engulf 100%, Perception 30%, Persistence 43%

SYLPH

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6	21	1-20	Body	-/29
CON	—	—			
SIZ	3 cubic m	3 cubic m		Combat Actions	2
INT	3	3		Damage Modifier	+1D8
POW	3D6	11		Strike Rank	9
DEX	4D6	14		Magic Points	11
CHA	—	—		Movement	20m

Typical Armour: None

Traits: None

Skills: Brawn 42%, Persistence 43% Stealth 75%

UNDINE

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6	21	1-20	Body	-/29
CON	—	—			
SIZ	3 cubic m	3 cubic m	Combat Actions		2
INT	3	3	Damage Modifier		+1D8
POW	3D6	11	Strike Rank		5
DEX	2D6	7	Magic Points		11
CHA	—	—	Movement		12m

Typical Armour: None

Traits: None

Skills: Brawn 42%, Incorporate 100%, Perception 30%, Persistence 43%

BLEMMYE

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6	21	1-20	Body	-/29
CON	—	—			
SIZ	3 cubic m	3 cubic m	Combat Actions		2
INT	3	3	Damage Modifier		+1D8
POW	3D6	11	Strike Rank		5
DEX	2D6	7	Magic Points		11
CHA	—	—	Movement		6m

Typical Armour: None

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Brawl 56%, Brawn 42%, Incorporate 100%, Perception 30%, Persistence 43%

or tradition connected with the land or with nature. For example, while Hamath is not an agricultural deity he is a protector of the poor, most of whom live in the countryside and depend on it for their subsistence.

SPELL RANKS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Some of the spells listed here are available only at specific places or can only be cast at certain times of year. This is a common state of affairs with Divine Magic, as deities do not usually have an all encompassing cult that accesses all the spells they can offer, but rather have core spells available to any Devotee with some specials only available via particular cults, artefacts or sacred places.

Since in Age of Treason many Divine Magic Spells are frequently acquired without membership of a cult, a spell's rank is indicated

by the minimum Pact score required for it. A spell with the rank of Deity indicates that the caster must be possessed by a deity to cast it. This usually only happens at the god's major annual festival.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

BLESS LAND

Duration Special; Rank Deity

This spell is usually the effect of a successful casting of the Call (Deity) spell at the annual festival of the local land god or goddess, or sometimes that of a culture's hero or weather god. The devotee invoking the deity must recite the boundaries of the land that the deity is called to bless. The territory described cannot exceed 10,000 Hectares (100 sq km) per 10% of the devotee's Pact score.

The impact of adverse weather, drought or other natural disasters on crop yields or Farming skill tests is halved.

In Korantia this spell is provided by the Sun God and cast in a cycle of annual rituals by their Emperor; in the Jekkarid, by the Moon Goddess Jekkara, cast by the high priestess at Parlasos and repeated in each of the temples from which the land's eight provinces are ruled. Tarsenia lacks a deity of sufficient power to enact such a rite. The Emperor Cult makes public that when the Emperor ascends to the heavens he will be able to provide this spell. In the meantime any attempt to harness alternative deities to do so is, of course, treasonous.

BLESS CROPS

Duration Special; Rank 75%, Touch

A small agricultural temple should be capable of furnishing several of these spells each year. Across Tarsenia shrines to the barley-goddess, Kait, make it available to her devotees. In Age of Treason the effect is to increase the yield of the targeted land area by x1. Up to 100 Hectares may be affected per point of Magnitude, sufficient for one village or a single large estate.

BLESS SEED

Duration Special; Rank 25% Touch

This spell affects 10 Pecks of seed grain per point of magnitude. It ensures the seeds have the very best chance of landing in a good spot when sown, of germinating and putting down good roots. As a result it takes only 10 Pecks of Blessed Seed to sow a Hectare of land – half the amount of normal seed required.

CONCEAL CROPS

Duration 1 Day; Rank 50%, Touch

This spell hides crops from would-be pillagers. The crops are literally swallowed up by the earth and removed from sight. A field, orchard or similar of 0.25 Hectares can be affected per Magnitude.

This spell in its various versions came to prominence during the Wars of Unification. In some places it is provided by a local nature spirit or hero. It can be accessed by devotees of Hoonvel who make the pilgrimage to his sacred site at Ushaya, a hill-town in the territory of Merat that was a famous place of refuge during the wars. Reports exist of a Thennalt version of this spell in which the crops continue to grow beneath the soil until they ripen, but are not returned to the sunlight until the caster is dead. This can allow a man to go to war out of season, leaving his crops in stasis beneath the soil to be revealed to his family upon his death – but potentially requires the caster make a human sacrifice of himself to properly serve his community.

CURSE CROPS

Duration Special; Rank 50%; Touch

This spell has several versions, according to whether the entity that offers it can manifest its power through torrential rain, a sun-blasted heat-wave, a flood, insect swarm, hurricane or hailstorm. It is most often encountered in the hands of Thennalt Warrior Societies, many of which are tied to a totem that represents a

destructive force of nature. The effect is to unleash a cataclysmic wave of weather or infestation that destroys crops in an area with a diameter of 1km per point of magnitude, typically destroying the livelihood of a rural village or noble estate. The spell can usually only be cast at a time of year that is appropriate to the means through which the damage is done; apply a 20% difficulty modifier to the Rites or Theology skill being used to invoke the spell per season by which the caster is adrift of the ideal time.

FATTENING

Duration Special, Rank 25%, Touch

This spell accelerates the growth of a domesticated Fixed INT animal to make it ready for instant use, usually to slaughter for meat. The effect is achieved during the course of the spell's 15 minutes duration, and is permanent. For every 10% of the caster's Pact skill the animal gains 10% in weight, however it cannot exceed the maximum SIZ characteristic for the species.

An alternative version of this spell has the target creature simply rapidly gain age, at a rate of one month per 10% of the user's Pact skill. Until such time as it reaches its full rolled SIZ score. The creature retains its current condition – hence if this spell is cast on an immature but well fed and healthy beast the result will be an older, larger, healthy specimen.

INUNDATION

Duration Special; Rank Deity

This spell is usually the effect of a successful casting of the Call (Deity) spell cast at the annual festival of the local river god, and if properly used generates a beneficial inundation of the land through which the river passes. The devotee invoking the deity must recite the boundaries that the deity is called to inundate with his waters. The territory described cannot exceed 1,000 Hectares per 10% of his Pact score. This land must be within the river's flood plain – it cannot be caused to flow uphill and irrigate hills and uplands. In most cases the spell causes the river to fill irrigation channels and canals, in some it results in the dump of significant amounts of fertile silt onto the land along the river. The process takes from dawn to sunset, and by the following dawn the river has receded again to its normal level.

The usual effect of this spell is to increase the yield of the inundated land by 2 – so that if the land usually provides a yield of x6 the amount of seed planted, for example, and this spell is used its yield will increase to x8. In Tarsenia only the Siskil River, flowing through the territory of Zarina, is the object of worship that demands his waters flood the land each year.

RESTORE FIELDS

Rank 25%, Touch

This spell affects a number of Hectares equal to its Magnitude, typically covering the planted area of one family's farm. When cast at the end of a successful harvest as part of a thanksgiving ritual it enables the area affected to be replanted for the following year without any fallowing or crop rotation with no loss of fertility.

This spell is provided by the mother goddess Samanse in certain places where Hoonvel is worshipped as a subordinate deity.

BESHOR VALLEY FLOODS: INUNDATION SPELL VARIANT

Inundation is a key part of the rites practised among the Beshor Valley people. In this instance the inundation is essential to the ability of some parts of the land to bear crops at all. The area of effect is predetermined and the yield delivered is equal to the Magnitude of the spell. However only the kings of Yegusai and Zagre can acquire, and cast the spell. They do so on a competitive basis, making simultaneous progress through the domains they control that year, performing the rites that are their duty and privilege.

Of the 87 separate wards and domains in the Beshor Valley, there are 24 where the spell can be cast, thanks to ancient pacts between people and river. Due to the limitations of dedicated POW, in an average year the kings manage 12–14 castings between them. As a result the various domains have to enjoy the benefit of the flood every other year, however as there is an imbalance between how many of these territories are in each kingdom and how many uses of the spell each king has, it is not uncommon for a domain to switch allegiance simply to secure consecutive year inundations. A King who has a low Pact score or who has neglected to take enough uses of the spell is liable to see desertions of local communities or lords to his rival.

RIPEN (SPECIFIC CROP)

Duration 15, Rank 75%

This spell causes the crops growing in the affected area to accelerate their growth by one month for every 3 Magnitude of the spell. The acceleration takes place within the 15 minute duration of the spell. The caster can affect all plants of the type provided for by the spell in an area of one Hectare. It is sometimes available from Sumis, goddess of the wild things, and in that case is traditionally used to call forth fruit from a wild tree or bush rather than a cultivated crop. Nevertheless there are villages near Merat and Zarina where a mystery cult has formed around a place sacred to the barley-goddess Kait, and the Ripen Barley spell is taught. Whatever mythological hokum has grown around these cults, the main value and purpose is to allow these villages the chance to be first to market with the year's harvest.

DESTRUCTIVE MAGIC AND CURSES

Many spirits and deities offer spells designed to ruin the efforts of your rivals and enemies to profit from their land. Thennalt Warrior Societies have access to many such spells, all of which represent calling upon the forces of nature to behave at their worst.

Bless Land, Bless Crops and Bless Seed each has a curse version, which delivers the reverse effect. In addition some apparently benign spells can be used aggressively. An Inundation can be called upon to wash away crops that are already growing, if invoked at the wrong time of year; gnome elementals, or the Turn Earth spell,

can similarly destroy a crop. Ripen can be used to accelerate growth so that the caster can steal the produce while the landowners are away or asleep in their beds, and for this reason there are shrines to Hamath where the spell can be sacrificed for by his devotees.

RAZE CROPS

Rank 25%; Touch

This spell torches all food bearing plants within the area of effect, which is equal to one Hectare per point of Magnitude, destroying any possible harvest this year. The crops affected must be in contiguous fields, as the area of effect flows out from the caster like a flood of fire and if it meets a gap of uncultivated land more than 3 metres wide it is stopped and must expend its energy in other directions. Living creatures within the burning zone are affected as if in contact with a small fire (1D6 damage per round, Evade test to avoid damage each round), and if not burned may find themselves suffering from asphyxiation by the smoke. The spell is commonly provided by gods connected with war. Some shrines or artefacts associated with Machank have this spell available. Casting this spell in any circumstances other than an act of war or the necessary destruction of a diseased crop is a capital crime, even if the lands targeted are your own.

GNOME PLOUGHS

Elementals are frequently used in farming by those with the resources to acquire and command them. Undines have been put to use raising water for use in irrigation, and salamanders for clearing land by burning, however gnomes remain the most widely encountered use of elementals in farming.

A 3m cubed gnome is capable of ploughing or clearing a small field of 0.25 Hectares in the course of a standard 15 minute Divine Magic summoning. If it is possible to detain the creature for longer, this means it can plough at the rate of 1 Hectare per hour, a single day being sufficient to complete the work on a decent sized farm, and a few days being enough to complete the task for a whole village or a large estate. Ploughing is the most obvious use for a gnome, but one can equally be used to clear fields of rocks and stumps, perhaps readying a hillside for the landowner to lay down a vineyard.

The following Divine Magic spell is provided by the Thennalt Earth Mother:

TURN EARTH

Duration Special; Rank 25%

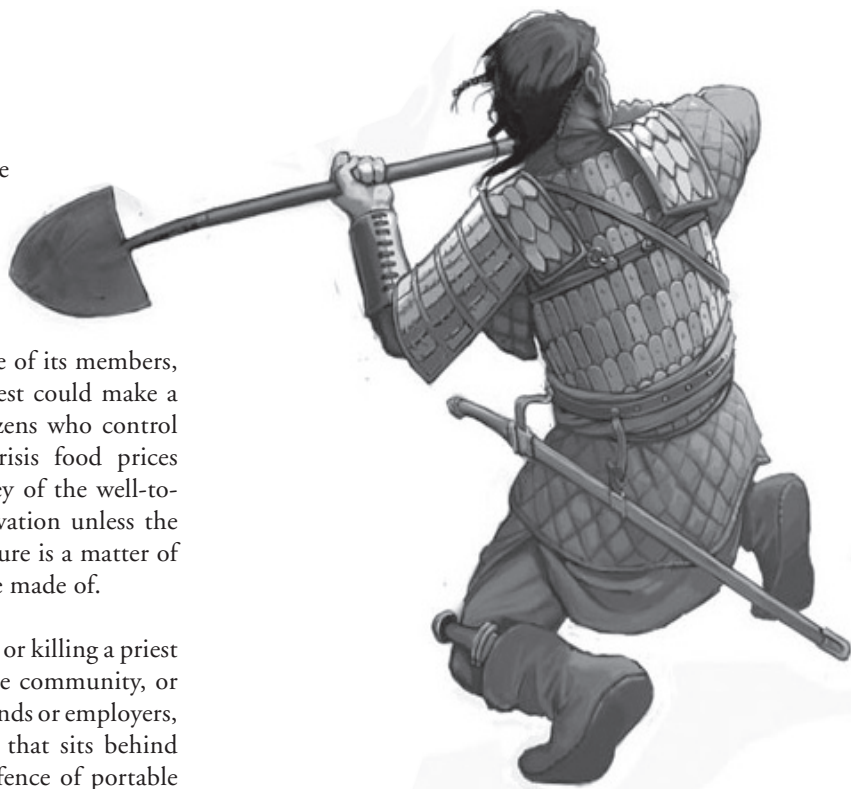
This spell summons one or more gnomes for the sole purpose of ploughing the earth. One Hectare per Magnitude of the spell can be ploughed in the course of a single day. The caster must mark out the area to be affected, and the means of doing so may vary from place to place. Common approaches include placing boundary markers, making a circuit of leather strips, or simply ploughing a furrow the hard way with a team of oxen that encompasses the desired area of affect.

AGRICULTURAL ADVENTURES

On the face of it, the realities of rural life are no place for an action packed adventure. Nevertheless the importance of agriculture in everyone's lives means that it is rich territory for warfare, conflict and life-or-death dramas. A failure in a community's ability to bring in a harvest threatens every one of its members, and a magical means of ensuring a good harvest could make a whole town, or just a small section of its citizens who control the magic, wealthy and prosperous. In a crisis food prices spiral upwards, soaking up the available money of the well-to-do and consigning the poorer citizens to starvation unless the Simulacrum intervenes with state aid. Agriculture is a matter of life and death – and that is what adventures are made of.

Whether the object of an adventure is capturing or killing a priest or devotee whose magic is essential to a hostile community, or defending the livelihoods of an Adventurer's friends or employers, agriculture provides an important motivation that sits behind the story – no less than the acquisition or defence of portable wealth in gold and jewels. Foreign raiders will target fields and orchards, destroying or stealing crops and livestock. An agent provocateur may use magic to cause crops to fail, stirring up unrest; a dispossessed inheritor or a deadly business rival may do likewise in order to take revenge or lay low those they perceive as their enemies. At least half the population lives in a regular state of uncertainty about whether they can get enough to eat this year, and any of these events that are disastrous for the purses of the rich may be deadly for the bellies of the poor.

Above all, keep in mind that all wealth ultimately stems from the application of human labour, and a little magic, to the resources provided by the earth; in settled human societies agriculture provides the largest share of that wealth by far. Even a city-dwelling goldsmith requires someone to be out there producing enough food that he does not need to work the land himself, and that there is sufficient surplus in the economy to provide his well-heeled clients with money to spend on his services.



Securing the magical support for agriculture is opportunity for a quest and the reason for many pilgrimages that Adventurers may undertake themselves or act as guards and escorts for those who do. It may also be the root of treasonous plots and political intrigue. The Emperor's inability to provide the Bless Land spell is a weakness in his magical potency that could cause powerful groups to seek alternative means of divine help, leading to conspiracies to overthrow the status quo. Only a generation ago the Solarists were run down and (it is assumed) exterminated, who planned to bring the Sun God into the Taskan pantheon, a move which would have threatened the Emperor's primacy. A delve into the traditions of Sorandib may reveal that the city's peculiar history in the field of agricultural and meteorological magic hints at a hidden secret; and in Thennalt lands, where the Earth Mother is queen of everything, magic is wielded that can make or break a harvest, in many cases by people who are hostile to the Taskans and would relish the opportunity to undertake raids and invasions where they get to use their magic in anger.

CULTS

THE BEGGARS OF SORANDIB (MYSTERY CULT)

This cult exists to provide a form of support and mutual protection for its members, who are the most disadvantaged section of society. The cult also provides a means of retribution against those who stoop so low as to oppress even those who have nothing. There is only one cult in honour of Nosthagre, which is inseparable from the begging community of Sorandib. This cult monopolises the gifts and divine magic this deity can provide to its worshippers. The Beggars do not set out to steal, but to render stealing unnecessary by other means of survival – since if caught committing a crime even a beggar can find his station in life reduced. Beggars claim the right to anything lost or discarded, and this is a right traditionally recognised by the rest of society.

The beggars also exist to demonstrate how even the most afflicted can survive if others come to their help. Devotees of the cult's patron deity receive an affliction if they do not already have one, which provides them with a reason to expect the charity of others.

LEADERS

Hanskom, the 'king of the beggars', controls access to Nosthagre, *The Little God of Lost Things*, who is channelled via a sacred artefact – an ancient, ragged child's toy in the shape of a little horse made of leather stuffed with straw. He is supported by an inner circle of initiates known as the Favoured Few, whose favour is in the form of various afflictions that mark them out as miserable beggars and elicit the sympathy and coins of the wider public.

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone who is destitute can seek the protection of the beggars, but will be expected to make some contribution, either by begging (naturally) or by bringing found objects that the higher-ups can find a use or value for. A beggar who accepts paid employment, or a grant of maintenance, is no longer a beggar and must leave the brotherhood. A bona fide beggar is expected to recognise Hanskom's authority, and that of his lieutenants, the Favoured Few.

BENEFITS

Those who join the beggars gain the support of the community and will likely never starve. They are entitled to share in the perquisites of beggar status, including the right to beg somewhere and to benefit from finding lost things. They are taught the basics of the cult's lore, and initiates can continue to learn as much of it as they wish.

BLESSINGS

There are no formal worship ceremonies to attend. Those who touch Nosthagre and pass over a minimum of 25% of their Magic Points have a chance equal to their Cult Lore to receive Nosthagre's Blessing. Each Blessing can be used as a 10% Luck modifier to enhance their Streetwise, Fast Talk or Perception skills when attempting to secure food or shelter.

SKILLS

Those who join the beggars' brotherhood can gain mentoring or training in:

Beggars' Lore (Cult Theology), Fast Talk, Sleight, Streetwise

INITIATION: THE FAVOURED FEW

The cult initiates are considered the leading lights of the begging community, and enforce its practices and traditions. The candidate should have a minimum of 50% in three of the cult skills, one of which is Beggars' Lore. A prospective initiate who has no affliction to celebrate must accept an Affliction as their first Gift from the god, at the cost of 1 POW. One who has, or who receives, an Affliction can also take one of the deity's other Gifts, or take Divine Magic spells.

AFFLICTIONS

Nosthagre's Gifts cripple the receiver so that others might deem them worthy of charity, thus securing a livelihood that requires no labour. Each Affliction either cripples a limb (non vital location) by reducing it to 0 HP, or reduces a Characteristic to species minimum -1; this gift is free with first POW dedication unless the devotee is already afflicted. Each new Affliction costs 1 POW

The more Afflictions a character possesses, the more they are favoured.

A character with one Affliction is entitled to dedicate up to 1/4 POW
A character with two Afflictions is entitled to dedicate up to 1/2 POW.

A character with three Afflictions is entitled to dedicate up to 3/4 POW

A character with four Afflictions or more is entitled to dedicate all POW

DISEASE RESISTANCE

For 2 POW a beggar can take a gift that renders him highly resistant to diseases of all kinds. Add the beggar's Pact score to his Resilience for resisting a sickness emanating from a plague demon, however if the resistance roll is in excess of his unadjusted Resilience the beggar is still a carrier of the disease.

MAGIC

In addition to the gifts of Affliction the cult enables initiates to take Nosthagre's offering of Divine Magic and Miracles. No common Magic or Sorcery is taught.

MIRACLES

The deity offers a miracle that provides both deterrent to and retaliation for mistreatment of the afflicted.

BEGGAR'S CURSE

This Miracle costs 3 POW and allows a beggar to strike someone else with an Affliction. The target must be named at the point at which the POW is dedicated. The beggar must subsequently touch the target, or something he is wearing, and speak his curse. The curse may only be lifted by a Miracle granted by a more powerful deity, or by the Afflicted living as a beggar for a year and a day as a form of penance.

DIVINE MAGIC

Find (Item), Unlucky

FIND ITEM

Duration 15, Ranged

This spell guarantees that any one named item (or person) will be found if it is within the range of the spell. The spell is normally cast upon an individual or object that can move freely for the duration of the spell, which moves with him, increasing the area of the search. If the item being sought is behind solid matter its presence will still be revealed, even if the searchers cannot get to it.

UNLUCKY

Duration Special

The beggar can share some of his misfortune with someone who has injured him in some way. This spell causes the target's next use of a Hero Point to fail. The Hero Point will be burned nonetheless, it simply will not bring the Adventurer the lucky success they had intended – potentially with disastrous consequences. While additional uses of this spell can be taken, each use of the spell cannot be regained until it has been triggered. The target of this spell cannot know he is afflicted with it, however it is visible to Soul Sight as a miasma on the victim's spirit.

UN-HEROIC ABILITY: PASS UNNOTICED

Skill Requirement: Stealth 75%+ or Streetwise 90%+; Fast Talk or Sleight 50% +

Hero Points: 4

This ability is the one by which beggars move about beneath the notice of other people, hiding in plain view. It is not about stealth, but a sort of abject humility that sometimes serves a useful purpose as placing the beggar beneath the notice of others. A beggar can use this for many things – to sneak into a place past its guardians, to take shelter in a private garden or to hang around with a crowd of people listening to their gossip.

CULT OF SORANTAR (PROPITIATION AND MYSTERY CULT)

Sorantar's worship was established many centuries ago when he was bound to this place. A cult was set up to honour and propitiate him, and when his home was moved from the caves beneath Palace Hill to the great ziggurat which is now his temple, it was charged with ensuring the conditions of the binding remain in force. The benefits that accrue to each party continue. Sorantar himself is the beneficiary of significant Magic Point sacrifices and a controlled flow of POW dedications; the city benefits from the energy generated by the intense heat of his manifestations. The priests maintain a careful balance – it is believed that if Sorantar gained access to a greater store of dedicated POW than the cult currently provides he may become a dangerous liability.

LEADERS

The high priest of the cult is Vegoth Maveg. His importance in Sorandib is only marginally outstripped by his sense of self-importance, regarding his role as being guardianship over everything that makes Sorandib what it is. Maveg is well aware of the ambition within the cult of Taskan Thesh to incorporate his cult into theirs, and will resist it with every bone in his body. He also knows that as Sorandib's population dwindles, so does the power and majesty of its patron deity, so he is not against Taskan intervention in the region per se. Maveg has come to the conclusion that Sorandib's failing monarchy is now beyond revival, and the Taskans offer the obvious opportunity to restore some glory to the city.

MEMBERSHIP

Any citizen of Sorandib is considered a common member, however these days much of the city population passes through life unrecorded and so can evade their obligations more or less with impunity. A common member must offer up 25% of his Magic Points on the god's holy day and can receive blessings in return. These members receive no individual blessing – their sacrifice is an act of public duty alone.

INITIATION

There are no devotee-initiates in Sorantar's cult, simply a cadre of common members who are given privileged access to the cult leaders, and who are expected to perform various cult duties when required. A number of full time cult employees form the core of this group, including the temple guards. They are not entitled to

make a POW dedication, but offer up at least 50% of their magic points at worship ceremonies. These members are singled out when blessings are granted at the acts of worship, demonstrating the greater favour in which they are held compared to other common members.

SKILLS

'Initiates' are taught Lore (Sorantar Cult Theology) to Basic Percentage. No other skills are taught by the cult.

ACOLYTES

An 'initiate' is a candidate for selection to become an Acolyte when a vacancy arises. The selection is entirely based on the discretion of the priests and is highly corrupt, so it is rare for anyone with a SOC of less than 10 to be selected, and those who are have their SOC score raised to 13 as a 'Gift'. These 12 individuals are entrusted with cult secrets and assigned to important tasks to assist the priests. They can learn the full extent of the cult's theology, and are expected to dedicate the amount of POW the priests demand of them – currently 3 points – and are entitled to access Divine Magic. Should they wish to, they can study the cult Grimoire.

PRIESTS

An acolyte may gain promotion to the priesthood, which brings with it perks and privileges that ensure a rise in SOC to 16 if it is currently lower. These men, usually about 14 in number, are the principal intermediaries between Sorantar and the people of Sorandib – and, importantly, between the cult and the Artificers. They are the keepers of the runes and enchantments that keep Sorantar imprisoned in his temple and the temple sanctified. They also have the unique privilege of being cremated within the city precincts – on one of the temple platforms in fact – their ashes laid in a special mausoleum within the Temple Quarter.

MAGIC

Sorantar is a minor deity and has a limited range of Divine Magic spells to offer, while the cult maintains its own Grimoire of sorcery spells.

DIVINE MAGIC

Consume, Control Fire, Dismiss Elemental, Extension, Hide Salamander, Summon Salamander

His Extension spell can only be applied to spells he himself offers.

CONSUME

Touch, Instant, Rank: Priest

Using this spell the priest converts a substance to magic points that can be used by the caster. For every point of magnitude 1 HP of flesh, 5 ENC of non-combustible material or 10 SIZ combustible material can be destroyed by fire and 1 MP gained. The caster cannot accumulate Magic Points indefinitely, since they only remain available to him for the duration of the spell. If used offensively on a target who is not helpless or surprised the caster must make a successful Brawl attack. The damage caused

by the spell cannot be healed. It would be possible to remove the remains of an affected limb and subsequently use magic to regrow or regenerate it.

HIDE SALAMANDER

Duration Special, Rank: Priest

A specialist binding spell that places a Salamander within a lump of Brightcrystal – a mineral found only in Palace Hill – in which it can be safely transported and from which it can subsequently reform itself without need for a fire from which its body would normally be created. The Brightcrystal must be a size of at least 0.25kg per cubic metre of the Salamander. The Salamander likes its home, and if released to perform a task will be more than happy to return to it rather than its elemental plane when its work is done. This spell is used to provide Salamanders to the Artificer for their forges.

CULT GRIMOIRE

The Brazier: Animate Fire, Dominate Salamander, Sanctify, Worship Sorantar, Wrack (Burning), Enchanting Ritual

THE ARTIFICERS OF SORANDIB

(SORCEROUS ORDER)

Almost anything that happens in Sorandib is in some way connected with the presence of the Artificers. They are a college of sorcerers who arrived in Sorandib to serve 'mad' king Basgerik over 350 years ago, and who put down permanent roots in the city. They established an Academy in Lower City, and a complex of workshops beneath the palace where their most secret work is undertaken. Many years later – following the first discovery of the means to make gunpowder some 150 years ago – they built a small manufactory producing gunpowder in the city. After a disastrous accident that killed many citizens 80 years ago, they moved this facility outside the city walls. The order itself is based in and beneath the palace and that is where the most secret workshops, laboratories and libraries can be found.

The Order is organised more or less as a guild, with ranks equivalent to apprentice, journeyman, master and grand master status. A further group known as Machinists exist to provide technically skilled labour to the order, but are not considered members. Machinist status and the skills and secrets that go with it passes from father to son.

The Artificers have a close relationship with the priesthood of the city's local deity, Sorantar. Sorantar's fires are used to power a system delivering hot water to some high prestige locations (including the palace), many of them now sadly in disrepair but with some notable exceptions. The Artificers are responsible for the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of these utilities. Each of the Master Artificers also has his own 'forge' in a chamber beneath Palace Hill, and these forges burn hot and bright, fuelled by an elemental from Sorantar's entourage.

MUNDANE ARTIFICE

An Artificer uses his fusion of arcane knowledge and technical know-how to construct something that can function in a way that is almost impossible for an ordinary craftsman to achieve and may even seem miraculous. However the majority of Artificer-made items involve no magic at all, do not detect as magical and do not involve elaborate ritual to make them. These products are known as Mundane Artifices. The secret knowledge to design and build them is represented by the Craft (Artificer) skill.

CRAFT (ARTIFICER) INTx2

With this skill an Artificer invests an otherwise ordinary item with extraordinary capabilities and enhancements referred to as Features.

Every artifice project has a Complexity rating. The Artificer can apply a total Complexity to his project equal to one tenth of his Craft (Artificer) skill. Complexity is essentially a measure of Magnitude for those in the artifice business. Each feature the Artificer wishes to add to an item has its own Complexity score.

PROCEDURE

The Artificer's player states what item he wants to craft and what Feature(s) of Artifice are to enhance it. The materials need to be acquired and assembled, and the Artificer must have access to the necessary tools, equipment and assistant labour. The Artificer will not roll against his Craft (Artificer) skill, but against the specific Art, Craft, Engineering or Mechanisms skill required to make an ordinary version of the object to which Artifice is being applied. He may bring in expert help in the form of a craftsman with a higher Craft skill to assist him and even do most of the work, in which case the assistant's Critical Range is added to the skill chance.

An artifice is created using the Extended Task rules. The duration of a Task Round Unit is based on the time required to make an ordinary example, plus the same again for each of the Features to be applied. Each Feature added to an object by Artifice also increases the difficulty level of the skill tests required to make it.

FEATURES FOR MUNDANE ARTIFICE CREATIONS

These are examples of some specific Features that an Artificer may apply to one of his creations in addition to those replicating the work of an Enchanter.

Articulated (Variable Complexity Feature)

A revision of the Articulation Virtue as it appears in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*. Articulation breaks an item down into separate hit locations by the use of complex joints and the transfer of functionality to discreet locations around the construct, which provides a more versatile platform for the creation of Golems. Articulation costs 1 point of Complexity for every hit location after the first. For example: creating a humanoid construct with 7 Hit Locations costs 6 points of Complexity.

Compact (Complexity 3 Feature)

The item or device has reduced size, weight or encumbrance. Achieving this without a loss in AP or HP requires great ingenuity. If successful, the Artificer can reduce the ENC or SIZ of an item by one half, with no loss of functionality.

Concealed (Complexity 2 Feature)

The item's Features, and in some cases even its basic functionality, are impossible to spot – or, at least, the Artificer's own skill opposes any tests made to determine what it is or how it works. Uses of the Feature include disguising armour or weapons as innocent pieces of personal dress or equipment, constructing secret doors, or architecture that hides its true purpose or plan. Alternatively the item may be made to incorporate a secret compartment or space in which something of appropriate size can be hidden away. This Feature must be applied separately for each Feature or function it is designed to conceal.

Puzzle Locked (Complexity 4 Feature)

The item is encrypted by way of a complex set of dials, levers, switches, moveable tiles and so on. It is impossible to use without either knowing the sequence in which these things should be operated, or else by a successful use of a Mechanisms skill test as an Extended Task opposed by the Artificer's own skill.

Refined (Variable Complexity Feature)

The item is engineered so that its normal capabilities are improved upon, or its drawbacks minimised or removed. A weapon may be made so well balanced that its minimum DEX requirement is significantly reduced, or its range as a missile is extended. It might have a weapon-catcher added giving it the ability to Disarm an opponent when parrying, or a poison reservoir that can be triggered in the event of a successful Impale. If a weapon is devised to do additional damage, the increase in damage will generally only apply in the event of a successful use of a Combat Manoeuvre. Armour can be made that reduces penalties to swimming or climbing. A lantern might be fashioned with clever use of mirrors that consumes only half the normal fuel, or burns twice as brightly.

To determine the Complexity cost of a refinement, it takes 2 points of Complexity to provide +5% advantage to a skill offered by the item as a result of its enhancement. If a weapon is to provide an additional Combat Manoeuvre to a standard item of the kind, it also costs at least 2 Complexity points, however should a weapon need significant re-engineering to gain the ability the GM should impose the cost of adding a Trait instead. One point of Complexity is required for every Characteristic Point by which a minimum (or maximum) score to use an item is reduced. If you have *Arms of Legend* the armour and weapon modifications presented therein can be achieved by an Artificer without the drawbacks stated at a cost of 2 Complexity each.

A general change in an item, such as to add a magazine to a crossbow to create a repeater (reducing reload time), should have a minimum Complexity point cost of 3.

Resistant (Variable Complexity Feature)

The item resists a specific form of damage: Cold, Heat, Electricity, Falling, Piercing, Cutting, Blunt Force and so on. The minimum cost of 1 Complexity point provides the most basic resistance to the type of damage specified. For example a Complexity 1 fire-retardant glove will enable an Adventurer to hold his hand over a candle flame indefinitely, with no damage to either the glove or the Adventurer inside it. A basic level of resistance to Blunt Trauma will prevent the Stun Location Manoeuvre from attacks that have caused no Hit Point damage.

Each point of Complexity applied to this Feature after the first strengthens the item as if it had been given STR Characteristic points through an Enchantment process. Each 3 points of additional Complexity (STR) completely blocks one dice, class or level of damage. Should the damage be of a higher class, damage will go through, however the item's STR rating is still deducted from the damage before it is applied to the Adventurer. Refer to the table at the bottom of the page.

Example: Alenza, a Journeyman Artificer, is embarking on a project that will create a garment designed to be proof against all forms of piercing damage, whether from arrows or daggers, for a client who is in fear of assassination. The project will require that she also has the Craft (Armourer) skill. Her Craft (Artificer) skill is 71%, so she can achieve a maximum Complexity of 8. She is applying the Resistance Feature and wants to strengthen the materials she is working on in cunning ways to make the garment proof against Small and Medium sized impaling weapons. Unfortunately the garment, a padded undershirt, will provide no defence other than its normal IAP against slashing or crushing attacks, and the attacker's Damage Bonus, if any, will still apply. As only a single Feature is being built into the item, the Craft test is Difficult (-20%).

Trait (Variable Complexity Feature)

Trait Features give an item a capability that it would not normally have. As such the Complexity is greater than simply enhancing the item's existing functionality, and Trait features usually cost at least 5 Complexity points. The final Complexity should be determined in discussion between the Artificer's player and the Games Master, with a view to just how the effect is to be achieved. A wall (or floor) could be made super-smooth and impossible to get a grip on, or a polished shield so reflective as to dazzle opponents; a lens could be crafted and polished in such a way as to enable it to see magical auras. These Traits may involve replicating something observed in the natural world (for example Creature Traits, such as Night Vision, listed in *Monsters of Legend*), but they must always

be devised with some rationale that reflects the original nature of the item. Hence, for example, the Night Vision trait is best applied to some sort of spectacles.

Trigger (Complexity 1 Feature)

The item has a form of autonomous but non-magical activation triggered by a set of rules provided by the Artificer. Pressure plates, heat sensitivity, fuses, tripwires, movement detection – anything the Artificer can reasonably devise where a physical action can be used to remotely set off a reaction. Each type of trigger, or each trigger in a chain, costs 1 Complexity point, however if there is a subtle and demanding application of mechanics involved – for example some sort of motion sensor – the Game Master may require a higher level of Complexity.

Virtue (Variable Complexity Feature)

The item performs a function that approximates something that can be achieved by Enchantment. Using the Virtues relevant to STR, CON and DEX provided in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* as a guide, total the number of Characteristic Points of the relevant type being emulated by the device and the Intensity of the Enchantment Virtue being replicated to find the total cost in Complexity points of each Feature. Characteristic Points must be separately paid for in Complexity for each Feature being applied, even if those Features rely on the same Characteristic.

While it is possible for an Artificer to work out how to achieve many of the same effects that an Enchanter does through ingenuity and technical know-how alone, he cannot artificially replicate Conditions, nor Enchantment Virtues relating to INT, POW or CHA, nor any of the Golem Virtues through non-magical means.

CREATING AN ARTIFICE WITHOUT THE CRAFT (ARTIFICER) SKILL

It is sometimes possible for an ordinary craftsman to devise and achieve something similar to a work of artifice if he excels at his craft, subject to Games Master approval. A Master Craftsman who has a Craft skill in excess of 100% can use the value of his skill over 100% as if it were Craft (Artifice), in respect of creating items that require that skill only. Hence an armourer with a skill of Craft (Armourer) of 125% could create a piece of armour that is enhanced with up to 3 Complexity points of Mundane Artifice.

ARCANE ARTIFICE

While Artifice is not a magical art in itself, the intellectual roots of the order are sorcerous. The most ambitious creations are ones that

Complexity	STR	Falling	Heat	Cold	Lightning	Weapon Damage
1	0	NA	1 (Candle)	1 (Biting Wind)	NA	Attacks (such as poison darts, fangs, bee stings) that do not inflict actual HP damage.
4	3	1D6	1D4	1D4	1D6	Small Weapons of the specified type.
7	6	2D6	1D6	1D6	2D6	Medium Weapons of the specified type.
10	9	3D6	2D6	2D6	3D6	Large Weapons of the specified type.
13	12	4D6	3D6	3D6	4D6	Huge Weapons of the specified type.

can be made autonomous, and this cannot be achieved without the use of magic. Enchantment of the kind described in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* is an effective way to achieve this, however the Artificers have a specialist alternative that exploits the POW source provided by an artefact unique to the city of Sorandib.

THE BLACK ROCK

Anyone who is to practice the art of making things as a profession in Sorandib must seal their admission to the crafting guilds with the permanent and irrevocable sacrifice of 1 POW to a great black pillar that stands within the grounds of the palace. No benefit is received for the sacrifice of this POW other than acceptance into reasonably reliable employment. The Black Rock absorbs their sacrifice and gives nothing in return.

The Artificers have created a specialist enchanting ritual that harvests the POW stored by the rock and uses it to give life to their constructs by converting it to Golem Characteristic Points.

POWERING ENCHANTMENT (SORCERY RITUAL)

The Powering Enchantment activates a work of Artifice, drawing on Characteristic POW and converting it to the Characteristic required. While the spell is a Touch spell, it can be manipulated with Range, and usually is, so that the POW is drawn to one of the forges.

When the Artificer casts this spell, he draws POW from the Black Rock up to a maximum of 1 point per 10% of his Grimoire skill. This POW can then be converted to one or more (if using the Targets Manipulation) Characteristics in the target construct, generating a number of Characteristic Points based on the Artificer's Grimoire skill:

Grimoire Skill	Characteristic Points Yielded Per Point Invested
01–25	1
26–50	1D2
51–75	1D4
76–100	1D6
101–150	1D8
151+	1D10

This Enchantment is used exclusively to activate Golem Virtues, which must be pre-installed as part of the Craft (Artifice) process, ready for activation. These virtues must be prepared as part of the crafting process, and cost 2 Complexity points each.

GENERAL PURPOSE BRONZE GOLEM

This is a fully articulated, humanoid golem made out of bronze. It is ready for further enchantment, or to be used as a platform for Instinct spells to equip it with skills for a particular job. It is constructed by a Master Artificer with a Grimoire Skill for the Powering Enchantment of 97% and Artificer Skill of 112% (Complexity 12).

	Dice	Average	D20	Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6	21	01–03	Right Leg	8/9
CON	—	—	04–06	Left Leg	8/9
SIZ	6D6	21	07–09	Abdomen	8/10
INT	1D6	4 (Fixed)	10–12	Chest	8/11
POW	—	—	13–15	Right Arm	8/8
DEX	3D6	11	16–18	Left Arm	8/8
CHA	—	—	19–20	Head	8/9

Attributes: DM: +1D8 CA: 2 SR: 10+ Mv: 6 MP: 0

Features: Articulation (6); Golem STR (2); Golem INT (2); Golem DEX (2)

Common Skills: Brawn 105%, Evade 55%, Perception 20%

Sample Advanced Skills (Instinct spells cast at 75%): Combat 128% Athletics 128%

This Golem has an effective SIZ of 21 for the purpose of calculating Hit Points and Damage Modifier. While effectively immune to most weapons due its metallic construction, this type is highly vulnerable to spells such as Form/Set Metal spell, which in the hand of a user with a Grimoire skill at least 71% can warp them into a shape that results in a catastrophic failure. A spell cast with a lower Grimoire skill can take out one location per CA.

The Golem has fixed INT, and can obey simple instructions of the 'fetch', 'kill', 'carry' variety.

THE GUILD LEADERS

Head of the order is the Chief Artifex, Felster Halkin. The Halkin family has been a part of the order since the beginning and Felster claims an ancestor among its original founders. A brother, Anthul Halkin, is also one of the five Master Artificers, and holds the title Royal Astronomer. Sidig Klum is the Master Artificer in charge of the Gunpowder Factory, Arkas Arkin runs the Academy, and the remaining Master is his cousin, Anthul Arkin, who is usually at Ashkor with the Taskan army.

MEMBERSHIP

The Artificers are always on the lookout for talented and intelligent individuals from the artisanal class who can be inducted into the guild proper, given an education and trained in both magical skills and specialist arts and science – such as architecture, engineering, alchemy, technical drawing, harmonics, astronomy – anything that might be a useful in the pursuit of making useful things that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

An Adventurer who wishes to become an Artificer must have first completed Previous Experience for one of the Professions listed under Artisans in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*.

NEW MAGICAL ABILITIES: THE WORK SONGS OF SORANDIB

The Work Songs are a magical tradition akin to Common Magic as described in the *Legend Core Rulebook*, but consists of a set of specialist spells for use by men and women at work. Instead of using a Common Magic or Rites (Own) skill these spells are activated using the caster's Sing skill. Mad King Basgerik outlawed public singing in Sorandib so that the Work Songs would be used only within the craft guilds controlled by the Artificers and would never be taught to outsiders or committed to writing. His law still applies, and Work Songs can only be used within the confines of an authorised workshop. This means many Work Songs that were once used in public – sung perhaps by labourers, peasants, builders or boatmen – have been lost to memory.

It takes only a few hours to learn the basic notes, tones and chants of a Worksong, but a week of practice to master it to the point it can be used.

More complex songs exist that enable one singer to influence others, chanting the same song together, or to weave the songs of different trades into a harmony. These songs are now protected secrets of the Artificers.

WORKSONG

Duration Special, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Trigger

This ability is used to apply a song or chant as an augment to a craft skill – and each craft has its own. A Worksong operates just like the Common Magic spells Armoursmith's Boon and Mason's Boon, adding a +10% bonus per point of Magnitude to the caster's next crafting skill test, which must take place while the song is still being sung. Worksongs can be learned to a maximum Magnitude of 5. Worksongs cost 1 MP per point of Magnitude to activate, and concentration is required to maintain it. If the craftsman is attempting an Extended Task each casting only lasts for a single Task Round.

Many versions of this spell exist, one for each of the key crafting professions. A Worksong is usually defined by the materials being worked or type of process being applied; Weaving, Carpentry, Metalworking, Pottery and so on. The metalworking song can, for example, be used equally by a blacksmith, an armourer or a silversmith.

FORMINGSONG

Duration Special, Magnitude 3, Trigger

This song is sung by a foreman to coordinate and harmonise the songs of a group of craftsmen contributing to a project. The foreman's own critical Craft score is added to the craft skills of all participants under his supervision who are using that skill. Each foreman can include a number of people up to his CHA within the harmony. Formingsongs are only known to guildsmen of Journeyman rank or higher, and indeed it is forbidden for other folk to sing in harmony. A Formingsong costs 3 MP to activate, and concentration is required to maintain it. The ability lasts as long as the task to which it is being applied is ongoing, however if the craftsman is attempting an Extended Task each casting only lasts for a single Task Round.

CONCERTSONG

Duration Special, Magnitude 5, Trigger

This song is sung by a Guild Master, and weaves the various Worksongs together in a way that delivers significantly enhanced skills to a project involving many different workers with different skills. The Concertsinger's relevant critical score in whatever Lore, Art or Craft skill is appropriate for the direction of the project is added to the skills of all workers who are engaged on it, no matter what skill they are using, so long as they maintain their own songs.

Anyone singing a Worksong gains a benefit to their work, on top of the bonus from their own Worksong and any advantage from the Formingsong of their work leader or Foreman.

A Concertsong must be maintained with concentration until such time as the various component workforces have adapted their songs to fit with the harmony required of them; this takes up to 5 minutes and a Formingsong test by each foreman. The Concertsinger may have to make the rounds of a number of workshops or sites, maintaining concentration the whole time, to bring everyone together into the same chant. The rules against singing in public mean that the Concertsinger may find himself singing to himself softly while a crowd of supporters escorts him from place to place shouting loudly to ensure he cannot be heard while in transit. To this extent Basgerik's impractical ban on singing has found a solution in ritual.

NOVICE (INDENTURED APPRENTICE)

A candidate for indentured apprenticeship typically has two or more of INT, POW and DEX at 15 or higher, or else has one such and a Talent for a skill deemed valuable by the Artificers. He must also have an existing Craft skill, or Mechanisms or Engineering, at 50% or higher.

The Artificers purchase a new member from his master, buying out their indenture to one of the craft guilds if required and at the same time extending that indenture for a further 5 years. Very rarely, someone from outside the craft guilds system of Sorandib is admitted to the guild, because there is some compelling reason to allow a foreigner into its membership. A free agent who submits to indenture is given a cash payment of 30 Silver Pieces (60 Taskeens) as part of the transaction in which he hands himself over to the power of his master.

An Indentured Apprentice lives according to the rules of the guild, and is at all times expected to obey its regulations and the specific instructions of his appointed master. He will spend almost 50% of his time at his studies, the remainder undertaking practical, often menial tasks at the direction of a Journeyman or Master Artificer.

An Apprentice who has completed the terms of his indenture but not yet qualified for the status of Journeyman may be ejected from the order, consigned to the ranks of the Machinists or, if trusted to eventually shape up and repay the investment in their training to date, given inferior duties as a *Free Apprentice* working with the Machinists until they do.

SKILLS

Craft (Any Artisanal Profession), Craft (Alchemist), Craft (Artificer), Education, Engineering, Lore (any), Mechanisms

MAGIC

An Apprentice has the chance to study one of the shorter or edited Grimoires of the order. Typically contains D4+1 spells such as Animate (Substance), Form/Set (substance), Glow and Mystic Vision. He will also learn at least one Worksong appropriate to his Craft skills.

JOURNEYMAN ARTIFICER

In total there are some 80 fully-fledged members of the order. Most of these are Journeyman, those who have successfully completed their apprenticeship and are freed from the obligations of indenture. To be accepted as a Journeyman Artificer requires a minimum skill in Craft (Artificer) of 50%, as well as at least 75% in a suitable artisan skill such as Craft (Metalworker).

A Journeyman is expected to give 50% of his time to the order, which means he can use the remainder to pursue private interests – including marriage and raising a family – that are not options for the Apprentices. His available time may in fact be erratic; it is not uncommon for a journeyman to be engaged on some long-term project that consumes all his time for months on end, and then granted a leave of absence for several months thereafter.

A Journeyman has access to wider secrets of the order, and is expected to take the time to study some basic arcane skills.

MAGIC

A Journeyman can learn the Formingsong, and can also study unabridged versions of the order's standard Grimoires. This may enable him to add spells to his existing Grimoire skill, as well as learning new ones.

GUILD MASTERS

The Guild Masters are Journeyman Artificers who take a post as head of one of the regular artisanal guilds of the city. These guilds do not always limit themselves to a single trade, however they usually do comprise a single industry or set of related industries. Guild Masters marshal their members to contribute to projects in which they and other Artificers play a role.

To become a Guild Master requires a skill of at least 75% in Craft (Artificer), as well as in three other skills relevant to the order, and a minimum of 50% in Influence, Sorcery Spell Manipulation and in at least one Grimoire.

MAGIC

A Guild Master may acquire the Concertsong spell. He has access to the order's restricted Grimoires, including those held in the secret library under Palace Hill.

MASTER ARTIFICER

These guildmasters are the leaders of the Artificers' order, and have access to its most secret lore. They must know Craft (Artificer) to at least 100%, and have a key Craft skill and a relevant Lore skill at 90% or higher. There must be a vacancy among the five offices at the head of the order – or else a new one must be created, something that has not happened for many generations.

Master Artificers are entitled to instruct and command the work of the Machinists, and are privy to the full range of the orders' secrets.

CULT GRIMOIRES

In addition to the basic sorcery grimoires made available to Apprentices and Journeyman, higher ranking members of the order have access to some unique works of magical lore.

On The Instincts of Beasts and Men (an Artificer's Grimoire in several volumes) contains a set of spells called Instinct of (specific skill). Each spell comes with an erudite preamble explaining the theories behind it, as well as useful anecdotes of how the spell has performed when applied to various types of construct.

These sorcery spells are an alternative means of providing a Golem with a skill to making use of Enchantment Virtues. Each volume of spells is a separate Grimoire, dealing as it does with a specific array of skill types, and the application of each skill is a separate spell. Aside from reducing the cost of creating a Golem in the first

place, these spells also allow one construct to be a platform for multiple purposes, as the Artificer uses these spells to reprogram it according to need. If multiple Instincts are applied they must all be applied at once using the Combine manipulation. Otherwise each spell applied will override and cancel out the former one.

The Golem on whom one of these spells is cast must possess Golem Characteristics in all Characteristics that normally form the basic percentage of the skill.

Each 20% of the caster's Grimoire skill makes it possible to grant the Golem (or any incomplete creature possessed of the necessary Characteristics to form the Basic Percentage of the relevant skill) a skill equal to 1 x its Basic Percentage.

Volume 1: Acrobatics, Athletics, Brawn, Evade

Volume 2: Insight, Perception, Persistence

Volume 3: Drive, Fly, Ride, Swim

Volume 4: Combat Styles

Volume 5: Dance, Play Instrument, Sing

Volume 6: Spellcraft (Sorcery Manipulation); Spell Casting*

Volume 7: Language (Tarsenian), Language (Jekkarene), Language (Korantine), Language (Djemiri)

*The Artificer can only invest the construct with the ability to cast one spell unless he uses the Combine manipulation, and it must be one that he knows. However the Golem can have a higher casting percentage than its programmer.

The Book of Halkin is the Artificer's Grimoire written by a former Chief Artifex and ancestor of Felster Halkin. It contains the following:

Powering Enchantment, Dominate Elemental, Form/Set Stone

The Old Grimoire is the body of arcane law the Artificers brought with them to Sorandib centuries ago. It exists in a variety of forms, many of them incomplete, the master document being in the subterranean library and written in Djemiri. Most of the abridged grimoires made available to lower ranking members are based on this original source material. An unabridged and complete copy, it contains the following spells:

Form/Set Metal, Form/Set Wood, Form/Set Stone, Animate Metal, Animate Stone, Animate Wood, Damage Resistance, Glow, Mystic Vision.

SHENG TRADITIONS

Sheng magic has its roots in Spirit Magic, however they do not normally control spirits in the way practised by other traditions. The only Traditional Spirits, and the only ones that followers of this tradition control in the standard way, are the tribal ancestors. Any other spirit captured and controlled by a Sheng practitioner must be bound to a fetish prepared using dedicated POW. Most 'Fetishes' in Sheng traditions are not in fact bindings for spirits, but magical charms that impart a little of the Ancestor's power to

the wearer. Every Sheng Tribe has its own Rites (Tribal Tradition) as a Common Skill.

The Sheng rely on the services of Wise Men (and women) and Shamans to lend magical support to the clans in time of need. Wise Men can be found in many places and in every clan, and are those who have acquired the Spirit Binding skill. These people are the experts in rites and ritual, deal with the day-to-day management of the clan's relationship with its Traditional Spirits and the provision and teaching of the clan's magical lore to its members.

Full shamans are provided by the Royal Clan of each tribe and distinguished by their ability to Spirit Walk. Aside from managing the tribe's relationship with deceased ancestors and presiding over the major rituals that punctuate the year, the shamans are able to offer individual tribesmen access to the tribe's magical support and protection through the use of tribal fetishes, of which there are a great variety with many different purposes and powers.

Sheng magic relies on POW dedications made to the ancestors to lend potency to their fetishes. The magic points generated by the dedicated POW are placed at the disposal of the ancestors, however when a tribesman dies and joins the ancestors himself, the dedicated POW is returned to him. A Royal Clan shaman works towards dedicating the vast majority of his POW to the tribal ancestors, however all tribesman are expected to attain a state in which a quarter or more of their POW is deployed in this way.

A Royal Clan is capable of generating new fetishes, or adding or taking away access to a fetish from a clan within the same tribe. This is done using Spirit Walking to meet with the tribal ancestors and negotiate a new overall covenant with them.

ADVENTURER CREATION

An Adventurer from a Royal Clan may become a Shaman, with the ability to Spirit Walk. This is an ability that one in four male members of the Royal Clan, both male and female, are born with. The prospective Shaman must also dedicate a minimum of 1 POW to the Ancestors in order to create a Soul Fetish. At Adventurer Creation the necessary skill points must still be expended to awaken the ability and gain the Basic Percentage. All those who do have this ability are intensively trained to make the most of it, using the maximum allowed number of Free Skill Points to increase it. An Adventurer who is a royal Clan Shaman must have a minimum SOC Characteristic of 15.

An Adventurer from any other clan may gain professional experience as a Wise Man (or Woman), as advanced age is not consideration a necessary pre-condition for wisdom.

An Adventurer from a Sheng cultural background can start play with one or more POW dedicated to the Ancestors, and knowledge of 1D3 Common Magic spells from the clan's stock of magical lore.

	Common Skills	Advanced Skills	Magical Skills
Royal Clan Shaman	Influence +10%, Rites (Tribal Tradition) +10%, Persistence +10%	—	Spirit Binding, Spirit Walking
Clan Wise Man	Insight +5%, Rites (Tribal Tradition) +10%, Regional Lore +5%, Persistence +10%	Pick One: Healing, Lore (any), Survival	Spirit Binding

CLAN MAGIC FETISHES

Each tribe has a number of clans, each with their own version of the tribal tradition that includes access to Common Magic, expressed through a unique pattern of tattoos referred to as the Clan Fetish. Once awakened, a Sheng's clan tattoo can be continually added to as he increases his access to and knowledge of his clan's lore. The POW dedicated to a Clan Fetish determines the maximum magnitude of the Common Magic spells they are capable of deploying. The spells themselves are worked into their body art, and each can be learned as the clan elders allow. These tattoos are the most common of a host of fetishes employed by the Sheng as almost every adult has them. Some clans have unique elements in their fetishes, perhaps a Pact with a nature spirit that provides a special ability or power or a unique Traditional Spirit, or even access to a Divine Magic spell. Clan Fetishes are activated, and Common Magic cast, using the Rites (Tribal Tradition) skill. Casting time and Magic Point cost is calculated as per the standard Legend rules.

While it is normal to learn 1D3 Common Magic spells upon initiation into adulthood, each additional point of POW dedicated to the clan fetish is usually accompanied by a new spell (at a minimum of 2 Improvement Rolls per spell). The recipient does not need to learn variable spells more than once. The increase in POW dedicated automatically unlocks an equivalent increase in the magnitude of the spell they can use.

Each new increase in the power of a clan fetish is granted in recognition of some service or proof of value to the clan in addition to the POW dedication to the Ancestors. The warrior might perform a deed, but equally could bring some increase of wealth to the community. As a rule of thumb, the standard measure of 'notable wealth' that applies in these cases is a 'fine stallion', which is regarded as being equivalent in value to some 4–5 ponies or 2 horses (and to some 800–1,000 Taskeens).

A clan's maximum magnitude of Common Magic is determined on 2D6+9, with a limit of Magnitude 5 on each spell. Hence there is generally no profit in dedicating more than 5 POW to the Ancestors in respect of the Clan Fetish.

When a Sheng passes from one clan to another by marriage or adoption he carries his heritage with him, and in this case simply begins a new tattoo on some other part of his body to chart his progress in the traditions of the new clan without losing access to the old.

GAINING A CLAN FETISH

The process of creating a Clan fetish takes place within the recipient's home community, where his kin celebrate with him the

rituals associated with some new step forward in a tribesman's life. Needless to say, the basic requirement to qualify for receiving a clan fetish is the support and goodwill of one's clan. In addition they should be considered ready to be an adult, with the responsibility that entails – and some clans may demand proof in the form of a successful hunt, a contribution to the clan's efforts in battle, or breaking a spirited horse that will become the first steed the candidate owns.

Preparing the recipient or the physical component of the new fetish requires an appropriate Art or Craft skill test, such as Art (Tattooing) or Craft (Metalworking), however some may simply require acquisition of the key material component in a ritually sanctioned way. There may be a great deal made of this – whether to secure ingredients and components for the fetish, or to perform some act that shows the rest of the clan the recipient is worthy. The activation of the fetish takes place in the presence of the clan's Wise Men (or Wise Women), one of whom will make use of the Spirit Binding skill to call the ancestors to be present and accept the POW dedication offered by the recipient of the fetish. The usual place for this rite to happen is at a clan gathering at the tomb of one of its Ancestors. These tombs are landmarks, tumuli on the plain sometimes topped with a carved stela or with a stone wall about its base.

TRIBAL FETISHES

There are several types of fetish that are common to all the tribes, with some variation in the physical component used to embody them. Tribal Fetishes are entirely in the gift of the Royal Clan Shamans, unless there is some historical idiosyncrasy that has left a clan able to incorporate one into their Clan Fetish. Some examples are shown on the table opposite.

CREATING A TRIBAL FETISH

Acquiring a Tribal Fetish inevitably requires a journey to a tribal centre as the Royal Clan Shamans are not in the business of making house calls. The fetish is also prepared for or by the supplicant in the presence of the Shaman and with the help of the shaman's entourage, rather than by close kin, and there is always a charge levied in goods or service for this. Amid much mummery, the shaman will Spirit Walk, through which he will learn if the recipient is considered worthy by the Tribal Ancestors. He may return from his ethereal journey with a spirit that wants to challenge the recipient, or a task the Ancestors have given, or a taboo that the Ancestors have set out as a necessary condition for their support. When all is ready the ceremony takes place to activate the fetish. The prospective recipient should succeed in a Rites (Sheng Tradition) test which, with the necessary dedication of POW, completes the process.

Soul Fetish:	Required by a shaman to gain the Spirit Walking ability, or to enable an Ancestor to manifest in the shaman's body while the shaman 'hides' his soul in the fetish. Can also be used to contain an Ancestor Spirit of 1 Intensity per POW, allowing the Ancestor to directly perceive and interact with the material world.
Spirit Fetish:	Typically used for binding spirits of a combined Intensity of 1 per POW, used for non Traditional Spirits.
Spirit Ward:	Blocks hostile spirits of 1 Intensity per POW unless the magician deactivates the ward with a Rites (Tribal Tradition) roll.
Spell Ward:	Blocks hostile spells of 3 Magnitude per POW.
Wound Ward:	Blocks damage after armour accounted for at a rate of 1 per POW, or blocks damage of a particular type (piercing, crushing, slashing) only at a rate of 3 per POW; or negates the ill effects of one Combat Manoeuvre such as Bleed, Stun Location, Impale or Maximise Damage at a cost of 3 POW. Those who are protected by a Wound Ward of the latter sort are expected to go into battle without armour or even naked.
Poison Ward:	Provides immunity against one type or category of poison (Serpent Venom/Injected, Herbal/Ingested, Blade Venom/Contact etc) per POW.
Luck Fetish:	Fudge a failed Resistance roll by +/-5% per POW.

Some examples of common fetishes and components are:

Fetish	Required Physical Component				
	Type	Tengir	Escar	Kismek	ragoman
Clan Fetish	Tattoo	Tattoo	Tattoo	Tattoo	Tattoo
Soul Fetish	Horse Tail	Tattoo	Tattoo	Tattoo	Horse Tail
Spirit Fetish	Varies	Varies	Tattoo	Varies	Varies
Spirit Ward	Phylactery	Headband	Tattoo	Phylactery	Phylactery
Spell Ward	Piercing	Torc	Tattoo	Amethyst	Amethyst
Wound Ward	Tattoo	Jacket	Tattoo	Girdle or belt	Girdle or belt
Poison Ward	Snakeskin	Snakeskin	Tattoo	Piercing	Piercing
Luck Fetish	Finger Bones	Gopher skull	Tattoo	Silver talisman	Silver talisman

USING FETISHES

Most fetishes only have to be worn or carried to do their work, and are considered "always on". As they are powered by POW dedicated by the beneficiary, fetishes usually only work for their

owner and are not transferable. If the owner dies there is a small chance, equal to the owners POW, that the fetish will retain a potency that can be transferred to a new owner.

THENNALT WARRIOR SOCIETIES

When a Warrior Society attacks it is a truly terrifying experience. The first sign of their arrival may be a rolling bank of fog. As it envelopes the settlement, mist-shrouded killers appear as if from nowhere, striking with surprise and terrible fury. Or they might arrive unheard against the hammering of the rain, until the downpour is joined by a shower of missiles, each arrow-shaft accompanied by half a dozen more that dissolve into water after striking home. Men who think and fight like animals can approach unseen through the most impenetrable forest, or fire-crazed plunderers emerge from burning crops to torch the houses of panicked farmers. There are some in Zathrum that coalesce around young aristocratic warriors and fight with chariots, each combat team being a charioteer, his driver and a small gang of 'runners' who fight on foot.

A Warrior Society is a cult formed of young men who devote themselves to a warband for a period of time, usually not exceeding five or six years. These bands remove the more aggressive and restless elements of society from the community and focus their attention on something useful – defending their communities or enriching them with the proceeds of their raids into foreign parts. Most Warrior Societies fight on foot, with simple weapons such as spears and axes, and limited armour or none, but are no less deadly for that.

Any Thennalt warlord worth his salt will have gone out of his way to attract one or more Warrior Societies into his following, however he needs to keep them busy, or they will get bored and wander off to find more action elsewhere or cause trouble for their supposed masters. Their existence is enough to generate conflict.

Each Warrior Society has its members make their devotions to one of the impersonal and potentially dangerous powers that are encountered in nature – typically one of the Natures (elements) or another Lesser Titan. The choice of patron divinity shapes how the society's members bring violence to the field of battle.

LEADERS

The Warrior Societies have no older members with many years experience, as youth is a requirement of membership. Usually the most experienced act as leaders, but disputes in such matters are resolved by voting, or 'showing spears', and failing that by combat.

MEMBERSHIP

A Warrior Society has no Common Members, only devotee initiates. They are exclusively male except for one reported society that is exclusively female. A prospective member of a warrior society must be free of responsibility – neither the head of a household due to the death of parents, nor married, nor a parent himself.

WAR DANCERS

Each society's environmental spell has a Rank requirement of 51% Pact and the additional trait of *Ritual*. Casting these spells is a longer process than the normal almost instant Divine Magic casting, requiring time spent on ritual. Then ritual consists of a War Dance conducted by the caster, and the other devotees may well join in. The caster has to succeed in a Dance skill test to invoke the deity's power instead of a Rites or Cult Lore test. Typically it takes 15 minutes to actually summon up the forces of nature they will unleash. If the Dance test fails then the caster loses a level of fatigue and continues to try until he succeeds, gives up or collapses from exhaustion. All those who have access to the society's environmental spell can pool their casting if they also succeed in the Dance test, and while this does not increase the effect of the spell they can stack the duration. Some societies may indulge in acts of sacrifice that also increase the Duration of the spell. The slaughter of a prisoner of war might increase the Duration by 15 minutes Per 3 POW of the victim(s), the self-sacrifice of one of the war band by 15 minutes Per POW.

He is expected to be at least average as a physical specimen – STR 10, CON 10, SIZ 11. No one is expected to remain in a Warrior Society beyond the age of 25; those who reach such an age and do not want to leave are supposed to seek an early death in combat. This is an ideal not universally adhered to.

The candidate must furnish his own weapons and equipment, the minimum requirement being a spear. He is required to dedicate a minimum of 1 POW to whatever entity the society pacts with, and with it is entitled to gain the Divine Magic spell Amplify.

BENEFITS

An initiate enjoys the comradeship and support of a band of brothers who share all food and plunder on equal terms from the day of their initiation. If the band is hired by a warlord, the warlord must agree to hire and supply every member of the band on equal terms. These sworn brothers will help each other in improving their skills, providing training for free. The society's Common Magic can be acquired for the cost of 2 Improvement rolls per magnitude of spell, and every member must take the Divine Magic spell Amplify in return for their dedicated POW. When a warrior leaves the band – usually because it is time for him to marry and begin life as an adult in earnest, his dedicated POW is returned and the access to Divine Magic is lost.

The entities worshipped do not usually offer Blessings, as they have little empathy with humankind.

SKILLS

Each society may have its own specialisms that members commonly teach one another. A typical set of skills would be:

COMMON SKILLS

Athletics, Brawl, Perception, Resilience

ADVANCED SKILLS

Survival, Track

COMBAT STYLES

Archery, Sidearm and Shield, Sling, Spear and Shield, Maul, Targeteer.

Swords are widely taboo amongst the warrior societies, as it is a weapon deemed to be the preserve of the 'grown man' – that is, among the Thennalts, a householder with a family.

MAGIC

A Warrior Society may teach Common Magic to its members, which is cast using the Rites (Own) skill. They also have limited access to Divine Magic that draws on the raw power of the natural forces to which they are aligned. A senior member (Pact 51%+) calls on an *environmental* spell, which then enables all members within its area of effect to activate an Amplify spell that increases the Magnitude of the Common Magic they are using so long as they remain within it. The specific spells are pertinent to the nature of the entity worshipped and combine with each other to provide a tactical framework.

Examples include:

RAIN

Common Magic: Bandit's Cloak, Demoralise, Dullblade, Extinguish, Multimissile

Divine Magic: Amplify, Rain

HAIL

Common Magic: Bladesharp, Chill, Frostbite, Speedart

Divine Magic: Amplify, Fog

THUNDER

Common Magic: Pierce, Sky Bolt, Thunder's Voice, Vigour

Divine Magic: Amplify, Call Winds

NIGHT

Common Magic: Bandit's Cloak, Boon of Lasting Night, Darkwall, Mindspeech

Divine Magic: Amplify, Eclipse

WILDFIRE

Common Magic: Fireblade, Firearrow, Ignite

Divine Magic: Amplify, Curse Crops (dessication)

SWARM

Common Magic: Bestial enhancement, Boon of Lasting Night, Clear Path, Detect Food

Divine Magic: Amplify, Curse Crops (locust swarm)

SORANDIB

Sooner or later every wandering Adventurer finds his way to Sorandib, whether the aim is to hide out from authority, find work as a sell-sword or simply to loot its treasures.

THE LAST KING OF SORANDIB

A suitable venue for the climax to an extended campaign, Sorandib provides plenty of opportunity for adventuring as players navigate around the many factions competing for control of the city and its treasures. This is also a place of exiles, so Adventurers who have found themselves on the wrong side of the law or branded as traitors may well take refuge in the city alongside many others in the same boat, ranging from idealistic political rebels to common criminals and abominable vampires.

Sorandib is an ancient city in catastrophic decline. The surrounding country has been laid waste by years of banditry and civil strife; the city itself is rife with factions, lawlessness and social unrest. Large areas are effectively abandoned or under the control of the local gangs. There are city districts where civilisation and law and order hold sway and these are the places where most people live and do their business. However no single force exercises control over the whole city and outside its walls there is near anarchy to the west, while Taskan soldiers maintain some order in the east to keep the road to the imperial heartlands open. Since its foundation Sorandib has thrived or at least been kept alive by two things: its control over a key river trade route along which passes a drug harvested from the weeds that choke lake Barur to the north; and the creations of the Guild of Artificers, a centuries-old association of sorcerer-scientists who are famous for their inventions, feats of engineering and practical devices – many of which are built into the very fabric of the city.

Just as the Emperor owes his immortality to magic provided by the king of Sorandib, the city will surely play some sort of role in his final ascension to the heavens. The cult of Thesh in Taskay has its eye on direct control not only of the Artificers but of the fire-demon Sorantar, who is the city's god. The Iron Simulacrum himself looks to Sorandib as the place he will discover his fate when the Emperor departs the physical plane, where he might be *unmade* in such a way as to find the key to a continued existence as an independent soul. Sorandib could be the scene of Treason on a world-shattering scale.

Adventurers who get to know Sorandib may well decide to assist the Empire in finally absorbing this failing kingdom – perhaps even by hastening the King's inevitable death; but they could equally

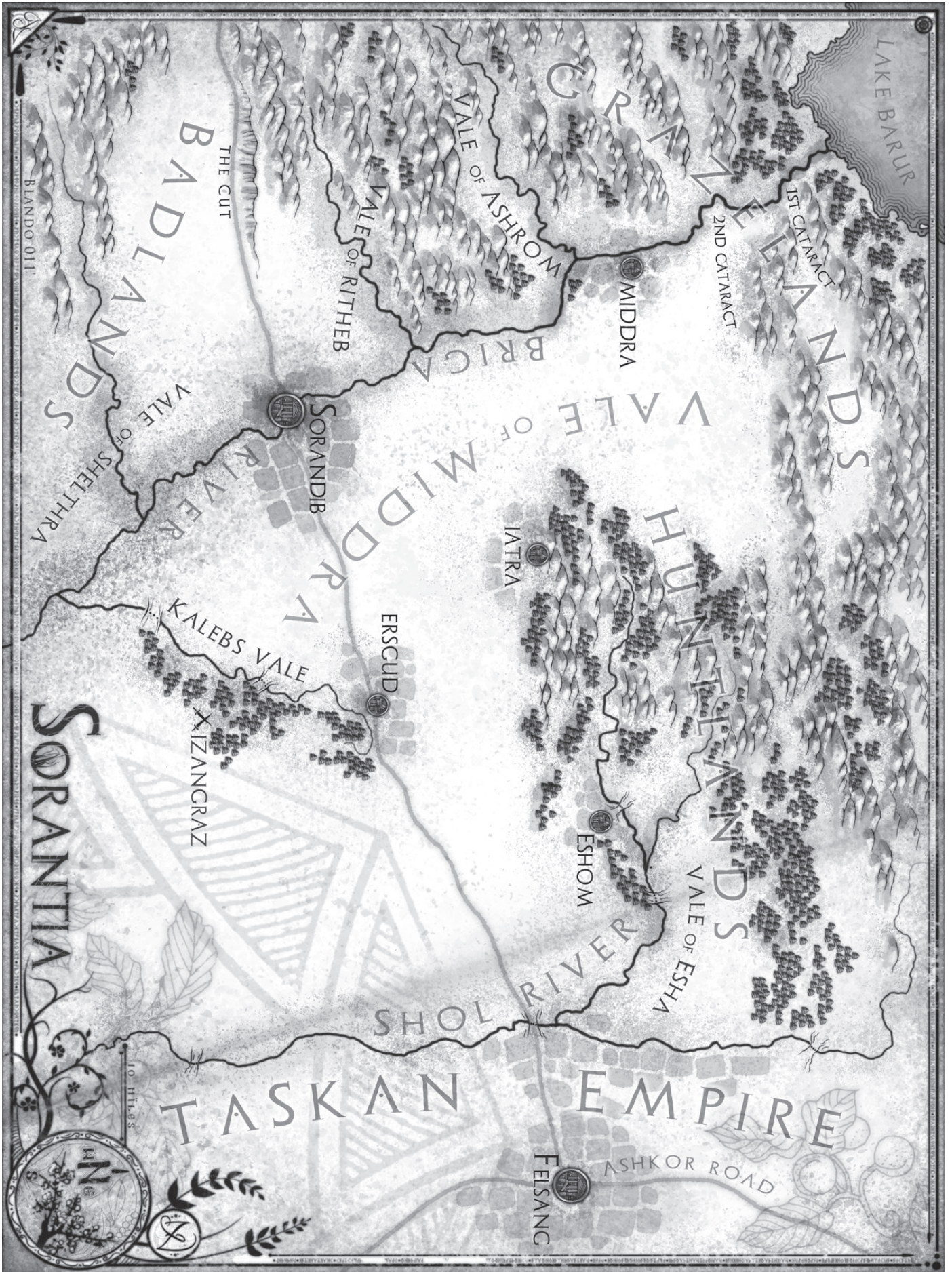
attempt to loot what they can and get out, or decide to shore up a resistance movement that attempts to block an Imperial take-over.

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Sorandib has had two eras of greatness; the first was over 500 years ago, when the fertility of its lands was famous, *A Sorandine Summer* was a byword for the most agreeable climate, timber and ores were plentiful in the surrounding country, and the river brought significant trade. After a rather destructive war with the city-state of Felsang, and the rebellion of Sorandib's subjects in Brotomagia and Camtri, significant changes took place. King Basgerik had invited in a sorcerous order – the Artificers – to support the war effort, and convinced of their vital contribution he ended up making them integral to the renewal of the city. It was at this point that the massive ziggurat was built to house the fire spirit Sorantar and his cult was established as a citywide phenomenon, which also fuelled an explosion of new and unprecedented constructions under the guidance of the Artificers. Middle City was built to house a massive increase in the city-state's artisanal class. A natural cistern beneath the palace was enlarged, and engineered to feed its waters to the Baths of Basgerik, as well as supply water to be heated by Sorantar's fires and pumped to the palace and a few other key sites. An artefact that had been the source of the city's magical energies was decoupled from the ancient enchantments it had hitherto powered and repurposed by the Artificers to power *their* creations. The city was transformed over the course of a generation from a state founded on its agricultural riches to one thriving on manufacture, trade and commerce, generating products unavailable anywhere else in the world.

Basgerik's reforms included new ordinances for the city, including a prohibition on singing in public and the destruction of all chronicles and histories referring to earlier times, that earned him the sobriquet 'The Uncultured'; or more popularly, just 'Mad King Basgerik'. Nevertheless his reign ushered in a new era of prosperity that was only slowly undermined by the gradual decay of the rural economy. Even under Basgerik's rule the rural population was starting to fall. Ever more people migrated to the city, resulting in the construction of a vast new suburb known as New City, under Basgerik's grandson Ilmerik. Sorandib now contained up to 35,000 citizens within its walls. Another 20,000 lived close by, and 200,000 more people still occupied the townships, villages and farmsteads of its territory.

The first sign of serious trouble was that the frequency of bad harvests was on the increase. This seemed at first not to matter as funds were available to bring in imports on a huge scale. Until, that



RIANDO 011

LAKE BARUR

BADLANDS
THE CUT
VALE OF SHELTHERA

VALE OF ASHROM
VALE OF RITHER
BRICIN

NELANDS
1ST CATARACT
2ND CATARACT

SORANDIB

MIDDRA

VALE OF MIDDRA

IATRA

HUNTLANDS
VALE OF ESHA

ERSCLUD

KALEB'S VALE

XIZANGRAZ

ESHOM

SORANTIA

SHOL RIVER

TASKAN EMPIRE

ASHKOR ROAD

FELSANG

10 MILES



is, Zygas Taga appeared outside the walls at the head of an army. He made no effort to storm the city, which was considered impregnable thanks to the defences created by the Artificers. He simply cut off the roads and river traffic, laid waste to the countryside, and waited. Basgerik III quickly came to terms as starvation threatened, and Zygas Taga moved on, laden down with 100 talents of gold and a secret that he would soon use to secure his immortality.

Now Sorandib's failing agriculture started to bite as wars and strife in neighbouring lands interrupted its easy access to grain shipments, with the collapse of the Korantine Empire in 1055 being the most terrible blow. Once the Wars of Tarsenain Unification had come to an end many of its citizens began to desert the place and resettle across the Shol River as citizens of the Taskan Empire. Declining resources resulted in the gradual decay of many of the city's finest buildings, and while the Artificers focussed their attention on revenue generating activities, such as the supply of the Taskan army with useful devices such as firearms, there were fewer and fewer resources left to maintain all the fantastic constructs that made Sorandib such a remarkable and celebrated city.

As if to mirror the lost fertility of the land, the royal line of the house of Muttine also began to fail. As each generation passed, every branch and offshoot of the royal line had to be exploited to keep a legitimate dynast on the throne. Every effort to have the current king Shadrian II sire an heir has come to nothing, and the terms under which the city is guaranteed independence from the Empire are specific to the royal bloodline, which means that adoption is not an option. It has been a battle with ever diminishing prospects of success. The king has lingered into his 77th year, and his health is failing.

THE REGION

Sorandib's historic territory is known as Sorantia. It encompasses a large part of the region known as Western Tarsenia, and the kingdom has always been regarded as culturally part of Tarsenia, if perhaps a slightly eccentric cousin. The old pact between the Muttine dynasty and Zygas Taga has meant that the region has been left outside the homogenizing effects of the Empire, and as a result Sorandib preserves both its regional idiosyncrasies and a great many archaisms – not least the persistence of monarchy – that have long since vanished from the Imperial cities beyond the Shol River. The parlous state of the country means that Sorantia has suffered declining population, resulting in abandoned farmlands and deserted villages. Only some parts are under any kind of authority and now a large proportion of the population are considered to be lawless bandits.

POPULATION

The kingdom's population is tiny in comparison to its historic heyday, and indeed in comparison to any of the imperial provinces of Tarsenia. Sorandib itself has 22,000 people living within the walls or close by. Its immediate hinterland and the few remaining towns under at least nominal royal authority – Middra, Iatra and Ersgud (the largest), plus those inhabiting the Fengo-harvesting villages around lake Barur, amount to almost a further 20,000, while the balance of the population – 27,000 people or so – lives outside of royal control.

Locale	Population
Sorandib	22,200
Sorandib Region	7,300
Middra and the Upper Vale	3,300
Iatra and East Vale	2,600
Ersgud and Kaleb's Vale	5,200
Lake Barur	1,200
Badlands	3,400
Shepherds	6,000
Free Farmers	15,000
Hunters	3,000
Total	69,000

All native Sorantines speak a dialect of Tarsenian. While in the major towns this dialect is entirely comprehensible to someone brought up in the Taskan Empire (–10% penalty), out in the hills and in the villages around Lake Barur it is highly idiosyncratic and thickly accented (–20% penalty).

THE BRIGA

This river rises from Lake Barur and tumbles over two cataracts along its route before arriving in the Vale of Middra. The town of Middra is still the main staging post for goods and people moving up and down the river between Lake Barur and Sorandib. From here the river is navigable for its entire length to the sea. Beyond Middra the Briga winds its way south along the edge of the Yellow Hills being joined by lesser streams in its progress, until the highlands fall away to the west and the river crosses the plain to the south east, through Sorandib, and on to its meeting with the Shol. At the confluence of the two rivers, which marks the southernmost extent of the Kingdom of Sorandib, it is the more powerful Briga that gives its name to the river that flows south through the kingdom of Morkesh to its meeting with the Inner Ocean.

THE SHOL

The lesser river rises in the hills East of lake Barur, and curls round until it cuts south, forming the ancient division between Sorantia and the rest of Tarsenia which is now a frontier of the Taskan Empire. The Shol can be forded at several places, the most frequently used crossing being the one found on the Felsang to Sorandib road.

THE VALES

The richest and most populous areas since olden times are the Vales of Sorantia. These are well-watered and fertile lands, which makes it all the more remarkable that the kingdom's decline has been so extreme as to allow large swathes of premium land to return to nature.

The Vale of Middra is the name for the whole valley of the upper Briga, as far south as Sorandib itself. It is bounded to the west by the Yellow Hills, which are cut by two valleys that drain into the Briga, the Vales of Ashlom and Ritheb. To the south the Vale of Middra meets a watershed along which runs the main east-west road connecting Sorandib with Felsang. Beyond this road is Kaleb's Vale, so called because the Kaleb family has its estates there, and they have founded Ersgud astride the road, a town almost entirely in their power. To the west lies the Vale of Shelthra, which was once the demesne of the Gundever family, among other great houses, but is now lost to bandits and squatters. Despite its

TIMELINE OF MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS

Year	Event	Description
512	Foundation	Ostrik the Synoikist unites the Tarsenians West of the Shol River into a single kingdom.
514	The Sorantine Apostacy	Ostrik refuses to sponsor public cult to the chief deities of the Tarsenians, and denies the divinity of Tarsen himself. Sorandib is henceforth considered an outsider to the community of Tarsenian city states.
529	The Similarity Engine	Thorrik II unveils the Similarity Engine, with which the people of Sorantia may exert their will upon the land 'as if a god.'
603	The Tribes of Sorandib	Ostrik II divides the people into Tribes, which will henceforth be the basis of voting, militia service, funeral rites and propitiation of the Similarity Engine.
742–751	Shol River War	Sorandib and Felsang engage in an extended conflict. During the war Sorandib loses its imperial possessions in Camtri and Brotomagia.
750	The Artificers	Basgerik I of Sorandib invites a sorcerous order to settle in Sorandib and affords them significant privileges in return for their contribution to the war efforts.
753–8	Basgerik the Builder	An extended campaign of construction, during which Middle City, the Baths of Basgerik, the Great Cistern and the Ziggurat of Sorantar are built.
757	Sorantar's New House	The city's patron spirit is moved from a natural cave system beneath the palace to a temple built atop a huge platform in its own city district.
758	Basgerik's New Beginning	Amidst wild celebrations Basgerik announces a new start for the city, and forbids all discussion of earlier times. It is extremely difficult to uncover information on historical events dating before this time. Nevertheless Basgerik's new calendar does not catch on.
803–814	New City	King Ilmerik builds New City, and Sorandib reaches its largest size with 35,000 inhabitants.
987–1019	Wars of Tarsenian Unification	Sorandib sacked Ashkor in 991 and participated in several battles in the early campaigns. However after 1002 she withdraws behind the Shol and plays no further part in the war.
1002	Zygas Taga's Siege	Sorandib's vulnerability is shown when a warlord with an army of brigands lays siege. The crown buys off the invader who crosses the Shol to join up with the army of the Zarinians.
1055	The Korantine Cataclysm	The Inundation of Korantis and the subsequent crisis among the Korantine states weakens Sorandib's trading network.
1114	Battle of Izangraz	The Kalebite clan plays a key role in blocking a Sheng raid into Sorantia. This is Sorandib's last moment of military glory.
1135–1175	The Great Decline	Sorandib is deeply affected by the strife that followed the loss of the Marble Simulacrum – but fails to recover when stability returns to the Taskan Empire.
1167	The Razing of Shelthra	For the first time the Vale of Shelthra is razed by 'bandits' while the crops are still in the fields. The Gundever clan are awarded river tolls in the city to replace their losses.
1189	Burning of The Tax Collectors	Amid unrest, and persecution and murder of royal officials, this is the last year that the crown attempts to raise taxes across the entire country.
1208	Ersatud Refounded	The Kaleb clan creates a safe zone around Ersatud to bring peace and prosperity to part of the country.
1211	The Taskan Road	The crown permits a permanent Taskan presence to enable regular patrolling of the road between Sorandib and Felsang.
1214	The Smiling Gods	Quag Kaleb renounces the Apostasy of King Ostrik (which almost nobody has heard of) and founds a temple at Ersatud on the 700th anniversary of the event.

potential wealth it is now referred to as The Badlands, for some of Sorantia's most aggressive bandits now control the area. Finally the Vale of Esha is formed by an arm of the Shol, and faces east towards the Taskan Empire. Its proximity to that great power does nothing to diminish the wild and isolated feel of the place which is increasingly encroached upon by expanding forest.

THE HILLS

The Yellow Hills frame much of Sorantia, and Lake Barur is nestled among them. Herdsmen moving their flocks between highland and lowland pastures according to the seasons are the main inhabitants. There are good pastures and some forestry to be exploited, as well as the unique harvest of Fengo offered by the lake. There are mines in the hills, but while some are spent others are abandoned only due to the lack of security. There is still iron and bronze to be had if conditions improve. The hills are also known for the presence of mineral crystals that have uses to the Artificers, for both arcane purposes and as exotic tableware. There are few surface traces left, but there are places where caves or mines give access to untapped resources.

ROYAL SORANTIA

While the whole of Sorantia is recognised as a single political entity under the king of Sorandib, the part of the country which remains subject to royal authority in practice is very small. Aside from a cultivated area around the city, which extends further on the east bank of the Briga than it does to the west, there are perhaps 30 villages and 3 towns (Middra, Iatra and Ersgud) that enforce, or at least recognise, the law as handed down by the crown and occasionally pay taxes. The most successful is Ersgud, a re-foundation by Quag Kaleb on the site of an agricultural town and royal road waystation on the route from Sorandib to Felsang. Thanks to the security provided by Quag Kaleb's own henchmen this settlement has swollen to a population of 4,000 people, made up both of settlers from Sorandib itself and a respectable number of 'bandits' who have decided that civilisation offers them something worthwhile after all.

BANDITS OF SORANTIA

The population of Sorantia has lived under unhappy circumstances for many years and have become hardened to the constant threats brought about by instability, lack of law and order, and the resulting general poverty. Several subcultures have formed over time, each of which asserts its own sense of identity and its own interests above any idea of a unified kingdom or nation. To most outsiders, and sometimes to one another, these people are bandits – chaotic, dangerous and prone to acts of violence if they imagine some advantage to them will be the result. They are self-reliant and seek to be self-sufficient, however with no rule of law to curb their behaviour they will not think twice about preying upon others to fill any gaps in their self-sufficiency.

They inhabit, and to an extent lord it over, large parts of the old kingdom of Sorandib. Those who have particular reason to fear the Taskan authorities tend to keep themselves west of the Briga, but pickings there are slim, and this exile necessitates effort to find lucrative work or to travel some distance to raid.

When the time comes for the Kingdom of Sorandib to finally collapse and the Taskans to march in, the attitude of these various

bands may prove decisive. Someone who united these groups could potentially raise an army of over 5,000 rebellious souls to resist the Taskans or to assert someone else's claim on the kingdom.

THE HUNTERS

These fellows move around in small bands of 3–6 individuals, and make their way by hunting and trapping in the area known as The Huntlands. An abundance of wild game has sprung up since most of humanity retreated from the territory, and a good living is to be made bringing meat, skins, furs and feathers, or even captive creatures, to markets in Sorandib or across the river in the Empire. They are known to take money to allow well-to-do hunters from the Empire into their territory and to provide services as guides and beaters. Of course anyone who does not pay a Hunter group for such access and services will be ambushed and at the very least robbed of anything they have of value.

The Hunters have no organized community or hierarchy, and only a handful of small villages punctuate the territory they roam. They nevertheless recognize each other by renown, and their mode of dress – a mixture of skins and furs and textile garments acquired from nearby settlements in trade – is quite distinctive. Some hunters live among, or close by, settled communities – such as those of the Free Farmers – but many are content to spend almost all their time in the wild and, if they set up family, to do so at some lonely retreat in the woods.

Hunters are generally not too dangerous unless they find people in their ranges who are not known to them. When they do, they avoid them if they appear strong or ambush them if they look weak.

Some hunters are devotees of Sumis, the Tarsenian goddess known as The Lady of the Wild Things, and they are aware of numinous places in the wooded hills that have an aura of sanctity about them, because the goddess or one of her minions appears there, and where devotions can be made. Sometimes shepherds join them in this, whose interest is less to propagate more wild animals, but to seek protection for their flocks and families from the wolves that have grown common in the region following their near extinction when the kingdom was at its height.

THE SHEPHERDS

The Shepherds are mobile herding communities who once tended the flocks of the great magnates of the land, but now just look after themselves and their own livestock. The territory they roam and call their own is referred to as the Grazelands, and comprises much of the hill country south of Barur as well as pastures in the Vale of Middra. Always ready to fight rustlers or to steal from communities they encounter on their travels, the Shepherds are actually one of the most notoriously dangerous groups in the region. They will of course trade from time to time, which only adds to the unpredictability of an encounter with them. Meeting a Shepherd band typically involves an encounter with D6+4 bandits, tending anything up to 50 times that number of livestock. There are villages dotted around the hills where the Shepherds' families are based and to which the roaming herdsmen may return at certain times of the year. Many Shepherd families live among the Free Farmer communities.

THE DESERTERS

These people are former soldiers in the Taskan army who have absconded without paying the army the significant sums required

to terminate their contracts early. They are a dangerous gang for obvious reasons, being trained in war and in some cases still bearing the military grade arms and armour they were equipped with by the Empire. The Deserters are a single group, and the core is a gang of bandits which fluctuates between 50 and 100 in number as individuals or sub-groups come and go. A greater number, formed of reluctant or former members settled in the area, can be summoned by peer pressure and intimidation to form a war-host if needed. Because the Taskan army will execute any of these men who fall into their hands, The Deserters tend to keep to the Western side of the Briga, were they have taken control of the Vale of Shelthra, a fine land that, for now, nobody feels strong enough to drive them out of. Sometimes members of this fraternity can be found in Sorandib, looking for work as sell-swords, buying supplies or even recruiting lone deserters who have made their way there. Their overall leader is Taras Harfang, who is sufficiently brutal and ruthless that many deserters who initially fall in with the gang swiftly look for a way out. The Deserters extort money and supplies from communities in their area, and sometimes take prisoners as slaves. Their raids can reach out as far as Brotomagia or even the Jekkarid. They effectively control the road west from Sorandib to Ramassa, and need to be bought off if you wish to openly travel that way.

THE FREE FARMERS

These people inhabit some of the farms, villages and towns of the region that were 'abandoned' by their former occupants. – In effect they are squatters, mixed in with many people who never left their ancestral home but simply began to actively resist or simply ignore any sort of state control. A typical community is a village of perhaps 50 or more people, with some of the larger ones being a couple of hundred, except for the town of Eshom which is home to over 1,000 souls. The largest of the 'bandit' categories, they are also the easiest to treat with as they have settled homes and farms to look after, and usually family too. The total population of these communities exceeds 15,000. The 'Farmers' will come together to see off any attempt by the crown or one of the aristocratic factions to assert control over them, since this can mean taxation, or even highly unwelcome efforts to examine who holds the true title to the lands and dwellings they inhabit. They do not specifically engage in acts of brigandage, simply because they have few opportunities to do so. Their bandit status is entirely based on their refusal to acknowledge any form of state authority. This does not mean that specific groups or communities do not come under the thumb of some bandit leader or wizard from time to time – and quite a few have resettled at Ersgud out of choice to avoid just this eventuality.

Free Farmer communities tend to be headed up by one or more elders, or just the most forceful local strongman. These people will welcome a new political order or Taskan takeover in Sorantia, or fight it tooth and nail – depending on whether or not they are confirmed as the owners of their homes and farms.

BANDIT ADVENTURER CREATION

A Taskan Deserter can be generated using the usual Adventurer Creation rules for Taskan characters provided in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*. A Deserter gets to exit the army for no cost, and should be allowed starting money and equipment using his original SOC Characteristic score, but his SOC is reduced to 2. For Adventurers from the other bandit communities, use the Cultural Background table provided here. Bandit Adventurers roll their SOC Characteristic on 2D6. In compensation the Gamemaster may allow 3 further points to be allocated to other Characteristics, or provide an additional starting Hero Point or Talent. Available professions include:

Beggar, Day Labourer, Farmer, Herdsman, Hunter, Robber, Smuggler

Due to the reduction in Common Skill bonuses, Bandit characters also gain an additional 50 Skill Points, however these additional points should be applied to Cultural or Professional skills they already gained through Previous Experience, with a maximum of +20 applied to any one skill.

BANDIT MAGIC

With a lack of temples to go to unless making a trip into Sorandib or Ersgud, no Common Sorcery, no class of professional priests, and being unlikely to go on pilgrimage to festivals taking place in the Empire, Sorantia's bandits are generally magic-poor. There are a few very ancient sacred sites dotted around the country where individuals may make devotions to purely local nature spirits with little to offer. A Bandit Adventurer may gain one or more Pacts with local spirits using Free Skill Points, acquiring a maximum of one Divine Magic spell or Gift from each (although potentially more than one use of that spell). Some Common Magic is available from these spirits for those who have a Pact with them, and a Bandit Adventurer may also take 1 Magnitude of Common Magic at the cost of 10 Free Skill Points. Both Divine and Common Magic provided by these spirits is cast using the Bandit Adventurer's Rites (Own) skill.

Common Skill Bonuses	Combat Styles	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Bandit Adventurers gain the following bonuses: +10% to <i>Athletics, Brawn, Culture (Tarsenian), Perception, Resilience and Stealth</i> , +5% to <i>Persistence and Rites (Own)</i> and +30% to <i>Lore (Sorantia)</i>	Bandit Adventurers choose two Combat Styles from the following, and gain a +10% bonus to each: <i>Brawl, Sling, Sidearm, Spear</i>	Bandit Adventurers gain the following Advanced Skills: <i>Language (Tarsenian) +50% Survival</i> In addition, Bandit Adventurers choose two Advanced Skills from the following: <i>Craft (any), Education, Lore (any), Play Instrument, Swim, Track</i>	Refer to the SOC table.

SPIRITS OF SORANTIA

The local and landscape spirits of Sorantia have a heritage that ties them to the Tarsenian culture and can conform their offerings to the Rites (Tarsenian) skill. Nevertheless they have not received formal worship in a cult for many centuries and generally only deal with individual supplicants. It would be possible for an ambitious Adventurer to embark on a quest to unite the spirits of Sorantia within a single cult, or to incorporate them properly into the Taskan Pantheon.

Each spirit has an Intensity of 6 or greater (POW39 and up), INT of 2D6+9 and a CHA of 3D6. It can be found and contacted at a specific place, where it can manifest and communicate with a Manifestation skill of (POW+CHA) x5%. Its home territory is a magnet for other related types of spirit (typically nature spirits), and it can be bargained with by someone with the Spirit Binding skill to provide such spirits for their use. It can Manifest at up to POW kilometres away from its sacred site at (POW+CHA) x3%, and anywhere up to the natural borders of Sorantia at POW+CHA x1%. Each spirit can attempt to force a mortal into Spirit Combat only if the mortal is in transgression of some tabu or rule imposed by a higher entity (such as the nature goddess Sumis) that it is tasked to uphold.

Each spirit may grant a Gift to a supplicant, offering a permanent effect equivalent to 1 Magnitude of its Common Magic for each point of POW dedicated. Once the worshipper reaches a Pact score of 25% or greater, a spirit will allow access to Divine Magic.

While having no more than one specialist Divine Magic spell to offer, the spirits are also able to grant the use of Extension in respect of that spell for a second point of dedicated POW, effective within the territory of Sorantia only. If these entities were properly incorporated into the Taskan pantheon, either individually or collectively, as part of the future assimilation of the kingdom into the Empire their ability to exercise power on behalf of their devotees would be increased. At that point they would no longer offer Common Magic, but respond to a Worship spell and provide Blessings instead.

Alternatively someone with Spirit Magic skills could bring the spirits of Sorantia together into a new Spirit Magic Tradition.

Some example local spirits include:

Spirit Name	Spirit Type	Divine Magic	Common Magic
Friguth	Tree Spirit	Oakskin	Endurance
Branus	Plant Spirit	Evergreen	Vigour
Sholanit	River Spirit	Summon	Slow
		Undine	
Brigut	River Spirit	Ebb and Flow	Strength
Mirocco	Wind Spirit	Call Winds	Bandit's Cloak
Ferux	Wolf Spirit	Snarl	Clawsharp
Izangraz	Battlefield	Truesword	Demoralize
	Haunt		

NEW DIVINE SPELLS

OAKSKIN

Rank: 25% Duration 15

The target's skin takes on the colour and seeming texture of gnarled bark. The caster becomes impervious to any physical

damage of up to 3 HP per point of Magnitude, including the effects of knockback. Unfortunately attacks by fire and lightning inflict +1 damage per dice per point of magnitude.

SNARL

Rank 25%, Duration 15

The target takes on a feral appearance and launches himself on his enemies with bestial fury. This spell is similar to the Berserk spell, however the increase in the recipient's attack chance applies to the use of natural weapons only. The spell also increases the recipient's Damage Modifier with natural weapons by one step – for example a 0 Damage Modifier becomes +1D2, and a +1D2 Damage Modifier becomes +1D4.

WIZARDS OF SORANTIA

The region is a favourite one for wizards to make their homes – they can both avoid unwelcome attention from the authorities and access some of the benefits of living within reach of a city. The wizards that may be encountered here are mostly of Taskan origin, and range from the purely antisocial and secretive to the downright evil.

Imalgrum is a Taskan sorcerer who lives in a run-down villa abandoned by its former owners in the hills above the Vale of Esha. The principal reason for his seclusion is his interest in summoning, and applications for Flesh Elementals that leave regular folk feeling a little queasy. He pays the hunters to bring him game, but they fear him because of the summoned creatures that sometimes lurk around or within his home. He has a couple of apprentices who tend a garden, and he makes regular trips back across the Shol to visit friends and family or acquire things he cannot find in Sorantia. Imalgrum is not yet entirely beyond the pale (except to some who are familiar with his private obsessions), and is even an occasional guest lecturer at the sorcery school at Felsang. Imalgrum can sometimes be encountered on a stroll in the Huntlands in the form of a SIZ 40 Giant.

Thul Rankor is a reclusive wizard whose forays into necromancy left him a pariah in his home town of Felsang. Apart from needing to get out of town when his body-snatching activities were discovered, Rankor was interested in the plethora of sites across the area where a failure to observe proper funeral practices during the regular chaotic periods in its history left both physical and psychic remains he could play with. Nobody wants to work for Rankor, so his entourage is limited to undead servants and bound demons. Rankor can be found in the well-preserved dungeon level of an otherwise ruined fort near the Second Cataract dating back to the days of Basgerik I.

Salome Kassam is a local Sorantine, a horrid lady who has uses for captive humans. She buys many of them from The Deserters, who ask no questions about what befalls their merchandise. They do know that sometimes Kassam sells them back the same captives, who are... different. *'Hollowed out'* is the phrase they use. Kassam is an Enchanter, and her house, tower and walled gardens, found overlooking the road west at a place known as The Cut, are a wonder to behold. However she is also a tappist, and many of her creations are made at the expense of unwilling sacrificial victims. Kassam has very few friends, perhaps understandably, but among them is Ocriman, Sorandib's resident Vampire Lord.

THE CITY

Sorandib is an extensive walled city, arranged around a hill overlooking the Briga River on which now stands a substantial palace. The first settlers here found good land for farming, a powerful local spirit to negotiate terms of worship with, a highly defensible hilltop and a convenient spot at which to span the river with a bridge. Over the centuries it outstripped all its local rivals and eventually became a seat of royal power over an extensive territory.

The city is divided first by the Briga, which separates Cemetery Hill, the Eastern Kalebite and Taskan Quarters from the city proper. The river also isolates a heavily fortified island known as the Gundever Palace, where most of the key bridges have been built. The city is further divided by a network of curtain walls which mark the different periods of the city's construction, and which maintain the distinct identity of each suburb.

CITY QUARTERS

Palace Hill: The king's palace sprawls over a hill that dominates the city. Since the walls and fortifications are Artificer-designed and built, it is generally assumed that Palace Hill is impregnable to assault. Its highest point – also the highest in the city – is a large dome, which is actually a rotating observatory within which the telescope can be replaced on its mounts by a big brass mortar. Within the complex the most striking features are the faded magnificence of the throne room, the superb ornamental gardens and the Court of the Rock. A natural cave system permeates the hill on which the palace stands. The caves are extensive and treacherous but are known to connect to the basement levels of the palace and are rumoured to also connect to sections of the sewer system. Finding a way into the caverns past the various locking gates, traps and golems that are put there to stop people doing just that is a holy grail for thieves and adventurers.

Old City: At the foot of Palace Hill, Old City is the heart of Sorandib and contains key locations such as Old City Inn and the Temple of Temmush that serves as the city's mint. This quarter has the city's original river docks, two areas of which are still in operation – one by the Palace Guard, the other being the main port of call for traders who reach the city by boat. There are two river forts: Fort Number One is in decay and all but abandoned with only an elderly caretaker to look after it, Fort Number Two is a key base for the Palace Guard. Old City Stink is so named because it catches the smell on the prevailing west wind that blows across the waste dumped from the palace down the north slope of

Palace Hill. Old City is regularly patrolled and functions more or less effectively.

Middle City: Middle City is the main point of access for the bridges that span the Briga. It is a rough part of town in which law and order only functions reliably in the areas immediately alongside the river, where there is a sufficient vested interest for permanent guards to be posted at the bridges and for occasional patrols by the Palace Guard, and around the guild hall. The fort (Fort Number Three) is in the hands of Quag Kaleb's men, which ensures his control of the one bridge that connects his district with the main city on the west bank. All other bridges are in the hands of the Gundever family.

The rest of this quarter is very run down and lawless – with some blocks more or less abandoned. However Middle City is a key point of access both above ground and below ground. – The city's original Grand Sewer serving Palace Hill and Old City debouches into the river here just south of Kaleb's bridge. As a result it is a useful route for those wishing to circumvent the Gundever river tolls.

Temple Quarter: A shrine with a roof of burnished bronze, constructed atop a massive stone ziggurat within a paved court, is home to the local city god, a fire-daemon called Sorantar. The high priest has his palace here and the temple maintains a significant establishment of priests, acolytes and attendants billeted around the place or often sleeping in the open around the temple (which is always warm). The city's two processional ways, the Street of Lights and Temple Street, meet at the temple court. The temple maintains its own guards to patrol the area.

New City: An unruly, ungovernable urban jungle rife with street gangs, religious cults and political agitators (often indistinguishable from one another). Large areas – more than a third of the total – are effectively abandoned, others are too dangerous to enter without a guarantee of safe passage from the local gangs or crime boss. Locals can get organised for self defence and summary mob justice under the banner of Sosbander's Free Society, and unwanted strangers suspected of no good are apt to be dragged in front of the self styled 'Judge' who directs the mob in lynchings. Some city blocks are barricaded and only accessible via single point of entry controlled by volunteer local citizens or gangs. By contrast a cult known as the Gardeners exists whose activists seek to return the abandoned parts of New City to nature, providing both allotments and parkland for the citizens and, more ambitiously, homes for wildlife – at this point mostly feral dogs and cats.

SORANDIB

KEY

- A: OLD CITY INN
- B: TREASURY
- C: PALACE GUARD BARRACKS
- D: TEMPLE OF TALOK
- E: BATHS OF BASGERIK
- F: ZIGGURAT OF SORANTAR
- G: GUILD HALL
- H: ZYGAS TAGA TEMPLE

100 METERS



GUNPOWDER PLANT

New City has one river fort, Fort Number Four, which is rarely manned and at present is the stronghold of a gang of thieves and outlaws. One main thoroughfare, the Street of Lights, is however patrolled by volunteers provided by the local town wards on a rota so that citizens can move to and from the Temple Quarter in relative safety. The Street of Lights was ambitiously furnished with a total of 27 glowstone lamps, in which a carefully shaped lump of Brightcrystal held in a brass cage is slung between the buildings or specially erected marble posts that flank the street. It is remarkable that only six of these have yet been robbed of their crystal.

Lower City: Lower City is a well-managed and mostly residential district with plenty of inns and stables for travellers. A volunteer force of watchmen keeps order and can call on the Palace Guard if need be. Lower city's most famous building is the Baths of Basgerik, an immense public work in which no expense was spared in the construction, the decoration or the equipment, with many enchantments included. It is the largest building of its kind in all Tarsenia.

Gundever Palace: An island in the Briga River, effectively a self-contained township under the control of the Gundever family, which gets to charge tolls on traffic across or beneath their bridges, for which purpose there are docking facilities down at river level. Gundever has guards on the bridges and down by the water to intercept or simply open fire on those on the river who fail to stop and pay their dues.

Kalebite Quarter: Quag Kaleb rules over this city quarter on the East side of the river and adjoining the Taskan Quarter. He keeps it peaceful and civilised, making this a desirable part of the city to live in for Sorandib's wealthier residents. Kaleb only has control over one bridge, which connects to Middle City, but also has extensive lands outside the city limits to the east.

Taskan Quarter: This district is, strictly speaking, outside of the city proper – a colony put down abutting Sorandib's walls where the road from the capital meets the East Gate (at the Kalebite Quarter). A three metre high wall connecting the permanent structures surrounds the main part, beyond which is a caravanserai surrounded by a palisade. Rising above the Taskan quarter is a 'keep' built by supplementing the walls of a large house that serves as the garrison commander's residence. 120 men are stationed here, most of them cavalry.

Sewers: Several miles of passages, large and small, carry waste and water overflows to the Briga River. The Grand Sewer, the earliest part of the system, is in places five metres across. The upper reaches of the Grand Sewer that run under Palace Hill are carefully guarded and trapped to deter intruders. Other parts of the network serve as thoroughfares and even homes for some of the city's inhabitants, and provide ideal routes for clandestine travel across the city. Some ancient machinery still makes the rounds of the sewers, clearing blockages by grinding up whatever refuse has accumulated to interrupt the flow. This can include people caught in their way.

THE WALLS

The city's walls vary in height according to the year of construction. Old City is surrounded by a wall 12 metres high, Lower and

ADVENTURER CREATION

Sorantine Adventurers can be generated in the same way as Taskan Adventurers. However they are not Taskan citizens, so do not need to sacrifice 1 POW to gain a Pact (Zygas Taga) skill. An Adventurer with an artisan background (any profession of SOC 11+ that provides a creative Craft or Art skill) must sacrifice 1 POW *permanently* at the Black Rock, gaining no Pact in the process. Refusal to do so entails a rejection of the closed shop guilds of the city, and the Adventurer will never be entitled to practice his trade there.

If you are generating more advanced Adventurers than provided for in the relevant chapter of the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook*, you may allow an Adventurer from Sorandib to have trained as an Artificer. The Adventurer must meet the minimum requirements set out in the Cults chapter of this book.

Middle City by a wall 10 metres high, and New City by a 12 metre wall. The various bastions generally only rise one to two metres above the height of the adjoining stretch of curtain wall, however a few towers and gate houses are higher, reaching 15 metres or more.

FACTION AND POLITICS

Shadrian Muttine is of advanced years, poor health and is mostly confined to bed. The King's courtiers, led by Vizier Astermain, have a lot to lose when the king finally dies and keep him topped up with fortifying elixirs to ensure he does not suddenly succumb to some ailment or poison. If they can only locate some long lost royal with a viable claim to the throne, and to the Emperor's protection under the ancient pact, they might just manage to hang on to all their perks and privileges. With the authority of the ailing king's word, control of the Palace Guard, free run of the great echoing halls of the palace itself and above all, direct access to the Artificers' Guild, the Royals (as they are known) are still a force to be reckoned with. Despite having such resources and control of the most important parts of the city, the Royals suffer from a lack of direction and spend more time worrying about how to maintain the status quo than planning any positive moves. There are various other factions in the city that the royal court has to contend with, whether by intriguing with them or against them.

THE KALEBITES

Quag Kaleb is a canny aristocrat who long ago threw in his lot with the Taskans and seeks to be their recognised friend in Sorandib. While he attempts to make himself the ideal candidate for a governorship when Sorandib falls under direct Imperial control, he himself is making land grabs outside of the city and offering good terms to townfolk who want to try out a new life in the country as protected tenants of the mighty clan Kaleb. Kaleb has funded and organised the establishment of a temple to Samanse and her daughter the barley-goddess Kait (known locally as Samandsa and Kadith) on his lands at the town of Ersgud astride

the Felsang-Sorandib road, and the positive influence of their temple has fostered harvests that have not been seen in Sorantia for centuries.

THE GUNDEVERS

Glav Gundever is the head of an aristocratic clan that controls a fortified island in the heart of the city known as Gundever Palace. Their country estates are long since in ruin – on the wrong (west) side of the Briga River where brigands now hold sway. Nevertheless, with the ancient right to charge tolls to those crossing the bridges here, and to levy tariffs on river traffic passing beneath those same bridges, the Gundevers are prosperous enough for now. Glav Gundever, while having a reputation for being a rough and no-nonsense sort, is famously an antiquarian collector. Out of a sense of pride in the city's past, and with a view to securing his own future, he employs both scholars and thieves to scour the city for works of art, ancient books and, of course, magical and mechanical artefacts. Gundever has no liking for Quag Kaleb, who often passes just these sorts of prizes on the Taskans to curry favour with them. The competition between the two men drives a good business for the prospectors who mine Sorandib for its secrets, but can result in a bloody denouement to a race between rival gangs of treasure seekers.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Vegoth Maveg is the head of the cult of Sorantar, the fire daemon who inhabits the city's biggest temple and whose subservient fire spirits have, for centuries, ensured the Artificers' fires burn hotter and longer than any others. The most likely thing to happen in the event of a future Taskan takeover is that Sorantar will be welcomed into the Taskan pantheon as have other gods before – but there is a chance the Taskans will try to destroy the God or bind him. For now, the cultural importance of his cult, and the role the god's power has played a part in keeping the Artificers working in Sorandib, means that Sorantar and his high priest can command respect. Maintaining Sorantar's power by maintaining the numbers of worshippers at the required level is Maveg's main task, which is difficult with a dwindling city population. The priesthood is still very wealthy and by keeping their part of the city clean and safe they make sure that the cult retains its high status on the street.

THE TASKANS

Based in a suburb outside the walls of Sorandib proper, the official leader of the Taskans in Sorandib is Sutermin Zastu, a captain in the Imperial army. He is of high family from the Tarsenian city of Felsang but of rather middling military rank, in order to ensure the Taskan presence here is suitably low-key for the time being. His principal task is to keep the trade route between Sorandib and cities of the Imperial Heartland safe, along which passes, among other things, the supplies of black powder required by the Unconquerable Heroes of Taskay – a shipment that happens twice per year in peacetime. His remit extends to securing the countryside either side of the road, which in an otherwise lawless land presents a great advertisement for the benefits of Imperial protection. He has no authority of any

kind in the city outside of the Taskan quarter itself. Of course the Taskans run a whole nest of spies in the city for all sorts of reasons, and these are run by a triumvirate of imperial agents working out of Sutermin's office.

SOSBANDER'S FREE SOCIETY

A powerful force in New City ruled by a committee of citizens who are largely self-selecting rather than elected, Sosbander's Free Society is the largest political association in Sorandib. It has grown out of one of New City's funeral clubs to become, in effect, a parallel government that raises tithes from its members, provides rudimentary policing and equally rudimentary and sometimes rough justice. Over 5,000 of Sorandib's inhabitants are effectively under its banner. Under the tutelage of the popular Tarsenian deity Hamath, Sosbander's Free Society is responsible for rendering many formerly lawless areas of New City peaceful, but its activities are also sometimes hardly distinguishable from protection rackets and other forms of organised crime. Sosbander himself is long dead, his name was just attached to the funeral club that was founded with a significant donation from the proceeds of his estate.

THE BEGGARS

There are over 1,000 beggars in the city, the vast majority of whom recognise the authority of Hanskom, the Beggar King of Sorandib. Hanskom and his chief lieutenants are devotees of an entity called Nosthagre, commonly referred to as *The Little God of Lost Things*. The beggars are very useful sources of information, who maintain a network of information gathering and rumour dissemination that allows them to influence the world around them in ways that provide the destitute with some small measure of respect. The beggars never indulge in thievery, but they absolutely indulge in 'finding' things that are 'lost' and making use of them, as well as soliciting food or money from those who have any to spare. Among their many perquisites is the right to collect abandoned corpses and receive a small bounty from the city authorities or the relatives of the deceased (if found) for bringing them to their attention.

THE URBAN TRIBES AND WARDS

Outside of those factions with an overt political or social purpose, the city has long since been factionalised along family, occupational, even sporting lines, and these lines are by and large shaped around ancient tribal divisions created by Ostrik II.

The Sorantines long ago separated into tribes for administrative purposes such as organising the muster for the militia and identifying whose job it was to defend what area, and sorting out the electoral roll. Despite the social and geographical mobility of several centuries the tribes remain identified with rigidly defined zones within the city. Which zone you are in is apparent enough in that many houses and buildings will have a plaque somewhere bearing the badge of the tribe to which the occupants, past or present, belong. Tribes can be very parochial, and each may regard certain others as fierce rivals and show some degree of antipathy or indifference to the rest. Each tribe has a totem animal that is its

badge: Fox, Deer, Ox and so on; and a colour, usually displayed as a ribbon worn in a woman's hair or attached to a man's cloak or tunic on festal days. Some go do far as to deck themselves out in the colour of their tribe.

To add to the confusion for the visitor, the tribes are only found in the Old City, Lower City, Gundever Palace and Temple Quarter. The newer areas of the city were not even built until many years after the original tribes were established, and those who settled these quarters were forced into the distinctly lower-class suburban factions known as wards. A citizen of these new wards had much the same civic obligations as a tribesman, however as a means of preserving the ancient privilege and potency of the tribes, his vote in city-wide polls is only counted at one tenth the value.

Naturally, this has led to immense chips on the shoulders of every New City or Middle City resident, against the establishment nobs of the upper town tribes. There have been some spectacular bust-ups at regular intervals, to the extent that the city has often banned any city event that might lead to the groups clashing, or even coming into close contact when wearing their colours.

THE PALACE GUARD

Sorandib can only muster some 200 royal troops. The militia, technically under the command of whoever is currently commander of the Palace Guard, has not been assembled for many years. Hence all the other armed men of the city are in the service of one or another faction, or are perhaps volunteers acting as nightwatchmen out of civic duty and organised by the local tribe or ward. It is unknown how many of these people would answer the king's summons to fight for him and their city if it came. The palace has a magnificent armoury, capable of furnishing arms and equipment to up to 5,000 men. It is not known how much of this materiel is serviceable.

Being few in number Sorandib's Palace Guard consequently offer limited patrols of the city and its defences, concentrating mainly on the palace, Old City, Lower City and parts of Middle City. They are well trained, equipped and motivated – apart from the realisation they are hopelessly under-resourced and outnumbered by the paramilitaries at large in the city. Their patrols are often only two men strong, except in the most dangerous parts of town. The barracks could house over 500 men and almost as many horses; large parts of it are now either abandoned or turned over for habitation by guardsmen's families.

The commander reports to the King, but to all practical purpose he takes his instructions from Vizier Astermain.

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT

Guardsmen usually patrol or stand guard with spear and shield, as this makes them look dignified and professional compared to the various bravos in private employment encountered across the

THE BOAT RACE

Even in the most difficult times the annual boat race that runs from Fort Number Two, up to Fort Number One, then back past the Necropolis and the Island to Fort Number Four, has always been allowed to continue. This festival takes months of preparation, officially lasts three days culminating in one main race, and is a key social event in the city's calendar. The race pits boats of seventeen oarsmen and a helmsman, and is contested by one crew from every tribe and ward in the city capable of fielding one. Honours are heaped on the winning boat and their neighbourhood earns great kudos for the year. Naturally the competition is fierce, and collisions, injuries and deaths are not uncommon and, frankly, expected by all. Teams and boats are regularly nobbled, bribed, sabotaged, threatened, even kidnapped or killed. The city expects this too, and all regard even the most underhand tactics as fair behaviour if this may result in a win. Men such as Glav Gundever and Quag Kaleb, make great play in paying for and providing the facilities, decorations, food and drink and other necessities of the festival, including the vast quantities of flags in the neighbourhood colours that are flown from every conceivable surface for the duration of the festival.

city. Their helmets sport a horsehair plume in white or red, their shield blazon shows the Tarsenian letter 'S' surmounted by the royal crown. A mixture of hardened and lacquered leather armour, reinforced with metal plates at key points, is the usual panoply.

THE REPEATING CROSSBOW

When actively patrolling, or dealing with real trouble, one or more within a group may carry a crossbow instead of spear and shield. Firearms are not available as they are manufactured exclusively for export to the Taskans. The Palace Guard are instead equipped with 5-shot repeating crossbows. Each shot in the magazine has a load time of 1, however if having to load individual shots by hand the load time is as for a regular light crossbow, and it takes five Combat Actions to reload a magazine and two to fit a magazine once it is loaded.

AVERAGE PALACE GUARDSMAN

A guardsman takes pride in his station and is generally both diligent in his duties and resistant to bribery.

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 12–5 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 10 **HP:** 12 **Critical Wound** 6

Skills: Artillerist 30%, Athletics 35%, Brawl 40%, Brawn 35%, Evade 30%, Insight 30%, Lore (Tactics and Drill) 51%, Perception 45%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 40%, Ride 30%, Rites 45%, Streetwise 50%

Combat Styles: Marksman 55%, Spear and Shield 50%, Sidearm and Shield 45%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Repeating Crossbow	L	100m	1D8, Impale	4/5
Spear	M	L	D8+1, Impale	4/5
Shield	S	S	D6	8/12
Falchion	M	M	D6+2, Bleed	6/10

Armour: Reinforced leather, metal helm, 3 AP

Blessings: Talok x 1

TYPICAL GUARD SERGEANT

One in ten guardsmen is a sergeant, a Devotee of Talok, who has 1D3 POW devoted to this local war god and allocated to Gifts or Divine Magic spells, better armour, and slightly higher skills.

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13–6 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 9 **HP:** 13 Critical Wound 7

Skills: As Guardsman except: Artillerist 50%, Brawl 55%, Lore (Tactics and Drill) 76%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 55%, Rites 60%

Combat Styles: Crossbow 70%, Spear and Shield 60%, Sidearm and Shield 65%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Repeating Crossbow	L	100m	1D8, Impale	4/5
Spear	M	L	D8+1, Impale	4/5
Shield	S	S	D6	8/12
Falchion	M	M	D6+2, Bleed	6/10

Armour: Leather, horn and metal Lamellar and helm, 4 AP

Blessings: Talok x2

Devotions: Pact (Talok) 31%: Gift: *Unfailing Heart* – Immunity to morale-affecting spells and creature traits; Divine Magic: Truespear

ENGINEER-SERGEANT

An Artificer named Bezus Melk is based at the barracks whose job is to maintain the torsion artillery installed in some of Sorandib's defence works. The rest of his kind are usually on loan to the Taskan army. Bezus has the honorary army rank of sergeant, but is a journeyman Artificer who has done his time working abroad and is quite happy now staying in Sorandib and enjoying the camaraderie of these local boys. Melk keeps a pet monkey called Chachak, who has become a much-loved mascot to the Palace Guard. Chachak is intelligent, playful and inquisitive, and easily mistaken for a sorcerer's familiar or homunculus. He is just a monkey.

GUARD CAPTAINS

For historical reasons there are a total of 14 Palace Guard captains, rather more than required by the size of the corps they command

– which means they have a fairly relaxed schedule and have long periods of leave available. These are desirable positions, which come with a SOC of 13, higher for those with specific titles such as the Royal Bannerman that bring additional perks and privileges. They enjoy housing provided by the crown in the Lower City, free meals in the palace courts, and public respect.

Guard captains are usually kitted out in fine metal lamellar armour, with bronze or iron greaves, sporting a sky blue cloak and a matching helmet plume (4 points overall, up to 6 in some locations). They are usually armed only with a sword when on duty – sometimes a spear is carried, but never a shield. Two of the guard captains are acolyte-devotees of Sorantar, some are devotees of the soldier-god Talok. The former are expected to equip themselves with the Summon Salamander Divine Magic spell, while the Morale spell is required of the latter.

GUARD COMMANDER

Vlasmik Bronsom is the Commander of the Palace Guard, a position of high honour if of rather limited military clout. He spends very little time actually commanding the guard, and can usually be found at court, in military dress, or perhaps on 'official' business in the Taskan Quarter where he is responsible for military liaison with Sutermin Zastu.

MONEY, TRADE AND FENGO

Sorantines use the Taskeen as a handy source of currency, although the local mint continues to issue new coinage from time-to-time. When it does so it purports to be a silver piece equivalent to a Korantine Guilder or Sharranketan Dinar, worth 2 Taskeens and called a *Gleam* (due to its high silver content). There are comparatively few in circulation, these coins are mostly hoarded as bullion.

Most trade of any great value is moving up and down the Briga River and the kingdom's key remaining natural resource is a weed known as Fengo, harvested from the edges of Lake Barur and transported first to Sorandib for processing then down to Morkar for distribution. An effective painkiller, Fengo also has a range of psychological effects that depend on how it has been processed and packaged and is, in fact, outlawed in the Empire in most forms.

FENGO

This drug is remarkable for having both psychoactive and physical effects that can be modified and harnessed by a competent apothecary or alchemist. So far as is known, the source of the drug in the shallow waters of Lake Barur, where it grows in dense leafy masses floating at the surface, is unique.

Fengo usually arrives in Sorandib as a bale of dry, fibrous matter known as Fengo Hash shipped down river from the shores of Lake Barur on shallow draft riverboats. A quantity is bundled into nets still green and kept fresh and moist by towing these nets behind the boats or the duration of the journey, or else is shipped in barrels topped up with water from Lake Barur itself.

Because there are two stages where the boats must be unloaded and the cargo and boats transported overland in order to avoid rapids and cataracts, there is ample opportunity for the trade to be interrupted by bandits who require significant payment before relinquishing their hold on the route, or who levy subsidies to allow the trade to continue on its way. Glav Gundever maintains a small force at Lake Barur itself to protect the communities who harvest the weed and occasionally funds efforts to suppress the bandits who interrupt the shipments, but just as often he will pay them off. With the collapse of the agricultural economy around Sorandib, Fengo provides the Gundever clan with their most important source of income.

Once in Sorandib Fengo is taken in at Old City Docks, then at least half of it sent out to refining centres located in Lower City. The remainder is, with minimal processing, turned into a preparation smoked or chewed as a recreational narcotic. Some of this is used locally, the rest finds its major market downriver in Morkesh from where it is also sold into the Sultanates of Djesmirket.

GREEN FENGO

The weed in its natural state must be kept thoroughly soaked in cold water until the moment it is processed. Green fengo is destined for use by apothecaries and alchemists as an ingredient for healing salves and other medical preparations. The Taskan Empire is the final destination for the majority of these healing products.

RAW FENGO (FENGO HASH)

Raw fengo is a fibrous substance that can be smoked or chewed, providing the user with a sense of well-being. It is more potent if smoked, but smoking has a shorter-lived effect than chewing the stuff. Fengo's primary effects are on the user's *Mood*, and the Attitudes Table in the *Age of Treason Core Rulebook* is used to describe the effects. The side effects are usually minor and not too harmful, unless the user takes too much at the same time.

The effects of taking Fengo are the same either way, but it takes much longer to release its effects when chewed than when smoked.

Application:	Mastication or Inhalation
Onset time:	1D3x10 Minutes (chewed) 1D6+4 minutes (smoked)
Duration:	D6+1 hours (chewed), D6 hours (smoked)
Resistance Time:	Test once at Onset
Potency:	2D10 (chewed) or D10+10 (smoked) per dose. If a previous dose taken by the user is still within its duration, he must resist the combined Potency of all doses when the onset time of each new one is reached.
Resistance:	Resilience
Conditions:	Varies according to dose and means of application. While the objective is to heighten the user's <i>Mood</i> , at higher strengths, Fengo may have additional effects.

Cumulative Potency	Successful Resilience Test	Failed Resilience Test (Additional Effects)
01–25	Improve the user's Mood one step	Resilience +10%; Insight, Perception and Persistence –10%
26–50	Improve the user's Mood one step, to <i>Content</i> as a minimum; Resilience +10%, Insight, Perceptions and Persistence –10%	As above plus: The user experiences a <i>Downer</i> upon expiry of the drug's Duration, resulting in a negative shift of Mood in equal measure to the positive gain they had formerly experienced.
51–75	Improve the user's mood two steps; Resilience +20%, Insight, Perception and Persistence –20%	As above plus: All other skills –10%
76–100	As above, and lose one CA	Resilience +20%; all other skills at –20%, however the Games Master may require a successful Persistence test to even attempt them. Duration followed by a Major Downer – a negative mood swing one step greater than the positive gain the user had experienced.
101+	Delirium	Stupefaction; Fumbled roll = death

FINE FENGO (FENGO POWDER)

Processed, buff coloured, fine powder used in apothecary and alchemical preparations, or, more dangerously, as a narcotic. Fine Fengo has the same properties as Fengo Hash, but at a much higher Potency, in this case driven by the skill – Lore (Poisons) or Lore (Herbalism) – of whoever has prepared it. A random sample will have a Potency of (D6+3) x10. Doses are small (5g) and usually inhaled (snorted) without burning, or formed into a small pill.

THE DANGERS OF FENGO

If a mood swing takes an Adventurer to a negative place beyond *Violent* he becomes extremely dangerous, capable of killing complete strangers; and if there is no one else to harm, they will set about themselves, frequently with self-mutilation leading to suicide.

If a mood swing takes an Adventurer to a positive place beyond *Ecstatic* then they are in danger of harm by believing themselves indestructible or godlike. Inadvertent suicide of the, "Look, I can fly!" variety is not unheard of. And some have died because they

imagined themselves so charismatic as able to charm their way past a gang of murderous cutthroats.

A user can become an addict. If a Resilience test is fumbled when testing to resist the Potency of the drug, the user gains an Addiction – treat as a *Passion* with a starting value equal to the Potency of Fengo in the user's system at the time. Test whenever it could be amusing to do so (never more than once per day), matching the Addiction to the Adventurer's Persistence. If the Addiction wins the Adventurer spends the next 1D6 hours focused on finding a fix if they do not have one to hand. If they do succeed in getting a fix, add 1% to their Addiction. If they get by without it, reduce it by 1%. In any event after a month of cold turkey the Adventurer should be allowed a Persistence test to shed any remaining cravings and kill the Addiction for good.

FENGO AS AN ALCHEMICAL INGREDIENT

A skilled alchemist can use the refining process to add or remove effects of the drug. Hence it is possible to generate a form of refined Fengo which is tailored to induce Delirium but no other side effects; or to add to the user's Resilience by numbing the body against pain. Each such process is considered an Alchemy Formula, and depending on its purpose may fall into a different Alchemy discipline.

FENGO TRADE AND SMUGGLING

On the wider market, Fengo pricing ranges from 65 Taskeens per kilo for hash, to 800 Taskeens per kilo – more than twice the value of silver by weight – for the refined stuff used by Alchemists. In Sorandib those prices may be halved if you know where to go, but the crown charges a significant tax on its export as a raw material in order to ensure the refining industry stays in the city.

The City Fathers have always attempted to ensure that the city profits from the fengo trade by having a near monopoly on its movement from the source of the drug in Lake Barur, and on the processing of the dried hash to its refined powder form that has a variety of recreational and alchemical uses. To this end they charge significant tolls on any raw fengo passing through Sorandib along the river (collected by the GundEVERS), currently at 30%, but at some times in the past reaching 50% or even more. This discourages the establishment of a processing business anywhere else, such as Morkesh, by making it uneconomic. Fengo landed in Sorandib is charged only at a normal import duty rate (2%), and its export duty after processing is 3%.

Clearly there are profits to be had for those who can circumvent the 'transit tax'. Meanwhile there are those who attempt to interrupt the supply from lake Barur, but although there have been occasional bandit raids on the Fengo collectors and shippers, attempts to take control of the supply are the one thing liable to bring out several thousand angry Sorantines under arms to take it back - and do so with sufficient brutality to discourage other chancers for the next generation. Simple smuggling is less heavily pursued and punished, particularly if a local business. The GundEVERS tend to have to police that on their own, and they crack down on it when they feel the damage to their river tolls is greater than the trouble and cost of doing something about it.

RELIGION

Being culturally Tarsenian, the residents of Sorandib worship many of the same gods as Taskans do, with some interesting additions. A number of southern (Assabian) gods are popular here too, whose worship has travelled up the Briga River from Morkesh. Cults outlawed in the Empire often flee to Sorandib and set up shop here, sometimes openly, sometimes (as in the case of the vampire cult of Vyako) in secret.

The most obvious difference to cities of the Taskan heartlands is in the scarcity of temples at which to worship, since with one or two notable exceptions there appears to be a complete lack of state support for religious building. None of the traditional Tarsenian gods has a temple in Sorandib. The city is under the protection of its own resident fire demon, Sorantar, who enjoys possession of its greatest temple – actually the biggest structure of any kind, a ziggurat which is also unlike any temple architecture seen in the Empire.

Sorandib has no festivals that are an object of pilgrimage for outsiders. The one thing people do come for is the annual boat race, which is (peculiarly) an entirely secular affair.

The Rites (Own) skill used by the locals is identical to the one used by Tarsenians from within the empire. With the lack of public temples and festivals, most worship is conducted at private shrines within the home or some other private meeting place – or is at least presumed to. It is possible that a high proportion of Sorantines are either irreligious or even of an atheist persuasion.

TEMPLE OF SORANTAR

Sorantar's temple is a shrine with a gilded roof set atop a ziggurat that stands 42 metres high and its base tier is 64 metres square. Each of the four massive platforms constituting the ziggurat is protected by its own set of enchantments as well as some practical, and some entirely frivolous, features and enhancements provided by the Artificers. The massive court in which the ziggurat stands has a simple hemp rope surrounding the base of the ziggurat in a circle that intersects with each of its four corners, marking out the boundary between sacred and profane space.

The dimensions of the ziggurat are highly idiosyncratic – but essentially the ziggurat marks out the space that Sorantar, bound to a rock at its heart, is able to move around in at a radius of POW (58) metres from his binding.

SORANTAR'S TEMPLE GUARDSMEN

Less popular than the Palace Guard, the Temple Guard take a stern and authoritarian attitude to undesirables. They have the absolute right to expel anyone they do not like the look of from the Temple Quarter. They are essentially a civilian band of enforcers and are neither trained nor equipped like soldiers, being armed with a thick stave studded with bronze and usually a dagger or dirk, and wearing little armour in order to look less military in aspect. But they are smartly dressed in temple livery, and made to wear beards to give them a more manly and aggressive appearance.

AVERAGE TEMPLE GUARDSMAN

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 12-2 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 10 **HP:** 12

Skills: Athletics 45%, Brawn 40%, Evade 25%, Insight 40%, Perception 35%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 40%, Rites 60%, Streetwise 40%

Combat Styles: Brawl 55%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Club	M	S	D6, Stun	4/4
Dagger	S	S	D4+1, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: Leather cuirass and skullcap, 1 AP

Blessings: Sorantar x2

THE ZIGGURAT

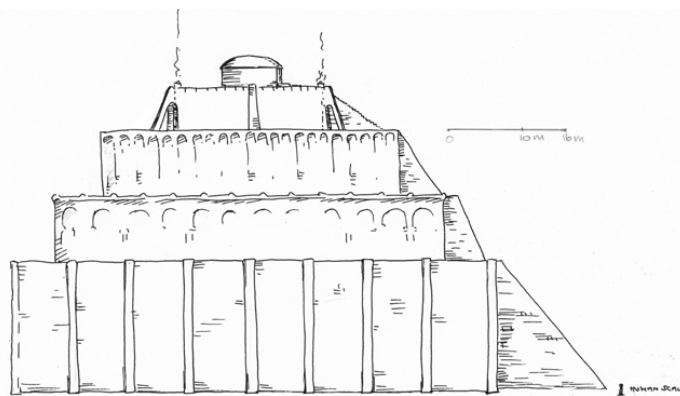
Level 1: This platform stands 18 metres high and access is controlled by temple guardsmen. Intruders are further deterred by a set of warding enchantments. The wardings do no damage but trigger an alarm audible to those of Acolyte status or higher within the cult if someone who is not a member of the cult sets foot on the platform. Someone protected by appropriate defensive magic of Magnitude 8 or better will not trigger the alarms. The steps themselves are not warded – if using them it is possible to climb right to the top without triggering any defensive magic.

Level 2: This platform stands 10 metres above the first and is protected by magical wards. Anyone who is not a Acolyte of Sorantar who sets foot on this level is attacked by a burning pain that causes 1D3 damage to a random location at the end of each round they remain. This damage can be blocked by 8 Magnitude or more of spell defences, but cannot be resisted.

Level 3: This platform stands 10 metres above the second and is protected by three famous golems that hunt down intruders. One of these is Johambo, a great behemoth built of wood bound in bronze, possessed of three wheels for legs and an enormous mallet; another is Kikatik, a skittering thing capable of climbing and hiding, spitting metal darts and leaping onto intruders before applying its razor-sharp jaws to their heads; the last, Shaylom, is simply an iron-bound ball that can career around the platform bowling over intruders.

On this level is the secret point of access to the chamber within the ziggurat where Sorantar's binding is to be found. This is the only level of the main structure that has access to internal space that can be explored.

A passageway runs to the heart of the ziggurat; it has two side chambers and is illuminated by a bright light at its end. The passage terminates in a ledge onto a circular shaft four metres across that goes up into the shrine atop the ziggurat and down



into the furnace beneath it. Hovering in mid air at the height of the ledge and shining with a bright and fiery light is a massive (40kg) polished lump of Brightcrystal. Its surfaces are etched with arcane symbols, and this object is Sorantar's binding. The side-chambers happen to be places where priests and acolytes take cover when Sorantar is in full flame. In one there is a substantial pile of Brightcrystal, in various sizes, nothing smaller than 0.25kg and ranging up to 3kg (there are 125kg here in all). Several pairs of decorated bronze tongs, of the kind used for handling hot materials, are kept in the same room, and two sets of full face-covering robes with glass eyepieces, Artificer made items that are resistant to heat (up to 3D6 damage).

JOHAMBO

Characteristics:

STR 25 SIZ 20 INT 4 DEX 12

Attributes:

DM: +1D10 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 8+ **Mv:** 8

Skills: Brawn 75%, Evade 36%

Combat Styles: Pulverise 81%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Arm & Hammer	H	L	2D6+D10, Stun, Sunder	As Arm

Armour: Reinforced with strips of bronze, 4AP overall

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
01-08	Wheels	4/11
09-16	Body	4/12
17-20	Hammer/Arm	4/9

KIKATIK

Originally constructed to be an Artificer's familiar, Kikatik was re-enchanted following his original creator's demise to be recycled as a temple guardian. His articulated body with 9 Hit Locations is a thing of wonder even among Artificers. Kikatik's enchantments are located in his hindquarters, so if this location is destroyed then Kikatik is destroyed.

Characteristics:

STR 17 SIZ 16 INT 5 DEX 15

Attributes:**DM:** +1D4 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 7+ **Mv:** 8**Skills:** Brawn 65%, Evade 60%**Combat Styles:** Marksman 90%, Grasp and Rend 96%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Spitting Teeth	L	30m	D4+2, Impale	–
Rending	L	T	D6+2, Bleed	As Head

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
01–02	Right Hind Leg	6/9
03–04	Left Hind Leg	6/9
05–07	Hindquarters	6/12
08–09	Right Centre Leg	6/9
10–11	Left Centre Leg	6/9
12–14	Forequarters	6/12
15–16	Right Foreleg	6/9
17–18	Left Foreleg	6/9
19–20	Head	6/11

SHAYLOM**Characteristics:**

STR 25 SIZ 17 INT 4 DEX 18

Attributes:**DM:** +1D10 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 11+ **Mv:** 10**Skills:** Brawn 75%, Evade/Manoeuvre 54%**Combat Styles:** Bowling 96%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bowling	H	T	D10+D4+Knockback	As Body

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
01–20	Body	4/32

GM Note: While Shaylom can swerve and veer in its course, it actually costs a 'Move' Combat Action to change direction by more than 45 degrees. To turn on a dime, for example to avoid careering off the edge of the platform, Shaylom must make a successful Evade roll.

Level 4: This platform stands six metres above the third and supports the shrine. At each corner is a simple golem that spits red hot missiles at any sorcerer or creature that approaches by air, attacking at a rate of one per round with a skill of 75% and inflicting D12+1 damage (Weapon Size Huge, Range 250 metres). Each Golem has a maximum of five shots.

The shrine's bronze doors are embossed with a riot of gilded sigils, and among these are found the enchantments for the temple's defences.

The room within the shrine is heavily embellished, the reliefs highlighted in gold and studded with glowing Brightcrystal chips. It is unfurnished except for an altar that stands immediately inside the door and before the circular shaft set in the floor. Those who reach the altar may find themselves confronting Sorantar himself, whose binding conditions allow him to manifest here.

WORSHIPPING SORANTAR**Blessings**

Townfolk who come to Sorantar during the major festival may gain a Blessing. Each blessing can provide a +10% skill bonus to the worshipper when making any Craft skill test that deploys heat in the crafting process.

Devotions

All attempts to make a devotion to Sorantar are controlled by his cult. Private supplicants are not welcome, and the mere approach will trigger the temple's magical defences.

SHRINE TO ZYGAS TAGA AND TASKAN PANTHEON

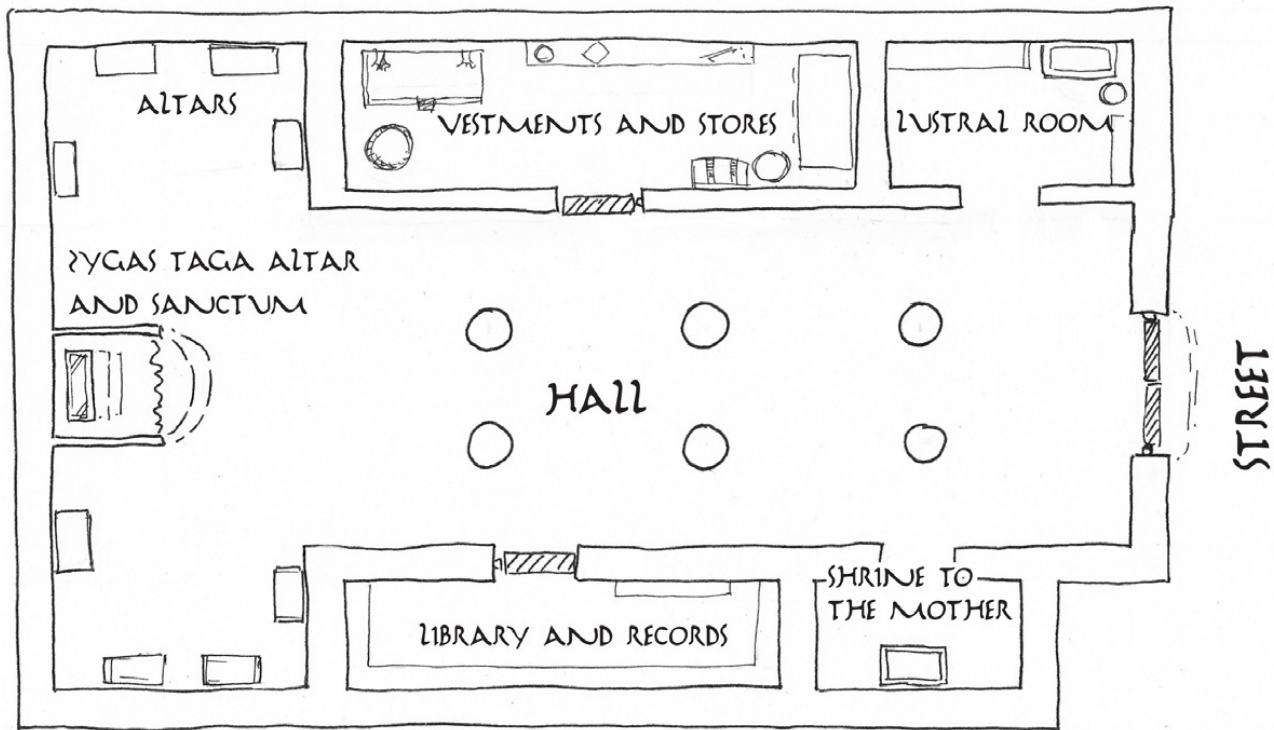
The Shrine here is a place where citizens of the empire can attend services on Emperor Days, but the officiating priest is of Acolyte rank (the local agent) and is not entitled to enrol locals as citizens. Nevertheless it is the key meeting place for Taskans in Sorandib, as well as the occasional member of Zygag Taga's Jekkarene cult. Baron Mozasteroy, a henchman of Baron Lankermost of Ramassa, looks after Jekkarene interests in Sorandib and can often be found here. Services in honour of other Taskan gods and goddesses can be held here on request and blessings received.

The temple consists of a large pillared hall some 14 metres long which acts as a public space; an inner sanctum dedicated to Zygag Taga is flanked by statues and altars of various Tarsenian Gods on one side and Goddesses on the other. Vestment and lustral rooms and a records library are found to either side of the hall, as well as a room dedicated to 'The Mother'. This is actually a place made sacred to the Jekkarene moon goddess, but where the little statuette set on an altar-table depicts a humble woman, presumed to be Zygag Taga's birth-mother.

Natives of Sorandib (and anyone else) who profess an interest in joining the cult and becoming Taskan citizens are directed towards Felsang, where they can enrol and make devotions without the suspicion of Taskan proselytizing – or to Ashkor, where they can show the sincerity of their desire and gain useful employment at the same time by joining the army.

The shrine is not a holy place and while Divine Magic from one of the Taskan gods can be recovered here, devotions cannot be made nor Divine Magic and Gifts acquired.

There are usually at least two Taskan soldiers on guard here, in their best equipment and uniforms.



SORANDIB: ZYGAS TAGA TEMPLE-SHRINE

SUTERMIN ZASTU, CAPTAIN OF THE TASKAN DETACHMENT

The commander of the Taskan troops stationed at Sorandib, Sutermin Zastu is a captain in a famous imperial cavalry unit, the Furies. He is of high family from the Tarsenian city of Felsang but of rather middling military rank, in order to ensure the Taskan presence here is suitably low key for the time being. While he gets to be the front man for all official interactions with the local community, nevertheless Sutermin is under the control of Imperial agents among his staff.

Sutermin can make use of his family Grimoire to hold services for his soldiers or fellow Taskans at the temple, however he lacks a Sanctify spell, this being the domain of lower-class professional priests, so he must hire someone for this part of the service when it is required.

Characteristics:

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 13 CHA 12 SOC 16

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 3 SR: 13 Mv: 8 MP: 11

Common Skills: Athletics 55%, Brawl 40%, Brawn 38%, Culture 85%, Dance 63%, Drive 55%, Evade 45%, Evaluate 62%, First Aid 54%, Influence 69%, Insight 42%, Lore (Tarsenian) 71%, Perception 51%, Persistence 46%, Resilience 50%, Rites 47%, Sing 30%, Sleight 30%, Stealth 32%

Advanced Skills: Education 65%, Lore (Sorantia 30%), Mounted Combat 81%, Ride 76%

Combat Styles: Cloak and Dagger 51%, Spear 65%, Archery 65%, Swordsmanship 71%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Kitan Bow	H	175m	D8+D2, Impale	4/8
Spear	M	L	D8+D2+1, Impale	4/5
Shortsword	M	S	D6+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dirk	S	S	D3+D2+2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn off-duty. On duty he wears a fine set of full metal lamellar and padding and a crested helm, for 5 points overall (SR penalty -7).

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Blessings: (Rites 47%), Jarmost x2

Divine Magic: Pact (Zygus Taga) 42% Dedicated POW1, Gift: *Citizenship*

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 0%):

Zastu Family Grimoire 45%: Dominate Dog, Dominate Horse, Sense Game Animal, Worship Tarsen, Worship Jarmost, Worship Thesh

TYPICAL TASKAN CAVALRYMAN

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3+1 when dismounted **SR:** 13–6 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 9
Dedicated POW: 1 **HP:** 13 Critical Wound 7

Armour: Leather, horn and metal Lamellar and helm, 4 AP

Common Skills: Athletics 40%, Brawn 35%, Brawl 30%, Insight 30%, Perception 40%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 45%,

Advanced Skills: Lore (Tactics and Drill) 55%, Mounted Combat 40%, Ride 55%

Combat Styles: Lancer 55%, Sidearm and Shield 60%, Archery 55%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Spear*	H	VL	D8+D2, Impale	4/10
Shield	S	S	D4+D2	8/12
Horseman's Mace**	M	M	D8+D2, Stun	4/10
Short Bow	L	80m	D6	4/4

*Taskan cavalry do not use the couched lance, but usually strike overarm with the spear from the saddle except when charging when they strike underarm.

** This weapon has a longer haft than a regular mace to facilitate use from the saddle.

If charging on horseback, the troopers can apply +1D6 Damage Bonus instead of the normal +1D2 if their attack roll is also lower than their Mounted Combat skill – this applies to *any* close combat weapon.

The short bow is the standard bow for use from the saddle in the Taskan army. It does not have enough draw strength to allow Damage Modifiers to be applied.

Blessings: (Rites 40%), Machank x2

Devotions: Pact (Zygas Taga) 30%. Dedicated POW 1

These troopers have been in Sorantia for some time; there is a 25% chance that each trooper has made devotions to Talok, the city's soldier-god, and has a Pact of 35% and 1D2 Dedicated POW. The first point is usually spent on the Unfailing Heart gift; the second on a use of the Truespear spell.

TEMPLE OF TEMMUSH, AND THE MINT

Temmush's temple is at the foot of Palace Hill, just by the ramp that leads up to the palace itself. It is fronted by a plaza where the money-changers traditionally do their business. The temple acts as a bank, royal mint and a safety deposit centre. Its priests comprise a state-sponsored cult of professional bankers, known as

The Banquet of Gold, who will evaluate treasures or divine the purity of gold and other precious metals with absolute integrity for a 1% fee. They also allocate safe boxes and store them securely for a rental of 30SP per month (equivalent to the cost of hiring a full time armed guard).

The temple has exceptional security, and only the priests know how to circumvent it. Its walls are in places four metres thick and warded against gnomes, the doors nearly 30 centimetres thick and bound with iron. A warding protects the vestibule, beyond which is the great hall with paved floor and simple dressed stone walls where there is a forge for melting precious metals, crucibles, work benches and all the necessary tools for both designing and striking coins. Standing silently on watch are two articulated bronze golems in the shape of armoured warriors. If there are intruders in the Great Hall, signalled by the Alarum spell being tripped in the Vestibule, these warriors will be activated. An enchantment carved into the ceiling releases combined Instinct of Combat (Brawl) and Instinct of Combat (Swordsmanship) spells manipulated for one additional target and with a Magnitude of 7.

GOLEM WARRIORS

Characteristics:

STR 23 SIZ 14 INT 5 DEX 18

Attributes:

DM: +1D8 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 14+ **Mv:** 6 **MP:** 0

Features: Articulation (6); Golem STR (2); Golem INT (2); Golem DEX (2)

Common Skills: Brawn 90%, Evade 90%, Perception 50%

Combat Styles: Brawl 164%, Swordsmanship 164%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword 2H	L	L	D10+D8, Bleed, Impale, Sunder	6/12

Armour: 8 AP on all locations with no penalty.

Hit Points: 8/8/9/10/7/7/8

The Golems rely on their near indestructibility and do not bother spending actions on defensive moves, unless it is to prevent being outmanoeuvred in a way that reduces their own attack chances. Preferred Combat Manoeuvres are Bypass Armour, Choose Location (Head), Damage Weapon and Maximise Damage. They are of course immune to Bleed and Impale, however Sunder can be a clever way to reduce the AP of a location and make them vulnerable to damage.

The great hall is open to the sanctum, and is also plain except for a simple stone altar bearing a man-sized statue of the god bearing a set of scales in each hand. One side is tipped by a piece of gold. Before the statue is a lump of silver, a lump of copper and one of lead, all larger than the piece of gold held on the balance. Placing the lead in the empty scale will create a balance, and the altar slides backwards through some artful mechanism to reveal steps down to the vault. The piece of gold should be picked up to use as an access token to the

vault. Incidentally, making the wrong choice invokes a curse through which the recipient's touch turns any gold he handles to base metal. This curse can only be lifted by creating or increasing a devotional pact with Temmush, and asking him to remove it as a Divine Gift.

At the foot of the stairs is a long corridor (approximately 30 metres in length) with a door at the far end and a bas relief running all along its length depicting a host of different gods and goddesses. This corridor is trapped three times: first by a spear trap triggered by a pressure plate in the floor at the foot of the stairs (90% chance of striking first intruder for D8+1 damage); second by a 3.5 metres deep pit containing one metre long bronze spikes (fallers are attacked by 4 stakes at 40% each, for D6+1 damage +D6+Impale; Evade roll to use a 'Redirect Blow' manoeuvre and if this is a critical success the spikes are avoided, only D6 falling damage applies); finally the door at its far end is false, and if tampered with simply collapses inward followed by a great stone that slides on rollers to crush whoever was behind it (4D6+1D6 damage to location 1D10). The first two traps are disarmed by way of a stone in the wall of the staircase that needs to be pressed. An alert intruder may Evade the first trap, and the third, alerted by the rumbling and grinding of the mechanisms that operate them.

A secret door on the left hand side of the passage is opened by placing a piece of gold in the mouth of Temmush's carved image in the frieze (a Culture (Taskan) at -40% is required to recognise him). This leads to the treasury; another long corridor, this one with a series of alcoves each with three niches containing a strongbox. Usually some 60% of these boxes will have valuable contents. Each box is locked and has 10 AP.

One box releases a secret mechanism if moved – this is at the point where a further concealed door leads to the temple treasury. This box is of course trapped, and the trap is itself concealed with a skill of 70%. A Mechanisms test can disarm it if found, but a failed roll will result in the trap being triggered. If the trap is sprung, two poison darts are fired with an accuracy of 120% at location D10+10 and inflicting 1D3+1 damage. The poison they carry has a Potency of 75 and leads to agonising pain (-40% from all skills) within 1D4 rounds if not resisted, followed by death 2D6 hours later if a second resistance roll fails.

The riches to be found in the square vault beyond are unimaginable to most people, but a mere shadow of what might have been here in the city's prime when it would certainly have been several millions – but nevertheless at any one time amounts to a minimum of 2D6 x 50,000 Taskeens in coin and bullion (somewhat over two tonnes of metal), as well as a host of priceless jewels and artefacts up to a further 3D6 x 100,000 in value.

The guardians of this chamber are, however, not to be messed with. Zanezbur (INT 12 POW 28 CHA 13) is a Spirit Ward who is there specifically to block Gnomes, which are the most likely means of access for would-be robbers. Rembrim is another (INT 16, POW 26, CHA 10) who protects the complex against intrusive magic such as Sense Projection, and both can Manifest against, and attack in spirit combat, any snooper using a Sense Projection spell.

NEW SORCERY SPELL: ALARUMS

Temporary Enchantment, Autonomous, Ritual

This spell allows a sorcerer to set an alarm which will alert the caster to a specific event, if he is within the spell's range. Each condition or exception that describes when the Alarum is (or is not) to be triggered costs a point of Manipulation. Alarums protect or defines an area of 1m squared for every 10% of the caster's Grimoire skill.

When manipulating an Alarums spell the following effects apply:

Magnitude applies to the Alarums spell, not to any spells it triggers. *Range* is used to extend the distance over which Alarums can alert the caster that it has been triggered.

Targets is used to define the total number of Conditions and Exceptions that can be defined, as well as the number of slots available for spells to be triggered by the alarm.

Duration applies to the alarm itself and does not begin until it has been tripped.

Once an Alarums spell is in place the caster can set sorcery spells that will be set off when the Alarums is triggered. These spells can be furnished by someone other than the Alarums caster if he has set that as a Condition, and are manipulated separately.

If the Alarum sets off an offensive spell with multiple Targets but only one target is present, it can, according to whatever conditions are placed on it, strike more targets who enter its area of effect until the Alarums Duration expires or the number of Targets is used up.

All the magic points for the Alarums spell and for those it triggers must be spent when they are set, and cannot be recovered until it is cancelled or its duration expires.

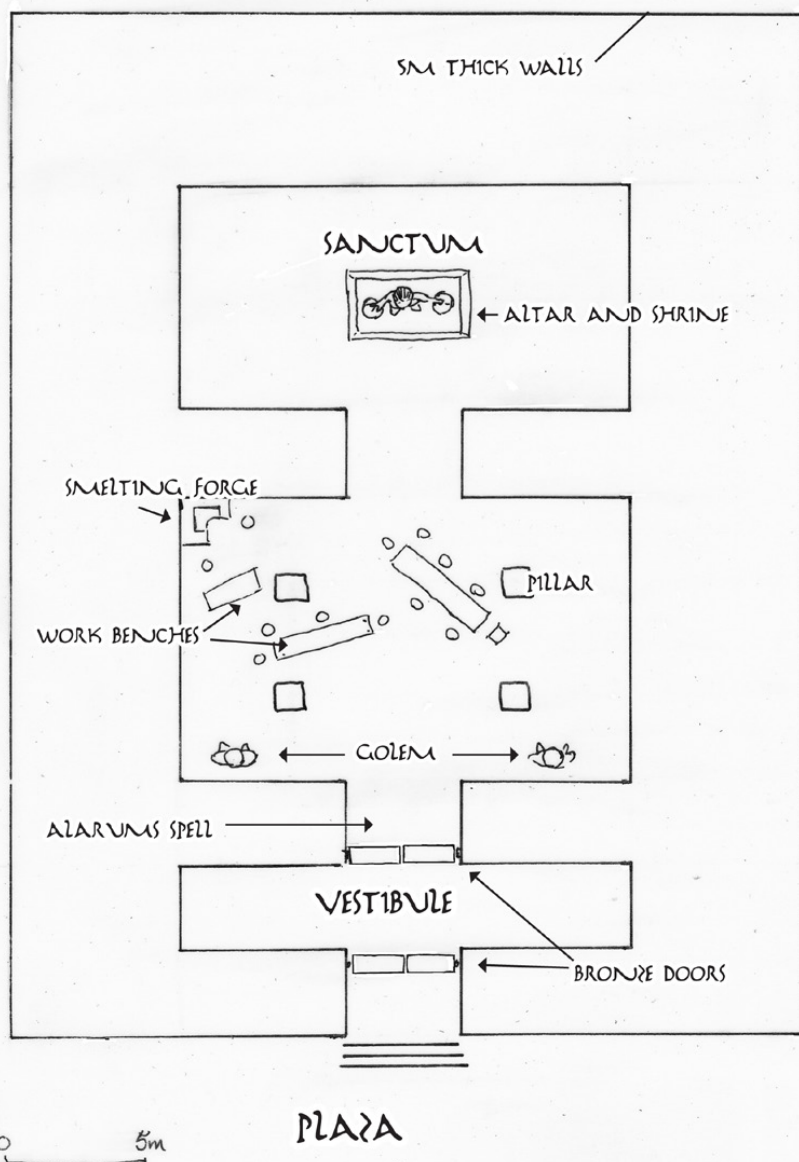
WORSHIP

Many individuals attempt to devote themselves to this deity in the hope he will make them rich, however Temmush is not a god of 'rags to riches' stories – he is one who takes an interest in the proper management, deployment and growth of wealth that already exists. Access to one talent of gold (some 6,400 Taskeens in bullion), and to deposit such a sum in their vaults, is regarded as the minimum requirement to earn this god's notice. As is common practice in Sorandib, when the deity is called to receive devotions he inhabits the statue rather than one of the priests.

DIVINE MAGIC AND GIFTS

Temmush can offer the following Divine Spells: Assay, Bless Trade, Call Temmush, Cartel

TEMMUSH TEMPLE AND ROYAL MINT



fraud or counterfeit is taking place between the participants, and whether the guilty party is one of the targets.

Bless Trade is a powerful spell if used with Extension, in which case it creates a trading network.

Cartel

Rank 50%

A magnified version of Bless Trade, this spell requires that all participants must use a casting of Bless Trade to participate in a trading network, and extends those spells indefinitely in both Duration and Range. Cartel can include a combination of number of participants, and a number of conditions equal to its magnitude. Each condition is effectively a contractual clause to do with the scope or termination of the Cartel. The caster and all other participants are aware if a member breaks these conditions.

This spell is a more formal contract, and it takes at least a month from the point of which a member of the network declares intention to leave for their magical link to be cancelled. More onerous termination conditions can be applied by the caster at the creation of the network. Neither the Cartel spell nor any of the Bless Trade spells used to participate in it can be recovered until the network is dissolved, or in the case of an individual participant, that they have observed the required notice period.

CULTS OF TEMMUSH

The Banquet of Gold is a public cult under royal encouragement and protection, with

a dozen or so initiated members and a dozen more employees. There are many other small cults and clubs that have Temmush as their tutelary deity, and these are often professional associations, people who do business in the temple's shadow as moneylenders, moneychangers, pawnbrokers and speculators. They have a vested interest in the temple's success, and often provide services to it or pay for renovations and repairs.

TEMPLE OF TALOK

Talok is the favourite war god in Sorandib, at least among the Palace Guard who come here regularly. His temple is close by the Royal Guard barracks, and is something of a museum, hung with trophies of battles that took place centuries ago when Sorandib was once a minor imperial power in its own right.

The temple has a live-in caretaker priest called Bedasthem who tends to take poorly to anyone other than himself leading worship

NEW DIVINE MAGIC SPELLS

Assay

Rank 50%, Duration 15, Touch

This spell gives the caster the ability to precisely establish the content of an alloyed metal, typically to assess or confirm the purity of bullion. For each Magnitude of the spell the caster can analyze up to 3 SIZ of a metal during the spell's 15 minute duration

Bless Trade

Rank 25%

This spell is used to ensure that a trade is honest and works to the benefit of all parties. For each point of magnitude the caster can target one person with the spell, and he must himself be one of those targets. It is possible to resist the effects with a Persistence test, but the caster will be aware of the resistance roll. For the duration of the spell all participants will immediately know if any

here. He is also grateful that the shrine provides a roof over his head, and somewhere he can earn some extra money by conducting weapons training in the courtyard – he rarely accepts invitations to deliver training at the client’s own home. His understudy, Jerib, is being taught the arts of the priest first, since Bedasthem regards this as more likely to provide the boy with a respectable living. However he will eventually start Jerib’s weapons training in earnest.

BEDASTHEM, 48 YEAR OLD WEAPONS MASTER AND PRIEST

Characteristics:

STR 14 CON 9 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 12 DEX 15 CHA 12 SOC 12

Attributes:

DM: +1D4 CA: 3+1 for dual wielding SR: 15+ Mv: 8 MP: 7 Dedicated POW:: 5

Common Skills: Athletics 57%, Brawl 92%, Brawn 40%, Culture 65%, Dance 35%, Drive 54%, Evade 86%, Evaluate 75%, First Aid 72%, Influence 37%, Insight 44%, Lore (Regional) 66%, Perception 41%, Persistence 68%, Resilience 71%, Rites 97%, Sing 30%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 40%

Advanced Skills: Education 48%, Mounted Combat 51%, Pact (Talok) 103%, Ride 68%, Survival 40%, Swim 35%, Teaching 62%

Combat Styles: Spear and Shield 118%, Sidearm and Shield 106%, Swordsmanship 92%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	D6+D4, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dirk	S	S	D3+D4+2, Bleed, Impale	6/6
Large Shield	H	S	2D4	6/18
Spear	M	L	D8+D4+1, Impale	6/5
Warsword	M	M	D8+D4, Bleed, Impale	6/10

Bedasthem can use a huge variety of weapons effectively, however if forced into combat in a ‘civilian’ environment without shield and armour he will fight with shortsword or warsword in one hand and his Tarsenian dirk in the other, gaining an additional CA.

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn, however when ready for a fight, Bedasthem can deck himself out in an old but fine set of lamellar armour (4 Armour Points overall, –6 SR)

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Blessings: (Rites 97%), Talok x3

Divine Magic: Pact (Talok) 101%: Morale, Panic, Call Talok; Gifts: Smiting (Damage Modifier increased to +1D4), Unfailing Heart (Immune to demoralization magic)

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 0%):

Book of Remembrance (79%): Sanctify, Spell Resistance, Worship Talok

The temple of Talok is in the standard format, with a broad hall leading to an inner sanctum at the far end. The area encompassing the inner sanctum and the statue in the Hall typically remains sanctified as a Sacred Site, while the rest of the hall is sanctified for specific Worship ceremonies (almost always conducted by Bedasthem). Each spear holds a cult spirit, which will manifest and inflict a Fear (as the Divine Spell) attack on anyone entering the sacred area or tampering with the statue with intent to do harm to the building or its priest. These spirits appear as horrifically mutilated casualties of war. They have seen action before and have used Magic Points as a result that they do not recover when bound. When each spirit’s Magic Points reach 1 it is released from its binding to return to the Many Hells.

Spirit 1: Intensity 2 Spook; INT 12 POW 14 CHA 12, CA: 2 SR: 12+ MP: 11, Manifest 52%, Spectral Combat 70%, Spirit Damage 1D8.

Abilities: Magnitude 6 Fear spell (costs 1 MP)

Spirit 2: Intensity 2 Spook; INT 14 POW 15 CHA 7, CA: 2 SR: 11+ MP: 9, Manifest 58%, Spectral Combat 75%, Spirit Damage 1D8

Abilities: Magnitude 6 Fear spell (costs 1 MP)

Spirit 3: Intensity 3 Terror; INT 13 POW 21 CHA 14, CA: 3 SR: 14+ MP: 19, Manifest 68%, Spectral Combat 105%, Spirit Damage 2D6

Abilities: Magnitude 7 Panic spell

This spirit can affect a magnitude that encompasses the whole of the main hall of the temple.

Items: *Talok’s Spears* The spears in which these spirits are bound are all capable of being removed and used in anger. Each one is enchanted to have a POW of 3 and a CHA of 3.

Virtues and Conditions: each spear is an Intensity 8 enchantment that bears a *Permanent* Damage Enhancement spell that means it always strikes for maximum (8) damage, as well as a *Fetish* enchantment that allows it to hold a single bound spirit that can be commanded by the spear’s wielder.

The spears only provide their virtues to Talok’s devotees.

The courtyard is mostly used for training, however it has three tombs, each marked with a plinth carved in relief, in which are interred the remains of those who were members of soldierly funeral clubs that are long since defunct, and have had no ashes added to them for more than 100 years. Bedasthem still ensures that appropriate rights are conducted on the Day of Ghosts.



WORSHIP

Bedasthem will run services for those who pay him to do so, and he will in any event run services on days and occasions deemed especially pleasing to the god that anyone may turn up to and seek a blessing.

Talok's Blessings: A Blessing from Talok can be used to add a 10% bonus to an Adventurer's Persistence for the duration of a battle. If unsure how to determine the duration of a battle, allow the blessing to apply from the first declaration of violent action until sunset that same day.

Bedasthem makes no charge to members of the Palace Guard who want to make devotions at the temple or to anyone who comes to witness the apotheosis of Talok on the annual high holy day. Anyone else must pay a fee of 30 Taskeens for access to the shrine.

GIFTS AND DIVINE MAGIC

Talok's Devotees can learn the Divine Spells Call Talok, Fear, Morale, Panic, Shield and Truespear, and receive the following Gifts:

Unfailing Heart: This Gift costs 1 POW. It renders the recipient immune to fear or demoralisation caused by any sort of magic or creature Trait.

Smiting: This Gift costs 1 POW. It permanently increases the recipient's Damage Modifier by one step

CULTS OF TALOK

There is one old established cult of Talok whose members are mostly from the Palace Guard, and Bedasthem is engaged to provide priestly services for them on a regular retainer. The guards meet in worship at the temple about once per month, and usually 30-40 of them attend. The officers regard it as a useful tradition to maintain. Only a few soldiers of the guard are also devotees.

Other cults come into being from time to time, and often fail to take root. There are currently four other groups for whom Bedasthem holds occasional services. One of them is a band of Taskan cavalrymen based in the Taskan Quarter. Talok does not have much presence in the rest of Tarsenia where Basat, Machank and Thesh are the regular deities for soldiers to attach themselves to. This makes him all the more appealing to some. A dozen Taskan soldiers regularly request a service, and three have made devotions here. On occasion they join with another group from the Kalebite quarter, headed up by Thul Vartigern. These men feel increasingly like Sorandib's effective army, since the Palace Guard does not have the resources to patrol

outside of the city, and the Kalebites actually keep the peace in significant tracts of country to the east. Bedasthem has to hold their worship services on Kalebite turf, but occasionally receives one of their number at the temple to make his devotions. The final cult, or group of worshippers, is a band of adventurer-mercenaries who insist new recruits devote themselves to this god. They number only a dozen, and busy themselves on protection duties in the city and occasional forays against brigands in the countryside.

Given that the temple is a Sacred Site, it would be possible – if Bedasthem could be included in the plan or somehow removed – to create a cult controlling access to it.

BUILDINGS OF NOTE

OLD CITY INN

As a starting point for adventuring in Sorandib there is no better place than Old City Inn. It is the most famous in the city, its current structure is 200 years old. Originally it was a place where notables and foreign ambassadors were billeted with their retainers when attending court, then, after it passed into the possession of the Ferrik family, an inn open to anyone with the money to pay their way. The Ferrik family still owns the place but they long since took up residence across the border near Felsang. Their agent, Lorith, manages the establishment on their behalf, and has quarters above a storeroom that he shares with his wife and three children. Each month Lorith sends a report and accounts to the owners, and encloses a set proportion of the takings. As often as he dares Lorith fails to deliver the cash and claims any losses or delay to be the result of brigandage on the road.

NEW DIVINE MAGIC SPELLS

Morale

Rank 50%, Duration 15

This spell is cast on a standard and affects everyone within a radius equal to the range of the spell who is serving under it. In the old days this spell was typically cast by a cult spirit bound to a unit's war banner. Several such banners still adorn the temple. The effect of the spell is to increase the Resolve of all those included by one step; the caster's Pact score is used to resist all incoming spells that affect the morale of those under the banner's protection, and the caster's critical range is used to augment all skill tests they undertake while within the range of the spell.

Panic

Rank 75%, Duration 15

This spell is an area affect magic attack that causes a state of panic and confusion that can lead to the collapse of an enemy unit. Everyone within an area equal to Magnitude metres squared is affected as if subjected to a Fear spell; anyone whose resistance roll is fumbled must make a Resilience test; if they succeed they collapse into a catatonic state; if they fail, they die of fright there and then.

LORITH

The landlord is middle aged and overweight but strongly built. He is gushingly pleasant towards his best customers, but dismissive towards those who can only afford dormitory space. He loves money, both for its own sake and because he is set on being able to get at least his children set up somewhere away from Sorandib – probably in Felsang, but maybe even further afield. As a result he does not shy away from some shady business dealings and moral compromises. He is also quite paranoid about security, which is quite a good thing if you choose to stay at Old City Inn.

The Inn is a huge fortress-like structure of dressed grey stone, its main walls reaching ten metres to a parapet, with three internal floors and with its own walled courtyard. Both yard and building are accessed by massive double gates, bound in iron and sealed by heavy wooden bars. Above the gates hangs a round shield bearing the badge of the Ferrik family. Within is a cavernous hall, with an internal wooden structure to one side supported by pillars to create first and second floor accommodation. The remainder of the hall is open to the roof eight metres above supported by four huge square columns, and this space is devoted to banqueting, drinking and entertainment. The area beneath the accommodation block has been made over to create a dormitory – with occupants having no more space than to be able to lay out a bed roll – and bathing facilities, this being four wooden tubs fitted to stone bases in the floor. These are filled from large cauldrons heated over the dormitory fire, so large as to require two men to carry them by poles slotted into loops fixed to the rim. Bathing is usually available in the mornings when the main hall is generally quiet. Those who require privacy for their baths can order a tin tub to their private room if they have one. Open archways lead from the great hall through to the kitchen. There was once a hot water supply that heated the baths and the floor of the hall, but this stopped working long ago, since after the inn passed into private hands it was longer deemed necessary or cost effective for access to that system to be maintained.

The main hall is heated by an immense fireplace, with a slightly smaller companion in the dormitory area opposite, and another in the kitchen.

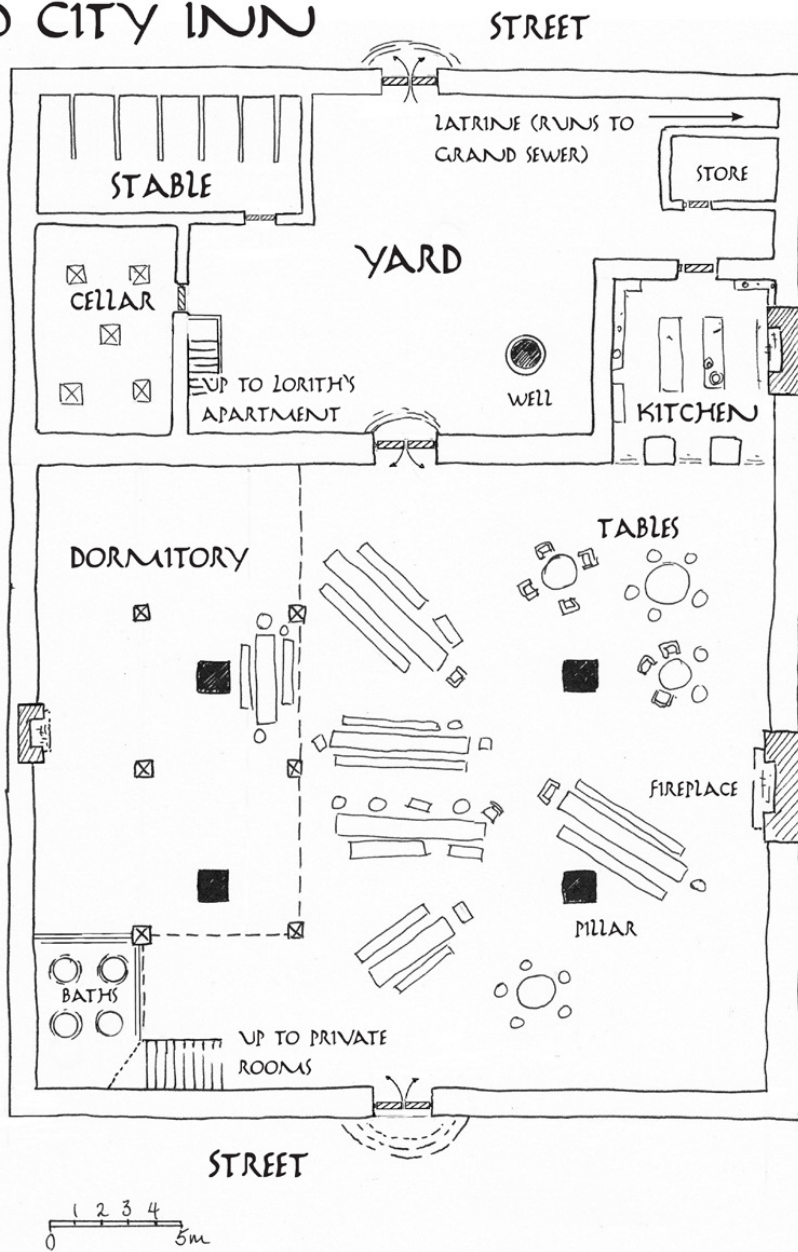
The only windows are slits located at three and five metres above the floor – the wooden ladders and walkways that would have allowed defenders to make use of them have long since been removed. It is otherwise lit by an enormous 100-spout oil lamp that weighs almost a tonne, suspended from the roof beams and lowered for cleaning and refuelling by a rope and pulley. This chandelier is famous in Sorandib, but the parsimony of the owners dictates that no more than 20 wicks are lit at any one time.

The only decoration in the great hall are carvings around the pillars, sculpted hearths and lintels and an array of faded banners hanging from poles planted in the walls at a height of six metres.

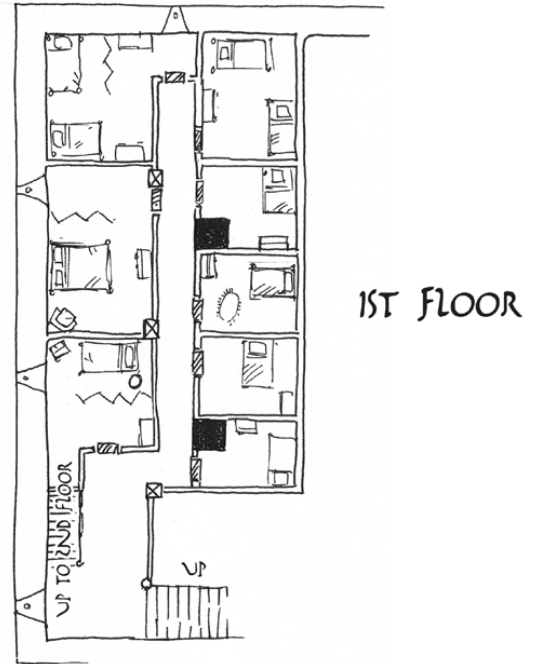
ACCOMMODATION

The upstairs accommodation is reached by a stone staircase to the first floor landing which then turns 90 degrees to reach the second, following the corner of the building. None of the rooms have external

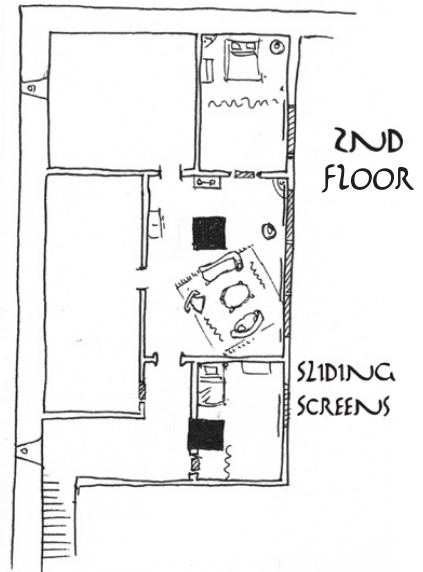
OLD CITY INN



OLD CITY INN: UPPER FLOORS



1ST FLOOR



2ND FLOOR

windows, but those overlooking the great hall have trelliswork screens that can be slid back so the occupants can enjoy a view over the tavern area. Each room has a wooden bed, stowage trunks, lamps, a low table and a reclining couch, and the larger ones have folding screens to enable the room to be split in two to provide separate reception and sleeping areas. The second floor, which was once entirely devoted to women's quarters, now has two chambers connected by a communicating door to form a women's dormitory. The furnishings throughout the accommodation areas are opulent but decayed or faded past any real value. The only permanent resident is Yeloria, a dancing girl who is kept in room and board by her patron, Thul Vartigern, captain of Quag Kaleb's men at arms. While she dances for anyone, Vartigern pays Lorith very well to keep all other men away from her bedroom. He is not the first to pay Lorith to do so.

COURTYARD

The courtyard wall encloses three outbuildings. There is a stable with room for 20 horses and a square structure housing all the kitchen stores. Then there is a two storey structure which holds wine, beer vats and barrels, lamp oil and bulky goods belonging to guests on the ground floor, while the apartments for Lorith and his family – a wife and three young children – occupy the first floor. The inn also has its own well, located in the centre of the courtyard.

STAFF

The staff at Old City Inn include Lorith and his wife, a highly regarded chef called Malud and his apprentice, three female kitchen staff, two tapsters-cum-doormen, three general hands and two boys. Only the chef has his own home to go to – the rest of the staff sleep on the premises, women and children in the kitchen, men in the great hall.

TARIFFS

Service	Cost
Private Room, including premium board and bath	8 Taskeens per day
Multiple Occupancy	2 Taskeens per additional party member
Stabling	2 Taskeens per day
Dormitory Space with board	2 Taskeens per night
Kitchen Space to sleep	2 Pennies including bread and/or soup as available. Sometimes given as charity
Meal and Drinks (standard fare)	2 Taskeens
Bath	1 Taskeen

MALUD, MASTER OF THE KITCHEN

The Master of the Kitchens is a surprisingly skinny but well preserved man in his fifties called Malud. Malud has his own apartment a few blocks away from the Inn. He is a skilled artisan and has a reputation that adds lustre to the inn, to which his services are provided on a non-exclusive basis. He prepares the menus offered to the more well-heeled diners and oversees the preparation of specially commissioned banquets. His apprentice Salug works as chef, oversees all kitchen operations, checks the quality of the wines and beers; Lorith's wife Insiba is in charge of purchasing foodstuffs from the market and controls the purse strings, but Salug writes the shopping list (which she then edits). It is rare for neither Malud nor Salug to be at the Inn on any given evening – this happens only when Salug accompanies his master on a one-off job elsewhere, in which case Malud ensures professional cover is put in place. Malud's relations with Lorith often appears abrasive and sarcastic, but the men are firm friends.

REGULAR GUESTS

JANABEK, ESCAR CHIEF

Janabek is frequently found in Old City Inn during the winter months when not on one of his periodic bans from the Old City. He comes here to drink with his companions, and on many occasions is too drunk to find his way home to the Taskan Quarter. Lorith humours him because he spends a great deal of his proceeds from horse dealing at the Inn, and besides, Janabek's temper is as legendary as his bonhomie, and he loves a brawl. The Palace Guard know him too well to do more than break up the fight, deposit him across the river and issue him a week's ban.

Janabek spends the spring and summer out on the plains. Several of his people now tend Taskan army horse herds on the Little Kitan. Janabek thinks such servitude beneath him and drifts around with his closest companions. He does not look it, but is quite wealthy, with many hundreds of horses of his own that he mostly sells to the Taskan army. Janabek is a Taskan citizen.

Characteristics:

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 14 POW 13 DEX 12 CHA 15 SOC 16

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 3 SR: 13–1 Mv: 8 MP: 7 Dedicated POW: 6

Common Skills: Athletics 55%, Brawl 92%, Brawn 61%, Evade 52%, Influence 71%, Insight 57%, Perception 80%, Regional Lore (Little Kitan) 91%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 78%, Rites 65%

Advanced Skills: Education (Taskan) 40%, Mounted Combat 75%, Ride 109%, Streetwise 25%, Swim 40%

Combat Styles: Archery 88%, Sidearm and Shield 82%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Battleaxe	M	M	D6+D2+1, Bleed	4/8
Dagger	S	S	D4+D2+1, Bleed, Impale	6/6
Kitan War Bow	H	175m	D8+D2, Impale	4/8
Hunting Bow	L	80m	D6, Impale	4/4

Armour: Wound Ward for 2 AP with no SR penalty (cannot be bypassed). Leather bracers, 1 AP (–1 SR). 3 AP on arms, 2 AP on all other locations.

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Devotions: Pact (Zygas Taga) 32% POW 1; Tribal Fetish: Wound Ward 2; Clan Fetish: Common Magic 3

Common Magic (Rites (Escar Tradition) 65%): Fanaticism (2) Heal 3, Speedart 3, Spirit Bane 3

PALACE GUARDSMEN

The Palace Guard is barracked nearby, and 2D4 of their number can usually be found here on any evening with many more on one of their very irregular paydays.

YELORIA, DANCER

Originally of Korantine stock, Yeloria is a dancer and courtesan living in private quarters at the Inn at the cost of Thul Vartigern, Quag Kaleb's guard captain and enforcer. She has been a regular performer for many of the city's notables, and is rarely presented with competition from visiting talent. Knowing full well she is reaching the end of her prime, Yeloria places most of her hopes in her courtesan career. However her latest patron is very possessive, and most men are too afraid of him to get close enough for Yeloria to work her magic on them. She has hopes that she can one day move higher up the social ladder than this paid captain of Kaleb's mercenaries or get out of Sorandib altogether.

THUL VARTIGERN

Known by reputation as the finest swordsman in Sorandib, Thul Vartigern is Quag Kaleb's henchman and enforcer, and leader of the Kalebite men at arms. Thul has quite a following – in this violent

city he is regarded as something similar to a sporting hero. While he is at heart a self-serving individual, his own pride and concern for his image leads him to embark on the occasional heroic venture against anyone who has become something of a public enemy, and Kaleb encourages this as it reflects well on him. Vartigern keeps a concubine, in rooms at the Old City Inn. Yeloria is a celebrated beauty, and provides ample cause for many men to challenge Vartigern's reputation. So far all have come off the worse for it, and those who survive the encounter usually bear an ugly scar.

Characteristics:

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 14 DEX 17 CHA 16 SOC 14

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 3 SR: 15-1 Mv: 8 MP: 11 Dedicated POW: 3

Common Skills: Athletics 67%, Brawl 112%, Brawn 52%, Evade 88%, Influence 65%, Insight 49%, Persistence 56%, Resilience 75%, Rites 58%

Advanced Skills: Command 71%, Education 35%, Lore (Military Tactics and Drill) 45%, Mounted Combat 65%, Ride 87%, Streetwise 45%, Swim 38%

Combat Styles: Duellist 125%*, Marksmanship 76%, Swordsmanship (and shield) 96%,

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	D8+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/12
Dirk	S	S	D3+D2+2, Bleed, Impale	6/6

*This Combat Style allows the use of M size bladed weapons with any S size weapon in the other hand, or a buckler, for an additional CA. It is always Thul Vartigern's style to reserve this action for an attack at the end of the round. A Duellist can also 'pull' blows as a Combat Manoeuvre, choosing the extent of the maximum possible damage he wishes to inflict up to the weapon's maximum, with a minimum of 1. Using this manoeuvre automatically negates the duellist's Damage Modifier.

Armour: Fine silk padding jerkin for 1 AP, can be worn under other armour. This garment is Artificer-made, is proof against cutting weapons of size Medium or less and has no penalty to Strike Rank. When on duty or expecting trouble he wears scale and leather armour (+4 AP per location, -6 SR). He will also then use a shield. AP 1 on arms and body normally.

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Devotions: Pact (Izangraz*) 67% Divine Magic: Truesword; Pact (Talok) 27% Divine Magic: Fear

*Izangraz is a spirit that haunts an ancient battlefield in the south east of the country where the Kalebite clan were instrumental in the destruction of a major Sheng raid led by a warlord of the same name. Vartigern encountered this spirit in his youth and it was this encounter that set him on his current, violent, path.

Passions: Thul Vartigern's Passion of Love (Yeloria) 55% manifests as a growing possessiveness that has damaging and poisonous undertones. If he sees Yeloria talking with any strangers (such as the Adventurers), or hears rumours that others have designs on her (or vice versa), test his Passion. If the roll is less than his Passion score he will take umbrage, resulting in rows, face-offs and sulks. If the roll is critical, he will be spurred take violent action. One day his rage may boil over to the point he takes it out on Yeloria herself.

THE GREAT BATHS

Properly called the Baths of Basgerik after the king who funded their construction, this Lower City establishment is a massive complex containing men's and women's steam rooms and baths fed by the same water system that provides for the palace. Clever use of bound elementals – undines and salamanders – provides a variety of hot and cold baths. Some areas have decayed and there are areas of collapse but the magnificent main chambers are still in use. An Artificer is charged with the maintenance of the plumbing system, which remains something of such sophistication (and cost) that no one could emulate today.

MAIN HALL

The main hall of the baths is a massive vaulted chamber over 40 metres wide and 30 metres long. Its walls and ceiling are decorated in a unique fashion, first covered in a geometric pattern of polished marble tiles of different colours, then these colours run together and twisted into seemingly random and organic patterns by use of a Form/Set marble spell. The striking effect is unique as a work of art. The hall is further adorned with a massive statue of 'Mad' King Basgerik. This communal area has exits left and right, to the women's and the paupers' baths respectively.

PAUPERS' BATHS

The Pauper's baths were set up so that anyone could bathe for the price of one penny, and rapidly became one of the liveliest and most crowded meeting spots in the city. The same is still true today.

WOMEN'S BATHS

The women's baths, where children are also allowed, leads to ornamental gardens that also provide the only space where respectable ladies may be seen taking fengo. For obvious reasons there is a long history of attempts to spy on the Women's Baths, whether through magic or disguise, and many favourite old anecdotes are in circulation on the subject. It is said the place was originally warded against intrusive magics such as Sight Projection, but there seems to be no such defence now. Recently a street magician was caught offering the services of a scrying spell to would-be voyeurs, but he was ultimately arrested and roughly dealt with.

MEN'S BATHS

The male sections are significantly larger and more complex, terminating in a portico giving onto a substantial exercise yard – which is quite deliberately overlooked from the Ladies' Garden. The bathing process begins in a cool room with a cold water plunge pool. Next comes a hot room that has fallen into

disrepair, its roof now open to the sky in places, and tumbled masonry obstructs the pool. Nevertheless it still sports a huge bronze tap operated by an ornate handle that supplies hot water into the murky, ankle-deep pool. It works at least 50% of the time and people gather around it to wash. This is followed by a steam room fed by pipes with lions head bronze spouts set in the walls, and finally cool water swimming pool looking out onto the exercise yard.

EXERCISE YARD

The yard is a dirt-floored space encompassed by a 2.5 metre high wall. It is dusty in summer and can be a mire in winter.

Facing the portico are a number of statues of naked young athletes. At least there were – now there are only two left on their pedestals, the rest are broken. These statues are golems, cast in bronze in the likeness of famous sportsmen of times past in the severe and blocky style of Sorandib's classical period. They are capable of descending from their plinths to accept a challenge from anyone who cares to take them on in a contest of Athletics.

THONBUS

The conditions of his enchantment mean that he can be challenged by reading aloud the inscription on his plinth, which states:

'If you are Thonbus, hero of old, then step down and prove yourself against me; for I would be a hero of today'.

This golem has an Athletics skills of 112%. Thonbus is programmed to run, jump or hurl heavy objects in Opposed Contests of Athletics skill with his challenger. Once summoned from his pedestal he will oblige with any such traditional sporting activity. On a flat run he will always lose, as his Movement Rate is only 6. However over rough terrain or obstacles, the ancient way, he is almost unbeatable, as skill and stamina (of which he has in inexhaustible supply) are the telling factors. He cannot grasp an invitation to participate in some novel contest conceived by his challenger; he always returns to his plinth and lifelessness by sunset.

ANSIG

The conditions of its enchantment mean that he can be challenged by reading aloud the inscription on his plinth, which states:

'If you are Ansig, hero of old, then step down and prove yourself against me; for I would be a hero of today'.

This golem has a Brawl skill of 112%. If anyone challenges Ansig they will find themselves in combat with a man made of bronze. However Ansig does not normally harm his opponents, generally seeking to grapple and secure a Combat Manoeuvre that puts them on the floor, stuns a location, or puts them in a grip that cannot be broken.

Other than the difference in skills, Thonbus and Ansig have identical characteristics:

Characteristics:

STR 17 SIZ 14 INT 4 DEX 16

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 2 SR: 10+ Mv: 6

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
01–20	Body	8/21

Skills: Brawn 65%, Evade 60%

THE PUMP ROOMS

In the Exercise Yard and adjacent to the main entrance there are some steps down to a door (usually locked and chained) giving access to the underground chambers – including the main water tank which is fed by the Subaqueduct running from the Great Cistern. Only Machinists and Artificers are allowed in here. There are hot pipes leading from the Furnace beneath Sorantar's temple, as well as undines used for pumping cold water and salamanders used for creating steam.

THE GUNPOWDER PLANT

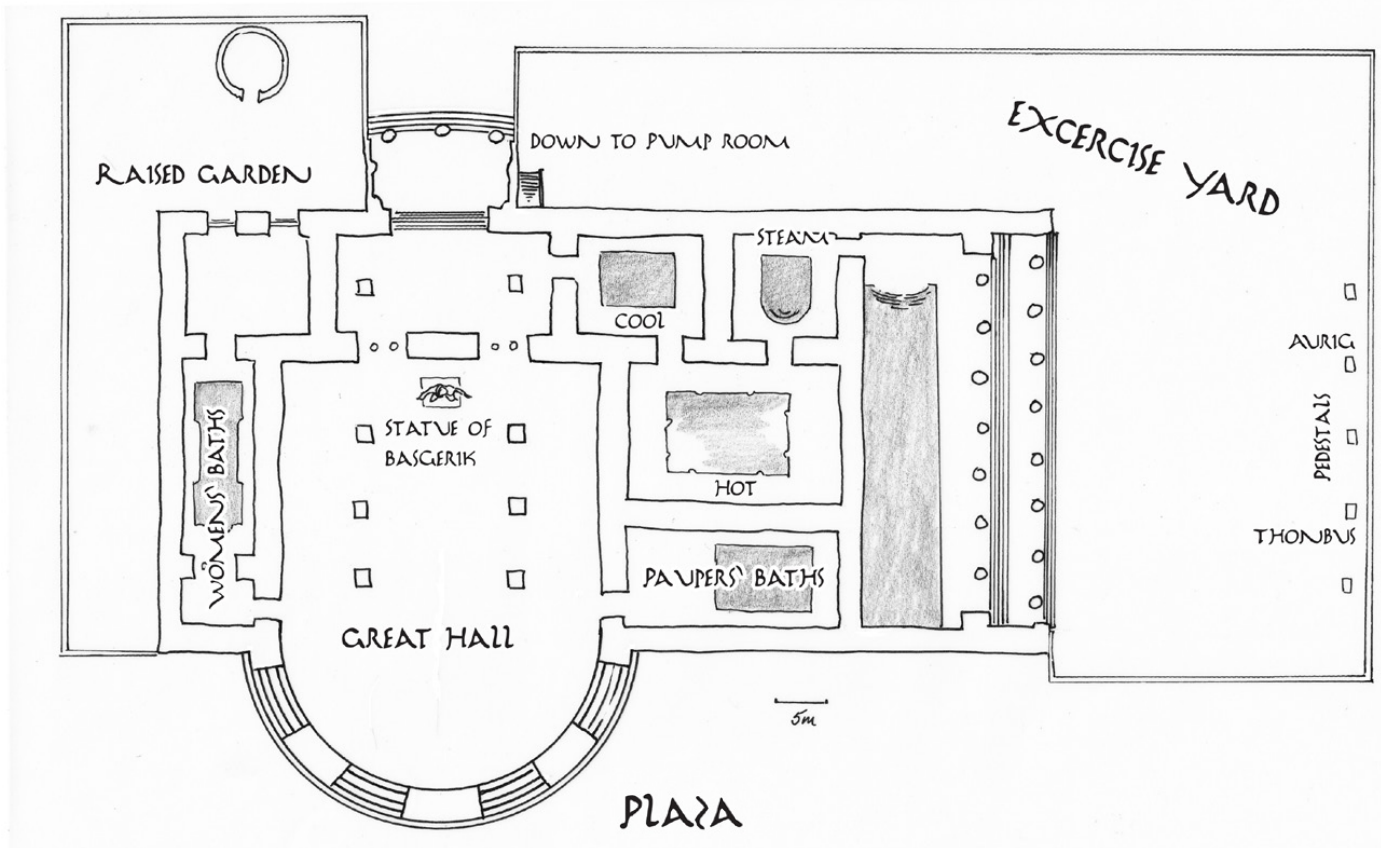
Situated outside the city limits for obvious safety reasons (but only after a tragic accident many years ago), this building used to have a civilian purpose, making a stunning array of fireworks that were unleashed on major public holidays and festivals. Now its purpose is the manufacture of black powder for the firearms manufactured in the city under the auspices of the artificers

The man who runs this establishment is known as the Chief Factor, and is one of the five masters of the Artificers' Guild. His name is Sisdig Klum, and he is generally assisted by two journeymen, Joblis Lander and Jeros Masser, who are permanently assigned to the manufactory. Because of the facility's importance, 12 of Sutermin Zastu's Taskan soldiers are always based here 'on loan' to provide security.

A secret tunnel, bored out by the use of gnomes and shored up with masonry, leads from the Gunpowder Plant to connect with the tunnel used by the Royal Guard beneath Palace Hill. Its floor is cut with grooves to accommodate the wooden wheels of trucks that can transport precious black powder and its secret component (Brightcrystal) to safety within the walls if the city ever comes under attack. These trucks can be pulled or pushed by a golem-powered engine.

THE ACADEMY

This celebrated establishment is where the Artificers train those they have selected for advancement within their order. A rambling collection of connected buildings, the Academy contains libraries that have been brought here over the centuries and organised as a single collection. There is also a lecture theatre, and a number of outdoor courts and spaces where classes can be held. While the library is now dwarfed by the famous Great Library of Zarina, it nevertheless contains many rare books that can only be found here, and to which access is jealously restricted.



The master of the Academy is another of the five Artificer Guild masters, this one an energetic man by the name of Arkas Arkin.

OUTLAW FORT

Outlaw fort, formerly Fort Number 4, conforms to a generic pattern applied to the four river forts on the West Bank of the Briga. Its three towers are empty shells, lined on the inside with hanging gantries and catwalks that give missile troops access to firing points. This particular example is in disrepair, its main doors having been removed, and with all its original furnishings and fittings stripped away.

Its current lord is Ataveg, a prince of thieves and one of the more influential figures in New City. The occupation of Ataveg and his gang is common knowledge, however the authorities are generally in too much disarray to bother reoccupying the place, and he makes sure not to commit any act so outrageous as to persuade them to take decisive action. On the other hand, an enterprising band of Adventurers could challenge his tenure and make the place a stronghold of their own. It is here that Ataveg holds court, hoards his treasure and occasionally provides hospitality for paying guests who need a place to hole up. Ataveg makes some of his money from smugglers travelling upstream who seek to offload using the cover of his stronghold before arriving at the Gundever tolls. Since there is little purpose to starting a price war on import duties with the Gundevers when tolls are at a level that barely makes dishonesty pay, the principal value of this is to land goods that Gundever would actually impound if they were declared. Most of his money is made shipping fengo out via New City Docks, avoiding the 30% duty that would otherwise be applied. As a Devotee of Hamath Ataveg disburses some of his illicit earnings to poor widows, orphans and beggars, so is a popular enough figure

among the local people, particularly with those whom Sosbander's Free Society denies any support.

ATAVEG

This crime boss is a wily character possessed of guile, daring and a sense of humour. He may choose a course of action because he is sure it will profit him, but sometimes does so for amusement. Ataveg has a high Insight skill and is quick to spot a chance for deceit, or indeed to sniff out any deceit plotted against him. Like any gangster, Ataveg can be violent and ruthless when the need arises. His sense of humour is not entirely a credit to him – he often uses it to exercise power over others in a way that humiliates them – although he does not do this to his trusted gang members.

Characteristics:

STR 16 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 10 DEX 12 CHA 16
SOC 5

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 CA: 3 SR: 14-1 Mv: 8 MP: 7 Dedicated POW: 3

Common Skills: Athletics 52%, Brawl 64%, Brawn 35%, Culture 65%, Dance 45%, Drive 54%, Evade 45%, Evaluate 102%, First Aid 40%, Influence 55%, Insight 68%, Lore (Regional) 75%, Perception 66%, Persistence 58%, Resilience 62%, Rites 45%, Sing 50%, Sleight 68%, Stealth 81%

Advanced Skills: Commerce 60%, Education 35%, Fast Talk 79%, Mechanisms 35%, Streetwise 108%, Swim 48%

Combat Styles: Knife Fighting 72%, Swordsmanship 55%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	D6+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dagger	S	S	D4+D2+1, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Ataveg will generally fight with his shortsword or his dagger, rather than both together. He makes use of Trip and Disarm manoeuvres to render a foe helpless when he can, so he can extract submission and ransom. His Alter Target spell is very useful in helping him make an escape. He would not think twice about flipping an attack to one of his accomplices.

Armour and Defences: Light leather jerkin, 1 Armour Point on Chest and Abdomen

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Devotions: Hamath 54%: Alter Target, Behold, Reflection

Ataveg keeps a treasure cache hidden in the south eastern tower. It is stored in a clay jar behind a broken stone, placed so as to be something he can retrieve quickly if the fort has to be abandoned. It consists of gems and gold coins worth 6,000 Taskeens.

INHABITANTS

Besides Ataveg and his nine gang members there are usually at least five women and as many children who sleep in the old barracks, all of whom have some connection to one of Ataveg's thieves. Any guests are usually required to sleep in the hall, where the gang can best keep an eye on them.

ATAVEG'S GANG (6 MALE AND 3 FEMALE THIEVES)

Characteristics are provided here for each of Ataveg's gang members. He insists that each of them is a devotee of Hamath; he also is particular that they have the skills necessary for a common thief, but also some special skill or talent that fulfils a useful function for the group.

Characteristics:

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 12 CHA 12 SOC 5

Attributes:

DM: +0 CA: 3 SR: 13+ Mv: 8 MP: 10 Dedicated POW: 1

Common Skills: Athletics 35%, Brawl 35%, Brawn 30%, Perception 50%, Persistence 40% Resilience 45%, Rites 40%, Sleight 75%, Stealth 70%

Advanced Skills: Fast Talk 40%, Streetwise 65%, Swim 30%. Each member of the core gang has at least one specialist skill at 55% chosen from: Acrobatics, Boating, Commerce, Disguise, Mechanisms, a Combat Style such as Crossbow or Knife Throwing

Combat Styles: Knife Fighting 40%, Sidearm 50%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	D6+D2, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dagger	S	S	D4+D2+1, Bleed, Impale	6/8
Club	M	S	D6, Stun	4/4
Knife, Thrown	S	10m	D4, Impale	4/6
Light Crossbow	L	100m	D8, Impale	4/5

Armour: A leather or padded jerkin, or none at all

Devotions: Pact (Hamath) 35%: Reflection

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

An approach ramp ascends one and a half metres to the gates from street level. The double gates (now missing) were set in a doorway giving onto a courtyard with a doorway to the antechamber of the Great Hall and two pillared cloisters. Before and after the gate are deep recesses in the wall where an iron sliding door, Artificer-made, was set ready to seal the entranceway in case of emergency. These are also now missing from Fort Number Four, although the other forts still have theirs. The four main chambers originally comprised the barracks, hall, officer's quarters and magazine, and of these only the barracks and hall are in regular use now.

THE WALLS

These are built of the brownish stone that is common here and are on average 2.5 metres thick and 13 metres high. Each of the three towers reaches to a machicolated battlement a towering 15 metres high.

COURTYARD

Empty except for great heaps of accumulated rubbish, from both clearance of the chambers by the outlaws and the waste generated by their occupation. The floor is paved, and the main pathways are kept swept. Cooking fires are set in the portico to the officers' quarters, and rain barrels are placed in the middle of the yard.

BARRACKS

A few wooden pallets remain in situ, and the hearth is serviceable. The barracks is now mostly used by nursing mothers and children, but there is also the remains of a latrine that has been widened to create access to the sewer below.

GREAT HALL

This is the main communal area for the fort's inhabitants, where most of them eat, drink, do business, make merry and sleep. It has trestle tables, reed matting on the floor, is lit by a variety of oil lamps, and has an assortment of ill-matched furnishings.

MAGAZINE

An assortment of old weapon racks still clings to the walls, all empty.

OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Abandoned, due to a leaking roof that the outlaws have not bothered to repair.

ACCESS TO THE UNDERGROUND

The known point of access to the underground system in the vicinity is a narrow sewer outlet at the foot of an exterior wall, visible except when the river is high (perhaps 40% of the time). This is blocked by a bronze grill, but once past that a person of less than SIZ 15 can squeeze along it until the passage gets wider once the first five metres have been traversed.

LOCAL PEOPLE

The environs of Outlaw Fort are more or less abandoned in economic terms, and its inhabitants are mostly poor vagrants. A number of beggars shelter beneath the walls at night, and congregate about the fort entrance during the day if there is any activity to observe. Ataveg's people are reasonably generous with small handouts every day or so.

ESCAPE AND EVACUATION

In an emergency an escape via the main gate is likely to be blocked so the outlaws would have to make their way out over the walls. There is a boat tethered in the river close by the South Wall for the purpose, and knotted ropes are held ready on the battlements to help the climb down.

THE OBSERVATORY

The Observatory tower is the highest point in the city and is set within the confines of the palace. It has a tall ground floor and an upper storey that supports a revolving crystal-roofed dome. The dome has a section that can slide to one side creating an aperture, and protruding from this can sometimes be seen the fat brass cylinder of a telescope (or, when danger threatens the city, the muzzle of a brass mortar).

Anthul Halkin is the Master Artificer graced with the title of Royal Astronomer, and on any night there is a 50% chance he is at work in the Observatory with 1D3 assistants. He is the only one of the five guild masters likely to be found within the confines of the Palace and the underground Artificer chambers beneath at all times.

GROUND FLOOR

Accessed by a door from the ornamental gardens, this five metres high room is very bare, its main feature being a fat brass column in the centre almost two metres in diameter, at the top of which radiates a number of sturdy iron struts. The column detects as magical, because it is a golem programmed (conditioned) to rotate when the appropriate command is given. There are six slit windows, three metres from the floor.

The broad brass base into which the column is slotted is bolted to the smooth flagstone floor. To one side, a spiral staircase, that aligns to a hatch in the ceiling, to the other some sort of goods lift worked by hand that aligns to another hatch. Along the wall by the lift is a wooden framework holding a variety of stone and metal balls – the ammunition for the mortar.

UPPER FLOOR

The magnificent crystal dome is constructed in segments framed in black iron that carries a raised motif of gilded geometric shapes. One segment is open to the sky but for bronze shutters that can open out like doors.

In the centre of the room is a two-and-a-half metres long, one metre wide tube of brass, mounted so as to be able to pivot up and down. The lower end terminates in an eyepiece, and a stool is set on the floor at this end with an adjustable screw mount. It is possible to point this device up at the heavens, but also down across the city.

Any Adventurer who looks through the device will see nothing unless he takes the lens cap off. A small tray is attached to the mount, in which is an assortment of eyepieces. Depending on which is fitted the observer may see different magnifications, or see magical auras and spirits. These can be taken away and used independently. One eyepiece can see spirits and auras in the material world, and will enable a trained eye to make an assessment of the POW and CHA of whatever they are examining; another shows the presence of magic, and a third looks into the Spirit World. The latter comes with some risks, as the viewer is visible to entities who are capable of moving between the Many Hells, the Spirit World and the Material World.

Also in the telescope mounting is a lever, which if depressed sets the whole room rotating clockwise, dome and all, until the lever is released. Unless a complete revolution is made and the hatch once more sits above the spiral stair, it is no longer possible for anyone to enter the observatory. This motion comes from the brass column in the room below.

THE COURT OF THE ROCK

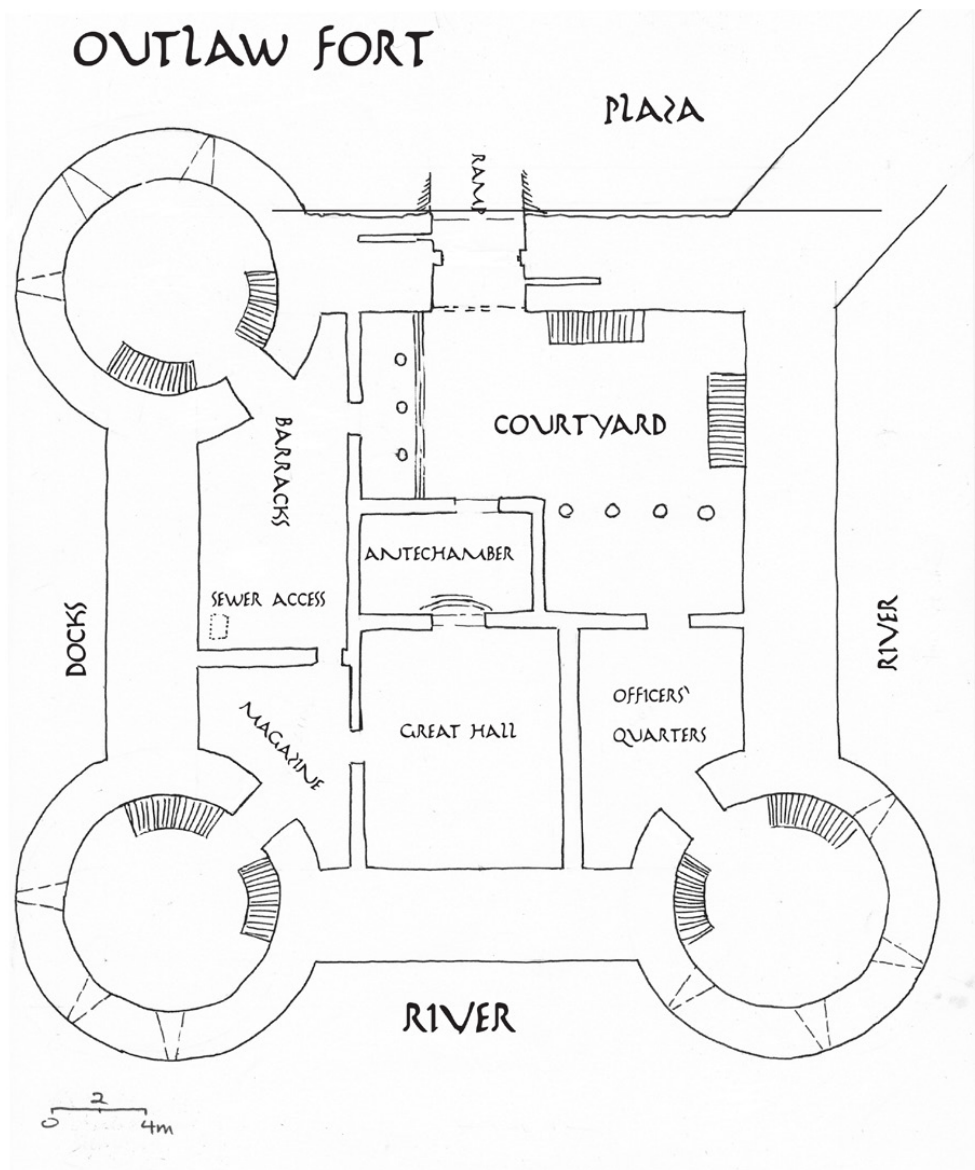
The Black Rock of Sorandib is a post of black basalt one metre thick and stands five metres high. For most of its length it is rough-hewn, however it has a 'waist' in its lower end where it has been carved and polished to a perfect cylinder. It is set at the centre of a circular court in the palace which appears to have been designed and built around it. The paving of the court

	AP/HP								
1D20	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
01–03 R Leg	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5
04–06 L Leg	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5
07–09 Abdomen	1/6	0/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	0/6	0/6	1/6
10–12 Chest	1/7	0/7	1/7	1/7	1/7	1/7	0/7	0/7	1/7
13–15 R Arm	0/4	0/4	0/4	1/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4
16–18 L Arm	0/4	0/4	0/4	1/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4
19–20 Head	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5

displays a wheel pattern with the rock as the axis and each of five spokes terminating in an ancient Sorantine glyph representing one of the five natures (Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Flesh). Beneath that Plaza lies a subterranean chamber hewn from the rock through which runs the lower part of the pillar, and from where the POW dedications are harvested by the Artificers for use in enchantments.

Viewed with magical senses the Black Rock is a blinding light, crammed with POW (over 3,000 stored Characteristic Points). The Black Rock absorbs POW from anyone laying hands on it, at a rate of 1 POW every round of unbroken contact. Attempts to resist its power requires a Persistence test each round, or Divine Intervention. In ancient times this power was used to execute criminals who were tied to it and drained until their souls were completely dissipated. However it was eventually discovered that the POW accumulated by the Rock could also be recovered again, and the court was built around it to house a device called The Similarity Engine. This device was powered by Black Rock, which in those days received the sacrificed POW of every citizen of Sorandib. It was used to regulate the agricultural year, controlling weather and rainfall, overriding the old dependence on the gods for their help and support and – it was thought – placing humanity firmly in control of its own destiny. Under king Basgerik I the Similarity Engine was dismantled. The Artificers arrived in Sorandib at the king's invitation to marshal the city's industrial and magical energies in support of a desperate war effort, and so the Similarity Engine had to go so its power source could be turned to more pressing needs. It was never put back together again, for once the Black Rock was under the Artificers' control they had no intention of letting it go.

This court is now the scene for the regular 'swearing in' of new members of the artisanal class, who are now the only citizens of whom a POW sacrifice is required.



THE GREAT GUILD HALL

One of Middle City's finest buildings and dating to the explosion in new construction initiated by Mad King Basgerik, this complex towers above the surrounding businesses and dwellings, its centre piece a great dome 20 metres across, the apex crowned by a statue another three metres high. In height this building is second only to the dome of the palace. Beneath this dome is the hall that serves as the main meetings space for the guildsmen of Sorandib. The guilds themselves were at the time of its foundation converted from informal associations and funerary clubs into rigidly structured and hierarchical entities under the overall control of the artificers.

SECRET SORANDIB

Beneath the streets of the city is another world – an extensive subterranean network of sewers, tunnels, and caves. The *Secret Sorandib* map shows some of the known features, and those which are an open secret. The map is not without its inaccuracies – and there remains significantly more to discover. Finding out exactly what lies beneath the palace, and attempting to get in there to explore and steal, is a pipedream for many plotters and thieves.

SEWERS

The sewers of Sorandib provide sanitation and also serve as a conduit for excess water. All along its length there are chutes directed from open sewers and drains in the streets above, or direct from the cess pits built into the grander houses and public buildings. In some cases a structure has direct access to a main sewer via the basement to allow a servant to unload garbage and human waste directly into it. Sewers can be accessed either through one of the functioning or disused waste chutes and cess pits, via one of the service access routes that are generally protected by lock and key, or simply followed from their outlet on the river.

The main sewers are three metre diameter tunnels, with an average seasonal depth of 0.8 metres. At 1.2 metres height from the bottom there is usually a walkway constructed on one side which is one metre across and allows an average size person to walk quite easily, if he stoops a little.

GRAND SEWER

A sewer originally constructed to collect waste from Palace Hill, and passing from there through Lower City to discharge into the river at Middle City. Narrower than Ilmerik's Sewer, it plunges into the subterranean heart of some interesting parts of the city. There are tunnels connecting the two.

ILMERIK'S SEWER

Ilmerik's Sewer was constructed at the same time as New City, by building over sections of open sewer through the ramshackle housing areas that were then extant outside the walls of Lower City and in places excavating further. King Ilmerik was quick to give his name to this vital public work. Its exit onto the river is a full five metres wide, although only the first 50 metres of tunnels are of the same dimension.

Ilmerik's Sewer is fed by a number of narrower conduits and drains and there are connecting passages with Grand Sewer.

SEWER FEEDS, OVERFLOWS AND SUBSECTIONS

These areas may only be reached via a main sewer. They have no walkways and anyone travelling along them must wade through the contents. Sewer subsections may be up to two metres in diameter, but the smaller feeds are a metre or less, and only passable by someone willing to crawl or swim. These sewer sections are not shown on the *Secret Sorandib* map.

TUNNELS

There are a number of subterranean tunnels, some of them only a few metres long to connect a couple of basements or make an underground link with one of the sewers, others are major feats of engineering that run for several hundred metres.

SERVICE TUNNELS

The biggest (longest) tunnels are Artificer-made, and devised to move people quickly and quietly around the city. The largest connects the barracks to the armoury and thence cuts across beneath Palace Hill to a secret sally port from where soldiers can sneak out to attack a besieging enemy. The tunnel extends southwards to the Gunpowder Plant, enabling people and materials to be moved in and out unseen via mine carts pulled by a wheeled golem.

There are secret (and uncharted) passages used by Machinist maintenance workers who are charged with keeping some of Sorandib's treasured technology in working condition. Some of these tunnels, in a few sections, benefit from permanent Glow spells to illuminate the way.

GNOME-CARVED TUNNELS

From time-to-time someone makes use of Earth Elementals to swiftly carve a path through the earth and rock; these passages rarely stand the test of time unless they are subsequently reinforced with props and masonry supports. In the past these haphazard burrows have been blamed for collapses at street level. Their history means they are generally uncharted, and it is possible to stumble across one cutting into a cellar or sewer feed.

THE PIPES

The pipes run along dedicated maintenance tunnels between Sorantar's Furnace and some key buildings in the city. They pump water heated in the Furnace's magical fires to provide hot running

Secret Sorandib

1. BEGGARS COURT
2. PALACE DUNGEON
3. GREAT CISTERN
4. SALLY PORT
5. GUNPOWDER PLANT
6. FURNACE

A - A SUBAQUEDUCT
B - B GRAND SEWER
C - C ILMERIK'S SEWER

**** TUNNEL
— SEWER or WATERWAY
**** PUFF



water at the Baths of Basgerik and the Palace. The outlet pipe from the main supply to Old City Inn is no longer in use. Only short sections have a passage that allows access, otherwise if there is a problem they have to be accessed by digging.

SORANTAR'S FURNACE

The furnace provided by Sorantar is situated beneath his ziggurat. Once every day Sorantar combusts everything in the furnace chamber.

PALACE DUNGEONS

The man-made part of the subterranean network under Palace Hill. Originally consisting of simple service areas for the palace, the last 500 years have seen the excavation of a network of chambers for use by the Artificers as well as an immense cistern, the premier reservoir for clean water for the city.

1. THE BLOCK

This is a trap set up to block the main tunnel leading into the Palace Dungeons in the event a hostile invader is using it to get in rather than the palace guard or others to get out. It is not designed specifically to kill, but simply to deny use of the tunnel. Nevertheless, when the trap is sprung by the defenders (from a position 20 metres to the east of the Block), the resulting planned collapse of a six metre section of tunnel will bury anyone caught within it – however it is not instantaneous and there is time for anyone who abandons all actions other than running to make an Evade roll to escape unscathed.

2. THE RIPPER

This trap is set to prevent ingress to the dungeons from Old Sewer. The Ripper is a contraption built around the circumference of the sewer tunnel and along some two metres of its length, reducing the space through which an Adventurer can move to a diameter of 1.5 metres. It is never triggered by moving through it from north to south, but if you are going north and there is not someone waiting for you on the other side to deactivate it, the Ripper will come to life as you approach within ten metres, applying heavy duty spinning, serrated blades to anything within it that inflict 2D6 damage to each of 1d3 random hit locations in every round. Armour, clothes and carried weapons and equipment will be torn, slashed and crushed at the same time (assume 1D3 key items are affected per round, and apply 2D6 damage). To pass through the Ripper in a single round requires an Acrobatics, Athletics or Evade test. A difficult (-20%) Acrobatics success or any Critical success means the Adventurer hurls himself through taking no damage. A failure results in a further round of damage, and continues to do so until a success is made or the Adventurer is finally minced.

3. BEGGARS' COURT

In Old City, on the slopes of Palace Hill, and close by where the rubbish chute tips food waste from the royal courts down its slopes by Old City Stink, is a tumbled ruin, the facade to a chamber cut into the hillside. There are always little knots of destitute vagabonds hanging around here, for within is the place where

Hanskom, the king of the beggars, holds court. The squared-off chamber within is in fact an anteroom to natural caves that lie beyond, and where the beggars have their holy place, away from normal folk.

At any time there are 2D6 beggars outside, and another 2D10 inside.

HANSKOM, THE BEGGAR KING

Hanskom is a bloated grotesque supported on an elaborate throne made of all kinds of salvaged materials. His disgusting appearance and odour mask what is otherwise an intriguing personality (to the beggars, who do not find him disgusting, he has an effective CHA of 17). A pit dug into the floor of his hall holds three large and vicious dogs to whom he throws anyone who has really upset him to be mauled and maimed (gifted with 'an unedifying affliction') before being pulled out again and cast out onto the street. Yet Hanskom can be surprisingly genial, and is always liable to confound the expectations of those who meet him.

Characteristics:

STR 16 CON 18 SIZ 19 INT 16 POW 09 DEX 06 CHA 02 SOC 03

Attributes:

DM: +1D4 CA: 2 SR: 11+ Mv: 4* MP: 5 Dedicated POW: 4 (Nosthagre)

Common Skills: Athletics 24%, Brawl 61%, Brawn 80%, Culture 85%, Dance 13%, Drive 20%, Evade 15%, Evaluate 90%, First Aid 31%, Influence 25%, Insight 78%, Lore (Regional) 65%, Perception 49%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 85%, Rites 70%, Sing 43%, Sleight 45%, Stealth 36%

Advanced Skills: Beggars' Lore 101%, Education 26%, Fast Talk 85%, Pact (Nosthagre) 102%,

Combat Styles: Beggars' Fury 61%

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn.

Hit Points: 8/8/9/10/7/7/8

Divine Magic: Pact (Nosthagre) 102%: Unlucky x2, Find Item x2

Gifts: None. Hanskom's Afflictions are all his own

*Hanskom's bulk and lameness mean he is slow – and is not capable of sprinting.

While anyone causing trouble here will have to contend with a mob of beggars, there may be a greater danger. Among Hanskom's courtiers there is almost always some outlaw, adventurer or bravo, a competent fighter disguised as a beggar, who is doing service to Hanskom for some reason of his own. When defending his master he will try and hide among the beggars, getting himself a good shot at someone's back before making his play.



BEGGAR STATISTICS

The general mob of beggars should be treated as underlings, with 0 AP and 4 HP, 2 Combat actions and a SR of 12+.

Skills: Evade 20%, Resilience 35%, Persistence 40%, Stealth 30%.

Combat Style: Beggar's Fury 25% – use as Brawl but includes throwing stones, rocks, rubbish and faeces.

These beggars will indeed fight furiously in and around Beggar's Court, in defence of their king, their refuge and their precious idol.

In most cases visitors can parlay with Hanskom himself. They may seek information or they may wish to gain access to the Lost Property Room. In the latter case Hanskom interrogates the supplicant on the purpose of their visit and what lost item they hope to find. He then sets a price for which the visitor can go rifle through the Lost Property Room in search of the item described. They pay the fee whether they find it or not, and while he does not normally demand exorbitant prices, he rarely negotiates.

3A. THE LOST PROPERTY ROOM

The Lost Property Room is a chamber where the beggars go to revere the idol which is the object of their cultic devotions: The Little God of Lost Things. The whole cave is piled with collected junk, most of it broken, decayed and useless. Some of it is not. If anyone could bear to spend many hours rifling through the teetering piles of stinking rubbish, they may find treasures.

It is also the Beggars' ultimate refuge, a place where they are safe from normal and un-afflicted folk who are wont to treat them badly. Defended only by beggars, it is potentially the easiest way to access secret parts of the underground.

4. THE BOAT POOL

Under the barracks is a sewer that provides a secret route for the Palace Guard on covert duties to access the city. A small chamber off the sewer provides a space where a collection of small flat-bottomed boats are kept. They are only one metre wide and 1.5 metres long and are there to be loaded with equipment and pushed or pulled along by soldiers wading through the sewer. A narrow flight of steps leads from the boat pool up into the barracks.

5. THE ARMOURY

This extensive complex can be accessed from the palace gardens, with internal steps leading down to its main areas, that include a gallery looking out across the river. It contains the war-gear required for up to five thousand men and a thousand or more horses, and is of enormous value. There are workshops and benches within the complex, but while finishing might be applied, repairs made and adjustments fitted, this is not a manufacturing site but a storage facility. Much of the best equipment is on display upon its walls, or arranged onto mannequins, so that visitors to court can be taken to see for themselves the military might of the city. Much of this equipment is, however, generations old and in poor repair, and except for the display items that someone might miss if removed, all the best stuff crafted with Artificer ingenuity has probably long been stolen or sold off. However extended searching of the piles of materiel will turn up valuable (x2 standard price due to fine materials or embellishments) examples of mundane kit, or if conducted using a magic-sensing spell or ability, or in the case of an Artificer-made item a Craft (Armourer) test, may just turn up a weapon that delivers a bonus to the user's attack roll (roll 2D6 to determine its ability), or an item of armour that offers +1D3 AP of protection without an increase of the Strike Rank penalty. Allow one such find per Adventurer searching.

It will be possible to find, or put together, complete sets of armour to almost any SIZ within the normal human range. Much of the armour is quilted padding and lamellar of the type still commonly manufactured and used, but often in unusual, archaic or unfashionable styles. There are examples that incorporate plate (6 AP) in specific locations – typically chest, arms and legs. Other equipment includes horns, banners, drums, tack and harness, saddles, even horse barding. There are stacks of ammunition of various kinds – literally thousands of arrows, crossbow bolts, slingstones, as well as large projectiles and replacement parts for the various siege engines used to defend the city walls.

The plethora of weapons is in various states of repair. Typically they may have 1D4–1 less Armour Points than is normal due to age, and 1D4–1 less hit points due to disrepair, with a minimum of 1 in each case.

6. THE GREAT CISTERN

Almost fifty metres long and thirty metres wide, and eight metres from its bottom to its vaulted ceiling, both rainwater and water pumped from the river or one of the natural cisterns by undines have been used to fill it. These days it is rarely more than two metres deep, although it can be filled to a depth of six metres. Its water supply leads to the Baths of Basgerik and on to Sorantar's temple; its overflows lead to the Old Sewer, but are narrow and dangerous to crawl through. If you can get into the Great Cistern, you can get out again into the network of tunnels and chambers beneath Palace Hill.

6A. THE SUBAQUEDUCT

This is a one metre diameter pipe where cold water flows from the Great Cistern to the Baths of Basgerik. A sluice gate operated from the bottom of the steps leading up to the Palace Dungeons is used to control the flow. Much of the time the pipe contains only a trickle of water and it is possible, if extremely arduous, to crawl along its length. When the sluice-gate is raised the pipe usually half fills with water, however there are times (20% chance in summer) when the cistern is either too low to deliver, or (20% chance in winter or during periods of freak or extreme weather) so high that the sluice is overtopped and the pipe is flooded. At the far end run-offs deposit excess water into the sewers, preventing an oversupply of water from welling up through the baths except in extreme conditions. Beneath the Baths of Basgerik a bound undine is used to raise the water from a holding tank to the baths as needed. If an Adventurer can get to the holding tank he might then attempt to crawl the length of the Subaqueduct to the Great Cistern. This is extremely arduous, dangerous, and impossible if you are SIZ 15 or greater or carrying any bulky equipment.

7. THE DUNGEON

The business end of the palace dungeons, but in fact rarely employed. The eleven one metre by two metre cells, the torture chamber and oubliette are really there for political prisoners (there are other gaols for common or garden ne'er-do-wells), and in these times the crown does not have the clout to round up its opponents and invite them to use the facilities. The dungeon is not permanently staffed. People from the palace staff or guard are sent down here to deal with prisoners when there is a need.

At present the dungeon is used as additional storage space for the palace, and more than half the cells are full of foodstuffs and kitchen paraphernalia. There is a stout wooden door, always locked (the keys held by a palace official) which gives access to a stairway down to Kings' Crypt (8). By the door is a panel set into the wall with a locked iron door, inside which are two levers. One operates the portcullis leading from the Great Cavern to King's Crypt, the other sets or disarms the pendulum blade trap on the stairway.

8. THE KINGS' CRYPT

The Kings' Crypt was in earlier times a connecting route to the cave system to give access to the natural cistern at Lightwater Deep. The entrance to the crypt from the caves is now covered by a portcullis, operated by a lever in the dungeon. If the Adventurers get past this they will come across a tunnel leading upwards with rough-hewn steps. The eighth of these is a trigger for a trap – a

pendulum blade that swings from the rear of someone ascending, attacking at 95% probability and inflicting 2D6+6 damage unless Evaded (this can be done only by an Adventurer who is facing the direction of the attack and can see it coming). It then swings back, once more slicing through anyone in its way, coming to a stop in its niche, thus resetting itself. Since the Kings' Crypt is so well tucked away from potential intruders, these physical barriers are its only defence.

At the top of the steps is an ornate archway leading to a chamber cut from the rock with carved architectural features. The only other decoration are some scraps and shreds of high value textiles hanging from the walls. Almost carelessly scattered about the room are a number (14) of ornate coffers each of which holds the ashes of a member of the royal household. None of these coffers bear any inscription to declare whose ashes are contained therein, and it would take some magical intervention to identify the remains. There are no treasures here other than the coffers themselves, which could be stripped down for the ivory plaques, gold and silver fittings and jewels that decorate them. Each coffer could furnish 1D6 x100 Taskeens worth of precious materials if broken up.

One coffer contains ashes where the little gold ornaments that once bedecked the body prior to burning are now mixed in with the ashes. Raking around the dust and crumbling bones will garner 54 of these tiny tokens, each of them worth 8 Taskeens.

9. THE TURNING POINT

The passage here widens. Approaching from the south west the stone floor has two parallel, shallow grooves cut into it. These are the wheel ruts for the little underground railway consisting of mining trucks drawn by a small, wheeled golem that shuttles materials and sometimes people between here and the gunpowder plant outside the walls. It requires a loop to change direction as no-one thought to engineer the golem in such a fashion as to be able to go in reverse.

There is usually an empty truck or two sitting on the siding and a 30% chance the golem engine is laid up here. In the middle of an emergency you may well find several large barrels of Black Powder, and sacks of ground Brightcrystal retrieved from the plant and dumped by the track. The Golem is a small vehicle converted from a truck with four solid wooden wheels and iron tyres. It accepts the commands 'go' and 'stop'.

THE ARTIFICERS' CHAMBERS

Heavily, if discreetly, protected, this is the place where the Artificers do most of their secret work. At the heart of this complex is the room where they extract POW from the Black Rock and convert it for use in enchantments. The subterranean section consists of one huge cavern with three chambers sprouting off it.

The only obvious point of access is through the Observatory within the palace precincts, however it is possible to get there via the Palace Caverns.

10. THE STUDY

A chamber of desks and lecterns where Artificers take books from the library for careful study under good light supplied by permanent Glow spells.

11. THE LIBRARY

The library is shut by a bronze-faced door with a heavy-duty mechanical lock requiring specialist tools to break or pick. Inside are over 300 books and scrolls in a variety of languages, including first generation copies of the order's Grimoires, and other precious and rare works of which some of the most interesting or valuable are as follows:

On Motion

This six metre long illustrated scroll written by Ervanth the Mechanician in an archaic form of Tarsenian using the local script (-20% to Education (Tarsenian)) is a study of the construction of artificial limbs, joints, wheels and other parts, pertaining to the Artificer's use of the Articulation virtue.

Someone who has the Craft (Artificer) skill can gain up to a 20% increase through studying this book. Mechanisms can also be increased by a like amount. This book is also a Grimoire, containing the Enhance (DEX) sorcery spell.

On the Workings of the Mind

This Tome explores the source and nature of intelligence and how to replicate it through magical and artificial means. *On the Workings of the Mind* makes it possible to gain an Improvement to the INT Characteristic, if studied over the course of a month. It also happens to be a Grimoire and contain the Create Familiar enchantment ritual and the Enhance (INT) sorcery spell.

On the Transport of the Elements

This codex is relatively recent. Its vellum pages are finely illustrated, and attempt to show how elementals can be harnessed to a vehicle to make it possible to travel beneath the waves, through the sky and even beneath the earth. The book describes the construction of a capsule, cylindrical in shape and pointed at each end, and various adaptations and golem features that might be fitted to enable its forward movement and handling in different circumstances. Calculations are made for the dimensions required to accommodate various sized cargoes or numbers of passengers, as well as likely speed of travel, supplies needed for the occupants and so on.

The codex also contains all the necessary content from which to assemble a Summoner's Grimoire, providing one who studies it and spends 2 Improvement Rolls with a starting percentage in Summoning skill plus the knowledge of how to summon gnomes, sylphs and undines.

Someone studying this book can gain up to 10% in Craft (Artificer). They can also use it to teach themselves the Advanced skill of Pilot (Exotic Craft) should the opportunity ever present itself.

Abferzal's Manual

Consisting of 12 individual scrolls in leather cases detailing the life work of Abferzal, once chief alchemist in the court of Sultan Dimmorz of Djesmir (which would, for those who know, date these scrolls to about 300 years ago). The scrolls are of course written in Djesmiri. It is one of the most comprehensive, expertly compiled and therefore valuable treatises on alchemy in existence

Abferzal's Manual contains a total of 37 different Formulae, split across potions, poisons and their antidotes, and elixirs, as well as a novel class of alchemy that relates directly to the Artificers' work, known as Concoctions. Among the Concoction Formulae is the recipe for Gunpowder.

The Manual has a Lore rating in each of these fields of: Potions 75%, Poisons 112%, Elixirs 124% and Concoctions 65%, and can provide four, five, six and three Improvement Rolls respectively in each to someone who spends sufficient time studying it.

The Index of Celestial Secrets

A recent work compiled by three successive Royal Astronomers, who spend their time making and recording observations of the celestial bodies using a telescope. The book's only value is to impart information, and it is possible to increase or gain an appropriate Lore skill such as Lore (Navigation) or Lore (Cosmology) by 10%.

12. THE WORKSHOP

This is actually a big cavern some five metres high at its apex, and 15 metres broad, that has been squared off. The roof has been reinforced with four stout spiral carved pillars. The chamber is furnished with several workbenches crammed with metalworking tools and alchemy equipment; display stands full of stuffed animals, jars of preserved organic material, containers for colourful minerals and so on. Suspended from the ceiling are more stuffed animals – birds and bats – made to look as if in flight, and a bizarre model of a cigar-shaped contraption that players may take to be an airship, but which is actually a submarine.

There are living and sleeping spaces used by the Machinists, who are expected to spend most of their lives down here. It is in this chamber that much of the most time consuming, detailed, repetitive and laborious work is done. Small parts are carefully filed and polished with breathtaking precision: alchemical processes and equipment prepared; materials assembled, quantified and classified.

This room contains a large golem-powered lift operated from within the room that connects to the observatory 12 metres above. This is used for bringing down bulky materials, and similarly to return large constructions or parts to the surface.

12 A-E. THE FORGES

From the expansive central chamber radiate several smaller rooms roughly six metres square, but also sporting five metre high ceilings. Each of these is a workspace known as a 'forge', as each has a fire that requires no oxygen, gives off no smoke or noxious vapours,

and burns at an intense heat. The forge is in each case powered by a fire spirit provided by Sorantar. Each of the five forge chambers is the domain of one of the guild masters of the Artificers.

One of the forges is usually cold, as its master is away serving as chief engineer to the Taskan army. Of the other four, there is a 25% chance for each at any time that there is work in progress. Usually this will be being conducted by a small team of Machinists, possibly under the supervision of a Journeyman-Artificer and one or more apprentices. At key moments in any process the Master-Artificer himself will be present.

- a. This forge is the workspace of Feslter Halkin, the head of the order. Halkin keeps his workspace clear, because he likes to work on big projects. On one side are stacked billets of iron and bronze graded according to quality, on another an enormous rack contains carefully labelled samples of many different kinds of timber. A massive anvil is set by the forge itself with a huge variety of hammers, tongs and files laid out on a trestle alongside it. The most arresting feature of the room, however, is a two-and-a-half metre tall bronze statue, which looks remarkably like the Iron Simulacrum, but with subtle differences to those who are familiar with the Simulacrum's design. It is suspended from the ceiling on chains, the feet hanging at about head height. This may be an abandoned prototype kept as a souvenir by the order, or it may be a replacement prepared in case the Iron Simulacrum is ever lost.
- b. This forge belongs to Arkas Arkin, who runs the academy and frequently brings students here to witness what should be the culmination of their careers within the order. The tables and workbenches are strewn with a myriad of small works in progress of varying complexity, many of them tasks he sets talented apprentices for them to try out the skills they are learning. Some of them make amusing or disconcerting whirs, clicks and vibrations when prodded or handled, but none have any useful purpose.
- c. This forge belongs to Anthul Halkin, the astronomer. His forge is often cold, as he spends more time studying and writing than he does making things. His greatest work is an Orrery, a device that computes and predicts the movement of the heavenly bodies, each of which is represented by a jewel connected to the base by an armature that enables it to move in the correct fashion. This exquisite item, of immense value (perhaps 25,000 Taskeens as a starting point), moves in a host of different directions in order to always place the planets in the right position in relation to one another. At its heart, however, cloaked by the presence of all the sprouting arms and attachments, is a dial with gears upon it. The whole is set on a brass base, inscribed with a pattern matching the floor of the Court of the Black Rock. Halkin's working notes in the device are always close to hand bound into a codex format, and a study of them will reveal knowledge of the Similarity Engine, revealed through Halkin's years of work and some clever deduction. With the contents of Halkin's book it would be possible to attempt the reconstruction of the Similarity Engine with enough time, labour and money.

- d. Sidig Klum's forge is impeccably neat and tidy and everything has its place, the result of many years observing strict procedures and protocols in his stewardship of the Gunpowder Plant. His work is mostly in the world of ballistics and firearms, as he constructs and tests different materials, designs and constructions for military ordnance in miniature before deciding to scale up the experiment somewhere less enclosed.
- e. This is Anthul Arkin's forge, and given his extended periods away from the city tends to either be deserted or the scene of feverish activity as his staff set about responding to some urgent new order from the Taskan army.

13. THE ROCK

This rough chamber sits directly beneath the Court of the Rock. From here it is clear that the rock is some sort of fossilised tree, and in this chamber its roots begin to splay out and grip the earth. The upper part is buried in the chamber's ceiling, and emerges again in the middle of the court above. In this room the Artificers perform all their major enchantments, taking POW stored by the Black Rock and converting it to other Characteristics through their unique Enchanting Ritual spell.

The rock can be Tapped by any trait, spell or ability that drains POW or Magic Points. It currently has a POW of 3,428.

PALACE HILL CAVERNS

These are the natural passageways that honeycomb the rock on which the palace sits. Here and there they have been connected or cut into by human hands and incorporated into the city's subterranean architecture. The usual way in is via the caves where Hanskom the beggar king can be found with his closest followers. There is a second route, via the Palace Dungeons, however this is both barred and trapped. A third is rumoured to be accessible from a secret tunnel linking the caves with the Sewers under Old City Inn (this is false, but the sewer itself can be accessed). The way in via Beggars' Court presents its own difficulties in the form of the beggars themselves and some serious physical obstacles to overcome.

There are no denizens in these caves, unless there are people hiding out here. Plenty of fresh water is available but there is nothing to eat, so Adventurers or anyone else staying in the caverns must rely only on the rations they bring with them or supplies they pay the beggars to provide.

HAZARDS

Unless otherwise specified, the caverns are completely dark, and given the irregularity of the floors, walls and ceilings, all movement is limited to groping along at one metre per CA. Even with a light source, normal movement rates are halved. Penalties for low light levels for both Perception tests and combat should be applied.

The caverns are mostly silent apart from the steady drip and trickle of water. Sounds echo and carry far through the complex.

All attempts to use stealth to move quietly are at a -20% penalty, and Perception tests for listening are at +20%.

All the passages are highly irregular in shape and require a mixture of stooping, scrambling and crawling to negotiate. Running is impossible without a successful Athletics Roll – failure will result in a mishap. In combat, a CA is lost to the process of keeping one's footing.

At some points it is necessary to make an Athletics test to climb up or scramble down a drop. One test is required per three metres or part thereof. The caves occupy a total vertical space of 20 metres. The highest sections touch on the Palace Dungeons. The lowest parts, being the bottom five metres of this range, are usually filled with water.

Any water encountered will be very chilly, dark, and full of dangerous obstructions to cause injury or snag on clothing and equipment. A fumbled swim roll means not only is a character in danger of drowning, he is also stuck, or takes damage.

GAS

There is some unpleasant gas in the caves, possibly the result or residue of Artificer activity, possibly natural. A gas has a Density (potency) of 3D6x5%. It may be heavier than air and pool in lower areas, or lighter, and do the reverse, or simply all around.

Gas pockets may be flammable; or poisonous, causing asphyxiation. The poisonous sort is invisible, but has a sharp smell and can cause lamps and torches to glow blue-green.

Flammable: If using a naked flame for light, there is a chance in each round equal to the Density of the gas in that location that it will ignite with unfortunate results. Alert Adventurers who have perceived the presence of 'bad air' can attempt Evade rolls to avoid 1D6 burns damage in 1D6 locations. Thick clothing and armour may protect to a maximum of 2 points.

Poisonous: Treat Density as Potency, and allow Adventurers the chance to hold breath as if drowning.

Onset Time:	1D6 minutes of exposure
Resistance:	Resilience
Application:	Inhalation
Duration:	1D6+1 hours
Resistance Time:	Test once at Onset, and again each 1D6 minutes thereafter.
Potency:	3D6x5%
Conditions:	Feinting (Adventurer is unconscious), followed by death if a subsequent Resistance test is failed before the Adventurer is removed from further exposure to the gas

A. THE RAVINE

A fissure five metres across blocks further movement along this passage. It descends 12 metres to where a stream trickles amongst jagged rocks.

Where the passage widens before the Ravine there are a mass of carvings on the rock walls. They are clearly very old. At the centre of them, someone who has studied the Lost Song of Sorandib, or visited the Court of the Rock may, with a successful Perception Test, recognise a glyph that represents earth.

The only way to cross it is to effect some sort of bridge to the ledge opposite, climb down into the ravine (Routine) then up again (Hard due to the slick, wet surface) or to jump it. Falling below will result in near certain death. The ledge opposite is rounded and slippery, being a run-off for water from the Great Cavern beyond, and sporting a constant trickle that disappears down into the ravine. There is nothing to hang on to, so landing here requires some means of gaining a purchase before falling.

The stream disappears into the rocks at the west end of the ravine, and eventually empties into Lightwater Deep.

B. THE GREAT CAVERN

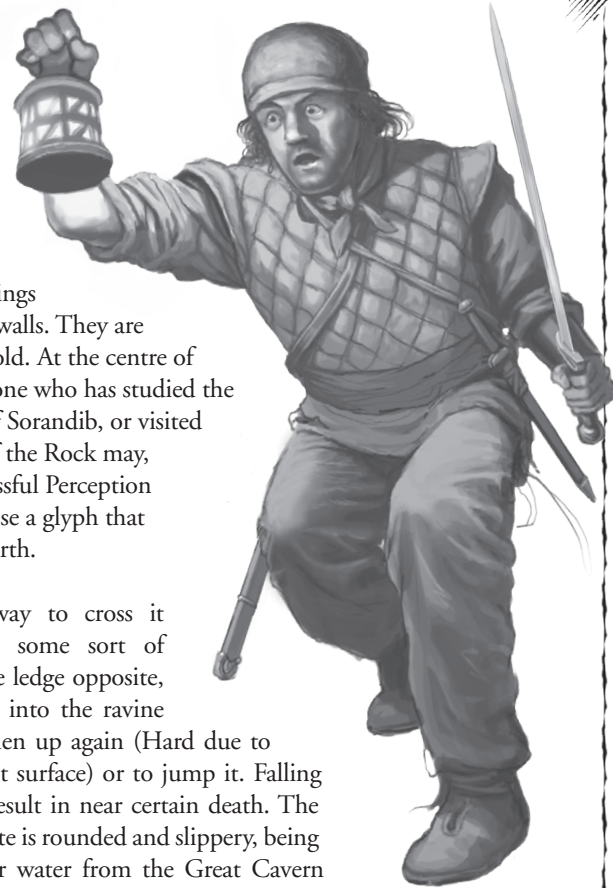
This is a large, high ceilinged cave with a plethora of long stalactites hanging from its roof. A raised ledge in one corner shows signs of occupation; some ashes and charred debris, a few rusty bits of equipment, barrel hoops and rotting scraps of cloth or wood, plus some illegible graffiti scratched onto the wall. From time to time the beggars assist a fugitive in hiding out here, and this is where they are advised to camp.

To the east of the Great Cavern the cave passages plunge deeper into the earth. Each new cave encountered requires a scramble down rocks and boulders to reach it. To the west the caves maintain a much more shallow descent.

C. MORTLAND'S TOMB

In the north corner of this cave is a curious man-made wall, clearly blocking off a passageway beyond.

More than a century ago Mago Mortland, a vizier to King Medebre II, was sealed up behind this wall and left to starve to death. His crimes were all political, and had involved not only targeted assassinations but spiteful killings of his enemies' entire families in order to seize their estates. His brutality was not the



cause of his downfall however; that came when Mortland was found to be in league with demons of the kind not normally tolerated in civilised society. Tried for wizardry (a broad term that covers any form of anti-social sorcery), Mortland's accumulated enemies not only ensured his conviction but took great pleasure of ensuring his family were proscribed and lynched too. Mortland was denied a proper cremation, which served to increase his chance of becoming a ghost. His soul is bitter, twisted and bent on having another go at life.

MAGO MORTLAND, GHOST

Characteristics: INT 17 POW 16 CHA 16

Attributes: CA: 3 SR: 17+ MP: 16

Skills: Influence 103%, Insight 78%, Perception 55%, Persistence 75%, Spirit Manifestation 64%

Combat Styles: Spectral Combat 80%, Spectral Throtling 1D8

Mortland will manifest as a ghost if his tomb is unsealed. He will then desperately attempt to attack and possess a new body, selecting the best or toughest-looking physical specimen if there is a choice. Mortland has been dead a long time – he maintains the skills noted above, but most others will have reverted to Basic Percentage. Allow 100 Free Skill Points to be distributed amongst other skills if you need to flesh out his character.

Once in charge of a new body he will either try and kill anyone else present and make his escape, or bargain with them, offering a cache of treasure he buried long ago on his estate two days from the city, if they will only help him out. Mortland can make good on his promise. His estate is now abandoned and overgrown or occupied by a small gang of brigands. He will eventually find the burial place of a large earthenware pot stuffed with coins, jewels, scraps of precious metals and the like, treasure worth perhaps 10,000 Taskeens. Mortland will however stop at nothing to ensure that he keeps hold of the best items whether by sleight of hand or cold-blooded murder.

D. LIGHTWATER DEEP

Alive with the splashing sound of an underground stream that empties into it, this cave is a natural cistern. Its waters are cold, clear and drinkable, although the slight glow from the water caused by naturally luminous algae may dissuade some from making use of them.

Etched into the cave wall at appoint that is often below the water line is an ancient glyph denoting water.

E. BLACKWATER DEEP

Blackwater Deep is another natural cistern, this one at the cave system's lowest point. Its name is given to reflect the contrast with Lightwater Deep, but has also been earned in other ways. This place is the most likely spot in whole cavern complex to encounter

BRIGHTCRYSTAL

Sorandine Brightcrystal is a mineral that was partly responsible for attracting settlers to this place many centuries ago. Its light-magnifying properties make it highly sought after for decorative purposes and jewellery, and in addition if it is invested with Magic Points it behaves just like the Sorcery Spell Glow in the *Legend Core Rulebook*. The scale of the effect is dependent on the size of the crystal, and bigger crystals require more Magic Points to power them.

Brightcrystal has another use however, known only to a select few. Milled down to a fine grit it is the active ingredient in gunpowder, and for that very reason the largest stocks of it – several tons in fact – are hidden away in the Artificers' Gunpowder Plant, found just outside the city. The very small number of people outside the Artificers who have discovered this secret may swoop on anyone known to be selling the stuff and make them an offer they cannot refuse – in cash to start with.

deadly cave gas. As a result there are very old and mouldered bones scattered about the place, and others lodged between the rocks at the bottom of the pool, where unfortunate souls have met their deaths. There is a symbol etched into the cave wall above the pool that is an archaic glyph denoting air. This glyph also appears on the floor of the Court of the Rock.

F. BRIGHTCRYSTAL CAVE

This cavern seems to pick up any light source, such as from lanterns or torches that Adventurers are carrying, and magnify it to an ambient light bright enough to read by. The light is emitted from a thousand small shards of crystal scattered about the place. Enough small crystal chips and fragments could be gathered up to raise 50+ Taskeens on the market with about an hour's work (assume a maximum 1D4+1 profitable hours of labour on this). Although not big enough for practical use as a light source, they make very interesting if gaudy costume jewellery.

G. OLD SORANTAR'S FORGE

This large cavern has signs of intense heat everywhere if you look closely. It appears that at some point the floor of the cave has been roughly levelled off. In the centre of the room, a low stone wall, just a metre high, encompasses what appears an immense fire pit, eight metres square. It is still full of traces of soot and ash, as well as a great deal of debris that has been carbonised beyond recognition. On a wall of the cave a good eye can pick out a symbol etched into the wall. It matches the glyph representing fire that can be found on the floor of the Court of the Rock.

The fire demon Sorantar left this place a long time ago to take up residence in the ziggurat that was built both to bind him and to bring him into public space as an object of worship. Until that time this is where he either incinerated, or offered services for, those who sought him out.

A LITTLE TROUBLE FROM THE GREAT LIBRARY

Muscling in on a bookish caper sends the Adventurers off on the road to Sorandib.

THE SET-UP

The Adventurers are in Zarina, where they are contacted by a man called Asrim Radam with an urgent and highly paid job of work that needs doing.

The work involves a raid on a black market dealer in books, who has managed to get his hands on a family heirloom stolen from Asrim's employer. Basically, the authorities are about to close this fellow down and likely confiscate whatever goods he is holding, but Asrim needs that book retrieved before this happens. The enormous sum of 500 Taskeens is on offer. Something in the Adventurers' particular skill sets or reputation has brought Asrim to their door. But the job must be done tonight.

BACK STORY

Asrim is in reality an agent of Varshang Keban, the Zarinian crime lord. Varshang has just sold a gang of corrupt librarians down the river, and needs them to be relieved of a certain item in which he has a material commercial interest before the Inquisitor steps in and raids their premises. Varshang has been paid a huge amount of money to procure this book for Glav Gundever of Sorandib, and intends to make good on the deal.

THE LIBRARIAN'S SCAM

The location is a scriptorium in Raheb Quarter owned by Niadra Jandrush, where scribes are reported to burn the midnight oil copying texts that have been "borrowed" from the library's specialist departments. These copies are then sold to buyers with no benefit being returned to the library. Some manuscripts that are borrowed are never returned at all, because the original manuscript has a greater value than any second generation copy, and because they are obscure and rarely consulted tomes easily 'lost' in the library through cataloguing errors. These manuscripts – the book Asrim seeks among them – are expected to be under lock and key, or in the proprietor's own quarters.

The book is to be recognized by its ancient leather binding bearing the design of a five-spoked wheel. Each spoke of the wheel

terminates in a symbol representing one of the physical elements – air, water, earth, fire and flesh.

The librarians are a soft target, and the Adventurers should be able to complete their mission with little opposition. Varshang knows exactly who they are and where they are, or he would not be Zarina's leading crime boss. One or two of the ring leaders are expected to be present, and any number of lowly scribes doing a second job to help make ends meet. It is very unlikely anyone is armed. However these are educated people and they may know how to sling a spell or two.

NIADRA'S SCRIPTORIUM

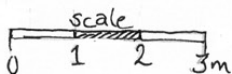
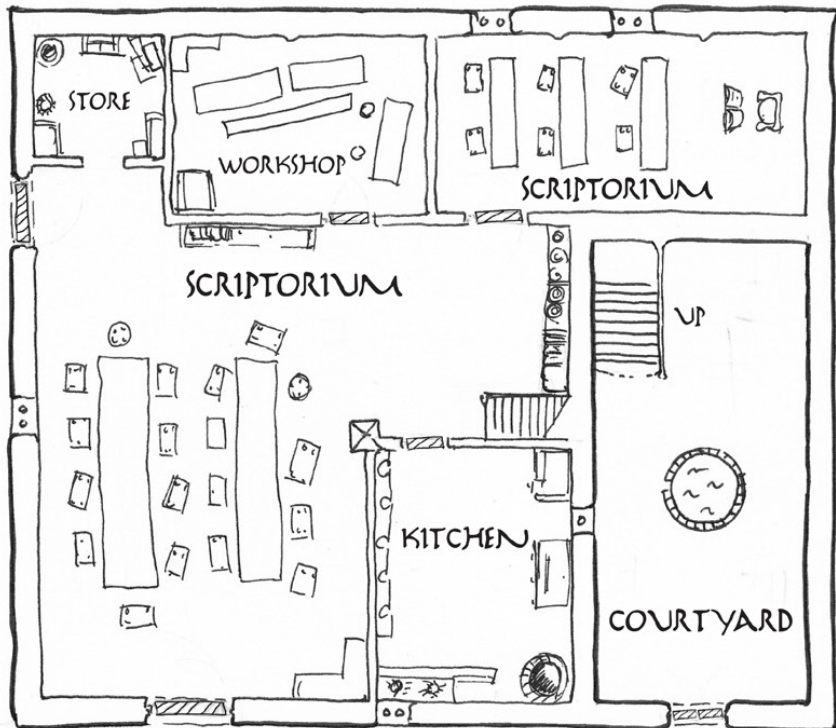
The Scriptorium has a large open room of benches and chairs where the main scribal work is done; a store full of roles of parchment, some sheets of precious paper, supplies of ink, quills, fine blotting sand and the like; a small workshop for assembling scrolls, scroll tubes and codex bindings; a smaller scriptorium space set up so one scribe can read aloud to a room of copyists in order to produce multiple copies of the same text; and a kitchen, which is used only for the workers and when Niadra has guests upstairs.

A steep flight of stairs leads up to a residential floor where Niadra lives, and where her elderly uncle often takes a nap. This consists of a parlour, dining room, bedroom and spare room, plus a locked cupboard in which are kept the stolen texts. The apartment can also be reached from the courtyard.

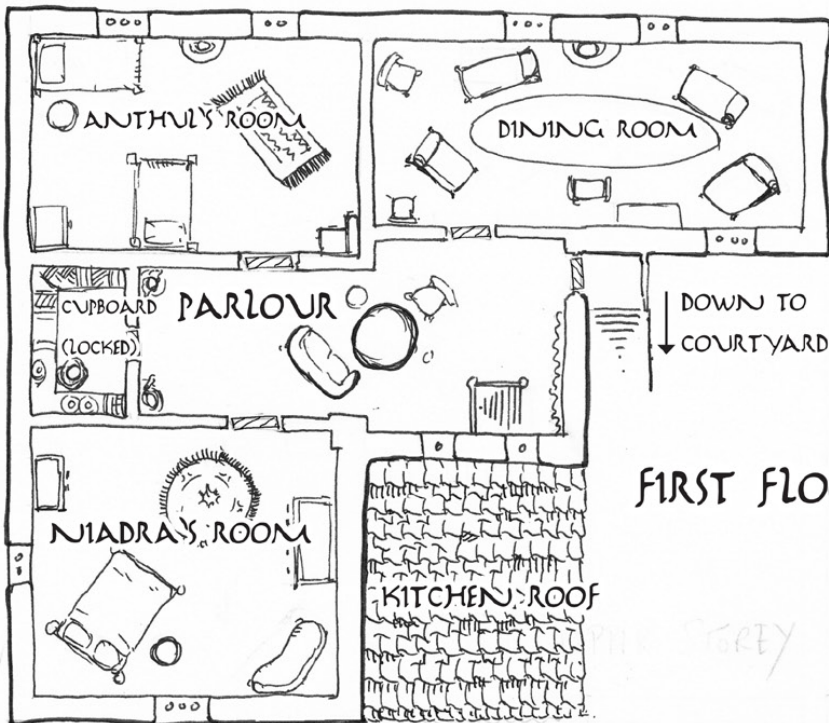
All windows have iron bars. Those with one bar are too small for a human to squeeze through even if the bar is removed, those with two bars can admit a person sized 13 or less, and those with all three bars are large enough for bigger SIZ characters, up to 18 if the bars are removed. The main door is secured with bolts top, middle and bottom, the rear door and the door into the apartment from the courtyard with a key and one bolt. The main door has a small window with a sliding shutter on the inside so the occupants can check the identity and question anyone seeking to be let in. The gate into the courtyard is usually closed and chained, but the courtyard wall is in any event only two metres high, and is relatively easily scaled.

NIADRA'S SCRIPTORIUM, ZARINA

GROUND FLOOR



STREET



FIRST FLOOR

THE PLAN

The default placing of the book the Adventurers seek is in the cupboard upstairs in the apartment, which is locked. Niadra keeps the key on her person at all times. Alternative placements are in the reading room, where Anthul has been studying it, or in Niadra's own bedroom in a locked trunk. If the Adventurers are well equipped with magic they may be able to locate the book through use of Sense Projection and form a plan accordingly. Note that it does *not* detect as magical.

The three principal Non Player Characters will know where the book is located, and will immediately know what the Adventurers are talking about if they describe it. The scriptorium's scribes have probably not seen it, but one or two of them may know that some 'special' texts are kept under lock and key and where.

Without intelligence of any kind, the Adventurers' plan must hinge on securing the opportunity to give the place a thorough ransacking, or else 'persuading' someone inside the building to reveal the book's location.

Asrim and his boss do not care whether the approach is one involving the breaking down of front doors or is more subtle than that – he will accept the former due to time constraints. Asrim will therefore go along with any plan the Adventurers come up with, but will steer them away from anything that is plain stupid, such as the liberal application of deadly violence. Avoiding a trail leading back to Varshang is also a priority.

Should the Adventurers be struggling to come up with an approach that should work, Asrim suggests a proposal to pose as an official squad in nightwatch uniforms provided through his own offices. This will enable them to bluff their way through the door with a Fast Talk or Influence check (modified according to the plausibility of the story the players come up with) opposed by Niadra's Insight of 46%, persuading this redoubtable lady to let them in to take a look around. The arrival of some nightwatchmen is unusual, but no big deal. Niadra would normally have little to fear, and if convinced of the disguise will rely on her wits to see them out on the street again, none the wiser, within a few minutes.

Niadra's tactic is to strike up conversation, allow a cursory look around while directing their attention away from anything remotely suspicious, offer a gift of food or drink and send them on their way. Niadra will quite casually offer a bribe if simple charms fail, and should these 'nightwatchmen' refuse it, Niadra will immediately be highly suspicious, ("You aren't with the nightwatch, are you?"). If they do take it, she will relax for the moment (and if the Adventurers are uncertain of the protocols, have them make a Streetwise check). In any event, as soon as it looks like the Adventurers have a very specific target and are not prepared to leave until they have accomplished it, she will quickly catch on that something more serious is afoot. Once the Adventurers' cover is blown, Niadra immediately attempts to have her employees help her eject these presumed thieves.

With a bit of thought the Adventurers could really escalate their disguise by having one of the party impersonate an Inquisitor, to ensure maximum compliance with their demands. This will require a Disguise or Acting test to carry off. However the Adventurers are then committing an act that could attract accusations of treason, should they get caught. If convinced of the disguise Niadra will be distinctly uneasy (an Insight check to spot her guilty agitation) and at least one of the occupants (Kassiam Kadam) will be thrown into a total state of panic. Rather than hiding behind a curtain or under a bed, he will try to escape from the house.

THE COMPLICATIONS

The Scriptorium is inconveniently busy at night. While the doors are locked, a night shift of seven scribes is hard at work copying texts and assembling books. Some of those at the Scriptorium are quite conscious that their activities are criminal, some of the workers only guess as much but ask no questions, and the rest are just honest workers employed to do the humdrum task of copying out texts by hand, and have no idea of what is going on.

If it looks like a robbery is taking place the scribes will actually put up quite a fight, striving to protect their employer and her elderly uncle, raising the roof calling for help, hoping to bring neighbours or the nightwatch to their aid. They may well interpose themselves between the attackers and the Jandrushes, and refuse to move in a fine show of public spirited bravery.

If everything goes very smoothly, a further complication can arise as the Adventurers emerge from the scriptorium and run straight into the real nightwatch patrol. While these men are likely no match in a stand up fight, tangling with them is deeply inconvenient and the Adventurers will have to fight, evade or talk their way out of the situation.

THE SCRIBES

Treat the seven scribes as underlings, with 2 Combat Actions and 6 HP apiece (or to prolong the fight, give them each 12 General Hit Points and a Critical Wound rating of 6). Each has a Brawl skill of 30%, Evade 25%, Persistence 40% and Resilience 30%. They will defend themselves with impromptu weapons – quill sharpeners, wooden scroll rollers, thrown inkwells as well as punches and kicks; they may try and push a bookcase onto the

attackers or hurl a stool – whatever defence they can muster. They will act as a group so far as their survival appears to depend on it, and use strength of numbers to tackle a foe. Their interest is to protect people first, rather than property. If they can actually subdue one of the intruders and hold him for handing over to the authorities, they will be mightily proud of themselves.

THE SCHOLARS

The three scholars present are Anthul Jandrush, an elderly gentleman whose job it is to scrutinise and appraise the work of the scribes; Niadra Jandrush, his niece, who is the dealer acting as agent for the ring and owns the scriptorium; and Kassiam Kadam, the ringleader of an illicit trade in manuscripts, who is a librarian at the Great Library.

Kassiam Kadam has the most to fear – as a librarian, he is potentially open to a charge of treason for removing restricted tomes from the Great Library. If he is caught he could be at the Inquisitor's mercy. The best he can hope for is that the treason charge does not stick and he simply faces serious fines and dismissal from his post – and consequent loss of Social Status – for his dishonesty. As soon as any uninvited callers are at the door, Kassiam disappears into Niadra's apartment over the shop and hides behind a curtain or under a bed. If there is time Niadra may even put him in her store cupboard, or if the scribes are putting up a fight downstairs she might attempt to hustle him out of the door and escape with him through the courtyard gate. He will use his spells to escape, typically using Hinder to slow his captor or pursuer to a Move of 3. Kassiam resorts to his dirk if he has to, but will not kill unless in fear of his life.

ANTHUL JANDRUSH

Attributes: DM: -1D2 CA: 2 SR: 13+ Mv: 6 MP: 12 HP: 9
Critical Wound 5

Skills: Brawl 32%, Evade 22%, Persistence 76%, Resilience 28%

Armour: None

NIADRA JANDRUSH

Attributes: DM: +0 CA: 2 SR: 14+ Mv: 8 MP: 11 HP: 12
Critical Wound 6

Skills: Brawl 41%, Evade 25%, Insight 46%, Persistence 55%, Resilience 60%

Armour: None

KASSIAM KADAM

Attributes: DM: +0 CA: 2 SR: 13+ Mv: 8 MP: 14 HP: 11
Critical Wound 6

Skills: Athletics 50%, Brawl 45%, Evade 35%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 35%

Armour: 5 point Damage Resistance, 5 point Spell Resistance (maintained by one of his accomplices)

Grimoire: *The Lawman's Friend* (53%): Glow, Hinder, Intuition, Neutralize Magic

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Tarsenian Dirk	S	S	D3+2, Impale	4/8

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

If the Adventurers fail to gain entry, it is possible they will try again in daylight. In this instance the scriptorium's main door is often left open to encourage a draft and people will be going in and out. Kassiam will not be present, and either Niadra or her uncle Jandrush will be napping upstairs, or out of the house on business. Getting in is easy, getting out without a great commotion and possible pursuit by local citizens will not be.

A stealthy burglary requires some means of gaining access to Niadra's apartment without those hard at work hearing the intruders. This is only realistic with the use of magic, possibly to remove the bars on the windows, or somehow get past the bolted door into the apartment from the yard.

Finally the Adventurers may come up with a clever plan to get the occupants to evacuate the building (a real or magical fire, for example), allowing them to sneak in amid the chaos and make their search. Remember that setting fires is about as heinous a crime in a city like Zarina as you can possibly commit. The consequences of detection and capture as an arsonist are grisly.

INQUISITOR DARUSH

As it happens, Inquisitor Darush is already having the scriptorium watched in order to establish appropriate timing for his own raid. He is wily enough not to intervene when the Adventurers appear on the scene unless a bloodbath is in progress, but when they are done he has them followed. This is a tail they will be hard pressed to shake off. Darush is a determined – and inquisitive – individual. But their actions are not in his brief – even if he questions them he has no right to use the authority of his office unless they are suspected to be engaged in treasonous activity...

THE NEXT STEP

When the Adventurers present Asrim with the book they will be taken to meet Varshang Keban at his house. There Varshang provides them with a peculiar box, of a highly decorative polished wood with bronze fittings and a bizarre and complex locking mechanism. Their instructions are to place the book in the box, activate the lock with the key, and prevent any other person from attempting to tamper with it. They are then offered another 400 Taskeens each plus expenses to deliver the box (and the book) to Sorandib, into the hands of Glav Gundever, one of that city's foremost citizens, 100 Taskeens up front for travel expenses (negotiable), the balance to be paid by the recipient. Up to two horses and a mule will be made available on loan. If the Adventurers have fallen foul of Darush, Varshang will significantly reduce his offer – to expenses and mounts, and perhaps 100 Taskeens apiece, since now they need his help getting out of Zarina for a while. He says he will take care of Inquisitor Darush, so that if they quit town for a few months all will be forgotten on their return.

THE BOOK

This is a thick leather bound codex in landscape format with tooled covers, showing significant age. Nobody has thought fit to grace the book with a title. The wheel design and elemental symbols described by Asrim are embossed in the leather. These symbols are archaic, and familiar to someone with an Education skill of 75% or a Culture (Taskan or Tarsenian) skill in excess of 90%, however an Education test is all that is needed to guess what each one represents.

So far as anyone knows, the book in question is actually a musical score, written in an obscure form of musical notation. Each page bears a horizontal line across the top, from which hang vertical lines of varying length, each terminating in a square, lozenge or circle. The book clearly has value as an artifact, but some who have studied it assume that the musical notation is actually just a code – that no one has yet cracked. A slip of parchment written by Anthul Jandrush and inserted inside the front cover says as much:

"N - received from KK he says no one in the Library has bothered to read the music for some time and surely won't be missed. Enquiry unexpected but means there is value will examine and see what to make of code"

The experts are wrong in this – the music is not code but is indeed a song, the song is a spell, but the spell only has a use in a very specific set of circumstances. The musical score it contains is something known about by a very few people, and referred to as *The Lost Song of Sorandib*. It is the activation spell for an ancient artefact that once controlled every aspect of Sorandib's prospering economy until it was dismantled in the time of Mad King Basgerik and its power source put at the disposal of the Artificers.

THE BOX

The box has 4 AP and 6 HP, and bears a permanent Damage Resistance spell that protects both box and contents from harm that is proof against attacks inflicting 10 damage or less. To unlock it requires not only the key, but also the manipulation of a pattern of bronze tiles around the lock in a specific sequence. This sequence is near impossible to guess at, and any attempt to tamper with it triggers a Holdfast spell that forces you to keep hands on the box mechanism, and a Smother spell, both of which are cast at 80% with Magnitude 7 and are cancelled only by the

THE LOST SONG

A piece of Sorandib's secret history, the Lost Song is the chant that powers a ritual used to operate the Similarity Engine. In olden times this arcane device was used to regulate the passing of the seasons, the fertility of the fields, and the height of the river. Essentially a massive spell enhancement device, the Similarity Engine provided the necessary magical support for the city state's key functions for which other peoples relied on divine providence. The Lost Song is known about only among certain antiquarians, since King Basgerik did such a good job of obscuring the history of what went before him.

opening of the box. If you know the sequence you can easily do so in a single round with a Mechanisms test before the Smother spell does any serious damage. If you do not, you are in difficulties. Should you not know how to operate the box, solving the puzzle is an extended Mechanisms task. Each Task Round is 3 Combat Actions, and is opposed by the creator's Craft (Artifice) skill of 65%. Each successful test signals a 25% progression towards solving the puzzle, and each critical gains 50%. If 100% progress has not been reached after 4 Task Rounds, the unfortunate Adventurer must start again.

Varshang will warn the Adventurers that the key is not sufficient on its own, and that tampering can have deadly consequences.

TRAVELLING TO SORANDIB

From Zarina travellers to Sorandib usually call first at Felsang. The Adventurers can choose to travel to Felsang by road or by ship. The sea voyage is accomplished in less than a day, but the Adventurers will need to find a vessel going their way and taking additional paying passengers, while a journey by road takes four days but leaves the Adventurers able to set out at a time and day of their choosing.

Varshang's instructions are to take the box to Gundever without having the official patrols take an interest in it. It is not that an official inspection is likely to relieve the Adventurers of their charge – rather Gundever does not want word to get around that something important is being conveyed to Sorandib at all. This can be achieved either by hiding the box well enough to escape most inspections, or by travelling across Sorantia by a route that avoids the Felsang-Sorandib road. This approach is also risky, as the lawless state of the land through which they will have to travel means there is a significant danger of an attack by brigands.

TAKING THE ROAD

When crossing into Sorantia the usual form is to cross the Shol River and then camp in order to have a full day's travel overland the next day, which should enable most parties to reach Ersgud by nightfall, and the slowest ox traffic to complete that leg of the journey in two days.

TASKAN PATROLS

Once on the road the Adventurers will at some point need to get through a cursory inspection by a patrol of six cavalymen from Sutermin Zastu's command based in the Taskan Quarter at Sorandib. These men are unlikely to uncover anything unless given reason to be suspicious. This encounter may happen at some place where the cavalymen have set their camp – if the Adventurers hang around long enough to witness the patrol investigating other travellers, an Insight test reveals that they are significantly more thorough in searching those who are travelling *from* Sorandib; their interest in those travelling *to* Sorandib is primarily in finding out who they are and what their purpose is.

ERSGUD

A second, more thorough, inspection takes place nearer to Sorandib itself, in country recently resettled by Quag Kaleb.

Ersgud is an agricultural town of some 4,000 souls, established at the only functioning waystation on the route by Quag Kaleb, one of the most powerful men in Sorandib. Here Kaleb is making a home fit for future citizens of the Taskan Empire, carved out of the lawless hinterland of this troubled city by sell-swords in his employ – and a with a bit of Taskan help. Adventurers traveling to Sorandib by the road must pass through Ersgud, and will find it has the only Inn on the route. The local militia, all Kalebite lackeys, will either intercept travellers on the road where it passes through the town or, if the travellers make for the inn, will come and make their inspection there.

Kaleb's 'Ersgud Militia' are much more assiduous in their searches than the Taskan patrols, being briefed to inspect goods and people that are heading for the city and do their best to direct whatever traffic may bring advantage towards the Kalebite Quarter. If that is not possible they are simply to pass information back. On the plus side they are more ready to be bought off with a bribe (two Taskeens per man present is the base cost to have their inspection made cursory, ten Taskeens if they are being asked to ignore something obviously suspicious). Although these Kalebite lackeys are not a tough proposition in a fight, Kaleb has some veteran mercenaries in the area who do the heavy work in pacifying the countryside, and they will be on the Adventurers' trail before too long if there is violence.

THE WAY INN

On the east side of this large agricultural town is The Way Inn, which is almost an obligatory stop for those on the road to Sorandib from Felsang. The inn occupies the site of an old royal waystation and is surrounded by enclosures where traveling bands and merchant caravans would camp overnight – but no one uses those now except sometimes the mounted Taskan patrols, or those unwilling to pay to have a roof over their heads. The inn is a large establishment, still in fine order being recently built, and chronically under-occupied but pricey all the same. Its proprietor is Hesta Dragan, a 50 year old woman formerly of Sorandib, one of Kaleb's favoured clients who will happily bend the ear of newcomers to tell them how he is the finest man in Sorantia, and make specific mention of how he has built this inn, the town's first temple, and a mill powered by magic.

The common room is charged at 2T per night, private rooms at 5T, fodder can be had at 1T per animal per day, although private room guests staying for a few days will be offered pasture close to town for free.

Meals range from 4 pennies to 4 Taskeens depending on your appetite and budget, and Hesta will make loud noises about how Ersgud is so blessed as to offer a full range of fresh foods, none of which are imported.

THE TOWN

Ersgud is an unwallled settlement, although there are open gateways that straddle the road on the way into and out of town. These are all that is left of the fortifications that Kaleb pulled down five years ago to symbolize the security that Ersgud now enjoys

The road passes right by the town centre, where you will find that Ersgud has a few very old buildings at its core, however the rest have been pulled down and looted for building materials over the years. There remains a basilica in which royal officials on a court circuit would hear local disputes and legal cases, which is now in the hands of locally elected officials – all of whom are of course from a candidate list of those sponsored and approved by Quag Kaleb. Next to this is a big open plaza where markets are held twice per month, and on one side of it, at right angles to the basilica, is a grain exchange that has storage capacity for over four hundred tons of produce.

The houses in Ersgud are a mix of one and two stories, and away from the very centre of town most have a small yard with a kitchen garden and some residents even keep livestock. Of the 2,500 people who live in Ersgud itself at least three quarters of the male population and a significant proportion of the women go to work in the surrounding fields every day, so during daylight hours the town can have a sleepy feel.

THE TEMPLE

A fork in the road on the west side of town leads to The Temple of the Smiling Gods. If instead you continue to the right in the direction of Sorandib, nevertheless there is a turn in the road where a fine view of the temple can be had, with its impressive new tiled roof capped by bronze ornaments along its ridge, and set in a beauty spot among orchards and pastures. This is constructed on land adjoining Kaleb's own significant estate. The bricks of which it is built come from his own clay beds and the timber supports from his woodlands. Processions of the townspeople to the temple when the festivals take place have to pass through part of Kaleb's land, and the cult that has grown up around the temple is of course entirely under Kaleb's control.

The Smiling Gods are Hoonvel, Samanse and Kait, the last two under their Sorantine dialect names of Samandsa and Kadith. The priests of the temple were originally induced to set up here by Kaleb, and are a small college of six priests led by an old fellow called Belster Sorkin, and their various apprentices and assistants; a total staff of 17. The priests make the rounds of the estates and farms in the area, holding worship ceremonies as required. Meanwhile Kaleb has seen that Ithema, a local girl, has been carefully nurtured to reach the devotional level at which she can cast the Call Kadith divine spell. This is cast at the temple only, ensuring that anyone who uses the goddess' epiphany to make their own devotions are doing so through Kaleb's patronage, and that the temple has the chance to become a Sacred Site as the years go by and the Goddess makes a habit of appearing there. In the year 1220 the Temple of the Smiling Gods in Hethrul near Ersgud has accumulated a Sanctity of 4%.

The main Festival of Kadith takes place after the harvest on the 28th day of the month Brenai. The deity is summoned to inhabit her cult image, a statue one metre high, which is then paraded on the shoulders of her devotees from the temple, round the various villages and thence to Ersgud itself accompanied by a great crowd. This processing carries on from first light to sunset, at which point it is the women of Ersgud who escort the goddess back to her temple.

THE PEOPLE

Of the 4,000 or so residents in the Ersgud area there are 714 families accounting for over 3,500 of the total. Even those who do not rely on farming for their principal livelihood are engaged in it in some way. Most of the inhabitants are effectively settlers out of Sorandib, brought here over a period of 15 years by Kaleb or simply attracted by the area's relative security. There are a very few individuals who are descended from generations of local farmers, since most were displaced during one of the many conflicts that have plagued the region, or were forced out by banditry before Kaleb and his Taskan friends restored law and order.

THE LAND

You can walk for more than an hour in any direction from Ersgud itself and all the while be passing through or near cultivated land, and within a few hundred metres at most from a walled hamlet or village. There are some scattered farm buildings, but no isolated farmsteads, as security is still a major concern no matter how effective Kaleb's men are at keeping brigands in check. Beyond these ranges the countryside has more or less returned to nature, and while some hardy herdsmen or hunters venture there, it is as yet no place for vulnerable families to be settled. All in all there are some 4,000 hectares of territory around Ersgud given over to agriculture in barley fields, orchard and vineyards – 40 square kilometres, carved out of a total territory of more than three times that encompassing woodland, pasture, hay meadow, ponds, and marginal land. The quality of land put under the plough is generally very good, with yields of between six and eight times the seed corn invested.

KALEB'S ESTATE

Apart from being a great expanse of productive territory, Kaleb's estate – his largest single landholding – happens to have the town's primary mill, which sports a golem-powered grindstone that can operate day and night – as well as having the Temple of the Smiling Gods on its doorstep. Several small hamlets ring the estate, wherein live those who work on it, including the hamlet of Shamab, where the mill is situated, and Hethrul, where the temple has been built. The agricultural fields are farmed by tenants who hand 20% of their produce over to Kaleb, which usually earns him a net income of something in the region of 12,000 Taskeens per year. The other 320 Hectares are directly exploited by Kaleb via the services of shepherds, quarrymen, woodcutters and other specialists, and this nets a further 8,000 or more (the mill alone generates over 4,000 per annum). About 70 people are regularly working the estate, who together with their families amount to a community of over 200 people.

KALEB'S MERCENARIES

Kaleb has a band of 18 mercenaries permanently billeted in Ersgud, and their role is to track down and kill or capture dangerous outlaws and bandits, thus keeping the locals reassured of their security. The mercenaries are all well equipped, skilled and seasoned warriors. Thul Vartigern is their designated leader but is usually in Sorandib, and an older, wiser man by the name of Radevan Askim is the leader on the spot.

If Adventurers deliberately leave the road to skirt around the town and yet pass within an eight kilometre radius, the mercenaries rather than the militia will be sent to intercept them. They will come fully armoured and equipped.

TYPICAL MERCENARY

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13–5 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 10 **HP:** 13 **Critical Wound** 7

Skills: Athletics 40%, Brawl 45%, Brawn 39%, Evade 40%, Perception 45%, Persistence 39%, Resilience 52%

Advanced Skills: Education 20%, Lore (Tactics and Drill) 55%, Ride 46%, Track 30%, Survival 25%

Combat Style: Sidearm and Shield 70%, Marksmanship 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Warsword	M	M	D8+Bleed, Impale	6/10
Round Shield	L	S	D4	6/12
Light Crossbow	L	100m	D8	4/5

Armour: Leather, padding and some lamellar, 3 AP overall, 4 AP to head

THE ERSGUD MILITIA

In addition to these professionals, there are 30 or more 'militia', lackeys levied at Kaleb's expense to fulfil basic policing and bullying duties in the community. Adventurers passing through Ersgud are more likely to encounter, and be shaken down by, these men unless they cause very serious trouble.

The militia are generally unarmoured except for a simple pot helm, but each is given a fine red tunic, which is one of the perks of the job. They are equipped with clubs, one or two swords, and spears. They only carry shields when there is a known emergency afoot.

TYPICAL MILITIAMAN

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 2 **SR:** 12–1 **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 9 **HP:** 12 **Critical Wound** 6

Skills: Athletics 30%, Brawl 35%, Brawn 30%, Evade 30%, Perception 40%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%

Advanced Skills: Education 25%, Lore (Tactics and Drill) 25%

Combat Style: Spear and Shield 35%, Sidearm 40%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Spear	M	L	D8+1+Impale	4/5
Militia Shield*	H	S	D4	6/12
Hatchet	S	S	D6+Bleed	3/6

*This shield offers +15% bonus when parrying missiles, but use of an S size weapon with it comes with a –15% penalty

Armour: Metal helmet (3AP), leather or padded jerkin (1AP chest and abdomen)

THE DANGEROUS ROUTE

To avoid official patrols and searches requires crossing open territory. This may include seeking a point at which take to the river and enter the city by water. This is the only means for the Adventurers to reach Glav Gundever without first passing through a part of the city where one of the other factions is alerted to their presence. The most effective way to do that is to strike the river to the north of the city at Middra and get a ride on one of the Fengo transports by bribing the boatmen, who are not allowed to take passengers when they have a cargo (or stealing a ride of course).

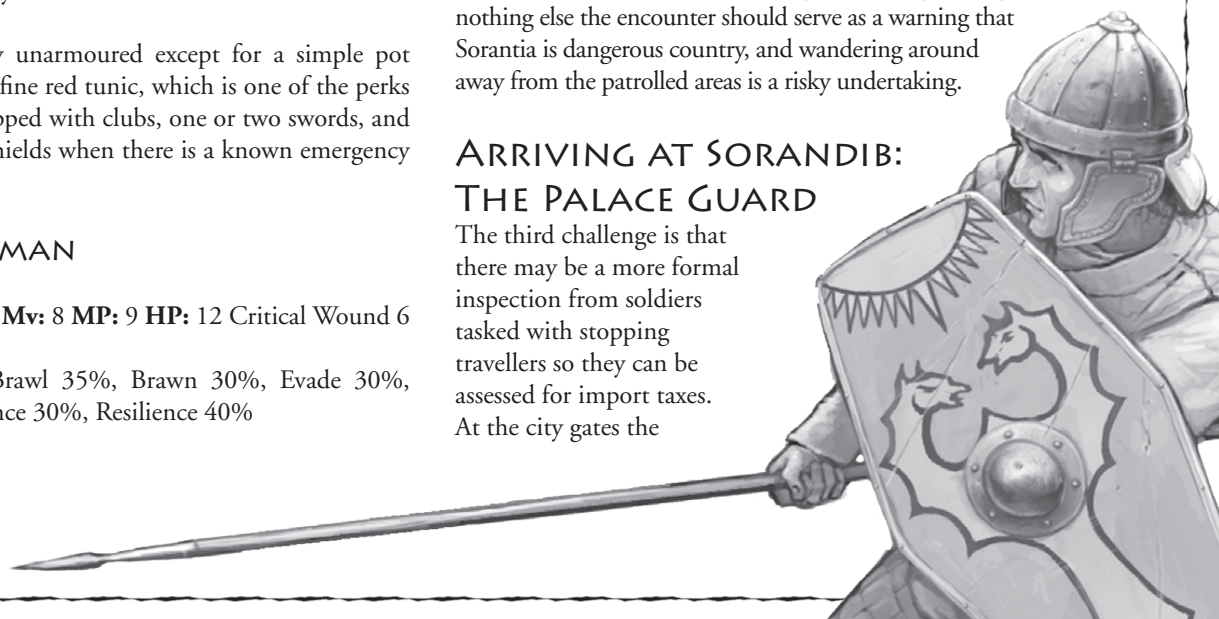
Adventurers choosing this route are almost certain to be attacked by robbers at some point as they make their way across Sorantia. The only way to prevent an attack is to somehow look invincible. If robbers are not bad enough, there are wild animals that will be happy to pick off a straggler or scout who looks vulnerable. The most serious challenge would be posed by minions of a wizard, who are suitably equipped with magical augments, or who are at least well prepared thanks to the use of magical senses used to scout the Adventurers prior to an attack.

If the Adventurers have been indiscreet about their mission before crossing into Sorantia, the attacking robbers may in fact be agents of someone who wants the box and the book it contains.

The Games Master should reward cunning plans for travelling this way without being set upon, but otherwise set up whatever kind of attack suits the level of the party to give them a good fright. If nothing else the encounter should serve as a warning that Sorantia is dangerous country, and wandering around away from the patrolled areas is a risky undertaking.

ARRIVING AT SORANDIB: THE PALACE GUARD

The third challenge is that there may be a more formal inspection from soldiers tasked with stopping travellers so they can be assessed for import taxes. At the city gates the



job is done by members of the Palace Guard, who may provide some advice and warnings on how to have a safe visit to the city. Likewise anyone approaching by river will be called to put in at Gundever Palace by Gundever's men, and a toll extracted there.

A duty is due of 5% of goods brought in to Sorandib itself. Personal possessions are exempt. At this stage the Adventurers are probably not carrying anything that could be described as merchandise, however a thorough search of their packs is likely to turn up the box. This can lead to awkward moments as a watch captain demands it be opened, and when this proves an impossibility it is at least certain that he will report this interesting artefact to the palace. If the Adventurers cannot open it, it is not theirs, and the soldiers will want to know who it is destined for. Within two days at most whatever information has passed on will be with Felster Halkin and/or Vizier Astermain.

COMPLETING THE SCENARIO

Once safely at Sorandib, it may be some time before the Adventurers see the Court of the Rock in the Palace, and realise a connection between that and the book, obvious in the matching designs worked into the book's cover and the paving of the Court of the Rock. So it is very likely the book will no longer be in their hands by the time they start to get clues about what it is for.

The best way for the Adventurers to get paid and stay out of trouble is to get the box and its contents into the city without alerting anyone to its existence, and then to get it straight to Glav Gundever, who will arrange to have the book checked and pay the money within three days. He is quite insistent about that, but is more than happy to arrange accommodation for the Adventurers in the meantime. This may be an empty or abandoned apartment in Gundever Palace, or rooms at an inn.

If need be Gundever can purchase a promissory note at the Taskan Quarter that the Adventurers can convert to cash when safely back across the border in the Empire, in order to save carrying cash around on a dangerous road.

GUNDEVER AS PATRON

If the Adventurers have done right by Gundever, and in particular if they have earned any respect from him for their discretion or aggression, he will be interested in employing them. As he tells it, he will continue to maintain them as his guests for another month at least. To Gundever this means maintaining them as his henchmen, at a rate of two or three Taskeens per day plus accommodation, and the expectation they will be at his beck and call. Such people on his payroll may expect some menial fetching, carrying and escorting work in the course of a week, but essentially to be ready to support their patron at any point when a crisis arises.

Should they refuse, Gundever will still be keen to ensure that if they stay in Sorandib they are available for hire for the odd job by himself, rather than falling in with one of his rivals.

If the Adventurers keep the box, and the book, on their persons and delay going to Gundever, then there is an increasing chance it will become known that they are carrying a "Something of Interest" and various people will try to find out what it is. Unless extreme precautions are taken, after 1D3+1 days Gundever will discover his delivery is in town and send trusted henchmen to force the handover.

Of course it is possible that information about the book, or its arrival in Sorandib, leaks out. Each of the key factions in Sorandib will have an interest in it, some of them sufficient to pay large sums to acquire it, others willing to take extreme measures ranging from theft to deadly violence.

SORANDIB'S FACTIONS AND THE LOST SONG OF SORANDIB

THE ARTIFICERS

These people – at least those at the top of their order – know all about the Lost Song of Sorandib, and what it does. As far as they are concerned the book needs to be safely in their protection, or perhaps even destroyed. Its existence, if known, may enable, and thereby cause, someone to seek to reassemble the Similarity Engine, which can only be done at the expense of the Artificers' hold over the magical power source that used to drive it. The whole existence of the order is dependent on this not happening, and Felster Halkin will sanction any action deemed necessary to prevent it. The Artificer will start with bribes, move on to threats, escalate to aggravated robbery and finish up with murder.

If a report arrives at the palace of strangers bearing an Artificer's puzzle-locked box, someone from the Artificers' Guild will track them down, and once they are located an expert will be brought in to use Sight Projection and a Glow spell to surreptitiously look inside the locked box. Once the Artificers know what the Adventurers have they will set about acquiring it. If the Adventurers are found to have passed it on, the recipient becomes their target, although should they know too much the Adventurers may still be killed.

THE ROYAL FACTION

Vizier Astermain does not know about the Lost Song of Sorandib, but he knows that there was once an artefact that regulated the prosperity of the realm and the fecundity of the royal line to boot. Anything that might restore such fecundity to the ailing aged king before he expires is potentially a vital asset, and there is no time to lose in setting it to work.

Someone, other than the Artificers who are unlikely to volunteer such information, needs to work out the relationship between the book, a lost artefact, and the imminent extinction of the royal line.

THE KALEBITES

Quag Kaleb does not know the history of the Similarity Engine, but he knows that back in very ancient history the Sorantines rejected their gods, and their continuing prosperity was illusory and short-lived (he does not know that this is because the Artificers dismantled the Engine). Kaleb's plans to rebuild a kingdom that he hopes one day to be in charge of as a scion of the Taskan Empire involves a renaissance of Sorandib's relationship with the Tarsenian Gods. He would regard the Similarity Engine as a godless anathema, and probably side with the Artificers in preventing its restoration if there was a plot afoot to pursue it.

THE GUNDEVERS

Glav is a magpie who collects ancient artefacts, so if anyone has uncovered the secret history of the Similarity Engine, it will be him. He already owns one or two peculiar items that he knows are special, and in fact are parts belonging to the lost device. Gundever suspects that any attempt to locate all the parts and reassemble them is pointless without the means to make the device work, and his researches have led him to the book held in Zarina's Great Library. Gundever is likely to conspire with the Royal Faction to attempt a restoration if for some reason that seems plausible, but he will always keep his involvement deniable (hence employing the Adventurers if need be) in case it gives the Artificers and Quag Kaleb the pretext they need to finish off the Gundevers for good, probably with Taskan support.

THE TASKANS

Agents based out of the Taskan Quarter would simply look to find out everything they can and report back. If details of what the Similarity Engine was, and what it could do, were to filter back to Ashkor and Taskay, any number of strange plots could be hatched to take advantage, or to intervene in whatever plots are hatched in Sorandib.

The first thing is to ensure that nothing happens that reinvigorates the royal House of Muttine. So if Vizier Astermain is known to have some plan to do so, he must be stopped.

The second is to ensure the Artificers are kept in business. So if something threatens their power, the Taskans will, if need be, provide help in removing the threat (by proxy of course).

The Taskans have limited knowledge of how the Black Rock provides power to the Artificers. Guided tours beneath the palace are not available even to them. Once the subject is raised and there is some hint there is something there that predates the Artificer's use of it, they may in fact sponsor some sort of intrusion to find out more. The information gained will simply be filed away for future reference – except that it may well ignite the interest of the Simulacrum, who is always on the lookout for any source of magical potency that could be harnessed to assist in the Emperor's ascension, or perhaps for him to control for his own purposes after the fact.

THE PRIESTHOOD

The Priests of Sorantar have no prior knowledge of the Similarity Engine or the lost Song of Sorandib, their historical records having been effectively purged by Basgerik. Their main concern is simply to avoid any changes in Sorandib that could see the cult overshadowed or made irrelevant. They could be persuaded to take sides with whoever feeds their paranoia about the possible implications of some plot or conspiracy.

SOSBANDER'S FREE SOCIETY

If any party came to Sosbander's Free Society with a plan to restore the Similarity Engine (while carefully explaining what on earth that means), this faction could be persuaded to fall behind the plan in the interest of providing some populist solution to the kingdom's woes that depends and serves the common man.

TWILIGHT'S ASSASSINS

This scenario begins with the Adventurers staying at Sorandib's famous Old City Inn. One night a gang of assassins break in and stab to death a Taskan agent in his room. The Adventurers may be roused from their sleep too late to intervene, but ideally soon enough to attempt to kill or capture one or two of the assassins before they escape. Unfortunately assassins who are captured make every effort to swiftly expire from a self-administered poison, leaving little chance for them to be interrogated. One way or another the Adventurers find themselves in the middle of a major incident, and well placed to investigate what's going on.

Taskan representative Sutermin Zastu is the most likely patron to pay the Adventurers to get to the bottom of who singled out and killed an important Taskan officer – and why. Zastu has no authority outside the Taskan Quarter, but with his lack of confidence in how the city authorities will deal with the matter, he needs to satisfy himself that he can make a proper and full report to his political masters. However Vizier Astermain is also a potential employer, unconvinced his own constables, in the form of the Palace Guard, are equal to the task.

To find clues with which to solve the puzzle, the Adventurers must immerse themselves in some of the least salubrious aspects of Sorandib society. They should eventually discover who sent the assassins – and in doing so uncover one of Sorandib's most fearsome secrets – a Vampire cult. The Adventurers should only slowly realise that this is the enemy they now face.

THE VICTIM

Thulvel Maroon is an Inquisitor – an Acolyte of the Taskan Emperor Cult. He is in Sorandib as the result of a report from Quag Kaleb, because Kaleb has heard evidence that a cult is active in the city promising eternal youth. Were the city within the borders of the empire such a cult would be considered a treasonous association. While it is not, there is intense interest in the court of the Simulacrum in 'immortality magic', and Thulvel has been sent to investigate Kaleb's report – coming as it does from such a politically sensitive place. Even Sutermin Zastu has not been informed of Thulvel's mission.

No sooner has Thulvel arrived in Sorandib than his presence and purpose becomes known to the cult he is investigating and they plot his murder.

THE NIGHT ATTACK

The assassins are admitted to the Old City Inn by Fraster, one of the cult Acolytes (Vampires), known in the cult as Brother Twilight. He may be inside the inn already, among the patrons in the Great Hall at closing time – and if he gets the chance will slip into the deep shadows, shapechange (using sorcery) into the form of a giant spider, and scuttle up to a hiding place in the rafters until the doors are finally barred and the guests are asleep. Alternatively he changes form outside the building and then scales the walls from the outside, using his Wall Walking trait, making his entry via one of the arrow slits.

Fraster's preferred plan is to use a *Dominate Human* spell to force one of the occupants to open the door. If there are no suitable targets because everyone is sound asleep then he will descend from the rafters and revert to human form before slipping back the bolts and ushering his followers inside. At this stage he has used at least three Magic Points (he must provide a magic point to achieve even the minimum 10 minutes spell duration and another for each extension), and probably a further 2 to use *Dominate Human* and give the spell some range (as a Vampire with no POW, the multiplier for each point of manipulation applied to Range is 10), and so it is likely he has only 4 Magic Points left. He would rather not use any more of this precious resource, although he will use them in order to secure his own escape.

BROTHER TWILIGHT, VAMPIRE

Characteristics (numbers in brackets are night-time values):
STR 12 (20) CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 16 DEX 12 (20) CHA 15
SOC 15

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 (+1D4) **CA:** 3 **SR:** 14+ (16+) **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 0+9

Common Skills (unmodified): Athletics 95%, Brawl 58%, Evade 54%, Influence 122%, Insight 90%, Perception 80%, Persistence 77%, Resilience 70%, Sleight 69%, Stealth 85%

Advanced Skills: Lore (Cult Theology) 77%, Seduction 76%

Combat Styles: (16% at night) Cloak and Dagger 90%, Swordsmanship 81%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Warsword	M	M	1D8+1D2(1D4)+ Bleed, Impale	6/10
Dirk	S	S	1D3+2+1D2(1D4)+ Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: Usually no armour worn

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Sorcery Grimoire (Sorcery Manipulation 64%): *Ocriman's Letters* 80%: Abjure Night, Dominate Human, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Shapechange Human to Spider, Worship Vyako

Divine Magic (Lore (Cult Theology) 77%): Pact (Vyako) 67%, Dedicated POW 12: Fangs

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (DEX); *Unnatural (characteristic)*: +8 STR, +8 DEX at night

GIANT SPIDER FORM

(Brother Twilight's heightened characteristics still apply)

Characteristics: STR 18 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 16 DEX 24

Attributes: DM: +1D4 CA: 4 SR: 20+ Mv: 6/12 MP: 0+8

Skills: Athletics 95%, Evade 54%, Perception 80%, Persistence 77%, Resilience 70%, Stealth 85%, Track 40%

Combat Styles: Bite 50% Web 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D4 +poison	As for head
Web	L	L	Entangles	4/19



SPIDER HIT LOCATIONS

Most of the vampires in this adventure are able to shapechange into a giant spider form. The hit location table is provided here, with hit points and armour details provided in a truncated form in the vampire stat blocks.

D20	Hit Location
01	Right Rear Leg
02	Left Rear Leg
03	Right Centre Rear Leg
04	Left Centre Rear Leg
05-11	Abdomen
12	Right Centre Foreleg
13	Left Centre Foreleg
14	Right Foreleg
15	Left Foreleg
16-20	Thorax

Traits: *Poison Bite*: POT 51 Injected, Onset 1D3 rounds, Duration 1D3 days, Resilience, Paralysis.

Wall Walking

Armour: 3 point chitin.

3HP each leg (1-4, 12-15) 6HP Abdomen (5-11), 5HP Thorax (16-20)

THE ASSASSINS

These fellows are Meldruth, Issana (female), Sangrin and Dorloth, all initiates, and Klandrin, who is on this mission to prove his devotion to the cult in order to earn his initiation right.

Meldruth stays at the door, ready to defend their escape route if the alarm is raised. The other four make their way up the stairs to the private rooms, where they force their way into Thulvel's room and set about him with their daggers. Fraster will lurk in the shadows, watching events, departing when he knows the job is done, or sooner if he risks discovery. Fraster will not take any action that stands a good chance of him being captured or unmasked as a vampire at this stage.

It takes the four killers one round to get to the staircase, another to climb the stairs, and a third to reach Thulvel's room. At that point they need to get through the door, which Thulvel keeps bolted. So long as no alarm has been raised at this point, Thulvel is only awoken when his door is broken in, requiring a successful Brawn attack by one of the assassins, attempted once per round.

MELDRUTH THE BUILDER, AGE 38 MALE, AKA DREAMSPEAKER, A DEMI-VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 23 CON 22 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 11 DEX 14 CHA 15 SOC 16

Attributes:

DM: +1D6 CA: 3 SR: 13+ Mv: 8 MP: 5+6

Skills: Athletics 104%, Brawn 60%, Evade 42%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 88%

Combat Styles: Brawl 60%, Sidearm and Dagger 75%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2+1D6, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None

Hit Points: 7/7/8/9/6/6/7

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 42% Dedicated POW 6

Traits and Gifts: Life Drain (STR); +9STR, +10CON at night (factored into stats)

Blessings (Tarsenian Rites 55%): Vyako x 2, Sorantar x1

ISSANA THE APOTHECARY, AGE 41
FEMALE, AKA NIGHTSHADE, A DEMI
VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 9 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 15 POW 12 DEX 16 CHA 22 SOC
13

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 16+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 8+4

Skills: Athletics 48%, Brawn 27%, Craft (Apothecary) 90%,
Craft (Alchemy) 45%, Evade 40%, Influence 55%, Persistence
60%, Resilience 42%, Sleight 76%, Stealth 64%

Combat Styles: Brawl 40%, Sidearm and Dagger 70%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 47% Dedicated POW 4

Traits and Gifts: Life Drain (CHA); +4 DEX, +6 CHA at night
(factored into stats)

SANGRIN THE WEAVER, AGE 47 MALE, AKA
GENTLESLEEP, A DEMI VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 10 CON 5 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 8 DEX 21 CHA 14 SOC
12

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 17+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 3+5

Skills: Art (Embroidery) 95%, Athletics 62%, Brawn 30%, Craft
(Textiles) 109%, Evade 84%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 33%

Combat Styles: Brawl 55% Sidearm and Dagger 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None

Hit Points: 4/4/5/6/3/3/4

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 38% Dedicated POW 5

Traits and Gifts: Life Drain (INT); +7 DEX at night

DORLUTH THE POET, AGE 35 MALE, AKA
LOVEMAGIC, A DEMI VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 19 CON 20 SIZ 11 INT 12 POW 11 DEX 14 CHA 14
SOC 9

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 3+8

Skills: Art (Poetry) 87%, Athletics 66%, Brawn 56%, Evade 42%,
Persistence 36%, Resilience 80%

Combat Styles: Brawl 65% Sidearm and Dagger 70%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2+1D2, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None

Hit Points: 7/7/8/9/6/6/7

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 52% Dedicated POW 8

Traits and Gifts: Life Drain (CON); +8 STR, +6 CON, +5 DEX
at night

KLANDRIN THE CALLIGRAPHER, CULTIST

Characteristics:

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 9 DEX 11 CHA 14 SOC
13

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 9

Skills: Art (Illustration) 78%, Athletics 46%, Brawn 39%, Evade
33%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 36%

Combat Styles: Brawl 35% Sidearm and Dagger 40%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2+1D2, Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Talent: Illustration +7 to Basic Percentage

Blessings (Tarsenian Rites 47%): Vyako x2

ROUSING THE ADVENTURERS

If the Adventurers are sleeping in the dormitory area on the ground floor there is a chance (Perception -20%) any Adventurer roused from sleep by the creak of the door or the draught created when the assassins enter the building. Any Adventurer obviously awake and on watch will have to face Fraster, and may have effectively volunteered himself to be hit with a Dominate Human spell and be used to open the door for the assassins. Bear in mind Fraster's first priority is to slip the bolts on the front gates, and he will attack people only if they look likely to prevent this mission. If the Adventurers are staying in one or more of the first floor private rooms, they will probably become aware something is amiss only when the assassins break down the door to Thulvel's room. Once the murder is in progress have Adventurers check their Perception every round until they awake.

MURDER MOST FOUL

If you do not want to play through the attack on Thulvel but present his murder as a fait accompli, assume that he is stabbed and dying by the end of the 5th round after the Assassins came through the door. Alternatively you may wish for the assassination to have a chance to fail and for the Adventurers to play a role in foiling it. In these cases, use the following outline of events:

When the assassin arrive, Thulvel is either asleep, or sat on his bed in a trance as he uses combined Vision and Hearing Projection spells to explore the city looking for clues to help him in his mission (even if you judge he is asleep this was his last waking activity and he is 4 Magic points down as a result).

If the door gives way in the first round, Thulvel is caught at a serious disadvantage – his initiative is at -10, and all those assassins who can make an attack before it comes round do so freely. For the rest of the round he can only Evade, trying to gain his feet, and at a -20% disadvantage to all skills. The attackers are a +20% advantage for their attacks, at least until Thulvel manages to get out of his bed.

Should it take more than one round to break in the door, Thulvel is by the second round roused from his sleep or from his spell-trance (but with a -20% penalty to all actions due to confusion or grogginess), and by the third is on his feet ready to face what is coming, (still -10% to skills). By the fourth round any penalties for surprise and confusion are gone. The assassins should take him down quickly, choosing Impale and Maximise Damage Combat Manoeuvres to do so. If the first attacks fail they must rely on their numbers to strike freely at the unarmoured Taskan. As soon as he is incapacitated, Thulvel will be given the coup de grace instantly. However once able to defend himself, Thulvel is no pushover.

A multi-target Wrack could quickly disable attackers if he has a chance to get it off.

As soon as the deed is done, or as soon as the assassins' purpose is frustrated, they make a run for it. They will make for the street by the quickest route, cutting down anyone who attempts to stand in their way, and once on the street will split up and try to disappear into the inky night.

FOILING THE ESCAPE

At whatever point the Adventurers are roused and choose to act they are on their own, for the sight of weapons drawn is enough to deter the staff and fellow guests from trying to intervene. As the fight gets under way the first priority of anyone else present will be to get out of the way, probably via the kitchen door. In the courtyard calls of alarm will raise an appearance by Lorith in 1D4+4 rounds, then calls for the watch will bring two squads of three Palace Guard running to the courtyard in a further 1D10+10 rounds. All of this is unlikely to change the unfolding events inside the Old City Inn. It will be down to the Adventurers to block the assassins' path or pursue them into the street.

CAPTURING THE ASSASSINS

The best chance the Adventurers have of collecting information is to capture one or more of the assassins. This is not easy, they know their lives will be forfeit if captured, so there is no point in surrendering. If incapacitated their only recourse is to attempt suicide – requiring a Persistence roll by each to muster the determination go through with it. A small vial of poison is carried by each one. This will take a Combat Action to make ready, and another to take it. If cornered, for example because the Adventurers have successfully barred their way, the assassins will attempt to drink their poison *before* engaging in melee. The poison has a Potency of 40%, acts in 1D6+1 combat rounds, and is immediately fatal if the opposing Resistance test (Resilience) is lost. If no result (both rolls fail) test again each round until a result is achieved.

A successful Resilience test provides hope of life. While the drinker immediately collapses and appears dead, and can be confirmed as such by anyone making First Aid test, only a close examination using a Lore (Medicine) test, or appropriate magic, will reveal that some spark of life remains. The poison will begin to wear off in 1D6+21-CON hours, at which point, and every six hours thereafter, the drinker may make a second (unopposed) Resilience test to come round and try to make an escape. A fumbled recovery roll will result in death. The least reliable assassin is Klandrin – and if he takes the poison his chances of avoiding death are limited. He does not know this, and that is deliberate.

THE AUTHORITIES

When the Palace Guard arrive the fight is probably already over. The situation will quickly become the subject of intense rumour and speculation, being such a bold attack on a politically sensitive a target. Within 1D3 hours, a senior figure from the Royal Faction, someone who reports directly to Vizier Astermain – or even the Vizier himself – comes to see what is going on. On behalf

of the king he immediately offers a 100 Taskeen reward for any information that helps to capture the culprits. Any citizen or foreigner who killed or captured an assassin in the act will get paid an immediate public award of 50 Taskeens in thanks. They probably do not yet know that capturing the culprits in question is worth far more than that, as the presence of Vampires in the city is nothing but a dark rumour. In addition if there any assassins escaped, they will be offered 50 Taskeens per head for any they can track down from Palace funds. This does not entitle them to represent themselves as officers of the law or to act in any form of official capacity.

If the Adventurers are now hired by Sutermin Zastu, they will be offered 4 Taskeens per person per day, and can bargain that up to 6. They will be contracted for a minimum of one month, and can negotiate that up to two. He will consider covering costs up to 400 Taskeens, to cover bribes, healing and other mission-specific expenses.

GM Note: Remember that the notion of vampires is unknown to these people; if the players attempt to press upon anyone in authority that they are in fact hunting the undead, they should be reminded that there is no word for 'vampire' in Tarsenian, and that they need to convince people of every detail or aspect of what they mean by the term.

The Palace Guard will load the dead assassins onto a handcart. If nobody instructs them otherwise the bodies will be unceremoniously dumped on Cemetery Hill where they will remain for several days among other putrefying corpse. This is a traditional practice, allowing relatives of a missing person to look for their lost loved ones among the bodies of those who die unidentified, unloved or too poor for anyone to take responsibility for a funeral. After a few days the current crop of corpses is thrown in a communal pit and burned. If any assassin is here because he has taken poison, he will come round and make off well before the pyre beckons. It is possible Adventurers will witness this while keeping watch over the corpses in case anyone comes to claim them. If not, word of these 'undead' walking corpses originating from a workman at Cemetery Hill will get around in 1D6+1 days.

THE CRIME SCENE

Sooner or later the Adventurers will see Thulvel's room, probably still adorned with his bloodied corpse. Any Adventurer who makes a Culture (Taskan) test will quickly see from his belongings that Thulvel Maroon is (or was) an important man in the Emperor Cult. Enquiries at the Taskan Temple will confirm he was not here in Sorandib on official business, at least not that anyone in the Taskan Quarter had been informed of.

He is furnished with good quality clothes, travel gear, writing equipment and a dirk and falchion for personal protection. In his trunk is a copy of a Taskan grimoire, The Black Book, the one issued to Inquisitors to aid their work. He is well funded with a cash resource of 300 Taskeens, a promissory note to the value of another thousand Taskeens to be drawn at the Zygas Taga temple at Sorandib in the Taskan Quarter, and sports a ring marking him out as one of the Emperor's acolytes.

The Palace Guard will arrange for all these items to be gathered up and sent to Sutermin Zastu, together with the corpse for proper cremation. Should Adventurers attempt to steal anything from Thulvel's room or corpse, only the cash element is likely to go unnoticed, even if it takes someone many days to establish what is missing.

INVESTIGATING THULVEL

It is possible to find some information about why Thulvel Maroon was in Sorandib in the first place.

While Quag Kaleb made the report that resulted in Thulvel's arrival, he does not know that his report has been acted upon and would be as puzzled as anyone else by the presence of this Inquisitor in the city. He is no fool though, and given some hints it is possible he makes the connection.

The most useful lead comes from Lorith, the innkeeper, who assumes that Maroon has been in Sorandib for five days, the length of his stay at Old City Inn. During this time he had been in contact with a local villain named Ataveg. Lorith knows this because he was asked to provide a messenger prepared to venture into New City and indeed had reports of a return visit from a messenger clearly of shady character. Maroon had also asked about securing an additional room at the inn, but then instead asked Lorith to arrange travel to Ersgud, and to send ahead to ensure a room set aside at the Way Inn in Ersgud for an indefinite stay.

GM Note: This was for Lotsita, a young woman Thulvel was 'buying' from Ataveg for the information she holds, but the arrangements were never completed and in any event Lorith does not know the details.

IDENTIFYING THE ASSASSINS

None of the assassins are bearing any mark of identification, their clothes are identical, but simple and unremarkable. However if there is more than one body to hand a Perception test (Hard -40% unless actually sniffing the clothes) will reveal a faint but similar odour attached to the clothes, speaking of stale beer and wine.

Four of the Assassins are cult initiates. As a result they each have an ugly scar – three of them on the neck or shoulder, one on the thigh. The corpses need to be stripped to reveal this detail. If they are later identified and this peculiarity is followed up, their family can only remember being told of accidents at work or an attack by a vicious stray dog. These are in fact the scars from the initiation rite, in which a cult acolyte feeds on the supplicant's blood, thus passing their POW dedications to their demon master, Vyako.

There is nothing about any of the bodies to suggest they are anything other than ordinary humans, and Demi-Vampires are in no way actually 'undead'. It may have been apparent in combat that these individuals had some significant Attributes.

Adventurers may have the bright idea of displaying these corpses in a very public place in the hope someone will recognise one of them and provide some information. If it comes from the Adventurers, this idea should be rewarded (POWx5 chance of success, or automatic at the cost of a Hero Point). The most likely

assassin to be recognised is the woman, Issana, who works in a trade and has many customers and suppliers who would recognise her.

Unfortunately once an assassin is traced to his home or place of work in this way, it is quite clear that his family or workmates have no idea why he should have been caught or killed in the act of committing a heinous crime. Only Issana's house offers an important clue – albeit one that is easily missed.

INTERROGATION

Any living prisoners in the hands of the Adventurers or the authorities will prove to be adept liars, and will use their lies to spin out their interrogation for as long as they can, or to hasten their execution. There are no official torturers in Sorandib; a local surgeon could be called to do unspeakable things to the prisoner until he is willing to say anything to make the cutting stop, but this bears all the risks of killing the victim if fumbled, or garnering a load of false information that has to be followed up before it is found to be untrue. Magical torture may have the same problems.

It should be assumed that in the absence of someone adept at the Craft (Torturer) skill, the most likely way to approach interrogation is to promise the prisoner freedom if he or she should part with information. At this juncture the Adventurers discover that the prisoners seem to prefer a horrible execution (as can be expected for their crime) to turning informant and winning their freedom. The only prisoner who will actually spill the beans is Klandrin, because he is not yet an initiate and as a result does not yet know how appalling and terrifying his masters really are. A successful Insight test reveals he is the one to focus on.

To get Klandrin to talk requires a successful Influence test, which can be augmented by the critical Craft (Surgery) skill of an amateur torturer, or the critical Grimoire score of someone using Wrack, matched against his Resilience in an opposed test. This can be tried once per hour. Only after hard pressure has been applied (whether or not it was successful) can he be persuaded to cooperate by promising his freedom. This promise can only really be made with any sincerity with the approval of Vizier Astermain, who is unlikely to attend in person. Without his approval the Adventurers may get into serious trouble if they attempt to keep such a promise.

KLANDRIN'S INFORMATION

The young man is a scribe and talented calligrapher, currently working in New City making signs and writing political graffiti for Sosbander's Free Society. Once his resistance to interrogation has been broken he can tell the Adventurers how he came to be associated with his fellow assassins. Klandrin's story is that he has, over the last year, been invited to a number of gatherings, always in different places, often the home of one of the celebrants, which usually involved a lot of wine, flirting, fengo and gossip. Sometimes people would be selling cosmetics, or showing off some item of clothing in the latest style from Zarina or Taskay. Since a minimum CHA of 13 is required to be invited, and much of the talk is about fashion and lifestyle, he always felt very flattered to

be there among the beautiful people. The religious part involves a foreign god called Vyako, who promises eternal youth. Each gathering would end in a service, Magic Points would be offered up, and blessings received.

Klandrin saves his lies (using his Blessings from Vyako to improve on them) for his own part in the assassination. The story, as he tells it, is as follows:

One of the high-ups, simply known as Brother Twilight, had talked to him some months ago about how he had been singled out for the opportunity to achieve Vyako's Greater Blessing. Since then he had run various errands to prove his dedication. Most were innocuous, involving tasks such as fetching a package or escorting a member to a rendezvous. However one was criminal – Klandrin took part in a street fight in which two enemies of Brother Twilight were attacked (these two having dishonoured Twilight's sister). Klandrin struck the first blow as instructed – after which the battle was a whirling free-for-all, of which he can remember little. The victims were bound, hooded, and taken into the sewers. He does not know what happened to them after that. Twilight was delighted with his display of loyalty and readiness for action, and said he would call again.

When approached by Twilight about tonight's mission, Klandrin was told the victim was someone who had outlawed and suppressed their cult in the cities of the east, and was now trying to do the same in Sorandib, because the jealous Taskan emperor will not tolerate magic that offers eternal youth or eternal life. It would be an unpleasant task, and not without risk, but for the greater good, and indeed a blow for freedom for Sorandib. As a junior member of the group his job was only to assist, to be lookout on the approach to the target. He can say that he saw Brother Twilight at the door, and assumes he was inside all along, hidden in plain view among the guests.

The story is mostly true. Klandrin is lying only to the extent that there were deserving victims involved in the first incident, and that he was no more than an assistant in the second.

Since only junior cult members ever held cult soirees in their homes, no information can be gained by taking names and addresses and questioning those concerned – however some time can be lost working through a short list and the Adventurers will certainly alert the cult to their enquiries through the Bloodvine, a system of information gathering the cult has in place. Some of those they meet will refuse to even speak, some will be only too willing, in a false-secretive way, to admit their involvement in some exotic foreign cult, and see no harm in it. None will know any of the cult leaders except by their cultic names – Brother Twilight, Sister Midnight, Sister Moonlight and Brother Dreamer. This is in fact all the Adventurers are likely to discover (an Influence test or Fast Talk for each interview reveals one further name). The people they interrogate are mostly respectable, and so far as they and the law are concerned have done nothing wrong.

KLANDRIN AND ISSANA

More importantly, Klandrin can reveal the name of one of the cultists – Issana. He is besotted with her and broke the cult's rules by following her and finding out her name and some other details

about her. She is the daughter of a deceased guard captain (this detail allows her to be identified by a member of the Palace Guard if the Adventurers are struggling for information) and now runs an apothecary. When Klandrin found out she was more than ten years his senior he really started to believe that the cult's promises of eternal youth could be made good.

He otherwise knew Issana as Nightshade, and the other assassins only as Dreamspeaker, Lovemagic and Gentlesleep. He did not yet have a cultic name, not being of sufficient status within the cult.

Klandrin says (if asked how the night unfolded) he had a rendezvous with the other gang members in a small square two streets from the Old City Inn. Issana handed him some clothes and bade him change into them in case he should find himself splashed with blood. He can lead the Adventurers to a spot where he hid his clothes, in a bundle behind some broken doors.

ISSANA'S APOTHECARY

A small establishment on one of the better streets near the river in Middle City, Issana's Apothecary is staffed by one old man, Artalen, who has not seen his mistress since the night before the assassination. This is not unusual, he says. His mistress often passes many days without visiting the shop (which is also her home), and when she does appear sets to work day and night on some important piece of business.

Issana's home is an apartment of three rooms above the shop, accessed via some stairs out the back. The windows are barred, the door is locked, and Artalen does not have the key. If the Adventurers have convincing credentials (being accompanied by a member of the Palace Guard, for example) he will not put himself at risk to prevent them breaking in – in other circumstances he will go into the street and call upon his neighbours to intervene, and within 1D6+6 rounds a small crowd starts to gather. Law enforcement in Sorandib is mostly through citizen action, and the locals are belligerent. The Adventurers will have limited time to search the premises before things get ugly, and more than twenty locals are ready to harass them with thrown objects and more, aiming to roughly eject them from the neighbourhood. Once the Adventurers are confronting the collective will of the street's traders and residents any guardsmen who arrive will side against them and move them on.

ALCHEMICAL FORMULAE

While there are many scrolls and pages in Issana's shop containing the recipes for her usual products, there is also a small, hidebound book which contains alchemical lore, tucked at the back of a cupboard where she keeps some of the precious (or dangerous) materials she has on the premises, to which she and Artalen both have a copy of the small key. This *Alchemy Manual* which was a gift from Brother Dreamer has a Lore (Elixirs) of 55% and a Lore (Poisons) of 65% and contains the recipes for *Restorative Elixir*, *Anagathic Elixir* and the *Sleeping Death* Poison. Someone who studies it will soon gather that any of the assassins who succeeded in poisoning themselves may yet be alive.

ISSANA'S ROOMS

Issana's rooms are modestly appointed, but her dressing table is well stocked with expensive cosmetics and a small locked box containing a fine selection of costume jewellery – worth up to 50 Taskeens. Next to a polished bronze mirror lays a perfect cut yellow rose in full bloom, each petal shot with red at its base. This flower never fades or wilts, being enchanted with Golem CON. This flower is a gift from her lover, Brother Dreamer, who quite literally gave a piece of his heart to make it (this can be found at the centre of the flower if an Adventurer takes the trouble to pull it apart). There are also two finely made scent bottles mounted in silver with elaborate decoration of flora and fauna in the local, rather archaic, style. If any Adventurer tries the scents they will find one is a heady perfume made to an old recipe; as for the other, they are immediately shocked to be confronted with a strong smell of blood. The liquid is a yellowish colour, with a red tinge. Issana wears this perfume when meeting her lover. The scent bottles are worth 12 Taskeens each or 30 for the pair.

An open trunk contains a collection of dresses in fine imported fabrics. Her living room sports comfortable couches, and an impressive pipe for taking fengo, of which a small supply (30 grams) is kept in a little wooden box beside the pipe.

The significance of the Yellow Rose is related to where Issana and her lover met, and where they still gather with their fellow demi-vampires and vampires.

GM Note: Locals may have heard of the tavern if they are resident in or frequent the right parts of New City. It is a very small establishment and there is no reason that anyone else, even someone native to Sorandib, should know of it. If the Adventurers are looking for meaning in the yellow rose, a Difficult (-20%) Streetwise test from an Adventurer or NPC who is very familiar with Sorandib will remember that a tavern of that name exists in New City.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are two places to go to find out what is happening in the Sorandib underworld, where information can be paid for. If the Adventurers have failed to kill or capture any of the assassins, and are stuck, both these sources are well known to those with Streetwise and eventually they will be given the lead. If the players have to be spoon fed, charge a Hero Point for the favour.

ATAVEG, BANDIT CHIEF

Ataveg is a prince of thieves, whose gang and their dependants have taken possession of Number 4 Fort, which is now generally known as Outlaw Fort as a result. Information on Ataveg can be found in the location description in the gazetteer section of this book.

Ataveg's information relates to a cult member who got cold feet and attempted to disappear on the eve of her initiation.

The young woman, Lotsita, took refuge for a short time at his stronghold. After a few days of various lies and pretence she

eventually blurted out that she had been a member of a cult, but had decided to leave before taking the next step to initiation and feared some sort of reprisal from the others. When asked why she had not gone to Old City and put herself at the mercy of the Palace Guard, Lotsita said she had done some bad things, and feared that would not go well for her. Ataveg knew that a foreigner at Old City Inn was disbursing money to find information concerning a cult in Sorandib and put two and two together. He put her in a safe house and offered Lotsita to Thulvel Maroon. But Lotitsa made off again before he could seal a deal with the Taskan.

An elegant gentleman came calling for her shortly after she left. He appeared in the middle of his fort, no one saw how he got in. This man inspired pure terror in his heart and Ataveg felt compelled to admit the woman had been in his company, but he had no idea to where she had now gone.

GM Note: The last part is a lie – the strange visitor provided enough cash and menace to get the information out of Ataveg and she will never be found. There is clearly a suspicion it is Ataveg revealed the presence of a Taskan asking questions to this mystery caller. This may or may not be true.

Ataveg learned enough from the woman to say that her persecutors have been known to gather at the Yellow Rose tavern in New City. He will share this information at a price, but may do so simply to move the focus of an investigation away from himself. Getting this information from Ataveg will cost either a significant favour or at least 250 Taskeens in hard cash, or goods equal to 500 Taskeens in value. It will also come with a warning that the Adventurers are up against something really quite frightening.

HANKSOM, THE BEGGAR KING

Visiting this bizarre dignitary can be unsettling and unpleasant. He lives in the shelter of partially collapsed excavations into Palace Hill, close by the rubbish chute for the palace, which is a traditional gathering place for the begging community. He is surrounded by a throng of his blighted followers, and here maintains a shrine to his patron deity, *The Little God of Lost Things*. More information on Hanksom can be found in the Beggars' Court section of the *Secret Sorandib* chapter.

Hanksom knows of some bodies that occasionally appear from the sewers – his people are in the habit of collecting abandoned corpses and taking them to the Cemetery Hill for cremation, for which a bounty of 4 pennies is due. They frequently find some odd and unusual corpses – this is Sorandib, after all. But every month over the last year one, two and sometimes more bodies wash up out of the New City sewers on the river shore that look like they have been savaged by some animal. The regularity of this occurrence leads him to suspect there are lycanthropes at large in Sorandib – perhaps exiles from the Jekkarid.

GM Note: These are the corpses of victims who have been drained of blood using the Vyakot Fangs spell, but who are unwilling victims and whose Dedicated POW prevents them being reduced to 0 POW and turned into vampires. In this case the vampires feed as part of their monthly rite of worship, pass the POW they can to Vyako, then

kill the unfortunate victim by blood drain or some other means. That Hanksom has his theory wrong may be deduced perhaps from looking at the calendar; these bodies are found in the days immediately following the dark moon, not the full moon.

Getting this information from Hanksom will require a favour and an object of value (not cash). This could involve anything from a small smuggling job, to enforcing a debt from a previous client who has failed to meet his obligations by crippling the victim, to a theft. This may be very mundane, like stealing someone's property from his servant because the servant is the target of the crime and can be expected to get a beating or lose his job for his negligence.

GM Note: Oddly, in the case of a theft Hanksom does not require the Adventurers to bring him the object they are sent after – only to see to it that it is removed from its current owner's possession and not returned. Hanksom's logic and philosophy is geared towards making other people poorer, not to making himself rich.

THE YELLOW ROSE TAVERN

The Adventurers' investigations should hopefully lead them to the Yellow Rose Tavern, a small local drinking place, beneath which is the secret shrine of the Vyako cult.

A pictorial sign of a yellow rose hangs above the door. A low lintel leads into a cramped, windowless bar that appears to have been converted from someone's front room. Behind the counter is a ladder up to the proprietor's home, and the back wall is hung with an array of old weapons. The bar is a simple arrangement with three wine jars sunk into its counter, various tapped beer kegs behind, a hearth, two round tables with simple stools for the patrons to sit on. The only lighting comes from a couple of weakly-burning oil lamps hung from the ceiling. At night there may be candles placed on tables and the bar.

Behind the bar is a large bald man sporting an earring, who seems to be the only member of staff. This is Josip Cleb, the proprietor. Josip is gruff and unpleasant, except with his regulars, and asking him questions will elicit no meaningful answers and raise his suspicions. Should that be the case the Adventurers may find themselves followed home.

At any time during the day or evening there will be 2D6 patrons in the Yellow Rose. During the day you can expect several of these to be cultists, enjoying the lack of sunlight. At night the door is barred from third watch (which begins approximately midnight – 1am). Anyone other than Josip left inside is, of course, a cultist.

No more than once per evening a man who has been seated in the public area is admitted behind the bar, where he opens a floor hatch and descends out of site, returning a few minutes later with a large jar of wine or a keg of beer. This man is Griam, and he does whatever jobs Josip needs doing in return for food and drink. Josip can rely on Griam to back him in a fight, or to go out and gather information or shadow someone about whom Josip is suspicious. Griam is not bright, relies on Josip for the thinking jobs, but he

has a high Streetwise skill of 75% and 45% in Stealth. Treat him as an underling with 11 General Hit Points, 2 Combat Actions and a Brawl skill of 60% - he'll use a knife if in real danger, otherwise some improvised weapon he can get a Stun Location manoeuvre with.

Neither Josip nor Griam are cultists. However they are very much in the pocket of the Vampire cult, and in fear of it. Josip asks no questions, takes the money offered, closes up at night and locks himself and his wife in their rooms. He tries very hard not to think about the noises that sometimes come from the cellar.

TARRIF

The Yellow Rose serves no food except soup, bread and honey cakes. These items are prepared upstairs in the living area, and handed down via the hatch.

Soup+Bread	2 pennies
Wine, per pitcher	4 pennies
Beer, per pitcher	1 penny
Honey Cakes	1 free with every pitcher of wine

JOSIP THE BAR KEEP

Big and burly, Josip the barman is a former mercenary and not to be messed with.

Characteristics:

STR 16 CON 13 SIZ 16 INT 12 DEX 12 POW 13 CHA 10 SOC 8

Attributes:

DM: +1D4 CA: 2 SR: 12+ Mv: 8 MP: 13

Skills: Brawl 64%, Brawn 80%, Evade 45%, Insight 35%, Perception 45%, Persistence 52%, Resilience 65%, Streetwise 66%

Combat Styles: Sidearm and Shield 75%*, Knife Fighting 65%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dirk	S	S	1D3+1D4+2+Bleed, Impale	6/6
Falchion	M	M	1D6+2+1D4+Bleed	6/10
Mace	M	S	1D8+1D4+Stun Location	6/6
Flail	L	L	1D10+1D4+Stun Location	4/10
Heavy Crossbow	H	150m	1D10+Impale, Sunder	4/8
Target Shield	L	S	1D6+1D4+Impale	4/12

*Josip can use any of the weapons on the tavern's walls at this percentage – these include a falchion, a mace and a flail, as well as an old crossbow and two old target shields. If disarmed of one weapon in a fight he reaches for another.

Armour: Leather Apron covers chest and abdomen (1AP, front only).

Hit Points: 6/6/7/8/5/5/6

Wealth/goods: Josip usually carries only his day's takings, some 1D4x10 pennies. His savings, amounting to 120 Taskeens and two gold coins worth 40 Taskeens each, are hidden in his two room tenement upstairs. This is quite a significant sum for someone of his station.

THE CELLAR

The cellar of the Yellow Rose is in fact just a small partitioned section of a great subterranean pillared vault, the rest of which is accessed via a hidden door. Right by the foot of the stairs down are the tavern stores, a false wall separates this area from the rest of the vault. A Perception test, adjusted for the lighting conditions, is required to find the concealed entrance. However a Lore (Architecture) test would immediately spot the fact that the cellar is part of a larger space.

While the tavern is open there may well be an oil lamp set atop the beer barrels to the left of the foot of the stairs.

THE VAULTS

Here the chapter of Vyako cultists meets, and in a dungeon created in one corner sometimes keeps a supply of drugged and/or trussed captives on which the cultists can feed. This space is also used as a refuge when any of their number is suffering from the effects of their condition in ways that make it unwise to be seen in public. It is pitch black unless one of the vampires is here, in which case oil lamps or candles may be lit.

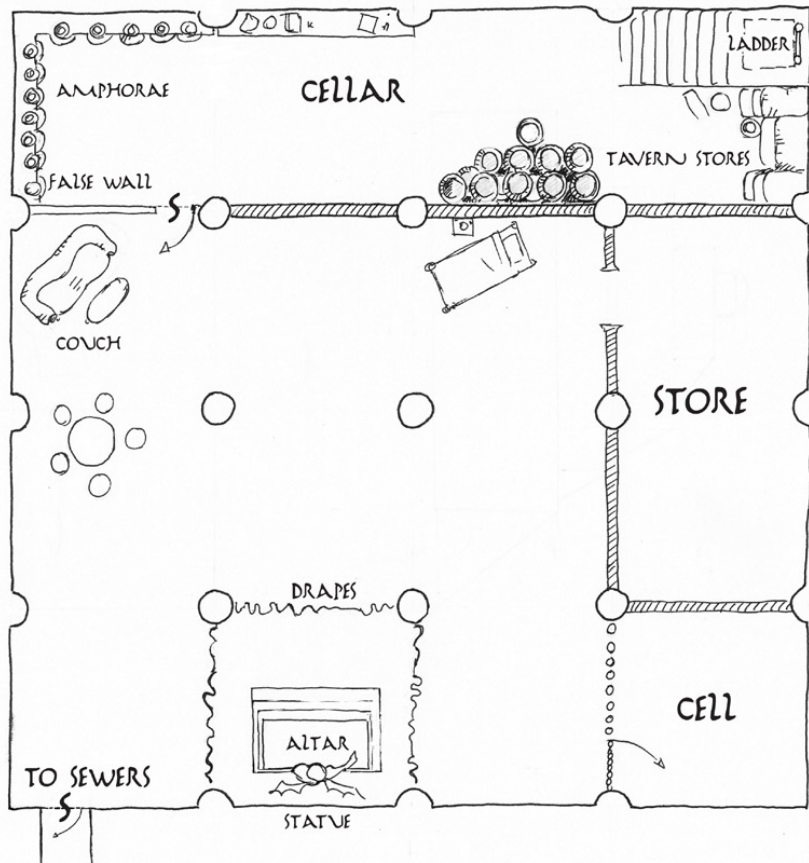
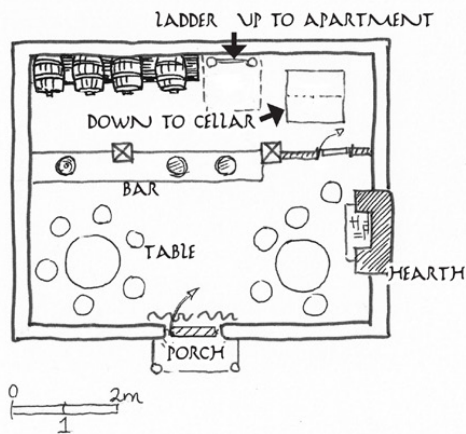
Once per month (on the 28th night) the whole Vampire chapter is present performing their rites. At other times there may be some or none of them, depending on the Games Master's needs and the relative strength of the Adventurers. Ocriman the vampire Lord only appears on the monthly days of worship unless some special meeting has been called. For every vampire present, there will be 1D3 demi-vampire companions.

If any Adventurers have been unlucky enough to be captured by the vampires, he will be languishing here. Depending on how long he is in captivity, he will have been subject to occasional snacking by visiting vampires, and drained of some Characteristic Points. If still incarcerated when the monthly worship ceremony occurs on the 28th night of each month and not rescued before the rite is competed, he will already be dead.

CULT STORES

An area has been partitioned off to act as a storage place. This contains clothing (several sets that are identical to the garb worn by the Old City Inn assassins), some barrels of water, some amphorae of quite decent wine, scented oils, candles, torches and the like, together with drinking cups, wine mixing bowls and

YELLOW ROSE TAVERN



pierced lantern covers designed to throw elaborate shapes on the wall; also soft furnishings in the form of plush cushions, simple couches, and rather garish and theatrical-looking drapes, throws and rugs. There is a quantity of the poison carried by the assassins encountered at Old City Inn. Here it is sometimes used to drug prisoners to make feeding simpler. A number of vials of the stuff (12 doses in all) are to be found in a small leather box. The leather box is stamped with a symbol that marks the contents as products of Issana's apothecary.

VYAKO'S SANCTUM

On one side of the sanctum is a place where prisoners are kept in a cage; on the other is an area made comfortable for cult members who require a refuge.

The altar is a stone bench fitted with manacles to bind a victim to its surface. The manacles are thoughtfully padded on the inside with velvet. Over the bench looms the carved image of Vyako as described by Ocriman; a creature of gargoyle-like form with a beautiful and youthful face.

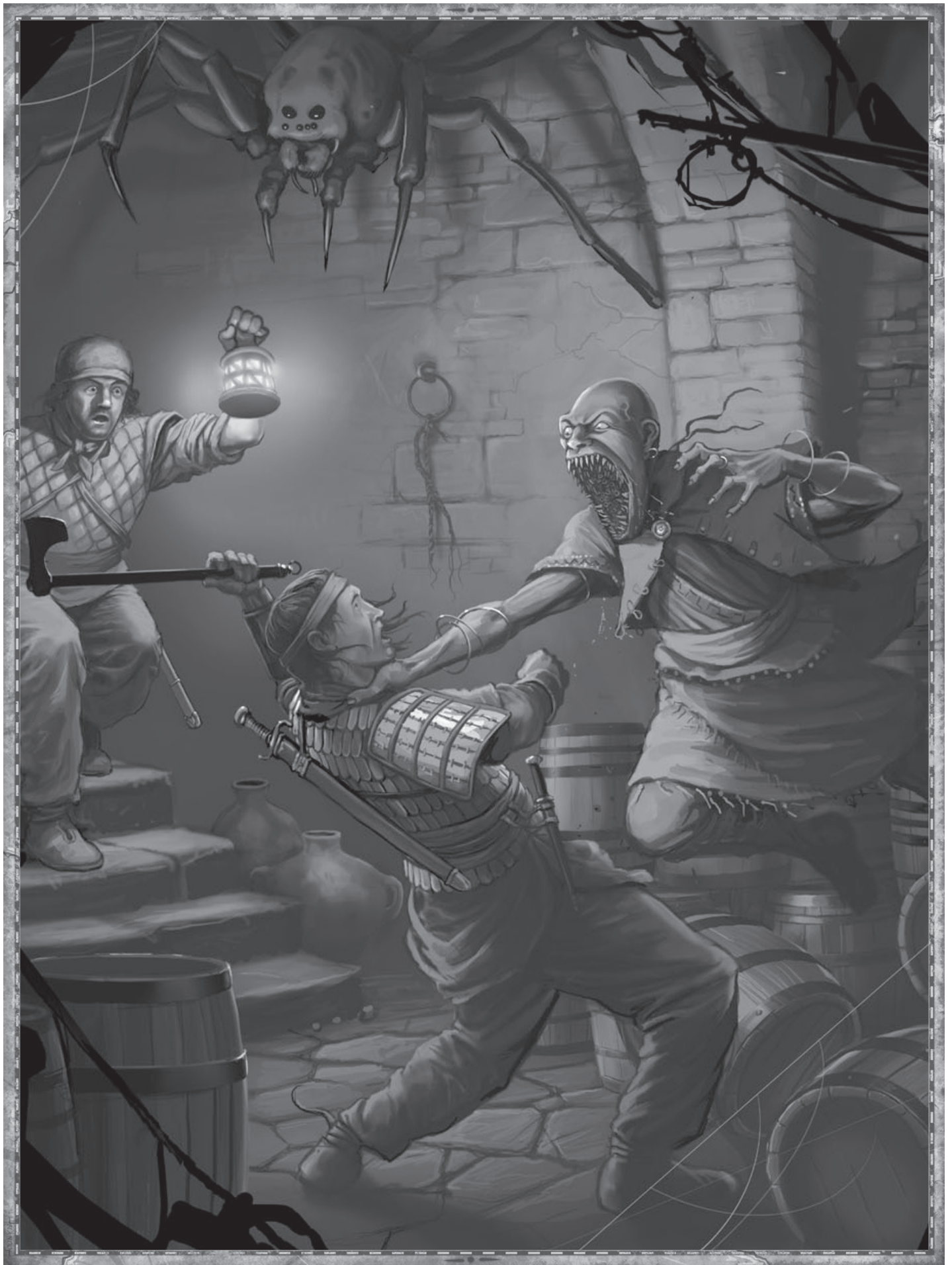
A profane individual (someone who is a non-devotee) in contact with the floor within one metre of the altar, with the altar itself or

with the statue, must resist a casting skill of 85% or is immediately attacked with a *wrack* spell, of magnitude 7 and inflicting 1D10 damage to a random location, repeated in any Combat Action in which the victim remains in contact. The altar can maintain the wrack on up to three targets at any time. The effect once fired lasts for 15 minutes. Once triggered the enchantment requires being splashed with sentient blood accompanied by 3 MP willingly or unwillingly given in the process to be replenished.

There is a properly concealed (with 65% skill) entrance behind the altar, from which a narrow passageway gives access to the city sewers. This is the way through which Ocriman himself, and sometimes other cultists, arrive for ceremonies and is always the route used for the removal of the dead bodies of those who have been fed upon, who since this shrine was established a year ago have usually been thrown into the sewers and allowed to drift off with all the other rubbish.

PRISONERS

The chance of finding one or more prisoners here depends on the date. Immediately prior to a dead moon worship ceremony it is certain there will be 1D3+1 prisoners. At other times of the month there is no more than a 50% chance there are 1D2 victims here.



AFTERMATH

If Adventurers discover the shrine of the Vyako cultists, they have revealed a terrible secret. On the assumption they make their findings known to someone in authority – whether to Vizier Astermain, to Sutermin Zastu or some other major faction leader – they can each gain 1 Hero Point in addition to two Improvement rolls each for solving the mystery. Any Adventurer who has been directly responsible for the destruction of one of the full vampires may also deserve a Hero Point, and another if that vampire is Ocriman himself. The Adventurers may decide the vampires are too dangerous and seek help in attacking their lair. The Taskans cannot help, but it is possible the Palace Guard, a citizen mob from Sosbänder's Free Society, or an armed band sent by Quag Kaleb or Glav Gundever may be despatched. If not properly prepared and equipped it could easily end in disaster.

The vampires will, unless Ocriman himself has been run to ground and destroyed, eventually recover and find a new meeting place. However some of their number may well thirst for revenge, and the Adventurers should beware.

VAMPIRE CAPABILITIES AND TACTICS

The Vampires all have access to the Abjure Night spell, which allows them to operate in daytime hours without harm but also to enjoy their heightened characteristics during the day. One of the full vampires may use Abjure Night with the Targets manipulation to enhance the demi-vampires as well as their own if they are caught in a dangerous fight during the day, since this spell will trigger their night-time enhancements.

As the vampires have no POW of their own, any skill that uses POW as one of its base characteristics is frozen at its value prior to their transformation – this includes Persistence. For these reason these skills are carefully honed in the period between becoming a demi-vampire and achieving full vampire status. Vampires use the Game World Time calculation of spell duration provided on page 60 of the Age of Treason Core Rulebook instead of a multiple of POW. Similarly use x10 to determine the maximum range of their spells.

SISTER MIDNIGHT, VAMPIRE

This waif-like young woman is the bankroller of the vampire cult, being from a very wealthy background. She is in fact a member of the Gundever clan, and wears the clan's badge on a gold finger-ring. She is Glav Gundever's wayward little sister, who rarely goes out in the day, has always been sickly and hooked on Fengo. She is the most dedicated and fanatical of Ocriman's followers, who believes her vampirism has not just given her eternal life, but has made her life worth living. She is an accomplished spellcaster, and adopts spider form as often as she can because she finds it empowering and liberating. Sister Midnight is the most voracious hunter, and leaves terrified, gibbering fools in her wake.

Characteristics (numbers in brackets are night-time values): STR 10 (14) CON 5 (11) SIZ 11 INT 17 DEX 12 (20) CHA 13 (20) SOC 17

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 (4) **SR:** 15+ (19+) **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 0+14

Common Skills (unmodified): Athletics 55%, Brawl 38%, Evade 61%, Influence 120%, Insight 95%, Perception 75%, Persistence 77%, Resilience 55%, Sleight 50%, Stealth 64%

Advanced Skills: Education 77%, Lore (Cult Theology) 89%, Seduction 72%

Combat Styles: (+12% at night) Cloak and Dagger 50%, Swordsmanship 51%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	1D6+Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dirk	S	S	1D3+2+Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: Usually no armour worn. If caught outside night hours without the benefit of an Abjure Night spell, reduce HP per location by 1.

Hit Points: 4/4/5/6/3/3/4 (5/5/6/7/4/4/5)

Sorcery Grimoire (Sorcery Manipulation 54%): *Ocriman's Letters* 74%; Abjure Night, Dominate Human, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Shapechange Human to Spider, Worship Vyako

Divine Magic (Lore (Cult Theology) 89%): Pact (Vyako) 67%, Dedicated POW 14: Fangs

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (INT); *Unnatural* (Characteristic): +4 STR, +6 CON, +8 DEX, +7 CHA at night

GIANT SPIDER FORM

(Sister Midnight's heightened characteristics still apply)

Characteristics:

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 13 INT 17 DEX 24

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 4 **SR:** 21+ **Mv:** 6/12 **MP:** 0+14

Skills: Athletics 95%, Evade 61%, Perception 80%, Persistence 70%, Resilience 110%, Stealth 85%, Track 40%

Combat Styles: Bite 50% Web 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D2+poison	As for head
Web	L	L	Entangles	4/19

Traits: *Poison Bite:* POT 57 Injected, Onset 1D3 rounds, Duration 1D3 days, Resilience, Paralysis. *Wall Walking*

Armour: 3 point chitin.

5 HP each leg (1–4, 12–15), 8 HP Abdomen (5–11), 6 HP Thorax (16–20)

GM Note: Sister Midnight has sufficient influence to be able to have Adventurers unfairly accused of a crime, or at least fall under suspicion and out of favour with Glav Gundever. Conversely if she is killed or captured and identified as Glorista Gundever, Sister Midnight may be the cause of a significant scandal that could bring down the house of Gundever. Unless they also suspect that there is a shadow cast upon the whole Gundever dynasty, even people outside the Gundever faction may be complicit in covering up the matter so as not to destabilise the city further. This could involve intimidation and even assassination of Adventurers who insist on creating a fuss.

In fact, much as he loves her, Glav Gundever would lock his sister away, denied the chance to feed if she is unmasked and handed to his power.

SISTER MOONLIGHT, VAMPIRE

Sister Moonlight glories in the beauty and magnetism with which she is invested by Vyako's gifts. At night she is simply the most mesmerising creature in Sorandib, for which reason she frequently dresses down or swathes herself in a hooded cloak to avoid unwanted attention. She is a known regular at the most fashionable parties in Lower City, but tries to avoid the notice of those who frequent court, preferring more discreet company. Her real name is Deandra Lansk, but adopts the identity of Lodra, a 'prettier sister' for her night-time socialising. Her ability to stupefy and seduce male victims, and even female ones, is unparalleled.

Characteristics (numbers in brackets are night-time values): STR 9 (13) CON 13 (17) SIZ 12 INT 14 DEX 14 (20) CHA 13 (21) SOC 15

Attributes:

DM: +0 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 14+ (17+) **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 0+11

Common Skills (unmodified): Athletics 50%, Brawl 44%, Dance 92%, Evade 53%, Influence 91%, Insight 80%, Perception 63%, Persistence 69%, Resilience 102%, Sleight 55%, Stealth 55%

Advanced Skills: Lore (Cult Theology) 65%, Seduction 110%

Combat Styles (+10% at night): Cloak and Dagger 72%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1+Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour and Defences: Usually no armour worn. If caught outside night hours without the benefit of an Abjure Night spell, reduce HP per location by 1.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5 (6/6/7/8/5/5/6)

Sorcery Grimoire (Sorcery Manipulation 44%): *Ocriman's Letters* 57%: Abjure Night, Dominate Human, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Shapechange Human to Spider, Worship Vyako

Divine Magic (Lore Cult Theology 71%, Dedicated POW 14): Pact (Vyako) 72%: Fangs

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (CON); *A Talent For Lying* x2 (+15% Seduction)
Unnatural (Characteristic) x5: +4 STR, +4 CON, +6 DEX, +8 CHA at night

GIANT SPIDER FORM

(Sister Moonlight's heightened characteristics still apply)

Characteristics:

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 14 DEX 22

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 18+ **Mv:** 6/12 **MP:** 0+11

Skills: Athletics 80%, Evade 53%, Perception 65%, Persistence 59%, Resilience 62%, Stealth 85%, Track 40%

Combat Styles: Bite 50% Web 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D2+poison	As for head
Web	L	L	Entangles	4/19

Traits: *Poison Bite:* POT 55 Injected, Onset 1D3 rounds, Duration 1D3 days, Resilience, Paralysis, *Wall Walking*.

Armour: 3 point chitin.

4 HP each leg (1-4, 12-15), 7 HP Abdomen (5-11), 6 HP Thorax (16-20)

BROTHER DREAMER, VAMPIRE, ISSANA'S LOVER

Brother Dreamer is Theador Shelm, an artisan and member of the guild of silversmiths, who long ago stopped turning up for mundane work and devoted himself to night-time carousing. His favourite pursuit is prize fighting in some grubby den in New City, at which he is highly successful. Every time he runs into someone from his former days he tells them that he came into some money when he was entrusted with a significant quantity of gold and silver from which to create a very fancy wine bowl to special order, and the client never collected. In reality he lives off whatever he has stolen from his victims, won in prize fights, had as handouts from Sister Midnight or sponged off his lover, Issana the Apothecary. He has an apartment in Lower City, but can rarely be found there except during the day when he is asleep. If anything happens to Issana and Brother Dreamer finds out who is responsible, he will take revenge, ideally saving them for sacrifice to Vyako.

Characteristics (numbers in brackets are night-time values):

STR 17 (21) CON 14 (21) SIZ 15 INT 13 DEX 12 (21) CHA 14 SOC 13

Attributes:

DM: +1D4 (+1D6) **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13+ (17+) **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 0+15

Common Skills (unmodified): Athletics 94%, Brawl 88%, Evade 68%, Influence 63%, Insight 61%, Perception 56%, Persistence 53%, Resilience 121%, Sleight 39%, Stealth 66%

Advanced Skills: Craft (metalworker) 98%, Education 40%, Lore (Cult Theology) 59%, Seduction 58%

Combat Styles (+13% at night): Cloak and Dagger 65%, Swordsmanship 76%, Sidearm and buckler 104%. Brother Dreamer usually fights with shortsword and either dirk or buckler in the off hand, gaining an additional CA

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	1D6+1D4(1D6)+Bleed, Impale	6/8
Buckler	M	S	1D3+1D4(1D6)	6/8
Dirk	S	S	1D3+1D4(1D6)+2+Bleed, Impale	6/6
Long Sword (2H)	L	L	1D10+1D4(1D6)+Bleed, Impale, Sunder	6/12

Armour and Defences: Usually no armour worn. If caught outside night hours without the benefit of an Abjure Night spell, reduce HP per location by 2.

Hit Points: 8/8/9/10/7/7/8

Sorcery Grimoire (Sorcery Manipulation 28%): *Ocriman's Letters* 34%: Abjure Night, Dominate Human, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Shapechange Human to Spider, Worship Vyako

Divine Magic (Cult Theology 47%, Dedicated POW 8): Pact (Vyako) 67%: Fangs

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (CHA); *Unnatural* (Characteristic) x5: +4 STR, +7 CON, +9 DEX at night

GM Note: Despite his cult-given name, Brother Dreamer is the physical sort and a lazy student of the arcane arts. His Grimoire skill is not even sufficient for him to use the Abjure Night Spell on himself, which means he does not go out in the day at all unless one of the other vampires casts it for him; likewise he cannot use the Shapechange spell on himself, so if his comrades turn into arachnids to escape a battle that is going against them, Dreamer is left as a rearguard. The other Vampires are unlikely to use their precious Magic Points to help him unless his loss or capture might spell disaster for them all. He has plenty of his own – because he does not use magic much.

Brother Dreamer can also only use the Dominate Human spell on a target with an INT of 12 or less and Holdfast on a target of SIZ 12 or less. In combat he will use his Neutralise Magic spell to take down any magical defences of those who have neglected to back their sorcery with Magnitude. He may try Holdfast or Palsy on the weediest looking opponent to improve the odds or simply get them out of the way so he can square up for a proper hand-to-hand fight with the toughest looking adversary in the room.

SAMPLE DEMI-VAMPIRES

If more demi-vampires are required for the climax of the scenario,

re-use the characteristics (and the characters if surviving) from the assassination of Thulvel Maroon. Two more examples are provided here:

GASPER THE BODYGUARD, AGE 29, AKA PUREBLOOD, A DEMI-VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 18 CON 20 SIZ 15 INT 13 POW 8 DEX 12 CHA 14 SOC 9

Attributes:

DM: +1D4 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 13+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 3+5

Skills: Athletics 87%, Brawn 48%, Evade 36%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 64%

Combat Styles: Brawl 67%, Swordsman 72%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Falchion	M	M	1D6+1D4+2, Bleed	6/10

Armour: Reinforced leather jerkin and leather braces, 2 AP Chest and Abdomen, 1 AP arms.

Hit Points: 7/7/8/9/6/6/7

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 38% Dedicated POW 5

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (STR); +5 STR, +7 CON at night (factored into stats)

Blessings *Tarsenian Rites* 45%: Vyako x 2, Sorantar x1

TANSTER THE ENTERTAINER AGE 24, AKA DUSKSHADOW, A DEMI-VAMPIRE

Characteristics:

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 11 DEX 21 CHA 17 SOC 13

Attributes:

DM: +1D2 **CA:** 3 **SR:** 17+ **Mv:** 8 **MP:** 7+4

Skills: Acrobatics 67%, Athletics 96%, Brawn 45%, Evade 71%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 45%

Combat Styles: Brawl 48%, Sidearm and Dagger 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Shortsword	M	S	1D6+1D2 Bleed, Impale	6/8
Dagger	S	S	1D4+2+1D2 Bleed, Impale	6/8

Armour: None.

Hit Points: 5/5/6/7/4/4/5

Divine Magic: Pact (Vyako) 42% Dedicated POW 4

Traits and Gifts: *Life Drain* (POW); +3 STR, +10 DEX at night (factored into stats)

Blessings (Tarsenian Rites 40%): Vyako x 2

OCRIMAN THE VAMPIRE

The Vampire Lord who leads the resident Vampire community in Sorandib is a remarkable creature, not just a powerful vampire but also a living enchantment. He is one of the first Tarsenian vampires, having been a follower of Thagrish Martigern. He is 103 years old, but has now lived in Sorandib for 30 years, and has long since blended in and affected the local accent and dialect. Ocriman cheats the limitations on his vampire nature thanks to enchantments provided by his friend, the witch Salome Kassam. The enchantment of a 'human' is possible because having permanently sacrificed all his POW to Vyako, Ocriman became an 'incomplete' creature.

Ocriman is enchanted with Golem POW, and a permanent Abjure Night spell. Combined, these enchantment virtues make him almost impossible to detect as a vampire. The Golem POW means he only has to feed when it is needed to pass POW to his god, or because he wants to boost his Magic Points. The Abjure Night Spell also allows his vampiric powers such as increased Characteristics to be active at all times. He can therefore be found plying his trade as a highly celebrated artist even by day. Ocriman is sought after to provide the design for embellishment of high class, one of a kind metalwork that the silversmiths will work to. He is equally renowned as an illuminator, and this is how he met Salome, who engaged his services to make her grimoire a thing of beauty.

Ocriman keeps a familiar, a great wolfhound that accompanies him wherever he goes (INT 6 POW 9 CHA 5). The hound is not used for combat but for companionship and a source of Magic Points, and as a great beast stretched out by a roaring fire while people talk into the night it can hear and pass on many secrets.

Ocriman's access to Magic Points makes him very dangerous – he can use Sorcery without the limitations of being a vampire, and when need be will cast extended duration Abjure Night spells on multiple Targets to prepare his vampire minions for a difficult mission, or cast a multi-target Palsy to take down a number of attackers simultaneously.

Characteristics:

STR 27 CON 18 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 10* DEX 25 CHA 22 SOC 15

Attributes:

DM: +1D8 CA: 4 SR: 21+ Mv: 8 MP: 10+9(Familiar) +4(typical)

Common Skills: Athletics 147%, Brawl 92%, Brawn 80%, Culture 85%, Dance 95%, Drive 44%, Evade 45%, Evaluate 92%, First Aid 51%, Influence 107%, Insight 98%, Lore (Regional) 70%, Perception 71%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 115%, Rites 59%, Sing 40%, Sleight 38%, Stealth 65%

Advanced Skills: Art (Design) 121%, Education 65%, Pact (Vyako) 110%, Seduction 89%

Combat Styles: Cloak and Dagger 81%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Dirk	S	S	1D3+1D8+2+Bleed, Impale	6/6

Armour and Defences: No armour usually worn.

Hit Points: 7/7/8/9/6/6/7

Divine Magic (Dedicated POW 14): Pact (Vyako) 110%: Fangs

Gifts, Talents and Traits: *Life Drain* (CON), +15 STR, +4 CON, +12 DEX, +7 CHA; *Genius for Design:* Ocriman's critical score for his Art skill is raised by 10% to 23%; *Talent for Lying:* Immortal

Heroic Abilities: Holy Man

Enchantments: *Golem POW; Permanent Abjure Night, Magnitude 8

Grimoires (Sorcery Manipulation 105%): *Ocriman's Letters* 106%: Abjure Darkness, Dominate Human, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic, Palsy, Shapechange Human to Spider, Worship Vyako

Salome's Digest 47%; Create Familiar, Write Grimoire;

GIANT SPIDER FORM

(Ocriman's heightened characteristics still apply)

Characteristics: STR 27 CON 18 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 10 DEX 25

Attributes: DM: +1D8 CA: 4 SR: 21+ Mv: 6/12 MP: 10+13

Skills: Athletics 147%, Evade 45%, Perception 71%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 115%, Stealth 85%, Track 40%

Combat Styles: Bite 50%, Web 60%

Weapon	S	R	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D8+poison	As for head
Web	L	L	Entangles	4/19

Traits: Poison Bite: POT 58 Injected, Onset 1D3 rounds, Duration 1D3 days, Resilience, Paralysis; Wall Walking

Armour: 3 point chitin.

5 HP each leg (1–4, 12–15), 8 HP Abdomen (5–11), 7 HP Thorax (16–20)

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