

EMER ATLAS I: • HÆSTRA •



& the History
of the Emerian Empire

Thanks to Pete Fenlon at ICE for helping to get the *Shadow World* back in print, to my playtesters (Ruth, Karl, Amy, Adam and Mike), and especially to all the fans on the internet who have helped keep the Shadow World alive during the time of darkness.

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This book would not have been possible without many early morning cups of fresh-ground joe, not to mention multiple mugs of tea (Earl Grey, hot), and many grande lattes made by my favorite *barista*. Other inspiration supplied by Haydn, Byrd, Vivaldi, V. Williams, and many others.

And the author will always be grateful to Miss A. Norton. Eet and Murdoc Jern started me down this path long ago.

ON THE COVER

The cover scene depicts a view looking south to the Sea of Votania from a hill near the city of Orian. Straight ahead is the island of Votania itself, the summit wreathed in clouds. Hanging in the sky is the great moon Orhan, its atmosphere clearly visible as it shrouds the land below. Near Orhan is the evil moon Charón, home of the Dark Gods. The slender pillar to the left is one of the many Navigator Obelisks which dot the land.

ABOUT THE TYPE

This *Shadow World* book was composed using Microsoft Word 5.1 mostly on a trusty Powerbook 145b and laid out in PageMaker 6.0/6.5 on a Power Mac 7100 running good old System 7.5.1.

The text was set in *Minion*, *Minion Condensed* and *Minion Expert* typefaces. Headers were set in *Caslon Antique*. Other typefaces used include: *Viner Hand* and *Ovidius*

Minion is an Adobe original face designed by Robert Slimbach and derived from type of the late Renaissance.

ABOUT THE GRAPHICS

The cover art was created using *Bryce 2.1* from Metatools, and the cover was composed using *Adobe Photoshop 4.01* and *Quark 3.32*, using a PowerMac 8600/200. Some graphics were created or manipulated using *Photoshop* and its many features.

Many interior graphics are from the Dover Art books *Historic Costume, Arms & Armor, Decorative Borders*, and others, and other copyright-free sources. Others were created using *KPT Bryce*. More Bryce illustrations can be found at the *Shadow World* Website.

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· FOREWORD ·

After wandering long in the darkness, the *Shadow World* at last again sees the light. This book represents the first in what will hopefully be a long line of sourcebooks about the world of Kulthea.

While *Shadow World* devotees will find that—in general—the new books are very similar to the old books that I wrote (*Eidolon*, *Master Atlas*, *Jaiman*). However, one thing that the *Shadow World* was criticized for was the number of high-level NPCs, and from them the assumption that SW was a high-level world. Well, the critics are half-right. I did spend an inordinate amount of time (and space) on some high-level characters who if opposing most PCs would wipe up the courtyard with them, or if allied with the PCs would probably do things for themselves rather than count on a bunch of ‘low-levels.’ The problem, however, isn’t that SW is all high-powered, its that they are most of what has been detailed. Starting with this book, we take a closer look at specific areas of the world, and include stats and background for NPCs more in line with the characters.

Regarding the system, I was surprised when talking to people on the internet how many are still using *Rolemaster* 2nd Edition (the ones with the red spines which came out in 1989) rather than *RMSS*. I must admit that I too, still use *RM2D*, but it’s not because I have anything against *RMSS*. Closer to the truth is that I’m just more comfortable with the older version, after helping to develop it and using it for all these years. Besides, the *Shadow World* was born under that system, and I’m not about to alter the stats of all those characters appearing in books like *Eidolon* and the *Master Atlas Second Edition*. The stats in these books will be based on *RM2D*, but with notes for *RMSS* where necessary. I will also be including some *RMSS*-specific information (e.g., training packages) in appendices or at the web site. For those who are using *RMSS*, you can either adjust the powers of the high-level NPCs and artifacts, or explain them by saying that they originate in a time before a weakening of the Essænce.

But hopefully what you most want out of the *Shadow World* is the unique feel and history of the place, and the interesting people and beasts who live there. So, grab your Kynac and a fistful of *Eidolon* Gold Notes, we’re going home.

T.K.A.
Summer 1997

*Fowler said “Are you trying to be clever or something?”
“I don’t have to try,” retorted Tommy. “I **am** clever.”*

—FROM *ANOTHER COUNTRY*, 1984
BASED ON THE PLAY BY JULIAN MITCHELL

EMER BOOK ONE:

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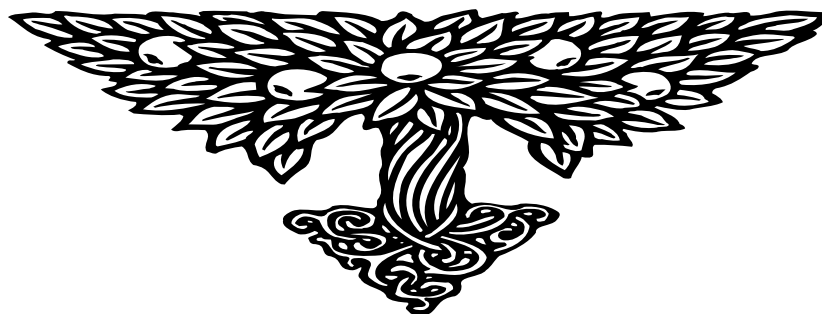
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A Navigator in the process of 'Jumping'

· PART I ·

INTRODUCTION



I have travelled far across the continents of Jaiman, Emer, and beyond; yet I feel my quest has just begun. The Phoenix pendant of Rhakhaan warm against my breast, I turned to face the brightening sky in the east. The Cloud Caravel beneath me bobbed gently in the river water; soon we would be airborne. We would sail out of Haalkitain, south to Emer. But not to bustling Sel-kai or lovely Artha. No, this time I would be entering new territory; places barely seen or spoken of except among the secretive Loremasters. Randæ Terisonen stood at the prow with the Navigator, and—as ever—Jad was by my side. Now the quest would begin, a quest more strange, wondrous and terrifying than even I could imagine.

*Kalen Avair
From his Travel Journals*



In this section is a brief overview of the scope of the new *Shadow World*[®] series presented by Eidolon Studio, and *Shadow World*'s relationship with ICE's *Rolemaster*[®] system.

Secondly, this section provides some general information that should be helpful in understanding and using the material later in the book.

1 · SHADOW WORLD & ROLEMASTER

The *Shadow World* was born many years ago; its exact date is hard to pinpoint. *Vog Mur* was the child of Pete Fenlon in the late 70's, predating even ICE. Then came *Rolemaster*, and the *Rolemaster* series: *Cloudlords of Tanara*, *Iron Wind*, and a handful of others.

Then came the realization that it was time to create an entire world to support the *Rolemaster* system (and *Fantasy Hero™* at the time) so the *Shadow World* was formally christened. Years passed and ICE made the decision that it was time for something new, and discontinued the *Shadow World* series in its incarnation of the time. Now, however, we take up the tale of Kulthea soon after it left off.

2 · INTEGRATING THE NEW EMER MATERIAL

For GMs who have led adventures in Emer before based on the old *Emer* book, there may need to be some reconciliation with the new **Eidolon Studio** material.

As for earlier Amthor writings, there is little inconsistency. However, there may or may not be conflicts with other *Shadow World* books (e.g., Amthor has never read *Curse of Kabis*); therefore only the *Atlases*, *Jaiman*, *Iron Wind*, *Cloudlords* and *Eidolon* are considered *Canon*.

There are also many new elements: cities, towns, and other sites not mentioned before. These can simply be considered omissions from what was a rather cursory previous *Rolemaster* survey of the continent.

The timeline has also been advanced a year or so, and we have the catastrophic event of the theft of the Northern Eye to precipitate a few changes.

3 · CULTURE & CIVILIZATION

While this book focuses on a portion of the continent of Emer, it seems important to review and discuss the environment of the *Shadow World* as a whole, and what life might be like in such a place.

In some ways Kulthea is not unlike our earth; men have the same psyches, the same wants and goals and desires. However, the routes to these goals are sometimes different. And there are powerful forces at work in Kulthea; things dismissed as superstition and scam in our world are very real mystical and magical energies in the *Shadow World*. And more peoples than mortal men live on Kulthea. Immortal Elves rule timeless kingdoms, while gods and

demons walk the earth. And the planet is swept by supernatural storms, the magical *Flows of Essænce* run amuck.

But while demons and sorcerers are real, they remain fairly unusual characters. Many a peasant has toiled his entire life in the fields of his lord and never once seen even the lowliest magical spell.

CIVILIZATION ON KULTHEA

The people of Kulthea's march towards civilization has been sidetracked several times, usually by cataclysmic wars fought among the gods with Men and Elves as their reluctant pawns. These wars leave little in their wake, and the pawns are left to rebuild from scratch. In addition, the presence of magic on the *Shadow World* has taken its toll in retarding technological and scientific advancements. Many things are just easier to do with magic. If you really can turn lead into gold, the scientific method goes out the window.

However, not everyone can use magic, and those who can tend to charge for their services (witness the Navigators), or simply withhold them, so others continue to struggle along and make slow progress.

It is the same way with governments. Advances are made, governments expand to the limits of practical size, then often collapse. Once again, as well, there are supernatural forces on Kulthea which prey on the vices of men and precipitate the destruction of governments which might otherwise have survived. The Emerian Empire is an example.

Earlier in the Third Era the Empire spanned virtually all of Emer in a monarchy unmatched in size, wealth and power. But it had finally grown too large to support itself, and with the help of sinister agents of darkness, it crumbled into anarchy.

Only in the last few centuries has the continent emerged from the chaos and wars which reigned in the aftermath of that fall. Several regions have established variations on what on earth is known as a *feudal* government. It is important to understand how this arrangement works in order to get a feel of what life is like in this environment. This way, the Gamemaster can convey this rich milieu to the players and create a more satisfying gaming environment for all involved.

FEUDALISM ON KULTHEA

Put simply, feudalism is the relation between a lord and his vassals or knights, those who pledge fealty or allegiance to him. He, in return promises to protect them from outside attack. This hierarchical system may extend upwards to a king and the lords beneath him. Lords are granted land to administer, and they build a castle, around which grows up a town.

Much of Emer (for instance, virtually all of Miir, Stroane and Vornia) is controlled by small kingdoms like this, with constantly warring factions, shifting allegiances and rival lords. In these regions, the land is dotted with castles every 12-15 miles (a day's march) with villages huddled around each.

LORDS

Successful knights under a great lord are granted land and wealth, and can then set themselves up as ruler of a fief. These lords are rulers of their tiny realm (often as small as a parcel of land half a day's walk in all directions). They protect their serfs and administer their lives as absolute authority.

KNIGHTS

Usually high-born, a knight aspires to become a lord in his own right. In the meantime he swears fealty to another and serves him with his sword and counsel.

SERFS

These people are bound to the land they work. Not exactly slaves, since their lord does not own them, nevertheless they are servants with usually few rights. Their lord protects them in return for their labor and allegiance. They usually have some land for their own use.

THE RISE OF CITY-STATES

Independent of these kingdoms have arisen several centers of power based not upon military strength and fealty, but by the power of commerce and trade. Izar, Kaitaine and Sel-kai are perfect examples of this situation.

THE MERCHANTS & ARTISANS

With the rise of cities and trade comes the opportunity for those with ambition and skill to gain wealth of their

own. Merchants travel from place to place trading their wares, while skilled artisans (including in many cases spell-users) are in demand and may choose their employer. Banking and an early incarnation of the corporation allow the easy transfer of money and investment.

RELIGION & MAGIC

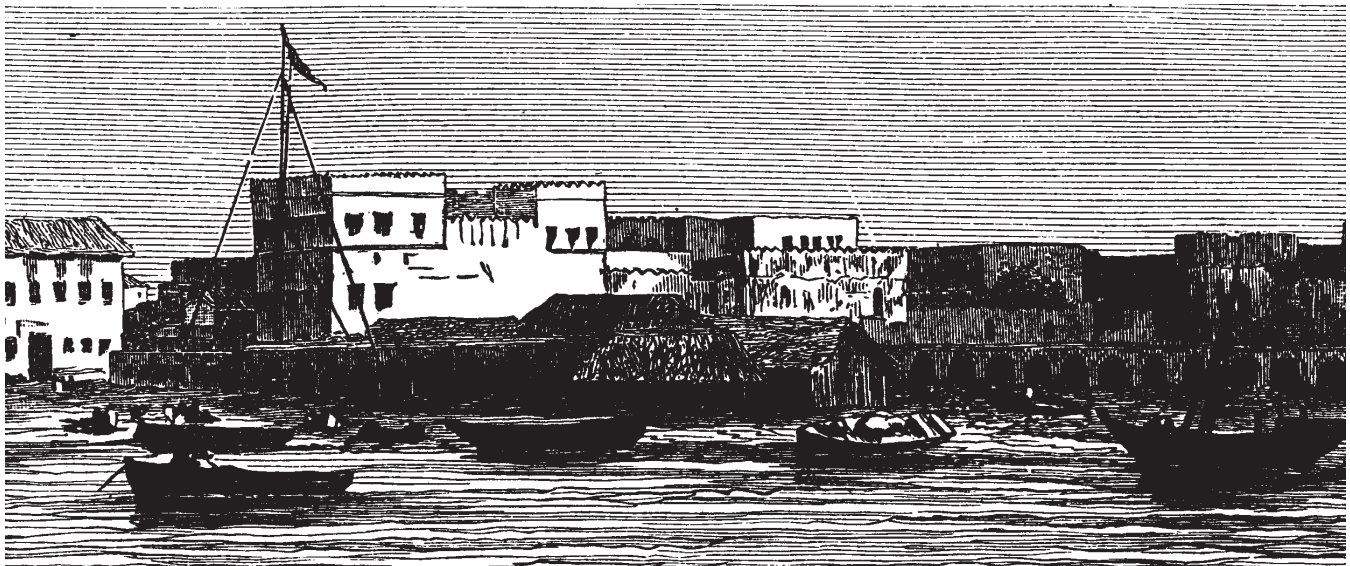
Thrown into this volatile political mix are two other powerful elements: wielders of magic, and representatives of rival gods. Clerics and priests seek to increase the influence of their various deities (and so grow their own political influence and wealth). On Kulthea they wield very real power, often the ability to heal wounds and raise the dead.

Meanwhile several factions of spell-users offer their services, though always for a price. A Truthsayer of Itanis is a coveted status symbol in any wealthy royal court, while many lords have a court Magician or Seer on retainer.

THE PLACE OF MAGICIANS & MENTALISTS

The difference between an Essence-user and a Mentalist is a subtle one to all but learned scholars and those who use the power themselves—and between them is often a bitter rivalry. The hybrid *Mystics* are usually looked upon with disdain and suspicion by both.

Spell users are not all that uncommon on the Shadow World; in fact perhaps one in ten humanoids has the potential either to wield the Essence or the power of their own mind. Much more rare is the opportunity to train and hone this raw potential into something that can be used as tool—and weapon. The wealthy and/or very fortunate may attend a college where the magical and mental arts are taught. This way they may learn spells and the methods of directing their energies.



THE PLACE OF CLERICS

The Lords of Orhan, the Dark Gods of Charón, and countless local deities all have their followers. These men and women can literally tap into the power of their god and wield a tiny portion of their supernatural ability. Those with this aptitude may join a monastery, temple or church to learn the ways of their chosen god or goddess.

THE FLOWS OF ESSÆNCE

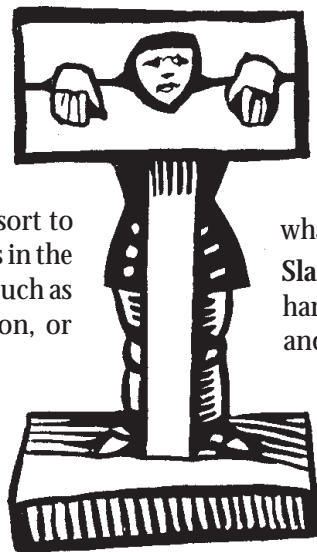
Swirling across and through the planet are the Flows of magical energy known as the Essænce. Like rivers, they have branches, pools, side currents and eddies. And like those liquid channels they can be very real barriers to travel and trade. Unlike rivers, however, flows are often invisible, and move at will. They can spring up overnight and create a barrier as real as a mountain range to divide a realm or even a town. This raw Essænce is the origin of all arcane power on Kulthea, whether it be endowed within the Mentalist's mind, or for the Magician to tap, or within the god to be channeled.

4 · CRIME & PUNISHMENT

The way that a society deals with its criminals says a lot about that society itself. Some places, notably Danarchis and Sel-kai to the east, consider themselves enlightened. With their magistrates and judges, they observe a process and adhere to a set of laws. Punishment usually involves a fine or incarceration rather than physical abuse or maiming.

On the other hand, less 'sophisticated' (or bureaucratic) governments depend on punishments sometimes meted out by the nearest nobleman or even the lord of a small castle. These—usually smaller and more rural—governments with less prison space resort to public flogging or caning, a few hours or days in the stocks, branding, or sometimes mutilation, such as cutting off a finger, hand, foot, or castration, or putting out an eye.

While to a lady in Eidolon or a Loari artist in Námár-Tol this may seem brutal and barbaric, these places do not have the luxury of prisons and guards. The accepted philosophy is that punishment must be swift and severe in order to serve as a deterrent.



The Stocks

5 · CULTURAL STRUCTURES

The section below discusses some general aspects of low-technology societies and gives the GM some guide-

lines should he need to further develop the cultures described in Emer or invent cultures of his own.

In addition, the terminology defined below is frequently used in the various cultural summaries, so it would behoove the GM to familiarize himself with it.

SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS

Below are some terms used to describe the food gathering ways of various cultures.

Hunter/gatherers. These groups rely on big game for food, have low population densities, and exist in a nomadic or semi-nomadic state. Extreme temperatures, rough terrain, and/or poor soil discourage any form of agriculture. Bands or tribes may have distinct hunting circuits and therefore establish vague territorial boundaries. Urbanization is virtually nil, although certain specific sites may be sacred and the focus of periodic societal gatherings. High protein meat diets are supplemented with nuts, fruits, berries, and occasionally fish. Wild grains are rarely used.

The average group size is normally limited to 25-50 people. The territory is limited by the availability of water, wild foods, and game, and the overall proximity of these staples to each other. Population density varies from .05 to 10 people per square mile.

Men normally do the hunting because the mobility requirement conflicts with childbearing. Women usually gather supplemental foodstuffs, an often arduous task that accounts for up to seventy percent of the group's nutritional intake. As with most extremely mobile groups, few old or weak people survive for any length of time (e.g., they may perceive their presence as a burden and wander off to die). In addition, possessions are usually limited to what one can comfortably carry.

Slash and burn agriculturists. These folk rely on hardy yet primitive vegetables, mostly grains and tubers. Often poor soil, harsh climates, steep grades, or dense foliage prevent a society from exploiting the land any more efficiently. Farming revolves around the clearing of an area by slashing large foliage obstacles and burning off the remainder. Normally one crop is harvested per year, and the land is again cleared by burning. Since the soil is quickly exhausted, move-

ment to new cultivated areas is frequent. Coarse grasses replace the cleared forest in the abandoned fields. The replenishment of the trees takes decades or centuries.

Fishing and gathering may supplement the diet. The population density varies from 1 to 20 people per square mile.

Herders. Herding peoples survive by supplementing a modest agricultural base with meat and dairy products taken from goats, sheep, cattle, and the like. Generally, the relatively small parcels of fertile soil are reserved for cropland or gardens, while the less arable territory is given over to the herds. Although the fertile land is provided with adequate fertilizer and is depleted rather slowly, overgrazing can exhaust the limited foliage elsewhere. Therefore, large areas are needed for the herds, since some rotation of the grazing lands is required.

Seasonal movements between lowland and highland pastures occur on occasion and serve to counter soil depletion and subsequent erosion. Mobility can also conquer the problems of drought and famine, which can devastate the animal-based food supply. Unfortunately, it is harder to hide from disease, and a herding group can suddenly find itself without food, should their flocks contract a severe illness. The people's proximity to their animals also makes them more susceptible to contagious disease. Herder population densities vary from 3 to 40 people per square mile.

Fisherfolk. Fishermen may supplement their diet by gathering or gardening. Normally these folk live on islands, beside the coast, or along rich watercourses, and get most of their nutrition from fish, shellfish, sea mammals, and other related delicacies. Some of these societies are akin to hunters and gatherers, and move periodically, as a result of weather or the flow of food sources. Others live a more sedentary existence, usually in comfortable seaside spots. This sort of subsistence produces population densities between .5 and 50 people per square mile.

Mixed economies. These groups emphasize rotational farming, often yielding large amounts of food, mostly grains and vegetables. Modest amounts of meat, dairy products, and fish round out the diet. Such societies generally possess large tracts of arable soil, and devote their surplus land and harvests to providing for animals, or as storage for future use. Within these areas, population density varies from 10 to 100+ people per square mile.



TECHNOLOGY

The following technological periods are examples which reflect a common course of development among most intelligent humanoid species and are particularly appropriate for Kulthea. Various societies on the Shadow World have technologies ranging from Old Stone Age through Iron Age and even beyond. For convenience, the various 'levels' are assigned numbers so they can be noted in the cultural descriptions throughout this book.

One might wonder how a wide range of technological levels can exist in such close proximity, especially given the amount of trade on Kulthea. This situation is understandable, however, because technical advancement depends on skill, knowledge and the proper facilities. For instance, the Bodlean Dalesmen have neither the skill nor the equipment to make fine steel, even though they might know the formula. However, iron is fine for most purposes, and what steel implements they need they could buy in trade from Danarchis or Miir. In another example, the making of the anti-gravity metal *Xenium* requires not only sophisticated equipment, but the formula is a closely guarded secret held by a few Alchemists.

Virtually all Kulthean societies fall into the Pre-Technology categories; the Technology categories are given primarily for reference and the occasional aberration.

PRE-TECHNOLOGY LEVELS

Level Description

- 1 *Stone Age.* Crude stone tools used; little or no cultural development. Fire, basic spoken language. No art, no agriculture, no medicine. Natural metals used late in this period.
- 2 *Bronze Age.* Crude metalworking, agriculture, and simple art forms. Settled cultural groups. Basic written language. The wheel, oared galleys, herbal healing, crude spears and bronze swords. Stone used in important buildings.
- 3 *Iron Age.* Refined weapon and tool-making, sophisticated agriculture. The beginnings of science and philosophy. Regional governments. Keystone arch, water power, chemical medicine, scale armor.

- 4 *Medieval Age.* Steel alloys (swords, chain-mail), sailing ships. Art and language refined. Windmills. The pointed arch allows for greater unsupported spans.
- 5 *Early Renaissance Age.* Regional Governments become more sophisticated. Art is a powerful force. Rigged sailing ships, telescopes.
- 6 *Late Renaissance/Pre-industrial Age.* Superior metals, advanced cultures with national governments. The beginnings of 'technology': printing press and first clocks developed. Balloons, medical experimentation. (Optionally: gunpowder)

TECHNOLOGY LEVELS

- 7 *Fossil Industrial Age.* Steam power allows first automated machinery. Automobiles, prop aircraft, railroads, direct current electricity, vaccines and anesthetics used in medicine. The telegraph.
- 8 *Electronic Age.* Transistors, then Silicon chips revolutionize technology. First computers, jet aircraft, nuclear bombs. Organ transplants, practical working prosthetics, antibiotics in use.
- 9 *Early Space Age.* Interplanetary exploration, superconductors, optical electronics, voice interaction with computers, artificially intelligent (sentient) computers, practical heavy energy weapons, antiviral drugs, cryogenics, cloning, human/computer interfaces (*Cyberspace™*).
- 10 *Fusion Age.* Clean energy, widespread interplanetary travel, advanced bioengineering (Alterant Repliants), small-scale terraforming. Practical handheld energy weapons. Cancer defeated.
- 11 *Molecutronic Age.* Truly organic computers, nanocircuitry, slow FTL (faster-than-light) vehicles span interstellar distances in decades.
- 12 *Gravitic Age.* Gravity fields understood and neutralized on a limited scale. Tachyon and inertial field physics in early stages. Energy screens developed. Planetary scale terraforming.
- 13 *Antimatter Age.* Control of fields, knowledge of hyperspace. Interstellar communication (Tachyon Beam Dictor), fast FTL vehicles, matter/antimatter harnessed, interstellar governments,

powerful energy weapons. Personal shields. (*Space Master™*)

- 14 *Early Matter/Energy Age.* Basic control of energy/matter movement and form. Short range (<100,000 km) matter transmission. Planet building (Dyson spheres, Ringworlds), fast terraforming. (*Beyond Space Master.*)
- 15 *Late Matter/Energy Age.* Total control of energy/matter movement and form, manipulation of matter into different molecular structures through use of complex machinery. Long range (10 LY+) matter transmission through hyperspace. Early experimentation with inter-planar travel. (*Far beyond Space Master; Lords of Essænce Tech Level.*)
- 16 *Planar Control Age.* Access to parallel dimensions through technology, personal units to manipulate matter, mental interaction with machines. Time travel, consciousness without need of physical body.
- 17 Beyond imagination.

SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the unique world of Kulthea, the introduction of such factors as the Essænce and artifacts of the ancient Lords make it difficult to categorize technological advances into a simple, clear progression. Below, we offer some guidance and information.

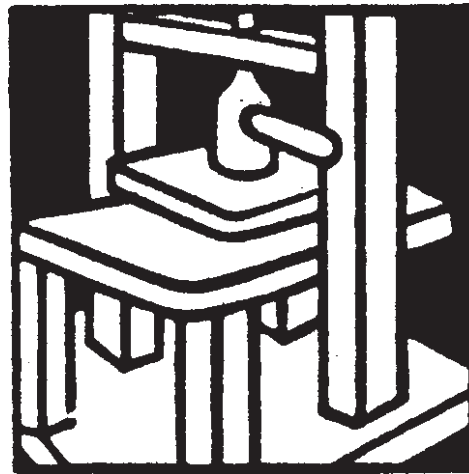
Water/Wind Power: The crudest form is the windmill, or the waterwheel, both used to grind grain between large stones. Water power is more steady and reliable. Windmills are only usually used in coastal areas or plains where wind

is relatively constant. More sophisticated machines such as pumps and conveyors came later.

Steam Power: A few advanced societies have developed crude steam turbines — usually to operate mills, propel ships, or other simple machines.

Printing: A handful of cultures have developed a crude method of printing — though nothing as advanced as a press with movable type. And the vast majority of societies with a written tongue are as yet satisfied with just that — writing it.

Alloys: Many of the more advanced societies have developed sophisticated smelting processes, allowing them to



unlock the earth's priceless metals from their surrounding ore. In addition, they can combine metals to create strong alloys such as steel.

Gunpowder: The secret of this potentially devastating tool has yet to be unlocked, by even the most advanced cultures on the Shadow World. The power of magic as stagnated any desire for a chemical explosive, and the mysteriously fluctuating effects of the Essænce can have a transmuting effect on chemical reactions.

Machines: A few of the most advanced groups have mastered the concept of gears and pulleys and have created complex mechanisms. While electricity is far from a reality, inspired inventors have harnessed water, wind, and even steam to drive machines.

Medicine: The medical arts owe most of their sophistication to the devotion of religious Healers and those who follow the mental disciplines of Lay Healing. The latter, through intense study and mental energy, are able to perform feats of surgery comparable to the most advanced science of *Space Master's* Terran Empire.

Herbs also provide potent medicinal cures; these enchanted plants are capable of anything from relieving minor pain to reviving those thought to be in an irreversible coma.

Astronomy: Kultheans as a rule have an unusually well-developed understanding of their place in the cosmos. In many cases this may be attributable to the wealth of knowledge — however fragmented — left behind by the Lords of Essænce. For instance, despite the fact that the globe cannot be circumnavigated (because of the barriers of the Essænce), any goatherd knows that the world is a sphere, and that it whirls around the huge burning orb of the sun (along with a number of other spheres). Things begin to break down, however, when one inquires as to the number of other planets and their names.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Typical political structures or governmental systems include the systems which follow.

Anarchy. Actually, the absence of a working structure or government, generally leading to complete disorder and confusion.

Clan. A large group of families or bands (family groups) which claim descent from a common ancestor and have strong blood ties. They are typically ruled by a chieftain or warlord, although a council of representatives (e.g., elders) may possess some or all of the real power and authority.

Democracy. A society where the ultimate power is vested in the citizenry. Under this system, each citizen has an equal vote.

Dictatorship. Absolute power, but not necessarily authority, is held by one person (the dictator).

Feudal. A somewhat decentralized system based on various tiers of landholders (possessors or owners). Those with lesser holdings (vassals) derive their grants and security from those above and, in return, provide the greater landholder (lords) with goods (e.g., food) or services (e.g., troops). Such a system is often hereditary.

Monarchy. Absolute power and authority is held by one overlord, the monarch (e.g., king, queen, emperor, empress, etc.). Such a system is generally hereditary.

Oligarchy. Power and authority rests in the hands of a small number of individuals (oligarchs), who may form a coalition or elite upper class.

Republic. Supreme power rests in one or more representative(s), governmental assemblies elected by the citizenry. Citizens may or may not have practical equality (i.e., an equal vote).

Theocracy. A state where the ultimate political power and authority rests with those who hold supreme religious power and authority. The overlord is often considered a deity or divine representative.

Tribe. A group of related clans or a large collection of people who maintain the same culture and consider themselves brethren. They are typically ruled by a council of elders (e.g., clan chieftains) and/or a high chieftain or king.

6 • GETTING AROUND

The varied lands of Hæstra may be traversed in a variety of ways; obstacles when they arise are as often political as geographic or elemental.

GM Note: much useful information about travel and encounters can be found in the *Rolemaster* book *Gamemaster Law*.™

BY LAND

The Hæstra mainland is crisscrossed by an ancient network of paved roads: the highways built by the Emerian Empire. About twenty feet wide (enough for wagons to pass) they are paved with flagstones, sloped for drainage, and have league markers (a league is approximately 3 miles; markers tell distance from Votania). Solidly built stone bridges span creeks, rivers and ravines. These roads connect virtually all of the large city-states, though they

are in varying stages of disrepair. In general, the roads are in better shape around the Sea of Votania and deteriorate as one moves away from that body. In Bodlea the highway is intermittently covered by eroded soil and weeds.

Secondary roads are of packed earth, though most are kept clear by area residents and have some markers. Finally, there are what can only be called paths, rutted and winding, barely wide enough at times for two horses to travel side-by-side. These can have underbrush perilously close to the path (a perfect hiding place for bandits), and at times the path itself can seem to vanish.

ON FOOT

Travellers on foot usually walk 8-12 hours a day, taking several breaks. Considering this, one should assume that a group can cover 12-15 miles a day on roads, perhaps a bit more if they are in excellent shape and push themselves, less if the terrain is not ideal. Not surprisingly, manors and villages dot the landscape about 12-15 miles apart, especially along major roads.

MOUNTED

If everyone in the group is mounted and the way is easy, one can cover as much as 20-25 miles a day. Obviously, it is assumed that the mounts are rested periodically. If the group has resources to get fresh mounts every few hours they can cover considerably more territory.

BY SEA

The western coast of Emer is always busy with trade ships. From Sel-kai far to the east ships arrive in Artha daily, continuing on to the Port of Izar, then to Aquitar and on to Kaitaine in the south.

It is 13-18 days from Artha to Izar, a long journey once broken by a stop at Zinvar. But since the mysterious destruction of the port city over a hundred years ago, the island is shunned.

While there are not many strictly passenger ships on Kulthea, many trade vessels have a few cabins and they will sell passage to travellers. Depending on the size and nature of the ship, passengers may have anywhere from feather beds and private rooms with their own steward and fine meals to hammocks and eating with the crew.

While the Sea of Gold is usually fairly tame, and the bay of Izar calm, each can be choppy—and storms are not uncommon in spring and fall. Further north, the Melurian Straits are always fraught with tricky currents, and storms can suddenly appear year-round.

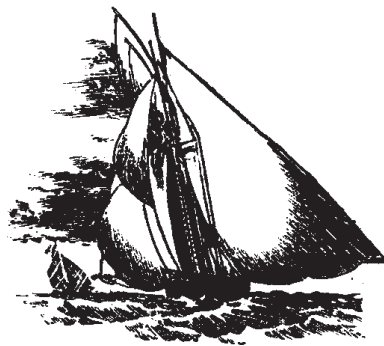
BY AIR

Skyships stop daily at all the major ports in Hæstra: Artha, Izar, Sarnak, and Aquitar, less frequently at Dynax, Relian, Arakin, Orian and Nysellin.

The Loari Airbarges, on the other hand, skirt the coast, travelling only from Danarchis to Izar, then on down to Kaitaine, a few stopping off at Aquitar. They are not seen over the Hæstra mainland.

BY NAVIGATOR

These guides are usually hired to guide Skyships or large sea vessels with important cargoes. Some wealthy merchants who travel overland will also hire a Navigator to make the journey go more smoothly. Navigators rarely are called upon to teleport passengers very far except by the very wealthy and powerful. (PCs could go an entire campaign without seeing a Navigator *Jump* a client.).



· PART II ·
HISTORY OF EMER
With Notes On Other Realms



“You have no idea what’s begun here.”

The Jenaar Emissary to the Shoneb Emperor
Just before she teleported away to escape capture
Northern Thuul
TE 5028

*Walk the way the fishes know
Safe beneath the domain of storms
Living stone arches above
All life allied; the world is one.
Entry is gained by knowing the key
Clues aplenty left by the door where
The fish speak.*

Translation of an Earthwarden Codex
Interregnum, date unknown

As this is the first of the Emerian Atlas supplements, it seemed appropriate to include an expanded timeline for the continent as a whole — with an extra focus on the Emerian Empire, which was centered here in Hæstra. This history is far more exhaustive than previously published and is essentially a composite of many *Shadow World* texts. Nothing so complete could be found anywhere on Kulthea except perhaps on the Loremaster island of Karilôn or the great library of Nomikos on Ormian. Other large libraries might contain sections of this material, but especially the Emerian Empire history would be relatively fragmentary. It should be noted that even this accounting is by no means complete; after the fall of the Emerian Empire, this record concentrates mainly on Hæstra. Later books will reveal events in other areas of Emer in further detail.

Secret or covert activities are included in italics; these are events and actions that the PCs could not be aware of without special means such as a vision or access to secret texts. Also, events before the year “0” (i.e., during the shadowy First Era and the Interregnum) are also essentially unknown and are included mainly for the GM’s reference. Terms in other languages are either OE (Old Emer), K. (Kugor, the language of the Great Drakes), Ir. (Iruaric), or I (Iylar, high-Elven).

1 · THE FIRST ERA

c. -80,000 FE (Approximately 200,000 years before the present time.) A cataclysm of cosmic proportions sends shock waves through the universes, and causes a ‘gate’ or ‘tear’ in the inter-dimensional fabric. A group of non-corporeal entities enters this space-time, fleeing the destruction of their own universe through the gate. They close this gate (though it can never be completely sealed) but find that they cannot leave the solar system because the unique location of Kulthea in space-time maintains its singular association with their home universe. Beyond the system, the peculiar radiations are too rarefied to maintain their life-force. They arrive at a moon orbiting the gate planet *Kulthea* (not wishing to interfere in the natural evolution occurring on the planet itself), alter the moon’s ecology to their liking (including making the moon the focus of their power), and take up residence. They are to become the *Lords of Orhan*.

Also at this time, a tiny black hole (its origins also possibly in another universe) strikes Kulthea, passing through the world and erupting out the other side. It extrudes core material behind it as it exits, and the *Pillar of the Gods* (a pinnacle of black crystal and metal several miles high, located in central Thuul) is created. Severe earthquakes and tidal waves cause widespread devastation, especially in the region surrounding the pillar.

c. -30,000: The first indigenous intelligent race on Kulthea — the *Altha* — discover fire.

c. -20,000 — -18,000: Althan culture develops a technology which allows them to conquer the stars. The

world becomes the center of an explosion of interstellar colonization. Many planets become homes for seedling cultures. The Lords of Orhan shield themselves on their moon, employing illusion and misdirection to keep the Althan race away.

c. -16,000: First appearance of the mighty comet *Sa’kain* in the Kulthean solar system. In Kulthea’s sky it is like a huge column of fire clearly visible by day and making the night as bright as sunset. Unbeknownst to the inhabitants of the *Shadow World*, Sa’kain’s entry into the system has reopened the a new inter-dimensional rift, destabilizing the current balance. The Lords of Orhan are unable to close this interface, so Kulthea is subjected to irradiation by the strange energies of another universe. This energy interacts with all matter in the system, infusing it with what is later known as the primal *Essænce*. In addition, the Kulthean system becomes vulnerable to intrusions from the Planes and the Void.

c. -15,000: First discovery of the *Essænce* by the Althan scientists of Kulthea. (Inhabitants were aware of unexplainable energies since the dawn of their civilization, but were previously unable to analyze their nature or tap their power.) Genetic manipulation enhances latent abilities to control the force. Members of the *K’ta’viiri* (family? clan? sub-race?) show special aptitude. The Althans soon discover that the *Essænce* is unique to the Kulthean system. In addition, certain materials are shown to retain, augment, or resist the *Essænce*. Strange, violent creatures from other dimensions appear periodically on Kulthea, but are little more than a nuisance.

However, many of the Althans are also true *Psionics*, able to tap their own energy reserves. (Psionic power is a personal energy which a percentage of all thinking beings in this universe may possess; it is unrelated to the Essænce.)

c. -15,000 — -10,000: Althan civilization begins to evolve into a unique combination of technology and ‘magic’ (the Essænce power). Society also polarizes, with the Essænce adepts (mostly the K’ta’viiri) becoming a privileged upper class. A number of *Portals* are constructed on Kulthea (and several on Charón); these gateways allow direct access to a selected few of the parallel dimensions. Althan scientists master techniques for opening and closing such gateways, sometimes using artifacts such as powerful crystals.

c. -14,500: First reappearance of the comet *Sa’kain*. It returns every 1500 years, though the proximity to Kulthea varies dramatically with each pass: sometimes brighter than Orhan in the night sky, sometimes all but invisible to the unaided eye. Its presence coincides with violent *Flowstorms* and serious disruption of the *Portals*.

c. -14,000 — -10,000: After a series of battles across the stars, the *K’ta’viir* family rules a large portion of the galaxy in a vast Empire, maintaining control by virtue of their superior Psionic powers and their mighty star-fleets. Their dynasty survives for millennia.

c. -10,000 — -6000: The K’ta’viiri begin experimenting with cosmic forces to open gates in other regions of space. Their hope is to tap the Essænce elsewhere. All such attempts end in spectacular failure.

Also, many peoples and creatures from other planets are brought to Kulthea and experimented with. Masters of genetics, the Lords of Essænce alter plants, animals, and races to suit their whim. These unusual races include the *Krylites*, the *Saurkur*, and the *Kuluku*.

c. -2000 — -250: The Emperors are increasingly corrupt and sadistic, showing little respect for life or the continuity of galactic stability. This perverse trend culminates in the Ascension of the Empress Kadæna in c. -510.

c. -250 — 0: Rebellion against the K’ta’viiri begins, instigated by the Lord *Utha*, a cousin within the family. Political, technological and Psionic powers are used in a

sweeping attempt to overthrow the current Empress-goddess.

The Lords of Orhan — fearing the complete destruction of life on the Shadow World — rescue representatives of their favorite animal and plant species from Kulthea and bring them to Orhan. Indeed, large areas of Kulthea are laid waste as the Uruths destroy the most of the K’ta’viiri, using channels of raw Essænce. The backlash from this power destroys or damages many of the ancient *Portals*, leaving them ‘open’ without control. Strange creatures and destructive demons of the Void swarm into this universe through the broken *Portals*.

Although the rebellion is successful, the result also brings about the complete downfall of the Althan Civilization. Worlds are destroyed, their populations reduced to a primitive existence.

c. 0: The final conflict of Utha and Kadæna takes place on Kulthea. Kadæna is beheaded by Utha himself, wielding a weapon known as the *Soulsword*.

By a last effort of Utha, the Flows of Essence are altered to imprison the intruders: by placing the ‘Eyes of Utha’ at the poles, he limits further influx of the strange and hideous creatures. While it was always believed that Utha caused the Flows to shift dividing the world into hemispheres, that was merely a side-effect of the crystals which he placed at the two poles of the planet.

Their real effect was to insulate Kulthea from the radiations of the inter-dimensional rift, and thus inhibit Demonic incursions from the Void. It is restored to the balance before the coming of the comet.

However, much of the world is now a wasteland. Recovery for Kulthea will be a long and painful process.

It is said that a few of the K’ta’viiri and Uruths survive, placing themselves in suspended animation to awake at a later time.

A secret cabal is formed at this time; led by none other than Utha’s son Dænkú, it is made up of eight surviving rebels and calls itself the Ahrenreth (Ir. “Secret Circle”). Their mission is to ensure the safety of the Eyes of Utha and to continue to close the errant Portals (or ‘Shadowgates’). These Portals, though severely inhibited by the Eyes of Utha, still allow demonic beings limited access to Kulthea.

INTERREGNUM

Also called the “Long Night”, this period lasts approximately 100,000 years. The world begins a slow return to stability. Many lands are lost beneath the waves as the



*A Scribe at the
Library of Olas Shryak*

clouds condense. Only the most sturdy peoples survive the period, and most are held at the lowest level of civilization. Unfortunately, many of the survivors are twisted, evil creatures such as the deformed Lugrôki and subterranean Trogli — and worse things, evil intruders from the end of the First Era. The Krylites, insectile people, maintain their culture hidden deep beneath the Spine of Emer and slowly elevate into a technically advanced society. The Dwarves also manage to survive by hiding underground.

During this time the Lords of Orhan seed some of their ‘rescued’ peoples back on Kulthea, among them the Elven and human races. The Fey Folk (Nymphs and Sylphs, Naiads and Dryads) first appear—creations of the Lords of Orhan sent to guard over the vulnerable races.

It should be noted that the Loremasters have chronicled (though in only the most general terms) the rise and fall of at least three civilizations during this time. They are known—among other names—as the Jinteni, the Wôrim, and the Taranians. The Jinteni were probably centered in southern Emer; the Wôrim from the eastern lands between Emer and Folenn, and the Taranians lived on a land mass in the Lonely Sea, which sank during a terrible earthquake near the end of the Interregnum. Of these cultures little remains. The most remarkable legacy of the Jinteni may be the City of the Dead in southwest Emer. There were also several powerful groups active during this time, among them the *Earthwardens*, who are credited with construction of the Coral Roads.

The Dænkú Ahrenreth is also active for many thousands of years. But one by one, these immortal men and women fall victim to various disasters. Three are believed killed in combat with servants of the Agoth. Two are slain by the backlash of closing Portals, and two others perish destroying a cult of hidden Kadænan survivors. Twenty thousand years after the fall of the K'ta'viir empire, only Dænkú himself remains. Unable to bear continuing alone, he constructs a secure vault on an isle south of Jaiman and places himself in suspended animation. Sophisticated machines are set to awaken him if the Essænce is disturbed. (What even Dænkú does not know is that one of his order — Ondoval — was not killed but caught in a warp of time. Far more horribly, another of the Order was captured by the Agothu and taken into the void. By some unspeakable method, the female K'ta'viir was impregnated and bore a child. It consumed the mind and body of its mother and sought a way to return to Kulthea.)

The machines fulfill their instructions after about sixty thousand years, during a particularly close pass of the comet Sa'kain. Dænkú wanders the globe for centuries, finding that the world has blossomed. Races have multiplied, and ancient wounds have healed. He suspects intervention, but

is as yet unable to pierce the magical veils shrouding the Lords of Orhan. Dænkú assumes the guise of an Elven sage and begins to gather other wise Elves together. He takes the name Andraax.

2 · THE SECOND ERA OF IRE

1: Founding of the College of Loremasters by Kirin T'thaan, Ilmaris Terisonen, and Andraax. All three are supposedly Elven, though Andraax is actually a Lord of Essænce. The College is based on the isle of Karilôn, the location hidden. The purpose of the Loremasters is twofold: first to serve as an instrument for gathering knowledge and information so that it is not lost; and second to disseminate this information ‘for the advancement of civilization.’ This date is not a coincidence; this is the beginning of ‘Loremaster Reckoning’ after the interregnum.

c. 100: A large Elven community, migrating from the east, settles on the green islands east of Emer. They name their home *Námar-Tol*.

450: First Loremaster-recorded appearance of the comet *Sa'kain*, a burning mass that hangs in the Kulthean sky for weeks. As it passes near the planet, it disrupts the function of the *Eyes of Utha*, and opens a door into a multitude of universes—including the Void. The comet returns every 1500 years. Soon after this event the Dark Gods begin to appear on Kulthea. To counter this, the Lords of Orhan create manifestations of themselves and accept followings. The origins of the Dark Gods remain unclear, though some suspect they are actually former Lords of Orhan who turned from the benign ways of their brethren. Others hold that they are early manifestations of the Unlife, or even ‘failed’ experiments by the Althans to create non-corporeal life. Perhaps only Andraax knows the truth.

450: Dænkú (Andraax) discovers a surviving K'ta'viir, who is gathering evil creatures in Mulira. After a spectacular battle the former servant of Kadæna is slain—but his half-K'ta'viir son (Lorgalis) escapes.

500: The Loremasters call the first Council of Karilôn, a gathering of seven leaders, to address a variety of issues. Joining Kirin T'thaan, Ilmaris Terisonen, and Andraax are *Tanris Dekdarion*, a Loar Warrior Monk), The Linær Cleric *Yael Ziriv-kari*, the Loar Bard *Ilmaris Terisonen*, and the Loar Astrologer *Romenor Tartalus*.

825: Six powerful Titans settle on the mountainous isle of Votania in the center of Emer. They decide that this mighty continent needs order and begin to gather ser-

vants. The Loremasters take note but elect not to interfere.

1000: *Andraax re-forms the Dænkú Ahrenreth, dedicated to maintaining the balance. As a lord of Essence and son of Utha, he is one of the few who even partially understands the real purpose of the Eyes of Utha. Kulthea hangs on the threshold between universes—a wild, chaotic one where magic rules; and the one where only physical laws apply. The Eyes hold the world in the open doorway, allowing Essence to work while maintaining the world in this universe. Should the eyes be destroyed, the world may fall one way or the other. Either all magic will fail or the world will enter a universe where flowstorms are continuous and the Unlife rules. The comet Sa’kain complicates things, as it seems to have multiplied the access to other universes.*

c. 1000: Warrior-mages on huge steeds begin purging the wilds in central Emer, driving out the ubiquitous Gark and Lugrōki hordes. These knights are harbingers of the coming of the Masters.

1073: A pantheon of godlike beings (the Titans) calling itself the “Masters of Emer” claims all of central and northwestern Emer. Their home is the mist-shrouded isle of Votania. Lordly beings, they are the size of giants, yet handsome and fair, and immortal. They rule through an order of warrior-mages (the Xiosians) but appear for festivals and ceremonies, riding out of the sky on enchanted chariots drawn by Pegasi.

c. 1073 — 5000: Under the Masters, most of the rustic Shay peoples are driven out of Hæstra, and the Laan settle in various areas. By 2000 the central and eastern regions are well populated with the Laan (who in the Third Era are referred to as the “Old Race”). The Laan build beautiful strong cities of granite and marble, and their knowledge of science and magic exceeds for a time any that has yet to be seen on Kulthea since the Long Night. But they are more easily called to the Darkness, and beginning as early as 3000, servants of the Unlife begin their slow work to undo the power of the Laan.

1075 — c. 1200: Another Master known as Kio Viax joins Titus Híaz (who is their Military Captain) to lead a mighty army through the Gap of Uj. By the end of the century they drive out the Goblins of Murlog and subjugate the upstart peoples to the southwest. The early horsemen tribes worship Viax as a god.

1200 — 1218: Titus Híaz, now joined by Ria Xain, crosses the Spine of Emer east and easily subjugates the nearby SE regions. Xain takes up rule of Khûm-kaan while Híaz moves on southwest. Meanwhile, the Master Xaym Jyax marches towards Tai-emer, quelling war between the peoples there.



*A Laan Lord and his wife,
circa 1500 SEI*

1220 — 1229: Híaz, after crushing the Garks of Onar, leaves Xaix Yjan in control; Híaz and Mira Zyan then civilize the Anzeti of Silaar; she remains to rule. (The Islands of Námár-Tol are left unassailed; whether the Masters elected to ignore the Elven peoples or a secret pact was struck is uncertain.)

1230: Titus Híaz returns to Votania triumphant: all of Emer is in the hands of the Masters. Each rules a region as lord and god. An era of peace and prosperity for the entire continent ensues, lasting nearly two millennia.

1950: The comet Sa’kain returns, as it does every 1500 years, triggering massive flowstorms and random gate openings.

c. 2,000: First Loremaster-recorded appearance of servants of the Unlife. The Unlife is a dark power—a force for total destruction and death—originating in another universe, allowed access to this one through a combination of the Eyes and the Comet. Unlike inhabitants of the Planes and even the Void, whose actions and purpose

seem unfathomable, the Unlife is a single force with many servants and incarnations. Dark cults—followers of the Unlife—begin to spring up.

2200: The Council of Loremasters decides to take a more aggressive stance against dark forces.

c. 2500: Establishment of the *Changramai* Monastery in the Choak mountains of northern Emer. It is believed that the Changramai are disenchanting Xiosians who left the service of the Titans (In fact, some are; however, the founder is Tanris Dekdarion, the Loremaster, grandfather of the famous T'vaar Dekdarion). Their quasi-religious order seems filled with contradictions to outsiders, but they are soon renowned as unsurpassed warriors in unarmed combat

2530: (Jaiman) Founding of the Library of Nomikos in southern Jaiman (by Andraax). It is administered by a monastic order of sages and scribes.

3100: The first stirrings of discord among the Masters of Emer. Two (Mira Zyan of Silaar and Xaix Yjan of Onar) are unhappy with their regions and wish to reapportion the lands. Titus Híaz refuses to do so.

c. 3200 — 3350: Goblins begin raiding in Uj again; Garks multiply in the Rulaash Forest of Onar and terrorize the Kuluku; Lugrôki breed in the Spine of Emer and begin raids on the lowlands of Hæstra.

3300: Founding of the first guild of Navigators, a secretive group which offers guaranteed safe travel as a service—to anyone who can afford their fee. *Their powers are based largely on a discovered cache of ancient artifacts known as 'compasses' which allow the user to tap the Flows for safe teleportation.*

c. 3300 — 3700: The Navigator Guilds spring up across the globe (or at least the western hemisphere). At first there is competition between the Guilds, uneven service, and low fees. Navigators can only be found and hired at large cities.

3345: Forces of the dark god *Andaras* attack Uj via land and sea. Because of the ongoing fight amongst the Titans, the Master of Uj (Kio Viax) leads an army himself.

3347: The fight for Uj climaxes with a confrontation between the Titan Kio Viax and the god *Andaras*. Kio is nearly slain before his brethren arrive to help. Uj is

overrun, signaling the end of the undisputed reign of the Masters.

3450: The comet Sa'kain returns.

c. 3500: The six mightiest of the Great Drakes, at the behest of Voriig Kye, gathers at the ancient breeding caves at *Ssoiayig Saer* (K: "Caves of the Drakes' Birthplace"). They agree to form an alliance of sorts.

c. 3450 – 5000: Much of Emer continues to be fragmented by incursions from various enemies and by the growing threat of Goblins, Lugrôki and Trogli. Dragons and other terrible enchanted beasts are everywhere, wreaking havoc and destruction. Corruption spreads through the Xiosians as well. The Masters settle their grievances by the end of this period, but enemy forces have grown too strong for them to overcome. They can only hold

Hæstra, watching as the civilizations they worked so hard to build collapse into dust. Soon even the Laan of Hæstra begin to revolt, seduced by dark gods.

3451: Birth of Tethior the Smith in Nâmar-Tol, son of the noble house of Jeranian.

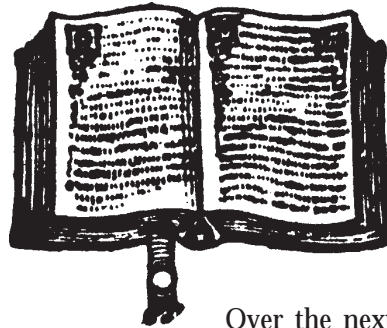
3453: Birth of Krelj (later known as 'The Swordmaker'), Tethior's younger brother—and eventually his rival.

Over the next dozens of centuries both will create a number of powerful tools and weapons to aid in the fight against the Unlife.

c. 3600: *The White Dragon Oran Jatar approaches Krelj and secures his assistance in creating the Dragon Helms. There are to be Six, the number of the Dragonlords. In return, Krelj learns much of the arcane arts of alchemy—including the working of laens and eog.*

c. 3500–3700: Rise of the realm of Thanor in Silaar. According to the sparse surviving records, this kingdom was ruled by a divine priest-king aided by an elite hierarchy of wizard-warriors. These people appear to be of the Jaaderi race. Many of the Thanorian ruins contain Orhan-marble, indicating that they were skilled masons and in tune with the Essence.

3710 — 3730: Convinced by the legendary Navigator *Orbaaljen Zamain* that the Navigators cannot survive in their present state, a summit is convened among leaders of all the Guilds. After literally years of negotiation, the Navigator Guild Alliance is formed. Pricing is rigidly fixed, and the Guild Alliance sets up a sophisticated network of obelisks, allowing anyone to 'summon' a Navigator just by touching the obelisk and requesting



one. The Navigators make their home at the center of the land known as Iyxia. Annual Conclaves are held at their headquarters there, a sprawling citadel called Nexus.

(Note: *Erroneous accounts give the origin of the Navigator Alliance as late as TE c 5000*).

3744: *The Dragon Helms are completed, and the Six gather. What they do not know is that Krelj, using the knowledge gleaned from the Dragonlord, also made six rings. These would allow a human wearer to assume the powers of a drake. They are known as the Daath Leerssoi (K. "Maker of the Shadow Drakes"). He tells no one of their existence but makes note of them in his secret journals. Soon after the helms are distributed, the golden dragon Kydak Dûm, vanishes.*

3840: *Tethior and Andraax begin work on the Six Crowns of Jaiman.*

3910: (Jaiman) Six realms arise with the Six Crowns as their foci. Dominating the continent, they wield their items for Light and hold back the Unlife (including the assaults of Lorgalis) for a long period. Even the Flows of Essænce are altered, creating sea lanes for the trade ships to escape the pirates of Ulor.

c. 4000: The Thanorian kingdom is in its heyday, occupying northern Silaar, with satellite states in southern Silaar, Námar-Tol, and Tai-Emer. There is a land where magic is commonplace. The city of *Thenia* on the shores of the Lake of Glass is a place of graceful towers of alabaster and crystal. This is in stark contrast to most of Emer, which is populated by warring tribes or loosely allied feudal lords.

- (Jaiman) *The Order of the Priests Arnak is formed by a manifestation of the Unlife known as the Iron Wind. They establish themselves in six locations across the continent of Jaiman. Tools of evil, they work to destroy society and civilization from within.*

4145: The youngest daughter of the Priest-king of Thanor has an affair with a handsome white-haired stranger (*he is in fact Akalatan the Dark Spirit, servant of Klysus the Serpent God*). She becomes pregnant and her lover abandons her. In shame she flees to the province of Arûl in southern Tai-emer, having her twin children there—one boy and one girl. She names them Sendar and Sendil. Other than having white hair (unheard-of among the Thanorians, considered of Jaaderi stock), they appear to be entirely human. The children grow up under the cloud of being bastard nobility. No one would believe that their father is a dark demigod.

4175: Sendar, now a decorated Warrior-mage in the Thanorian army, is appointed governor of Arûl. His sister Sendil, a Mystic, is always near him.

4179: Sendar declares the Priest-king of Thanor (his uncle) to be corrupt and a false leader. He names himself lord of Arûl and Thanor, and reveals apparently supernatural powers. Civil war breaks out.

c. 4180: *Seeing a threat from the power of Thanor to the southwest and an opportunity with the rebellion of Arûl, the Dragonlord Voriig Kye begins to amass his armies and constructs a fleet on several isolated isles.*

c. 4200: Preceded by a series of earthquakes and brutal storms, the fleets of the "Lord of Encla Turic" (*Voriig Kye*) assault the Silaar and Tai-emer coast from the north and the south. The Dragonlord's armies utterly destroy the realms of Thanor and Arûl; Thanor's treasures are looted and cities laid ruin. Sendar and Sendil vanish. Voriig himself leads a series of devastating assaults on Thenia and central Silaar. He is largely responsible for the formation of the Værken Mire. *The twin demigods escape to a secret temple in the Pelegris Mountains where Akalatan casts them into a magical sleep.*

4430: *Tethior's son A'kesh is born, the product of a brief romance. The mother—actually a Dyar mystic—does not tell the father of his child but instead apprentices the boy to Krelj.*

4495: *Krelj reveals the Daath Leerssoi to A'kesh.*

4790: Tethior (with the aid of Andraax) creates the Ilarsíri.

4980: (Jaiman) A cataclysm of uncertain origins destroys the capital of Zor and lays waste to the central region of that kingdom. *The Zorians, ever hungry for ancient technology, uncovered a terrible weapon from the lost realm of Taranía. They unwittingly triggered it, causing an explosion not unlike a thermonuclear blast. The city was vaporized, the land all around melted to slag. Radiation persists to this day. Fortunately, the Crown, sword and pendant of Zor had been removed to the refuge of Gryphon College by loyalists and were not destroyed. Zor would never rise again as a kingdom, however.*

c. 5000: (Jaiman) While every ruler of the remaining Five Kingdoms dons the crown at coronation and is 'at-tuned,' a growing recognition of the crowns' mind-altering effects (and a wariness of the influence of Priests Arnak) leads to a tendency to wear them less frequently. Without the will of the wearer, the powers of the crowns to enforce borders are weakened. Border conflicts begin to spring up across the continent. Only the kings of

Rhakhaan don the crown with any frequency, and that realm is the only one to survive into the Third Era intact.

5230: *Tethior and Krelj have a confrontation which reputedly ends in Tethior killing his younger sibling in self-defense. (Krelj is killed, despite many rumors that he survived.) The incident leaves Tethior unbalanced with grief and guilt. He at times assumes the personality and appearance of his brother, and eventually becomes The Nameless One. A'kesh witnesses the killing, unaware that Tethior is his real father. He flees with one of the Daath Leerssoi. Tethior finds another of the Dragon-rings in the wreck of Krelj's workshop. Andraax later takes the other four.*

c. 6200: (Jaiman) Every kingdom on the continent is at war on at least one front. Within decades, U-Lyshak and Saralis cease to exist as united realms. The designs of Tethior and the Loremasters have been largely undone.

6203: (Jaiman) An *Ordainer* appears in southwest U-Lyshak and leads an army of evil creatures south. Mortals flee before the demonic lord.

c. 6400-6450: All across the western hemisphere, governments destabilize, criminal activity rises, cultural and racial hatreds inflame. This is partly caused by the corrupting influence of organizations such as the Priests Arnak and other dark religious orders preaching intolerance and subversion, but there seems to be literally something in the air causing tempers to shorten and aggressive behavior to increase. Goblins and Lugrōki breed in large numbers and are seen walking openly in the daylight—something they never dared do in the past. They burn farms and ambush travelers with impunity. Once again dragons and other fearsome creatures are seen with growing frequency. At the bidding of the Dark Gods, the undead rise and demons appear to rape and kill unchecked.

6441: Because of increasing dangers and flow instability, Navigators suspend commercial travel services until further notice (until the end of the war). *While it is not widely known, they offer their services to the Loremasters and their allies through the end of the Wars of Dominion.*

6450 – 6820: Wars of Dominion The arrival of the Comet, severely disrupting the Flows, triggers the apocalyptic war.

The disruptions of the Wars cause a ripple in space-time, reopening several Portals. Ondoval of the Ahrenreth returns to Kulthea, but he has been driven insane by his eternity in another dimension. His soul is corrupted by the Unlife.

With the aid of the Lords of Orhan and the Titans, the Dark Gods are driven back and imprisoned on Charón, their powerful servants destroyed. Many valiant Loremasters and Sages are killed, however.

6820 – 6825: At the conclusion of the war, the Loremasters coordinate a massive effort to set enchanted, immortal Guardians at the many Portals to guard against new incursions of dark forces.

Tethior is said to have been a casualty of the wars but in fact goes into hiding. The Masters of Emer retire to their palace-city atop Mount Votania (in the center of Emer), setting guardians about the perimeter and a barrier of clouds about the city.

3 · THE THIRD ERA OF IRE

c. 1 – 1000: The weakened Loremasters begin to aid the rebuilding of civilizations. Across most of the hemisphere, it is a struggle to survive in a dark age which has destroyed much of what the Loremasters labored so long to build. A few scattered enclaves survive, but they are under siege in a world of chaotic forces. Wild demons, undead and evil creatures roam free for centuries, only slowly hunted down and destroyed.

- Jaiman fares better than most lands of the hemisphere, perhaps because of the crowns—even though only Rhakhaan's rulers wear them with regularity. As a result, while the lands themselves are not ravaged as some others, the other four governments are either ineffectual or nonexistent (Zor is, of course, no more); their royal artifacts lost or hidden.

- On Emer, Votania is a haunted island, shrouded in clouds of mist. Most of the continent reverts to wilderness broken by isolated city-states.

c. 300: *A group of Dyari Elves, led by the Dark Prince Quentar Daal, arrive on the western shores of Emer. They are traveling east from their homeland, seeking new lands to settle. After some exploration they find a high hidden vale in the Mountains of Gold, and a cave complex directly beneath. They establish a small kingdom of their own and name it Skystone.*

350: *The Dyari of Skystone encounter the Dwarven kingdom of Ton-Bor further south under the mountains. After an initial period of mutual suspicion, they make an alliance. The naturally secretive Dwarves agree to broker the Dyari goods to the outside world—while preserving the anonymity of the Dark Elves—in return for a commission.*

408: *After travelling across Kulthea, Ondoval returns to the Guarded Isle, original gathering place of the Dænkú Ahr-*

enreth. He decides that it is his duty to reconvene the Ahrenreth, and ventures forth again to gather a new cabal. He is insane.

888: *Ondoval convenes the Dænkú Ahrenreth, giving it the new name ‘Cult of the Secret Circle’ (Jerak Ahrenreth). The members: Churk Ta, Schrek, Ondoval, Lorgalis, A’kesh (son of Tethior), Dari Holvir, Oan Lyak and Shanarak. Their goal: to free Kulthea from the oppressive barrier surrounding it and allow complete access to the Flows of Essænce. They and their servants begin the process of reawakening the heart of the Ahrenreth, a great focus-crystal. However, Ondoval does so by the use of human sacrifices. But even Ondoval does not possess the power to destroy the Eyes of Utha... yet. He requires certain artifacts from the First Era. Construction begins on the Eight ‘Secrets’ (or ‘Ahreni’), towers and citadels scattered throughout the world to act as centers for the plan of the Cult.*

898-1108: *Construction of the Ahren-Iyax (Ir. “Dreaded Secret”) in central Ræl. It is also later known as the Tower of Vour.*

c. 900: *Schrek, with the help of the forger A’kesh, creates an item to allow him to retain his human form indefinitely. Schrekerases A’kesh’s memory of creating the Faaw Shryaac, (K. “Talisman of Hiding”). It is a translucent red stone roughly in the shape of a humanoid heart, which pulses with a reddish light, set on a staff or Dir-wood, held in place by a setting in the shape of a black dragon-claw with silver talons. However, the talisman also locks Schrek into human form, and without it he cannot assume his true shape or access all of his powers.*

Andraax, wandering far in the East, is awakened as if from a dream. His memory remains fragmented, but he knows that something is terribly wrong.

c. 1000: *An organization calling itself simply the Alliance is formed in central Agyra (the western-most equatorial continent).*

c. 1000–1500 (Jaiman) *Rhakhaan consolidates power along approximately its old Crown-enforced borders. Much of Haalkitain City is rebuilt. The other four realms also rebuild during this period, though Tanara is now the domain of the Dúranaki.*

1085: *Aldaron comes to Emer, transported, most suppose, through a Portal. Actually, he and his group are from a colony ship which arrived in this system from a far planet of the Althan Empire. He leads a fair people who begin to settle the continent. While not immortal, he seems to age slowly even for his race, which is long-lived. Some of the Laan (now referred to as the ‘Old Race’) resent his presence, but most welcome a unifying force. The People*

of Aldaron were never many, numbering perhaps only a few hundred when they first appeared. They tend towards fair hair (even white or silver) and skin, with blue-gray eyes. They have a youthful mien for most of their lives, then age slowly. Life span is usually about 500 years.

C. 1100 — 1300

(AGE OF CONSOLIDATION)

Aldaron’s charisma and determination (not to mention powerful tools and weapons, the exact nature of which are now lost to history) earn him the respect of his neighbors. He establishes his home at Votania, building a mighty citadel on the northern slopes of the mountain. Only the uppermost peak remains mist-shrouded, and Aldaron orders that it is off-limits. From this base—Aldain Castle—and using a combination of diplomacy and disciplined armies (and apparently a natural talent for Mentalism), he solidifies his hold on central Emer. Aldaron easily brings all of the bucolic Shay and Talath tribes of central Hæstra under his control. Eventually even the most willful (some would say arrogant) Laan people in more civilized lands are for the most part convinced to ally under Aldaron’s flag.

1105/1 ER (Empire Reckoning): Aldaron sets up temporary quarters on the northern banks of the inland sea of Votania. He also founds the Eight Orders and directs the creation of the Artifacts of the Orders.

- The workshops of the *Ahn Sye Ni-Vulma* (OE. Order of the White Flame) are constructed along the rocky western shore of Votania. The first Master of Ni-Vulma is Kerento T’ara. He gathers an elite circle of Laan and Elven smiths and they begin to create the artifacts of the Eight Orders.

1112: Construction begins on Aldain Castle on the northern shore of Votania itself.

1125: The comet Sa’kain returns, though on this pass it is relatively distant.

1130: The Garks of the northern Spine of Emer are virtually eradicated by Aldaron’s armies.

1135: The Murlogi of the Forbidden Ridge are driven into their caverns and the entrances into Hæstra are sealed.

1144: Most of the Lugrôki of the Mountains of Gold are scattered and their king slain by Lord Kendos. A nonaggression treaty is made between Aldaron and the Dwarven kingdom of Ton-Bor under the mountains, but Skystone City, the hidden Dyar kingdom, remains secret.

1145: Hæstra is secured; Aldaron names Kendos the Grand Duke of Hæstra. The regional capitol of *Arдан* is established in Hæstra, along the foothills of the Mountains of Gold. Its symbol is the Unicorn.

- Aldaron names himself King of Hæstra and in a grand ceremony he founds the eight orders: *Ahn sye Nokora* (E. “Order of the Flaming Sword,” the King’s Guard), *Ahn sye Zanar* (OE. “Order of the Cloak”), also known as the *Crimson Cloak* or *Crimson Order*, the priests of the official religion of the Kingdom—worship of the one god Zanar), *Ahn sye Talaus* (OE. “Order of the Ring”), a group of magicians), *Ahn sye Shan* (E. “Order of the Sun”), Animists responsible for the agricultural health of the kingdom, also specialists in herbs and drugs), *Ahn sye Takla* (OE. “Order of the Four Winds”), the messengers of the King), *Ahn sye Woloka* (OE. “Order of the Eye”), a group of Seers and Astrologers to advise the King), and *Ahn sye Nomoke* (OE. “Order of the Hand”), a secretive society whose purpose was always unclear. *In fact, the name ‘Ahn sye Nomoke’ means Order of the Mask; they are a sort of secret elite guard, spies for the king both inside and outside the realm.* Lastly, the *Ahn sye Nivulma* (OE. “Order of the White Flame”), a guild of craftsmen and artisans who were the master smiths for the King and creators of the artifacts). More is written about the eight orders in the *Other Powers* section.

1187: Sailing south along the western coast, Aldaron’s forces secure western Uj and head east. Regional capitol of *Leonas* is established at the mouth of the Daluj river in Uj. Its symbol is the Wyvern.



1190: Aldaron returns home for a few years to supervise the growth of his capital city.

1192: *The Loremasters first learn of the Alliance, and send a few agents to ascertain their alignment. They are unable to penetrate the secret Brotherhood. However, the Alliance sends one of their own back to infiltrate the Loremasters. This spy must be cautious, however. Andraax can recognize a Thalan on sight.*

1204: *From his citadel of Ahrenraax (Ir. “Secret Claw,” one of the Eight Secrets of the Jerak Ahrenreth) the Ordainer Morloch completes his subjugation of eastern Thuul. He turns to the southwest.*

1208: *Voriig Kye encounters a servant of the Ahrenreth and traces it back to the Ahrenæk, in Onar. He also discovers A’kesh and they meet. Voriig gathers a few hints about Schrek as well (but Voriig does not learn of the Faaw Shryaac). Voriig decides that he should be a member of this council, if for no other reason than to keep an eye on them.*

1210: *Churk Ta of the Jerak Ahrenreth dies under mysterious circumstances. A’kesh nominates Voriig Kye to replace him.*

1261: After several years of bloody strife, the indigenous Jaaderi people of Tai-emer are subjugated by Aldaron. A regional capitol of *Relas* is

established in Tai-Emer, at the mouth of the T’voca river. Its symbol is the Lion. Aldaron heads further east while his brother Aldanor leads a fleet across the Sea of Tears to the north.

1262: Aldaron advances into the land of the *Nuyan Khôm*. Not only are the Nuyani better horsemen but they are skilled in a style of unarmed combat unknown to the Emerians. However, the Nuyani are fewer in number and they have little defence against the Imperial cross-

bows. Aldaron's losses are heavy but he eventually makes his way to the capitol of *Ashenoq*. Aldaron asks to meet the Nuyani warlord (Hûta'arn) Tasan Nuyin, but instead the Nuyani surrender. He is led to the Warlord's palace where he learns that Tasan has committed suicide. Aldaron is named the new Hûta'arn of all the Nuyani. Meanwhile, Aldanon founds a regional capitol in northern Silaar, at the northern tip of the Rust Mountains. It is called *Corinn*; its symbol is the Hawk.

1286: Heading south, Aldanon moves into Khûm-kaan, settling *Coronan* at the mouth of the Sybarus River.

1298: *Voriig Kye* determines to some extent the nature of *Schrek's* powerful Faaw Shryaac (K. "Talisman of Hiding") and convinces another of the Eight—the *Lyax Khâng*—that *Schrek* is a threat. The *Khâng* (an elf named *Nandaar Darian* at the time) manages to steal *Schrek's* staff and gives it to *Voriig*. The Dragonlord keeps it for nearly five millennia, during which time he has his cohort, the Dragonlord-chemist *Oran Jatar* separate the staff into three parts. He removes the red jewel in the center leaving an empty gap between the four claws. The gem becomes known eventually as the *Dathmaur Shryak* (K. "Heart of Agoth"). Now the top of the staff is called *Raathtruliik* (K. "Cold leaping flame"), and between the claws the staff glows sometimes—especially near *Schrek*, creatures of the void—and of course the *Heart*. The lower part of the staff, a rod of *Dír-wood* is the *Riig Prona* (K.: *Ember of Hope*) The top of the staff is given to the Elven brothers on *Vog Mur* to keep, while the heart itself is guarded in *Voriig's* vault, and the rod is kept by *Jatar*.

1300: Aldaron's unification of central Emer essentially complete, he declares himself the Emperor of Emer. At a grand ceremony he presents the four scepters of the Archduchies, crowns his brother Prince of *Coronan*.

The Four Realms are:

Name	Region	Symbol
Ardan	Hæstra	Unicorn
Relas	Tai-emer	Lion
Corinn	Silaar	Hawk
Leonas	Uj	Wyvern

Plus the Princedom of *Coronan*, covering the region of Khûm-kaan.

c. **1300:** *Navigators* venturing into *Alliance* territory (central *Agyra*) are told they are not welcome. At first they ignore the warnings, but after a *Jenaara* (with twenty *Kal'chah*) materializes in the center of the *Great Hall* at *Nexus* on *Iyxia* to press the *Alliance's* wishes, they quickly relent (and after the intruders have left they reinforce their

magical defenses). This event is a closely guarded secret among the *Navigators*. If anyone should ask to go to *Agyra*, they are simply told that it is off-limits. This marks the beginning of an uneasy truce between the *Navigators* and the *Alliance*. Since this time, the *Navigators* have been essentially giving ground as the *Alliance* assumes total control over more and more land. The *Navigators* have warned the *Loresmasters* of the *Alliance*, but the *Loresmasters* are reluctant to interfere—and unsure whether the *Alliance* is even a bad thing.

1300 — ≈1500 / 200 — 400 ER:

(AGE OF EXPLORATION)

Aldaron ends many ships out from Emer to explore the surrounding isles and lands across the seas. In addition to securing the remainder of the Emerian continent under his rule, Aldaron establishes relations with realms to the west, south and north. Attempts to explore the lands east in *Iyxia* are turned back by powerful *Essænce* flows.

1307: Aldanon's fleet arrives on the shores of *Námar-Tol*. He is greeted politely but coolly by the regional lords. By the time he makes his way to the capitol, the Prince has learned Aldanon's intentions: to annex the Isles for the Empire. While the ships of the Elven fleet are individually superior, they are outnumbered by the Emerians; on land the vast armies of the Emperor are overwhelmingly superior. While the Elves might hold off an attack, they have little stomach for warfare with such an enemy. After meeting with the Council of Lords, the Elven Lords of *Námar-Tol* sign treaties with Aldaron, essentially agreeing to be a protectorate state, independent but under the wing of the Empire. The Elves are not pleased at paying tribute but they are surrounded and vastly outnumbered. The Emperor agrees not to interfere with the internal workings of their land.

c. **1310-1320:** Aldanon explores Khûm-kaan and establishes settlements along the northern coast. Expeditions sail up the rivers to the foothills of the Black Mountains, but do not penetrate the deep jungles. The *Kuluku* people remain in hiding.

1317: *Janel Vonn*, a *Loari* Magician of *Námar-Tol*, is named to the Order of the Ring.

1318-19: Aldaron sends agents into *Jaiman*.

1320: Aldaron abandons the idea of annexing *Jaiman*, partly because of the peculiar geopolitics of the land (i.e., the magical crowns). Instead, he secures a nonaggression treaty with the southern kings of that land. He directs the Duke of *Leonas* in *Uj* to explore south.

- c. 1320-1332: Aldanor sails out of the bay of Zalkali and back south into Onarian waters. He continues east past the Rulaash region and to the grasslands of central Onar, a land known as *Ahnasan*. There he encounters the Kinsai, riders of huge six-legged panthers. The Kinsai are semi-nomadic—barbarians to Aldanor’s eyes. He claims the land in the name of the Emerian Empire, though the Kinsai seem unimpressed. Continuing east the Prince arrives in Malqanar and discovers the Shuluri, the Sea-elves. Aldanor meets with their leaders and after some negotiation they form a simple alliance. The Shuluri grant an area of land to Aldanor on which to build an outpost.
- 1322: *Bethis Hirl*, Lord High Seer of the Order of the Eye, is found dead in his quarters; apparently he committed suicide. The Laan *Vartain Leganto* is named to succeed him.
- 1325: The famed Laan explorer *Jelred Tain*, under commission from the Duke of Leonas, rounds the spur of Ræl. He is the first to do so, after many ships are lost in the Dead Sea. Continuing east, he passes through the treacherous Spire Straits between Ræl and the continent of Falias. Only 20 miles wide and filled with rocky barren islands, the straits also harbor swift, unpredictable currents. Tain enters the Rælian Bay.
- 1326: Jelred Tain lands on the Isle of Jade and nearly loses his life to unspeakable creatures there. He escapes but many of his crew do not. They continue westward to the Rælian mainland, claiming it for the Empire. The natives greet Tain as a god.
- 1332: The Satellite capitol of *Shanish* is established in Onar, along the northern coast.
- 1340: Aldaron marries one of his own people, Isil.
- 1341: Colony ships from Leonas in Uj make the dangerous passage to Ræl and a satellite capitol of *Intil* is established in eastern Ræl, though at this point it is Emerian in little more than name. Ræl is so isolated from the rest of the continent that there is little threat from Imperial fleets or armies. The colonists treat the natives like little more than animals, hunting and enslaving them. By the end of the century the indigenous people are nearly extinct.
- 1368: Isil bears Aldaron a daughter: Vania.
- 1372: Aldaron doubles the size of the Order of the Silver Sword from 88 to 176 plus an equal number of adherents.
- 1388: Isil bears a son, Terenis.
- c. 1400-1420: The Komaren Isles and the Shinh Archipelago west of Emer are brought under rule, and most of the pirates who had been flourishing there are rooted out. Rumors of the *Alliance* in Agyra are first heard in the Emerian court of Aldain. Aldaron sends a few agents from the Order of the Hand. When they return a few months later, a few note that their behavior is somewhat changed (*They are actually Brotherhood spies in disguise*).
- 1415-17: The young Prince Terenis distinguishes himself as a warrior and commander in the Shinh and Komaren campaigns, captaining the flagship of the Imperial fleet.
- 1425: Ships from the Emerian Empire encounter the Kingdom of the Desert Jewel (Gethyra).
- 1428: Gethyra and Emer sign a peace treaty. Embassies are established.
- 1430: As arranged by Aldaron and the Church, Terenis marries the Laan woman Syba, daughter of the *Na-Fulk* (OE. Archduke) of Relas.
- 1431: Explorers enter the Ring of Thuul and encounter the Pillar of the Gods. They also discover the isle of *Jordan* and the *Jhordi*, a race of telepathic, blue-skinned men and women. Jhordi emissaries return to Emer. Much of southern Thuul is a shadowed land populated by evil races.
- 1432: Aldaron first hears of Terenis’ illicit liaisons from agents of the Order of the Hand, but does nothing.
- 1434: Rumors spread of Terenis’ infidelity. Court gossip is that his consort is Jaad, one of the Knights of the Silver Sword (a man). The Aldain court is rocked by scandal.
- 1437: Terenis divorces Syba and ‘marries’ Jaad by declaration, in defiance of the religion of Zanar (homosexuality is quietly tolerated in more liberal sections of Emerian culture but open relationships of this type are frowned upon in society and disallowed by the official church). Despite pressure from the *Cho-Na-kudai* (Lord High Priest), Aldaron refuses to banish Terenis. Nor will he either bless or condemn the ‘marriage.’ However, he declares his daughter Vania is ordained heir, despite tradition of the male being selected as heir.
- 1439: Vania marries the Laan Lord **Estar** of Leonas, shifting some focus from Terenis.
- 1440: Terenis survives an assassination attempt (the assassin, a woman, is thwarted by Jaad). He retires for a time to the Imperial winter palace in the Komaren Cluster.
- 1451: Londoris, Lord High Mage of the Order of the Ring, founds the *Olas Shryak* (K.: “Library of Essænce”) with

the sage T'jamiis (*really the Dragonlord Voriig Kye*) at the source of the Lene river.

1462: Emerians encounter the *Shoneb Kingdom*. The first meetings do not go well, the Shoneb being an aggressive and suspicious culture. Emerian explorers shift their attentions more south.

1466: Aldaron's brother Aldanor, Prince of Coronan, dies of an unknown illness. His son Keil succeeds him.

1480: Aldaron lays aside the Scepter of Emer, and his daughter Vania assumes the throne. To her are given over the symbols of rulership and the allegiances of the Eight Orders. Aldaron retires to the Houses of the Dead. At his departure ceremony are many dignitaries from far-flung realms, including the GreatKing of Gethyra and the Crown Prince of Rhakhaan.

1482: Tyganis, the Zanar Cardinal of Ardan, begins to pressure Vania to banish her brother and his lover from Emer. She refuses, but at her urging Terenis and Jaad maintain a low profile at court.

1493: Gorjar, the Fulk of Relas, contests Vania's authority and attempts to secede from the Empire. But the Empress reacts swiftly, sending a large force into the Relas region and arresting Gorjar by the dawn of 1494.

c. 1500: At their compound on the *Aaen Vulm* (K.: "Isle of Glass") on the Rælian Bay, members of the Order of the Sun begin genetic experiments on various flora. They are aided by the powerful Animist *Durnanga* (*in reality Drül Churk*).

- (Jaiman) The *Magician* appears in Haalkitain. Under his influence the emperors wear the crown less frequently, and expand aggressively into surrounding lands.

1512: Vania gives birth to a son: Vanaar.

1525: Vania has another son: Vemik.

1535: Vania's husband Estar dies in what is announced as a hunting accident in the forests of Norg near the eastern edge of the Forbidden Hills. *In fact he was found beheaded along with the rest of his hunting party. (They were ambushed by Shards of Viour.)*

1543: Vania remarries: this time a Laan lord of Corinn named Shanar (*really the Dyar Elf Shanarak, a.k.a. Kort Hulum, of the Jerak Ahrenreth*).

1548: Vania's eldest son Vanaar is slain in a hunting accident. While circumstances surrounding the incident are quite different than those of Vanaar's father Estar (Vanaar is shot by an arrow, apparently by accident), there is speculation at court that the deaths are part of some plot.

c 1550 - 1600: (Emer) Vania's last few years are marred by corruption among her ministers and—despite a strong and even hand—disaffection in the outlying provinces and possessions, and nearly continual uprisings. She is also forced to pay some regional armies for their allegiance, thus creating mercenary forces who will work for the highest bidder. Corruption in the military becomes rampant, and naval ships are little more than privateers.

- In Coronan (the Princedom controlling the lands of Khûm-kaan and Onar), Keil maintains control over the Shay peoples of western Khûm-kaan, but Onar and Ræl essentially fall out of contact.

- In Nuyan-Khôm, the individual warlords begin to assert more and more authority, and the Duke of Silaar is essentially powerless to stop them.

- In Tai-Emer, the indigenous Jaaderi people of the Lion Province of Relas begin to chafe under the increasingly oppressive rule. Skirmishes and civil disturbances become common

- In Uj, The Wyvern Province of Leonas suffers attacks from the Charn Raiders in the highlands, and the nomadic Rhiani tribes—always only nominally part of the empire—ignore all Leonas authority.

- Finally, in Ardan, the land of the Unicorn and the heart of the empire, the counties begin to chafe under harsh Ducal rule and ever-increasing taxes needed to pay for the army.

1551: Accusing them of plotting against the Empress, Vania disbands the Order of the Hand and banishes their leader, the Laan/Iylar Mystic Barul Xygarus. In fact, the Order goes underground. They choose as their headquarters an isolated tower in the Northern Spine of Emer. They become truly the Order of the Mask.

1552: Vania gives birth to twins: Væric and Vinya. It is obvious that they are part Elven; Vania's husband Shanar vanishes, the courts at Aldain and Corinn are rocked by this scandal: Shanar was apparently not a Laan but an Elf. Vania is accused of deception and sorcery. She eventually reasserts her power and Væric is accepted as her son.

1553: The Lord High Priest of Zanar declares the church independent of the Imperium and moves his official seat from Aldain to the Isle of Fire, off the coast of Hæstra. (The Isle of Fire had previously been a religious retreat). The church takes no official action against the Imperial family, but at the direction of the bishops, priests begin to openly speak out against certain empire policies.

1555: At A-kesh's suggestion, the Order of the White Flame relocates their home to the Ahrenæk in Rulaash.

The rest of the Order does not realize the true nature of the installation until it is too late and they are under the spell of the Ahrenreth.

1558: Vania's second son Vemik is lost at sea. The half-Elven Væric is named heir to the Empire despite conservative outcries.

1576: Vinya disappears (*she joins the Cult of Stars*).

1588: Væric narrowly escapes assassination. The would-be assassin is never caught.

1589: Væric marries the Lady Kyria of Leonas.

1600: The strain of rulership takes its toll, and Vania passes the Scepter of Emer to her son Væric. She dies within a week; Emer mourns for eight days.

1603: Archduke Welias of Corinn marries the Laan beauty Jysela.

1604: Raiders from the south assault Ræl. The Imperial fleets, already stretched thin to maintain peace in other regions, are unable to protect the possession.

1605: Archduke Welias names Jysela his co-ruler. Within weeks she (and the Seer Kesilex of the Order of the Eye) begins to institute 'reforms,' restricting the rights of many citizens. She also begins to speak against the Nuyani race, naming them inferior to the Laan and Old Race. Corinn forces begin to collect Nuyani books and scrolls. Certain civic leaders are taken in for 'questioning.'

1607: Væric appoints a new Keeper of the Eye: Luarto Shang (*it is Ondoval in disguise*).

1608: The Prince of Coronan is assassinated; his half sister Driselle seizes power with the blessing of the church. She refuses to acknowledge Væric as Emperor, instead crowning herself Queen of Coronan.

1609: The Order of the White Flame recalls many of the Imperial Order artifacts and 'enhances' them (actually adding lenses made with the help of the Order of the Eye).

1612: Racial tensions in Corinn reach a climax—Archduchess Jysela orders restrictive curfews for all Nuyani. There is rioting in several towns, and within days of the proclamation, Jysela declares martial law. Her husband Welias—supposedly the actual ruler—is silent. Hundreds of Nuyani are arrested; many are summarily executed as traitors. When scholars among the Laan speak out, they too are arrested as traitors.

1617: Væric is besieged as the full decay of the heart of Emer is revealed. The provinces either rebel or are

assailed by forces out of the frontier. The Emperor loses his elder son on the fields of battle.

- Relas secedes; Væric is unable to hold it. Later that year, two cities in Ardan are burned. Væric's seers (led by Ondoval) foretell the end of his rule within a year.

- Isolated by the secession of Relas, the Silaar province of Corinn splits in two. In the southern region, the Nuyani are victorious (they are aided by supplies from the Elves of Namar-Tol), while Jysela manages to maintain control of the northern mainland and the islands. While still part of the empire in name, Corinn is essentially independent.

1618: Luarto Shang tells Væric that his remaining son and heir, the teenage Valaan, has betrayed him (a lie, but Væric believes it). Valaan is arrested and put on trial, convicted of treason through Shang's skillful framing. In Væric's moment of greatest anguish, Luarto Shang murders him with a poisoned dagger, then steals many of the Imperial artifacts and departs.

- Valaan escapes, rescued by the Storm Wizard and taken to Storm Castle.

- Ageren Vuk, the *Cho-Na-kudai* (Lord High Priest) of the Order of the Cloak, names himself Emperor Regent and declares the eight-year old Silima Chark (a distaff niece) Empress. He has the backing of most of the Council, but there is dissent from some of the Orders. Ageren Vuk is extremely conservative, and believes that the fall of the Empire was because of sin and corruption. He orders martial law, censorship and strict adherence to oppressive laws.

- As more priests fall under the shadow of the Ahrenreth by tapping its power, they are forced to pay a sinister price: the life-force of all who die under their care is channelled back to the jewel at the heart of the Ahr-enthroûk.

1618-1648: The next 30 years are marked by Inquisitions. At first only books are burned and rights are restricted, but soon the terror escalates and 'trials' condemn hundreds to death, burned at the stake as heretics, sorcerers, and 'the perverted.' (This time is later referred to as the 'First Zanarian Purge'). Loremasters rescue what texts they can, and free many innocents, but soon they are also targeted by the church. Silima remains a puppet Empress, eventually marrying Vuk's nephew, Horgo.

- *Ondoval abandons the Order of the Eye. His work in Emer complete, Ondoval begins his search for the Book of Gates. He travels into the East. The Order is in disarray; many of its artifacts are gathered by Zanar and the others.*

- The other Orders fail or break away one by one. The Church works to destroy them, painting the organizations as tools of sorcery or politically corrupt. Some members go into hiding, while the leaders of a few others try to set up governments of their own. Zanar attempts to establish order on a religious rather than political basis, the *Cho-Na-kudai* endorsing leaders he feels will survive. The Four Winds Order vanishes; Eye, Sun, Silver Sword, Flame and Ring all disband. The Mask was always invisible.
 - There is widespread famine and disease as systems of trade, food distribution and bureaucracy break down
 - A nonaggression pact is made with Queen Driselle of Coronan, but it has little meaning considering the separation of the two realms.
 - By the end of this period, the western isles, Námar-Tol, and most of Uj has essentially seceded. The Emerian Empire has shrunk down to the region of Hæstra.
- 1648:** Ageren Vuk dies; he is succeeded by an even more cruel but politically inept cleric. Silima attempts to assert herself but her haphazard policies wreak havoc with the already faltering Imperial economy.
- 1649:** Silima dies suddenly (she was poisoned by her husband). Horgo's bid to rule causes chaos.
- 1649-1652** These three years mark the final death-throes of the Empire. Seven men and women sit on the throne in quick succession during this violent period. By 1652 even the central continent is in anarchy, with a few small city-states ruled by petty despots, each constantly trying to destroy the others. Most of the People of Aldaron have fled into the mountains while the Laan retreat to islands or sail westward.
- 1650-1660:** Second Zanarian Purge. As the remaining vestiges of organized government collapse, Priests of Zanar continue to rile against sin and excess, while demanding heavy tithes. They are able to move between the warring city-states with relative impunity, as few warlords wish to anger the Church.
- Sel-kai emerges as a small independent trading town on the Sharhya river. Its island location, distance from the Imperial capital yet key location between Emer and Jaiman make it an ideal trade center.
- 1653:** Aldain City is sacked by raiders (mostly Shay brigands from the countryside). Only hours before the looters reach the old city, a force of Loremasters and Navigators enter and rescue what art, books and other treasures they can salvage. The last man claiming to be Emperor of Emer is slain on his throne. The city deteriorates into a partially ruined (and reputedly haunted) refuge for bandits and criminals.
- c. 1660-1700:** Rustic peoples of Emer, tired of their poverty while the priests live in growing wealth, begin to fight back. Anti-church uprisings spread across the continent, despite the very real power wielded by Zanarian priests. Zanarian missionaries are driven out of Tai-Emer and Silaar. The Elves of Námar-Tol take great pleasure in routing them from their island realm.
- c. 1800:** Kaitaine has established a name as a trading center along the SW coast of Emer.
- Aldain City is essentially abandoned; the isle of Votania is deserted.
 - The *Yellow Death* sweeps across all of central Emer, killing twenty percent of the mortal population. It is marked by high-fever and a yellowing of the skin and eyes. (*It is an acute form of hepatitis; Elven races are immune.*)
- c. 1900:** The bucolic land of Lys is founded by Linæri disenchanted with Urulan and fearing the growing power of Rhakhaan. En route to their new home in southern Emer they are joined by others of their kind who depart Námar-Tol.
- 1998:** *Ondoval recovers the Book of Gates. With it—and the power of the Secrets—he may open Portals to the past and begin his search for the Shadowstone.*
- c. 2000-3000:** (Emer) Most of the continent remains politically fragmented and slides into a Dark Age lasting over a thousand years. With the exception of a few enclaves and a handful of resilient trade centers, Emer is a thinly populated land.
- The Dyari of Skystone City expand their underground realm and in high sheltered mountain vales. The Dwarves of Ton-Bor also expand their subterranean metropolis.
 - The goddess Mynistra first appears in Hæstra and cults following her spring up across the land.
 - Námar-Tol closes its borders for most of this period, the Elves fearful of the deteriorating situation on the mainland. Meanwhile, however, they continue their technological advances.
 - (Jaiman) After many more years of relative peace under the influence of the Six Crowns, The Priests Arnak return to the realms of Jaiman. Under their evil influence, the kings and queens wear the crowns less, opening the door to outside influence. The magical borders falter.
- c. 2000 (Jaiman: the Mur Fostisyr) The time setting of events as told in *The Iron Wind*.**

- (Agyra) The Alliance gains dominion over virtually all of Agyra.

c. 2000 – 5030: *Ondoval travels through time and space seeking the Shadowstone. He returns at various times to rest and call the Council, but as the ages pass, dissension grows in the ranks of the Ahrenreth, and Ondoval begins to communicate less with the order.*

2059 – 2065: A plague (known as the ‘lingering pain’) sweeps through northern Emer. It kills through a long, painful wasting disease, wreaking panic and death among the Laan, Shay, Nuyani, and Jaaderi.

c. 2100: A Dragon Cult spreads over the Isle of Jade in SE Emer.

2625: The comet returns once more.

c. 2625-2700: Altered weather patterns (possibly caused by the return of the comet) increase the average temperature and reduce rainfall in regions of eastern Uj and Tai-Emer. These areas move from a semi-dry environment to arid. Easternmost Uj becomes essentially a desert.

2705: *Shanarak (“The Fair”) Departs the Ahrenlaakh (Ir. “Lost Secret”) on an errand to the East. Schrek begins to infiltrate the citadel with his agents.*

2755: *Shanarak returns to the Lost Secret to discover Schrek’s work. There is a battle between the two Lords’ forces and in the end Shanarak is victorious. However, Schrek intervenes, summoning the power of the Ark of Worlds, sending the citadel and its surroundings into a parallel plane.*

c. 3000 – 4000: The Lords of Orhan begin to make appearances on Kulthea again, having vanished after their aid in the Wars of Dominion. They are more aloof from political affairs than before.

- Kaitaine’s population swells, and her powerful trade guilds explore further and further outward.

- (Jaiman) In the northeast, the realm of the Dragonlord grows, while the western realms fall to armies of Lugrôki. The Dúranaki go into hiding. Only the Elven-realm of Urulan stands against the growing domination of Rhakhaan.

3030: Kaitaine establishes a trade pact with the Elven realm of Lys.

3050: *Schrek sends his lieutenant Wargur to assume command of the Ahrenæk from the Elf-lord Sigirus and the Alchemist A-kesh.*

3150: The Grotto Path is discovered by ships sent out by Kaitaine to find new markets. Ræl and the islands of the Rælian Bay are open to trade.

3155: Kaitaine makes trade pacts with the *Naal Triumvirate* in western Ræl.

c. 3200: A group of Emerians settle at the mouth of the Urij river; their land is called *Sarnak*. After the male leaders make a series of foolish decisions that threaten the realm, the women revolt and take control.

3290: Hostilities between Naal and Ansidus in Ræl erupt into war.

3300: Kaitaine caravans moving along the Scorpion Ridge have their first encounter with a Rhiani tribe.

- The Naal/Ansidus war climaxes in a huge battle near the tower of Vour. The fight is inconclusive though many thousands die. An uneasy peace follows, and the battlefield is a haunted place thereafter.

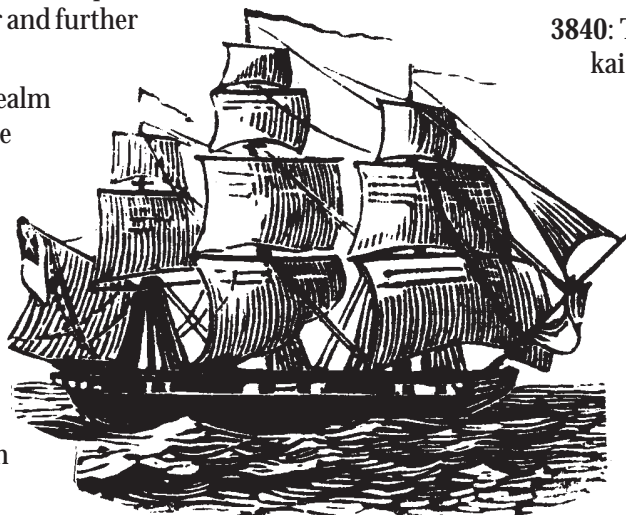
c. 3300 - 3500: In Silaar, the Nuyan Khôm begin a rise again from scattered clans into a group of provincial city-states. The lords (called ‘Tarns’), form trade and antiaggression pacts.

- The Loari of Námara-Tol continue to make technical advances, creating ever more complex mechanical devices. Their skill with alchemy is unmatched on western Kulthea. They make tentative contact with Sel-kai and the Nuyani.

3380: Trade explorers from Kaitaine enter the Bay of Izar (at first thought to be another ocean); they encounter the Amazon culture of Sarnak. Their first meetings end in disaster.

3840: Trade agreements between Sel-kai and Kaitaine are signed.

3980: The Laan lord Jengar Qatanen of *Orian*, a city-state at the mouth of the Alarna river (north of Votania in Hæstra) secures fealty from several nearby lords and establishes the kingdom of *Irdania*, spanning most of the old land of Miir. Jengar then launches on a campaign to expand his realm into the neigh-



boring regions of Vornia to the west and Stroane to the east.

3989: Jengar has lordship over most of the lands surrounding the Sea of Votania.

3998: Jengar is killed while in the forest of Norg on SE Hæstra. He and his entire party are found beheaded and dismembered; many appear to have been drained of blood. (*It was the Shards of Viour.*) Jengar's 15 year old daughter Lissane assumes the throne.

3999: Many lords in Irdania express dissatisfaction with Lissane's weak rule, while others compete to marry her and become king. Eventually the Lord Terok wins out. They are married and he is declared a member of the royal family of Qatanen. Soon after the wedding he asserts himself, and a period of peace begins for Hæstra.

c. **4000:**

- A strange disease virtually wipes out the entire horse population of Silaar and Tai-Emer, crippling the fighting forces of the Nuyani. The disease is stopped at the Spine of Emer, however.
- (Western Lands) The Alliance, already in control of Agyra, has spread over most of Mulira and into western Thuul. In addition to their subterfuge methods, they employ their swift war-catamarans to control the coasts.
- (Jaiman) Rhakhaan now controls nearly all of the Jaiman mainland, having beaten back the Lugrôki and the armies of the Dragonlord. There is increasing prejudice against the Elven-kind, leading to internal strife. Many Elves flee the country for Urulan.

4008: (Jaiman) Kelir VI names himself Emperor of Jaiman. War is declared on the Elven-realm of Urulan, and the two countries are at odds for over 500 years and three Rhakhaan emperors.

c. **4008 - 4500:** (Jaiman) While the two mighty realms of Rhakhaan and Urulan fight to the south, many lesser lords begin to quarrel amongst themselves for the northernmost lands of Jaiman.

4015: Queen Lissane of Irdania gives birth to a son, Telemedar; however, she dies in childbirth.

4020: Prince Terok marries again, a half-Elven woman named Selis.

4024: Selis gives birth to a son, Xerion.

4031: Prince Telemedar, at 16, is already a handsome and extremely bright youth, but those close to him see a dark side. Seeming to have little interest in the martial arts, he studies magic under the court Magician Belos, and his stepmother. Rumors also begin to circulate through

court that Telemedar and Selis share a more intimate relationship.

4034: Prince Terok of Irdania dies, under suspicious circumstances. Nevertheless, Telemedar Qatanen is crowned king at the age of nineteen.

4035: Court Magician Belos dies of a fall from the Orian castle wall. Telemedar names his stepmother Selis to the post. Her influence at court grows, to the consternation of the Royal Council and lords and ladies of the court. The only other person who has Telemedar's ear is a childhood friend, Kevik, the son of a wealthy Orian merchant.

4036: Selis is pregnant; there is little doubt as to the father. At her urging, Telemedar expands Irdania into the Bodlean lands and makes plans to take Sarnak and Danarchis.

4037: The war front to the north does not go well for Irdania. Kevik is found dead in his quarters, hours after counselling Telemedar not to accept Selis' impending child as heir. Telemedar consults a Seer and learns the truth: Selis was behind his friend's killing. Insane with rage and anguish, he brutally murders his pregnant wife. Telemedar is tried and executed. His younger half-brother, the 13 year-old part-Elven Xerion, is placed on the throne.

4052: Like his brother, Xerion shows a preference for the magical arts—and sensual pleasures. He shows little interest in governing, preferring to spend his time in the intimate company of wine, food, young men and women. The kingdom is essentially ruled by Privy Council of lords.

4056: At the insistence of the Privy Council, Xerion marries: the 21 year old Celiana, Countess of Maray. She shows a skill at rulership he lacks, and while he descends ever deeper into decadence, she assumes control of the government. The northern aggression is halted, and Irdania makes peace with her neighbors.

4066: At the age of 42, Xerion is stabbed to death in his bed by a slave boy who had been brought to him for 'entertainment.' Soon after her coronation as ruler, his wife Queen Celiana puts this incident behind her and purges the palace. A long period of stability ensues.

4085: *At Schrek's urging, an Astrologer named Zagul is appointed to the Jerak Ahrenreth, taking Ondoval's place as Arulis Kygari.*

4125: Sa'kain streaks past Kulthea again, wreaking havoc with weather and Essænce.

4166: (Jaiman) The conqueror Ugus Fost (now ruler of most of NW Jaiman) is murdered and his realm destroyed by a demonic force (*it is the Shards*).

4205: The First Skyship is constructed in Sel-kai by the Laan shipwright Leriú Valain and the Loari alchemist Teryk Altiar. The Merchant-prince of Sel-kai begins an ambitious project: to build a flying merchant fleet.

4250 – 4600: The fame and wealth of Sel-kai grows. In 4600 the current prince embarks on a plan to construct a floating city.

c. 4300: (Jaiman) NW Jaiman falls under the yoke of a lord known only as the *Syrkakang*. This would appear to be a successor to the one who threatened the Mur Fostisyr 2300 years ago.

4345-4349: King Perulin of Itanis, soon after his 100th birthday, claims that he has been visited by the spirit of Telemedar and his unborn child, and claims they are haunting the palace. The King's delusions grow steadily worse over the next few years until he is incoherent. However, strange, unexplainable events have begun to occur: fires starting spontaneously, eerie voices in the night, the walls of the King's inner chambers seeming to bleed. Clerics summoned to cleanse the palace all fail. Finally, the king throws himself off a parapet. Perulin's son Xerion is crowned; the mysterious events cease.

4350 – 4365: Three apparently different plagues wipe out almost half the population of Hæstra. This, combined with a series of droughts and uprisings in the border lands, and the weak rule of King Xerion III, spells doom for the kingdom of Irdania. Several lords in Vornia split away into independent holdings. Fear of the plague severely limits trade and travel amongst the holds, and few ships from outside mainland Hæstra will go there, wary of contamination.

4365-4400: By the end of the century, most of Hæstra has deteriorated once again into a collection of small, petty kingdoms and a handful of more powerful city-states. Irdania is no more.

c. 4400-5500: Most of Hæstra is in a dark age. Trade ships only enter the Bay of Izar to dock at Sarnak; others remain along the seacoast. Even Skyships do not enter, partially because of tales of at least one dragon terrorizing the land. Navigators add a surcharge for travel there for many years after the plagues have



A Gathering of Loremasters, including , Romenar Tartalus, Shayn al Xa'ar, Kirin T'Thaan, and Yael Ziriv-Kari

run their course. Bodlea, never densely populated, becomes a desolate empty land. Many castles and manors in the other regions are abandoned and fall into ruin. Even the city-states do not recover from the plagues and lack of contact.

c. 4500:

- In Ræl, the rival kingdoms of Ansidus and Naal escalate hostilities once again. Their ongoing conflict continues sporadically for a thousand years.

- *After millennia of wandering with fragmented memories, Andraax is caught in a flow-storm which restores his powerful mind. He is subject to fits of insanity, however. The K'ta'viir visits the Guardian Mind, only to find that it*

has been cursed by a spell from beyond the Pale. Andraax returns in disguise to Karilôn to discover what has transpired. There he learns of the plots of the Eight, and of the Alliance. He detects the Alliance spy, but his own disguise remains intact. He is unsure of what action to take—if any—to stop this group.

- *The (female) Dragonlord Ulya Shek discovers a partially functioning Lord of Essænce installation on a far western isle. Inside, she awakens an Althan Lady: Jenkyna. They form an alliance.*

4515: (Jaiman) The Emperor of Rhakhaan (the first to refuse the Phoenix Crown even at coronation) is assassinated after only three years as monarch; the realm, without a strong heir, is politically fragmented. The inconclusive (but mutually debilitating) war with Urulan is broken off.

c. 4520 - 5000: (Jaiman) The weakened Urulan falls prey to sea-raiders and eventually disintegrates as a nation. Rhakhaan fares better, but her borders retreat to nearly where they once were when the Emperor wore the Crown. Meanwhile, the Syrkakang spreads his dominion to the northern border of Rhakhaan.

4578: *An alliance between three of the Eight (Lorgalis, Oan Lyak and Iæn Shiin) is formed at the Ahren-Lyax. They lure the Seer of Urulan to their hold, slay him, and Iæn Shiin assumes his post. He is instrumental in the realm's demise.*

4650: The city of *Eidolon* rises in the sky above Northern Emer, a jewel of unsurpassed beauty and a triumph of Kulthean craftsmanship. It nearly bankrupts Sel-kai.

c. 5000:

- With the decline of terrestrial powers comes a rise of religious rivalries in Hæstra. Mynistra's followers wield considerable influence in the southwest, while Priests of Andaras gain power in Stroane. Izar has always been largely a center for Shaal, the Orhan god of the sea. In the north, the Sun god Phaon sees a resurgence of popularity. The church of Zanar has fallen by this time to a little-known cult.

- (Jaiman) The southeast is besieged by the dark forces of the Dragonlord. The Dúranaki retreat into their caves, leaving the Sulini and Myri to fend for themselves. Many Myri sail south and settle in the empty lands of Bodlea in Emer. Over the next few decades they colonize (albeit sparsely) much of the rolling land north of the Keyten river. They become known as the *Talath*.

- (Western Lands) The *Alliance* encounters the *Shoneb Empire* in NW Thuul, and begins infiltrating their government. They also send agents south into the Jan.

5028: (Western Lands) A Jenaar emissary from the Alliance officially contacts the Shoneb Empire. She is attacked, and barely escapes, her Kal'chah guard—fierce and skilled as they may be—are outnumbered, forcing a retreat.

5029: (Western Lands) The Alliance retaliates: Dozens of Kal'chah attack key government centers in the Shoneb Empire, and it collapses like a house of cards. The Emperor agrees to 'join' the Alliance.

5030: *Ondoval recovers the Shadowstone, an immensely powerful item once worn by Kadæna. As he returns—exiting a Portal in Mulira—the Portal is destroyed by the dark energy of the Shadowstone. The planar instability also allows the return of the Ahrenlaakh to this world. Ondoval retires to the Ahrentorg and plots his final assault on the very Essænce.*

5030 – Present: All but imperceptibly, Flow-storm activity increases across Kulthea. Random Portal operation also intensifies, allowing more creatures of the Void and other planes into the world. The Loremasters, the Lords of Orhan, and a few others are aware—though they cannot determine the cause.

5040: *The Dragonlords Voriig Kye and Sulthon Ni-shaang are nearly slain in a trap laid by Schrek, the acting leader of the Jerak Ahrenreth. Both escape, however.*

c. 5100: *The Loremasters learn that a dark power has built a citadel in the northern waters of the Endless Sea, but the area is swathed in a veil of shadow which they cannot penetrate. Agents sent in do not return. As the darkness grows, their concern intensifies.*

5188:

- *Ondoval declares himself the K'ta'kuli (Ir. "Lord of Shadows"). His court includes Ordainers and other powerful demons.*

- *A power struggle ensues within the Jerak Ahrenreth, though Schrek quickly emerges as the final authority.*

- *The fact of Ondoval's return and full measure of his treachery are finally revealed to Andraax, even in his somewhat unsteady mental state. He begins the search for the Soulsword, the only instrument which might slay the wearer of the Shadowstone.*

c. 5200: (Western Lands) Alliance forces encounter Lugrôki in western Thuul and Mythenis. After attempting to utilize them as laborers, they find them too diffi-

cult to control. They begin a systematic destruction of this race, which they consider ‘worthless.’

5210: Gelenad n’Chenn becomes Lord of Relian after the sudden death of his father. This is somewhat controversial because Gelenad is a priest of Phaon.

5210-5220: Gelenad sends escorted trade representatives north to the Dales and Danarchis, west to Zinvar and east into Tai-emer. Over the next few years trade begins to grow, enriching Relian. His aggressive trade policies are welcomed, though his promotion of the religion of Phaon is not greeted with the same enthusiasm. Tensions increase between Relian and Arakin, which has become a stronghold of Andaras.

5221-5225: Gelenad’s religious influence grows from merely openly following Phaon to making it the only tax-free religion in the land, and he begins to pressure citizens to convert. Finally, in 5225, the council of Merchants asks him to choose either his church or the Lordship. He retires to a monastery and the council assumes control of the city.

c. 5300: *The Dark Elves of Skystone discover an ancient installation. While not of the Lords of Essænce it is a technologically advanced geothermal power generation facility, possibly built by the Taranians during the interregnum. After many years of work and study, they manage to repair and restart it. They find many other interesting devices, some a fusion of magic and technology.*

5430: The Loari of Námár-Tol develop the first airbarges. These huge, slow-moving steam powered air vehicles are greeted with awe and suspicion by most other people.

5499: (Jaiman) The entire population of Plasidar (a Duchy of U-Lyshak) is wiped out. The first ships to arrive after the event find the port empty except for dozens of large cocoon-like objects. They flee when they hear a loud, piercing shriek. *(A nest of Kæden was found and accidentally awakened by the inhabitants, who were quickly subdued and cocooned).* The island is left abandoned for over a century; all trade ships steer a wide berth past it and the boiling waters around Aranmor.

5598: The Naal Triumvirate attempts to control access through the Grotto Path, taxing trade ships passing through. This move—a

not entirely successful one—angers Kaitaine as well as Ansidus and the independent isles in the Rælian Bay.

c. 5600: Tensions between the Naal Triumvirate and the kingdom of Ansidus in Ræl escalate into open warfare.

5615: Dyari immigrants—a faction exiled from Skystone City—come to the deserted isle of Plasidar and decide it is the perfect place to settle—and set up a pirating operation.

5650: The comet returns. During the ensuing weeks it hangs in the Kulthean sky while strange and terrible events occur across the world.

- Droughts strike Ræl for the next several years. By 5660, the region which was Ansidus is a wasteland.
- Chronic famine in many lands.
- The Prince of Sel-kai’s sky-yacht *Nightflyer* vanishes with his daughter on board. It returns periodically in later years, a ghost ship—and an evil omen.
- Snakes rain from the sky in Tai-emer and Uj.
- Erratic tides (even for a planet with five moons) cause widespread damage to coastal cities.
- Another attack of the strange horse-killing disease sweeps across northern Emer, this time also affecting Hæstra. Three quarters of the horse population is lost. Each in their own way, the Lankanok and the Nuyani decide to seek alternatives.

5650-c. 5700: The Animists and warriors of Lankanok embark on a breeding program to domesticate the *Scrill*, large, herbivorous bipedal lizards, as an alternative to horses. (A brief flirtation with riding the carnivorous



Empire Ruins on the Votania coast

Quarnaks was abandoned when they kept eating their riders).

5651: The High Priest of Ashenoq in the Nuyani lands goes into the wilderness to seek an answer to the loss of their horses. He fasts and prays to the god *To-to-nar* ('the two-faced'; actually the Orhan gods Kieron and Jaysek). The gods hear his pleas... after five days of wandering the solution comes to him—in the form of a huge Gryphon. She is to be the mother of a stable of winged mounts for the elite warriors of Nuyan Khôm.

5704: A Silvery Dragon is seen again, the mighty beast terrorizing the city of Eidolon. Yet it does no damage and vanishes into the clouds. Some claim that it had a human rider. Rumors abound that the Prince of Sel-kai is subsequently blackmailed into paying a 'protection' ransom. *These rumors are not true.*

5899: (Jaiman) Ilred IV dies in his sleep; is succeeded by his daughter Italana VI, who accepts the crown of Rha-khaan and welcomes the Magician.

5910: More than a thousand years after its first aggression against Kaitaine, Vajaar declares sovereignty over the entire mainland of Uj west of the Daluj river. Itanis, Kaitaine and the Rhiani are all cut off from each other except by sea and a treacherous route (through the Scorpion Ridge) which only the Rhiani will brave.

5912-5913: Two successive springs fraught with severe hurricanes buffet Kaitaine, the Komaren Cluster, and the entire SW Emer coast. Much damage is done, and shipping is disrupted. Only a few very precious cargoes guided by Navigators get through safely.

5922: The Loremaster Selas Vey enters ruins believed to be of Jinteni origin in Uj, otherwise known as the City of the Dead. He is not heard from again.

5945: A man known only as the *Nameless One* arrives on the isle of Zinvar and predicts impending disaster to the thriving trade center in three years. (*It is in fact Tethior the Elven Smith, using one of the Daath Leerssoi to conceal his appearance.*)

5948: The people of Zinvar are overcome in one night by a mysterious plague of violent madness. The city burns. Zinvar becomes a deserted place, shunned by sea-travelers.

5980: The Kuluku of the Quon jungle in Khôm-kaan, who have been trading with the neighboring Shay living near the Gap of Uj for centuries, suddenly vanish into the rain forest. *They did not die but retreated to avoid becoming entangled in the turmoils of the Shay. In their seclusion they begin to arm themselves and train in earnest. They*

accelerate breeding of their still-secret mounts, the giant dragonflies known as Krell.

6000: (Western Lands) Jenaar emissaries of the Alliance approach the kingdom of Gethyra. The king rebuffs them.

- The population of Sel-kai City exceeds ≈150,000

6019: The Nameless One enters the Palace of the Emperor of Nuyan Khôm and warns the ruler of a great disaster. That night the Butterfly Scepter of Khôm is stolen.

6020-22: Plague devastates Silaar, killing 35% of the population of Nuyan Khôm, including nearly all of the Royal Family.

6021-40: (Western Lands) The Alliance infiltrates Gethyra.

6023: Piracy causes serious disruptions along the Lethys—Sel-kai trade routes; Plasidar is suspected.

6035: Amidst the ruins of the old capital of Relas (one of the four regions of the old Empire) a new leader begins to rebuild. He names himself the Lord of Arдания. People flock to the site to take jobs, and the city begins to thrive again. The Lord even resurrects the ancient *Ahn sye Nokora* (Order of the Silver Sword) which once guarded the Emperor of Emer.

6036: *The head of the Faaw Shryaac (The red gem alone becomes known as the Heart of Agoth) is stolen from Voriig Kye by the infamous (and allegedly insane) Loremaster Elor Once Dark. He, in turn, misplaces the artifact and it is lost.*

6037: Niév (a small town north of Arakin) passes many conservative laws at the urging of the local Priest of Andaras.

6038: A total solar eclipse (by Orhan) over central Emer. Minor tremors shake the lands about Votania... for the next ten days and nights, strange lights are seen in the mists about the base and summit of the island.

- (Jaiman) The Priest of Yarthraak arrives in Helyssa, a kingdom in the heart of old U-Lyshak.

6039: The Nameless One warns the Priest-king of Pochanto of impending doom. He is ignored. Eight days later an earthquake levels the capital city.

- (Jaiman) The Dyar pirate lord Guynar of Plasidar is assassinated; his three sons (Aenor, Kalon and Jerel) vie for power.

- (Jaiman) An unusually harsh winter with deep snows continuing into spring causes hardships throughout eastern Jaiman. Snow-gark attacks on the Dúranaki become intolerable. The warrior T'Kaal Arain gathers a

force and mounts a series of counterattacks, driving the Garks northward.

Ondoval makes his first attempt to destroy the Northern Eye. His failure is nearly complete but spectacular, triggering a violent Flow-storm and causing an incredibly severe winter for much of the northern hemisphere. He returns to the Shadowed Secret to regroup.

6040: Rumors of visits by the Nameless One in southern Hæstra, Námár-Tol, and a southern city in the Lankan Empire.

- The Lankanok, their elite cavalry astride the swift and agile *Srillizards*, defeat the surviving Pochanti in northern Tai-emer, consolidating their hold on the region.
- The Khurtûm (Priest-king) of Lankanok and the Lord of Arдания sign a pact of nonaggression. Lankan priests order more human sacrifices—many of them Pochanti prisoners.
- (Jaiman/Plasidar) *The eldest son Kalon takes control of the pirate realm; Aenor goes into hiding, and Jerel flees with a few loyal followers to southern Urulan.*
- (Western Lands) Gethyra agrees to come under Alliance ‘protection;’ their capital is occupied by Alliance warriors.

6041: The Katra of Stroane, urged on by his advisor Shatang (a high priest of Andaras), begins his expansion campaign, drawing nearby Miirian holds under his rule by oaths of fealty. Those who resist are laid siege. This expansion continues for the next few years.

- *Aenor of Plasidar changes his name to Aenor of Quaal and settles in Sel-kai City. With his share of pirate gold he sets himself up as a wealthy entrepreneur.*
- (Agyra) Dyari of the Alliance uncover a cave near the Sea of Fate in the center of the continent. The entire party is later found dead—dismembered and their heads missing. Within weeks the entire eastern coast of the sea (known as the Green Beach) and nearby forests are terrorized by a murderous force which takes the heads of its victims. *They released Shards of Ubenmas, including N’koru of the I-lat Norg.*

6042:

- (Jaiman/Urulan) Jerel of Plasidar builds a base of operations in southern Urulan. he names himself the White Swan. Ships flying his flag begin raiding along the eastern edge of the Melurian Straits, creating problems for Sel-kai, Danarchis, Præten and Lethys.
- (Jaiman/Tanara) T’Kaal Arain succeeds his aging mother as Head-of-Family. He begins steering the Council of

Families towards a greater awareness of the larger political situation in Jaiman—and alliance with Rhakhaan.

6043:

- (Jaiman) Empress Italana dies and her son Jerrin takes the throne of Rhakhaan, but refuses the Phoenix Crown. His younger cousin, Frelik, steals the crown and retreats north, claiming to be the true King.
- (Jaiman) Gark raiders attack the Myri lands in the Tanaran foothills.
- Dyari miners, delving deep under Skystone City, encounter a connection to the Ash Lairs. Ever curious to the point of recklessness, they explore deeper.
- The Nameless One is seen in Izar, but makes no public statements.
- Reports of a huge red-gold dragon in the Spine of Emer near Tovor, at first dismissed as hysteria, persist. *It is Motar Voorg.*

6044:

- The forces of the Katra of Stroane move through Vornia, capturing hold after hold. The Archbishop of Helberna (the heart of the religion of Mynistra) refuses to yield and the city is laid siege.
- A manor south of Tovor is destroyed—survivors tell of a huge winged fire-drake.
- The Dyari of Skystone inadvertently release a mighty *Ordainer*—a Lord demon of the Essænce. It slays many of them before they drive it out. It takes up residence in the caves of the Lugrôki to the north, enslaving them.
- (Jaiman) Prince Halek of Helyssa sends an explorer ship to Ulór—supposedly a lifeless island since the Wars of Dominion. The ship fails to return.

6045:

- Under the influence of Robersin, a Priest of Andaras, Niév becomes even more radically conservative. The cleric of Andaras preaches that all nonhumans are evil. A law is passed making it illegal to be an Elf in Niév.
- (Jaiman) T’Kaal Arain becomes First Speaker for the Dúranaki.

6045 – 6048: (Jaiman) Frelik, aided by mercenaries from Saralis, assaults the northern borders of Rhakhaan. He makes slow progress southwards.

6046:

- In the first enforcement of their anti-Elven law, an Elven traveller venturing into Niév is arrested and convicted of “being an Elf.” He is executed by beheading. News of this event travels far, and many Stroane trade partners

threaten boycott. Niév trade suffers as traders avoid the town, but most of the residents are now caught up in the religious fervor.

- (Jaiman) King Halek of Helyssa is slain while on a hunting trip. Halek's son Kier vanishes that same evening and a search is begun. The Priest of Yarth accepts the Regency and maintains order.

6046: After a long siege, Helberna falls to the army of Stroane. The Archbishop of Helberna is thrown into the dungeon.

6047:

- The Sarnak Council, aware that they may be the next target of the Stroane aggression, sends a beautiful agent to Arakin.
- *Voriig Kye calls a meeting of the Dragonlords. The five (the golden dragon is still missing—or dead) gather at Vog Mur, the first such meeting in millennia. While most (except Sulthon Ni'shaang) have little interest in the affairs of men and Elves, the Alliance, as well as Ondoval and Schrek, are cause for concern. However, only Voriig sees the true threat of Ondoval; the others succumb to the inevitable self-confidence of their inherent power.*

6048 (Spring): Against the advice of his High Priest, the Katra of Stroane marries *Vazia*, a country maid of questionable birthright.

- (Summer) The Katra of Stroane is found dead in his bed, apparently murdered by his young wife—who has disappeared. His ten year old son Mikel is crowned Katra, but only in name. True power is shared between the Lord General of the military, High Priest Shatang of Andaras, and the Katra's uncle, Prince Lorek. As news of the Katra's death spreads, the Stroane forces begin to lose the initiative.
- (Jaiman) T'Kaal Arain, returning from a diplomatic mission to Haalkitain, narrowly avoids an ambush by unknown assassins in the Grey Mountain foothills. Saralis raiders cross the Pelyar mountains into Helyssa.

4 · RECENT EVENTS

· 6049 ·

- Lugrôki under the Ordainer of Gorlhach expand their realm under the northern Mountains of Gold. They enter the Ash Lairs.

WINTER 6049

- The *Hard Winter* in Hæstra: heavy snowfalls block highways. Parts of the Keyten river freeze over. Wild beasts

sweep down from the Spine of Emer to harass Stroane and the Dales of Bodlea. Residents of the Stroane manors are more suspicious of strangers than usual, and the Bodleans barricade their villages. The Red Dragon attacks several more manors, though usually just to feed on livestock.

- (Jaiman) The Priest of Yaarth escalates the search for the son of king Halek, missing since the night of his death.

SPRING 6049

- Hæstra is in turmoil as news of the Katra of Stroane's death spreads.
- (Jaiman) Yinka armies attack the southern Myri villages, breaking a thousand-year-old peace. The Bucolic people are unprepared and many are killed. A meeting of clan-leaders is held, and the Myri begin to arm themselves.
- (Emer) Trogli from the southern Spine of Emer swarm out of their caves at night to attack the Shay of Khûmkaan. The Kuluku are still not to be seen; it is suspected that they died in a plague, though no one dares enter the jungle.

SUMMER 6049

- (Jaiman) Yinka attacks intensify; a major assault on the river town of Ulir is turned back by the appearance of knights astride flying horses: the Cloudlords of Old have returned, wielding magical swords and wands which unleash the power of the sun. Further Yinka incursions are deterred by a Dúranaki presence. Cloudlord sightings continue.
- (Emer) Cloudlords are seen near Eidolon. They fly close but do not land.

AUTUMN 6049

- (Jaiman) Yinka attack the Sulini village of Shenin, but are turned back. Sulini are joined by Elven reinforcements from Urulan.
- (Emer) Eidolon loses a dozen ships—supposedly in freak storms.

FALL 6049

- (Jaiman) Agents of the Priest of Yaarth are seen as far east as the Grey Mountains, seeking Prince Kier. The remote Yinka temple of Chakor is burned. There are no survivors, but rumors spread that it was Cloudlords' work.

• 6050 •

WINTER 6050

- The Nameless One is seen in Kaitaine.

- The Nuyan-Khôm tell tales of ghosts wandering out of the old land of Thanor. Thanor has always been haunted, but now the undead seem to be multiplying.
- (Jaiman) Frelik's armies reach the border of Prevan, a province just north of Haalkitain. Emperor Jerrin Talus Malvion Faslorin III orders his Lord Captain north with four legions to finally crush the would-be usurper. Cloud-lords assault the Yinka city of Achren, burning the city and sending Yinka fleeing into the hills.



A rare glimpse of Storm Castle, its shielding clouds torn away by a sudden wind.

SPRING 6050

- (Jaiman) Slowed by a long winter, the Emperor's forces reach Prevan even as Frelik the Usurper attacks the provincial capital; the would-be Emperor is turned back.
- *The Loari inventor/adventuress Selia Rendanaar of Námámar-Tol mounts an expedition to the City of the Dead. She finds the lost journals of the Loremaster Selas Vey—and something else. In a laboratory deep within the catacombs of the city she discovers a cache of jewels of varying sizes, all faceted spheres. She determines that these have the power to absorb energy and release it to power devices—and vehicles, one of which she discovers and repairs. She and her*

party flee the city in the flying vehicle—barely escaping the site's golem guardians—and return in secret to Námámar-Tol.

SUMMER 6050

- With the death of the Katra of Stroane, expansion halts and generals try to consolidate what they have taken (Izar is spared). There is civil unrest but it is generally disorganized. The Bodleans remain safe behind the Keyten. Trade is tentatively reestablished with some neighbors, but local tax officials take advantage of the disorganized Stroane/Arakin government.

- (Jaiman) Forces of Dansart from the Zor Wastes seem to aid the Usurper's armies. Frelik reveals the crown to the Rhakhaan generals, casting doubt amongst them (but the Usurper still does not dare to put the crown on).

- *Four of the Jerak Ahrenreth hold an informal meeting.*

AUTUMN 6050

- Secret rebellious factions form and grow in major Hæstra cities; local lords begin making plans to retake their lands—and perhaps expand in the chaos they know is coming.
- Many rumors of the growing realm of Arдания reach the court of Eidolon. The Lord of Arдания (really Y-tarmen, one of the 12 adherents of Ahrenreth) as established Ardan City, and at its heart the Palace of Gold. He is surrounded by a guard bearing the ancient *Yarkbalkas*. Also in evidence is the Order of the Eye, led by Iæn Shiin, an Iylar Elf and former Loremaster, now a member of the dreaded Jerak Ahrenreth.
- (Jaiman) The Priest of Yaarth, claiming that Prince Kier is dead, seizes control of Helyssa. United with the forces of Lorgalis, he sweeps east towards Rhakhaan.

FALL 6050

- Recruiters appear in several major cities in Emer, offering opportunities for well-paying jobs in the new realm of Ardania. The lord of that city seems to have endless gold to spend. *He does indeed, tapping the coffers of the Jerak Ahrenreth.*
- Rebellious activity in central Hæstra increases, funded in secret by Sarnak, Izar and Danarchis. Smuggling and tax evasion is rampant. The Stroane government, having taken out huge loans from Sel-kai to pay its mercenaries, and now unable to effectively collect new taxes, is near bankruptcy.
- (Jaiman) The Empire of Rhakhaan is under siege on three fronts, and Jerrin Faslorin finds that his defenses are strained. Almost nowhere on Jaiman is unaffected by war.
- *The Storm Wizard, fearing the fall of Rhakhaan and subsequent collapse of civilization on Jaiman, gathers his powers. The conflict must be slowed, and he takes matters into his own hands.*

• 6051 •

WINTER 6051

- 1•5 Minor earthquake in Sel-kai.
- 1•7 A dragon is sighted over Sel-kai. It circles a few times, then climbs near Eidolon, but does not approach any of the Skyships or airbarges before abruptly vanishing into the clouds. Opinions differ over the type, but many believe it is Silver. *(It is Voriig Kye).*
- 1•11 Arrival of the *Hûta'arn* of Nuyan-Khôm in Sel-kai for trade talks. He sails into the harbor amidst a fleet of unusual ships, traveling up through the Sea of Tears. He is only 30 years old (one of few of the royal family to survive a plague 28 years ago) but a shrewd ruler. Together with his wizened great-aunt as trade minister, he is a formidable negotiator.
- A strange flu-like illness strikes many Itanian Warlocks. All who succumb recover, though some suffer a terrible permanent side-effect: their Mentalist abilities are gone. *There are rumors of a cure, an herb which grows in Nâmar-Tol.*
- (Jaiman) With dramatic suddenness, winter comes to nearly all of Jaiman in the form of a monstrous blizzard. The cold and snows cut off supply lines and freeze armies in their tracks. There are heavy casualties on all sides, but the weather works to the Emperor's advantage. Nevertheless, Frelik the Usurper renews his call for Jerrin's abdication.

The Loremasters suspect artificial intervention in the weather of Jaiman, but are unable to trace the source. They are understandably nervous that a source of such power can remain cloaked from their detections. The Navigators, always concerned about strange meteorological phenomena, launch their own investigations.

SPRING 6051

- (Jaiman) The snows begin to melt, but heavy rains further slow progress of any forces in the Rhakhaan conflict.
- 2•10 – 2•25: (Sel-kai) Heavy rains and melting snow cause the canals to rise to above flood stage. Minor damage to lower levels of some structures.
- 2•15: the Bank of Sel-kai and Ullizi Bank call in their loans to Stroane. The realm is unable to pay, so the banks claim the collateral (the crown jewels) and declare themselves in charge of the government. They send agents to Arakin.
- 2•18: (Stroane) A coup led by the Lord General Terell—backed in secret by members of *Ahn Sye Zanar, Order of the Cloak*—has the other two of the Trinity, as well as the agents of the Sel-kai Banks, arrested and the Katra's son rumored to be killed (*actually, he is taken to Ahrenreth*). Terell declares martial law in Arakin. High Priest Shatang and the Katra's Uncle are tried and executed for treason; the Sel-kai bankers are ordered to return home empty-handed. The Order of the Cloak asserts its influence.
- (Sel-kai) The bankers return (by Navigator Jump), and within hours Sel-kai declares the Stroane government invalid. They make plans to recover their investment.
- 2•31: A Portal opens on the plains of Miir in Hæstra and three beings from another time and place emerge. *They are the Dreamlords. They depart for the East.* This event unlocks the portal, and for several days, horrible creatures emerge: demons from and beyond the Pales. Finally, Loremasters arrive and seal the portal. But many of the hideous beings remain free.

SUMMER 6051

- (Stroane) Lord General Terell has trouble maintaining power in the sprawling, recently taken lands of Miir and Vornia. Independent-minded lords reassert their authority and much of Hæstra is torn by warfare. Resistance in the cities becomes more widespread.
- (Hæstra) Wild wolves and stranger creatures continue to range far from the Spine highlands to harass homesteads in the hills. The Choak Pass becomes a dangerous road except for well-armed caravans—and even they have no chance against the occasional forays of the Red Dragon.

- (Jaiman) The Arnak Priest of Dansart sends his evil Messengers of Ulkya against the northern provinces of Rhakhaan. More strange creatures emerge from Zor to harass the Imperial forces (they are mutants bred by Dansart).

AUTUMN 6051

- (Jaiman) The Dragonlord Sulthon Ni'shaang consolidates his hold over Wuliris. He decides that Frelik has grown too powerful (he would prefer to see the Usurper and Emperor at each other's throats indefinitely) and considers a move south into the Zorian wastes.
- The deterioration of southern Hæstra continues: most lords refuse to pay taxes to Arakin, and desertion among the Stroane mercenary armies is rife.

FALL 6051

- 5•21: (Jaiman) At the climax of an important battle between Helyssa loyalists and forces of the Priest Arnak, Prince Kier Ianis appears in his homeland amidst a tremendous surge in the Essænce. He is wearing the Sea-drake Helm. Under Kier's leadership (and using the powers of the Helm) the armies of Yarthraak are driven back or destroyed.
- 5•22: (Jaiman) Night skies above Jaiman are illuminated by unprecedented Flow-storm activity. The most intense disruptions are above the center of the continent. These storms are accompanied by minor but frequent earthquakes.
- 5•23: (Jaiman) The main powers of the Sea-drake Helm fail (*as do those of all six helm-crowns of Jaiman; the vault of Crowns is disabled*). Prince Kier retreats into hiding and initiates a guerrilla offensive against reduced and disorganized armies of Yaarth.
- 5•40: (Jaiman/Rhakhaan) The Emperor, in order to head off rampant rumors, declares Frelik's claim irrelevant, since the Crowns are no longer true symbols of the rightful monarchs. Nevertheless, the realm is in chaos.

• 6052 •

WINTER 6052

- Spurred by Bishops of Mynistra and Priests of Andaras, most of the lords of Miir and Vornia sever their ties from Arakin. Larger cities (Relian, Orian, Dynax, Helberna) are independent city-states, while across the countryside dozens of manors become essentially independent fiefdoms. This situation creates an environment where bandits and highwaymen flourish. Trade suffers; the cities are full of former mercenaries offering their ser-

vices as bodyguards. Many are not to be trusted. The realm of Stroane shrinks to the Lene river on the north and Qye to the south. Niév is an independent town, still dominated by a Priest of Andaras. The Archbishop of Helberna is freed from prison and soon elected Lord Mayor.

- *The Elves of Námar-Tol begin quietly buying up large amounts of raw Arinyark, the rare mineral crucial to making the antigravity metal Xenium. Their interest spurs more exploration for the mineral. They are building a secret fleet of very small, fast Skyships, powered by the starstones—jewels found by Selia Rendanaar.*
- (NE Jaiman) The Dragonlord Sulthon Ni'shaang takes the initiative against depleted Zor and the Syrkakang, and seizes lands to the west and south. Earthquakes accompany volcanic eruptions in Ja'miil Targ.
- The Izaran League is formed: a loose mutual-protection alliance between Sarnak, Izar, the Komaren Cluster, and Barellis.
- *The beginning of the Grand Campaign...*
- (Jaiman) The Dragonlord Sulthon Ni'shaang takes the initiative against depleted Zor and the Syrkakang, and seizes lands to the west and south. Earthquakes accompany volcanic eruptions in Ja'miil Targ.
- 1•20 – 1•30: *Schrek, Oan Lyak, and Dari Holvir of the Jerak Ahrenreth meet secretly and decide to begin a program of assassinations among their enemies to further disrupt political situations.*
- 1•22: Ignatus Jurgon, a merchant baron of Sel-kai, is found murdered in his study. (It is the work of Saren Xanaari, revenge for House Jurgon illegally infringing on their trade.)
- 1•33: (Sel-kai) *First meeting of Olgivana Centaurus, Barrin Qaterris, Koren Maas (security minister), Enik Foor (Minister of State), and Boren Alsec (Commerce Minister). Olgivana puts forward her plan to have Barrin succeed Prince Rylec.*
- 1•35: (Jaiman) One of the Priests Arnak in Lethys is murdered by a *Cult of Stars* assassin.
- 1•54: Rylec Qaterris, Prince of Sel-kai, narrowly escapes assassination. Three days later, the alleged attacker (a woman in black) is found dead on the steps of the Prince's Palace. City gossip says she had on a steel ring—mark of the Grey Ring. *She was a Cult of Stars assassin, indeed caught and killed by the Grey Ring.*
- 1•66: *The Cult of Stars assassinates the Loremaster Gireg Jaan, who had been investigating the Jerak Ahrenreth.*

SPRING 6052

- Zornaq, High Prælector of Vajaar in Uj, annexes the Komaren Cluster, declaring it a haven of sin and evil and in need of a religious purge. The Komari (having no interest in becoming part of religiously oppressive Vajaar) retaliate, precipitating a series of naval battles. The defenses of the port of Aquitar on Komaren are reinforced. Kaitaine, geographically and politically caught in the middle, declares neutrality, but is forced to further fortify the ports and patrol the island perimeter.
- (Jaiman) The Cloudlords demoralize the Y'kin government. This frees Rhakhaan forces fighting on the southern fronts to defend the east and north.
- 2•1 (Jaiman) Frelik begins his march towards the Rhakhaan capital, accompanied by only 50 guards. He claims to be coming under the flag of truce to negotiate peace.
- 2•11: (Stroane) General Terell is murdered by one of his generals, triggering a revolt in Arakin. There is rioting and the royal palace is burned and looted. Chaos rules for several days before another officer (Guard Captain Snythe) gains control of the city.
- 2•15 (Jaiman) Frelik arrives outside Haalkitaine. Instead of negotiating, he declares himself Emperor. In a brief ceremony, Frelik's Advisor Belock places the *Phoenix Crown* on his head, and the Usurper, anticipating that he be granted tremendous powers by the crown, demands that the Emperor abdicate. He barely finishes his declaration, however, when two black-clad women appear nearby and attack Frelik and Belock. Frelik is slain at the very gates of Haalkitaine, but Belock apparently fends off the attacker and vanishes. There is a simultaneous attempt made against the Emperor Jerrin himself, but he is saved by the Loremaster/ Changramai Master T'vaar Dekdarion. The assassin is captured before she can escape or kill herself and placed under heavy guard. She is believed to be a member of the *Cult of Stars*.
- 2•15 (Jaiman) *The Jerak Ahrenreth's plan to create chaos in Jaiman backfires as the Emperor of Rhakhaan's greatest threat is removed while the Emperor himself is saved through intervention of the Loremasters. Oan Lyak, the 'Dreaded Assassin' and mistress of the Cult of Stars, swears that she will personally slay the Loremaster T'vaar Dekdarion.*
- 2•16: (Jaiman) Taking advantage of the demoralized and leaderless condition of his enemies, the Emperor orders an attack. The Phoenix Crown is recovered and the Usurper's guard is arrested. As news of the Imperial victory spreads, Frelik's forces all surrender or flee.

2•16 (Jaiman) *Oan Lyak orders the liquidation of the Cult member who failed in her mission. The Emperor's would-be Assassin is murdered in her high-security cell, despite all precautions.*

2•20: (Jaiman) After being assured by the Loremasters that the Phoenix Crown no longer exerts magical control over the wearer, the Emperor announces the date of his coronation: the first day of summer.

2•25: *Zener Morndaak (the Loremaster who's report on the status of the Crowns may have been read in Nomikos) is captured in Urulan by a shadowy group known as the Silver Claw.*

2•35: *Zener Morndaak dies under torture.*

2•39: (Jaiman) T'vaar Dekdarion is attacked in Haalkitaine Palace. He fends off the would-be killer but is wounded with a poison knife. The assassin, a woman in black (an agent of the Cult of Stars) escapes. Dekdarion falls into a coma.

SUMMER 6052

- The Vajaar-Komari war continues with little progress. The few times Vajaar forces make land on a Komaren island they are ferociously attacked by the infamous *Blood Brethren*. The Izaran League allies also come to the Komari's aid.
- 3•1: (Jaiman) Jerrin Talus Malvion Faslorin III is crowned Emperor of Rhakhaan by Eldest Loremaster Kirin T'thaan. Many envoys from other countries attend, including Dúranaki, Elves, many Melurian lords, the Prince of Sel-kai (arriving by skyship) and Cloudlords. The celebration lasts ten days. With heavy security by Palace Guards, Changramai, and Loremasters, there are no incidents.
- 3•23: Eidolon trembles and tilts a fraction of a degree for a few seconds, causing a panic among residents. The city rights itself and stabilizes, but the cause for this alarming event is not discovered.
- 3•44 *Klyrunak of the Ahrenreth arrives at the Watching Isle; his search for the Tomb of Andraax is almost over.*
- 3•48 *Klyrunak enters the Tomb of Andraax and encounters Tya'ar. Andraax is alerted to the intruder.*
- 3•49 *Unable to make sense of the Lords of Essænce vault, Klyrunak proceeds to the Hall of Worlds, where Andraax catches up with him. The Mystic is no match for a Lord of Essænce, but Andraax is unable to fully shield his identity from the Ahrenreth adherent. Klyrunak escapes with this knowledge and his life, no more. Andraax remains here to meditate and converse with Tya'ar, then goes to Karilôn.*

- Tensions escalate between the Elves and mortals of Sel-kai. Scuffles between rival gangs of thugs increase.
- Sendar and Sendil, demigod offspring of Akalatan, are awakened by their father. They emerge from their secret mausoleum and he directs them to the *Heart of Agoth*. The twins then make their way towards Kenezán, capital of the Lankan Empire.

AUTUMN 6052

- (Jaiman) Kier Ianis claims his throne in U-Lyshaak. He sends messengers to The Elven Forest, Norek, and Rhakhaan asking for aid.
- (Jaiman) While no longer in control, the forces of the Arnak Priests are still troublesome to the governments of Jaiman. They retreat into shadows to build again.

FALL 6052

- Large Arinyark deposits are found in the Scorpion Ridge near Jantanen. Miners from Sarnak and other nearby towns flock to the site despite hazardous conditions.
- 5•58: The Nameless One appears alone in the Garden of Songs on Karilôn. He warns of an impending global catastrophe and vanishes. A few Loremasters claim to have seen six fingers on his hands, while a few believe they caught a glimmer of gold in his eyes, spurring a rumor that the Nameless One is in fact the legendary sixth Dragonlord: Kydak Dûm, the Golden Dragon. *Andraax is there in disguise; he and Tethior each see through the other's illusion, but Tethior flees.*

• 6053 •

WINTER 6053

1•1: *(Just after Midnight on New Year's Eve; the North Pole) The insane K'ta'viir lord Ondoval, accompanied by three K'ta'viiri lieutenants, enters the Northern vault and takes the Eye of Utha. He is unable to destroy it, but has created a vessel which controls its powers. Two of the Lords are killed and Ondoval is badly wounded, but he escapes back to the Shadowed Secret with the Eye. Immediately, the Southern Eye attempts to compensate (The Lords of Orhan also lend power to the Southern Eye, but they cannot continue this indefinitely) but is unable to fully protect the globe. Kulthea shakes with a worldwide earthquake. And that is just the beginning.*

AFTERMATH OF THE LOSS OF THE NORTHERN EYE (THROUGH WINTER 6053)

- Essænce storms wreak havoc; the hemisphere curtain (the Wall of Darkness) breaks down in random areas.
 - The entire globe is swept by storms and aftershocks for the next 2-3 days, causing widespread flooding, property damage and thousands of deaths.
 - Coasts are buffeted by tidal waves. Portals everywhere sporadically open and close, drawing in any beings and animals nearby or spewing forth strange creatures.
 - The Navigators suspend service for 30 days. (their compasses behave erratically for 10-20 days before returning to normal function.) Most sea travel is virtually impossible for 10-20 days; perilous for another 10-20 because of storms.
 - Sel-kai Skyships, being more fragile and susceptible to Essænce than sea vessels, are grounded by order of the Prince for a full 30 days.
 - Eidolon is shaken by tremors for hours; a few residents flee to the ground. Meanwhile, Sel-kai City suffers the worst floods in 200 years. There are scattered fires but they are for the most part contained due to the well-prepared fire-marshals.
 - Meteor showers rain fire down all over the planet; combined with lightning storms and volcanic eruptions they trigger raging fires. These would be far worse except for the widespread downpours and blizzards.
 - The Great Kaitaine Fire. A meteor strikes the city and triggers terrible devastation; fires burn for days. Over half of the city is destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Undaunted, the Guilds begin reconstruction.
 - A land mass rises out of the center of the Lonely Sea. It is part of the lost continent of *Tarania*.
 - Many other cities across the planet are damaged by earthquakes and the fires which are triggered by them. Several dormant volcanoes become active, spewing ash into the sky.
- ≈1•1 *The Loremaster Council is called into emergency session (attended in secret by Andraax), and the Navigator Guild Alliance convenes a conclave (they gather as soon as the Essænce storms subside enough for travel)...*
- *Schrek summons a gathering of the Jerak Ahrenreth. They gather to discuss the deeds of Ondoval and how to salvage their own plans for dominance; they are at odds with the Priests Arnak, several Dragonlords and other factions.*

Schrek is becoming desperate to locate the Heart of Agoth and regain his full powers before the collapse of the protection of the Eyes. He attends the council with a new bodyguard, a very large humanoid wearing a full helmet. Schrek claims that the guard is in fact the infamous Shar-Bu, lord of shards who can literally kill with a smile...

1•35: While the seas are still stormy, the Komari launch a devastating sneak attack against Vajaar, via a coral road. They infiltrate Vajaar's war harbors and sink two-thirds of her fleet while it sits vulnerable, docked in harbors. The Komari demand the Prælector's immediate surrender. He is humiliated, defeated by a nation of *sherki*.

SPRING 6053 (THE PRESENT)

- While the weather stabilizes somewhat, sea storms are still common—as are sightings of and attacks by a variety of fearsome sea creatures. For the next few months, valuable, nonperishable cargoes are rerouted via land routes.
- Stories reach the main cities that several Navigator-guarded caravans across Hæstra are attacked by highwaymen. In every case, the Navigator leaves the criminals dead or crippled, to the delight of the caravan leaders, despite a surcharge. *The Navigator Leadership relaxes their noninterference policy in certain circumstances.*
- (Jaiman) Settlers flee the Lu'nak region, claiming the 'Forest Demons' have returned. The New Syrkakang (ousted from much of Lu'nak) asserts dominion over all the Myr Fostisyr. The Fustir, Ky'taari and Udahir are in hiding.
- A Jenaar emissary from the Alliance arrives in the beleaguered Vajaar to offer aid in return for Alliance membership.
- The Light dragon *Ssamis T'zang* emerges from her eyrie to terrorize the inhabitants of the Scorpion Ridge.

5 • CALENDAR NOTES

Any culture is going to have days out of the year set aside as special for one reason or another. The reason for such days can be religious or secular, ephemeral or practical. Below is a summary of holidays observed by some major cultures in Jaiman and Emer.

THE KULTHEAN CALENDAR

Before launching into a description of holidays, a review of the common calendar is in order. This reckon-

ing was developed by the Loremasters, and is used by the Navigators and most cultures on Emer and Jaiman.

SEASONS

Kulthea—like any planet with an axial tilt and regular, elliptical orbit—has four celestial “seasons.” Their formal beginnings and endings are largely ignored however (except by astronomers, and for a few holidays) in favor of the much more obvious pentennial phases of the great moon Orhan.

There are four landmark dates in the seasonal year of Kulthea, two Solstices and two Equinoxes:

Solstice: When the sun appears to be farthest from the planetary equator. There are a ‘summer’ and ‘winter’ Solstice, the latter signifying the first day of the calendar to year to many Kulthean cultures.

Equinox: Where the sun passes the planet equator. The vernal occurs when the sun appears to pass from the south to the north; autumnal when it appears to move north-south.

MONTHS

Rather than follow the above pattern, most cultures have adopted ‘seasons’ which mirror the five months, each seventy days long. These are listed as follows, beginning with the winter solstice, when Orhan is new:

Winter: The period of deepest cold.

Spring: Weather grows warmer; planting season.

Summer: Warmer weather still, yet (relatively) pleasant.

Autumn: Hottest weather, then cooling. The last day of autumn is usually an indicator for harvest.

Fall: Temperatures drop; harvest; preparations for Winter made.

This varies from culture to culture of course, depending on climate, hemisphere, and social orientations. (The Southern Hemisphere, for instance, goes in reverse.) The names given here are conventionalizations.

However, Orhan begins each month new, waxes to full on the 35th, and wanes again towards the end of the month.

WEEKS

There is a shorter period marked by many of the more sophisticated Kulthean cultures, the ten day span which is delineated by the phases of Varin, the Second Moon. Unlike the huge Orhan (which appears much larger than even earth's moon in the sky), Varin barely shows a visible disk. It is rather bright, however, and can be seen on even sunny days.

However, since seventy days is a rather cumbersome length of time to keep track of, most people think in terms of ten-day weeks. Following are the names of the days as declared by Loremasters, and their Erlin (common Elvish) translation:

DAYS OF THE WEEK:

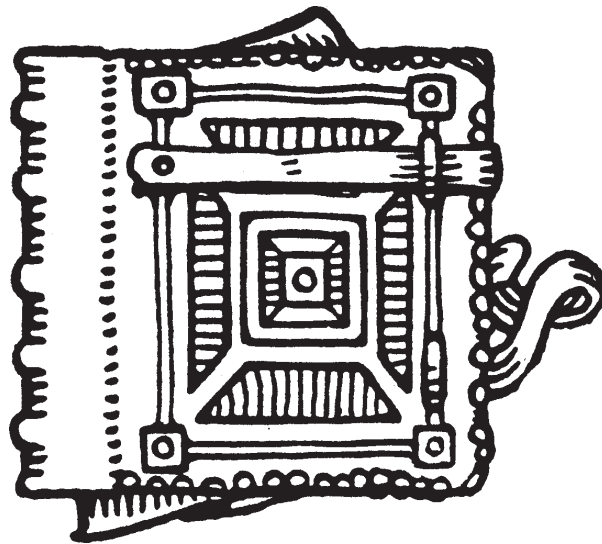
Erlin Name	Translation	Significance
Orhayen	Moon-day	Varin is full
Buryen	Fire-day	
Usivyen	Water-day	
Melyen	Earth-day	
Ordyen	Air-day	
Maryen	Dark-day	Varin is new
Kyayen	Star-day	
Aryen	Sun-day	
Kindagyen	Cloud-day	
Purlyen	Wind-day	

The day of the full moon is considered the first day of the week, and is market day in many cultures.

Note: Unlike a modern industrialized week, in medieval societies there is no 'work week' and 'weekend,' everyone works every day. Religious services are held early in the morning or in the evening. Because of this, holidays are even more significant.

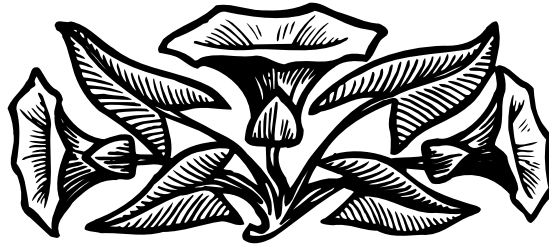
LOREMASTER RECKONING

Interestingly, the Loremasters ignore Varin for official record-keeping purposes, using Orhan exclusively to divide the Kulthean year. Dates are recorded as "TE 5090, Orhan 4, day 45" for example. This means the 45th day (of 70) of the fourth month (otherwise known as Autumn in the northern hemisphere) in the year 5090 of the Third Era. It might be even more briefly recorded as 5090•4•45. The Scribes of Nomikos and all the Navigator Guilds also use this simple but effective calendar system.



· PART III ·

HÆSTRA CLIMATE & DENIZENS



I could hardly believe our luck—we were no more than an hour from the port of Orian, up from the unhappy little town of Qye. Maybe those tales about a giant kraken in the Sea of Votania were really just no more than tales. Going by ship saves days over travelling by land. Hard to believe that so many crusty mariners would be afraid of a rumor though...

The sun went down and darkness swept across the waters all around us. I felt a cold wind on my face; saw clouds moving in from the north. Looked like a storm coming... then suddenly I was thrown off my feet and nearly over the balustrade as the ship lurched backwards. Had we hit a some hidden rocks just under the surface? Then I saw them—two then three, then more, like huge blind serpents coiling over the rail and onto the deck: tentacles. One knocked a man overboard as you or I might swat a bug. Then another wrapped around a crewman and lifted him into the air like a doll, screaming. Other tentacles, dozens of feet long, gripped the ship, and we began to list badly to starboard. The first mate was yelling for everyone to grab harpoons and swords, but it seemed like there would be no stopping this monster...

Maret Skeldo, of the Trader Ship 'Blue Morning'



Second largest of the four main continental regions of Emer (the others are considered to be Tai-emer, Khûm-kaan and Uj; Onar, Silaar, Ræl and the islands are considered 'lesser regions' by conservative geographers), Hæstra is the most widely cultivated and the most densely populated of Emer's varied lands. Its mild climate, fertile soil, and available resources make it an ideal region for human habitation.

In this section the climate and basic geography are discussed. Also described are some typical—as well as not so typical—flora, and fauna, and the races who inhabit the Hæstra region.

1 · CLIMATE & GEOGRAPHY

Shielded on nearly every side, Hæstra is protected from all extremes of nature. The humid mid-latitude climate is ideal for agriculture; no wonder that Hæstra has been called the breadbasket of Emer.

HÆSTRA CLIMATE

Following is some general climate-related information which serves as a guide and key for terminology used in the various areas of Hæstra.

CLIMATE TYPES

The climate of Hæstra is tremendously variable, depending on latitude, prevailing winds, proximity to coasts, Essænce Flows, mountains, and a plethora of other factors. The Weather Map shows some basic wind and Flows information, and utilizes the terms defined below to provide basic guides as to the typical weather activity for a given area.

Rainy Tropical: At most, one or two dry months; all months warm or hot.

Wet and Dry Tropical: A well-developed dry season with one or two rainy seasons; all months warm or hot.

Semiarid Tropical: Light precipitation, rapid evaporation; all months warm or hot.

Hot Arid: Negligible precipitation, rapid evaporation; all months warm or hot.

Humid Subtropical: Precipitation in all seasons with maximum in summer; long warm summers, cool winters.

Dry Subtropical: Hot dry summers; cool, moderately rainy winters.

Humid Mid-latitude: Precipitation in all seasons with maximum in summer; long warm or hot summers, cold winters.

Temperate marine: Numerous rainy days in all seasons with moderate total precipitation, higher precipitation in highland areas; warm summers, cool winters.

Semiarid mid-latitude: Light precipitation; warm or hot summers, cool or cold winters.

Arid mid-latitude: Extremely light precipitation; warm or hot summers, cool or cold winters.

High altitude: Climate varies with elevation, latitude, and exposure.

TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION

In addition to the weather map, the chart below provides some temperature and precipitation guidelines.

As noted above, most of mainland Hæstra is well-protected from coastal storms. Precipitation is generally

moderate, however, and actually heavy in the late spring (supplied from the Bay of Izar and the Sea of Votania). Summers are mild, the temperature rarely exceeding 90° F. While often during the winter the temperature dips below freezing for days at a time, rarely does Hæstra experience truly bitter cold.

A more detailed depiction of Hæstra's weather picture can be gleaned from the weather table below.

HÆSTRA WEATHER TABLE

	Lowlands (Miir, Vornia)	Hills (Bodlea)	Coasts/Isles (Danarchis)
Winter	15-35° Mod Sw/Rn Breezy	10-30° Mod Sw/Rn Breezy	35-50° Normal Rain Windy
Spring	40-55° Rainy Breezy	35-50° Normal Rain Breezy	40-65° Rainy Windy
Summer	70-90° Moderate Rain Calm	60-80° Moderate Rain Breezy	65-85° Normal Rain Breezy
Autumn	60-80° Moderate Rain Calm	50-70° Moderate Rain Breezy	60-80° Normal Rain Breezy
Fall	40-60° Normal Rain Breezy	30-50° Mod Sw/Rn Windy	45-60° Normal Rain Windy

KEY

Temperature: is expressed in degrees Fahrenheit as the average daily low-high. Note that most Kultheans do not describe temperatures so precisely; they simply say the temperature is *cold*, *cool*, *warm*, or *hot*. Mountain temperature refers to the habitable regions between 1,000-3,000' above sea level. To calculate temperature at higher altitudes, subtract 1° for every 300' more above sea level.

Precipitation: refers to the % chance of rain or snow falling on a given day. In the higher altitudes of the Spine of Emer and Gold Mountains, snow will usually occur when moderate Snow/Rain yields a precipitation result.

Moderate Rain: 15% rain; partly cloudy.

Moderate Sw/Rn: 5% snow; 2% sleet; 8% rain; partly cloudy.

Normal Rain: 25% rain; partly cloudy.

Rainy: 40% rain; cloudy.

Wind: Speeds are given in miles per hour. Above the tree line, winds are considerably more forceful. Treat *Breezy* as *Windy*, and *Windy* as *High Winds* (20-60+ mph)

Calm: 0-9 mph; or consult Sea Winds Table (-20).

Breezy: 5-20 mph; or consult Sea Winds Table (-5).

Windy: 10-40 mph; or consult Sea Winds Table (no adjustment).

SEA WINDS TABLE

Calculate the wind speeds at sea, around islands and along the coast according to the following table (percentages reckoned according to an open-ended D100 roll). When rolling for the coast of a sheltered bay, reduce the total by 20.

Wind Condition	Normal Roll	Fall Roll
Dead Calm (0-1 mph)	01	01
Light Winds (2-7 mph)	02-25	02-25
Moderate Wind (3-7 mph)	26-74	26-74
Strong Wind (8-18 mph)	75-89	75-84
Gale (32-54 mph)	90-96	85-92
Storm (55-72)	97-00	93-97
Hurricane (73+ mph)	—	98-00

MOUNTAIN RANGES

The ranges which guard Hæstra's borders are formidable barriers. All are relatively young mountains except Choak, a legacy from an earlier epoch.

Hæstra is bordered on the south by the *Forbidden Hills*; beyond lies the desert of Uj. To the west stands the *Izaran Crest*, and to the east the mighty *Spine of Emer*. Northeast are the *Mountains of Gold*.

THE SPINE OF EMER

Separating Hæstra and Tai-emer and extending far beyond Hæstra southwards, the Spine of Emer is one of the most prominent features on the face of Kulthea. Beginning south of the Choak Mountains, the ridge runs unbroken for over 1500 miles. Only at the famous Gap of Uj does the Spine pause before rising again to run south another thousand miles. With a sharp dogleg east, the chain makes a twisting path southeast before finally sinking into the sea 800 miles further. The Spine of Emer has many tales to tell, for it has many residents both above and below its surface. Scattered through its peaks are also several dormant volcanoes. One is active: Mount Gorath, about 400 miles south of the northern tip of the range. Gorath spews smoke on a regular basis and surrounding lands are shaken with tremors. It has not had a major eruption in decades, though it seems only a matter of time before Gorath shows its anger again. Two of the Spine's largest peaks also bear specific mention:

Shúthos: The Iruaric name means 'fiery mountain.' Indeed the snow-covered tip of

Shúthos glows with red fire as the sun sets. At the southern terminus of the north spinal ridge, the Fiery Mountain overlooks the Gap of Uj. Though no match for Larnthos, Shúthos is a respectable 11,000 feet in height. Its upper portions are very sheer.

Larnthos: This mighty peak was named 'tall mountain' with good reason. It stands at nearly the same latitude as the peak of Votania, but rises to a height of 17,000 feet. The pinnacle is all the more spectacular from the east. (The southern Hæstran plains are nearly 4000 feet above sea level, reducing Larnthos' relative height.)

CHOAK MOUNTAINS

Like an afterthought, the Choak Mountains cap Emer, rising up in an inverted 'T' shape a hundred miles north of the last peak of the Spine. Ironically, they are much older than any of the other mountain ranges on Emer. Apparently they survived geological turbulence which much of the rest of the region did not.

MOUNTAINS OF GOLD

A ridge of hills jutting up from the ocean, they form a sheer barrier between central Hæstra and the stormy waters of the open sea — isolating the Elven Isle of Talæn and a handful of neighbors from the mainland. Named for their golden color in the sun, they also embrace rich mines of that precious element.

THE IZARAN CREST

These old, rolling hills lie along the eastern banks of the Bay of Izar, separating Sarnak from the lands to the east and north. The Crest is much higher on the Bay side, the last fold before the great plateau (which holds central Hæstra and the Sea of Votania) falls to the level of the ocean.

SCORPION RIDGE

Named for the hooking line of the ridge not unlike the curled barb of a scorpion, the ridge encloses the southern portions of the Bay of Izar. It is rocky and the slopes are steep, but a few hardy groups have made their homes along its flanks. The Ridge also has several dormant volcanoes and three known active ones.

MORBЕК HIGHLANDS

A vast area of ancient mountains whose peaks have long ago worn down, the Highlands still rise to a respectable altitude. Mining attempts in these hills have yielded nothing of value, proving





*The Barrier Isles form an intimidating boundary between the
Sea of Gold and the Forbidden Sea*

them to be worthless as well as ugly. However, ancient lore speaks of a kingdom beneath the Hills, populated by strange, stunted people. These are the Murlogi, and under these hills and the Forbidden Ridge is their realm-under-the-mountain. And even further down are the Ash lairs.

FORBIDDEN RIDGE

High and sheer, the Forbidden Ridge is true to its name: the peaks are almost barren of vegetation and composed of a black rock, giving them an ominous quality. However the Ridge is rich in minerals of many kinds, including jewels, silver and rare materials. But also lurking under the Ridge are the tunnels of the Murlogi.

SEAS & WATERWAYS

Bounded by seas to the west and north, this region's coasts are erratically populated because of the often treacherous coastlines. Inland Hæstra is a well-irrigated land,

with countless rivers, streams and small lakes throughout the landscape.

OCEAN & COASTAL HAZARDS

The nature and frequency of dangers faced by seafarers varies somewhat from body to body, but most share some common perils. Many islands are ringed by treacherous coral reefs that can rip open the hull of any ship, or sandbars lurking just beneath the water surface. Even a cautious captain can run aground of these, his ship trapped forever. More unpredictable are whirlpools and waterspouts (tornadoes at sea). The former can draw a ship down into the depths to vanish without a trace; the latter can wreck sails and masts, or even lift a ship out of the sea. And the sea is not immune to Essænce Storms. These sometimes form with normal storms or hurricanes to create a force of terrible destruction.

Then of course there are sea beasts: sharks, giant sea-turtles, sea-drakes, giant squid, sea-serpents...

SEA OF GOLD

Most of the northwest coast meets this relatively calm sea, named long ago perhaps for the adjacent mountains or the lovely hue it acquires at sunset.

STRAITS OF MELURIA

While reefs are less of a problem here than further south, the Straits are infamous for their strong currents, spontaneous whirlpools, and of course the boiling seas around Aranmor in southern Jaiman.

FORBIDDEN SEA

North of the *Barrier Isles* (named appropriately for their many jagged spires, deadly reefs, barely submerged rocks and unpredictable currents), the cooler waters are also rougher and deeper than the Sea of Gold—and more often stormy. Few mariners brave the open ocean here.

BAY OF IZAR

Another prominent feature on the Emerian landscape is the huge enclosed bay along the western coast. Sheltered by the Scorpion Ridge along the south and the Morbek Highlands to the southeast, the waters of the bay are calm and easily navigable. There is little land upon which to gain a foothold, the only flat shores lie to the northeast. Land meets water in rocky shoals along much of the rest of the coast, and in the southwest sheer cliffs loom.

There are three primary ports on the bay: the Port of Izar at the mouth, the town of Bentara along the northern coast, and the city of Sarnak, lying to the far east of the bay and shielded under the Morbek highlands.

KEYTEN RIVER

The Keyten River travels east-west across northern Hæstra, dividing the Bodlean states from the expanding arm of Stroane. It is wide and deep, an excellent waterway for travel, though all boatmen shun the haunted city of Zinvar on the isle at the mouth of this river.

One of the most famous mystical beings of Hæstra is Kellus, a powerful Naiad of the river Keyten who protects the bucolic Bodleans from southern aggressors.

ALANA RIVER

Originating in the Spine of Emer, the River Alana winds its way southwest to empty into the Sea of Votania.

THE LANGASSE

Langasse flows nearly north-south from the Mountains of Gold into the Sea of Votania. Once this river literally flowed with gold from the rich mines, but now it is only blue.

URIJ RIVER

Urij flows down from the foothills of the Forbidden Ridge into the Bay of Izar. The upper reaches of this river are swift and dangerous — far too rocky to be navigable.

VOTANIA

Geographically and historically, Votania is a place with few rivals in the picture of Kulthea. It has been home to the Emperor of Emer, the Masters of Emer, and conceals still a secret citadel beneath its green flanks.

This isle lies near the heart of Emer, at the center of most comprehensive maps of the Western Hemisphere. Guarded by the deceptively calm Sea of Votania, the isle is rarely visible, clothed in a thick veil of mist. The sea is a freshwater body and very deep. Tales of some sort of kraken-like monster living in the depths of the sea are unsubstantiated, but rumors and sightings have persisted for millennia. Votania is also the nexus of a flow coil—a spiral of Essence energy spiraling out from the island and across the continent.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Spine of Emer — especially the central region — is a rich repository of valuable minerals. It is no wonder that Stroane has become a wealthy nation with such a copious base. In addition to coal, iron and copper, the mountains yield up quantities of gold and silver, Shaalk, Keron, Eogs, and even Kregora.

The Mountains of Gold were once a plentiful and easy supply of that yellow metal, but their easily-accessible supplies seem to have dried up. Tales of new veins are always circulating, but most are dismissed as wild rumors.

A rare vein of Orhan Marble is not completely depleted in the Forbidden Ridge, but it is also difficult to reach. The only practical access is by water over the Sea of Votania, a voyage few dare to undertake.

2 • FLORA

Hæstra's temperate climate allows for a wide variety of plantlife. Many types of deciduous tree are common, as well as many coniferous forests, especially to the southwest.

DÍR TREES

The black wood of Dír is among the most prized of hardwoods, being similar to ebony. Durable and fine-grained, it makes superior staves and bows. Its dark beauty is unmatched in elegance.

The Dír tree itself is deciduous and grows in a tall, vertical trunk with short, horizontal branches. Its small

leaves are nearly round with a dark underside and a silvery green upper face. Dir tree seed pods are disc-shaped, curling under at the edge to create an aerodynamic air pocket. The bark of the tree is nearly black like the core. Dir trees, while best known in the north of Jaiman, are found primarily in the northern regions of Hæstra, SW Uj, and Ræl.

HOEN TREES

Also deciduous, the Hoen has an overall form similar to the oak, but with large three-lobed leaves which have a light golden color in autumn. The bark of the tree is even lighter than the silver birch, and the wood itself is naturally a pale color which makes it quite valuable. It makes excellent bows.

Hoen trees are rare but flourish when tended by Elves. The isle of Talæn is heavily forested with them, and the Emerald Forest is said to have a number deep in its embrace. Elsewhere they are scarce, though a few can be found in the western regions.

MIRAN TREES

This deciduous beauty is rarely encountered outside of Elven lands. Originally only found on Urulan, seedlings were brought by Elven colonists in the early centuries of the Third Era.

Mirans are similar to maples in many ways, but with lighter, smooth bark and rounded, dark green leaves which turn deep gold in the Fall. Miran seeds are like walnut-sized acorns, dark brown with a golden cap. They are delicious to eat, and a handful can provide a full day's sustenance. In Hæstra they can only be found on Talæn and in the Emerald Forest.

BORE-BURRS

Small shrubs found in hilly regions sprout these shiny brown burrs which catch on the clothes of a passing man or steed and cling. They can sense body heat, and if not removed within a few minutes, the tiny organism inside sprouts. It will burrow into the flesh (the host may feel a sting), making a home in muscle or fat tissue. Once the burr 'bites' it requires a deep incision to remove it, otherwise the burr drains one hit the first day, two the next, three the third, etc., as it grows. After 10 days the only way to stop it is to remove the limb or major surgery by a Lay Healer. Left unchecked, the burr will grow, making the affected area swell and deform, until the host lapses into unconsciousness and eventually dies. If a host is bitten by several burrs at once he may die within a few days. Whether plant or animal it is uncertain, but death this way is said to be extremely painful.

FOGFLOWERS

Resembling a lily, these lovely white flowers give off a sweet scent during the day, but as night settles, they exude a bluish mist. Herbalists theorize that the mist is a defensive mechanism, driving away nocturnal beasts which would consume the Fogflower's sweet leaves. The fog-like emanations of these flowers can be considerable; a field of fogflowers can blanket the countryside in a heavy mist, only burning away in the late morning sun. They are common in southern Bodlea.

SIENE

Said to be the gift of the Orhanian god Kieron, Siene is a bush which produces a luminous orange berry. The berries do not keep well, but can be made into a preserve.

In any case, a small amount of the fruit has the effect of cleansing the body of any intoxicant in seconds (it also cures hangovers). This miracle fruit is indispensable



for curing addictions; it is also quite rare. It can be found on the slopes of Votania and the southern shores of the Sea of Votania.

THOKOT

A sturdy shrub, Thokot is able to thrive in even the most hostile of environments. It has small bluish leaves and produces bitter red berries, but Thokot's main feature is the 4" long thorns which grow all over the plant. These thorns exude a sticky fluid which has the effect of a mild to moderate nerve poison. Shadowy landowners use the bush to guard their borders. Thokot is rare in Hæstra, seen only along the shores of the Bay of Izar.

3 · FAUNA

While one might think that much of Hæstra is settled, there are still wide stretches of virtually untouched forest and moor. In these lands many beasts both common and enchanted make their home. Also, the flora and fauna of the mainland differs greatly from that of the islands.

MAINLAND FAUNA

Following is a discussion of some typical beasts which inhabit the inland areas of Hæstra.

BIRDS

On the interior mainland can be seen the usual variety of normal temperate avians, from sparrows to hawks and

falcons. The huge *Rocs* are rare but there are eyries in the Spine of Emer.

BLACK SQUIRREL

Actually large, ebony-furred flying squirrels, these imps look like normal rodents, but are actually voracious carnivores. Huge swarms of them have been known to swoop out of trees and overpower unwary travellers.

GHOST HOUND

Deadly and silent, these huge pale dogs travel in packs all along the upper flanks of the mountainous Spine of Emer. Their breath is freezing, and the icy claws of a Snow Hound will freeze their prey to the bone.

NIGHT HOUND

Night Hounds shun the sun, wandering by starlight when their coal black coats conceal their presence. They have luminous yellow eyes and are silent like the Snow Hounds. Night Hounds are larger than their Ghostly brethren, often waist high at the shoulder and weighing in excess of 200 pounds

GRYPHON

Enchanted animals with the head and wings of a huge hawk and body of a grey panther, gryphons are an awe-inspiring sight. They are somewhat intelligent and usually very dangerous. Preferring their lofty aeries to lowlands, they are rarely seen away from the peaks of the Spine of Emer.

GEMSTING

These huge, semi-intelligent scorpions are more common in Uj, but can also be found along the beaches near the Mountains of Gold. It is these which the Dyari of Skystone City have tamed and made into fearsome mounts for their defensive guards.

UNICORN (WHITE)

A beast of unequalled beauty, the unicorn resembles a graceful pure white horse with a single spiraling horn projecting from its forehead. The whorled horn can be either gold or silver, but always has an unnatural, metallic look about it. Unicorns, while intelligent, have an inscrutable outlook, and will almost never embroil themselves in mundane events. They are incredibly rare, but sightings seem to occur most often in the vicinity of Flow-storms. Unicorns are creatures of the *Essænce* and are apparently able to travel through the Planes with ease. They also have an intrinsic mastery of spells, many having access to the lists *Shield Mastery*, *Lofty Bridge*, *Elemental Shields*, *Spell Reins*, and *Warding Power* (see the *Master Atlas Book*).

It is believed by many Kulthean cultures that a Unicorn sighting is a guide or harbinger.

ISLAND FLORA & FAUNA

Most of the western isles (e.g., Komaren, Barellis, the Rashelles) are tropical or sub-tropical, with rain forest covering most of their rugged land. These are home to a vast array of wildlife.

PRIMATES

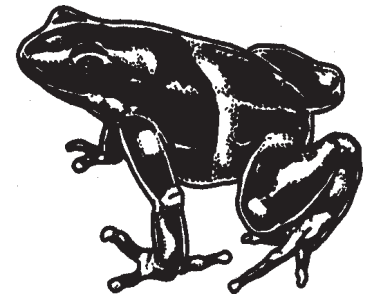
Some of the less densely settled islands still have populations of apes and other primates—including some of the large, hostile Grey Apes.

SNAKES

A variety of snakes large and small make their home on the isles. Some are venomous while others are constrictors. The largest are the giant pythons of the Rashelles.

TREE FROGS

Common on the islands, these amphibians come in a variety of colors and are usually quite tiny. However, some have a highly poisonous secretion on their skin, while one type can spit a reduction poison up to twenty feet if frightened.



BIRDS

The islands feature a wide assortment of brightly-plumaged birds, including some very large parrots. Some, especially the prized Falta-bird, are hunted for their beautiful feathers. Others are kept as pets.



The Falta bird

WATER FAUNA

The temperate waters along the western coast are home to a wide variety of fish and sea mammals. And the fresh water Sea of Votania harbors its own mysteries.

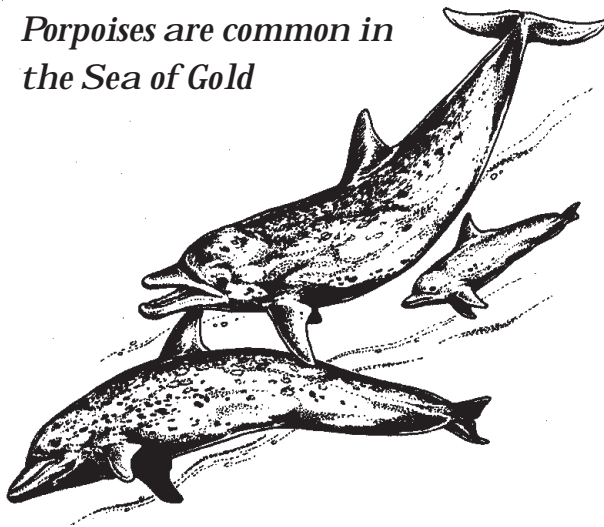
Dolphins, whales and sharks are among the larger creatures to be encountered in the seas; few whales are seen close to the shores, while sharks prefer the more southern areas. Dragon turtles and sea serpents are also known to live in these waters.

KRAKEN/GIANT SQUID

At least one kraken has been encountered within the Sea of Votania; there may be more than one, or the sea may actually be connected to subterranean bodies of water through deep tunnels. Giant squid are spotted along the coast periodically.

Kraken rarely attack ships, tending to dwell at great depths. However, when food is short they venture into the shallows and will attack anything they consider threatening.

Porpoises are common in the Sea of Gold



4 · RACES

The races common to Hæstra are described in detail in this section.

ELVES

General Inf.: Males 6'-6'10", 150-200 lbs.; females, 5'6"-6'2", 115-165 lbs; highly resistant to extremes of natural heat and cold; death occurs only through violence; 2 hours of meditation each day suffice in place of mortal sleep. Superior hearing and vision; can see outdoors at night as full daylight.

Elves are very similar to humans, except they are generally taller and have elongated ears with points at the top, slightly larger eyes, and more delicate features. Men have no facial hair, and they have almost no body hair, while scalp hair grows thick and full throughout their lives. Elves mature as humans, but once they reach adulthood they do not age.

Many Elven cultures revere the Lords of Orhan, while others follow lesser deities and the more rustic spirits of forest and river.

HIGH ELVES (IYLARI)

The most lordly of all the Elves, two Kindred make up the Iylar race: the *Linæri* and the *Loari*. There is also an offshoot tribe of the *Loari* known as they *Dyari*.

Linæri (Iy.: 'Singers')

The *Linæri* possesses golden-blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin. While of the High Race, they prefer open spaces to structures, and when they build homes they are always very airy designs filed with light and warmth.

True to their name, the *Linæri* are a musical people. Even the least of them can play the harp or sing, while the more talented compose music or delight the ear with expertise on several instruments. Garments of white, silver or gold enhance the nobility of the *Linæri* demeanor.

Loari (Iy.: 'Builders'):

The *Loari*, have raven-black hair, predominantly brown, grey-blue or hazel eye color, and fair—even pale—skin.

While the *Loari* love nature as much as the *Linæri*, they seek to unlock its hidden secrets rather than enjoy it in its untouched state. They are unsurpassed at gem-cutting, architecture, and the making and working of alloys. Their egos are also unsurpassed among Elves and men — except perhaps by those among their kind who have turned to darkness: the *Dyari*.

Dark Elves (Dyari):

Despite their name, the Dark Elves do not have darker skin than their brethren, in fact they are often very fair-skinned, and have pale—even white—hair. Their ears frequently have more pronounced points than the other Elves; their eyes are grey, black, or sometimes amber. Often, however, they are so similar to their *Loari* brethren that it is difficult (at least for mortals) to tell the difference.

The Dark Elves instead gained the name because of their reputation for serving darkness. It is true that many of their kind have been seduced by the lure of the Unlife (many of the Priests *Arnak* are *Dyari*, for instance), but most *Dyari* are merely what one might call 'mercenary.'

They embody the worst traits of the Loari but to the extreme: they are vain and arrogant, considering all other races (including other Elves) to be inferior. They have a lust for power, whether it be gained by magic or might, and they have love technology. But while the Loari love machines partly as clever creations in themselves, the Dyari see them primarily as tools to gain wealth and power.

Forest Elves (Erlini).

Forest Elves most often have sandy hair and light blue, green, or grey eyes. Like the Linæri, they prefer to live close to nature in her unaltered state. When they employ tools and structures these are always subtle and clever of design, simple yet practical.

These are the most prevalent of the Elven-kind by far, and in many areas they have interbred with mortal groups to create a hybrid race. (See Half-elves below.) However, when a culture of Erlini has been isolated for a long period, they are very shy and resist becoming involved in the affairs of humans or High Elves.

Aquatic Elves (Shuluri):

Aquatic Elves are a rare and elusive breed of Elves having both gills (hidden inside their throats) and lungs, able to exist equally well on land or in water. They physically resemble High Elves, but are very pale, with blond or white hair. They also have slightly webbed hands, elongated, webbed toes, and an inner eyelid which helps to protect the eye while underwater. Aquatic Elves may live on land or in water; typically they reside near coral reefs or other shallow water areas.

Half-Elves (Ta-lairi):

The variety in Half-Elves stems not so much from the subtle variance in Elves, as the more pronounced differences between the Mannish races. The common different kinds of Half-Elves are noted in the race chart in the Master Atlas, with statistical differences.

The Ky'taari of the Mur Fostisyr and the Sulini of Tanara are examples of this fusion; there are numerous other cultures whose people are — as a group — descended from an Elven-man-

nish mix. They are almost always mortal, though enjoying a slightly longer life span, remaining healthy and hale until very near the end, then aging very rapidly over the last 5 years or so, of life.

Individuals who are children of a pure-blood Elf and pure-blood Human may be given a choice (by Eissa, one of the few gods to have the power to grant such a choice) whether to be mortal or immortal—or it has been predetermined at birth by genetics (aka 'the will of the gods').

MANNISH RACES

In addition to the common racial types described in the *Master Atlas Inhabitants Guide*, there are a number of specific racial types who make their home on Emer.

Anzeti: 5'4" - 6'0" tall, no professional limitations. Life span: 100 years.

The Anzeti are a smallish people but hardened greatly by the unfriendly climate of the chilly climes they inhabit. Dark haired, with red-brown skin and green or hazel eyes, they reside almost entirely in the high, mountainous areas of central Emer. They are generous, quiet, and shy, for they are seldom encountered by other races.

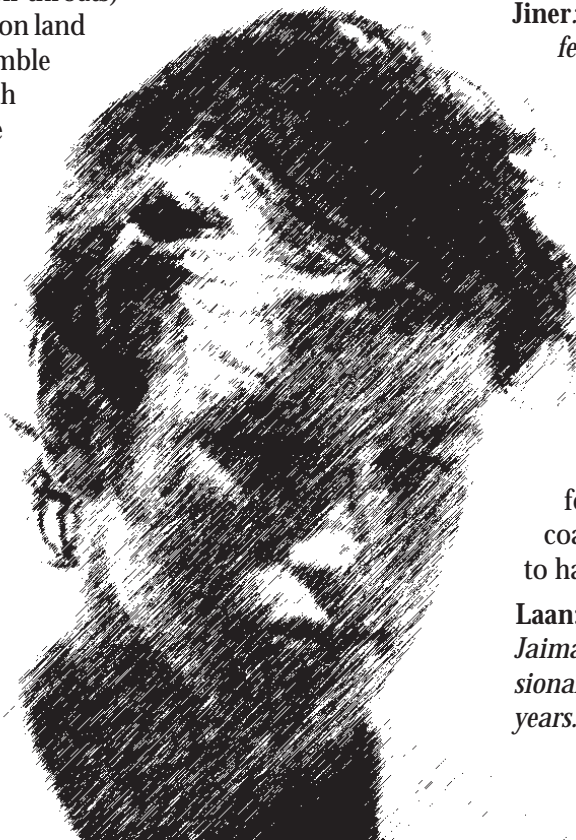
Jiner: 5'4" - 6'4" tall, slender, no professional limitations. Life span: 70-100 years.

Similar to the Y'nar (see below) in facial features, but tend to be more tall and lean.

Eyes are usually brown or amber, and a distinguishing feature is the epicanthic folds (the small overlap of skin over the eyes). Jineri also have the 'flattened' features: small noses, wide, prominent cheekbones and forehead. Their hair is always coarse and straight, and they tend to have darker skin than the Y'nari.

Laan: (*High Men; related to the Zori in Jaiman*): 5'8" - 6'10" tall, no professional limitations; life span 100-200+ years.

The Laan tend to be even taller than the lordly Elves, but more heavily boned and physically stronger, though perhaps less nimble than the Elven-kind. Their hair is dark brown or coal black, eyes blue, grey or



Bren Kælerion, a Linær Elf

From the Sketchbook of T'sandar Vey

occasionally a bright green, and they tend to be fair-skinned, from very pale seeming to a ruddy but light complexion. Few of the men sport beards, and many have little or no facial hair. The Laan are great warriors, leaders and empire-builders: their ambition matches their great stature. They are concentrated in Emer in the Kaitaine vicinity and in verdant hills of Hæstra.

Shay (Common Men): 5'4" - 6'2" tall, no professional limitations, though *Essence* and *Mentalism* user would be particularly rare. Life span: 50-80 years.

Made up of a mixture of several racial subgroups, the Shay peoples are shorter than most other races but stocky and hardy. They usually have brown hair and fair skin, with eyes blue, hazel or brown. Shay men are more hirsute than most other races, and are likely to let their facial hair grow. Shay are most prevalent in Tai-Emer and the southern and central regions of Hæstra.

Talath (Northmen; also Myri in Jaiman): 5'10"-6'10" tall, no professional limitations, though *spell users* would be very rare. *Magical arts* are frowned upon on most cultures. Life span: 70 - 100 years.

The Talath are a hardy race, blond and blue-eyed. They have cultures in Northern Hæstra, and because their appearance suggests a people of a cooler clime, are believed to have migrated from Jaiman. Powerfully built, the Talath are of amazing size and strength. Most have a fair countenance; the men have little or no beard. Both sexes are big-boned and have a strength borne of a life of hard work and pure spirit.

Tending to be a people of simple means, the Talath have never been empire builders, preferring to live in small villages tending their sheep and crops. They are often subjugated by other peoples, but even this seems not to phase them overmuch — unless they are assailed by servants of the Unlife, in which case they fight with a fevered determination.

Thesians: 5'6" - 6'6" tall, slender, no professional limitations. Life span: 60-90 years.

The graceful Thesians, with their dark brown skin, full lips and flattened noses, could well be descendants of the famed *Jinteni* race. Loremasters base this conjecture on what few statues and reliefs they have found which can be linked to the lost *Jinteni*. In Hæstra there are very few Thesians except on Thesmoq, where they are virtually the entire population. Other Thesians on Emer are for the most part in Onar and Khûm-kaan. All Thesians have dark brown eyes, very dark skin, and have little hair, except on their scalp, where it grows in very tight curls. Long-fingered hands are also the norm.

Y'nar: 5'0" - 6'0" tall, no professional limitations, though they tend more towards *Mentalism* than the *Clerical* or *Essence* pursuits. Life span: 60-80 years.

Concentrated mostly in the northeasterly regions of Emer — especially the hills of the great Silaaran peninsula — the Y'nari are a quiet people. Small but hardy, they have fair skin and little body hair, but scalp hair is thick and while it can be straight or curly, it is almost always black (or, in rare cases, silver). Eyes are usually brown or amber, and a distinguishing feature is the epicanthic folds (the small overlap of skin over the eyes). Y'nari also have 'flattened' features: small noses, wide, prominent cheekbones and forehead.

Fauns: 5'6"-6'4" tall; run almost twice as fast as a man; no suggested limits on profession. Life-span: immortal, part *fairie*

Spirits of the woods and fields, Fauns are a somewhat mysterious race, and apparently have a number of subgroups. Some possess the hind legs of a goat; others only the hooves of a goat instead of human feet, and others have normally developed human bodies. All, however, display small goat horns springing from the invariably chestnut curls that cover their pointed ears. Fauns are boyishly handsome (beardless), muscular young men with an infamous libido. They are musically talented and they shamelessly employ their enchanting voices to beguile humans into their arms.



Phylos Chantari of Izar, son of A Thesian father and Loari mother. Note the pointed ears and dark coloring.

*Charcoal drawing by
Kendar Deramien, Loremaster*

One bizarre aspect of the race is that they are all male. Fauns mate with other humanoid females, and if the child is male, there is a 20% chance of it being a Faun.

When not following their baser passions, members of this race have been known to produce great works of art, music and poetry. Some have become skilled Alchemists and smiths. At least one is known to have been a Navigator.

UNDERGROUND RACES

Dwarves: 4'-5'6" tall, 90-200 lbs, no professional limitations, resistant to extremes of temperature. Average life span 150 years. Superior night vision: can see up to 100' in total darkness (infra-red vision).

A secretive, subterranean people, Dwarves tend to keep to themselves in their underground empires. They are suspicious of other races, though they sometimes find kindred spirits among the Loari and Dyari.

Short and powerfully built, they seem ideally suited for a life underground, though their homes are usually much more than a mere warren of tunnels: they have constructed entire cities and palaces under mountains. Male Dwarves almost always grow thick beards. They usually wear thick wool and linen clothing, sometimes with leather trim. While Dwarves may be of any profession, they tend towards mining, construction and craftsmanship. Many are Alchemists.

In terms of worship, some follow Iorak or Valris, while others follow local deities. A few have fallen to follow dark gods.

The Loremasters believe that the Dwarves began living underground long ago during the interregnum to hide from the fearsome creatures on the surface. They face a different threat however: sometimes their digging leads them too far and they stumble upon a tunnel to the Ash Lairs.

There are at least four distinct tribes of Dwarves, though few but they can tell them apart.



Sculpture of a Sleeping Faun

*From the Ruins of Aldain City.
Sketched by T'sandar Vey*

Trogli: 4'6"-5'6" tall; suggested professional limitations: no spell users (optionally, only low-level Channeling-related spells); fear daylight, but can become accustomed to it; average life span: 50 years.

Trogli fear all things alien to the underground world. Terror keeps them far from the surface and entrances where sunlight penetrates; encounters with beasts or Men from the sky-covered fields quickly become bloody frays driven by panic. Trogli possess muscled bodies with bluish-white skin; their eyes glow in the darkness with an eerie red light. Sloping foreheads and massive jaws form the contours of their large heads and long, tangled, black hair grows from their scalps. Trogli

often wear armor and wield weapons stolen from their foes, but use stones as clubs or missiles when they have nothing else.

DARK RACES

Murlogi: (called in some areas *goblins*) 3'6"-4'6" tall; suggested professional limitations: no spell users; excellent night sight, blinded by daylight (-75 to all activities if outdoors); strong; average life span: 80 years.

Round-headed creatures with snub noses and wide mouths, Goblins possess greenish, yellow skin and toeless feet. Mechanically inclined, the Murlogi have invented many machines to torture as well as those useful in warfare. Utility and strength mark most of their creations, but they are invariably inelegant like their creators. Murgoli are skilled miners, enlarging their underground kingdoms by connecting nearby caverns with tunnels. Often an entire mountain range (The Morbek Highlands are an excellent example) may be webbed by these passages. Goblins stay below ground by day, but night sees them swarming the lands in search of brutal amusement.

Garks: 4'-4'6" tall; suggested professional limitations: no non-channeling spell users; average life-span is 30 years.

Mottled grey fur covers all of the ape-like Gark, except the palms and soles of his feet. Long arms hang to his knees, and a powerful, prehensile tail grows from the base of his spine. Most Garks possess only limited intelligence, and usually use crude weapons such as clubs, hatchets, and spears. They wear simple, decorative clothing and organize themselves by family groups. Each group shares a large nest suspended high above the ground in the trees. Occasionally, males band together to raid the homes of nearby Mannish peoples. Garks are omnivorous, but some groups relish the taste of raw human flesh.

Garks have been trained by some dark sorcerers and lords to act as a crude military force, and though they are powerful fighters, they are not as easily disciplined as the more military Lugrôki.



A LUGRÔKI

LUGRÔKI

Lesser: 4'-5' tall; partially blinded by direct sunlight (-50 to all activities); suggested professional limitations: no spell users; average life-span: 100 years.

Greater: 5'-6' tall; dislike, but can operate normally in sunlight; no suggested professional limitations; same as lesser LUGRÔKI in other respects.

Grotesque faces with slanting eyes and flattened snouts full of sharpened tusks further deform the heavily built, muscled body with its long arms and thick, swarthy hide. Cannibalistic cruelty motivates their distorted souls, and a LUGRÔKI respects little save superior force. Most are superb smiths, but they rarely make items unassociated with war. Lesser LUGRÔKI are born to live, fight, and die in darkness; they hate the stars and moonlight, but panic under the brighter sun. Greater LUGRÔKI are smarter and tougher; they can operate in daylight and possess superior skills in speaking, reasoning, and fighting; some superior individuals have been known to be spell-casters. LUGRÔKI are frequently confused with Goblins due to their similar gruesome physiognomies and proclivities, but if legends are to be heeded, their origins are very different.

DEMONS

In addition to the demons covered in the *Master Atlas*, there are many more which have not been thoroughly covered. These include entire races of Essænce Demons living in parallel worlds near our own. One such alternate-Essænce world is *Azdyær* (Ir. "Home of dark thirsts") which the inhabitants call *Kai-tjiin*. It is related to the dark god Klysus (perhaps he rules there) and his Demigod Akalatan.

This planet is a warm, humid world always cloaked in clouds, filled with rainforests and volcanic islands. It is ruled by a hierarchy of Procreator demons, all devoted to base carnal pleasures of every kind. They enter the Shadow World when they can, to rape humans and Elves with the intent of propagating their race. They are summoned by the priests of the Python cult on Rashelles (and by Priests of Klysus

in Lankanôk). Sometimes appearing as powerful and fantastically virile men; sometimes possessing the priest and transforming him, they ravish their victim—male or female—and plant their enchanted seed. If the victim survives, a female may be pregnant with a demon-spawn, giving birth in just 90 days, 25% chance the experience kills her. The father then returns to claim his offspring. A male may be 'infected' and slowly become essentially a were-demon (rules as for werewolf, except were-demon attempts to ravish nearest humanoid).

DEMON TYPES

All fall under the classification of Procreator demons, though their powers differ slightly from those of the archetypal Procreator. Their normal appearance is described below, though all can assume a fair form (except during insemination, when their true form is revealed). All have a musky odor they cannot hide, and are naked in their natural form. All know the following lists to their own level: **Evil Mentalist** *Mind Subversion*, *Mind Domination* **Mentalist Base** *Mind Control*, **Houri Base** (RMC IV pg. 60, if available) *Influences*, *Alluring Ways*.

Reveling in emotional (and physical) torture, they like to dominate their mate. If by seduction and deception (preferred by the Go-tjiin and Jo-tjiin), they use spells or their irresistible fair form to entrap their mate, only revealing their beastly form in the throes of passion. Alternatively (the method preferred by the Khal-tjiin-kai) they seize and subdue the nearest man or woman and brutally rape them, enjoying the emotional and physical

damage they inflict. But the ultimate goal of all Procreators is to create more of their kind, either through offspring or transformation.

Go-tjiin-kai: (“servile-demon-men”)

(Type III demon, level 6-10, 50% chance of appearing) Least of the three known races of Azdyaer, the Go-tjiin are often slaves or servants of the Jo-tjiin. They appear naturally as tall (6’6” – 7’), muscular and virile youths with pale skin, oversized, pointed ears, small fangs, glowing gold eyes, hairless except for metallic-golden hair spiked up from their heads.

Jo-tjiin-kai: (“Master demon-men”)

(Type IV Demon, level 11-15, 4 PP/lvl, 45% chance of appearing) Taller than the Go-tjiin, (7’6” – 8’) the masters have red-brown skin, huge musculature, pointed ears taller than their head, small black horns, fangs and their fingers have retractable claws. Their eyes glow with an orange light. Fantastically virile, they also have a two-foot-long prehensile tongue which can strangle a man

(among other things). They are hairless except for a long, mohawk-like mane of black hair on their heads.

Khal-tjiin-kai: (“Terrible demon-men”)

(Type VI Demon, level 21-30, 6 PP/lvl, 5% chance of appearing) Though about the same height as the Go-tjiin, (7’6” – 8’) these terrifying lords are far more powerful and dangerous. They have glistening black skin like marble which burns to the touch. Their bodies have hugely over-developed muscles and they are grossly virile. Totally hairless, they sport large pointed ears and a set of ebony curving horns, from their fanged mouth they can extend a 4-foot-long, blood-red prehensile tongue. Their oversized hands have curving claws like steel and their eyes glow a deep, hungry red. They are insatiable.

ATTACK RESULTS

Demon	Critical (Depression+Stress)	% Chance ‘Impregnated’
Type III	C (1 each)	20%
Type IV	D (1 each)	50%
Type VI	E (2 each, plus 3 A heat))	80%

DEMONS

Type	Lvl	Bs Rt	MxPce/ MMBns	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Attacks	# Enc	Outlook (IQ)
Go-tjiin kai	8	60	Fspt/30	MF/FA	M	150	11(60)	150LBa(2x)/150LGr/Spells/Special	1-3†	Cruel (VH)
Type III Procreator, attempts to subdue, grapple and ravish target. May use spells (see text).										
Jo-tjiin-kai	17	80	Spt/20	MF/FA	M	190	12(60)	180LBa(2x)/180LGr/Spells/Special	1-2†	Cruel (VH)
Type IV Procreator, attempts to subdue, grapple and ravish target. Tongue grapple: 80MGr. May use spells (see text).										
Khal-tjiin-kai	25	100	Dash/10	MF/FA	L	240	19(50)	230LCI(2x)/250LGr/Spells/Special	1†	Cruel (VH)
Type VI Procreator, attempts to subdue, grapple and ravish target. Tongue grapple: 100LGr. May use spells (see text).										
Pale VI Demon	27	150*	Dash/50	VF/FA	M/LA#	250	12(60)	180LCI(2x)/130LBa/100MBi†/150LCr\$1		Cruel(AV)

* Special
† If encountered randomly; otherwise depends on how many are summoned.



MONSTERS AND DANGEROUS PLANTS OF HÆSTRA

Type	Lvl	Bs Rt	MxPce/ MMBns	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	AT Hits	(DB)	Attacks	# Enc	Outlook (IQ)
Bore-burrs	0	0	0	N/A	T	1	4(0)	10TPuncture/Special	5-50	N/A
Black Squirrel	0	30	Dash/40	FA/FA	S/-	20	1(40)	20TBa/10SBI/30SBI	5-100	Bellig
Gemsting	4	80	Run/10	MF/VF	M/I	85/F	12(40)	60LPi(2x)/80LSt/poison	1-3	Hungry
Giant Spider										
Lesser	3C	60	FSpt/30	MF/FA	S/—	30D	3(30)	20SPi/40SSt/poison†/Special	2-20	Hungry(NO)
Greater	8F	80	Spt/20	MF/FA	M/I	160F	4(40)	70LPi/75LSt/poison/Special	1-10	Hungry(LI)
Major	20G	100	Dash/10	FA/VF	L/LA†	350G	12(60)	120HPi/90LHo/poison/Spells/Special	1	Cruel(HI)
Night Hnd	5	150	Dash/20	VF/FA	M/—	100	4(30)	90MBi/50GBreath	1-10	Bellig.
Sea Serpent	15G	100	FSpt/20	MF/FA	H/SL	400G	16(30)	90HGr/150HCr†/80HBI/90WBr[Heat]	1	Aggres.
Sentinels										
Warders	10	—	—	—	LA	300	20(0)	Special	Pair	Protect (SU)
Guardians	10	—	—	—	LA	400	20(0)	Special	Pair	Protect (SU)
Shards										
Lesser	15H1000‡	Dash/50	BF‡/BF‡	M/II	175G	12(50)‡	120lcb(2x)(Slash)/poison§	1-5	Cruel(AV)	
Greater	25H1000‡	Dash/50	BF‡/BF‡	M/LA	225H	12(50)‡	150lcb(2x)(Slash)/poison§/100Bolt‡	1	Cruel(VH)	
Lord Shards										
Hoar-Ak	45	1000†	Dash/50	BF†/BF†	M/II	300	12(90)*	220lcb(2x)(slash)/Poison3/Bolt 170†	1	Cruel (HI)
Snow Hnd	6	150	Dash/20	VF/FA	M/—	90	4(30)	70MBi/50IBreath/30CBreath	1-10	Bellig.
Unicorn	10	160	Dash/40	BF/VF	L/I	200	11(80)	200LHo120MBa†/110MTs†/Spells	1	Good(SU)
SPECIFIC BEASTS										
Motar Voorg	38G	200	FSpt/15	VF/FA	H/SL	450G	16(50)	100HBI/140HCl/110HBa/70HHo/100FBr*	1	Varies(VH)
Red-gold Dragon (Fire Drake) of N. Spine of Emer. Fire Breath Weapon										
Ssamis T'zang	34G	250	Dash/25	BF/VF	H/SL	300G	12(60)	80HBI/100HCl/70HBa/100HHo/120LBr*	1	Varies(HI)
Blue-white Dragon (Light-Drake), Southern Scorpion Ridge. Lightning Breath Weapon										

BEAST & MONSTER CHART CODES

Enc: This is the size range of a typical pack of the creatures when encountered in or near their lair. A pack will often contain a wide range of levels/ages (including some young). Often, only a patrol comprised of fewer members will be encountered away from the lair. If no range is given, one such creature is normally encountered.

Outlook: a general measure of the creature's outlook, attitude, demeanor, and/or reaction/behavior pattern.

IQ: This is a measure of the monster's reasoning and memory ability. The statistic is not normally given for animals since their actions are often based upon instinct.

* — Special.

4 — On ground, movement rate is G of that given, "run" is the maximum pace, the DB is halved, and claw (Cl) attacks cannot be used.

* Reduction Poison; poison level is equal to level of Kæden attacker.

†Special: see text and rules

‡ — Special.

NOTES FOR THE GREAT DRAKES

Attack Patterns for Drakes: (wyverns and fell beasts [see flying beasts table] follow a similar pattern)

Each round while *in flight*, a drake may:

- 1) use its breath weapon (if able) *and* if diving on a target, it may also use:
 - a) its horn attack (roll each critical twice and take both results) **or**
 - b) its claw attack (can be used as a HGr attack to attempt to grab smaller targets) **or**
 - c) its bash attack (can be used as a HCr attack with double damage in an attempt to land on a smaller target).

On land or in the water a drake may use:

- 1) its breath weapon (if able to) and one claw attack or one bash attack **or**
- 2) its horn attack and one claw attack and its bash attack (tail) **or**
- 3) its bite attack and one claw attack and its bash attack (tail) **or**
- 4) two claw attacks and its bash attack (tail).

Changes in Base Movement Rate due to Environment: The base movement rates above for drakes and wyverns are for movement in their primary environment (air, land or water; listed after the creature type above). The chart below gives the percentage of primary base movement rate which may be used in other environments. In parentheses after the percentage is the actual base movement rate for a 'mature' drake of the given type. A dragon in flight must be in a dive to achieve a 'pace' of 'FSpt' (x4) or 'Dash' (x5, a power dive). No drake may 'FSpt' or 'Dash' *underwater*.

	Winged In Air	Winged On Land
Fire Drake	100%(200)	30%(60)
Light Drake	100%(250)	20%(50)

UNDEAD										
Type	Lvl	Bs Rt	MxPce/ MMBns	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Attacks	# Enc	Outlook (IQ)
Wörim Wight	15D	50	Spt/10	SL/VF	M/LA#	145E	1(90)	110We[Cold]/90LBa(Cold)/Spells	1	Protect(AV)
Jinteni Wraiths										
lesser (IV)	10C	70	Dash/30	MF/VF	M/II#	120D	1(70)*	80We[Cold]/70LBa/Special/Spells	1	Cruel (SU)
greater (V)	15F	60	Dash/20	MD/BF	M/LA#	165E	1(50)*	100We[Cold]/90LBa/Special/Spells	1	Cruel (HI)
Undead Sorcerers										
Corpse Candle	7H	-	-/-	-/-	M/II#	100A	1(30)	Spell/Special(4 Con pt/rnd)	1	Cruel (LO)
Found in the Wailing Marshes										
Ghost Wolf (IV)	10H	120	Dash/30	FA/VF	L/LA#	200A	4(55)*	100Lbi/75MCl50/Special	1-5	Berserk(NO)
LAND ANIMALS OF HÆSTRA										
Type	Lvl	Bs Rt	MxPce/ MMBns	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Attacks	# Enc	Outlook (IQ)
Bats										
small	0A	50	FSpt/40	VF/VF	T/—	4A	1(60)	10Tbi100/20Sbi(6)	1-100	Passive
large	1A	90	Dash/30	VF/VF	S/—	10A	1(60)	20Sbi100/30Mbi(3)	1-50	Normal
Bears										
Large	10G	90	Spt/10	MF/MF	L/I	230G	8(30)	85LGr60/65LCl†/70Mbi§/90Mba40	1-5	Aggres.
Small	5E	80	Spt/20	MF/MF	L/—	150F	8(20)	60LGr60/50LCl†/50Mbi§/70Mba40	1-5	Aggres.
Beaver	2A	40	Run/20	MD/MD	S/—	40C	3(35)	40Sbi100	1-5	Timid
Bee/Wasp	0A	30	Dash/30	MD/VF	T/—	1	1(40)	0TSt80/0TPi20/20TSt(10)	1-300	Normal
Birds										
small	0A	70	Dash/30	FA/FA	T/—	5A	1(70)	00Pi50/0TCl150/0Scl(6)	1-200	Timid
large	1A	100	Dash/30	FA/FA	S/—	8A	1(50)	0SPi50/0Scl150/20MCl(3)	1-100	Timid
Cats										
Large	5D	100	Dash/30	FA/MF	M/—	100E	3(40)	40MCl40/60Mba60/60Mbi§	1-2	Aggres.
Small	3C	110	Dash/40	VF/VF	S/—	60D	3(60)	30MCl30/20Sbi30/Both40	1-2	Aggres.
Condor	4C	100	Spt/10	FA/MF	M/—	90E	1(30)	50LCl100/45MPi 4	1-2	Passive
Deer	2B	130	Dash/30	VF/FA	M/—	70F	3(40)	20MHo90/20MTs10	2-20	Timid(N)
Dogs										
Large	4C	120	Dash/20	VF/FA	M/—	65G	3(40)	45Mbi100	2-20	Aggres.
Small	2B	100	Dash/30	FA/FA	S/—	45F	3(50)	50Sbi100	1-10	Normal
Eagle	3C	130	Dash/20	FA/FA	M/—	30E	1(30)	50MCl100/35SPi 4	1-2	Aggressive
Falcon	2B	200	Dash/40	VF/BF	S/—	20E	1(60)	45Scl100/20SPi 4	1-2	Aggressive
Hawk	2B	150	Dash/30	VF/BF	S/—	25B	1(50)	40MCl100/25SPi 4	1-2	Aggressive
Owl	1A	100	FSpt/20	FA/FA	S/—	20A	1(50)	35Scl100/10SPi 4	1-2	Normal
Rabbit/Hare	1A	100*	Dash/40	VF/FA	T/—	10D	1(50)	0Tbi100/10Sba(6)	1-10	Jumpy(N)
Rodents										
Large	1A	30	FSpt/10	MD/MF	S/—	15B	1(20)	10Sbi100/20Tbi	2-20	Timid(N)
Small	0A	20	FSpt/20	MD/MF	S/—	8A	1(30)	20Tbi100/20Sbi(6)	2-20	Timid(N)
Sheep (Male)	2B	110	Dash/50	FA/FA	M/—	45E	3(40)	60Mba100/50MTs§	1-10	Normal(N)
Wolf	3C	110	Dash/20	FA/FA	M/—	110E	3(30)	65Mbi100	2-20	Aggres.

REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND WATER CREATURES OF HÆSTRA										
Type	Lvl	Bs Rt	MxPce/ MMBns	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Attacks	# Enc	Outlook (IQ)
Alligators/										
Small, water	1A	40	Run/20	MD/MD	M/—	85D	7(20)	50MBi100/30SGrS/Special *	1-10	Aggres.
Large, water	3C	50	Run/10	MD/MD	L/—	20E	7(10)	80LBi100/80MGrS/Special *	1-10	Aggres.
Dolphins/Porpoises										
Dolphin	8F	80	FSpt/40	VF/FA	L/—	80E	1(40)	50MBa80/40MBi20	20-100	Normal
Porpoise	7E	80	FSpt/35	VF/FA	L/—	85E	1(40)	60MBi100	2-20	Normal
River Dolphin	6E	80	FSpt/30	FA/FA	L/—	70E	1(40)	50MBi100	2-6	Timid
Fish										
Large	3C	90	Spt/20	FA/FA	L/—	35D	4(20)	50MPi100	1-5	Normal
Medium	1B	70	Spt/30	FA/FA	M/—	20B	3(30)	30SPi100/40MPi(3)	1-20	Normal
Small	0A	50	Spt/40	FA/FA	S/—	8A	1(50)	0TPi100/10SPi(6)	1-100	Passive
Frogs										
Frog	0A	10*	Run/20	SL/FA	T/—	A	3(30)	0TBa20/0TGr80/20TGrS	1-10	Timid
Toad	0A	10	Run/10	SL/FA	T/—	A	3(40)	0TBa30/0TGr70/10TGrS	1-10	Normal
Tree Frog	0A	10*	Run/10	SL/FA	T/—	A	3(40)	0TBa30/0TGr70/10TGrS	1-10	Normal
Jellyfish	0A	5	Walk/0	IN/IN	T/—	2	1(30)	Touch gives 1-10 hits	1-100	Passive
Killer Whale	9F	100	FSpt/25	VF/VF	H/LA	450H	8(20)	100Lba30/110Hbi70/150HGrS	1-5	Belligerent
Lizards										
Small	0A	10	Dash/10	VF/FA	T/—	A	3(60)	0Tbi60/0TCl40/20Sbi(6)	1-10	Normal
Large	1B	20	FSpt/0	MD/MD	S/—	0C	3(50)	10Sbi50/20Scl30/Both20	1-10	Normal
Sharks										
Large	5E	100	FSpt/20	FA/FA	L/—	180F	4(20)	100Lbi100	1-10	Belligerent
Small	2B	80	FSpt/30	FA/VF	M/—	90E	4(40)	60MBi100	1-20	Aggres.
Snakes										
Boa/Python	3C	30	Run/0	VS/MD	L/I	5F	3(0)	70MBi30/60MGr70/90LGrS	1-2	Aggres.
Non-Poisonous	0A	40	Spt/10	SL/VF	S/—	0B	1(40)	20Tbi100/0Sbi(6)	1-5	Normal
Sea Snakes	1A	30	Run/10	SL/FA	S/—	0B	1(40)	30Tst100/Poison†	1-2	Normal
Viper	1B	40	Spt/10	SL/VF	S/—	5B	1(30)	20Sst100/Poison†	1-2	Normal
Squid										
Small	1A	40*	Run/30	MF/MF	S/—	20B	1(50)*	40SGr100/30TPi†	1	Normal
Medium	3B	60*	Run/20	MF/MF	M/—	40D	1(30)*	60MGr100/40SPi†	1	Normal
Large	6D	80*	Run/10	MD/MF	L/II	70E	1(30)*	80LGr100/60MPi†	1	Normal
Giant (Kraken)	10E	100*	Run/10	MD/MF	SL	130F	1(20)*	100HGr100/80LPi†	1	Normal
Turtles, Aquatic&Land										
Small, water	0A	30	Run/10	SL/SL	S/—	0B	12(20)*	20SPi90/30TBa10	1-2	Passive
land	0A	5	Run/0	CR/SL	S/—	0B	12(20)*	0Sbi100	1-2	Passive
Large, water	2B	40	Run/10	MD/MD	M/—	0E	12(0)*	50MPi70/60Sba30	1-2	Passive
land	3C	10	Run/0	CR/SL	M/—	0E	12(0)*	20MBi100	1-2	Passive
Whales										
Baleen	10G	100	Spt/10	MF/MF	H/SL	700H	8(50)	80HGr50/75HBa50	2-10	Passive
Beaked	6E	90	Spt/20	MF/MF	H/LA	400G	8(40)	85HPi75/60Lba25	6-10	Timid
Narwhale	7E	90	Spt/30	MF/FA	L/LA	300F	8(50)	80HHo60/60Lbi20/50Lba20	2-10	Normal

· PART IV ·

REALMS & KINGDOMS OF HÆSTRA

Our horses shuffled through the deepening snow and I wondered once again why we didn't take a ship north from Arakin and save ourselves several days of road travel in winter. But Randæ had been evasive, saying only that our eventual destination was inland and this would work out better in the end.

But the weather was turning against us. The snow seemed to be falling harder with every minute and several inches already lay on the ground. By my reading of the map we were nearly upon a town called Niév—a perfect place to spend the night—but Randæ was talking about skirting the town and heading east towards the foothills of the Spine of Emer tonight. This seemed ill-advised, to put it mildly.

“I would rather not stay in Niév.” He sighed finally, after I asked him a third time.

“Why not? Do you have a reputation there?” I smirked.

“No.” I could see the troubled look on his face as he turned to me, even through the falling snow. “We will find we are not welcome there.”

“Why is that?” Jad demanded.

They do not like Elves in Niév.” Randæ said ominously.

*Kalen Avanimir
From his Travel Journals*



Second largest of the four main regions, Hæstra is the most widely cultivated and the most densely populated of Emer's varied lands. Its mild climate, fertile soil, and available resources make it an ideal region for human habitation. On the other side of the coin, that means that the rich lands are coveted and frequently fought over.

Following is an overview of the current geopolitical forces within the region of Hæstra. Brief summaries of a few neighboring realms may be found in the following chapter, *Other Powers*.

This chapter is meant to provide geographic and cultural information for the various realms and cities, specifically as noted on the color player map. Information on secret or lost sites will (with a few exceptions such as Skystone City and Ton-Bor) be found in Part VI, *Places of Interest*.

GM Note: as a point of reference, Hæstra's land mass is comparable to that of Spain, France and Italy combined. Similarly, it is about the size of California and Nevada together. The Komaren Cluster alone is nearly as large as England. Try to keep this in mind when imagining the variety of realms and terrain here.

Also within this section are two charts. One is a military summary of the fighting forces of the various realms. The other is a selection of NPCs, two or three representing each realm. These are included to aid the GM in adventure ideas and encounters for the PCs. Basic RM2 statistical information is provided which can be easily adapted to RMSS. If more system detail is required the GM can create it as needed.

1 · DANARCHIS

Occupying a rocky peninsula (the northernmost extension of Hæstra), Danarchis is a small but powerful maritime kingdom. Aside from trading with the simple Bodlean peoples, they have little contact with the inland affairs of Hæstra — instead reaching out across the seas for their riches. Danarchis also controls all of the small islands surrounding the realm, to the Forbidden Reef to the west and the Elben Archipelago to the east.

The kings of Danarchis learned long ago that there was much more profit to be earned from trade with the stubborn Bodlean Dalesmen than through conquest. As a result, the King has declared that his people must never attempt to seize land beyond the peninsula, and the Talath have agreed not to settle in Danarchan land. Danarchis

and Bodlea have since had a friendly and stable relationship for many centuries. Besides, Danarchis has its hands full dealing with the troublesome *Honakh* of Præten and his sea-raiders. Being a practical people, they realized that the slow but honest Bodleans would make better allies than enemies. Beyond trade with Bodlea, Danarchis has little contact with inland Hæstra.

Lethys (a huge city in southern Jaiman), Izar, Kaitaine and Eidolon all trade at the Danarchis port of *Artha*, a bustling city with beautiful white marble towers and seaside plazas. The king of Danarchis resides in a gleaming palace on a hillside overlooking *Artha*.

NOTE TO VISITORS

Visitors to Danarchis—especially to *Artha* or the other larger towns—will find a friendly, if somewhat aloof, homogeneous Laan population. The towns are spotless, and there is minimal crime (city guards are very much in evidence) and moderate corruption. Posted everywhere in Danari, Erlin and Shay are placards listing a number of infractions and their punishments, including spitting and littering (5 bp) and public drunkenness (night in jail and 1 gp). For more serious crimes, the accused is brought before a Magistrate.

RESOURCES/EXPORTS

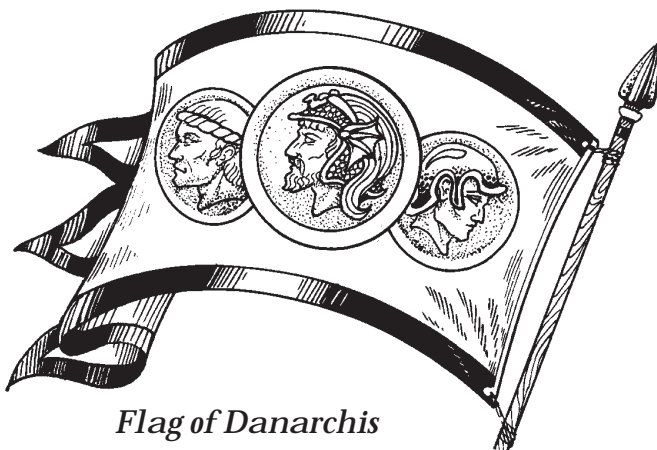
Olives are a rarity elsewhere in Emer and Jaiman but seem well-suited to the Danarchan hillsides. These as well as wine, clams, shrimp and crabs harvested in the sheltered bays are all high-demand exports for this small realm. Healing herbs of various kinds are cultivated in sheltered coastal areas as well, and fishing is a major industry.

There are also rich deposits of tin and nickel in the Blue Hills — and a blue-green ore which the merchants of Selkai and Namar-Tol pay a rich price for, though they are evasive when asked its purpose. The Danarchan Priests say that it has some Essænce powers, though it is of no use to them. (*The material is Arinyark ore, a key element in the making of anti-gravity Xenium.*)

Artha is also a major trade corridor, with spices and pepper coming from the western isles; raw materials from the Scorpion Ridges; and silks, finished goods, coffee and tea from the east.

IMPORTS

Danarchis has an insatiable need for timber to maintain its large fleets and cotton for sails and clothing. The city obtains most of these supplies from the Bodleans (except cotton, much of which comes from Tai-emer and western Uj), in return for wine and finished goods. It also imports salt, spices and luxury goods.



Flag of Danarchis

PLACES OF INTEREST

While most of Danarchis is rural hills covered by grass or forest, vineyards or olive orchards, there are some bustling trade centers and other spots of interest.

ARTHA

Danarchis has only one true city, but the kings have lavished all their love and wealth on this metropolis for generations. While other towns in the kingdom are fishing villages of whitewashed brick, Artha has many buildings of pure white marble. Her streets are paved with stone cobbles, and there are many courtyards and squares filled with fountains and grand sculpture. Artha is perched on a rocky hillside overlooking a sheltered bay, with extensive harbor facilities. It is also well-protected by the Danarchan fleet and a large contingent of the king's guard.

A visitor to Artha will find a cosmopolitan city with a healthy selection of goods. Traders come from Izar and Selkai, the coasts of Jaiman and even as far as Kaitaine.

Nestled at the feet of the Blue Hills along the steep western coast, Diaspar is an isolated town, accessible only by sea and a narrow pass over the mountains to the more gentle east slope. It is a place of steep winding streets flanked by whitewashed houses, a way-station for trade ships but not a major trade center. Diaspar is known for two things, however: its large, black olives grown in the hills above the town, and the beautiful blue sapphires mined nearby.

ALBEMARA

The Lighthouse of Albemara, though not a great beacon like the Lights of Izar, is a comforting sight for sea-captains navigating the western coast of Danarchis. Even so, navigation around the horn is perilous; the seas around the town perched far out on a peninsula are calm, but they hide danger beneath the surface

DANARCHAN ISLES

Ringed Danarchis are dozens of islands and countless atolls. Some inhabited, others little more than barren rocky outcrops. Coral reefs and tricky currents make navigating among them a job for the experienced sea captain.

The Elben Archipelago, six larger islands and numerous tiny outcroppings, is currently under Danarchan protection. Over the last several hundred years it has been an object of contest between Artha and the Honakhs of

Præten, falling several times to the latter realm. The islands have strategic value, lying between the two kingdoms and along the heavily traveled Melurian Straits. Beyond that however, they are not of great value, being sparsely populated by shepherders and potato growers. The seas are rough around most of the coastlines, and some of the isles still have active volcanism.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

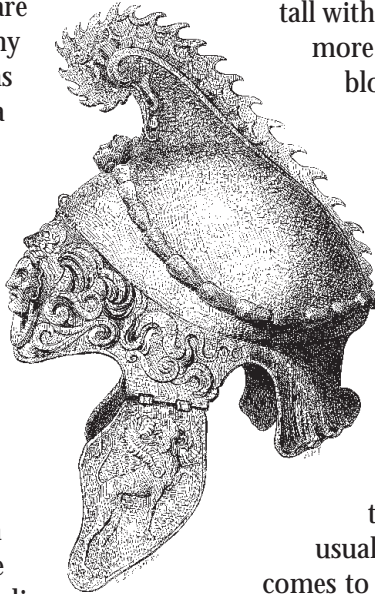
Racial Origins: Of Laan descent, the Danarchans are tall with dark hair and fair skin. They tend to be more slender than the more imposing pure-blood Laan, and a few have lighter, often curly hair. Their origins are less clear.

Political Structure: Monarchy. The golden scepter passes to the eldest son when the king reaches the age of 100, abdicates or dies (whichever comes soonest). There is also a royal Senate of elected men, though they have limited power.

Society and Culture: In Danarchis men control government and business, while women are the final authority in the household. Marriages are arranged, usually within the same class, and the man comes to live with the wife's family. To outsiders and in most social situations, Danarchans are polite to the point of being overly formal; rudeness and disrespect is not tolerated. The one exception is on certain evenings when women remain at home while men often gather for raucous parties involving copious wine and food, and good-natured games of skill.

Technology: TL 3. While Danarchan smiths have the working of iron and a few alloys, they have yet to master fine steel, buying what little they need from others. The making of enchanted weapons is beyond their ken. However, they are unusually advanced in their shipbuilding skills, having very seaworthy rigged ships second on Emer only to those of Elven design.

Arts & Architecture In the cities (of which there are two besides the port-capital of Artha, not counting more than a dozen villages), the Danarchan architectural skills are in full flower, revealed in graceful towers, temples and palaces of gleaming white marble. They are equipped with clean running water and sewage facilities. The remaining villages which dot the coast and mountainsides are rustic gatherings of stone cottages. The stone is of necessity as much as a desire for permanence; there is very little available timber in Danarchis, and most is used for ships



or fuel. Danarchis is known for fine pink coral jewelry—and a unique form of dramatic pantomime play, often using elaborate costumes and masks. There are a few travelling Danarchan play troupes, in high demand in cities throughout Emer.

Clothing: In the usually mild climate of this coastal realm, the Danarchan men wear simple kilts or loose shorts, while women almost exclusively wear billowing pants and an over-tunic. Brightly dyed silks are always in demand here; Danarchans buy all they can get from the Sel-kai traders who bring such cloths from Nuyan Khôm.

Military Structure: Danarchis' strength is in its navy. It has a large fleet of galleys which patrol the calm coastal waters, warding off attack by the Præten raiders. (Note that these ships are of a radically different design than the fast, rigged trading vessels).

Currency: Danarchis mints its own pieces of silver, the weight matching a standard set by Eidolon.

Language: Danari is the official language, which has its roots in Old Emer. In fact, it is more similar to that lost tongue than any other language spoken on Emer today.

Diet/Subsistence: Mixed economy in most mainland; Fisherfolk on islands. Fish is a staple, supplemented by

domestically-grown vegetables and some mutton. Some eat corn-meal, but wheat bread is preferred (much of the wheat supplied by Bodlea).

Worship: Unusually cosmopolitan, Danarchans worship the entire Orhanian pantheon, though they frequently call upon Shaal, the master of the Seas, for favorable weather (For insurance, they ask his servant Neela to moderate him should Shaal lose his infamous temper.) There is a large and influential priesthood — many of them Channelers of some skill — who maintain temples to the gods. Priests of Zanar and Andaras have had little success in gaining a foothold here.

2 · BODLEA

More of a region than a specific government, this rolling land of hills and valleys north of the Keyten river is home to a collection of Talath dales, a term referring to the independent valley-towns and the farm/pasture lands surrounding them. The dales are relatively isolated, making only sporadic contact between each other. However, the southern dales benefit from contact by river trade with the Elves of Talæn and the Miirians, and the northern Dales trade with Danarchis.



One of the moors of Bodlea. Note the standing stones, part of some ancient ruin.



A Talath Shepherd boy from Uppsdale

*pencil and watercolor, from the sketchbook
'Peoples of Emer' by Haldak Vatay*

Reasons why southern lords have not annexed this land are as many as the sheep which graze on it. The soil is not as fertile as that in the Miirian land, so has (relatively) limited agricultural value. Because of cold winds off the western coast, Bodlea is considerably cooler and sees more rain than the rest of Hæstra. The Talath, while disorganized, are ferocious fighters when defending their homesteads. Another reason, and perhaps the most bizarre, is the superstitious fear among the southern forces that the river Naiad *Kellus* will rise up to defend the simple Dale-men.

GM Note: It is in fact true that there is a river Naiad in the Keyten, and he does protect the Bodleans when he can. He is not omnipotent, but has an awareness of all who enter or pass over his river. More information on him can be found in the Other Powers section.

NOTE TO VISITORS

The Bodleans are known for their simple hospitality, but they also have an instinct for those who mean them harm. Most are outgoing and friendly, ready with general information and harmless gossip. Crime and corruption are minimal. There are virtually no inns in Bodlea except in the cities, but travellers are always welcome to spend the night in a barn.

CARLSDALE

Located in the very foothills of the Blue Hills, Carlsdale is in an upland vale and is the closest of the dales to Danarchis. It is also one of the largest and wealthiest of the Bodlean villages. Carlsdale has large flocks of sheep and grows corn, wheat and cotton, in addition to a wide variety of vegetables.

MILLSDALE

The largest producer of wheat in Bodlea, Millsdale lies near the windy, rock-strewn western coast. Much of the shoreline is rocky cliffs, so the Talath of Millsdale have little to do with the sea (which is fine with them; Talath seem to have a racial fear of the open ocean).

HIGHDALE

Another upland valley community, Highdale is nestled in the western hills of the Choak Mountains. Somewhat isolated from the other dales, Highdalers tend to have an (uncharacteristic) superiority complex. They are still friendly with other Bodleans, but affect a superior air.

DALE SYMBOLS

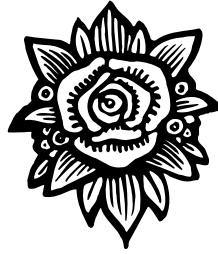
Dale	Symbol	≈Population
Carlsdale	Three Stars	600
Millsdale	A Bundle of Wheat	400
Rakesdale	A Raven	350
Allesdale	An Eclipsing Sun	300
Highdale	A Gryphon	300
Yorndale	A Running Horse	200
Alainsdale	A Spread-winged Eagle	300
Galendale	A Tree	250
Uppsdale	A crossed sword and Scythe	300
Wyerdale	A Wyvern	400
Gravesdale	A Yellow Rose	250

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: With their big-boned physiques, blond hair and smooth, fair skin, the Bodleans are very closely related to Talath stock.

Political Structure: Each Dale is ruled by a council of the seven Eldest (male or female).

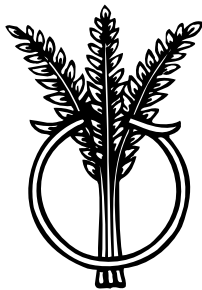
Society and Culture: Patrilineal and patrilocal, women when they marry move into the home of the man. Households are run exclusively by the eldest man. The Bodleans have a rich oral history, and while writing is known to them it is usually taught only to the town shaman or healers.



Technology: TL 2. The Bodleans actually make rather fine copper and tin implements, and thanks to their trade with Danarchis have little reason to pursue ironwork on their own. Their pottery is also simple but attractive. Few Bodleans can afford a very good loom, so they trade raw wool for cotton and linen cloth.

Arts & Architecture Very rustic wood structures with dirt floors and thatch or wood-shingle ceilings are the norm; sometimes important structures in a given Dale are constructed of stone.

Clothing: Simple wool or cotton clothing: shirts with suede or wool pants are the rule in Bodlea's cool climate. The men will sometimes go shirtless and the women switch to cotton dresses when the weather gets hot.



Military Structure: None as such. If the Dale is threatened, the Elders will raise a militia.

Currency: None internally; barter is practically the exclusive mode of

trade. Most Bodleans have a few coppers squirreled away for special purchases when a travelling merchant comes through, however.

Language: Revealing their Jaimani origins, the Talath of Bodlea all speak what they call *Tal*, a sophisticated and beautiful language which is very close to the speech of the Myri of Tanara. This musical, lilting tongue is one of the most complex in Emer.

Diet/Subsistence: Herders/Mixed Economy. Basic fare of vegetables (greens and tubers), wheat breads, fowl and mutton are the staples of this bucolic people. Cows are usually kept for dairy products.

Worship: The Bodleans recognize the pantheon of Orhan — especially Iloura and Oriana. But they are also superstitious and pay homage to a vast array of local and household spirits. Those near the Keyten River in particular worship Kellus.

3 · MIIR

Miir is a name given to the region situated south of the Keyten river, and between the Langasse to the west and Alana to the east. This region known collectively as Miir is actually a collection of semi-independent lord-holdings, and scattered homesteads. The wilderness is strewn with beautiful if mysterious ruins. It is a rolling land with many small valleys. The downs of Miir have the richest soil in Emer and were once the heart of the Emerian Empire under Aldaron. As with Stroane and Vornia, many of the Miir lords hold titles passed down since the days of the Empire.

Up until nine years ago most of Miir had been united under the Kings of Orian for several centuries. Like neighboring Vornia, Miir is a land of feudal alliances. To the north, Relian remains an independent city-state, grown wealthy and powerful through trade across the Keyten and the Choak Gap.

However, the Orian pact was splintered nine years ago when the Katra of Stroane lay siege to Orian and demanded the King's surrender. Taken completely by surprise by this aggression after centuries of peaceful coexistence, the king was unable to summon the help of the vassal lords and Orian fell. The Katra received the king's allegiance and married his daughter.

Recent events have disrupted this political situation (see the timeline) and Miir is once again in turmoil.

MIIRIAN TOWNS AND HOLDS

Orian and Relian are the two cities which anchor Miir at north and south. Most others are towns which have grown up around feudal manor holdings. In addition to those listed, there are numerous farms and small villages scattered across the countryside. Virtually every 15 miles or so along most roads one will encounter a small manor or castle.

ORIAN

A walled city on the north shore of the Sea of Votania, Orian is built on ancient foundations. Here during the time of the Emerian Empire stood a port which served ships making the 50 league journey by water from the capital city of Aldain on Votania. Upon those remains was built the capital of the kingdom of Irdania. While not architecturally as grand as either of these, Orian is a thriving city centrally located in Hæstra.

Visitor Notes: Entry fee: 5 bp. Orian is fairly cosmopolitan, though one does not see many races other than Shay or Laan. Crime and corruption are moderate.



The High Temple of Mynistra near Helberna

RELIAN

On the southern bank of the Keyten River just before it joins the cold, swift Taursa, Relian is a crossroads between Bodlea and the heart of Hæstra. Traders coming through the Choak Gap pass through here, as well as those coming overland from Danarchis. This city-state has an unusually diverse population: here one might see Anzeti from the Emer highlands, Bodleans who have abandoned rural life for the city, and even a few Jaaderi—mostly immigrants from Pochantos, fleeing Lankani repression. A few Loari Elves also make their homes here. The vast majority of the population remains Shay, however, followed by Laan.

Relian is administered by the Chamber of Five: The High Priest of Phaon, the Grand Guildmaster, and three wealthy lords.

Visitor Notes: Entry fee: 3 bp. Crime is becoming prevalent, especially with the influx of Pochanti. Corruption is moderate.

BORNAY

A small town just south of the Keyten, Bornay grew up beside an ancient Empire-era bridge, the only one spanning the Keyten River for three days' walk in either direction. The town and bridge are controlled by Lord Dennys of Bornay Castle.

PELLERN

A way-stop along the Imperial highway from Relian to Bentara on the Izaran coast, Pellern is a poor, run-down community which has seen better days. Once it was a wealthy mining town, when gold flowed from the mountains, but most of the veins in the area are tapped out. Aging Lord Dreygen is ill and his wife—the young Lady Wintessa, daughter of Lord Dennys of Bornay—is unhappy here. She takes out her bitterness at marrying the sick old man by punishing the serfs and carrying on barely concealed affairs.

CHELZARIA

At the meeting of the upper Langasse on the north and the Deer Run river on the south, this sizable town is still mining its wealth from the mountains as well as from field and river. The Count Harond is an eccentric man (and an astrologer) but he and his daughter are fair and competent.

It is a common suspicion among the townsfolk that there is an underground fortress of Elves nearby, but it is not discussed in front of strangers (except perhaps under duress or a sufficient bribe). Many townsfolk have glimpsed what appear to be tall dark men on huge scorpion-like steeds in the night, or shadowy travellers with an Elvish mien on the roads. Exactly where this city is they do not know, but suspect it is somewhere to the south, perhaps 10 leagues or so.

HELBERNA

This bustling town is not only a busy trade center on the shores of the Votanian Sea but is also the home of the high temple of the goddess Mynistra (See *Other Powers*). The High Archbishop of the Mynistran Church is located here as well, and much of the surrounding land is ruled by lords who are also bishops of her faith. (Politics and religion are inextricably intertwined in Hæstra as well as many other places on Kulthea.)

From the three-sided High Temple of Mynistra overlooks the city on a nearby bluff, a powerful reminder of the goddess' presence.

Visitor Notes: Entry fee: 2 bp. Helberna has a very large Laan populace, with Shay being second in number. Crime and corruption are moderate.

TOVOR

This town has the unfortunate distinction of being near the reputed lair of *Motar Voorg* the Red Dragon. The great beast has not yet attacked the town, but he has raided farms and destroyed several manors in the area. Lord Lystor is at a loss; beyond offering a 1,000 gold piece reward for the head of the dragon (many have tried to slay the dragon, all have failed).

ALKARTEK

Alkartek is a sprawling castle overlooking a vast territory in central Miir, a land with rich soil and plentiful ancient ruins. Many were broken down long ago for stones to build new houses and bridges, but there are still quite a few scattered among the rolling wheat fields.

Old Lord Nemeck is unsure how to pass on his territory to his twin sons, who at 20 are eager to assume responsibility.

BOKPENTOK

The town rests on the north shore of the Alana River, at a crossroads between three large cities. Bokpentok is surrounded by a low stone wall, and Count Hirotha's castle is an ancient but sound structure. A large abbey of Mynistra is also located near Bokpentok, just over the river to the south.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: For the most part, the Miirians are of Shay descent, though some—especially those of the merchant and landed classes—show evidence of Laan blood in their ancestry.

Political Structure: Varies somewhat from village to village, but most are controlled by the local lord in his castle, who in turn is answerable to a regional lord. The overall political picture is shifting constantly as various lords struggle to dominate each other.

Society and Culture: A typical feudal society: most of the wealth and leisure time is available only to the lords and their families. The serfs labor with little time for recreation, and their lives are controlled by the lord, sometimes to the point of who and when they can marry. Of course, even the offspring of lords will probably have no say in their future spouse, being betrothed to another lord's



Three Sisters of Mynistra

pencil and watercolor, from the sketchbook 'Peoples of Emer' by Haldak Vatay

child to cement an alliance. Among the wealthy however, many learn to play a musical instrument, and most women are skilled with sewing and embroidery. Noble boys are trained in weapons with the aim of becoming a knight. Children of either sex who show aptitude for the arcane arts are sent to a school to hone their skills (having a child with magical talent is very prestigious, not to mention a possible source of advantage over others).

Technology: TL 2-3. Varies somewhat from manor to manor. The larger cities possess a greater sophistication.

Clothing: The majority of Miirian people wear wool or cotton clothing and leather shoes. Only the wealthy lords and their ladies can afford the finer fabrics such as velvet and silk.

Arts & Architecture Strictly wood structures except in a rare important building, such as a lord's castle or a temple.

Military Structure: As noted above, Miir's military is made up of the many feudal lords' knights, and when necessary the raised militia of serfs.

Currency: Barter is a common system of trade; coins minted in Arakin, Izar, Danarchis and even Sel-kai are also seen.

Language: All speak dialects Shay; some speak a bit of Old Emer; and Erlin.

Diet/Subsistence: Herders/Mixed Economies. Wheat, corn and tubers are staples, supplemented with beef, some mutton, fowl and greens.

Worship: Mynistra is by far the most followed deity in Miir, though many Lords of Orhan are called upon as 'lesser gods.' A few even follow 'Dark Gods.'

4 · VORNIA

The grasslands between the Bay of Izar and the Gold Mountains were never densely populated. *Vornia* is more of an ancient regional name than a political delineation; there is no central government or any unifying force to the scattered population. The Cultures here are essentially similar to those of Miir, though there are a few Jineri immigrants from the western isles. See the Miir information above for cultural information.

JENNIS

Nestled in a vale near the western end of the Forbidden Ridge, Jennis is a town under a shadow. It and several surrounding villages are ruled by the Bishop Timmon V'nar, a Laan priest of considerable powers, who also holds the title of Baron.

The Bishop of Jennis is by claim a follower of Mynistra, but fifteen years ago he turned from following her to the worship of Moralis the dark god. It is a tragic tale of unrequited love and jealousy which may one day be told, but suffice it to say that the Bishop goes through the motions of following Mynistra by day while leading perverse dark ceremonies to Moralis by night.

From the fortified abbey complex overlooking the town he rules with an ever tightening grip, giving the sadistic captain of the guard a free hand to keep the people in line.

GELBENTEX

Baroness Midenna rules her small domain with a firm but even hand from her fairy-tale castle perched on the cliffs overlooking the Sea of Votania. In addition to being a skilled administrator, Midenna is an accomplished magician. During the town's revolt against the Stroane occupation she used her powers against the armies of the Katra.

BENTARA

The Count of Bentara is the young Bryce Korel, who succeeded his father last year at the age of 19. The elder

Korel was killed along the road from Izar, apparently by bandits. There were rumors that the boy arranged his father's death, but no proof. Meanwhile, he has proven a capable leader and managed to keep his council of advisors in line—including the power-hungry Sorcerer Ventine. Bentara is one of two key land routes from mainland Hæstra to Izar and the sea, and also the main trade point with the Dwarves of Ton-Bor

DYNAX

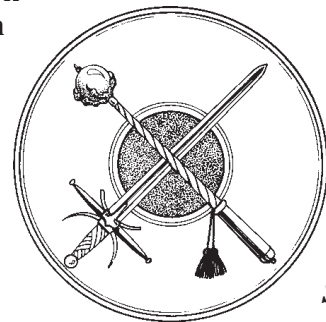
On the shores of the Sea of Votania and just a day's march from the eves of the Emerald Forest, Dynax stands at a critical trade juncture, just over the mountains from Sarnak and the western isles. The city is also in a state of political turmoil, having just overthrown its feudal lord Wurlek (he is in prison) but the new Guild Council is mired in petty bickering. Midenna of Gelbentex is considering a takeover, but in the meantime it is a standing joke in Dynax that no one knows who is in charge. Trade is uninterrupted, however, and the main bureaucracy continues to function as before. Unfortunately, it is rife with corruption. Bribery and embezzling is widespread. Crime is a growing problem, and Dynax is becoming known as a city of thieves.

5 · STROANE

Stroane is a kingdom in great turmoil. Just a decade ago it was poised to control almost all of Hæstra; today it is on the verge of complete collapse.

A few years ago, the Katra ('king') was murdered by his young wife, an act which smacks of a conspiracy of some sort (she was an assassin sent from Sarnak). But the wife escaped, and the other members of this supposed plot have yet to be uncovered.

The Katra's son Mikal—just ten years old—was ruler in name only, the actual administration being handled by a triumvirate made up of the highest military official (the Lord Gen-



Crest of Stroane

eral), the Katra's most eminent advisor (the Andaras High Priest Shatang) and the Katra's uncle (Lorek, Prince of Vornia). The three were frequently at odds, and the government was unstable. One by one the local lords began to reassert their independence, until the Lord Gen-



The town of Qye, looking northeast. The water is an inlet of the Sea of Votania.

Etching by Dendenien of Orian

eral—with the backing of the Church of Zonar—instigated a coup and had the other two rulers put to death. However, he was unable to stop the deterioration of the realm, and now Stroane has shrunk to the Lene river on the north and Qye to the south. Lord General Terell now fights to maintain order in a kingdom fraught with troubles inside and out.

ARAKIN

The capital city and trade center of Stroane, Arakin lies along the eastern shore of *Vul Arus* (I. “enchanted waters,” the old name of the Sea of Votania). A city of dark grey stone, it is a forbidding sight. Arakin is surrounded by a high wall with many towers and battlements.

Visitor Note: 8 bronze pieces are charged to enter the city (a bit stiff), and the Stroane military is everywhere, but rather than maintain order they are often the cause of trouble. Brawls and fights are common, drunkenness rampant. Crime and corruption are pervasive. In general, Arakin has become a very rough town.

TETERANTOR

For the most part Teterantor is an unremarkable manor, its wealth derived from mines in the shadow of the Spine

of Emer and grains from the surrounding fertile land. However, townsfolk will tell you that strange things have begun to happen in Teterantor recently. The Lord Garan Tholen has not been seen during the day for the last few months, nor his eldest son in 30 days. All proclamations have been made by the Lord’s secretary. When seen after sundown he looks pale and tired. Also, people have begun to disappear from the town without a trace. Some fear that the lord has become some sort of wraith... or a vampire. *He has become a vampire, and feeds on the people by night.. He was made so by the minstrel Xanar Trellian, who only travels by night.*

NIÉV

Despite its relative proximity to the city of Arakin, Niév is a backwater town ruled in name by the Baron Jerel Hunoren. However, the real power rests with his advisor, the Priest Robersin of the cult of Andaras. Under Robersin’s influence the town has become paranoid and suspicious of all outsiders, especially those other than the Shay. Elves are specifically hated, to the point that it is now illegal to be an Elf in Niév. Many travellers now avoid the town, staying east of it and fording the Lene river a few miles up.

QYE

The town of Qye (pronounced 'kye') is a grim place in the shadow of the Spine where the sun never seems to reach. The castle of Lord Dremnock broods over the huddled buildings, an ancient pile of stones.

People of this town do not look you directly in the eyes, their gaze always shifting from place to place. They seem glad enough to see visitors, but at the same time they are not very talkative. This is especially true when one is planning to take the Norg Road to *Cloud Pass*, because they are afraid of revealing the secret, the Terror in the Trees

Just five miles from the outskirts of Qye lie the eaves of the Forest of Norg, once a game preserve for the Emperor of Emer. However, something which slept there for many years was awakened: Shards. The river *Imanas* roars down through this dark and brooding wood from where the Spine of Emer meets the Forbidden Ridge. Beside the river is the Norg Road, a winding way which becomes steep and twisting as it rises into the Spine to Cloud Gate, a narrow pass across the mountains into northwestern Khûm-kaan, and the edge of the new kingdom of Arдания.

The fortunes of Qye have improved in recent years with the rise of Arдания in the east, and increased trade through Cloud Pass. If word should get out of the Terror, this new income would dry up. So they must stay quiet. So what if a few merchants become food for the Demons...

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: The majority of the Stroane population (about 85%) is Shay, with most of the remainder (predominantly the merchant and noble classes) being Laan. Elves and the other races are rare

Political Structure: While theoretically an absolute monarchy, Stroane is currently under the 'temporary' rule of Lord General Terell. At present the throne is occupied by the boy Mikal, though Guard Captain Snythe has real control of the government (if anyone does).

Society and Culture: With resources strained from the long aggressive war, there has been little time for the arts in Arakin.

Technology: TL 4. Stroane is one of the most technically advanced realms in Hæstra.

Arts & Architecture (housing) Multi-storey stone structures in Arakin. Fully transparent glass windows, wood and coal-burning stoves.

Clothing: Elaborate wool, cotton and imported silk clothes are worn by the upper classes (wealthy merchants and nobility), while the middle merchants and craftsmen wear simpler, but high-quality garb. The peasantry wears cotton or wool shifts.

Military Structure: The large standing army is well-equipped, with a very regimented structure, though there are increasing problems in the ranks: desertions, insubordination, etc. Shortswords and broadswords are the preferred weapons, and Stroane composite bows are of high quality.

Currency: A silver coinage is minted in Arakin; some other cities will no longer accept it, however, claiming that it has been diluted with lead.



*Guard Captain Snythe, Lord General Terell,
Zanar Priest Marik Ch'toy*

pencil and watercolor, by Haldak Vatay

Language: There is a ceremonial tongue known fluently to about 30% of the population as “Old Emer,” but it is actually a distant corruption of that ancient language. All speak Shay, their common tongue.

Diet/Subsistence: Herders/Mixed Economies. The people of Stroane enjoy a well-rounded diet of beef, mutton, a variety of breads and cheeses, tubers and greens.

Worship: Although there are a few temples dedicated to some of the Lords of Orhan, the churches of Zanar and Andaras are currently dominant.

6 · ZINVAR

Until 5948 — barely a hundred years ago — Zinvar was one of the preeminent trading centers on Emer. A large island, it was an independent city-state at the mouth of the Keyten river. It had ties with the Dales, Danarchis, Kaitaine, and even Sel-kai and Zinvar had become a wealthy port to rival Kaitaine.

Then, in 5945, a man who only called himself the Nameless One arrived in Zinvar and announced that the city would fall within a year. After he wandered the city for 8 days foretelling doom, he was asked to leave the island. For three years all was normal in Zinvar, and the city prospered. Then, three years later to the day (so the tales go), a ship with tattered black sails came riding into the western port at sunset, against the wind. It maneuvered into the port as if a skilled crew was at the sails, yet lookouts could see no one on deck. The ship touched the stone dock and vanished. Then the madness began.

Whether it was a plague or a curse of one of the Dark Gods will never be known. While legends say that no one escaped, a few Navigators did. Fleeing instantly, those whose Jumps did not go awry were mind-blasted idiots who only recovered after months of treatment. Those who did not escape attacked each other with the nearest weapon — or their bare hands. Trading ships who arrived later that evening saw the port ablaze, great fires reaching hundreds of feet into the air. They turned away. For days Zinvar burned, columns of smoke visible for miles. Supposedly no one has yet returned to the cursed isle... and lived to tell of it.

7 · TALÆN

This island off the western coast of Emer is a idyllic haven of Erlini. While only 150 miles from the cursed island of Zinvar (they could see it burn on that day), the Elves of Talæn had never been in close contact with the island. Talæn has a moderate climate and is covered almost entirely by forest, dominated by the massive navaal

trees. Reefs surround the island, making it treacherous to approach. While the Elves will help those who are shipwrecked or otherwise in trouble, they do not welcome casual mortal visitors.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Talæn is a microcosm of nature, supporting an interesting array of plant and animal types. Its proximity to the mountainous coast of Hæstra (barely fifty miles at the nearest point) allows many birds to travel there. Somehow an array of other temperate-climate creatures also made their way, including deer, goats, and a variety of other herbivorous creatures.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: Pure Erlin stock.

Political Structure: Monarchy. King Seylars rules here with his wife, Queen Linnea. Descent is through the eldest child. The main village is located in the southern bay of the island.

Society and Culture: The population of this peaceful island spends its time tending the plantlife, protecting its borders, and in art and song. To visitors they seem to be in a dreamlike existence, unhurried and unconcerned. But if threatened they are deadly foes. Aside from the unquestioned authority of the king and queen, there seems little other structure to this society. Some couples wed while other Elves move through casual relationships.

Technology: TL 2-4. The Elves are skilled craftsmen, devoting their energies mainly to works of art and musical instruments. They also have simple but seaworthy sailing vessels.

Arts & Architecture The Erlin live in huts along the edges of forest glades, or in light houses constructed in the trees. Each hut is roofed with fronds sealed with beeswax, while the walls are living vines. The floors of these houses are thick moss or planks. Any cooking is done in outdoor stoves of stone and iron.

Clothing: Simple cotton or silk tunics are the norm. Facepaints are often used for decoration, as well as seashell or coral earrings and bracelets.

Military Structure: All Talæn inhabitants are taught to use a longbow and a knife, though there is no standing fighting force as such. The Erlin also possess many small, swift and maneuverable boats.

Currency: None.

Language: Erlin.

Diet/Subsistence: Gatherers/Fisherfolk. Seafood and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables grown on the island.

They drink a fine mead (an alcoholic beverage made from fermented honey; the Erlin are accomplished beekeepers).

Worship: Iloura, Jaysek and Kieron are favorites of the Talæn Elves, and they have a mixed respect and fear for Shaal. The Elves of Talæn hold frequent banquets in honor of the Lords of Orhan.

8 · THE EMERALD FOREST

Situated between the Sea of Votania and the Bay of Izar, this extensive forest contains a plethora of wild plants and animals — and not a few sentient life forms as well. Though the Miirians and Vornians say it is haunted, the Forest is the home of many of the Fairy Folk, a group of Fauns, and a secretive community of arboreal people. The master of the Emerald Forest is a powerful being; one might call him a god.

The Forest is surrounded by an invisible barrier which inhibits entry by those unwelcome — which constitutes anyone but the Fauns and Forest-folk themselves, as well as dangerous wild animals.

GM Note: *If uninvited, one must successfully resist 10th level Channeling or feel unease, increasing as one moves further in until it is unbearable.*

THE FAUNS

The colony of Fauns who make their home under the eaves of the Emerald Forest do so at the sufferance of the Forest Folk. They repay this hospitality by guarding the forest perimeter and helping to protect the wood.

Among the most ‘human-like’ of the several races of Fauns, these are handsome youths with smooth tanned skin and beardless faces. Their bodies overall (including legs and feet) are as a muscled human’s, only their small curling horns on their head protruding from chestnut hair betraying their Fairie origins. They prefer to run naked, though some will clothe themselves in green kilts when travelling outside the Forest.

Most Fauns are skilled with the bow and a melee weapon; all are excellent musicians and singers. They spend much of their time at play, or dancing, singing and partying. Their libidinous reputation is well-deserved. They revere Kieron, toasting him often at their banquets.

This group has a hierarchy among them, with a sort of pack or gang mentality. The current leader is Kears, who maintains his place as much with his charisma as by his superior prowess.

GM Note: *Many have Bardic spells, and they are mischievous. They have been known to waylay travellers just for fun, or even hijack a wine shipment.*

THE PEOPLE OF THE FOREST

A small community resides deep within the Emerald Forest, powerful beings with Animistic abilities who are unlike any other race on Kulthea. The People of the Emerald Forest are secretive and wary of outsiders, but are not unkind. They almost never venture forth from their haven, and—as mentioned before—a warding presence prevents unwanted intruders from entering the perimeter of the forest.

On the rare occasion when members of the Forest Folk out, they are seen only as if through a misty haze, their features never to be easily made out. One thing is certain: though the wood is a perilous place, it is most so for creatures of evil intent.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: Unknown, though the Forest People have similarities to Nymphs and Elves, yet are of neither race. They are immortal, yet reproduce like men and Elves. Whether they can be killed is unknown, though it is said that powerful Dark Essænce can weaken them. Physically small, rarely does a member of either sex reach 6' in height. Their skin is fair and their eyes are always green, though hair color may vary from pale blonde to dark brown.

Political Structure: The Forest People have a King and Queen, though among them all are considered equal; their Lord and Lady serve to speak for them and judge in disputes. Little more in the way of law or government is needed. (Kel—see below—is thought of more as a benevolent presence than a ruler, and he is too easily distracted and impulsive to be an administrator.)

Technology: TL 2. The Forest People use little in the way of metal; iron and steel are materials which fear and avoid. These metals interfere with their magic; whether steel can actually do harm because of their nature is unclear. The knives which some warriors use are of a green glassy substance which may be laen, though how this rustic people could master the art of laen-working is a puzzle. A few weapons are also of a greenish metal (beryllium) found only in one other place on Emer, the jungles of Khûm-kaan.

GM Note: *The Forest People are reduced to half their effective level for spell-casting in the presence of iron within 10 feet, (including PPs). Those wearing lots of iron (like armor) get a +30 to RRs vs. their magic. Weapons of iron are Of Slaying the Forest People. They will attempt to flee when faced by it under all but most extenuating circumstances.*



A Stroane Guard at Arakin

Arts & Architecture None. They live in the forest glades and in the trees under the sun and stars. Man-made structures of any kind make them uneasy.

Clothing: Finely woven tunics of a silky material which shimmers green-blue (+50 to hiding), breeches of a soft suede-like hide, and sometimes boots of similar (though thicker) hide. Often they go barefoot.

Military Structure: None. All seem to be proficient warriors in some form of combat or other, however. Many are skilled Animists, Druids and Shamans. Others are experienced with a long bow, knife and quarterstaff.

Currency: None.

Language: Though they have their own unique, lilting tongue, it appears that most Forest people know the rudiments of Erlin (Common Elvish) and Old Emer. All are versed in the ancient Earth-Channeling tongue *Enruth*.

Diet/Subsistence: Herbivorous, the Forest People forage for their food. The forest provides all they require; agriculture is a foreign concept to them.

Worship: The inhabitants of the Emerald Forest are masters of Channeling powers, and though their leader is

capable of godlike feats, they do not ‘worship’ him. Instead, he leads the people in a worshipful respect — and unity with — the earth itself (much like the Fairie-folk). Though the Forest Folk clearly have magical items of their own, they dislike outside magic.

KEL

A powerful Dryad-like being, Kel ranks with the Spirits of Orhan in his resilience. (In fact, the Loremasters believe that he was once a Spirit of Orhan who surrendered many of his powers to live permanently in the Emerald Forest.) In temperament he is like a playful boy — though he protects the Forest People as his own children. Kel almost never assumes his 12' form because he considers it intimidating and against his character. However, if he or his people are truly threatened, he will.

Kel usually wears a bright green tunic with darker tights and moccasins. He is linked empathically to a huge, sentient Oak Tree in the center of the Forest, and between them they maintain a barrier of protection about the entire wood. If dangerous intruders enter, he is immediately aware of it.

System Notes: If the wood is threatened, Kel can increase its power to that equal to a Great Warding Perimeter. Should Kel be defeated, his spirit returns to the tree and the perimeter retreats to just around the Vale of the Tree. Should this mighty tree be somehow destroyed while Kel's spirit is recovering there, he would be slain.

THE GREAT OAK

It is an ancient, huge tree, 150' tall, with branches extending almost 100' out from the trunk. The trunk itself is over ten feet in diameter. Acorns from the oak are 3x normal size, and enchanted: six can provide a day's nutrition.

System Notes: Sentient Tree, defends as a *Super-Large Creature*, 1,000 hits, AT 20 (200). It is intelligent and can speak mentally to Kel or the Forest People. It Knows the Animist Lists Plant Mastery, Animal Mastery and Nature's Lore to 50th, except all ranges are to the perimeter of the Forest. It controls the Warding Perimeter around the Forest, and also knows Warding Power and Warding Lore to 90th level. If necessary, it can cause the entire forest to rise up in defense — a truly frightening concept to would-be enemies.

9 · SARNAK

To the south of the river Urij, slag-like hills rise steeply to the impassable Morbek Highlands. To the north stretches the rocky Forbidden Ridge. At the mouth of this

swift and cold River lies the city-state of Sarnak, realm of the amazon warriors.

Situated strategically on the trade route between the coastal mining villages along the bay and the inland settlements, Sarnak guards the shortest route to Votania, and the only pass from Hæstra to western Uj. Many caravans travel through the *Storm Pass* to Sarnak, and the city has grown wealthy and powerful—but this was not always so.

The most notable feature of Sarnak society is the role of the sexes. Women rule this land, and men are subservient domestics who look after the children, cook, sew, farm, and perform all other domestic chores. The women are the warriors, heads of government, and usually the craftsmen. Once Sarnak was like most other cities which had outgrown their feudal lord: ruled by wealthy guilds and merchants. But a series of foolish mistakes made in the interest of short-term gains almost ruined the town. The women conspired to rescue their city. They drugged the male leaders and soldiers and imprisoned them. Then the women took control.

While the Warrior-Amazon of Sarnak are known throughout Emer, the people of Sarnak do not consider themselves a martial society. While women are trained as fighters, they are not an aggressive people, only attacking when they consider themselves threatened. And they only resort to war when diplomacy and other means have failed. As a classic example, rather than face Stroane on the battlefield and lose hundreds of lives, they sent an assassin to kill Stroane's leader and collapse the realm's government, removing the threat.

SARNAK CITY

Located on the southern shore of the river Urij, the city is constructed on a bluff of rock overlooking the river and the eastern portion of the Bay of Izar. Sarnak City itself is a looming presence, a jumble of dark towers and parapets designed to look impressive and to be impregnable. Inside it is not so grim, many of the shops and houses being painted bright colors. It is also unusually clean, boasting an efficient sewage system. The Directorate meets in the Administration Center, a

cluster of interlocking towers. This is also the site of the Sarnak treasury.

THE REALM

The land claimed by the Directorate of Sarnak lies along the coast to the southwest, up the steep valley behind the city to the east. On the eastern front the state is guarded from the north by the Emerald Forest, and on the south by the Morbek Highlands. There is a pass south to the Charn Plateau in Uj.

VISITOR NOTES

All the women of Sarnak are coolly polite to visitors. They will attempt to address the first female of the group, but will deal with men. 3 bp are charged to enter the city, plus tariffs on trade goods. Crime and corruption are minimal; the Amazons have little tolerance for either.



Two women of the Sarnak Directorate confer while a (male) page stands by to attend them

TRADE

As a crossroads, Sarnak sees a wide variety of goods. Trade has increased lately as the Sea of Gold has become a less desirable route from the north to Izar.

RESOURCES/EXPORTS

In the hills east of Sarnak, people of this small realm have built countless terraces to hold the plentiful rainfall and drainage from the mountains. In these stepped fields they grow cranberries and rice, potatoes and other vegetables. On the drier hillsides to the southwest they grow grapes for wine. Sarnaki wine is no match for that of Danarchis, but it is plentiful and relatively inexpensive.

The Sarnaki export wool, salt and wood and some finished goods: weaponry, armor, and steel tools. They are also known for their mercenaries.

IMPORTS

As mentioned above, Sarnak has little flat land for farming. They import wheat and corn from Vornia, red meat from Vajaar, grains and cotton from Bodlea.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: Primarily of Shay but with clear Laan influence. The women are unusually tall, often exceeding 6'.

Political Structure: Representative democracy. Ruled by a council of five women known as the Directorate, elected by the female populace.

Society and Culture: Men are considered inferior except in domestic matters. They do not vote, cannot own land, and are not permitted to carry weapons (except a quarterstaff). Women may have more than one husband, and wealthy women may also have a 'harem' of servant men. Despite the heavy trade through Sarnak, most outsiders see little of their pri-

vate life. Men when seen in public always have their eyes cast down and speak quietly. All women are addressed as "Mistress."

Technology: TL 3-4. The Sarnak smiths have mastered steel-making and are able to craft fine armor and weapons.

Arts & Architecture The city of Sarnak is a fortress, with high granite walls and buttressed towers. The interior of the city is somewhat more colorful, with many banners and gardens. But the atmosphere is one of a defensive, inward-looking people.

Clothing: The climate of Sarnak is almost uniformly balmy, so that clothing's only purposes are decoration and modesty. Men are often shirtless, and the women usually wear a simple, functional tunic. Silk toga-like garments are worn by the women at important festivals, political and cultural events. The

Amazons keep their hair no longer than to their shoulders; many keep it trimmed very short or worn up.

Military Structure: This security-oriented society has a large and well-equipped standing army and navy. Women occupy all positions of authority, while men serve support functions. Men may not carry or learn any weapon besides the quarterstaff. There is an elite core of soldiers known as the *Shaitan*, skilled in many weapons as well as the arts of reconnaissance and sabotage. The woman who killed the Katra of Stroane was from this group.

Currency: While a silver coin is minted, barter is often employed.

Language: A tongue called Arlak is spoken exclusively, which appears to have roots in Old Emer, but has changed radically. The women are also taught Erlin. Most women have basic reading and writing skills, but it is forbidden for men to learn reading and writing.



On the outskirts of Falkenna, along the coast of the Bay of Izar, looking south. Note the Sarnak watchtowers.

Etching by Dendenien of Orian

Diet/Subsistence: Mixed Economies. Tubers, wheat breads and vegetables supplement a diet heavy in seafood and red meat.

Worship: Atheistic, the Sarnaki and consider all supernatural beings to be “magicians with overdeveloped egos.”

9 · IZAR COASTAL TOWNS

Currently, Falkenna is a satellite state of Sarnak while the other four are independent towns, each ruled by a lord. Most of the residents are Shay, except Baymar, whose population is mainly Jineri. All owe most of their wealth to the Scorpion Ridge, which provides miners with salt, iron, tin, copper, silver, gold, many precious and semi-precious gems... and even Eogs and laen.

FALKENNA

Only recently the Count Dennik of Falkenna swore fealty to the Directorate of Sarnak. He is not thrilled at being lorded over by women, but his knights proved no match for the amazons.

This spur of the Forbidden Ridge yields up diamonds and silver, enough to keep the Count well-off even after paying taxes to the Amazons. And not as glamorous but hardly less valuable is the salt mined from vast caves nearby.

JANTANEN

Huddled in a narrow valley at the foot of the Morbek Highlands, Jantanen is constantly under threat from Murlogi raiders by land and pirates by sea. However, the rich gold, emerald and Eog mines nearby make the perils worth while. Lord Iorn was killed a few years ago in a raid by the Goblins, but his widow, Lady Cinnamona, has proven a skilled leader and administrator.

SLYK

A growing town overseen by the ambitious Lord Rislian, Slyk trades in lumber from the surrounding forests and cut at their mill, as well as iron, tin, platinum and precious gems from the mines.

The hills above Slyk are also the only known place in Emer where the rare life-giving herb *Saliva* grows.

FEN-JORL

This town would be more wealthy if the insane Count Gilden didn't squander his fortunes made on Eog and sapphires and amethyst on his sprawling and increasingly baroque castle. It is a spectacle easily seen from well off the coast and a source of resentment from the common people. Gilden's son Raen is an ambitious teenage boy who might soon solve the problem...

BAYMAR

This fortified village overlooking the Fulla River enjoys a brisk trade with the Komari and Izar. The looming Scorpion Ridge is rich in a wide variety of minerals and wood which the Jiner Lord Halluan of Baymar trades with Komaren for finished goods.

10 · KOMAREN CLUSTER

Upon arrival at Aquitar, the capital city of Komaren, the uninformed first-time traveler will notice something unusual about the populace. It may take a moment to pin down this difference, but once it is realized it becomes obvious. First, in most of the city, there are almost no women to be seen anywhere in public. In many feudal societies this is not that strange, as women are usually relegated to domestic life—and on some societies they must either cover themselves completely or are forbidden to go out in public because it would be considered improper. However that is not the reason for the scarcity here; women are welcome to visit Komaren—though few would find reason to settle here.

The next thing that a visitor will probably notice is that many of the men of Komaren exhibit uncharacteristic affection—for each other. Komaren is a realm which has become a haven for the *sherikaan*, (a somewhat derogatory Old Emer term for men who prefer the intimate company of other men). This orientation is accepted in a few cultures, ignored in many, and vigorously opposed in some—especially some very religious societies.

This is not to say that all the men of Komaren are this way, but most at least have some such leanings. It has become a normal and accepted part of the culture and in fact is an integral part of the *Blood Brethren*, the elite Komari fighting force. Like many of the western islands, the Komaren Cluster was sparsely populated for millennia by Jineri, and then annexed by the Emerian Empire around SE 1400. The Komaren isles were a rich resource for woods, spices and seafood, as well as pearls and citrus fruits. Also, of course, the islands held a strategic location bridging the north and south of Emer.

The Emperor even built a winter palace on the southern shore; Prince Terenis retired here for awhile to escape scrutiny at the Imperial court.

Perhaps it began with Terenis; perhaps it was a coincidence that the Prince and his warrior lover Jaad came here, but over the years Komaren's reputation as a haven for the *Sherikaan* has spread, attracting immigrants from all over the hemisphere.

NOTE TO VISITORS

Entry to Aquitar costs 3 bp, plus cargo tariffs. Crime is minimal, corruption moderate.

The Komari are for the most part an easy-going society, but the one thing they have no patience with is intolerance for their orientation. A disparaging word could get the offender banished.

THE BLOOD BRETHERN

The Brethren are composed of two-person teams who are mates (usually male, though there is a contingent of females) who have sworn oaths to protect each other to the death. Many also have at least rudimentary Mentalist abilities and the two are telepathically linked. This explains the legendary ferocity of these forces and their



A pair of Blood Brethren show off helmets, spears and a shield—trophy from their victory over the Vajaari

pencil and watercolor, from the sketchbook 'Peoples of Emer' by Haldak Vatay

reputation for never surrendering. Other armies (especially the Vajaari) regard the Brethren with a mixture of contempt and grudging respect.

The Brethren serve either on Komari naval forces or on land as elite 'special forces' groups. Most are trained in a variety of weapons and unarmed combat. Some are skilled assassins while others are experienced in open warfare. All are among the best warriors on Emer.

In terms of armor the Brethren usually wear leg and arm greaves of an unusual leather-like material. (Actually it is treated sharkskin: it becomes soft and spongy on one side—not unlike neoprene—and retains its tough abrasiveness on the outside; especially effective against slashes and punctures). Some also wear a reinforced sharkskin breastplate, though rarely do they don helmets. For clothing they wear only a short red kilt and sturdy sandals. Part of their pre-battle ritual involves painting the partner's face, arms and chest with runes in a bright red and blue body paint, giving each warrior a unique and fearsome appearance.

One special group among the Brethren are sea warriors. They may serve on ships, but their preferred mode of travel and attack is atop trained killer whales. A whale can easily carry both men great distances. These forces are also sometimes accompanied by loyal dolphin familiars. The link between man and sea-mammal is closer here than any about Emer, except perhaps for the Sea-elves of distant Onar.

AQUITAR

The capital of the Komaren Cluster is a large crescent-shaped city which curves around a bay of many docks. Komari architects faced a serious challenge when building their city: the tides here are unusually severe, even for Kulthea. Waters rise and fall twenty feet or more every day. The solution: the entire city floats on large rafts, connected by bridge ramps which can pivot and tilt to accommodate the shifting altitude of the city raft-islands. Supporting the islands is a combination of *bubblekelp* and *island trees*.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: The Komaren citizenry is predominantly a mixture of Jineri and Laan descent, plus a constant influx of Loar and Erlin Elves, Shay, Itanians, and just about every other race.

Political Structure: A republic where all adults may vote to elect representatives to the Assembly. They in turn elect two Speakers, who share considerable power. Residence for 1 year is required for full voting citizenship;

After one month newcomers may be granted provisional citizenship.

Society and Culture: Komari culture is essentially unique, being a nation of immigrants, with few ‘families’ in the classic sense. However, they do tend to create their own type of family, either pairing or a group creating a communal household. Athletic games are a favorite pastime, as well as music and dance.

Technology: TL 5. While superficially a simple culture, the Komari retain much of the knowledge and techniques of the Old Empire.

Arts & Architecture: The Komari use a variety of beautiful tropical woods to create their low, sweeping architecture. Roofs are ornate, while solid walls are few. Instead they utilize moveable screens and roll-up shades for privacy, allowing cool breezes to flow through the building. The only structures built primarily of stone are governmental or civic, but these show skill with stonework and mastery of the arch and buttress. Every town has at least one theater, as the Komari enjoy performance arts of every kind.

Clothing: The balmy climate of the isles mean clothing is primarily for decoration or modesty. Men usually wear a short belted tunic or just a kilt; women a similar, longer tunic. All wear simple leather sandals or barefoot. Jewelry is usually minimal: either sex may wear a ring, pendant or earrings; little more. Most men wear their hair very short—even shaved around the ears.

Military Structure: The most famous (or infamous) of the Komari forces are the *Blood Brethren*, skilled warriors who operate in pairs. In addition the government has a sizable standing army and navy, always wary of Vajaar to the south.

Currency: They do not mint their own coins, accepting any standard weight currency.

Language: Erlin is the primary language, though many continue to speak a dialect of Old Emer.

Diet/Subsistence: Mixed Economies/Fisherfolk. Seafood, grains and a wide variety of vegetables are staples. Komari culinary skills are widely renowned.

Worship: Most Komari are atheistic, though some follow the Lords of Orhan who accept them: Jaysek and Kieron.

11 • TON-BOR

Within the southern region of the Mountains of Gold lies one of the few Dwarven enclaves remaining on Kulthea. Others on Emer are rumored to be in the Spine of Emer and the Crystal Cliffs far to the east.

Little has been said about Dwarves in the Shadow World before; they are a race unusually isolated both culturally and genetically. Legends among men that the Dwarves came from stone are just that: legends. However, they differ from men and other races in many ways. They are resilient and resistant to heat, but cold makes them sluggish. They are able to ‘hibernate’ if necessary for months or even years in a state of deep sleep.

Stocky and hirsute, almost all Dwarven men grow thick beards. They have tough skin but deft hands, and it is true that many are skilled craftsmen. Dwarves can see after a fashion even in the darkest cave, but bright sunlight bothers them.

Some men claim that Dwarves have no soul, but Dwarves tend to be the most fervently religious of races. All revere the Lord of Orhan Iorak, but each clan also has a local patron deity.

Dwarves are ruthless warriors with a special hatred for the Murlogi and all demons.

TRADE

The Dwarves of Ton-Bor trade almost exclusively with Bentara to the south (and, secretly, the Dyari of Skystone), though sometimes they will deal with Chelzaria.

RESOURCES/EXPORTS

The Mountains of Gold yield up a wide variety of ores, and the Dwarves are masters of smelting and alloys. They even have mastered the working of Eogs. Their weaponsmiths have no equal except among the most skilled High-elves. Dwarven metalwork usually bears a forceful, utilitarian style.

IMPORTS

Unusual foodstuffs, cotton, wool, ale, leather and woods are constantly in demand in Ton-Bor.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: Dwarves of the Gold-root clan differ from the other clans in that they tend to be somewhat taller, with lighter hair and beards.

Political Structure: Ton-Bor is a Patrilineal Monarchy. King Valtor III has been ruler for 35 years.

Technology: TL 5. Dwarves share a love of mechanical devices with the Loari and Dyari Elves, and while they tend towards a more functionality-oriented approach to design, their works have a certain practical elegance.

Arts & Architecture Vast underground halls decorated by ornate carving and sculpture mark the grand style of the Dwarves.

Clothing: Wool with leather trim is the usual garb, pants and tunic with heavy boots for both sexes. Dwarves like to dye their fabric bright colors.

Military Structure: Ton-Bor is guarded by a large garrison of well-equipped warriors.

Currency: Dwarves mint a full range of coins, all with detailed stamped designs

Language: All speak *Tonic*, the guttural Dwarven tongue which they teach no outsider. Most of Gold-root clan also know some Shay and a smattering of Erlin.

Diet/Subsistence: Mixed Economies. Roots, tubers and mushrooms are supplemented by imported vegetables and meats. Dwarves are also big ale and beer drinkers.

Worship: Iorak is revered especially by smiths, but the local god Torgon is widely worshipped as the patron god of Ton-Bor.

12 · SKYSTONE CITY

In the Mountains of Gold, what began as a precious metal mine long ago has grown into a grand, mostly subterranean city. Ruled by an elite class made up entirely of Dyari Elves, this hidden metropolis is unknown except to a very few outside the city. Actually, the city is much older even than its Dyari inhabitants. The four roads and main halls date to well into the Interregnum. Just who built these massive tunnels and what happened to them is a mystery.

THE UPPER CITY

High up in a narrow mountain valley stands a small cluster of white stone towers surrounded by a few terraced fields and gardens. This is the tip of the iceberg which is Skystone City; long winding stairs lead down into the main city deep below. Watchmen stand guard at the towers while others cultivate the land. Trained falcons also watch the perimeter by day, and large bats guard by night.



The Southern Light of Izar, looking south along the Scorpion Ridge

THE GREAT HALLS

The main city is based upon a cruciform, four great underground roads extending almost a mile to the north-east, northwest, southwest and southeast, each ending in a great gate. These identical gates, actually massive iron doors fifty feet high and wide, set on sliding tracks, can be closed to seal the road.

To the southwest the road leads under the mountains almost a hundred miles to the Dwarven city of Ton-Bor. Northwest it leads 30 miles to a huge grotto opening onto the sea. Here the Dyari have built a small fleet. Northeast the doors have been sealed—they lead down to a maze of caves and an area of the old city that has been taken over by a Lugrōki colony. Southeast the road opens into a deep, narrow valley. Chambers near this secret entrance serve as stables for the Gemsting steeds.

THE UNDER CITY

Many levels extend below the road level, deep under the roots of the mountains. At the lowest point they join with the Ash Lairs and connect to Deep Gates. It is here that the Dyari inadvertently released an *Ordainer*, who caused great damage before finally being driven out.

TRADE

Only the Dwarves know of the secret city, and because of this they are the Dark Elves' largest trading partner. A few agents also carry small items by land, and the Dyari have a fleet which travels to nearby ports, but for the most part they depend on Ton-Bor. One might expect the Dwarven-people to take some financial advantage of this, but they value fairness, to the Dyari advantage. They also prize the fine jewelwork and magical devices which the Dark Elves are far superior at producing. And the Dyari can work laen, a skill even the Dwarves have yet to master.

DEFENSE

The Dyari jealously guard the Obsidian Vale—the narrow valley which shelters the entrance to their secret metropolis. In addition to Gemsting patrols there are several lookouts carved into the black rock flanking the valley. Intruders who are in danger of discovering the entrance are either killed or captured and made into slaves to work the deep mines.

A force of warriors ride Gemstings—huge scorpions 10-14 feet long. The riders sit in a saddle on the back, and the scorpion's stinger arches over his head.

CULTURAL SUMMARY

Racial Origins: As with all Dyari, they are an offshoot of the Loari tribes from long ago.



One of the curving avenues of Izar

Etching by Dendenien of Orian

Political Structure: A monarchy in which the eldest child of either sex inherits the throne. The current king of Skystone is Valdemarion Amarothe, who has ruled for over five hundred years.

Society and Culture: A rigid caste system based partially on race is the rule here. Dyari are either nobles, priests or artisans. Other races live in the city: humans and other Elven tribes are all laborers, little more than slaves who mine or farm or are domestic servants. Many have tried to escape Skystone; none have succeeded.

Technology: TL 5-6. The Dyari are masters of mechanical and magical devices, adept at making springs and tiny gears. They are also among the few who have knowledge of the working of *Læn*

Arts & Architecture The Dyari architectural style tends toward smooth, stepped surfaces, sometimes with many

angles. For ornamentation they utilize geometric patterns and blocky muscular sculpture. Music is not very common—though the Dark Elves do sometimes employ a variety of percussion instruments. In the realm of performance art, poetry and drama is extremely popular, for the latter they prefer lengthy plays with elaborate, intertwining plots, often ending in ironic tragedy.

Clothing: The Dyari like deep reds and blues, and especially black. Many wear wool garments trimmed with black leather and silver clasps, sometimes with red or purple accents. Leather is always in demand in Skystone, as is cotton and silk. Social events are frequent and clothing is a status symbol. They also like to wear their hair in a highly stylized fashion, braided or curled, sometimes woven with ribbons or metallic threads.

Military Structure: Besides the city guard, all adult Dyari are trained with weapons. All others are forbidden any kind of weapon for fear of uprisings.

Currency: Skystone does not mint its own coins but uses Kaitaine, Danarchis or Izar currency.

Language: All speak Dyari and Erlin, most also know some dialects of Old Emer and Shay.

Diet/Subsistence: Mixed Economies. Besides a wide variety of vegetables and fruits from their gardens above, the Dyari enjoy red meat, breads, and dairy products. Their foods tend to be spicy as well. Dyari of Skystone have an unending thirst for Námár-Tol wines, also peppers and spices from the western isles.

Worship: Andaras, Moralis and Scalu each have a following here, though most Sorcerers and Astrologers worship at the altars of Kesh'ta'kai.

13 · PORT OF IZAR

Located at the tip of the northern peninsula guarding the entrance to the bay of Izar, this independent city-state has been growing steadily in wealth and size for many years. The Lord Mayor of Izar has become little more than a figurehead, while real power rests with the Council of Guilds. In addition to being located at a key location for trade, Izar has become a center for skilled craftsmen. The city's gracefully curving walls protect her vast wealth and teeming population within. Izar's circular port is always bustling with ships.

NOTE TO VISITORS

A truly cosmopolitan city, Izar is home to representatives virtually every race on Emer and beyond. It is a bustling trade center and source for goods of all kinds.

Entry costs 5 bp, crime (mostly robbery and petty theft) and corruption (mostly bribery) are moderate.

THE LIGHTS OF IZAR

These monstrous twin lighthouses were constructed by Aldaron during the heyday of the Emerian Empire thousands of years ago, but have been maintained in fairly good condition. Each tower is of stone, and almost five hundred feet tall; the method of their construction has been lost; how such tall slender towers can stand in the face of storms and earthquakes is a mystery many present-day architects would love to unravel.

Each tower is topped by a small chamber surrounded by glass. In the chamber is an enchanted crystal which glows with a powerful light. The southern one glows blue-violet while the northern one glows amber.

14 · INDEPENDENT ISLANDS

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of islands scattered along the northwest coast of Hæstra; no one has mapped them all. Most of these are in fact little more than fragments of reef, or lifeless outcroppings of volcanic rock. New islands are constantly rising out of the sea and others vanishing, the result of underwater volcanism.

THE BARRIER ISLES

Extending in a great arc west from Danarchis, this string of isles and atolls divides the *Forbidden Sea* on the north from the *Sea of Gold* to the south. The Barriers extend thousands of miles further north almost as far as the Mur Fostisyr. Few of these are habitable, however, being either coral rings or dark jagged spires, steep towers of stone jutting out of the sea. A few have vegetation clinging to their flanks, but they are also surrounded by treacherous reefs and sand bars lurking just below the surface of the water. Beyond this narrow strip of shallows, the ocean depth on either side of the ridge plunges swiftly to many hundreds of leagues.

The Barrier isles would appear to be an ideal vehicle for one of the legendary Coral Roads, and indeed an ancient avenue travels beneath this string of barren islands. The southern entry is hidden beneath a rocky outcropping on the coast of Danarchis. The road splits far to the north, one fork heading east to Mulira and the other continuing north under the ice to the polar regions.

THE ISLE OF FIRE

A single island about 20 miles off the Hæstra coast, the Isle of Fire is the domain of the Lord High Priest of Zonar. His palace is perched high on a bluff near the southern end

of the island, and protected by many guards and magical wards.

GM Note: more on the Isle of Fire will be revealed in later books.

BARELLIS ISLAND

North of Komaren and southeast of the mountainous semicircular isle of Thesmoq, Barellis is fairly large—nearly 400 miles north to south.

The earliest residents of Barellis were the *Jineri* people (see *Thesmoq* below), and it was inhabited as well during the Emerian Empire. However, the Governor did not depart when the Empire abandoned the isle, instead naming himself Prince of Barellis. There was large Laan population on Barellis, and over the centuries they have intermingled with the *Jineri*. The Princedom has survived to the current day, though it has evolved into a government with relatively powerful regional lords. Barellis has a small but respectable fleet, kept alert by constant harassment from Shinh pirates.

Barellis has trade relations with Komaren, Danarchis, Kaitaine, Izar and Sarnak, and even Sel-kai skyships are known to visit the sheltered Barellian coves. Especially popular exports are pepper, cinnamon, and other spices.

Extending from the southern tip of Barellis is the upper arm of the *Nivean Atolls*, which separate the *Sea of Gold* on the east and the *Narrowing Bay* from the *Lonely Sea* to the southwest. While few know it, there is an entrance to the Coral Road at the very tip of Barellis. One avenue rises above the sea to the west and Agyra (and provides a way towards the risen land of Tarania), while another proceeds under water east to Emer. The Emerian exit is near the southern finger of land guarding the Bay of Izar.

RASHELLE ISLANDS

Just north and east of Barellis, the Rashelles are a cluster of islands long ago separated from the influence of the Emerian Empire. The population is entirely *Jineri*, scattered throughout the lush jungles in small arboreal tribes. Most of the Rashelle islands are wilderness; one would not call it civilized. Cymonum is little more than a large fishing village.

The Rashelles—especially the main island—are home to several potent and rare herbs, most related to the nervous system and magic. *Rud-tekma*, *Gort*, and *Zapic* can be found here, as well as *Sek* (relieves coma) and *Efrid* (massive nerve regeneration). Adventurous herb seekers often come here, but some do not return, victims of the *Cult of the Python*.

CULT OF THE PYTHON

Controlling the villages over the southern part of the island, this cult has existed for thousands of years. Deep in the jungle is a sprawling temple complex devoted to worship of the snake-god (Akalatan). There is one high-priest and a hierarchy of lesser warrior-priests under him; they are political as well as religious leaders who wield total authority.

Along much of the southern coast are scattered stone totems: pillars carved to resemble writhing snakes, with the top a huge snake head facing outward: a warning to intruders. Many have ignored these warnings and paid the price. Intruders are quickly captured and brought before the Priests of the Python. Some are killed, some kept as slaves. Others—particularly young men and women—are held prisoner until the next Incarnation Night (every New Orhan). There they become the subjects of a bizarre and perverse ritual involving the priests and priest-initiates and summoning of the Procreator demons.

TEUSILYA

This tiny isle rests halfway between the westernmost of the Rashelles and the Thesmoq Domain, but is an independent realm. It is the home of Lord Agonar, a half-elven lord who divides his residence between here and Sel-kai.

Agonar's origins are shrouded in the past, but he has controlled Teusilya since the days of the Emerian Empire, when he used his powers to cloak the island from Imperial explorers.

Somewhat of an inventor, the lord has a large workshop and a metals forge, where he and his assistants create all manner of mechanical contrivances.

Aside from a small manor house and outbuildings, and some cultivated land, the island is mostly covered in forest. However, Rashellians will tell you that Teusilya is protected by many guardians conventional and magical.

SHINH ARCHIPELAGO

The scattering of isles, reefs and atolls extending beyond the Komaren Cluster and separated from the Komari by treacherous reefs, Shinh is known only as a group of isles and atolls inhabited by wild beasts and pirates.

THESMOQ DOMAIN

Those who study astronomical phenomena and effects on Kulthea would immediately point to the island of Thesmoq as the result of a meteor impact millions of years ago. The land mass is a mountainous semicircle around a tiny steep isle. While the remainder of the circle is not obvious on a map, it is still there lurking just below the waves.

Thesmoq was first colonized by immigrants from the Mulirian continent probably during the Second Era. They resemble the Y'nari race in many ways, though taller and more slender with darker skin; some also display Elven racial features such as arching eyebrows and slightly pointed ears. Loremasters refer to this race as *Jineri*. The island came under the control of the Emerian Empire during the early Third Era, an Imperial Governor and occupying force nevertheless having little effect on the internal tribal government.

The fall of the Empire and departure of the governor and his entourage had even less immediate effect, though several hundred years of isolation have caused a breakdown of central authority on Thesmoq. Currently the island is said to be ruled by a collection of independent lords, though few specifics are known. Protected by a

combination of Essence barriers and encircling reefs, they remain relatively isolated from surrounding lands. However, the Alliance knows of Thesmoq and its many valuable resources, and they have already begun their program to bring Thesmoq within the fold.

The mild climate and mountainous terrain combine to create a beautiful land with rainforests on the mountains and warm black beaches, especially on the interior of the old crater facing the Thesmian Bay. Out of the center of the bay juts a small island which the Thesmoq people name *Aeoni*. It is uninhabited, though the residents know of its existence. The sides are sheer rock and landing is nearly impossible, except at a tiny cleft in the rock on the western side where a hidden platform allows access to a winding stair. Upon the summit is an ancient temple, dating to the Second Era.

REALMS NPCS

This chart is designed mainly to aid the GM in creating encounters with 'normal' locals in Hæstra. Most are the type of NPC the players are likely to run in to or wish to contact. Very brief biographical information is also provided; the GM should feel free to expand this if desired to further 'flesh out' the NPC. GMs could also 'move' these NPCs to a similar locale to fit in with the movements of the PCs.

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
BODLEA								
Betram of Carlsdale	6	74	1(20)	Y	N	60ss	35 short bow	10
Talath Shaman (Animist). Age: 36 Sex: M Eyes: blue Hair: blond Build: stocky Height: 6' 2" Items: Amulet, x2 PP Spells: 3 Animist Base lists to 10th Profile: Curious, friendly. Unusually knowledgeable about ruins around Bodlea. Will trade info and (minor) healing herbs in return for interesting information.								
Reana of Millsdale	4	36	1(5)	N	N	31 dagger	50 longbow	0
Talath Fighter Age: 32 Sex: F Eyes: blue Hair: blonde, long Build: full figure; strong Height: 5' 11" Profile: A farmer and skilled potter, Reana is raising her son and daughter alone. Her husband Teris vanished 2 years ago; it is suspected he was killed by Lugeröks or wolves. She has been granted freedom to marry again by the elders but has no desire to.								
DANARCHIS								
Varta Benerius	5	81	9(40)	Y	Y	86 broadsword	65 shortsword	10
Laan Rogue Age: 26 Sex: F Eyes: blue Hair: black (ponytail) Build: slender/strong Height: 6' 1" Items: black custom leather breastplate/greaves +10, stainless steel sword, +10. Profile: First mate aboard the trade ship <i>Northern Zephyr</i> (which also carries passengers in moderate comfort), she is a strong-willed woman loyal to her crew and captain; knowledgeable about the Sel-kai—Kaitaine trade route. Often seen at the <i>Shady Vineyard</i> , a tavern in Artha. Navigation, Weather Watch, Sailing, others +60								
Antonius Pergulis	8	69	1(30)	(Y)	N	65 dagger	90 Firebolt	10
Laan Mystic (gem merchant) Age: 34 Sex: M Eyes: dark blue Hair: black (neck length) Build: lean Height: 6' 7" Spells: All Mystic base to 10th, Invisible Ways, others Items: Spectacles of seeing: allow him to attempt to see through illusion as 30th lvl; bracelet, leather with silver clasp, +4 PP for Mystics; silver/amethyst ring. Profile: Member of the <i>Amethyst League</i> he reports on any strange activities or people.								
STROANE								
Toron Baalik	3	41	13(30)	Y	N	72 short sword	55 spear	5
Shay Fighter (deserting officer) Age: 24 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: brown Build: lean Height: 5' 9" Profile: Hiding out in the countryside doing odd jobs for farmers, Toron does not wish to turn to a life of crime; one of the few of the hundreds who have abandoned the Sarnak army to make such a choice.								
Marek Imaren	2	34	1(15)	Y	N	48 broadsword	15 short bow	10
Shay Rogue Age: 19 Sex: M Eyes: Hazel Hair: light brown/short Build: very muscular Height: 5' 8" Items: a +5 steel broadsword with a green laen orb in the pommel (his pride and joy). He does not realize that the sword is magic and <i>Of Slaying Undead</i> . Profile: A page in Sarnak Castle by day, Marek works as a busboy in the Gilded Goblet tavern most nights. The remainder of his spare time is spent practicing with the sword and building his body. Marek is bright and knows many secrets of the Castle, from political intrigues to hidden passageways. He is looking for a way out of his dull life...								

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
MIIR								
Serena, Priestess of Mynistra.	5	33	1(5)	N	N	45 quarterstaff	+25 Shockbolt	5
Shay Cleric Age: 28 Sex: F Eyes: brown Hair: brown Build: slight Height: 5'6" Spells: 4 base Cleric to 10th, 2 Closed, 2 Open lists Items: Tiara of Mynistra, +3 spells. Profile: A young priestess serving in the city temple at Orian, she sees many different travellers in need of healing—and hears many things. She is a notorious gossip, though not in a harmful way.								
Borno Vey, Prospector	3	29	1(0)	N	N	48 Short sword	27 dagger	5
Shay Fighter Age: 52 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: grey; grey beard Build: average Height: 5'11" Items: Headband, casts <i>Directed Light</i> 1x per day. Profile: Makes a marginal living on ore he finds in the Gold Mountains, spending most on cheap wine at inn along the foothills. He has seen the Dyari Gemsting riders, but everyone in the locals towns he haunts think he must have been drunk.								
VORNIA								
Marto the Barkeep	5	41	1(0)	N	N	45 dagger	—	0
Shay Rogue Age: 28 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: red-brown Build: stocky Height: 5'8" Profile: Owner of <i>The Bursting Barrel</i> in Bentara, Marto is easily the prime source of local news and gossip. With his wife and four children he runs a respectable tavern and inn. Most skills in cooking and related fields.								
Lady Skella Fenton	7	47	1(5)	N	N	—	—	0
Laan Scribe Age: 48 Sex: F Eyes: blue Hair: black Build: average Height: 5'9" Profile: A woman of minor nobility, Fenton resides at Dynax, but has made journeys to the Library of Shrynaar, and even the great Library of Nomikos. She is fascinated with the history of Hæstra and is writing a book on it. Many skills in research, languages.								
SARNAK								
Velta ka Norno	9	94	1(30)	Y	N	88 broadsword	105 long bow	10
Laan Fighter (Administrator) Age: 41 Sex: F Eyes: blue Hair: black/braids Build: slender Height: 5'10" Items: +10 steel sword Profile: Assistant Minister of Trade, she has many skills related to diplomacy and administration, (assume >+50 in each)								
Ketarian na Kono	3	43	1(35)	Y	N	65 short sword	54 spear	15
Thesian Fighter Age: 23 Sex: F Eyes: dark brown Hair: black Build: sinewy Height: 5'11" Profile: A Recent arrival at Sarnak, Ketarian is one of the many Thesians to have joined the Amazon realm lately. Her cocoa-colored skin is still very unusual on the Hæstra mainland, but Sarnak is one of the realms where all races are accepted. She is currently serving in the City Guard.								
PORT OF IZAR								
Kylen Marsto	4	43	1(30)	Y	N	65 scimitar	55 light crossbow	10
Thesian Rogue (sailor) Age: 26 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: black/short/kinky Build: muscular Height: 6'2" Skills: assume >+50 in all sailing skills Items: Boots of sea-legs: +50 to all balance/moving maneuvers on a ship; Storm-ring: predicts storms up to 48 hours; also storm direction (wrong 10% of the time) Profile: Currently employed aboard the trader <i>Spindrift</i> , he is a happy-go lucky young man in search of adventure. He is a skilled sailor and basically honest, but likes to party and frequents the port bars of Izar and Aquitar.								
Imaria, Sister of Eissa	15	63	14(35)	Y	Y	55 mace	(Absolution)	10
Laan Cleric Age: 45 Sex: F Eyes: green Hair: blonde, long worn in a bun Build: slender Height: 5'9" Spells: Channels, Life Mastery to 20th; Blood/Bone/Nerve/Organ/Muscle Law to 20th; Concussion Ways to 20th. Items: gold tiara, x4 PP for Clerics of Mynistra; Profile: First Sister of Healing, Imaria is in charge of the clinic of the Mynistra temple at Izar. While a caring woman, she comes off as cool and a bit distant.								
THE KOMAREN CLUSTER								
Jak Legan	7	81	14(30)	Y (10)	Y	105 handaxe	+91 net	25
Laan Ranger Age: 28 Sex: M Eyes: blue Hair: black/very short Build: muscular Height: 6'4" Spells: Items: 'sharksin' armor, +10 steel handaxe, floating shield of scales Profile: 'Blood Brother' (i.e., mate) of Zen0 (see below), the two are rarely separated and fight as a team. Recently returned from their crushing attack on Vajaar, they are stationed at Aquitar, and live in an apartment in the city. They are often on guard duty on the docks. Both are familiar with the coast, and have some knowledge of the islands. Might take laeve to serve as guides/guards.								
Zeno A'chai	6	90	1(90)	(Y)	Y (arm)	+90R4STR/+85R3S+T	+100/50/50 Jata	30
Loar/Laan Warrior Monk Age: 33 Sex: M Eyes: green Hair: black/short Build: muscular Height: 6'5" Items: Set of black alloy bracers: one is x3PP, other casts Shield spell 3x per day; +15 enchanted Jata† Profile: Changramai-trained, Blood-brother of Jak (see above).								
Raen Willow	4	38	1(15)	(Y)	N	45dagger	35 Shockbolt	15
Jiner/Thesian Animist. Age: 20 Sex: M Eyes: dark brown Hair: black, curly/very short Build: medium Height: ??" Spells: Items: Profile: Found, barely a year old, washed up in a small covered boat on the shore of a western Komaren Isle, Raen was adopted by a family there. His right arm is malformed and underdeveloped, with his right hand merely a small thumb and two fused fingers. His adopted parents will never know if he had been abandoned by parents not wanting a deformed child, or if he had somehow been swept there by a storm. At any rate, he was accepted and nurtured—unusual in a world where there is little room for the crippled. His animistic talents were quickly recognized, and he hones them in his spare time. He works in the <i>Dark Brew</i> tavern (specializing in coffee beverages) in Aquitar.								

BARELLIS

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
Ursenda Nymar Laan Fighter (Knight) Age: 34 Sex: F Eyes: grey Hair: black, very long Build: slender Height: 6'1" Items: +10 magic scimitar Profile: Eldest daughter of Lord Keten Nymar, she is in charge of the perimeter guard. A tough, headstrong woman, she is determined to show she is fit to rule, rather than her conniving younger brother.	10	98	15(35)	Y	Y	120 Scimitar	90 dagger	-5
Bentis Wratana Jiner Thief (Pirate) Age: 21 Sex: M Eyes: light brown Hair: black, short Build: slender Height: 6'4" Items: +15 long knife (strikes as rapier), boots of silence. Profile: Often seen in Nysellin (Barellis' main town), he is actually associated with some pirates whose base is further south along the coast. Bentis loiters about looking for potential targets.	5	48	1(30)	Y	Y (arm)	65 rapier	45 dagger	15

RASHELLES

Denas Jiner Fighter (Fisherman) Age: 36 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: black, long in braids Build: lean Height: 6'3" Spells: Items: Profile: Lives with his wife and three children in a small village of huts along the eastern coast of the main island. He is friendly but protective, and speaks a few words of Erlin. He knows where the Cult of the Serpent complex is.	3	45	1(10)	N	N	+30 handaxe	—	15
Soronomi Jiner Rogue (Python Guard) Age: 25 Sex: M Eyes: light brown Hair: black, short Build: lean/muscular Height: 6'3" Items: +10 steel handaxe, blowgun, armed with a level 3 poison which is delivered with any crit above "A"; RR failure means target at -30; second hit within one day means unconsciousness for 24 hours. Profile: One of the Guardians of the Python, he protects the temple and sometimes participates in raids to capture victims.	6	81	1(35)	Y	N	+85 handaxe	+75 blowgun (poison)	15
Kyto vo Tamen Jiner Priest (Sorcerer/Evil Mage) Age: 29 Sex: M Eyes: emerald green Hair: black, very short Build: lean Height: 6'5" Wears a loincloth and beautiful feathered mantle. For rituals is naked except for a falta-feather headdress. Spells: Sorcerer Base Mind/Flesh/Soul Destruction to 10th, Evil Magician Dark Summons to 20th Items: Armet in shape of snake, x3 PP enhancer for Sorcerer, casts Shield 3x/day; jade & silver pendant, adds 10 levels for demon control rolls; +10 obsidian dagger, used for sacrifice rituals. Profile: One of the Priests of the Python God (an incarnation of Klysus), Kyto participates in the perverse rituals of snake worship and summoning the Procreators. He is cruel and his lusts are insatiable. He can cast a fatal channeling: <i>Grip of the Python</i> . Target who fails RR is down and begins receiving Crush criticals every round, starting with "B" and increasing, continuing to take "E" crits until dead. Kyto can stop the process at any time before death.	12	71	1(40)	(Y)	N	+65 dagger	+35 <i>Grip of the Python</i> .	10

EMERALD FOREST

Jano Faun Bard Age: ? (looks ≈18) Sex: M Eyes: green Hair: curly red-brown Build: lean/muscular Height: 6'2" Spells: 4 Bard base to 10th, 1 Closed Essence to 5th, 1 Open Essence to 10th. Skills: Singing85 Dancing70, Seduction90. Items: +10 fighting net, +25 black wood broadsword with green laen edge. Profile: One of the elders among the Fauns of the Emerald forest (though to look at him you would never know it), Jano is hardly less playful and mischievous than in his youth many years ago. He is always on the lookout for attractive strangers to seduce (either sex, but they must have an AP or PR of 80 or above). Jano is usually naked or wears a loincloth.	7	88	3(30)	N	N	+90 broadsword	+75 net	10
Lonni Half-Dryad Thief Age: ? (looks ≈25) Sex: F Eyes: green Hair: brown Build: slender Height: 5'1" Items: +15 beryllium knife (strikes as rapier), +5 comp bow. Profile: Lonni is a member of the perimeter guard along the Emerald forest eves; she is wary of all outsiders. She wears a camouflage green tunic and pants. S&H90, Tracking87.	6	58	1(25)	N	N	+72 rapier	+58 comp bow	20
Kel the Dryad Animist Age: ? (Appears ≈16). Eyes: Brilliant Green. Hair: Red-brown. Build: Slender. Height: 5'10" (or 12'). Race/Sex: Godlike being/Male. Skin: fair. Demeanor: Playful/mischievous.. Special Abilities: Large Creature Critical Table. When 12' tall, resists as a <i>Super-large</i> creature. "Stun" result forces him to parry; "Stun No Parry" means he is stunned, but may parry. Haste at will. Resists vs. all forms of magic (Mentalism, Essence, Channeling) equally, using his level to resist. If he succeeds, there is no effect; Spirits never suffer any 'partial effects' from spells. Skill Bonuses: Climb240; Swim240; S&H180; Perc240; Chan240; Amb±15; AMov100 all; MAST180; MASw180; Acro240; Act120; AnTr90; Dance240; Diving90; Music180; Seduct240; Sing180; StarG90; Subdu200; Track240; Trick180; Tumb120. Spells: Base Spell OB is 90; Directed Spell OB is 180 (Water Bolt). Kel knows all Animist and Druidic Base lists to 90th, all Channeling Open and Closed and Base Clerical Spell lists to 50th lvl. Quarterstaff: As +45 Flail and allows parry as many as six foes (inc. missiles and those behind) a round. Longbow: +45, it has 3x normal range and has no subtraction for intervening woods. Arrows shot from it burst into green flame and should be considered <i>Holy</i> and <i>Of Slaying</i> creatures of the Unlife and any Demons (they are not really on fire and will not hurt any flora). Amulet: x6 PP enhancer for Channeling, glows in proximity to demons of the Void and the presence of the Unlife.	90	300	4(200)	(Y10)	(Y)	280 Flail	340 longbow	80
Enchanted Oak Defends as a Super-Large Creature. It is intelligent and can speak mentally to Kel or the Forest People. Knows the Animist Lists <i>Plant Mastery</i> , <i>Animal Mastery</i> and <i>Nature's Lore</i> to 50th, except all ranges are to the perimeter of the Forest. It controls the <i>Warding Perimeter</i> around the Forest, and also knows Warding Power and Warding Lore to 90th level. If necessary, it can cause the entire forest to rise up in defense.	120	1000	20(200)	(Y)	(Y)	120 HBa (4x)	150 LGr	none

Notes:

* Indicates a Shield or Greave protection is due to magical garment, shield spells, etc.

† A Jata is a unique three-bladed throwing weapon used by the Changramai monks. See **Other Powers** for more info.

‡ Only delivers second attack if a critical is delivered by first attack that round.

L: Large Creature Critical hit table

SL: Super Large critical hit table

HÆSTRA MILITARY/CITIZENRY CHART

Type/Rank	Home/Race	# encntrd	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Shield	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM
DANARCHIS									
Ship Officer	Laan	3/ship	8	90	10(10)	N	110rapier	70dagger	10
Captain or first mate of defensive fleet or better traders.									
Ship Crewman	Laan	10-20/ship	3	45	1(10)	N	65rapier	30sb	5
Crew of defensive fleet or better traders. Also might be encountered in port.									
City Guard	Laan	varies*	5	70	14(20)	Y	90bs	—	5
In Artha or other large cities.									
BODLEA									
Dale Warrior	Talath	≈10-30/Dale	6	110	9(20)	Y	100ss	80sb	10
Leather Breastplate, iron or low steel sword.									
Dale Levy	Talath	≈50-200/Dale	2	50	1(10)	N	35 varies	20 varies	15
No uniform, they will fight with whatever is available; usually an axe or pitchfork in melee, rocks or a spear or sling for missile. A few have iron swords and short bows.									
CITY GUARD (LARGER CITIES, MHR /VORNIA/STROANE)									
Guard Captain	Laan	varies*	10	110	15(30)	Y	120bs	90 light crossbow	0
Lieutenant	Shay	varies*	5	80	9(30)	Y	90bs	--	0
Guard	Shay	varies*	2	65	1(30)	Y	55ss	--	5
CONSTABULARY (SMALLER TOWNS)									
Constable	Shay	1	6	65	1(10)	N	65 ss	--	-5
Deputies	Shay	6-20	1	32	1(0)	N	40 ss or club	--	0
STROANE (N ADDITION TO GUARDS AS ABOVE)									
Military Captains	Laan	1	10	110	15(30)	Y	120bs	110cp	15
Green Surcoat, Gold helm. Shield is black with Stroane emblem.									
Military Soldiery	Shay	varies*	1	20	6(20)	Y	40ss	15sb	
Green Surcoat, Green helm. Shield is black with Stroane emblem.									
SKYSTONE CITY									
Patrol	Dyari Elf	2-6	4	56	18(35)	Y	75falchion	68lcb	5
Black alloy armor, Lightcrossbow with spring loading (fire every round), +5 steel falchion.									
Mounted patrol	Dyari Elf	2-6	5	90	18(35)	Y	120whip	100lcb	20 (mtd)
Black chitinous armor (made from gemsting), Lightcrossbow with spring loading (fire every round), +10 barbed whip									
Mount	Gemsting	2-6	6	140	12(30)	N	60LPi(2x)/80LSt/poison		20
Giant scorpion with saddle and reins									
City Guard	Dyari Elf	1-20	3	44	18(35)	Y	55falchion	40lcb	5
Black alloy armor, Lightcrossbow with spring loading (fire every round), +5 steel falchion.									
TON-BOR									
City Guard	Dwarf	1-20	3	52	15 (30)	Y	67 battle axe	60 heavy cb	0
Only found inside the underground city, usually at entrances or important ares									
Patrol	Dwarf	2-3	5	71	13 (30)	Y	90 battle axe	85 heavy cb	0
Usually outside the city guarding the perimeter. +10 steel axe.									
TALAEEN									
Better Warriors	Erlini	1-3	10	100	1(50)	Y	120ss	140lb	30
Forest Green tunic and breeches +15 Long Knife (ss table,puncture instead of Krush), +20 Long Bow.									
Warriors	Erlini	1-20	4	65	1(40)	Y	80ss	100lb	25
Forest Green tunic and breeches. Long Knife (ss table,puncture instead of Krush), +10 Long Bow.									
EMERALD FOREST									
Better Warriors	Nyph/Erlin(?)	1-2	10	120	3(60)	N	110 knife	130lb	30
Long Knife (ss table,puncture instead of Krush). Some have Animist/Druid spells.									
Common Warriors	Nyph/Erlin(?)	1-10	5	90	3(50)	N	80 knife	100lb	20
Long Knife (ss table,puncture instead of Krush). Some have Animist/Druid spells.									
Fauns	Faun	1-4	4	90	3(40)	Y	90bs	70sb	30
Some have Bardic spells.									
Sentient Tree	Tree	2-10	5	200	11	N	60LBa(3x)	60LCr	0
Cannot move from rooted spot; act only when awakened by Great Oak.									
<i>Kel and Great Oak—NPC Chart</i>									

Type/Rank	Melee Home/Race	Missile # encntrd	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Shield	OB	OB	MovM
Sarnak									
Captains	Shay/Laan (female)	varies*	6	110	17(40)	Y5	110bs	60cp	10
Soldiery	Shay/Laan (female)	varies*	2	40	13(30)	Y	50bs	30cp	5
Men	Shay/Laan (male)	varies*	1	65	1(10)	N	25qs	—	5
KOMAREN CLUSTER									
Guard Officer	Laan	varies*	10	120	1(30)	Y10	120bs	100cp	15
Guard Soldier	Laan	varies*	4	80	1(15)	Y	100bs	70cp	10
Blood Bretheren Captain	Laan	varies*	8	120	14(55)	Y10	140bs	90hcb	0
	Sharkskin armor, protects as +10 chain but encumbers as leather. +10 rustproof alloy broadsword								
Blood Bretheren Soldier	Laan	varies*	4	60	14(55)	Y10	95bs	50hcb	0
	Sharkskin armor, protects as +10 chain but encumbers as leather. +10 rustproof alloy broadsword								
BARELLIS									
Knights	Laan/Jiner	varies*	5	75	9(30)	Y	98 falchion	85 bola	10
	Patrol estates of the lords. Often on horseback								
Peasants	Jiner/Shay	varies*	0	8	1(0)	N	5	0	0
	Inhabit the villages around the lords' castles. Generally passive, but will fight with whatever is available; usually an axe or pitchfork in melee, rocks or sling for missile. A few have short bows.								
RASHELLES									
Warrior (family head)	Jiner	varies*	2	18	1(10)	N	25 dagger	35 short bow	10
	Inhabit the native villages. Generally passive, but will fight if threatened.								
Python Warrior	Jiner	varies*	6	81	1(35)	Y	+85 handaxe	+75 blowgun/sp	15
	Guardians of the Python, protect the temple and sometimes participates in raids to capture victims. +10 steel handaxe, blowgun, armed with a level 3 poison which is delivered with any crit above "A"; RR failure means target at -30; second hit within one day means unconsciousness for 24 hours.								
MURLOG									
Better Warriors	Goblins	1-4	4	70	8(30)	Y	75melee	45missile	5
	Usually encountered (always underground or at night) with lesser warriors below. They use weapons taken from their downed foes—sometimes steel or magic ones.								
Lesser Warriors	Goblins	2-20	2	35	8(30)	Y	40melee	20missile	0
	Always encountered underground or at night. Weapons are usually crude bronze swords, clubs or spears.								
GARKS									
Warriors	Gark	1-10	2	55	3(20)	N	40 melee	20missile	15
	Semi-human, apelike beings. Tribal, fight with club and rocks. Also can attack with their tail: 50Sgrapple.								
ASH LAIRS UNDER MTNS OF GOLD									
Trogl Warrior	Trogl	1-100	3	65	3(30)	Y	55 melee	25 misile	
Trogl Captain	Trogl	1-2	8	110	13(20)	Y	120 melee	45 missile	
Troll Captain	Mountain Troll	1-4	10	250	16(40)	N	120club	100rock	10
Ordainer of Argath	Demon	1	60	400	20(80)	N	200HBa/250HuCr; 300whip		15
	Fire Law list to 20th. See Master Atlas 2nd Edition, or RM Creatures books for additional powers.								
KEY:									
	• 'varies*' means that the number encountered will depend heavily on the situation. City guardss on patrol usually work in pairs; troops in larger numbers. Off-duty personnel could be encountered individually, or in groups of 2-6; some might be drunk or hostile depending on the PCs and their attitude.								
	• Shields equal to 20 or 25 of DB. An * means that armor is magical or specially made.								
	• Note defensive bonuses include Quickness and shield. Shield references include quality bonuses (e.g. "Y5" means "yes, a +5 shield").								
	• Unless otherwise stated, mounted troops have fully effective OBs when fighting from mount.								
	• Unless otherwise noted, the OB given for Martial Artists (abbr. 'mar') is for rank four. The letter folloing indicates skill in either strikes (stk) or sweeps and throws (swt).								

· PART V ·

PLACES OF INTEREST



4 Fall, 5945 TEI

We have arrived at the entrance to the Caves of Danaar, forty leagues from the town of Pellern near the birth of the Langasse river. If the opening is any indication, these caverns are overrated. Just a crack in the rocks up among the foothills; I would never have seen it. I think Lord Kalariak only found it again because of the peculiar formation nearby—an archway of stone perhaps fifty feet tall, apparently natural in origin. We'll camp outside tonight before entering the caverns. I continue to have doubts about the Lord's expectation of finding one of the caches of the legendary Earth Wardens here.

6 Fall, 5945 TEI

I must admit that indeed the entrance was deceiving: already I have seen wonders like none before in all my years of exploring beneath the surface of the earth. Pillars of crystal, luminous plants and shimmering lakes. Here and there are signs of ancient habitation as well...

26 Fall, 5945 TEI

We have been wandering through these caves for days, going ever deeper. Our food and water supplies are running low; the last underground river was four days ago—if that contraption of a clock can be trusted, since there is no night or day here. I fear that we have lost our way, even the Dwarven guide Gerenn seems at a loss...

28 Fall, 5945 TEI

All are nearing exhaustion. Kalariak foolishly decided to go forward after point of no return. Temperature seems to be rising... Desperately need water...

29 Fall, 5945 TEI

Just when all hope seemed lost, we stumbled upon a cavern lit by glowing moss, revealing a vast underwater lake. We drank out fill and rested, feasting on the delicious blue berries which grow here in the dim light. Now we continue on, Gerenn having found a new tunnel. The warmth here is strange, and there are peculiar smells.

(no date entry)

No time... Huge cave, fires, sulfur. A city, black towers... tombs with incredible treasures, gems. Possibly city of Earth Wardens. Attacked by hideous creatures from below... gates to the Ash lairs... Gerenn dead, others wounded... no way out...

*From the Notebook of Anulis Batanadies,
Kalariak Expedition*

(book was found, edges burned, at the mouth of the Langasse River)

While one might think that the severe weather and geologic contortions of the *Shadow World* would cause any physical creations of previous civilizations to be quickly lost, the Essænce sometimes acts in strange ways. The lands of Kulthea are scattered with haunting reminders that the world has been home to many peoples before the present tenants.

While surviving evidence of the Lords of Essænce is extremely rare, the few remaining installations are especially priceless—and perilous. The Lords had a mastery of magic and technology, and between these powers they created ways to preserve their secret hideaways even through the millennia since they ruled this section of the galaxy.

More common are ruins of civilizations which rose and fell during the Second Era and earlier in this, the Third Era of Ire. A few reminders even survive from the time vaguely referred to by Loremasters as the *Interregnum*. This was the period between the destruction of the K'ta'viir Empire and the founding of the College of Loremasters (the date considered to be the first year of the *Second Era of Ire*), a period of as much as 100,000 years. While the Loremasters would like to take credit for single-handedly returning civilization to Kulthea, in fact many cultures rose and fell during that vast span of time. Legacies of a few of those peoples have endured, to awe and mystify scholars and adventurers.

1 · THE CORAL ROAD

A vast network of avenues linking the continents, the Coral Road was at first attributed to the Lords of Essænce, but was in fact built some time during the Interregnum, before the Second Era. It was designed as a safe method of travel between continents when the seas were even more perilous, and frequent flowstorms made magical travel almost impossible.

Few have heard of the Coral Road, and fewer still have walked any of its winding ways, but many of the routes survive even today.

The road is sometimes under the water, following coral reefs; at other times it is above the waves connecting strings of atolls. Once the entrances to the roads were grand gates, but most have been sealed or destroyed. A few were hidden and locked with powerful spells. The Loremasters and Navigators know a handful of these secret ways, but most are lost. A complete map of the Coral Roads would be priceless; even a partial one highly prized.

The roads are wondrous works of craftsmanship united with the natural growth of coral. Often the tunnels and passages have crystal windows cut in them, affording

vistas of storm-tossed seas above, and tranquil views of swimming fish in the waters below.

Written records of events before SE 1 are notoriously rare and unreliable, but evidence suggests that most of this network was constructed/grown sometime between -10,000 and -5000 SE, by a group known as the *Earth Wardens*. Probably Elven in nature, their influence is implied by these and other works all across the hemisphere.

CORAL ROAD ENTRIES

Entrances to the Coral Road vary tremendously in design, though virtually all are now cleverly concealed to appear as natural formations. They are either very near a coast or even located just offshore on a small island, the actual door hidden by magic and skillful workmanship. Difficulty in finding the door varies with each entrance, but discovering one by chance is very unlikely.

The Navigators and Loremasters know of a few dozen coral road entries; undoubtedly many more still lie undiscovered.

DANARCHIS CORAL ROAD ENTRY

A rocky pinnacle rises out of the sea just off the northwestern tip of Danarchis, one of dozens of such islands. This one is distinct only because of an ancient granite archway on the coast facing the isle—a symbolic door. Three hundred feet of shallow water separate the coast from the isle, and there, fifty feet up the sheer rock face in a niche in the side, *Very Hard* to locate, is a secret door. Pressing a nearby stone (seemingly a cluster of quartz) triggers a counterbalance to swing the great stone door inward. A wide stair spirals 100' down and opens onto the coral passageway. A vaulted corridor about 20' high and wide, it curves westward beneath the sea. One branch heads north where it opens at the Mur Fostisyr, and continues to the north pole. Another branch dives deep beneath the ocean to rise again at the Thesmoq Domain, underneath a tiny sacred isle. It sweeps further west before joining the road which lies along the reefs extending from the Komaren entry.

KOMAREN CORAL ROAD ENTRY

On the southern coast of the main island there are many rocky outcroppings. One of these conceals a spiral stair down to the domed antechamber. The road heads west and joins the road from Thesmoq before continuing to a small outcrop near the risen land of Taranian.

THESMOQ CORAL ROAD ENTRY

In the center of the Thesmanian Bay lies the tiny island of Aeoni, crowned by an ancient temple from the Second

Era. But the temple conceals an even more ancient secret: a Coral Road entry.

2 · ASH LAIRS & DEEP GATES

Far beneath the surface of the *Shadow World*, flows of water and magma have carved vast mazes of tunnels and caverns. Kulthea is a world riddled with secret caves, and the darkest of these are the Ash Lairs.

ASH LAIRS

Even the Loremasters know little of this underworld—it remains largely unexplored. However, it is the home to many creatures and beings: demonic refugees from other planes, hideous spawn of inter-species matings, and other things unthinkable. Wild tales of this realm tell of everything from maze-like tunnels to huge caverns enclosing entire cities. Demons of the Essence and those of the Fourth through Sixth Pales in particular make their homes here.

Even the Trogli rarely venture into these depths, though Goblins, Trolls and Lugrôki find their way into the lairs—whether by plan or misfortune—inevitably to become subjugated by the demonic residents. Cave Worms and similar beasts also dwell here.

DEEP GATES

Entrances to the Ash Lairs are the Deep Gates, physical and magical doorways from the surface world to the lands below—and beyond. Fortunately for surface dwellers, these access ways are few and most are closed by enchanted locks. However, take care when exploring a cavern, especially when the air turns from cool to an uncomfortable warmth with a scent of sulfur...

3 · VOTANIA

This great mountainous isle near the center of Emer has always been a focus of power and mystery. The coast is a mix of fine sand and treacherous rocks guarding a narrow border of habitable ground. Soon, however, the steep flanks of the mountain rise at a seemingly impossible angle towards the summit, nearly three miles above the surface of the sea. No mortal has set foot on the uppermost peak of Votania in millennia—and returned to boast of it.

ALDAIN RUINS

At the northern tip of the island, Aldaron built a beautiful palace and the capital of his empire. Aldain was a metropolis of slender marble towers and colonnaded courtyards, with gardens and fountains everywhere. But

that was thousands of years ago, and little remains of the city but tumbled walls and broken columns. The city was plundered soon after the fall, and has been looted many times over the ages, but it holds treasures still for those clever and determined enough to seek them out. It also has its own guardians... and some say it is haunted.

FORGE COMPLEX RUINS

Along the western shores lie the ruins of a vast compound. This was the first home of the Ahn Sye Ni-Vulma, the Order of the White Flame. It was closed in TE 1555 when the order moved to the Ahrenæk at the urging of Akesh. This complex has also been the target of looters, though not as much so as Aldain City. Many of the facilities are underground and hidden, and some have yet to be reached by robbers. They are equipped with many protections, however, so seekers of wealth should beware.

THE AHRENTHRÔK

The evil order known as the Jerak Ahrenreth makes its home deep beneath Votania, in a sprawling complex of chambers. A physical entrance to the Ahrenthrôk lies concealed on the northern coast of the Sea of Votania, but it is well guarded by magical warders. *More about the Ahrenreth is discussed in the "Other Powers" section, and details of this holding will be revealed in an upcoming book.*

ACROPOLIS OF THE TITANS

From a small cove on the southern coast of Votania, a wide staircase spirals up around the flanks of the mountain, eventually reaching the summit many thousands of steps later. This is the only way to reach the Acropolis of the Titans; no Navigator will take you there.

Hardy climbers will encounter obscuring fogs (actually low clouds) near the summit. The upper portions of Votania remain wreathed in clouds at all times.

Treasure-hunting visitors will find disappointment at the end of their labors, for all that stands upon this lofty height is a cluster of grand but simple temple-like buildings (one dedicated to each Titan). The acropolis appears abandoned (the titans who are here choose not to show themselves) unless someone tries to tamper with or deface anything. This will bring forth a terrible storm, powerful enough to literally blow the intruders off the summit.

4 · PORTALS

Portals (otherwise known as 'Gates') are an integral part of the *Shadow World*. Most were created during the First Era or Interregnum, though the power to make them was still not uncommon in the Second Era. Few now have the skill or desire to undertake such a project.

Most Portals function in a—relatively—mundane fashion, transporting whomever steps through it safely and instantly from one place to another. However, some Portals have the power to send one to another time, or even to another world. And since most Portals operate in both directions, they give beings on the other side access to this world.

Below is a selection of Portals still functional in Hæstra. Some are fully active while others have been closed but can be re-opened. This is not meant to be a complete list; GMs should feel free to add Portals as appropriate for their campaign. Additional portals may exist within other sites.

GENERAL PORTAL ATTRIBUTES

Active Linked: The most common type of Portal, it is like an interdimensional door, opening at one specific place at the other side. One steps through and is suddenly at the terminus of the Portal.

Active Variable: This type of Portal is not tied to one specific location at the other 'end.' Rather it may have several possible openings at pre-determined Portals, or may even be random.

Dormant/Inactive: A Portal is usually inactive (as opposed to closed) because it requires a key to open it. Keys may come in the form of anything from a magical token, to a spoken word, to a gesture, to in at least one case a real key. If the key is used properly, the Portal becomes active.

Closed/Sealed: This is a functional Portal which has been magically blocked (usually by the Loremasters). Powerful spells interfere with the functioning of the Portal, preventing anyone from going through it. The Portal still radiates power but cannot be used unless the spells are broken.

Dead: For whatever reason, the power is gone from this Portal. It give off little or no magical energy, and appears to be completely inactive. There have been a few cases, however, when a Portal thought to be dead has suddenly reawakened...

GATE OF YÆRA

This powerful Portal began as a great geode more than 15 feet in height. Located in the foothills of the Mountains of Gold, it stands amidst many ruins on a rocky plateau. This place — now known as Yæra — was most likely a scholarly center of the Earth Wardens, though its exact nature is long forgotten, as its manuscripts have turned to dust. Whether the Laan opened this Gate is uncertain; it dates from a time preceding that people.

A sorcerer of considerable skill worked his spells, and split the geode. Therein were revealed two perfect hemi-

spheres, their cores glittering with amethysts. But one hemisphere remained for only an instant before vanishing in a silvery flicker of Essænce. The other, held upright on a pedestal of fine marble, serves as the entrance, and the vanished half is the exit far away.

The Gate is not constantly functioning, and the original method of controlling it is long lost; perhaps it was by some enchanted item or command. However, the Gate will activate at seemingly random times. A flowstorm will open the door, or sometimes a powerful use of Essænce nearby. But just as often the hollow will fill with a shimmering light for no obvious reason, and the air in the courtyard around the Gate will become still; almost electric. In the sparkling core of the geode, one can see faint, shifting scenes, as if the other terminus of the gate is actually moving through space or time. The exit point has never been determined.

The effect will last for a few seconds or an hour — again there is no pattern — and the Gate closes again. Navigators stay well clear of it.

OBELISK OF THASE

A three-sided pillar of black adamantine stone, the obelisk stands in the ruins of an ancient city (there are actually several such obelisks, but the rest are undiscovered in wilderness areas, or buried, or underwater). The pillar is ten feet across on each side at the base, rising up and tapering to a needle point sixty feet in the air. While the surface of the Obelisk appears to be smooth and

featureless most of the time, when it is troubled by the Essænce, strange characters appear on its faces, glowing blue and green and red.

It is older than the ruins which surround it, though it shows no sign of age. An artifact of the Lords of Essænce, it is a portal of sorts. By speaking the correct phrase in *Iruaric*, the surface of the obelisk becomes permeable. One can step inside, into a triangular chamber about eight feet per side. In the center is a slender triangular pedestal three feet high, on the surface of which is a complex touchpad/mental control surface. By using thought-commands and/or touching key combinations, the inside walls change to indicate the various locations the obelisk-transporter can deliver you to. Some are obviously destroyed now. Once a selection is made, one merely steps through and is there. Someone could theoretically step into the *Ahr-enthrok* or any of a number of still-functioning Lords of Essænce installations from here. But, there is no one left alive who still knows the code phrases except Andraax and a handful of K'ta'viiri in deep sleep.

5 · HOLY & UNHOLY PLACES

Here are a few examples of temples and shrines associated with various deities.

TEMPLES OF EISSA

These structures whether in a city or the countryside are usually a rectangular temple with a complex of at-



A Portal of the Lords of Essænce, located near a ring of stones ruin



A Typical Rural Shrine of Iloura

tached buildings. Priestesses of Eissa (all who serve Eissa are women) live here and maintain the temple. many are also Healers and Clerics who will cure the sick and heal wounds (in return for a hefty tithe).

Eissa preaches that those mortals who are pure of spirit and follow her teachings will be released to a divine oblivion when their body dies. The same is true for Elves who die, and others who grow tired of the world may be chosen to travel to Orhan itself and live there in dreamy bliss.

SHRINES OF ILOURA

Rather than one specific shrine, this is representative of probably hundreds of small, rural structures scattered across Kulthea. As Iloura is the Mother of the Earth, so it is only appropriate that her shrines are usually simple and located in the wilds.

While some may be no more than a shallow cave with a slab of rock to roof it, others have corbeled arch doorways with a short corridor leading to the chamber. Iloura's shrines are always dug at least part-way into the ground,

but there is usually a small roof-vent to let in a ray of light and allow smoke to escape. Always above the entrance is the symbol of Iloura: three leaves in a branch.

The altar itself is a round stone with a large circular depression in the center and a small depression on either side. In finer shrines, set in each of the side depressions is an unusual material called *smokestone*. It looks like rock but is organic, and can be soaked in a liquid steeped in certain herbs. When dried, it can be lit and smolders for about eight hours before going out. (After cooling for ten or so hours, it can be lit again, and re-used in this manner almost indefinitely).

The smoke from the stones releases an incense which allows one who is a follower of Iloura to have visions — should the Lady Iloura wish it.

The stones are lit and the center depression is filled with fresh water. The adherent must be alone in the shrine and spend the night. Whether they have a vision or not (requires a successful *Meditation* roll) they will awake rested in the morning.

HALLS OF KIERON

Kieron's preferred method for his followers to show their devotion is music, festivals and revelry. In return he makes sure the wine is always sweet and the hangovers mild. Kieron brings levity and fun to balance the seriousness of some of the other gods. Because of this his 'temples' are designed to be concert halls and party rooms. These are maintained by attendants who receive tithes to cover expenses.

TEMPLE OF MYNISTRA AT BENTARA

This temple is on a bluff overlooking the town of Bentara in Miir. It is the chief temple of the local goddess Mynistra, a large structure with three colonnaded wings. For more on the goddess herself, see *Other Powers*.

SHRINES OF AKALATAN

One of several temples in larger cities, this one is devoted to the Dark Spirit Akalatan, the 'son' of Klysus.

Followers of the Serpent god must make regular sacrifices (usually they must give some of their own bodily fluid) to appease him and ensure health and life. Priests of Akalatan teach that failure to do this will result in returning in the next life as a slave in a demon-world.

Periodically, there will be special closed ceremonies to which only the devout are invited. At these shadowy events often culminate in a sacrifice to Akalatan some sort of perverse ritual of bonding with the god through a summoned *Procreator* demon.

All priests of Akalatan are men, who for some reason all appear young and virile until the moment of death, when they age within a span of seconds to old men (this extended youth is a benefit of their perverse rituals and drinking 'blessed' fluid).

Shrines are six-sided buildings with a small sanctuary, and a stair down to many chambers below ground where priests and servants live. Not surprisingly, a snake motif dominates, including snake-headed men.

ACROPOLIS OF SCALU AT DESAMIS POINT

There is a spit of land ten leagues north of Jantanen in the Bay of Izar. The hills are fertile, covered with tall grass and scattered trees, but this peninsula, known as Desamis Point, lies empty. Loremasters believe that the place was once the domain of an evil lord—the remains of his castle still stand somewhere along the coast—but it was all destroyed when he turned against the god Scalû. At the very tip of the peninsula the land rises in a rocky cliff, hundreds of feet above the water. It is here that the Temple of Scalu once stood.

A treacherous narrow stair cut into the rock is the only way up there short of flying or teleport, and at the summit one is greeted by a sprawling, walled complex of temples and other structures. This was a monastery once inhabited by dozens of monks devoted to the Bringer of Night. Now there are only ruins and the moaning cry of the wind.

System Notes: Those foolish enough to spend the night on the peninsula will have terrifying nightmares. Each night on the peninsula afterwards, they will suffer an attack from the Evil Mentalist Base Mind Disease list. The GM should roll 1D10 to determine the spell level, then roll an attack with no range mod. For Neurosis, Phobia, and Psychosis, the GM should choose things or acts which seem appropriate for the character.

TEMPLE COMPLEX AT MUARTAAR

This desolate plateau in the Forbidden Hills southwest of Qye holds the remains of temples to Scalu, Klysus, Andaras, Inis, Moralis and Z'taar, plus numerous smaller temples to lesser evil demigods. It dates to the end of the Second Era, when many dark gods had large followings, just before the Wars of Dominion. The complex seems abandoned, but there are many traps and hidden magics, and three demons of the Sixth Pale remain magically trapped here for all time, waiting for new toys to amuse themselves with.

6 · OTHER LAIRS & PLACES OF POWER

Below are several miscellaneous sites of interest which the PCs may have to pass near, or they might be destinations in themselves.

BURIAL MOUNDS OF THE JINTENI

Pre-dating the Wôrim, the Jinteni were centered in what is now Uj, but had many colonies in Hæstra and Khûm-kaan. Their burial mounds can be found throughout Miir and Vornia. Usually visible now as a circular hill of earth about ten feet high and thirty feet in diameter, these mounds cover a small tomb, accessed through a small door. Of course, the door is now covered by earth and grass. Inside these tombs (provided they have not been looted) one may find gold, platinum, art treasures, or even an ancient magical item. However, disturbing the tomb may release the angry Wight of the entombed.

LAIR OF MOTAR VOORG

The Red-gold dragon lives in the Heights of the Spine of Emer, east of Tovor. Motar is a fairly typical Mature Fire-drake, highly intelligent but bent only on the acqui-

sition of treasure and destruction of all who threaten him. Until recently he was in hibernation, but has awakened and is hungry and not too happy about his new neighbors.

Motar loves tales and word-games, and actually has much knowledge of the Second Era—not to mention considerable treasure from that time. He enjoys music and conversation, and has even been known to allow a particularly gifted Bard to leave his lair unharmed, though empty-handed. (He has been visited by the Loremaster Randæ Terisonen.)

Motar's home is a warren of caves about a thousand feet up the Spine of Emer. The entrance is easy to see by the cascade of bones and rusted armor strewn down the mountainside by the opening. Among the tens of thousands of gold pieces, hundreds of jewels, and dozens of magic items in Motar's treasure hoard is the *Holy Sword of Kuor*.

HOLY SWORD OF KUOR

Description: A large bastard sword fashioned of a dull grey alloy. The edge is like a razor and never requires sharpening. The blade is etched with a fine tracery and runes which are barely visible. The guard is a simple "T" shape, roughly formed—but it is of Star Iron. The hilts are wound with black wyvern-skin, and the pommel is an orb of black Læn. The scabbard is also of black wyvern-skin trimmed with titanium.

Powers: Those who do not worship one of the Lords of Orhan or are not pure of heart can barely lift the sword. To wield it they would be at -30. In the hands of a

virtuous servant of Kuor, however, it becomes light and easy to swing, and has the following powers:

1. +30 OB
2. Attacks using the "Holy" critical hit table (in addition to regular criticals against normal-sized opponents).
2. When drawn from its scabbard it creates a sphere of anti-magic five feet in radius where no spell may function (no RR). Magic items' innate powers operate normally but they cannot cast spells.

THE EYRIE OF SSAMIS T'ZANG

A Light-Drake, Ssamis resides high in the Scorpion Ridge east of the coastal town of Slyke.

Unlike Motar, Ssamis is cruelly mischievous, and enjoys 'playing' with her prey before killing it, much as a cat does with a mouse. She is also extremely vain, even for a female drake, and will let an skillfully flattering intruder live for some time before eating him.

Ssamis' hoard is not as extensive as Motar's but is still a very great treasure-trove.

THE WÔRIM BARROW-DOWNS

Little is known of the Wôrim, whose civilization rose and fell during the Interregnum, except that at one time they apparently inhabited most of Hæstra. All that remains of this ancient culture are several scattered barrows, mostly in Miir and southern Bodlea. The barrows are usually marked by a low stone structure and a large oval pillar with an inscription. Over time some of these have collapsed, or the stones partially covered or broken. Some of these tombs have been looted for the treasures

buried with the Wôrim. Many of the residents of these barrows are still here—manifesting as Barrow-wights. Anyone walking within 100 of the downs might attract the wights.

THE WAILING MARSH

In western Vornia, between the northwestern end of the Izaran Crest and the shores of the Bay, lies this swamp. It straddles the road between Bentara and Falkenna, looming over about fifteen miles of the ancient highway built by the Old



A Temple of Cay in SW Hæstra

Empire. Once this road was raised above the swamp—a causeway with periodic low bridges to allow the waters to flow beneath. But the road has sunk in places, and a few bridges have collapsed, making this a treacherous route.

Year-round it is warm and muggy in the marsh, even oppressive. The air is still and the sun never reaches beneath the trees. Often a dark mist will rise from the waters.

The marsh is infested with alligators and large constrictors, but the greatest peril is the wailing deep in the swamp.

CYPRESS TREES

Overshadowing the swamp are these great coniferous trees, their roots fanning out above the watery ground like living buttresses. Those who have been in the swamp say that the trees have an awareness.

THE WAILING WATERS

In the heart of the swamp, where the cypress trees grow thick and tall, are the wailing waters. The site of a battle an age ago, it is now a watery graveyard for numberless souls. Within this region are what are commonly known as *Corpse Candles*. These appear as handsome men or beautiful women trapped under the waters. Unlike the usual type, however, these also can be heard, a sad song wafting through the swamp. Those ensorcelled by their spell will soon join the wailing.

System Notes: *All within 100' must make a SD RR vs. 1st level or be drawn to look into the waters of the undead. Afterwards treat as a normal Corpse Candle. PCs may also unwittingly look into the water and be trapped even if making a successful RR vs. the wailing.*

THE GREY GROVE

In a shallow valley in central Miir, astride a tributary of the Alana river, stands an ancient forest. While made up of a mix of trees, it is predominately oaks, willows, elms and pines.

Within this grove lurk many hostiles: Sentient Trees, a colony of Garks, Giant Spiders, and Black Squirrels.

THE BODLEAN MOORS

Bodlea is a vast area of rolling land. Most Dales are situated on higher ground where farmland has the best drainage. Between these higher elevations are regions of open lowland which form either marshes or just perennially moist heath. These moors usually covered in grass or moss, with a few scattered trees, odd rocky outcroppings, and ruins of farms, temples and castles whose owners have long been forgotten by all but the Elves. Morning fogs linger in these areas, and the sun never seems to shine as

bright. Creatures natural and supernatural lurk here. These are the Bodlean Moors.

MOOR INHABITANTS

The foggy moors provide a home to numerous birds and animals, most harmless. The most dangerous normal creatures are probably the few roving wolves. However, foul beasts inhabit the darker regions: black squirrels, giant spiders, ghost wolves, and even a few Cave and Hill Trolls. There are also rumors of a nest of land wyverns south of Wyerdale.

THE GLEN OF NORG

In the Glen of Norg, astride the northern face of the Forbidden Hills, the Shards of Hoar Ak settled at the bidding of the Ahrenreth. They drank the blood of the lowland breed. Perhaps this is why Hoar Ak traded brown for burgundy.

More on the Shards and the I-lat can be found in the *Master Atlas 2nd Edition*. There is also basic Shard information in the *Rolemaster Creatures* books.

GM NOTES

The potential power and terror of Shards cannot be stressed enough. Of all the constructs they are the most devilishly powerful and cruel.

When moving in combat their pace is anywhere from a Shardic sprint (confined space) to dash (open areas, including forests), making their DB -300 to -500; virtually unhittable by normal means. They pause for only part of a round to fire their deadly disks. To have any chance of hitting a Shard, one must be on opportunity fire with a missile weapon and anticipate where they will stop (within a 30° firing arc). Attempting to melee with a Shard in combat is suicide.

The one defense against Shards is invisibility, and even this is less than perfect because of the Shards' superior senses of hearing and smell. If the target is invisible and flying or moving silently, add 80 to their DB. If they are invisible but not successfully moving silently, they are only -50 to their DB.

And remember, Shards are not merely brutal but cruel, and their dietary preferences make resurrection difficult at best.

ORACLE OF SYNE

Built into a cliff-side in the Forbidden Ridge— high up the face of the bluff — is a great arched doorway, on either side of which sits a staid warder. These statues of wizened kings which flank the entrance to the Oracle of Syne have no magical power, but they stand guard just the same. And the narrow winding path to this remote entry dissuades the faint of heart as well.

Once past the eternal scrutiny of these doormen, a corridor slopes gently downward for several hundred feet. It is dark but for luminous runes which glimmer on the black walls.

At last the visitor reaches a vast domed hall, lighted from far above by a small opening in the center of the arching roof. In the center of the chamber is a well: a round opening framed by grey stone, a shaft descending into the depths of the earth. This is the Oracle.

To ask a question of the Oracle, the visitor must cast an offering into the well (no one has ever heard it hit bottom). The Oracle has a supernatural ability to judge the relative sacrifice of an offering. One man's offering of a loaf of bread might be sufficient while a rich man's offer

of a diamond and gold necklace is not enough. Some say the Oracle is fickle; others say it is all-knowing.

If the Oracle deems the offering insufficient, there is a stony silence, and the supplicant will get no answer, even if he throws in more. If, however, the gift is appropriate, the Oracle speaks:

"Your offering is welcome and well-given.

What do you ask of the Oracle of Syne?"

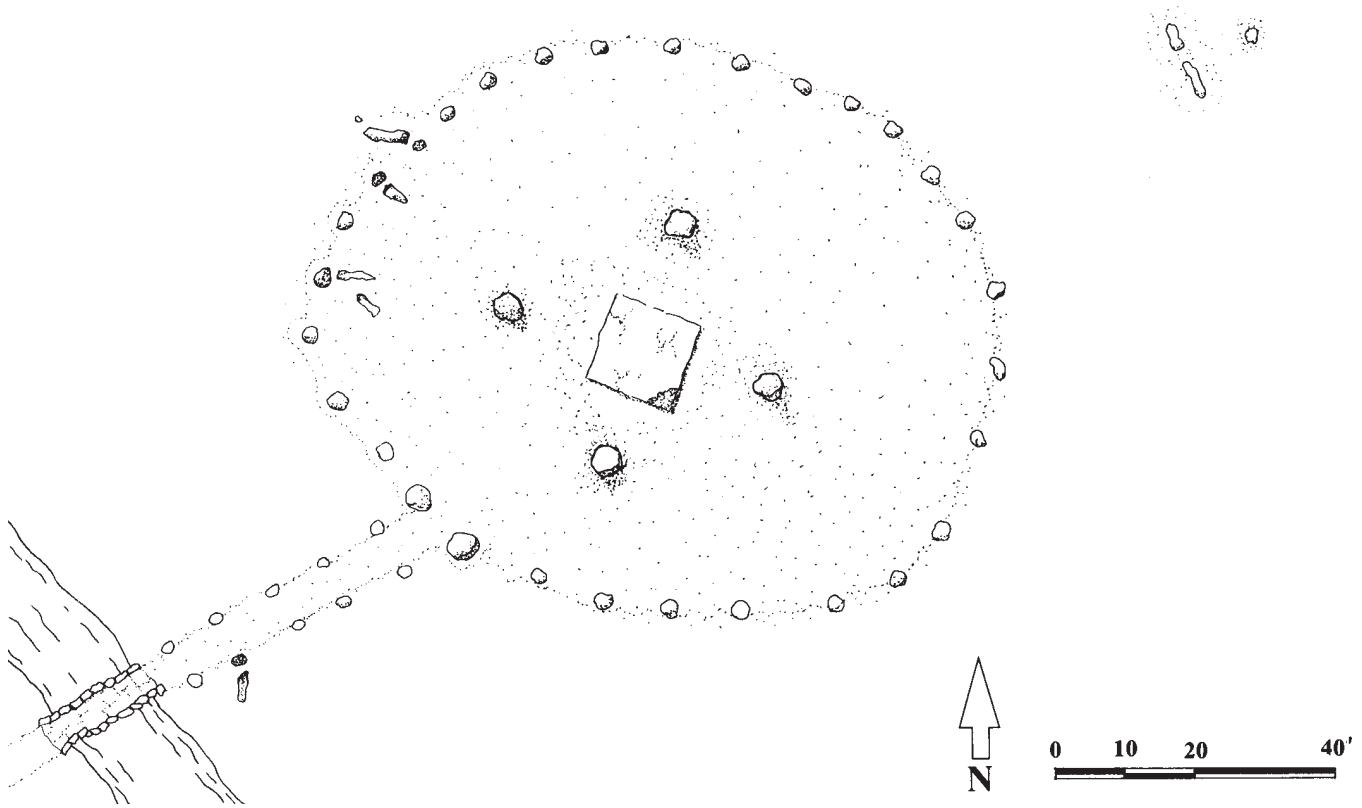
The visitor may then inquire about a single concept (*one aspect* of a place, a thing, a person, etc.) The Oracle will answer, sometimes in a clear single word, sometimes in cryptic verse. But it will always give some useful (if initially obtuse) reply, and in the asker's most familiar tongue. The Oracle will rarely answer more than one question per day from a visitor, no matter how rich the offering.

STANDING STONES OF NILÔM

GM Note: The standing stone described here are typical of many sites scattered over Hæstra and sections of Tai-emer and Khûm-kaan. The GM may wish to adapt the



A Cave of the Shards of Hoar Ak



A Typical Standing Stones ruin in Bodlea or Miir

layout and powers and have the characters encounter similar structures elsewhere.

The rolling hills of Bodlea have a few features of note, among them a number of defiant stands of trees — and the Standing Stones of Nilôm.

The structure takes the form of two concentric rings of tall, roughly cylindrical pillars surrounding a circular platform which rises three steps above the ground. The rings are 100 and 60 feet in diameter, and the platform is 20 feet across. The pillars in the rings are made of a blue-grey stone. The outer pillars are about ten feet tall while the inner pillars rise to around fifteen feet; they are considerably eroded but one can just make out cryptic, hieroglyphic patterns on their surfaces. The platform is of a grey stone and much smoother.

Once, long ago, there was an avenue lined with smaller stones which led to the stream a hundred yards away, but this road has been fractured in several places, many of the pillars lying broken on the grass. It is no longer a safe place to travel along.

However, the circle retains much of its ancient virtue. When awakened by need, it can be a fortress against evil.

STANDING STONES POWERS

1. All stones begin to glow when a demon or servant of the Unlife (essentially any 'evil' being) ventures within 1000'.
2. Any 'evil' being or creature attempting to pass through (meaning between the stones or over them) the outer ring receives an "A" *Disruption* critical and must make a RR vs. 20th level. Failure means the creature is thrown backward, success means it has gotten through the Ward.
3. As 2 for creatures attempting to pass the inner ring, except the critical is "B" and the RR is vs. 30th level.
4. As 2 for creatures attempting to climb on to the platform, except the RR is vs. 40th level.
5. Very powerful creatures may have spells which enable them to pass the Wards, or even damage them, as is evidenced by the broken avenue.
6. The Wards do not stop good spells from being fired out, though evil spells must make the same RR as physical action. The Wards do not interfere with physical missile attacks of any kind.

· PART VI ·

OTHER POWERS & PERSONALITIES

The sun was shining and it was one of those perfect days for travelling: not too hot or humid, nor too cold but brisk enough to be comfortable while hiking. We had just stopped to rest on a low hill overlooking a farm when they appeared. Randæ sensed it before anyone else, and ordered us to lie flat on the ground. Then the Phoenix pendant turned cold against my skin, almost burning me with the chill, and a moment later we all felt the tingling, when your hair stands up just before lightning strikes.

The sun itself seemed to dim and turn grey as, not a stone's throw away, a bluish light flickered near the ground and a shimmering oval of light appeared out of thin air. The oval rimmed what looked like a rippling mirror perhaps thrice a man's height—it was a Portal.

For a moment the gateway to another dimension floated silently, then the creature emerged. It was not unlike a large squid, levitating upright by some power with its tentacles hanging below it and wavering sinuously. But the upper 'body' was bloated and translucent with apparently three saucer-like eyes spaced about it, and within we could see a monstrous pulsing brain. I had never seen anything like it before, an unspeakably hideous thing beyond imagination.

But Randæ apparently knew its ilk...

"Thresh!" He hissed under his breath. "This is bad."

But it would get worse. The thing floated forward, then rotated slowly as if surveying the area. We held our breath. Then the Portal shivered again and another horror appeared, more bizarre than the first. A huge, bloated fish with shimmering diaphanous fins, for a moment it seemed strangely beautiful. Then I noted that it was covered with large, round, unblinking eyes. And from its toothy maw protruded a cluster of tentacles, dripping with luminous slime. I felt bile rise from my stomach at the unnatural foulness of this thing.

And while we were watching this monster, the Thresh had darted across the field to hover above one of the cattle grazing nearby. It lowered slowly onto the apparently unwary beast, its wavering tentacles encircling it. Then the body lunged downward and the poor creature let out one plaintive cry. It was over quickly; within a few heartbeats the cow was a desiccated heap of bones and hide.

As if on queue, the two then flew away to the north with startling speed. We all let out a breath, and Jad proceeded to become noisily sick.

*Kalen Avaniir
From his Travel Journals of Emer*

This portion of the book is dedicated to groups and individuals who—whether they act openly or in secret—have an impact upon Hæstra and environs. The intention is to devote attention primarily to more local influence; organizations such as the Loremasters and Lords of Orhan have been covered in detail in the *Master Atlas*.

1 · CHANGRAMAI MONASTERY

Established around S.E.I. 2500 by none other than the Loari master of unarmed combat, Loremaster Tannis Dekdarion (an ancestor of the current Loremaster and Changramai master T'vaar Dekdarion, as well as the infamous Dúranak Prince, T'revor Dekdarion), the school is named for the ancient *changrama* technique of mind/body fusion.

It is more a school and training center than a true monastery. In fact, while many adherents follow a devotion to the Lord Cay of Orhan, no organized religion is practiced in the walls of the Changramai compound.

ENROLLING

All are welcome to enroll in the Changramai school, though very few are granted entry. Those older than young adolescence are also unlikely to be accepted because of the complications of beginning training later in life. Rigorous testing is required to be granted entry; only one in perhaps 100 who seek admission are accepted.

RANKS AND LEVELS OF ABILITY

Young men and women who pursue the discipline of changrama progress through a complex series of echelons. The exact nature of these vary slightly depending on the chosen curriculum, but the terminology is essentially the same.

STUDENTS

The Monastery takes in a few orphans as children and essentially adopts them. These children are very well cared-for through to adolescence. If they have the aptitude and desire, they are offered the chance to become initiates. Alternatively, they may continue to live and work in the shelter of the monastery, or depart to seek their fortune.

INITIATE

All who enter as adolescents or adults are initiates, usually for five years. They are given a series of tests to determine their aptitudes and preferences, and set upon a course of additional schooling and training.

VEILS

There are ten levels or *veils*, of skill and development in the Changramai discipline. These levels are somewhat theoretical; T'vaar Dekdarion himself has only reached the Ninth Veil, by his own declaration. A Changramai Monk advances to a higher veil through a *trial*, a test of mental, physical and spiritual ability in which the monk proves he has earned a new designation. Judgement is made by a tribunal of masters.

GM Note: These Veils are not tied absolutely to specific system levels, though for convenience they may roughly correspond to 5 level increments (i.e., 1st level equals the First Veil, 5th level = Second Veil, 10th level = Third Veil, etc.).

The veil level is signified by the color of the small raised collar band around the traditional white robes, and on the left cuff of the robe or other garment.

Veil	Color
First	White
Second	Tan
Third	Grey
Fourth	Red
Fifth	Green
Sixth	Maroon
Seventh	Blue
Eighth	Purple
Ninth	Black
Tenth	Gold

RANKS OR RIBBONS

A second designation of skill is called degrees or *Ranks*. These are specific sets of ability related to the two basic schools of martial arts taught at the Changramai school. There are four ranks for each of the two basic styles, ranking designated by small triangular pips on the collar. Ranks for the *Talshya* method (utilizing mostly striking attacks) are placed on the left side while ranks for the *Renshya* (involving mostly unbalancing and throwing maneuvers) are placed on the right side. The pips are usually worn only at ceremonial occasions.

MONKS AND WARRIOR MONKS

The Changramai training embraces training philosophies both with and without the aid of spells. Thus, graduates may either be pure physical warriors or users of Mentalism as well. While the Mentalist Monk has an additional training regimen, the differentiation is not often made to outsiders.

GM Note: While RMSS continues to consider Monks of Essence and Bards of Mentalism, in the Shadow World this is reversed for all NPCs (GMs may do as they wish with

their Player-characters). Monks use Mentalism, Bards tap the Essence; this is the 'Amthorian' philosophy from RM 2nd Ed.

THE CHANGRAMAI TATTOO

All who pass the first Veil are given a small red triangular tattoo on the back of the left hand. From a distance the tattoo looks solid, but upon close inspection it is actually a very intricate pattern. The tattoo is also enchanted in nature, and very difficult to counterfeit.

Optionally, the monk may also have a second tattoo, a tiny red triangle (pointing down) under the left eye. This makes it clear to everyone that the wearer is a Changramai.

CHANGRAMAI BODYGUARDS

The monastery does not hire out monks for guard duty unless they have passed the Third Veil, (*GM Note: this is usually around 10th level*) and have a total of four ranks in martial arts. However, monks hired as bodyguards never wear rank or veil insignia as they would reveal to possible opponents the monk's area and level of expertise.

A monk may be hired through one of the offices located in most of the larger cities in Emer or Jaiman. Rates vary tremendously depending on the person or item to be protected, where (or if) they are travelling, etc. The minimum is 2 Monks for day/night protection at 10 gp/day and up. This is always split 50-50 between the monks and the Monastery.



Changramai Monk Novitiates sparring.

From the Sketchbook of T'sandar Vey

TYPICAL CHANGRAMAI BODYGUARDS

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
Kark Jenael Loari Warrior Monk. All Adrenal moves 58, Subdue 55	11	113	1 (85)	N	Y(arm)	101StkR4; 96SwTR4	90/20 jata*	25
Sargon Jerell Jineri Monk. Three Adrenal moves 55, Subdue 50, All Base Monk lists to 10, Shield Mastery to 5.	10	85	1(80)	(Y)	Y(arm)	90StkR4	80/30 jata*	20
Bren Jenjanus Loari Warrior Monk. All Adrenal moves 62, Subdue 70	13	120	1(95)	N	Y(arm)	111StkR4; 90SwTR4	100/80/30 jata*	20
Horek Trinn Laan Warrior Monk. All Adrenal moves 80, Subdue 65	14	115	1(90)	N	Y(arm)	118StkR4; 85SwTR3	102/50/20 jata*	10
Idarien Chye Loari Monk. 4 Adrenal moves 70, Subdue 80. All Base Monk to 20th, 3 other lists	22	98	1(100)	(Y)	Y(arm)	90StkR4; 85SwTR4	110/30/20 jata*	25
Thierry of Ravensdale Talath Warrior Monk. All Adrenal moves 65, Subdue 50	9	88	1(70)	N	Y(arm)	100StkR4; 95SwTR3	80/40/20/20 jata*	15
Valen Tai Nuyani Warrior Monk. All Adrenal moves 58, Subdue 55	16	125	1(90)	N	Y(arm)	105StkR4; 117SwTR3	130/60/60/30 jata*	10

• **Jata:** This circular, three-bladed weapon rolls on the broadsword table, with range as a spear. Skill in its use is taken in a way similar to martial arts, except subsequent ranks are instead targets in the same throw (max ranks: 4). All targets must be within a 120° arc. The thrower may use his last attack bonus instead as a 'return', causing the jata to come back to him. Thrower may opt to catch the jata, making a maneuver roll with the applicable attack bonus. Failure means a roll on the thrown weapons fumble table; failure by over 100 means an unmodified attack on the thrower.

2 · THE EIGHT IMPERIAL ORDERS

Long ago these eight elite groups served Aldaron and his successors, the Emperors of Emer. As agencies of the Empire, they aided in administrating the realm and monitoring activities throughout the far-flung lands. Some also served as foci of learning and storehouses of knowledge. Each order had a First Minister, who sat at council with the Emperor.

It was assumed that all the orders were disbanded when the Emerian Empire collapsed in the years following T.E. 1650. All except Zanar did vanish from view, and some actually disbanded. But the kernel of their origins remained, and some have returned to serve as enclaves against disorder. Some fell under the shadow to arise again as twisted mockeries of their former mission.

GM Note: A brief overview of the orders is included here; more will be revealed of their current activities and members in later books, especially for those located in other regions of Emer.

ARTIFACTS OF THE ORDERS

Each of the Eight had powerful items associated with them, forged at Aldaron's command. The Smith and Alchemist *Kerento T'ara*, one of Aldaron's people, was the creative force behind these artifacts. T'ara's understanding of magic was slightly different, having come from a parallel world. With him he brought a new perspective on the flows—and a powerful use for the rare crystalline element Laen.

Laen combines an enchanted nature along with some of the tensile strength and optical properties of glass and the malleability of steel. It was mainly the optical properties of the material that T'ara was able to exploit, creating lenses which in effect focused and filtered the very flows

of Essence. Into each item was integrated a *lens*—a cabochon of transparent laen, tinted to match the hue of each order.

However, in 1609 SEI, Ondoval (disguised as Luarto Shang, the Lord High Seer of the Emerian Empire) and A-kesh recall many of the old artifacts to be 'enhanced.' Instead, they alter the purpose of the lenses to link them with the Dark Jewel of the Jerak Ahrenreth, and each lens acted as a scrying and recording device, allowing the members of the Order of the Eye to 'see' through each lens at will. Once a lens was recovered, they could also view everything that the lens had ever seen. In this way the Order of the Eye was able to spy on even the most secret meetings and events. Just as each order had a color associated with it, one might know the origins of a lens by its clear tint.

Order	Lens tint
Eye	Violet
Silver Sword	Grey
Scarlet Cloak	Red
Ring	Green
Sun	Yellow
Four Winds	Blue
Hand (Mask)	Black
White Flame	Clear

Eight were the servants of Dænkú.

Powerful lords, they served a greater master.

*But time was cruel and War put an end
to the Power of Dænkú.*

*The Eight returned, yet they sought new guidance:
Ondoval filled the void with Darkness.*

*While Dænkú slept for the second time,
His Cult turned from the Narrow grey path.
Crystal reflections were to defeat the Eyes
If both are lost then hope dies.*

*Few guessed the purpose of the Cult of Old,
subtle as whispers in a gale.*

Now their actions speak and realms fall.

The Order meets again in the Hallowed Hall.

AHN SYE WOLOKA

The *Ahn sye Woloka* (E. "Order of the Eye") was once the association of Seers who aided the Emperor with foretellings and communication with the far reaches of the empire. They were corrupted during the later years of the Empire by Ondoval (founder of the *Jerak Ahrenreth*), when he—disguised as the Seer Luarto Shang—rose through the ranks to be named the Lord High Seer and Keeper of the Eye. He used the altered power of the lenses of the other orders to spy on them and engineer their undoing.

The Order was supposedly destroyed in the ensuing chaos after the fall of the Emerian Empire.

But Iæn Shiin (now one of the Eight of Ahrenreth) stepped in and salvaged the trappings of the group. Today they live again, and they seek the *Aenfaw*—specifically the *Heart of Agoth*—but not for Schrek. Iæn Shiin is an ally of Lorgalis first, and has learned of Schrek's search for the artifact. He hopes to secure the item first and therefore put it where the demonic Lord will never find it. He uses the Order of the Eye to cover his actions.

As in the original structure, there is the Lord High Seer, eight Lord Seers and sixteen adherents. Iæn Shiin is the Lord High Seer, the current headquarters of the Order is the *Isle of Glass*, located in the Rællian Bay.

THE LENS CIRCLETS

The Lord High Seer and each of the eight Lord Seers possess a magical circlet with mystical scrying powers. In form they are copper metal headbands studded all around with green laen jewels. Affixed to the band in front is a complex metal apparatus which can swing down over one eye, allowing the wearer to look through a tinted lens and



A Lens Circlet, holding two lenses

access the item's powers. In addition, there is a second clip which can hold another lens pivoting down in front of the first. A lens from one of the other orders can be inserted here, and the wearer can view anything the lens has ever witnessed.

Other Powers:

1. Can view at will as if through any of the other lenses of the Eight Orders.
2. x4 PP Seer spell enhancer

ORDER OF THE CLOAK

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
Vorga the Inquisitor	20	90	1(50)	(Y)	N	88 mace	+45 Absolution Pure	15
Laan Evil Cleric. All base Evil Cleric to 20th, 6 others to 10th. Scepter of Zonar (with lens), +30 robes of Defense								
Gragor the Priest	12	68	1(30)	N	N	68 mace	+20 Black Channel	5
Laan Evil Cleric. Lesser Scepter of Zonar (+10 Mace). All base Evil Cleric to 10th, 5 others to 10th. Black Channel: Wrath of Zonar: range 50', RR mod -10. Target bursts into flame, one "B" crit for every 10 pts failure.								
Bortok Khog, Champion	15	165	18(50)	Y	Y	155 mace	90 heavy crossbow	-20
Laan Fighter. +10 armor, Mace of Zonar (+20, additional disruption crit one less than any other crit)								
Darmis au Boj, Champion	10	120	18(35)	Y	Y	125 mace	75 heavy crossbow	-25
Laan Fighter. +5 armor, Mace of Zonar (+10)								
Klendo Xhaak, Champion	7	93	18(35)	Y	Y	100 mace	80 heavy crossbow	-35
Laan Fighter. +5 armor, Mace of Zonar (+10)								

3. Multiplies range (in time and/or space) of all Seer Base spells x4.
4. Multiplies duration of all Seer Base spells x4.

AHN SYE NOKORA

The *Ahn sye Nokora* (E. “Order of the Silver Sword”) was the Emperor’s house bodyguard. Traditionally, these impressive men wore flowing silver and white robes and had full helms of steel. Their swords were polished to a silvery finish, and the elite of this guard wielded a special weapon called a *Yarkbalka*.

Now they have revealed their presence again, and serve a man known as the Lord of Ardanía and reside with him in the Palace of the Sun in southern Taimer. All have the same grey robes and helm of their predecessors, and ride great steeds.

THE YARKBALKAS

These strange weapons resemble large broadswords (bastard swords), but all are fashioned of a special titanium-eog alloy which has a distinctive silvery hue.

Common Yarkbalka Powers: Treat as 2-h sword, -10 when use one-handed; +10 and 2x hits when used with both hands. Could be summoned to hand of attuned wielder from up to 100' away with a thought. Fumbles on an UM 01-03, used 1-h or 2-h.

Superior Yarkbalka Powers: Sixteen High Guardians had special Yarkbalkas. The Superior weapons had powers of the common blades, but in addition to striking as a 2-h sword when used one-handed, and a 2-h sword +20, 2x hits when used with both hands, these special blades could summon the *Fireblade*: the weapon bursts into intensely hot flame. The sword becomes a +30 2-h sword, dealing 3x hits and an additional Heat Critical of the same value. The Lord High Guardian had a similar weapon, except it was also considered *Holy*.

THE HELMS

The Sixteen High Guardians and the Lord High Guardian also possess enchanted helms. Fashioned of a silvery alloy, each had a smoky grey lens set in the forehead.

AHN SYE ZANAR

Once an honorable association — as were all of the Eight — the *Ahn sye Zanar* (E. “Order of the Cloak”; also

known as the Crimson Cloak or Crimson Order) has become warped and their focus is meaningless. Originally—on the original world of Aldaron’s People—it was a priesthood who cared for the sick and honorably released the dead. They followed a benevolent god of that world named Zanar; theirs is a monotheistic religion. However, upon arrival on Kulthea, the priesthood suffered a crisis: they were severed from contact with Zanar.

At first they were welcomed by Eissa, who allowed them to believe that she was male and another ‘incarnation’ of their god; though the Zanarians were troubled by the existence of other gods.

Then, in T.E. 1553 the Seer Luarto Shang (*Ondoval in disguise*) reveals to the Lord High Priest of Zanar that Eissa is really a woman and not even the most powerful of Orhan. In the depth of his crisis of faith, the High Priest is vulnerable to Ondoval and is tricked into redirecting his channelling focus to the Crystal, the heart of the Jerak Ahrenreth.

As the years passed and more priests were replaced or converted to following the Ahrenreth in the name of Zanar.

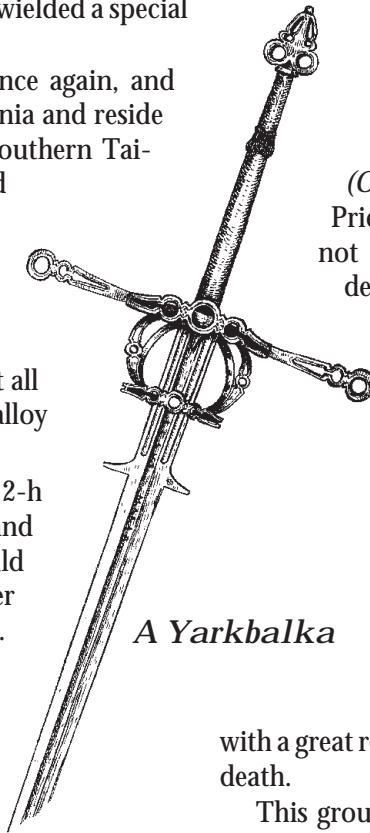
Now the *Inquisitors of Zanar*, driven by a misplaced religious fervor, they terrorize the land, demanding ‘tithes’ and ‘devotion to Zanar’. The focus of the order is the Scepter of Zanar, a silver rod

with a great red orb, now perverted into an instrument of death.

This group controls an island off the Hæstran coast (the *Isle of Fire*, just north of the entrance to the Bay of Izar) and their religion is spreading across Emer. The organization does not claim land, but rather seeks to subvert the peoples of neighboring realms to the religion of Zanar. The Church promises longer life to its faithful, and in fact offers the chance to be raised from death should the body be brought to a temple quickly enough. They exact heavy taxes from their followers, and as their following in a given area grows they put pressure on the remaining peoples to join.

PRIESTS

The most innocuous of the followers of Zanar, the priesthood maintains the many temples which can be found in cities across Emer. The high Priest of each temple can indeed raise the dead, but there may be side effects, as they may be channeling from an evil power. (GM discretion). They also charge a stiff fee.



A Yarkbalka

INQUISITORS

Men who travel the countryside in dark red robes with hoods and masks, the Inquisitors constantly search for ‘enemies of Zanar.’ All who use Channeling spells (especially those who follow the Lords of Orhan) are considered such, and the Inquisitors cast *Excommunication* upon them. Those who openly defy the Inquisitors are often the victim of *Firenerves*, or even *Bloodfreeze* (a spell which causes the blood to harden in the veins over a period of 1-10 minutes, killing the target with agonizing pain) or the *Hand of Zanar*, a fatal channeling projection which causes the target to burst into flame. The Inquisitors are a tool of terror, frequenting areas where there is resistance to the Order. They also carry small scepters of silver, each with a lens in the head.

The Inquisitors travel in pairs, in a black coach drawn by sable horses, and always escorted by four to eight Champions.

When Inquisitors are seen in a town or other public place, people slink away — for they might be picked out for examination. If such is the case, the two Inquisitors come towards you, while the Champions cut off escape. Then they ask:

“Do you follow Zanar?”

If the answer is no, you are ordered to convert immediately and pay 50 gold pieces. Refusal to convert means one of the aforementioned spells is employed until you convert.

If the answer is yes, they say: “Tithe five pieces of gold.”

CHAMPIONS OF ZANAR

Burly men in silver armor with red cloaks, they accompany the Inquisitors and act as bodyguards and enforcers. Champions have tall helms with red horsetail crests, and wield large silver maces.

There are eight Lord Champions and one Lord High Champion.

LORD HIGH PRIEST

Head of the Church of Zanar on Kulthea, the Lord High Priest (also known later as the Lord High Inquisitor) resides on the Isle of Fire. He rarely ventures forth from his opulent palace. The current Lord High Priest is Vogo Cthon-Raval, a cruel and depraved man. However, he is periodically possessed by the spirit of Schrek, a condition considered by his adherents as some sort of communion with Zanar. These possessions, however, are invariably marked by random acts of abuse upon whatever victims are available.

THE MACES

The Eight High Priests have maces of an enchanted nature; each also has a red lens in a special setting on the top. The maces are +15 and do an extra *Disruption* critical. The Lord High Priest’s mace is actually a seven foot tall staff, x4 and +4 to channeling. It will also cast *Protections IV* and *Spell Shield True* at will (user must concentrate to maintain the Shield).

THE ARMOR

The Eight Lord Champions all had enchanted plate armor. In addition, they each have an ornate silver cloak-pin, with a red cabochon setting. This is, in fact the lens.

AHN SYE TALAUS

A cabal of Mages, the *Ahn sye Talau*s (E. “Order of the Ring”) was always an arcane group, more secretive than any other—except of course the Order of the Mask. Because of the nature of their artifact, it was difficult for the Order of the Eye to create items of subtlety which incorporated a lens—and which the members of the order would use. Finally, they created sixteen small telescopes and one larger version.

They survive to this day, but in two separate organizations, often at odds with each other.

THE GREY RING

A secret council located in Sel-kai, the Grey Ring is a vigilante group of Mages and other spell users who have taken the law into their own hands. They mistrust the Talau College (see below).

THE TALAUS COLLEGE

The other faction of the Order of the Ring remain isolated on an isle south of Lys. Now known as merely *Talau*, the island is a gathering-place of magicians and scholars of the Essænce. They are allied with Lys, and cloak their presence from all who travel into the Bay of Uj. While not evil in nature, the Mages value their isolation and will protect it at any cost. *More will be revealed about this group in Emer III*

THE RINGS

Each member wears a grey alloy ring, composed of platinum and other alloys, engraved with runes. The rings are created for each member and each has unique powers and attunement.

THE TELESCOPES

These beautifully crafted instruments are about the length of a man’s forearm, and fashioned of polished walnut. At each end is a silver metal cap protecting the

lenses. Each also has a matching case to protect it. The eyepiece cap screws off to free the smaller lens which doubles as a tool for the Order of the Eye. The telescopes operate like the real instrument, magnifying distant objects by 20x. They also allow the user to see through fogs and clouds and at night as day. Finally, once per week they can see through any one solid barrier (e.g., a wall, a hill, even a single mountain) within 4 miles to view what may be on the other side.

THE BOOK

The focus of the Order is a great tome, the *Book of the Ring*. The Book was stolen in T.E. 5010 by an unknown thief and the Talaus College has been trying — unsuccessfully — to recover it since. (*The thief was servant of Schrek, and the book is in the vaults of Ahrenthrök*).

AHN SYE SHAN

The *Ahn sye Shan* (E. “Order of the Sun”) is another of the Orders to be corrupted. Once the members of this order were masters of flora and wise in the ways of enchanted herbs.

Their home is an island known only as the *Isle of Glass*. It is located in the Rællian Bay, surrounded by reefs. *More will be revealed about this order in Emer III*

THE SUN AMULETS

There were sixteen gold sunbursts about four inches in diameter and suspended from a golden chain. Each was hollow in the center to hold a yellow lens. Each was a +4 PP enhancer, and may cast one *Plant Mastery* spell up to user’s level per day. The Lord High Animist had a slightly larger amulet, which was +8 to Channeling spells, and User may ‘safely’ (i.e., only the normal failure chance) overcast any spell up to five levels above his own once per day. Caster must ‘know’ the spell.

AHN SYE TAKLA

The *Ahn sye Takla* (E. “Order of the Four Winds”) is still technically in existence, though it is not of the same nature as it once was. Today its head is the Storm Wizard, and its members are the Storm Heralds.

HORSES AND BRIDLES

Four blue lenses once were set in the bridles of the Heralds’ mounts, set in the center of the horse’s forehead. Long ago, however, the Storm Wizard learned of the treachery of the Order of the Eye and the powers of the lenses. He removed them and has them now in a secured chest.

STAVES

Each herald carries a staff, a simple grey wood rod about five feet long and tipped with silver.

THE HERALDS

Also known as simply the *Heralds*, these beings are among the most mysterious and arcane on Emer.

Each of the Heralds has a tabard bearing one of those four beasts (Unicorn, Hawk, White Lion, Wyvern) stitched in silver on a cloudy grey field.

When a Herald is seen, he is always astride a great white stallion which moves at what seems a slow motion gallop. While the horse’s movements are slow, its velocity is not. No man nor beast nor vehicle has yet been able to keep pace with these strange riders. And while these horsemen seem solid enough to the eye, they often rise off the ground as they ride, carried on nothing more substantial than the air. These horses have no wings like the mighty steeds of the Cloudlords of distant Tanara; only some powerful enchantment keeps them aloft. They seem to pay no heed to events around them and attacks against them are fruitless. Often, however, just the appearance of a Storm Herald is enough to drive away most creatures of Darkness.

In fact, the four Heralds serve the Storm Wizard who long ago brought Aldaron to this world to unite it against the Shadow.

While these four beings are sentient men, they carry an air of detachment which makes them seem little more than automatons. In a very real sense, they are extensions of the Storm Wizard’s will. It is virtually impossible to slay them, though the nature of their powerful defenses is mysterious. If a Herald finds himself in a situation he cannot control, he simply vanishes.

Though the four wear tabards with differing emblems, all have essentially identical powers. They all look similar as well: youthful yet somehow wizened, tall, with short black hair, fair skin, and grey eyes.

THE HERALDS’ MOUNTS

These appear as mighty white steeds with silver hooves. Their saddle and bridle is pale grey leather and trimmed with silver and hung with silver bells. They are enchanted beasts, the like of which is no longer seen on the Shadow World. In a sense, they are not alive at all, but are summoned spirits from another plane. If killed, they will re-form at the Storm Castle.

AHN SYE NOMOKE

This order has been known as the Hand, and (erroneously) the Serpent, but the Order of the Mask is closest to the truth. Always a shadowy organization, they were the Emperor's spies—and the only group which refused the gift of lenses from the Order of the Eye. They were in fact disbanded at one point by the Emerian ruler, only to go underground.

They have no set headquarters; their meeting place changes constantly (though their original meeting-hall was in the northern Spine of Emer). Their intentions and purpose have yet to be revealed. However, it is known that originally there were eight members and eight adherents. Each had a mask, which supposedly granted abilities akin to those of a powerful Mystic.

AHN SYE NI-VULMA

The *Order of the White Flame* was originally a guild of craftsmen and artisans who were the master smiths for the Emperor. Now they serve only the Jerak Ahrenreth; their home is the Ahrenæk in Rulaash and their leader is Akesh, bastard son of Tethior.

THE VISORS

There were eight and one of these; all simple laen shields attached to a headband so they could be swung down over the face—not unlike the visor of a helm. The eight conferred frontal immunity to natural and magical heat and cold, and were x4 PP enhancers for All realms of Alchemy. The one did as the others, but also, only when worn by the attuned Lord of the White Flame, it would project on the inside of the glass the spells for all Alchemy lists and all alchemical recipes at a command. Only the wearer could see them.

3 · THE SECRET CIRCLE

This section describes a secret order known amongst its members and followers as the Jerak Ahrenreth, or 'Secret Circle.' It is a cult of surpassing power and evil, with a convoluted history which reaches back far into the First Era.

How this organization is used (if at all) is up to the GM. With such powerful agents and subtle operations, the Secret Circle could be behind any number of subversive operations, large and small.

THE JERAK AHRENRETH

An ancient cult, the Ahrenreth was called to order long before the founding of the College of Loremasters and before the first Navigator Guild was formed. In fact, its origins lie in a different age, when the very face of Kulthea

was different. Its founding leader was a Lord of Essænce by the name of Dænkú — though in a later age he would be known as Andraax.

THE FIRST SECRET CIRCLE

In the hours that followed the death of Kadæna, Utha's forces captured all of her K'ta'viiri followers who did not escape to other planes and stripped them of their powers. Then they routed her evil minions and either destroyed them or sent them back into the Void from which they came. Utha then decided that Kulthea needed to be shielded from the threat of returning minions of the Unlife as well as demonic forces from the outer Planes — and Beyond. He had set his Eyes to watch over the world, but feared that they alone could not maintain a watch against Darkness. So he charged Dænkú with the task of forging an organization to protect the Eyes and maintain the safety of Kulthea. To aid them he gave the *Crystal*, a mighty artifact through which flowed the Essænce. With it, the Circle could tap vast energies, and it acted as a focus of their powers and purpose.

This first Secret Circle, known properly as the *Dænkú Ahrenreth*, was made up entirely of K'ta'viiri, and was led by the man whose original name was said to be *V'gliin*. As leader of the Circle, V'gliin came to be known as *Dænkú* exclusively, and his birthname was virtually forgotten.

The Dænkú Ahrenreth did its duty for thousands of years, but at last the inexorable march of time and the attrition of conflict with the minions of the Shadow reduced the Circle to Dænkú alone. Some were slain in combat with demons, some were swept away by the tides of the Essænce. Among those lost into the Void was Ondoval, trusted friend of Dænkú.

But at last there seemed to be peace, so the Chief of the Order slept deep beneath the earth, to be awakened should danger arise again.

THE AHRENRETH REBORN

At the Dawn of the Third Era, Ondoval returned from beyond the Void and opened the sealed gates of the Guardian Isle. The old members of the Secret Order were long lost, but he resolved to refound the Circle. But Ondoval was not as he had been when he entered the Void. His mind was twisted by the warped reality, and his purposes were not what they had been. He strayed from the ideals of the original order and fell into evil.

Seeking for minds of subtlety and power, he endeavored to gather a new Order and renew the Oaths as he remembered them.

It was within the shadowed ruins of the original meeting place of the Dænkú Ahrenreth that Ondoval called the Cabal to order.

He summoned forth the Secret Circle once again.

THE AWAKENING OF THE CRYSTAL

The Essænce Crystal still glittered within the deepest recesses of the Earth Vault, but its light was dim, wearied by time. In his insanity, Ondoval decided that to reawaken the Crystal would require the blood of sacrifices. The Eight went forth and returned with humans and Elves by the hundred. Taking their warm blood in a sadistic ritual, the Eight added their own life-fluid — weakening themselves near death — and bathed the Crystal.

The great faceted cluster did awake; only now its color was no longer clear like pure water but red like fiery blood from the depths of the wounded earth. And the innocent blood of the victims of this ritual cracked the adamantine facets. From the Crystal, Ondoval took seven splinters, and from each would grow a new Crystal, nourished by the blood of a thousand souls. Borne of these seven splinters grew the Secrets, seven from the one. Each serves as a local focus of the Unlife, puncturing the field of protection offered by the Eyes of Utha and granting Ondoval and the Ahrenreth additional powers. Together with the Ahrenthrök, the first hold, they were eight.

THE CIRCLE OF EIGHT

These eight beings serve as a focus and council; an alliance of evil unmatched in the Shadow World. But it was not always so. The First Secret Circle was called to combat Kadæna and her cruel servants.

Some aspects of the Circle remain the same, however. As before, the eight members assume titles associated with specific seats on the council, taking those titles as their names. In some ways these were more than designations, for they were indicators of their role, and even became part of the owner's identity.

Those names have been changed, however, and new rings have been forged for the Eight of the Cult.

4 · THE “ALLIANCE”

GM Note: Much more on the Alliance will be revealed in later books, but since they are mentioned in the timeline and have begun to visit Emer, some background is in order.

Late in the first millennium of the Third Era of Ire, a group of Dyari archaeologists (the less diplomatic might call them tomb-robbers) discovered an ancient vault of the Lords of Essænce. Inside, among other things, they discovered a sealed chamber, and being curious souls,

they opened it. Within was a small circular room empty except for thirteen pedestals set in a ring. And upon each pedestal was a crystal orb, shimmering with a brilliant, prismatic inner light. Believing them to be artifacts of value, the Dyari brought them out of the vault. It was not until much later that they realized that within each orb was a presence...

And so thirteen *Thalan*, imprisoned by the Lords long ago, were freed from their magical tomb. They each mystically impregnated a Dyari female with their presence, and as the fetus developed each moulded it to his or her purpose. The resulting children resembled Lords of Essænce as much as Dyari, and from birth they exhibited strange powers. Even before their bodies had fully matured, these thirteen entities had exerted their mental powers over the current Dyari leaders. Rather than take prominent positions themselves, they assumed unobtrusive administrative positions in the small Dyari kingdom, all the while gathering information and crafting their new organization. They also secured several caches of artifacts which the Navigators would call *compasses*, and kept them hidden for their own purposes.

Over the next few hundred years the thirteen built a growing commercial empire around bureaucracy of their own, far outgrowing the Dyari. They became known as the *Brotherhood*.

During this time the group sent out spies and agents, selecting races who could serve their needs. They brought back Jhordi and Kuluku and bred them as elite warrior teams.

THE BROTHERHOOD

At the heart of the Alliance is the Brotherhood, a group of 13 *Thalan* Mystics, each with two Dyari adherents. Their physical forms are humanoid and immortal, resembling a fusion of Elf and K'ta'viir. They have all the special physical attributes of the K'ta'viir. Using subterfuge and manipulation, they brought the wild mannish tribes of the area under their control. Because the Brotherhood members are all experts at illusion, no one knows how many there are or where they may be at any given time—or even what they really look like.

THE JENAAR

The primary political emissaries of the Alliance are Dyari Elves. When going openly, they dress in similar black uniforms with red trim and a particular earring and hair style. They are known as the *Jenaar*, and approach neighboring governments making an offer to join the growing trade pact known as the Alliance. Acceptance, however, means far more than a trade agreement; it

means coming under the Alliance dominion; refusal means destruction at the clawed hands of the *Kal'chah*.

Other Jenaar are trained Mystics who secretly infiltrate other cultures and governments—initially in order to analyze their potential as future Alliance members, but if the culture refuses or is unsuitable, the Jenaar also act to destroy the structure from within, making it more vulnerable to outside attack.

THE VA'TENN & KAL'CHAH

One Jhordi Mentalist (a *Va'tenn*) is in charge of a group of Kuluku warriors (*Kal'chah*). The most powerful among the Va'tenn possess a wristband which functions much like a *compass*. Using this, they are able to teleport into a secure place and strike without warning.

5 · AMETHYST LEAGUE

An elite trade organization and social society, the Amethyst League is headquartered on the isle of Pyridiis, part of the realm of Danarchis. All members wear an identical ring—a silver signet set with an amethyst. Each gem has a unique emblem cut into it, a seal to identify the individual wearer.

The League is actually a cover for a crime syndicate, specializing in smuggling but also involved in other illegal activities. Many governments have tried to snuff them out, but because most are so localized, the League is able to go underground in that area until things 'cool off' before resurfacing.

6 · THE BLACK DAWN

An insidious religious cult said to originate in southern Silaar, the *Black Dawn* is just beginning to insinuate itself into Hæstra. The group's symbol is a gold sunburst with a black center, meant to symbolize an eclipse. High priests of the order carry a mace of gold with a black obsidian sphere in the center; lesser Priests wear an amulet of a gold sunburst with an obsidian cabochon.

At present the Black Dawn has a very small following in the larger NE Hæstran cities, members meeting in homes and back warehouses. Rituals are said to involve self-mutilation and sorcerous summonings. Some Loremasters theorize that the Black Dawn is an offshoot of the Order of the Sun, but this remains unconfirmed.

GM Note: more will be revealed about the Black Dawn in upcoming books; in the meantime the GM may wish to plant a few ominous rumors.

7 · THE SIRENS OF SORAK

The Sirens are beautiful women of Elven character (though a few males have been reported), each usually accompanied by an elderly man. The general belief is that they come from a land to the south or east, but it is not certain.

GM Notes: The Sirens—like the Heralds of Darkness, and the Priests Arnak in Jaiman—are servants of the Unlife. Having destroyed the land of Gethanen to the east, they are moving into Emer. The Sirens have varying powers and natures, but all are powerful Bards, using music and sound as deadly weapons. Some wield their power with subtlety, others with flagrant displays of raw power. More will be revealed of them later.

8 · NEIGHBORING REALMS

Below is a very brief overview of a few governments outside of Hæstra but which may have an influence on events there.

It is important to keep in mind that only the most wealthy and well-travelled will have seen any of these places; to most they are merely exotic names and spots on a map.

SEL-KAI

A legendary trade city, Sel-kai (and its counterpart, the skyborne city of Eidolon) is known across the hemisphere. Home of the famed skyships, Sel-kai is a name synonymous with wealth, prestige and culture.

The city of Sel-kai itself is essentially a sprawling cluster of islands at the mouth of the Sharhya River. Canals run between the isles, which are connected by dozens of bridges.

Hovering high above, glittering in the sun, is the palace-city of Eidolon. It is disc-shaped, with rings of shops and villas alternating with small parks and gardens. At the center is the Prince of Sel-kai's palace.

THE LANKAN EMPIRE

Few of Hæstra's inhabitants know much of the lands east of the Spine of Emer, and when facts are scarce there is always gossip and rumor to fill in the gap.

While not technically the most advanced culture on the continent, the Lankani possess quick minds and an aggressive nature. They have conquered nearly all of the once-isolated tribal communities around them, and just ten years ago defeated the Pochanti, a kingdom further north along the coast of Tai-emer. For a culture which

cannot work steel, has little use for the wheel and little desire to sail, they have become quite powerful.

KAITAINE

A trade center even larger than Sel-kai City (though perhaps not as famous or glamorous), Kaitaine is located in southwestern Emer. Its ships trade all over the continent, north to Jaiman and south to Falias and Thuul.

PRÆTEN

Two peninsulas and more than a dozen large isles mark the empire of the Honakh (*'king'* or *'lord'*) of Præten. This maritime country is isolated from the steppe-peoples of Tai-emer and seems more than happy to remain so. The Præteni are an aggressive people who have found themselves in an unhappy location between two major trade powers. To the west lies Danarchis, an organized little realm with ties to every major shipping port from the Mur Fostisyr to Kaitaine, while not 500 miles to the east floats Eidolon, the only trade city whose fame (and legendary flying trade fleet) has spread across the entire hemisphere.

As a result, Præten has had to resort to raiding to supplement its economy, its privateer ships making life difficult for Danarchis and the seagoing vessels of Eidolon as well.

VAJAAR

The Lord Praelector of this realm—located in SW Uj—has just been crushed by the forces of the Komari. Vajaar was the aggressor, seeking to annex the Komaren Cluster and exploit it. But, like so many campaigns by the Vajaari, this one ended in failure.

9 · PIRATES & BANDITS

With the breakdown of large governments comes isolation and suspicion. Sea lanes are no longer patrolled, nor roads maintained, and crime thrives.

RAIDERS BY SEA

In addition to numberless independent pirates, the sea-merchants of Hæstra have three forces to contend with.

To the north, the isle of Plasidar is well-known as a pirate haven; their lord is Jerel, the *White Swan*, a ruthless Dyari Elf. East of Danarchis is Præten, which denies that its ship raid merchants on their way to Sel-kai, is clearly guilty. The Honakh is a dissembler and master of subterfuge, and his ships fly no flag when they strike. Finally,



Kellus the Naiad rises out of the Keyten River

west of Komaren is the Shinh Archipelago, a cluster of isles said to harbor many wild creatures—and a pirate base.

HIGHWAYMEN AND BANDITS

No safer than the seas are the roads of Hæstra in this troubled time. Poor, desperate serfs with no home turn from begging to stealing. Often they are armed with no more than a knife or pitchfork. More dangerous are deserting soldiers, and jobless mercenaries, mostly from the army of Stroane. On the positive side is that some sense of honor might be expected from these thieves; however the negative is that they are inevitably skilled and well-armed fighters. Then there are the professional highwaymen, merciless killers who will do anything to get your gold. They are most to be feared.

Finally, there is at least one well-organized society of bandits: the *Riders of the Golden Rose*. All wear dark blue, including a silk mask and cap, and all have a beautiful golden cloakpin in the form of a rose blossom. They are skilled fighters, honorable after their fashion; some victims say even polite. They are reputed to have an Elven air, speaking Erlin with a fair accent. They never harm their targets when it can be helped, and usually take only cash.

GM Note: The Riders are in fact Elves and Laan, recruited into the service of a Linær/Dyar Bard who calls herself the Golden Rose. Her secret castle is in a vale among the foothills of the Spine of Emer, about ten leagues east of Relian.

10 · POWERFUL BEINGS

The following are special NPCs in Hæstra.

KELLUS THE NAIAD

Powerful among the Faerie, Kellus is tied to the Keyten River. He draws his strength from it and cannot leave it for very long. All of the land along the river is lush and beautiful, and it is the home of many varieties of animal. Kellus is the object of reverence by the Bodlean people, and in return he has used the river to help them defend themselves from southern attackers more than once. He can turn the river into a raging torrent, sweeping anything in it away to the sea.

Kellus can assume a human form, a handsome, muscular youth with fair skin and pale blond hair. At other times he can rise out of the river, appearing vaguely human in form, but many times the height of a man and made up of the water of the river itself.

MYNISTRA

Powerful among the local gods of Hæstra, Mynistra could stand in her own domain (within Hæstra itself) against a Lord of Orhan. Outside of that region but within 1000 miles of Helberna her powers and level are essentially halved. Beyond that she is reduced to a quarter of her normal powers and vulnerable; it would take dire circumstances for her to go so far, especially when she could easily channel through a follower.

Mynistra is known as the three-faced: Love, Wisdom, and Protector. To reflect this, some statues of her have three faces spaced around the head. Others have three separate statues reflecting the different natures. Though generally benevolent, the goddess does not suffer those who take her name in vain or worship her without feeling. The former might meet with an accident and the latter could find themselves without Power Points at a very awkward moment. Mynistra is not above being petty. Services are every 10 days (travelling worshippers are expected to make do even on the road); she enjoys singing and prayer, and small sacrifices of incense and flowers.

11 · INTERESTING PERSONALITIES

The following individuals are not particularly powerful, but they are all unique and could be useful to add flavor to the PCs experience.

BASHAR THE MERCHANT

A wealthy man by most standards, Bashar Tremaine nevertheless travels on horseback (or in his covered wagon) from city to city and manor to manor. He carries a wide variety of wares, including herbs, ointments, jewelry, unusual trinkets, a few books, and even a selection of magic scrolls.

With him is his wife Findell and two adult daughters—Naris and Baila. Both daughters are skilled fighters and help to guard the entourage.

PHENO THE JUGGLER

Pheno is not unlike many other travelling entertainers in Hæstra, travelling from manor to manor, putting on a show in return for a meal and a few coppers—except that he is actually a Loremaster. Not all Loremasters are lordly Elves who announce their presence. Many indeed are simple merchants and entertainers who travel alone and gather information from a different perspective.

Pheno dresses in worn but clean clothes in bright colors; PCs will never know that he is a Loremaster, but if

they take time to chat with him and buy him an ale, they might get a priceless gem of knowledge or two.

BANDARA, MISTRESS OF ILLUSION

A wood-elf, Bandara is very unusual for her race in that she enjoys travelling and interacting with mortals. Her companion—Mikal—is in fact a Laan. Together they go from village to manor to city, putting on shows in return for a few silvers. Bandara travels in more respectable circles than Pheno; She entertains lords and kings, and wears an air of mystery and power like a cloak. Her flashy shows are designed to impress and amaze those unfamiliar with magic, and they do so.

TRELLIAN THE MINSTREL

The handsome Trellian is in demand wherever he goes; his voice is like honey and his songs are unmatched in their ability to stir the heart and soul. He has been making the rounds of Hæstra and beyond for as long as anyone can remember, yet he still looks like a young man. When asked, he demurs, suggesting elven blood. But Trellian has a dark secret: he is a vampire. He must travel only at night; during the day he sleeps in a sealed box in his covered wagon. The only one to share his secret is his current assistant, the youth Kendo, who watches over him by day. After entertaining, Trellian slips into the night to feed. He takes little pleasure in this, but he must to survive. He usually manages to leave his victims alive, but sometimes he cannot help himself.



Bandits lie in wait along the road to Orian

POWERS & PERSONALITIES

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
Kellus	30	250	11(90)	N	(Y)	180 mace (fist)	120 water bolt	30
Naiad, tied to Keyten River. Age: Immortal (appears ≈20) Sex: M Eyes: blue-green Hair: white-blond, shoulder length Build: muscular Height: 6'20" Spells: Mentalist Closed Liquid Manipulation, Mystic Base Liquid Alteration, Mystical Change to 30th. 300 PP. Spell range is within 100' of the river from any point in the river. Over max hits means he incorporates for 7-70 days.								
Mynistra	160	700	20(150)	N	(Y)	300 HBa(fist)	300 lightning call	200
Goddess Age: Immortal (appears ≈25) Sex: F Eyes: green Hair: blonde, shoulder length, flowing Build: perfect Height: 6'12" Powers: As Lords of Orhan (Master Atlas 2nd Ed p 102) within Hæstra. Spells: All Channelling and Base Cleric. She particularly enjoys calling storms and lightning.								
Pheno	20	110	11(35)	(Y)	(Y)	140 broadsword	95 dagger	20
Shay Thief (Loremaster) Age: 36 Sex: M Eyes: brown Hair: short, dark brown Build: lean Height: 5'9" Spells: All Loremaster Base to 20th Items: Tunic, protects as AT 11, Magic +20 broadsword (looks like poor iron), +20 throw and return dagger. Loremaster Ring, invisible at will.								
Bandara	10	40	1(40)	(Y)	N	35 dagger	(spells)	15
Erlin Illusionist Age: Immortal (appears ≈30) Sex: F Eyes: blue-green Hair: Build: statuesque Height: 6'2" Spells: All Illusionist Base to 10th, <i>Rune Mastery</i> , <i>Lofty Bridge</i> to 10th.								
Mikal	7	68	9(35)	Y	N	95 quarterstaff	60 comp bow	15
Laan Rogue Age: Immortal (appears ≈20) Sex: M Eyes: blue Hair: black, long Build: muscular Height: 6'4" Items: +15 quarterstaff.								
Trellian the Bard	20	130	11(40)	(Y)	N	95 broadsword	(spells)	10
Laan Bard (Vampire) Age: Immortal (appears ≈25) Sex: M Eyes: grey Hair: black, short Build: muscular Height: 6'5" Spells: A Bard Base to 20th, 5 Essence lists to 10th. Able to become mist form at will, other Vampire powers. Items: +20 harp, +25 magic laen sword.								

· PART VII ·

ADVENTURES AND IDEAS



Zek adjusted his pack for the umpteenth time, but he had run out of new places on his shoulders—all were sore. It didn't help that the sun beat down on them through the humid haze, the heat making perspiration run down his back and soak his tunic. Who would have thought that it could be so hot this high up in the Gold Mountains? The Changramai Monk was beginning to feel faint; he wondered how the others were holding up. Just behind him, he could hear the labored breathing of the Talath youth Bandor, but he was stoic and uncomplaining. Zek glanced back to see Bandor's blond hair plastered to his scalp with sweat. And just in front, Kylene the Erlin from Komaren had stripped down to his white kilt, and seemed cool and tireless. But then he was an Elf, sure-footed as he climbed through the tumbled rocks, ever higher.

"I can smell water!" Kylene called back. "Must be a stream nearby; we can rest—"

The Elf was cut off in mid-sentence by a sound like a thunderclap. The ground trembled under their feet.

"Wh-what was that?" Bandor looked up to Kylene for guidance.

But Zek saw it first. "I think it has something to do with *that!*" He pointed to a sheltered niche not far away. It had been shadowed before, but now from that overhang came an eerie blue-green radiance.

The three fearlessly clambered over to the source of the light, entering the niche as one—and stopping short. Before them, framed by a bright glow, was an upright oval perhaps eight feet high. It seemed to hover in midair. And within that oval, like a window, was an image of another world. Within the window it was night, on a rocky shore overlooking a stormy sea. But it was much more than a vision—they could smell the salt air and feel a cool sea breeze. And as if far away they heard the crashing waves.

"A Portal..." Kylene said in a hushed voice.

While these atlases are intended primarily as a source of background for GMs to create their own adventures and campaigns, we include here two relatively detailed adventures and a number of adventure and campaign ideas. Many of these are intended to be relatively 'low-level.'

Hopefully these, coupled with the rest of the book—especially *Places of Note* and *Other Powers*—will give GMs inspiration for many hours of exciting campaigning.

1 · THE WAY TO SARNAK

The city-state of the Amazons, located on the eastern end of the Bay of Izar, is the goal of a caravan just up from the town of Qye, now resting in Arakin. They carry a variety of items, from spices to silks and rare herbs. The leader of the caravan, a Shay trader from northern Khûm-kaan named Belian Togg, needs a group of guards who are familiar with southern Hæstra to guide him overland to Sarnak. Normally Togg would go by sea, but the storms have been too frequent and treacherous—especially in the Melurian Straits—so now he is trying the land route.

GM Note: This could serve as a mini-campaign for starting players, as most of the challenges early-on are relatively minor, building to such terrors as a Mountain Giant and the Light Drake. See the chart for the caravan NPCs

THE GOAL

To escort a caravan carrying a variety of goods safely from Arakin to Sarnak.

ENCOUNTERS

Following are things which might be encountered along the way. Keep in mind that Togg and his servants will not fight unless they have to (that is what he is paying the PCs for!).

SPECIFIC ENCOUNTERS BEFORE STORM PASS

NiéV: This town is probably best avoided, especially if there are any Elves in the group. An Elf could be arrested on sight, which would certainly complicate things.

Fauns: Only encountered at the Emerald Forest perimeter, the fauns will observe the caravan, and if it stays away from the forest, 50% chance they will ignore it. Otherwise, they will begin by taunting them from nearby trees.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Harmless Travellers: These could be traders (From a single traveler to a wealthy, navigator-led expedition. They might want to exchange rumors about trouble in the area.), soldiers on patrol, travelling minstrels, refugees, or something totally unusual. Most will simply nod to the group and move on.

Bandits: Highwaymen are everywhere in Hæstra these days. Between the collapse of Stroane and the confusion caused by freakish weather, there is an increased sense of isolationism outside the cities, and everyone has got to watch his or her own back.

Bandits can range from a bedraggled group of desperate lordless serfs to deserting soldiers to a well-organized band like the *Riders of the Black Rose* (see *Other Powers*).

Inquisitors of Zanar: These troublesome priests tend to prey on smaller groups, but a wealthy caravan might be too much to resist. See *Other Powers* for a typical Zanar Group.

Wild Animal/Monster: If it is within 3 days of a Flow Storm it will be a monster such as a demon; otherwise it will be a hungry bear, 3D4 wolves, or 1D4 Forest or Stone Trolls.

Storm: A normal but severe storm. Horses may bolt, streams flood...

Flow Whirlwind: A small, luminous green funnel cloud forms within a mile, accompanied by strange winds, clouds and lightning. Treat as a *Large Flow-squall* (*Master Atlas 2nd Ed*, pg. 29)

Flow Storm: Treat as *Major Flowstorm* (*Master Atlas 2nd Ed*, pg. 29).

ENCOUNTER ROLL

Roll D100 2x daily on the chart below until 2 days past Dynax. Note that Togg will only travel on the road and by day. Some encounters (animals, bandits) are more likely at night when the group is camped.

Roll	Result
01-40	Nothing Unusual
41-80	Harmless Travellers
66-69	Bandits: Poor Serfs*
70-74	Bandits: Highwaymen*
75-79	Bandits: Renegade Soldiers*
80-82	Bandits: Black Rose*
83-84	Inquisitor of Zanar*
85-90	Animal/Monster
91-96	Storm
97-99	Flow Whirlwind
00	Flowstorm

*If encountered already, roll again until a different result is obtained.

THE STORM PASS

Giant Spiders: While preferring the night, these hideous arachnids will welcome prey into their webs at any time. Lesser (Roll 2D4) and greater (Roll 1D4) spiders may be encountered together, their webs closing in on the trail.

Murlogi: A danger only at night, these vermin emerge from their underground cities after sundown seeking wealth and slaves. Roll 8 + 2D4

Hill Trolls: Mostly in the lower elevations, these Trolls do not turn to stone, but they are blinded by the sun. Roll 1D3

ENCOUNTER ROLL

Roll D100 2x daily on the chart below until the border of Sarnak. Note that Togg will only travel on the road and by day. Some encounters are more likely at night when the group is camped.

Roll	Result
01-50	Nothing Unusual
51-65	Harmless Travellers
66-73	Giant Spiders
74-80	Murlogi
81-89	Hill Trolls
90-95	Light Drake Sighting
96-97	Storm
98-99	Flow Whirlwind
00	Flowstorm

Mountain Giant: The GM can decide whether the caravan should encounter the Mountain Giant—and if they track his path back to his lair.

Optional Secret Tomb: The Lair of the Mountain Giant is merely the anteroom of an ancient tomb (*Easy* maneuver to notice the architecture, *Hard* to find the door in the back to the inner tomb. The GM could develop this to add treasure potential to the trip.

Light Drake: Ssamis T'zang Actually resides far around the Scorpion Ridge, but there is a chance she will be flying in the vicinity. If a sighting is rolled (see above), there is a 20% chance she will see the group and decide she is hungry. She may just strafe the caravan and carry off a horse, or she may be in a nasty mood that day...

REWARDS

Togg will pay 700 gp. (100 in advance, 600 on arrival) plus food along the route for safe arrival of his caravan. This is a lot of gold, but still cheap compared to the cost of one Navigator. And Togg apparently has some cargo that will make it worthwhile. In addition, the PCs may keep anything they 'find' along the way, though detours are not permitted.

2 · GHOSTS OF ZINVAR

The isle of Zinvar has been supposedly uninhabited for over a hundred years—ever since the entire population simultaneously went mad and killed each other. Since then the place has a reputation of being haunted—or worse. In any city in Hæstra one can hear wild stories told third-hand of the brave (or foolish) who have traveled there only to barely escape with their lives. They speak of a few survivors reverted to animal-ways, of hordes of rats, and of wandering undead: those killed in the insanity who still walk the island.

GM NOTES

Much of southern Zinvar (formerly a region of farms and country estates) is now a wilderness. At the northern tip of the isle, where once stood Zinvar City.

THE GOAL

To go to Zinvar and return—unharméd—to prove that setting foot on the island will no longer cause insanity

OBSTACLES & AIDS

Few aids are available in this grim adventure, but there are perils aplenty. The ruined city is especially infested with foul creatures, though there are treasures to be found—few looters have dared to land on Zinvar.

INHABITANTS

Feral Humans: The few who were not killed were reduced to an animal-like state. Their descendants are barely human. They have almost no language, can't use a weapon more sophisticated than a club, and run naked through the ruins and forests. They will attack on sight. 10% chance/day of encountering 2-12 (2D6)

Rats: Though not giant, these little beasts grow to be almost a foot long (not including the scaly tail). Found mostly in the city, they have grown bold and will attack in groups of 5-50 (5D10), especially underground or at night. 10% encounter a day, 50% at night, 80% underground.

Birds: Flocks of vicious, bloodthirsty seagulls swarm about the coasts. 30% chance per day 10-60 (10D6) will attack any ship within a mile of the coast; 50% they will attack anyone on the beach.

Skeletons & Zombies: These remains of the dead residents are mostly found underground or in buildings, especially at night. 20% chance/day of encountering 1-4 of either indoors during the day; 50% at night anywhere in the city

REWARDS

Whatever treasure they can haul away; once word is out that a visit to Zinvar does not equal instant insanity there will be a rush of loot-seekers.

Discreet PCs could sell their information and possibly act as guides for an expedition mounted by a nearby lord or wealthy speculative merchants who realize the strategic importance of Zinvar.

3 · ADVENTURE IDEAS

Here are a few very brief adventure ideas for the GM to develop.

WOLVES ON THE MOOR

The Dalesmen of Bodlea are used to wolves prowling the less-settled areas, and the keep large dogs to protect their sheep. However, something much more fierce and cunning has begun to kill—and it has attacked humans as well. The Dalesmen would be in the PCs debt if they could capture or kill the beast (It is a werewolf; one of the Dale leaders).

THE CORAL ROAD

One of the PCs is mistaken for someone else, handed a note, a map and a curious key. Following the map, and interpreting the mysterious instructions leads the adventurers to a Coral Road entrance.

Just finding an entrance to the Coral Road is a valuable prize. The PCs could sell this information (and the key) to

the Navigators or Loremasters for a considerable sum (≈5,000 gp.). Or, the road itself could be a path to many adventures. And of course, the people who mistakenly gave the key to the PC will be wanting it back...

THE TWIN

Someone runs into one of the PCs at a bar, and starts talking to him like he knows him, calling him by another name. If the PC plays along, the stranger inadvertently reveals a secret—perhaps a location of a secret tomb, a political intrigue, or a scandalous rumor. Suddenly the stranger realizes that the PC is not who he thought, and becomes angry and violent. What to do?

RECONNAISSANCE

The larger cities (Sarnak, Izar, Aquitar, Artha, Orian, Arakin) are constantly hungry for information about events in other places. They are especially interested in each other's business, and the activities of larger places like Sel-kai, Kaitaine, Námár-Tol, etc.

For the most part this is healthy competitiveness, though sometimes observation becomes spying... and spying becomes sabotage. Most cities have career 'observers' stationed within the governments and business of their neighbors, though often they will use others for less sensitive (or more risky) information gathering. Traveling PCs with the right contacts could find these jobs lucrative and interesting—if they are careful and discrete.

ADVENTURES NPCS

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Sh	Gr	Melee Ob	Missile Ob	Mov
BANDITS								
Poor Serfs	25	120	11(90)	Y*	(Y)	190 long kynac	180 kynac	30
Highwaymen	20	90	1(80)	Y*	N	90da	110 Fire Bolt	10
Renegade Soldiers	25	120	11(90)	Y*	(Y)	190 long kynac	180 kynac	30

· PART IX ·

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