

Issue 10

March 2012

MINOTAUR

The Official Webzine of the *Mazes & Minotaurs* RPG



EXPLORE THE JUNGLES OF CHARYBDIS – **LEARN** THE SECRETS OF THE LIVING LAND – **CREATE** CHARYBDIAN ADVENTURERS – **SEEK** THE SPEAR OF TAMRO – **VISIT** THE COLONIES OF THE MIDDLE SEA – **BATTLE** THE LATEST TRIREMES – **FIND** THE LOST PRINCE OF ARGOS – **MASTER** THE HISTORY OF MYTHIKA – **DISCOVER** NEW CREATURES, MYTHIC ITEMS AND OPTIONS

BIGGEST ISSUE EVER! 100 PAGES OF FREE M&M GOODNESS!





MINOTAUR n°10



A Word from the Editor

There & Back Again (Again)

Welcome, dear readers, to the tenth and biggest ever issue of the *Minotaur*, the one-and-only official webzine of the *Mazes & Minotaurs* movement – an issue very dear to my heart and which has been for quite some time in preparation. But here it is, in all its 100-page glory – yes, 100 pages of 100% free M&M material, divided into two main sections:

Let's start with the lion's share: a 65 page mega-dossier on Charybdis, Mythika's equivalent of ancient Africa, a land of lush jungles, lost cities and hidden wonders. This section includes a complete *Mythika Gazetteer*, rules for creating Charybdian heroes, a massive *Mythic Bestiary*, Charybdian-themed *Pandora's Box* and *Maze Master's Lore* columns, as well as the first part of *The Spear of Tamro*, a new epic adventure trilogy written by none other than **Andrew Pearce**, the man who brought us such M&M classics as the *Desert Kingdom Gazetteer* and the *Secret of Zerzura* trilogy.

Next comes a 20+ page voyage across the Middle Sea, including a bonus *Gazetteer*, an article on islands and colonies, a *Griffin Archives* article on warships and, yes, a bonus *Mythic Bestiary* full of fascinating underwater creatures – not to mention the *Quest for Prince Argan* campaign plot. Maritime and undersea adventuring was the theme of our very first issue, so we thought it made sense to come back to the Sea for our N°10.

Last but not least, this issue concludes with yet another *Twist in the Maze* by Luke G. Reynard, followed by the first part of a fascinating series of *Almanac of Mythika* articles in which Andrew Pearce – sorry, Anagnosis of Thena – tells you all about the history of the M&M world. And no, we haven't forgotten the *Play Nymph*.

Before I let you enter the maze, I'd like to close this editorial by addressing a hearty *Shield Wall!* salute to **Shaun Burke**, whose unique vision and ideas formed the essential backbone of the Charybdian material presented in the following pages. You were Charybdis' first Griot, Shaun – thanks for passing on the Tale.

Next issue, the *Minotaur* will take you to the shores of Seriphos, cradle of the Minean civilization.

In the meantime, have fantastic adventures!

Olivier Legrand (2012)

MINOTAUR MIRTH



- Come on, girls! I thought this was a Naiad spot!

MAZES & MINOTAURS 2011 Gaming Genius Fan Award Best Indie RPG

Ancestors of Charybdis

Old Mammutep: Olivier Legrand.

Venerable Griot: Andrew Pearce.

Spirit of Charybdis: Shaun Burke.

Fellow Wayfarer: Darren Peech.

Veiled One: Luke G. Reynard.

Keshite Engravers: Various Illustrators; Emmanuel "Croquefer" Roudier.

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Ruthless Minean Raider: R. Dan Henry.

All game material included in this webzine uses the **Revised Mazes & Minotaurs** rules.

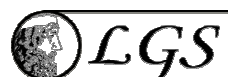


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Yes, that's right, you've got yourself TWO Mythic Gazetteers in the same issue!

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CHARYBDIS

Land of Untamed Jungles, Forgotten Cities and Ancient Secrets

Written by **Shaun Burke, Olivier Legrand** and **Andrew Pearce**



The Dark Continent

« ...the savage land of **Charybdis** with its lush jungles, strange beasts and tribes of ebony-skinned warriors. »

Maze Masters Guide

Mineans who have never been to Charybdis (also known as Charybdia – nobody seems to agree on the correct name) tend to view this subcontinent as an indistinct mass of jungle-dwelling savage tribes – a typically ethnocentric, oversimplified view of things. The cultural reality of Charybdis is, of course, far more complex; the vast territory of the so-called Dark Continent (known locally as *Karibdia*, or ‘the Living Land’) is home to a myriad of different tribes, nations and kingdoms, each with its own identity and history.

In his famous travelogues, the renowned explorer-cum-scholar Appolyonatos of Midia proposed to classify the human peoples of Charybdis into five main groups: the **Kari** jungle tribes, the populations of the **Keshite enclaves**, the **Opari** mountain tribes, the **Black Amazons of Negara** and a fifth catch-all group of “lesser tribes” - other communities that did not fit into Appolyonatos’ first four categories.

In addition to these human population groups, two nonhuman races also play a prominent role in the cultural ecology of the Living Land: the **Jengu** (the Charybdian equivalent of Nymphs) and the **Zebrans** (the Charybdian equivalent of Centaurs).

Each of these population groups will be examined in detail in the following pages – but first, let us take a quick look at the Living Land itself.

The Living Land

Charybdis is a very vast land - but can be divided into four main geographical terrains: its **northern coast**, the **great jungle**, the **Opar mountains** and the **Ibrahari wildlands**.

The Northern Coast

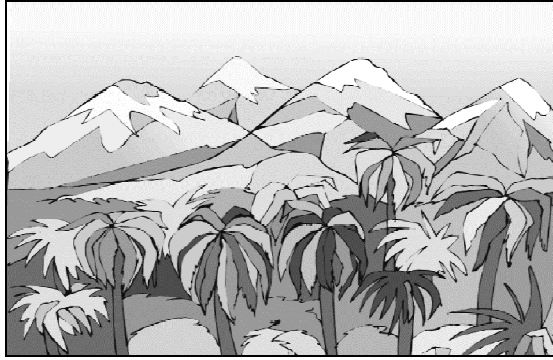
The northern coast of Charybdis is the main point of contact between Charybdians and peoples from the other side of the Middle Sea - mainly Umbrians and Mineans from Seriphos and the Three Cities, who have established trade outposts and small colonies on the coastline, including the Umbrian stronghold of Ithkos Minor and the Argosean port of **Apoikos**.

The Great Jungle

This immense tropical forest is what most outsiders think about when they hear the name ‘Charybdis’. Within its green, lush depths lies a whole world of forgotten ruins, lost cities, small enclaved kingdoms and, of course, myriads of tribal villages.

Its abundant fauna includes elephants, lions, rhinos, panthers, gorillas, hippopotamuses and dozens of other species - as well as many fantastic creatures, from savage Beastfolks to all sorts of fearsome Monsters and mysterious Spirits.

Through the great jungle runs the **Black River Kongos**, which is said to carry the very blood of Charybdis itself. Near its source lies the fabled city of **Tatambor**, one of the mightiest Keshite enclaves.



The Opar mountains viewed from the Great Jungle

The Opar Mountains

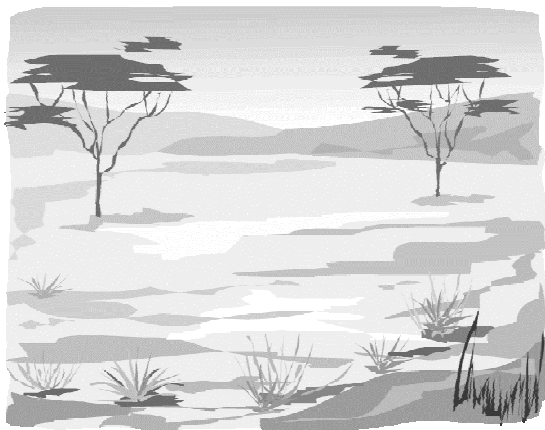
The Opar mountains are home to the fierce Opari warrior clans (see p 6). They also include many hidden valleys with "lost cities" (Keshite enclaves).

The mountains also hide many perils for the unwary traveller, including many winged monsters – such as Harpies, Pterodactyls and even, if some rumors are to be believed, a few ancient Dragons.

The Ibrahari Wildlands

The Ibrahari Wildlands are vast veld-like lands which stretch east of the Great Jungle. This flat, wide open space covered in grass and scrubs is the sacred homeland of the **Zebrans**, who are often described as the lords or kings of the Ibrahari; they are often at war against the Cynocephal and Hyenakin tribes which regularly encroach on their natural and sacred territory.

East of the Ibrahari Wildlands rise the ominous peaks of the **Atas-Antar**, the Mountain of Doom, which mark the natural border between Charybdis and the Stygian Empire. No human settlements exist in these monster-infested mountains, which act as an insuperable physical (as well as spiritual) barrier between the two lands. On the highest peak of the Mountain of Doom stand the ominous ruins of the Yellow Gate – the most accursed site in the entire history of Charybdis (see pp 16-17).



The great Ibrahari Wildlands, home of the Zebrans



A typical Kari woman

The Peoples

Kari Tribes

Most of the indigenous human tribes of Charybdis refer to themselves as **Kari**. Physically, Kari are a black people, with wide local variations of body frames, facial features and skin tones, from light brown to the darkest shades of ebony.

They are divided into many different (and often rival) tribes scattered all over the northern jungles. Some of these tribes are fierce and warlike, while others lead a far more peaceful life; their attitude towards Mineans and other outsiders (who tend to view them as stereotyped 'Charybdian savages') runs the full gamut from friendly curiosity to fanatic hostility.

Despite these profound differences, all Kari tribes share many common cultural traits, including a common language, a similar social structure and the same animistic world-view. For outsiders, one of the weirdest aspects of Charybdian culture is the Kari's approach to religion: they do not worship a polytheistic pantheon of well-identified and defined deities but acknowledge the existence of a spirit world which (to put it shortly) is to the material world what the spirit is to the body.

This invisible spirit world, which coexists with the material world, is populated by an indefinite number of spirits of many different kinds and degrees of power, including spirits of nature and spirits of the dead. Within this worldview, beings which other cultures identify as « deities » are simply defined as the most powerful entities of the spirit world.

Each Kari tribe has its own tutelary spirits as well as its own Animists, who act as sacred mediators between humans and the spirit world, filling the niche devoted to Priests in a polytheistic culture; unlike Priests, however, Animists are not devoted to a single spirit or deity but act as general advisers, interceders and experts on all supernatural matters.



A proud Kari warrior

Typical Kari Warrior

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +3

Missile Attack: +1

Damage: 1d6 (spear)

Defense Class: 16 (with shield)

Hits Total: 8

Detection / Evasion: 0 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 15, Melee +5), Missile Weapons (spear), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 30.

*These stats are for Minor NPCs only. For player-characters and major NPCs, see the article on **Charybdian Characters**.*

Opari Clans

The Opar mountains are home to the Opari – a proud tribal people known for their love of battle and fiercely independent spirit. The Opari live in natural fortresses carved from the living stone of the Opar Mountains; each of these settlements is ruled by a tribal chieftain, who may be the son of the previous ruler or (depending on the customs of the tribe) may have won this title through trial by combat.

Physically, the Opari tend to be taller and more strongly-built than most Kari and Keshites. It is often said that only the northern barbarians of Hyperborea can match the Opari warriors in might, height and fearlessness – and indeed, the Opari are often described by Keshites as “mountain barbarians” – a title in which some of them seem to take great pride.

While the spear is indisputably the favorite weapon of Kari tribesmen, the weapon of choice of Opari warriors is the sword. Sometimes known as “the Sword People”, Opari are renowned in all Charybdis for their skilled blacksmiths.

Opari clans tend to be very closely-knit communities and are often at war with each other; all previous attempts to unite them into an “Opari nation” have failed miserably, often resulting in more bloodshed and enmity between already antagonistic clans.

The Opari have their own language (Oparian) and culture but share many common customs and beliefs with the Kari tribes. While they follow the same animistic worldview, they also acknowledge the existence of three ‘deities’ or ‘supreme spirits’, connected with the sky: Thunder (whom they often envision as a powerful warrior), Sun (often depicted as an archer) and Moon (usually represented as a beautiful but mysterious woman); whether or not these deities are connected with (respectively) Zeus, Apollo and Artemis is a matter of speculation.

While the Opari remain a tribal people at heart, they also have a very adventurous spirit; many of their young warriors choose to leave their mountains to travel through Charybdis in search of adventure and glory or to seek work as mercenaries in the armies of Midia or the Desert Kingdom; most “Charybdian warriors” found in these forces are of Opari stock.

*For minor Opari warrior NPCs, use the Barbarian stats from the **Creature Compendium** (p 60).*



A proud, fearless Opari warrior



A Keshite noble couple

Keshite Enclaves

While most Charybdian communities are based on the traditional tribal model, the western jungles of Charybdis and the Mountains of Opar also contain several enclaved kingdoms and city-states (or « lost cities » as Minean adventurers tend to view them) which follow a different social model – far closer to what the ethnocentric Mineans call « civilization ».

Most of these enclaves are actually the remnants of the long-fallen and forgotten empire of Kesh, which once ruled all of Charybdis. Nobles who rule these enclaves are of Keshite ancestry and can be easily distinguished from their Kari subjects and vassals by their distinctive « Keshite face » - long and thin, with almond-like eyes and high cheekbones.

While Keshites no longer form as a single cultural entity, they can be found in various bastions and enclaves scattered all over western Charybdis ; these communities were once parts of the lost Keshite empire but have long since devolved into independent (and often isolationist) communities, each with its own monarch, nobility and army.

Each Keshite enclave is ruled by a king, known in Keshani as an *Orangun*. Most enclaves follow an elective monarchy pattern, with the new Orangun being chosen by and from among the heads of the local noble families – which are all, according to this system, potential royal houses. The most notable exception to this rule can be found in the mightiest of all Keshite enclaves, the great city of Tatambor, where monarchy follows a classic hereditary (i.e. father to son) line of succession.

Keshites share the same animistic worldview as the Kari tribes, with a particular reverence to the spirit of the First Ancestor, also known as Anansi, First Son or Grandfather Man, whom they see as the founder of all human civilization and culture. Members of the nobility also worship the ancestor spirits of their noble house, in private or family-based prayers and ceremonies. As keepers of ancestral lore, Griots also play a prominent part in Keshite cultural and sacred life, having an even more important status than Animists in some enclaves.

*For minor Keshite warrior NPCs, use the Archer and Soldier stats from the **Creature Compendium** (p 60).*

Tatambor, City of the Mighty



An aristocratic Tamburu nobleman

The greatest and strongest of the Keshite enclaves in present-day Charybdis is **Tatambor** ('stone city'), a mighty and prosperous city-state located south of the Kongos, the great Black River of Charybdis. It is ruled by the Alaafin ('king'). Its people, the Tamburu, are famous for their war elephants and quagga-mounted cavalry (quaggas being zebra-like horses).

Tatambor is ruled by a hereditary line of kings who claim descent from the great legendary hero **Tamro**, who battled and defeated the horrors from beyond the Yellow Gate with eight other heroes at the dawn of the Twilight Times (see p 17). It is to honor the undying memory of Tamro that every king of Tatambor takes this name upon ascending the throne – along with a descriptive title, such as *The Just*, *The Bearded* or *The Swordsman*.

The current king, **Tamro the Bold**, has just inherited the throne at age 24, after his father, Tamro the Proud, died in battle against the Opari barbarians. Like many other Tamros before him, the young king dreams of restoring the might and splendor of the lost empire of Kesh – a grand, hopeless ambition which clearly goes against the conservative mentality which prevails among Tamburu noble clans.

On the whole, though, the Tamburu tend to be less isolationist than most other Keshites; while they remain prudently wary of outsiders from beyond the sea (especially Umbrians), they maintain regular trade relationships with other enclaves scattered throughout Charybdis as well as with their Kari neighbors. It is said that the most adventurous Tamburu traders even lead their caravans as far as the fabled Seven Cities of the far south (see p 18).



A proud Amazon of Negara

Amazons of Negara

The **Black Amazons of Negara**, a proud people of warrior women, are ruled by Queen Zenobia. As mentioned in the *Minotaur n3* (p 11), their culture presents many strange similarities with that of the white Amazons of Amazonia – perhaps because their respective « founding mothers » were guided by the same goddess, as detailed below.

Many Negaran Amazons travel through Charybdis in search of adventure. Their best warriors, who form the Queen's personal guard, are known as Swanswords and carry swan-head hilted tulwars.

Their great city, Negara, is located in a “lost valley” south of the Opar mountains. Its actual origins are shrouded in legend and mystery but it seems quite certain that the first Negaran Queens and warriors were of Keshite stock and that Negara may have started life as a bastion or ally of the lost empire of Kesh. Another community of Black Amazons is said to exist in the far south of Charybdis – but the Negaran Amazons have always refused to discuss this obviously sensitive subject with outsiders.

They are on tense terms with the Opari, who have always tried to encroach on their territory - attempts which always result in armed retaliation from the fierce warrior-women. The presence of Minean and Umbrian colonists on the northern coast is also a matter of deep concern to them – indeed, according to some rumors, Queen Zenobia could well consider an unprecedented alliance with the Opari to drive off the would-be conquerors from Charybdis.

The Negaran Amazons worship two twin goddesses known as **The Sisters**. The Sisters are depicted as twin warrior women with a single suit of armor, a single shield and a single sword between them: one, known as the Sun Sister, fights all day while guarding her sleeping sister, the Moon Sister, who awakens at dusk and fights all night while protecting the sleep of her sister. It is highly probable that the Sisters are actually two aspects of the same deity, who may well be the goddess known to Mineans as Artemis. The religious practices of the Negaran Amazons follow the same patterns as those of their Amazonians counterparts, (see *Minotaur n3*), with the Queen acting as the Sisters' high priestess.

*For minor Negaran warrior NPCs, use the Amazon stats from the **Creature Compendium** (p 59).*

Languages & Oral Tradition



The **Charybdian** language is divided into many tribal dialects; it has no written form, with Griots acting as living repositories of oral literature. Every Kari tribe speaks its own version of Charybdian; other tribes (such as the Opari, the Babanga pygmies or the Indwa Lake Tribes) have their own native tongue but often speak Charybdian as a second ‘common’ language.

In the various Keshite enclaves, Charybdian is used as the common language but Griots and Nobles also use **High Keshani**, the tongue of their ancestors, but only for ritual or poetic purposes. Griots themselves may well be the last remnants of an imperial Keshite order of sacred poets, musicians and lorekeepers.

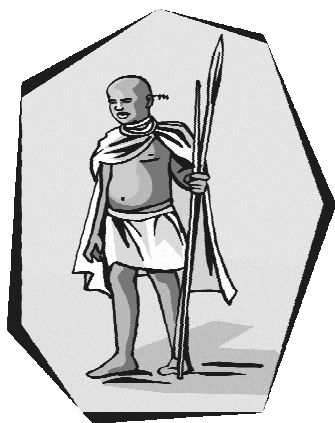
Other important languages in Charybdis include **Negaran**, the tongue of the Black Amazons, **Oparan**, the native language of the Opari, the native languages of the **Indwa** and **Babanga** tribes, **Zebar**, the language of the Zebrans and the **Spirit Tongue** used by Animists, Jengu and many spirits.

None of these languages exists in written form – a fact which is often cited by foreign scholars as the “utter proof” of the primitive and uncivilized ways of Charybdian peoples. The truth is far more complex: in Charybdis, writing is a spiritual taboo.

The origins of this belief lie at the very roots of the Charybdian animistic worldview. For Animists and Griots, who act as the lorekeepers of their peoples, language is a living entity, which can only be transmitted by a living voice: for them, writing a word amounts to killing and desecrating it, turning it into an inanimate, spiritually empty shape. During the Time of Power, this taboo was broken by the evil Veiled Ones, who used writing to construct their foul rituals and record their forbidden lore (see p 16).

The same reasoning also applies to knowledge and memory, which can only be passed down from generation to generation, as a living, spiritual material and not as ‘dead words’.

Many Griots and Animists believe that the languages and memories of their ancestors will remain alive as long as they remain unwritten. The word *Karibdia* can be translated as ‘the living land’ and Kari as ‘the living men’.



A Babanga Pygmy

Other Human Communities

Charybdis is also home to a variety of other human communities – such as the the lake-dwelling **Indwa** people (« blue crane people »), a peaceful tribal folk of fishermen, weavers and farmers who live in family settlements called *umuzi*, or the **Babanga** pygmies, who live on the borders of the great Kongos river – another peaceful people, as long as other tribes do not threaten the welfare of their communities; it is said that some of the best hunters in Charybdis come from the Babanga tribes.

*Minor warriors from non-Kari tribes should be given the same stats as Kari Tribal Warriors. See **Charybdian Characters** for more about the Babanga pygmies.*

Jengu

Jengu are Charybdian Nymphs. They look like alluringly beautiful Charybdian women and have the same characteristics and powers as Nymphs; they are divided into three different Kins: **Jungle Jengu** (Dryads), **Swamp Jengu** (Heleads) and **River or Lake Jengu** (Naiads). For some weird cosmological reason, there do not seem to be Charybdian equivalents of Oreads, Napaea or Nereids. Jengu maintain very important (and sometimes quite complicated) relationships with Animists; those who have been bound to a specific place by the powers of an Animist are known as *Cymbee*.



A Jungle Jengu enjoying an offering left by villagers



A brave Zebran warrior

Zebrans

Zebrans are the Charybdian equivalent (and distant cousins) of Centaurs. Their human half resembles that of a Charybdian human, while the equine half of their body is zebra-like, with black and white stripes and a zebra-like tail. They are a nomadic people found in the vast Ibrahari wildlands east of the great Charybdian jungles but some of them have been known to leave their native territory and travel with humans in search of adventure and glory.

They are honorable warriors, bound by a code of ancient traditions - which include things like trial by single combat or killing all outsiders who wander into the unmarked area of the veld designated as the graveyard for their honored dead. Zebrans are sworn enemies of most other Beastfolks, especially Cynocephals and Hyenakins.

Zebrans have exactly the same stats as Centaurs.

Other Folks

Beastmen & Half-Men

Charybdis is also home to many tribes of Beastmen described in the *Creature Compendium*, such as the brutish **Apemen**, the marauding **Cynocephals**, the ravenous **Hyenakins** and the fierce **Leonids**.

The tales of “Charybdian cannibals” often heard on the other side of the Middle Sea are actually garbled accounts of encounters with **Ogres** or **Degenerate Men**, who can be found in the Opar mountains and the Great Jungle, respectively.

Special mention should be made of the **Kalonoro**, a race of albino, anthropophagous Apemen living in the lost city of Xanth; and the so-called **Pygmies of the Red Hills** near Tatambor, a folk of half-human dwarves with an unparalleled reputation as master assassins, poisoners and herbalists – who seem to be the Charybdian counterparts of the dreaded Zorbias (see *Creature Compendium* p 18).



Watch out: the Umbrians are coming!

Outsiders in Charybdis

During the last two centuries, **Mineans** from the Three Cities and **Umbrians** have begun to establish small colonies on the northern coast of Charybdis.

Most of these settlements are actually little more than trade outposts but at least two of them can be considered as real towns with their own permanent colonial residents, authorities and armed forces: the Umbrian colony of **Ithkos Minor** (see *Minotaur* n^o 4, p 23) which guards the Southern Gatepost of the Bronze Gates and the Argosean colony of **Apoikos**, which is located north of the great jungle.

All sorts of goods are shipped from these colonial outposts to the other side of the Middle Sea, including wood, ivory, gold, gems and slaves. The Charybdian trade is currently in full boom, constantly attracting more and more adventurous merchants and ship captains, as well as a good deal of smugglers, pirates and other rabble. It also causes growing friction with some of the local communities, especially the Keshite enclaves, which tend to be isolationist and very wary of foreigners – especially those who would upset their well-established economy and commercial balance.

Climate & Armor

The extremely hot Charybdian climate makes it almost impossible to wear metal breastplates and full helmets. Minean Spearmen who think they can keep their breastplate on while traveling across the Charybdian jungles or wildlands are in for a shock – perhaps literally!

In order to simulate this in game terms without having to bother with complicated rules about temperature and heat strokes, Maze Masters should simply *triple* the effective Encumbrance value of all non-magical breastplates (9 instead of the usual 3) and helmets (3 instead of the usual 1). Shields are unaffected. With these increased values, a fully-clad Spearman with a spear, a shield and a sword will have an Encumbrance total of 27, instead of the usual 19, enough to make most warriors *heavily encumbered* (rather than simply *encumbered*).

Charybdian Customs

Names & Naming

The meaning of names is, of course, of great significance in most Mythikan cultures. Names are often given after consulting with priests or oracles, and sometimes a character trait that will become important as the child grows to maturity, or even a deed that they will perform, may be foreshadowed in the name they receive. However, within Charybdian culture, the importance of names is greater still.

Most Charybdians have not one but three different names. The first name is the one they receive at birth. This **birth name** is the one that they retain throughout childhood, but which in adulthood is restricted to family and close friends (indeed, to address an adult that is *not* an intimate by their birth name is a grave insult, and usually cause enough to start a brawl). In most Kari tribes the birth name is given by the mother; in most Keshite enclaves (such as the city of Tatambor) it is given by the father.

The second and third names are received as part of the initiation rites into adulthood (the age of this Rite of Passage varies from tribe to tribe, but is generally from twelve to fifteen). The second name is the **chosen name** by which the individual will be known henceforth within adult society; it is specifically chosen by each person for themselves.

The third name is spoken privately to the individual by an Animist during the Rite of Passage. This is the person's **true name**, which most keep thereafter as a cherished secret, known only to themselves and their namer. Some may chose at length to reveal it, for example, to a spouse, a sibling or their closest friend, while others reveal their true name to another only on their deathbed, and some not even then. If one does know someone else's true name, it is the ultimate betrayal to reveal it to a third party.

Animists (and, in some cases, Griots) who are attached to a specific tribe or enclave act as living repositories and preservers of their compatriots' true names – a sacred and secret knowledge which they only impart to their carefully chosen successor.



Your local Animist always knows your true name



A proud Keshite father

The reason for this universal secrecy about one's true name is the belief that knowing someone else's true name gives one power over that person. It is believed that Sorcerers, in particular, can exploit the knowledge of someone's true name to increase the efficacy of any spells directed against that person.

Animists and Griots believe that all living beings have a true name. The quest for spiritual wisdom is, in essence, a search for understanding of the true names and therefore the true nature of all things.

This triple-naming custom is present among all the Kari and Keshite communities of Charybdis – but not among the Opari or the Amazons of Negara: in these cultures, individuals only have a birth name and a chosen name. While they adhere to the same overall animistic beliefs as the Kari and Keshites, these peoples believe that one's true name is so secret that it should remain hidden from everybody, including its intended recipient.

This important cultural difference is, of course, interpreted in a very different manner depending on which culture you belong to: because they are not "bound" by the knowledge of their true name, Opari and Negaran Amazons see themselves as having more individual freedom, willpower and daring than their Kari or Keshite neighbors, which is precisely why those communities tend to see them as "barbarians". This also applies to the Zebrans, who take pride in their untethered, adventurous spirit.

The Babanga pygmies also live in ignorance of their individual true names, but for different (and almost opposite) reasons: they do not see this ignorance as a mark of personal freedom but as an essential part of the spiritual unity of the tribe, emphasizing the superiority of the community over the individual.

See the article on **Charybodian Characters** for lists of typical names and this issue's **Maze Master's Lore** for more details about the spiritual significance of true names, including their optional effects in game terms.

Marriage Customs

One of the most common misconceptions amongst Mineans regarding Charybdis is that its inhabitants routinely indulge in polygamy. This is actually not the case. Most Charybadians are monogamous in their relationships – not least because in most tribes men are expected to pay a substantial 'betrothal price' (usually measured in cattle) to their wife's family, and very few men can afford to pay this price more than once in a lifetime (one reason why men rarely remarry if widowed).

Polygamy is usually, therefore, a royal privilege, common amongst Kari chieftains and some Keshite nobles – though, interestingly, not amongst the Opari. What is peculiar to the Opari is the practice of large 'communal weddings' of dozens, even hundreds, of warriors and their brides at a time. In all likelihood, the tales of widespread polygamy amongst Charybadians were first inspired by garbled reports of these colorful and impressive ceremonies.

Within this global cultural framework, three peculiar exceptions are worth noting: the Black Amazons of Negara, the Babanga pygmies and the Zebrans.

The Black Amazons of Negara reject the very notion of marriage, and make use of male slaves for mating purposes according to customs that are remarkably similar to the Amazons of the North (see *Minotaur* n°3, pp 8-9).

The Babanga pygmies have no notion of 'mother' or 'father' at all – children are raised communally by all the adults of their tribe. It is believed this custom developed long ago as a defense mechanism against other more aggressive communities, so that all the children should receive equal protection within the confines of the tribe.

The Zebrans are unabashed polygamists – at least as far as their warrior elite is concerned. In Zebran society, the number of a warrior's wives (or 'mates' as they are called) is a direct reflection of his honor and status among the tribe. (Note: to reflect this custom in game terms, simply assume that a Zebran player-character or major NPC is entitled to a number of mates equal to his level).



A Charybodian bride's preparation



A wise female Animist

Animism

Religion as the Mineans understand it does not exist in Charybdis. Charybdians may have gods of their own (such as tribal idols or tutelary spirits) but they have no real temples and no organized priesthood.

In the Living Lands, a more primitive form of spiritual belief prevails: Animism – along with its associated type of magicians, Animists.

Animists

Animists wield power over the spirit world and fill a vital role in the hierarchy of Kari tribal society, acting as seers, advisers, healers, exorcists and, above all, sacred intermediaries between their community and the spirit world; in many ways, they are to the animist culture of Charybdis what Priests are to the polytheist culture of Minean countries.

This new magician class is described in detail in the article on *Charybdian Characters* (p 19). It should be noted that 'Animist' is more a game term than a cultural one; all over Charybdis, Animists are known under a variety of different names, including *sangoma*, *legba* or *inyanga*, while foreign explorers often call them 'witch doctors' or 'fetish-men'.

Tribal Spirits

According to Charybdian beliefs, every human being is born under the auspices of the spirits of his ancestors, who watch his actions from the spirit world and will judge him after his death, either welcoming his own spirit among them (or, if the character has betrayed his tribe, rejecting it in the great void to wait for the end of the world).

Thus, every tribe has its own spirit tribe, composed of all the loyal spirits of its members' ancestors; when Kari peoples mention their tribe, they do not only refer to their living compatriots, but to the tribe as a whole, ancestor spirits included.

Animism in Game Terms

In game terms, the magic of Animists works as a cross between Divine Prodigies, with powers of blessing, vision and healing, and Sorcery, with powers of compelling, attack and binding – but these latter abilities can only be used on Spirits (including Mindless ones, which are immune to regular Sorcery).

See the article on *Charybdian Characters* for a detailed description of the Animist class and its mystical powers.

The First Ancestor

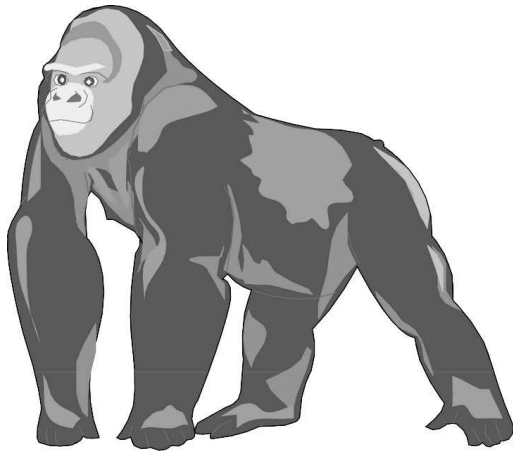
This spirit occupies a unique niche in Charybdian myth and belief – the spirit of Man himself, also known as *Anansi*, *Grandfather Man*, *First Son* or *First Ancestor*.

As the spirit father of all the human spirit tribes of Charybdis, First Ancestor is said to be the creator and guardian of all human gifts, skills and crafts, starting with the gift of language itself; for this reason, Grandfather Man acts as the tutelary spirit of all those who follow the path of words and knowledge, including Griots and Animists.

In many traditional tales, Anansi is also portrayed as a Trickster figure, who regularly demonstrates his superior cleverness over other spirits, stealing fire from the sky and crafting the first story, which also makes him the first Griot.



A wandering Animist – or is this the First Ancestor himself, walking as a mortal man in the Living Land ?



The great Gorilla Beast Lord

The Beast Lords

Charybdian lore also acknowledges the existence of at least twelve great Beast Lords, all tied to the natural fauna of the Living Land.

These ancient, powerful spirits, also known as the Twelve, are (in alphabetical order): Antelope, Buffalo, Crocodile, Eagle, Elephant, Gorilla, Hippo, Lion, Panther, Rhino, Snake and Zebra.

Some of these entities can probably be identified with the animalistic idols worshipped by Beastfolks such as Hanuman the Ape God or Amrah the White Lion (see *Minotaur* n°6, p 19).

Other, lesser Beast Lords may also exist – such as Giraffe, Warthog, Cheetah, Vulture or Wildebeeste; in fact, it would be logical to assume that every animal species has its own Beast Lord.

Each Beast Lord rules over a spirit tribe formed by all the animal spirits of his species, past or present, living or dead – the Lion Beast Lord, for instance, rules over all the spirits of individual lions, while the Gorilla Beast Lord is the ancestor of all gorillas.

The Wild

In addition to these easily identifiable animal spirits, the animistic cosmology of Charybdis also has room for a more abstract, all-pervasive and primal spirit force known as *the Wild*.

All Beast Lords and other nature spirits are linked to the Wild, which acts as a form of supreme tutelary spirit for Jengu (who, being spirits themselves, have an intrinsically stronger bond with the forces of nature) and Beastmasters (whose very powers require them to embrace the forces of the Wild).

The great spirit tribe of the Wild is represented by the Jengu, the Charybdian equivalents of Nymphs, as well as by a myriad of other nature spirits, including tree spirits and wind spirits. The Wild also acts as the supreme tutelary spirit of the Living Land itself – it is, in many ways, the soul of Charybdis.

Ancestral Lore

The Ancient Ones

Charybdian ancestral lore makes special mention of the great evil represented by the beings known as *the Ancient Ones* or *the Nine Abominations*, entities so old that they predate even the forces of the Wild:

Gagorib - the Destroyer

Kudsakra - the Moving Fire

Lamudagun - the Great Sea Serpent

Luanda - the Shifting Mountain

Shezbettu – the Crawling Eye

Udranga – the Winged Shadow

Umbabal - the Shapeless One

Usebugu - the Devouring Maw.

Yurugu – the Great Worm

Chief among the Ancient Ones was Gagorib the Destroyer, who, oddly enough, is also credited for the creation of the world (see *Creation Myth*, p 14). For this reason, those rare Minean scholars who have taken a genuine interest in Charybdian myths consider Gagorib a primitive personification of the abstract concept of Chaos as a blind cosmic force of endless creation and destruction; the boldest among them have even suggested that the Ancient Ones might simply be the Titans under another name.

The mere mention of an Abomination's name is enough to bring fear in the heart of the bravest men; indeed, speaking aloud the name of an Ancient One is considered taboo in most tribes – and when Griots or other wise people do speak about them, they always refer to them by their title (the Moving Flame, the Great Worm, etc.) or some similar metaphor. It is said many of the twisted creatures which haunt the darkest places of Charybdis were created by the Nine as tools of fear and oppression.

After their demise at the hands of First Son and his siblings (see *Creation Myth*, next page), the Nine Abominations were exiled to the Black Void which lies beyond the edges of the world - but they never stopped watching the Living Land with their demonic gaze and waiting for the time of their return, which will bring the end of the world. Indeed, such a cataclysm nearly happened four centuries ago, at the end of the Time of Power (known to Mineans as the Age of Magic), when the Charybdian Autarchs known as the Veiled Ones built the Yellow Gate on the Mountain of Doom – see p 16 for more details.





Are these the six siblings of First Son?

Creation Myth

According to legend, Gagorib, the greatest and eldest of the Ancient Ones, once grew tired of the endless night, and sang reality into existence. He sang the stars, the clouds, the rivers and the seas.

He sang the birds of the sky, fish of the sea, and beasts of the land; then as his voice grew hoarse, he sang his seven children into being. First Son, who was the first of the seven children of Gagorib, watched his father sing, and then First Son began to sing along with his father as Gagorib sang Kesh, the first man, and Gleti, the first woman, into existence.

Ages later, Gagorib looked over his earliest works and found that he took pleasure in them all, but in humanity whom he had created with the help of his First Son, he could find no pleasure.

And so Gagorib decided to sing humanity away, and as he began the song of destruction, rivers rose, and stones clashed in the sky raining fire upon the people, but every time he came close to eliminating the stain of man, other songs would peal out from the hidden place in the earth, songs of creation and light and protection, songs of concealment.

Long did Gagorib and his monstrous brothers look for First Son. Finally Gagorib came upon a strange hut with no windows or door, at the foot of a white baobab tree, and from that hut came a strange song unlike any he knew, a song that seemed to sap the strength from Gagorib and his brothers, for this was the final song of First Son – the song of freedom.

First Son and his six siblings chopped up and burnt the bodies of their Father and Uncles, the Ancient Ones, and First Son taught men the seven songs of naming, and so it was that the sons of Kesh sang the song that changed First Son into Anansi.

Keepers of Memory

Since neither Charybdian nor High Keshani has a written form (see p 8), there are no historical records of Charybdis – or, to put it more properly, no historical *manuscripts*.

For Charybdians, writing a word is a way of killing it; therefore, writing down the history of Charybdis would amount to killing the living memory of the land itself. In Charybdis, history (or “ancestral memory” as Griots prefer to call it) is passed down from generation to generation by pure oral tradition, in the form of tales, songs, myths and genealogies. This memory is kept alive by the Griots, who often describe themselves as “*Keepers of the Living Flame*”, a traditional metaphor for ancestral lore.

This ancestral memory is made up of myriads of myths, tales, poems, songs, royal chronicles and tribal epics – with quite a lot of variations, divergences and even contradictions regarding various notable events and personages - but unlike Minean scholars, who like their history unified and set in stone, the lorekeepers of Charybdis see this diversity as the legacy of Man; according to one popular Griot saying, there are as many truths as there are stars in the sky.

Of course, the ancestral lore of each tribe tends to be highly (if not entirely) focused on its own history, with little concern for outside events; within this essentially tribal perspective, the humble deeds of one's own ancestors are seen as more important and more meaningful than those of the mightiest warriors or kings from other tribes or regions.

There is, however, a memory which transcends these tribal or regional boundaries, standing out like majestic stone ruins in a many-colored jungle – the memory of the lost empire of Kesh and of the great war it waged against the terrible Ancient Ones...

The Lost Empire

Outsiders who are curious about the history of the Living Land are often puzzled with the mystery of the Lost Empire of Kesh. From the various Keshite enclaves (and ruins) scattered throughout the Great Jungle and the Opar mountains, it is obvious that this empire did exist – and that its downfall probably occurred a few centuries ago, rather than in some incredibly distant and mythical past. Yet, while the Griots and the inhabitants of the various enclaves retain fragments of the history of Kesh, its history as a whole seems to have vanished from the collective memory of the Living Land, as if this memories had faded into the mists of time, leaving Charybdis with a unique form of massive memory loss. Such is indeed the case - and the reason for this uncanny phenomenon can be found in the legends of the Great War, known to every Griot and lorekeeper: the memory of Kesh was forgotten because it was eaten by Gagorib the Destroyer, after the defeat of the Nine Abominations by the Nine Worthies, in the final days of the Time of Power (see p 17).



A typical Keshite ruin



A Griot, keeper of ancestral memory

Without the Griots, the ancestral memory of Kesh would probably have sunken into complete oblivion; it is the sacred quest of Keshite Griots to keep this incomplete and fragmented memory alive and to keep on searching for more shards of this memory - in the form of half-forgotten tales, old ruins and lost artifacts... Perhaps, one day, the memory of Old Kesh will be fully restored and the empire will rise again in all its splendor and glory to reign over the Living Land. Or perhaps it is lost forever, surviving only as echoes of the bygone Time of Power.

The Three Times of the World

The three ages of the world categorized by Minean scholars are also acknowledged by Charybdian lorekeepers – but under different names and with slightly different mythical significances.

The memory of the Living Land is divided into three Times: the **Time of the Wild** (Age of Myth), the **Time of Power** (Age of Magic) and the current **Time of Twilight** (Age of Heroes). According to most Animists, this third epoch will be followed by a fourth, final era: the **Time of Darkness**, which will supposedly see the downfall of Man, before the earth and the sky are devoured by Gagorib and the other Ancient Ones and a new world is born.

The Time of the Wild

As previously mentioned, this primal age roughly corresponds to the Mineans' Age of Myth. Like its Minean counterpart, it was a time of great wonders and prodigies and probably lasted several millennia. It was dominated by the Wild and its associated Spirits, the Beast Lords, and also saw the birth of the Jengu and other spirits of nature.

It was during the Time of the Wild that the First Ancestor taught Man all the secrets and crafts which allowed him to survive and prevail over Beasts, including the arts of fire, stone and song. Under Anansi's tutelage, Man entered the Time of Power.



Yes, that's a Veiled One

The Time of Power

The Time of Power was an age of glory and grandeur, of might and magic. It saw the rise of the Empire of Kesh, which stretched from the north of the Opar Mountains to the south of the Great Jungle. It was during this time that the mighty cities of Tatambor and Negara were built.

It was also during the Time of Power that the seeds of the Great War were sown. Anansi's greatest gift to mankind was Magic. Unfortunately, some of First Son's apprentices began to pervert his teachings into dark sorcery, using their powers to trick, lure and subjugate instead of guiding the tribes on the paths of peace and wisdom. These adepts of the forbidden arts became known as the Veiled Ones.

Always hungry for more power, these Autarchs consorted with many enemies of man, such as the Serpent Men of Stygia, who were then at the height of their power. Under the tutelage of their ophidian allies, the Veiled Ones began to bargain with the Nine Abominations themselves. In exchange for massive sacrifices and foul rites better left untold, the Ancient Ones gave their minions tremendous power. Soon, the nations of Charybdis found themselves facing the greatest menace they had ever known – an unholy alliance of barbaric beastmen, evil spirits and power-mad sorcerers, backed by the might of the Stygian empire and the unspeakable secrets of the Nine Abominations.

This was the start of the Great War – a War that would change the face of Charybdis forever.

The Great War

Under the command of the Keshite emperor, a great alliance was formed against the seemingly invincible power of the Veiled Ones. In addition to the forces of the empire of Kesh, this alliance included the Amazons of Negara, the Opari warriors and a myriad of Kari tribes who would henceforth be known as "the Free Tribes"; the Zebrans and Jengu also joined forces with the alliance, throwing all their might and magic in the desperate battle against the Veiled Ones and their monstrous hordes.

The War went on for many generations, during which the empire of Kesh and its valorous allies defended the Living Land against those who sought to turn it into a Dead Land of ash and despair. Many tribes were slaughtered, many cities fell – but still the Charybdis alliance stood fast, holding the forces of darkness at bay and keeping the spirit of the Living Land alive. The Keshite empire was shattered – but like a wounded lion, it fought the enemies of mankind with an even greater fury. After the complete destruction of the imperial city of Keshan, the city of Tatambor became the new capital – and the heart of the resistance against the Veiled Ones and their minions.

Faced with such heroic, unyielding enemies, the Veiled Ones decided that the time had come to free the dreaded Ancient Ones from the Black Void where they had been banished at the dawn of time. By summoning Gagorib the Destroyer and his abominable siblings back into the world, the Veiled Ones would annihilate their enemies – and destroy the very spirit of the Living Land once and for all.

The Yellow Gate

Herding tens of thousands of slaves and captives in preparation for the massive blood sacrifice required to feed the blind hunger of the Ancient Ones, the most powerful among the Veiled Ones used their dark arts to construct the great stone portal through which they would bring back the Abominations – a portal which, along with the proper unspeakable rites, would allow them to open a gateway to the Black Void, where Gagorib and his siblings lay waiting in malignant hunger. This portal, known as the Yellow Gate, was erected at the heart of the Veiled Ones' mightiest bastion – at the top the Atas-Antar, the Mountain of Doom.



A nightmarish depiction of Gagorib the Destroyer



A depiction of prince Tamro, Charybdis's greatest hero

The Veiled Ones used their sorcerous powers to hide their endeavors from the eyes of their enemies; when the leaders of the alliance learned about the Yellow Gate, it was already too late. The Gate was completed and the Veiled Ones were simply waiting for the right astral conjunction to open the portal to the Black Void. No army could ever reach the Mountain of Doom in time to stop the incoming apocalypse – but a small group of determined heroes could, perhaps, manage to sneak through enemy territory and avert the end of time.

The Nine Worthies

A valorous Keshite prince from Tatambor named Tamro gathered eight other heroes around him: his old Griot mentor, an Amazon, an Opari warrior, two Kari warriors from two different tribes, an Animist, a Jengu and a Zebran. After many perilous battles and trials, the nine heroes eventually reached the Yellow Gate – mere minutes before the completion of the dreadful ritual. Already, Gagorib the Destroyer was rearing his gigantic, unspeakably monstrous head through the portal. No one really knows how Tamro and his heroic companions managed to close the Yellow Gate before it was too late.

One thing is certain: they saved the Living Land and they all gave their lives for this – all except the Griot, who needed to live to tell the tale. According to some legends, this Griot was actually Anansi in disguise – but maybe this is just another story...

When the Yellow Gate closed, the sorcerous energies the Veiled Ones had gathered to open the portal backfired on them, annihilating them and most of their minions, breaking their foul power and freeing the Living Land from their dark dominion.

But this victory came with a terrible price.

Songs of Times Past

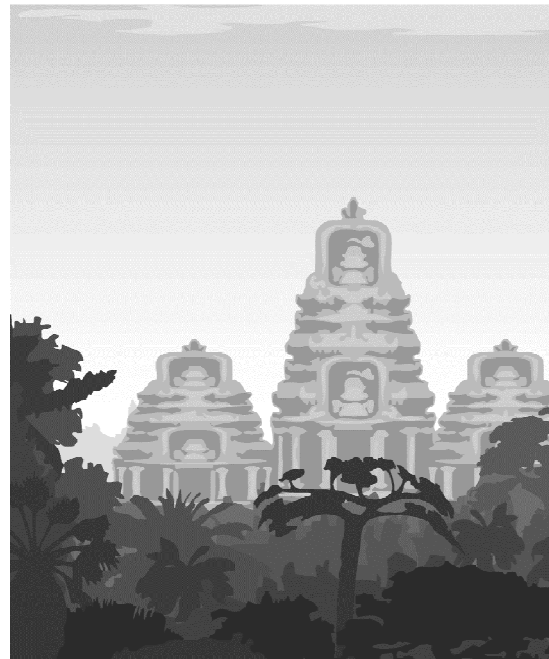
Charybdian oral tradition does not record dates the way Minean scholars do – but the obvious parallels between the Three Times of the World and the Three Ages of Minean History suggest that the destruction of the Yellow Gate and the fall of the Keshite empire happened between 300 and 350 years ago – which corresponds to the span of ‘thirteen generations’ given by most Griots. Because of Gagorib’s curse, however, Charybdians tend to view the Time of Power as an incredibly ancient, half-mythical past. Such is the true meaning of the Time of Twilight.

The Time of Twilight

Just before he was banished back into the Black Void, Gagorib roared a terrible curse at his victors: his fury was such that, with a single earth-shattering roar, he broke the might of the Keshite empire and *devoured* most of its memory. Only a few scattered enclaves survived the cataclysm – including the very birthplace of Tamro, the city of Tatambor. The empire of Kesh was broken, but its spirit lingered on the Living Land, like a ghost from ancient times.

After the sacrifice of the Nine Worthies and the demise of the Veiled Ones, the Yellow Gate was destroyed by the armies of the alliance; its ruins still stand on the Mountain of Doom, as an ominous testament of the half-forgotten Great War.

With the ultimate defeat of the Veiled Ones and the fall of the Keshite empire, the Time of Power came to an abrupt end. The Land entered a new age – the current one - an age of scattered tribes, lost cities and forgotten songs, known as the Time of Twilight.



Twilight falls on Charybdis

Beyond Charybdis

The Stygian Empire

As previously mentioned, the peaks of the Atas-Antar, also known as the *Mountain of Doom*, mark the natural border between Charybdis and the evil Stygian Empire. To most Charybadians, it remains an unknown land of darkness and mystery - and a territory better left unentered. The Stygian Empire itself has shown little interest in Charybdis since the Veiled Ones were defeated at the end of the Time of Power (known to Mineans as the Age of Magic - see p 16 for more details).

For Animists and Griots, the reason for this status quo lies in the magical strength of the Living Land itself: the combined forces of the tutelary spirits of Charybdis are so powerful that they simply prevent the necromancer lords of Stygia and their Anubian allies from extending their foul influence past the sinister peaks of the Atas-Antar. One thing is certain: the masters of the Stygian empire would love nothing more than to subjugate the Living Land and turn it into a Dead Land of darkness and despair - but in order to accomplish this, they would first need to find a way to weaken the spiritual strength and oneness of the Living Land - another reason why it is vital to maintain an unbroken bond between the Living Land and the spirit world.

Conversely, this situation of status quo also explains why most Charybadians prefer to ignore the Stygian menace rather than attempting to uproot it once and for all - because such a struggle, even if victorious, would severely endanger the spiritual integrity of the Living Land, exposing its tutelary spirits to the corruption of Stygian power. Griots often compare Stygia with a scorpion: staying clear of it is the wisest thing to do and trying to trample it underfoot is the surest way to get stung, whether or not you manage to crush the vile creature.

See the previously-published Gazetteers of the Desert Kingdom (issue 5) and Midia (issue 7) for more details about the Stygian Empire and its influence.



Stygia: the Shadow in the East...



Who knows what lies beyond the border of the map?

The Seven Cities of Entopan

According to an ancient Keshite legend known to all Griots, far south of the great jungle lie the fabled Seven Golden Cities of Entopan - a mighty nation whose splendor can only be compared to that of the fallen empire of Kesh. In fact, some sages speculate that the Seven Cities of Entopan may once have formed the southernmost part of the old Keshite empire and some enclaves regularly send parties of brave volunteers in search of the Golden Cities. So far, none of them has ever returned to tell the tale.

According to most tales, the fabled Seven Cities of Entopan are:

Akharat - a city of scholars and diplomats, who remain neutral in all feuds, wars and negotiations between the other Cities.

Hascarmus - a haven for bandits and river pirates, ruled by thirty or so feuding families, who only unite against external threats.

Ixia - home to an invincible army.

Kalaar - said to be home to an ancient race of wise elephant-headed men known as the Mammuteps.

Naumedas - also tantalizingly known as the City of the Thousand Pleasures.

Toxar - a city of assassins and master poisoners.

Yoppa - the southernmost, most mysterious and (supposedly) richest of the Seven Cities.

The actual degree of truth behind the tales of the wondrous Seven Cities is left to each Maze Master's discretion: perhaps the Seven Cities are pure myth, perhaps they did exist but were destroyed ages ago by some terrible disaster... or perhaps they still exist in all their might and glory, beyond the border of the map, as one of Mythika's many *terrae incognitae*.

CHARYBDIAN CHARACTERS

Creating Adventurers from the Living Land, by **Olivier Legrand** and **Shaun Burke**



Warriors

The five basic warrior classes of *Mazes & Minotaurs* (Amazon, Barbarian, Centaur, Noble and Spearman) are available to Charybdian player-characters but may fill different social and cultural niches.

The **Amazon** class is, of course, represented by the Black Amazons of Negara. Maze Masters may use either the official version of the class from the *Players Manual* or the variant presented in the *Minotaur* n°3.

In Charybdis, the **Barbarian** class is mainly represented by the fierce Opari warriors (see p 6).

The **Centaur** class in Charybdis is represented by the Zebrans (see this issue's *Gazetteer*, p 9).

The **Noble** class as defined in M&M only exists in Keshite enclaves, where it fills exactly the same niche as in Minean cities and nations.

In the Charybdian setting, the **Spearman** class can represent two very different types of warriors: the martially-trained soldiers found in Keshite enclaves, who are similar in every respect to their Minean hoplite-like counterparts, and the typical Kari tribal warrior, who also fight with spear and shield and also enjoy the usual benefits of the Spearman class, with some minor adjustments in game terms (see *Tribal Spearmen* below for more details).

Tribal Spearmen



While they have similar characteristics and abilities in game terms, the fighting style of tribal Spearmen is very different from that of their classic hoplite-like counterparts, focusing more on dexterity, speed and ferocity than on martial discipline, training and armor protection.

Unlike classic M&M Spearmen, tribal Spearmen do not (for obvious climatic reasons) wear armor or helmets. This obviously makes them more vulnerable in battle – but also tends to give them greater mobility and agility thanks to their lower Encumbrance total, making stealth and athletic actions like climbing far easier for them – and a full part of their overall warrior training.

It should also be noted that tribal Spearmen do not have access to the Shield Wall maneuver, which is typical of Minean and Minean-inspired military tactics.

These disadvantages (lack of armor and Shield Wall training) are actually counterbalanced by a unique extra edge: like all Spearmen, tribal Spearmen have the spear as their (melee) *weapon of choice* – but in their case, this advantage extends to missile use as well. In other words, a tribal Spearman always rolls two D20s and keeps the higher one when using a spear, whether as a melee or as a missile weapon. This advantage should also apply if the optional rules on javelins detailed in issue 5 (p 55) are used.



Two very different faces of Charybdian magic:
A graceful Jengu and a wise Griot

Magicians

Charybdian magicians can choose from five basic classes: **Animists**, **Beastmasters**, **Griots**, **Jengu** and **Sorcerers**.

Animists are probably the most ubiquitous type of Charybdian magician; their vital role in tribal society is described in this issue's *Gazetteer* (p 12). In game terms, Animism works as a mix of Divine Prodigies and Sorcery, as detailed next page. In all cases, the Animist's Ancestral Insight is used in lieu of a Priest's Spiritual Aura or a Sorcerer's Psychic Gift.

Beastmasters are detailed in *Minotaur* n³.

Griots are the Charybdian equivalent of Lyrist; they fill the same social niche, acting as storytellers, poets, musicians, loremasters and, well, magicians. In game terms, Griots are similar to Lyrist, except that their primary attributes are Wits and Luck (rather than Grace and Luck). This also changes the nature and name of their magical talent, which is not called *Orphic Voice* but **Voice of the Ancestors** and is equal to the sum of their Wits and Luck mods. Their Power total is modified by their Wits mod and their Songs have the same effects and work in the same way as those of a Lyrist.

Jengu are Charybdian Nymphs. They look like supernaturally beautiful Charybdian women and have exactly the same characteristics and powers as classic M&M Nymphs; they are, however, only divided into three different Kins: Jungle Jengu (similar to Dryads), Swamp Jengu (similar to Heleads) and River or Lake Jengu (similar to Naiads). Jengu who have been bound to a specific place by an Animist are known as Cymbee (and do not usually make great player-characters, for obvious reasons).

Charybdian **Sorcerers** have exactly the same powers and abilities as other M&M Sorcerers – and tend to attract the same degree of mistrust and hostility, as opposed to the wise, respected and community-oriented Animists.

ANIMIST



Primary Attributes : Wits and Will

Gender Restrictions : None

Basic Hits = 8

Animism: Animists use a type of magic known as Animism, tied to Spirits and the spirit world. Their magical talent is known as Ancestral Insight. See next page for a detailed description of their powers.

Ancestral Insight = Will mod + Wits mod

Mystic Strength = 12 + Ancestral Insight

Starting Power = (4 + Will mod)

Power Recovery: An Animist recovers his Power points by meditating and communing with the spirit world. Each two full hours of such activity will restore a number of Power points equal to the character's level.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives an Animist +2 Hits, +4 Power points, +1 to Luck and +2 to either Will or Wits.

Possessions: Dagger, staff, robes, 3D6 x 10 sp.

Restrictions: Animists can never wear any form of metal armor (including shields or helmets), since this would disrupt their mystical link with the spirit world.

Patron Deity: Animists have Grandfather Man, the First Ancestor, as their tutelary spirit (see this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer* for more details).

Background Talents: Animists have the Healer and Exorcist (see p 24) talents.

Reputation Effect: Animists receive their reputation bonus when dealing with humans from Charybdis as well as with Jengu (Charybdian Nymphs).

ANIMISM



Magnitude 1: Spiritual Blessing

This power allows the Animist to attract the favor of an individual's ancestor spirits on that person. In game terms, it works exactly like Divine Blessing. It may affect the following scores: Mystic Fortitude, Danger Evasion, Physical Vigor or Defense Class.

Magnitude 2: Spiritual Vision

This power works exactly like Divine Vision, except that the visions are provided by the Animist's ancestor spirits rather than by a deity.

Magnitude 3: Spiritual Vitality

This power allows the Animist to infuse a wounded or sick individual with some of the vital essence of that person's ancestor spirits. In game terms, it works exactly like Divine Vitality.

Magnitude 4: Spiritual Command

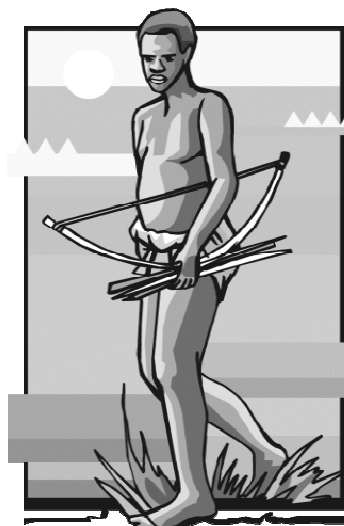
This power works exactly like the sorcerous power of Compelling, except that it can only be used on Spirits - including Jengu and Mindless Spirits (who are immune to classic Compelling).

Magnitude 5: Spiritual Attack

This power allows the Animist to use his own spiritual strength to battle against spirits. In game terms, it works exactly like a Sorcerer's Psychic Attack except that it can only be used on Spirits, including Jengu and Mindless Spirits.

Magnitude 6: Spiritual Binding

This power allows the Animist to bind a particular spirit to his service. In game terms, it works exactly like the Sorcery power of Enslavement, except that it can only be used on Spirits (including Jengu and Mindless Spirits).



A heroic Charybdian hunter

Specialists

Hunters are probably more numerous in Charybdis than in any other region of Mythika – as well as far more respected and honored, at least within their tribe; in game terms, this gives Charybdian Hunters the same reputation Tribal Renown as Barbarians and Amazons (see *Players Manual*, p 47). Most Hunters will either be of Kari stock or belong to another tribal group of peoples, such as the Babanga Pygmies or the Indwa Lake Tribes.

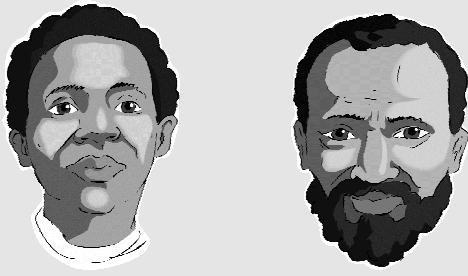
Thieves as a player-character class do not really exist in Charybdis. There are very few Charybdian cities large enough for professional Thieves to ply their trade anonymously. Thievery is also a dangerous proposition in Charybdis: captured thieves can be subject to slavery, banishment or even death, depending on the community.

Other Classes

The classes of **Priest** and **Elementalist** have no real place in the culture of the Living Land; the social niche and sacred role of the Priest are filled by the Animist and Elemental Magic as defined in the M&M rules is completely alien to the mindset of Charybdians, who view it as a wholly unnatural way of manipulating and subverting the forces of creation.

The three optional classes detailed in the *M&M Companion*, on the other hand, could work well in a Charybdian setting: the **Shapeshifter** class could prove an interesting alternative for magicians, while the two military classes of **Archer** and **Cavalryman** may be available to player-characters from a Keshite enclave, such as the great city of Tatambor, renowned in all Charybdis for its quagga-mounted warriors and regiments of deadly bowmen.

Playing the Pygmies



In a Charybdian campaign, Maze Masters may allow players to create characters from the Babanga pygmy people. Players who select this option should use the following rules, which reflect the effects of the Babanga pygmies' short size as well as some of the unique features of their culture.

Babanga adventurers automatically belong to the **Hunter** class, regardless of their gender. There are no warrior or magician classes: their culture does not recognize the concept of war and the spiritual role usually devoted to Animists in other Charybdian communities is filled by the Jengu, with whom the Babanga prefer to interact directly.

To reflect the Small size of the character, the player must devote his lowest roll to Might – and if this score is higher than 12, it must be lowered by 4. The character's Basic Hits are also reduced to 6 (instead of 10).

Their short stature gives pygmies an automatic +2 to their EDC against all missile attacks (as for all Small beings) but they have the same movement rate as other humans, being extremely fleet-footed.

Babanga pygmies are renowned for their stealthy thread and sharp senses, which make them superb hunters: in game terms, these exceptional abilities give them a +2 bonus to their Hunting score.

The spears and arrows used by Babanga pygmies are as deadly (1d6 damage roll) as the weapons of normal-sized humans; their small stature, however, prevents them from using swords and other battle weapons effectively.

Lastly, it should be noted that the Babanga do not follow the common Charybdian custom of triple-naming. Each Babanga pygmy has only one name, which he chooses for himself during the Rite of Passage. All Babanga names are unisex, bisyllabic and end in –e. Typical examples include Bembe, Kenge, Moke, Ndembe, Sese, Tite, Webe, etc.

Babanga Hunters are always regarded as true heroes by their tribe; for this reason, all NPC Babanga Hunters should be treated as Major NPCs.



The spear: the Charybdian weapon par excellence

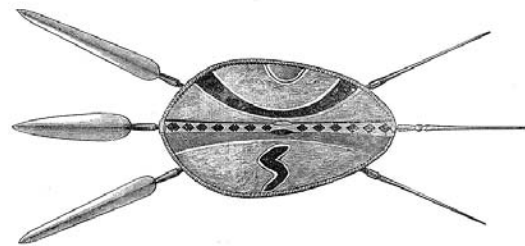
Weapons & Armor

Charybdian weapons are similar in game terms to standard M&M weapons. The spear is the melee weapon of choice for most warriors, except for those Keshite Nobles who favor the sword and for Opari Barbarians, whose weapon of choice is always the Oparian sword – a big, heavy blade similar in game terms to the barbarian weapons described in M&M.

Although they are mostly made of wood, leather and other natural materials, the shields of Charybdian warriors are assumed to be as effective as those of their Minean counterparts.

Armor, however, is another matter entirely, since the Charybdian climate makes it extremely difficult for breastplate-clad fighters to function effectively, as noted in this issue's *Gazetteer* (see p 10). For this reason, no Charybdian warrior may start the game with a standard breastplate or helmet; for classes that normally possess them as part of their starting equipment, such items should be replaced by their lighter variants – the linothorax and the "partial" helmet described in a previous *Twist in the Maze* (see issue 5, pp 54-55). These lighter forms of armor are NOT subject to the triple Encumbrance effect normally associated with Charybdian climate.

Maze Masters interested in running a Charybdian campaign may also consider using the other variant rules detailed in that same *Twist in the Maze*, such as the rules on wicker shields and light javelins.





A tribal Animist chanting in the Spirit Tongue

Languages

Although it comprises many different tribal dialects, for simplicity's sake, Charybdian should be treated as a single language. All Charybdian characters are assumed to speak Charybdian (either as their native language or as a 'common tongue') as well as one or two extra languages (see below).

As noted in the *Gazetteer*, all Charybdian languages (including High Keshani and the Spirit Tongue) only exist in spoken, living form.

Warriors and Specialists

All warriors and specialists speak Charybdian as well as a second language, which may be either the Minean tongue (learned through contacts with colonists, traders or adventurers from across the Middle Sea) or a non-Kari native language: Negaran for Black Amazons, Oparian for Opari barbarians, Zeban for Zebrans, the language of the Indwa Lake Tribes or the tongue of the Babanga pygmies.

Keshite Nobles also speak High Keshani, the ancient language of the fallen Keshite empire (which is only used for ceremonial or poetic purposes).

Magicians

All magicians (including Animists, Jengu and Beast Masters) speak Charybdian and the Spirit Tongue, a sacred language, thought of as the ancestor of all the other Charybdian languages. Griots also speak High Keshani, which they use as their primary poetic language. Sorcerers speak a third language of their choice - usually Minean or another, possibly nonhuman, language (see *Maze Master's Guide*).

It should be noted that, with the exception of some Sorcerers, Charybdian magicians do not usually speak the Minean tongue, which makes them seem even more mysterious and inscrutable to Minean colonists and travelers.

Naming the Character

As mentioned in this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, most Charybdians have three names

The most important name is the **chosen name**: this name should be treated as the character's actual name and should be invented by the player or chosen from the lists given below.

Typical Kari names (male): Adongo, Akono, Baako, Bongani, Kibwe, Kwani, Mambe, Manda, Obi, Oladele, Sango, Tembo.

Typical Kari names (female): Abebe, Adeb, Alake, Andile, Egun, Mbali, Nandi, Noku, Sizani, Zanele.

Typical Keshite names (male): Arkamun, Ataro, Kabela, Khamani, Mengesha, Menele, Ogun, Oromo, Tabor, Yekuno.

Typical Keshite names (female): Adina, Amara, Ayesha, Ima, Makeda, Mekdela, Sheba, Tanisha, Tsendenia, Zenia.

Typical Oparian names (male): Amra, Borak, Gondar, Imra, Juma, Kerma, Kunta, Kwara, Simba, Thengor, Thambar.

Typical Oparian names (female): Adowa, Ama, Bulah, Kera, Lela, Thabisa, Themba, Zama.

Negaran Amazons have Keshite or Oparian names, while Zebrans and Jengu usually have Kari names.

The character's **birth name** is rarely used after childhood. For simplicity's sake, it should take the form of a single noun in plain English, usually referring to some aspect of the natural world - such as "Leaf", "Thunder", "Lion" or "Gazelle".

But what about the character's **true name**, that all-important aspect of Charybdian culture? Well, since a character's true name is supposed to be so secret it might actually *never* be spoken aloud or come into play, the best way to keep it secret is to leave it undefined: the player simply knows that his character has a true name, which was given to him during his Rite of Passage, and that's it. When situations involving someone's true name arise in play, then players and Maze Masters should simply use sentences like: "This Animist knows your true name." or "Adongo finally tells you his true name." This elusive approach is not only quick, simple and hassle-free: it is also a very effective way to convey the mystery and taboo inherent to the very concept of true names; on a more practical level, it will also prevent player-characters from inadvertently blurting out someone's true name while in conversation.

As mentioned in the *Gazetteer*, Opari Barbarians, Negaran Amazons and Zebrans do not receive a true name during their Rite of Passage.

See this issue's *Maze Master's Lore* for optional rules about the magical significance of true names.



Charybdian weaponcrafting 101

Background Talents

If this option is used, Charybdian characters should be given the following choices. These lists include two new talents, *Pathfinder* and *Exorcist*, which are only available to Charybdian characters.

Amazon: Choose two background talents among Armorer, Beastmaster, Bowyer, Equestrian, Healer, Pathfinder and Wrestler.

Animist: All Animists automatically have the Healer and Exorcist talents.

Barbarian: Choose two talents among Wrestler, Beastmaster, Mountaineer and Pathfinder.

Beastmaster: All Charybdian Beastmasters have the Beastmaster and Pathfinder talents.

Griot: All Griots automatically have the Orator and Musician talents.

Hunter: Choose two talents among Beastmaster, Bowyer, Healer, Mountaineer and Pathfinder.

Jengu: Like Nymphs, Jengu only start with a single talent – Musician, which reflects their enchanting voice and natural musical gifts.

Noble: Choose two among Orator, Equestrian, Mountaineer, Pathfinder, Tactician and Wrestler.

Sorcerer: Choose two talents among Actor, Healer, Orator and Exorcist.

Spearman (tribal): Choose two talents among Healer, Mountaineer, Musician, Orator, Pathfinder and Wrestler.

Spearman (classic): Choose two talents among Equestrian, Healer, Mountaineer, Musician, Orator, Tactician and Wrestler.

Zebbran: Choose two talents among Bowyer, Healer, Musician, Orator and Wrestler.

New Background Talents

Pathfinder

This talent is similar to the *Woodsman* talent (see *M&M Companion*) but applies to the jungle environment.

Foreign characters with the *Woodsman* talent will not benefit from its effects when operating in the Charybdian jungle; as far as the M&M rules are concerned, forests and jungles are treated as two completely different environments.

Exorcist

This talent provides extensive knowledge of the spirit world and Charybdian Spirits in general; it is a mandatory talent choice for Animists and is also available to Sorcerers if they so wish.

While it gives no special advantage when using magic, this background talent provides very useful information in play regarding the habits and powers of the various Charybdian Spirits the character may encounter – information which may be especially valuable when fighting malevolent Spirits (hence the '*Exorcist*' name).

Wealth

Charybdian culture does not use any form of monetary currency. Most commercial transactions in the Living Land are based on barter (and usually involve quite a lot of haggling), using standard measures of gold, ivory, grain or livestock to establish the values of all sorts of goods.

For simplicity's sake, however, the starting wealth of Charybdian adventurers should be determined as for all other characters but be assumed to take the form of various chips of gold, silver or copper, with each chip being equivalent (in weight and value) to a single coin of the same metal.



Wealth in Charybdis comes in many shapes



Fetishes & Talismans

As described in this issue's *Pandora's Box* column, mythic items in Charybdis most often take the form of tribal fetishes or ancestral artifacts – sacred items which are inherently tied to the spirit world, as well as to the living memory of a specific tribe, bloodline or community. Many Charybdian mythic items are passed down from father to son, from mother to daughter, from master to apprentice, in an ongoing process of spiritual transmission.

While Mineans and most other cultures in Mythika tend to think of mythic items as personal prizes and trophies whose possession demonstrate their owner's superior prowess, cunning or divine favor, Charybdians view them as living manifestations of a person's ties to his ancestors, the spirit world and the memory of the Living Land.

For these reasons, Charybdian player-characters, who often represent the most promising members of their community's young generation, may be allowed to start their adventuring career with a single mythic item, representing a family legacy, a tribal treasure or a parting gift from their master or tutor. This starting item can be considered as the Charybdian counterpart of a divine boon – a tribal, ancestral or spiritual boon, if you will.

This option only applies to characters who were born and raised within a true community, or tutored by a wise and well-meaning master – a restriction which absolutely excludes Jengu (who do not have any form of social organization and care little for crafted items anyway), and Sorcerers (who are social outcasts and *never* bestow any "parting gift" on their apprentices).

Starting Mythic Items for Characters

Players should select their Charybdian character's starting mythic item from the following lists. Other items of comparable power may be available, at the Maze Master's discretion. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are described in this issue's *Pandora's Box*.

Amazons

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Bow of Long Shooting*, Bow of Skill*, Fetish Shield*, Loincloth of Protection*, Loincloth of Strength*, Spear of Skill*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Animists

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Ancestor Statuette*, Mask of Spirit Battle*, Mask of Spirit Control*, Mask of the Healer*, Staff of Ancestral Wisdom*, Staff of Spirit Command*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Barbarians

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Fetish Shield*, Headdress of Tribal Command*, Headdress of Victory*, Loincloth of Protection*, Loincloth of Strength*, Spear of Might*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Beastmasters

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Animal Talisman*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Griots

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Harp of the Ancestors*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Hunters

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Bow of Long Shooting*, Bow of Skill*, Mask of the Hunter*, Net of Entrapment*, Spear of Skill*, Spear of Vigilance, Talisman of Good Fortune*, Talisman of the Hunter*

Nobles

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Ancient Spear of Kesh*, Bow of Skill*, Fetish Shield*, Spear of Conquest, Spear of Might*, Spear of Skill*, Spear of Vigilance, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Spearmen (tribal)

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Fetish Shield*, Headdress of Tribal Command*, Headdress of Victory*, Spear of Skill*, Spear of Striking, Spear of Vigilance, Talisman of Good Fortune*, War Mask*

Spearman (classical)

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Ancient Spear of Kesh*, Fetish Shield*, Spear of Skill*, Spear of Striking, Talisman of Good Fortune*

Zebrans

Amulet of Health, Amulet of Protection, Bow of Long Shooting*, Bow of Skill*, Fetish Shield*, Spear of Skill*, Talisman of Good Fortune*

MYTHIC BESTIARY

CHARYBDIAN CREATURES

An Assortment of Native Beasts, Monsters & Other Denizens from the Living Land

Written by Olivier Legrand & Shaun Burke



A Charybdian Bestiary

This jumbo *Mythic Bestiary* details more than fifteen new creatures from Charybdis (plus a few variants).

The Charybdian environment includes many natural and not-so-natural creatures already described in the *Creature Compendium* or in previous issues of the *Minotaur*. The following sections examine the five Taxonomy categories used in M&M: Beasts, Folks, Monsters, Animates and Spirits.

Beasts

As mentioned in this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, the natural fauna of Charybdis includes many Beasts already described in the *Creature Compendium* or in a previous *Minotaur*, such as **Elephants**, **Rhinos**, **Lions** (but be sure to check the entry on the *Charybdian Great Lion* p 31), **Crocodiles** and **Hippos** (both of which can be found in the *Mythic Bestiary* of issue 5, p 39 and 41).

Other common Charybdian animals include **Eagles**, **Wild Boars** (Warthogs) and **Bulls** (Buffalos).

The present Bestiary includes stats for various other Charybdian animals, such as **Antelopes**, **Giraffes**, **Hyenas** and **Gorillas**.

Folks

As detailed in this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, **Zebrans** occupy a special niche in the Charybdian milieu, similar to that of their Centaur cousins on the other side of the Middle Sea. Zebrans have exactly the same stats and abilities as their Centaur cousins. Their culture is also very similar to that of the Centaurs, with equivalents of Chironians (Griots) and Sagittarians (known in Charybdis as *Ixionids*, in memory of a Zeburan hero who was a master of the bow); Zebrans even have their own degenerate Brutaurs, known as *Zebrates*.

Charybdis is also home to many tribes of Beastmen, the most numerous being **Apemen**, **Boarmen** (a local breed with warthog-heads), **Cynocephals**, **Hyenakins** and, of course, **Leonids**.

Other half-human Folks described in the *Creature Compendium* which can be found in Charybdis include **Degenerate Men**, **Ogres** and the **Red Hill Pygmies** (see this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, p 9), who have the same stats and abilities as Zorbas.

On the reptilian front, Charybdis also has its fair share of cave-dwelling **Troglodytes** (along their **Lizardian** rulers) and the **Serpent Men** of Stygia maintain at least one hidden enclave near the dread Mountain of Doom.

Last but not least, don't forget the **Klaatakaa'rr!**



Monsters

Many Monsters from the *Creature Compendium* can be found in Charybdis, including the following creatures: **Bapharons**, **Birds of Ares**, **Catoblepas**, **Chimeras**, **Giant Lions**, **Giant Scorpions**, **Giant Snakes**, **Giant Spiders**, **Griffins** and **Gryphons**, **Harpies**, **Hellephaunts**, **Hydras**, **Leucrotas**, **Minotaurs**, **Pterodactyls**, **Rhinotaurs**, **Swamp Horrors**, **Tarasques**, **Tetrax** and **Tyrannosaurus**.

Despite what some Minean scholars would have you believe, true Dragons seem to be unheard of in the Living Land - but **Wyverns** (see *Minotaur* n4, p 43) can be found in the Opar mountains.

Charybdis also has its fair share of unique native Monsters, some of which are detailed in the following pages – such as the fearsome **Kakodyle** and the titanic **Horned Juggernaut**.

Animates

While mechanical automatons and walking bronze statues are virtually unheard of in the Living Land, various vegetal Animates, however, can be found in the Charybdian jungle, including **Vines of Tantalus**, **Wood Titans** and two new nightmarish creatures detailed in this Bestiary – the terrifying **Man-Eating Tree** and the pain-driven **Tokoloshe**.

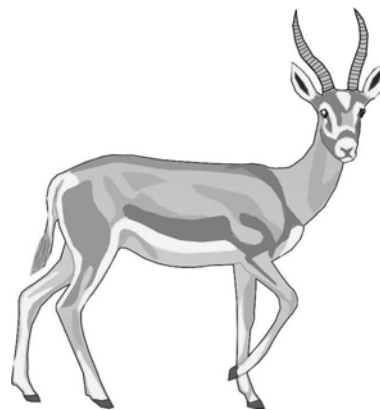
Spirits

Perhaps more than any other land, Charybdis has a myriad of resident Spirits, including the nymph-like Jengu, who play a very important role in the spiritual ecology of the Living Land.

Various other Spirits detailed in the *Compendium* can also be encountered in Charybdis – but are usually known under a different (i.e. Charybdian) name, just like the Jengu:

<u>Spirit</u>	<u>Charybdian Name</u>
Cacodemon	Chaos Spirit
Empusa	Obayifo
Eolian	Wind Spirit
Flamoid	Flame Spirit
Ghost	Restless Spirit
Ker	Sasabonsam
Shadow	Shadow Spirit
Stichios	Juju Tree

This *Mythic Bestiary* also describes two specifically Charybdian evil Spirits, the life-draining **Baby Eater**, who preys upon the life-force of newborn children, and the jungle-dwelling **Tree Vampire**.



The standard, classic Charybdian Antelope

Antelope

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: These stats encompass various species of medium-sized antelopes.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Peaceful

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60' (240' galloping)

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +1

Damage: 1d6 (horns)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 4

Detection / Evasion: +4 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 14, Melee +3), Gallop, Sharp Senses, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 20.

Antelope Variants

Gazelles are similar to Antelopes, except for their Small Size; they also lack the ability to *Charge into Battle* but are *Lightning Fast*. These adjustments affect their stats as follows:

Movement: 60' (240' galloping), Initiative: 16, Damage: 1d3 (horns), Hits Total: 2, Detection / Evasion: +4 / +6, Awards: Glory 6.

Also known as Sabre Antelopes or Sword Horns, **Oryxes** are a breed of larger Antelopes known for their deadly horns. This makes them more Aggressive than standard Antelopes (see above), which modifies their stats as follows:

Initiative: 13 (15 Charging), Melee Attack: +3 (+5 Charging), Hits Total: 8, Awards: Glory 30.



- Protect my child from the dread Abiku!

Baby Eater

Taxonomy: Spirit

Description: Also called *Abiku*, these malevolent, immaterial spirits prey upon newborn children, whom they possess and drain of their nascent lifeform, leading to the death of the baby in a matter of days. These invisible and intangible bringers of death and sorrow move undetected among humans and other sentient beings, going from settlement to settlement in search of new preys. They are responsible for many infant deaths among the Kari peoples – deaths which an ignorant eye would attribute to a wasting disease but Animists (or anyone with the Exorcist talent) know better. Baby Eaters are solitary Spirits and always hunt alone. Protecting a community's newborn from the Abiku is one of the chief duties of every resident Animist.

Size: Small

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 45'

Initiative: n/a

Melee Attack: n/a

Damage: n/a

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 6

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Insubstantial, Life-Energy Drain (special, see below), Magic Resistance, Mindless.

Awards: Glory 16, Wisdom 140.

The Abiku's Insubstantial form makes it immune to all physical damage; its invisibility also makes it impossible to detect in any manner. It can only be affected by an Animist's powers when possessing the body of a baby.

Possession & Exorcism

The Abiku's *Life-Energy Drain* only works on babies who are less than three (lunar) months old; anyone past this age is immune to the spirit's life-devouring powers. The Spirit simply enters the body of the defenseless infant and slowly drains his life-force, killing him in 1d6 days – unless it is defeated by an Animist first, in which case the child will survive the ordeal.

To destroy the Abiku, the Animist must use his Spiritual Attack power to reduce the Abiku to 0 Hits – but if he does not manage to destroy the Abiku with his first Spiritual Attack, the evil spirit will immediately retaliate by killing the possessed child outright before leaving his body to become invisible again, escaping any further Spiritual Attack by the Animist.

Trying to force the Abiku to exit its victim's body by using Spiritual Command would only have temporary effects, so Spiritual Attack is the only way to deal with these accursed drinkers of life.

Cheetah

Taxonomy: Beast

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 80' (320' running)

Initiative: 19

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6 (claws & bite)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Camouflage (jungle and savannah, 22), Charge Into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee +7), Gallop (see below*), Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (18), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 65.

Unique Ability: Deadly Acceleration

* The Cheetah's unique morphology allows it to use *full movement* (galloping at 320') and Charge Into Melee during the same battle round.



- Pheew! Almost didn't make it to that page in time!

Devouring Ant

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: These rat-sized carnivorous ants, also known as *N'zanti*, are found in the Opar Mountains; they prey on mountain animals (goats, etc) and man alike. Their bite produces a potent paralyzing venom which they use to immobilize their prey before devouring them *en masse*.

Size: Tiny

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 40'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1pt (bite)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 2

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +6

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Lightning Fast, Mindless, Poison (paralysis), Stealthy (16), Wallcrawling.

Awards: Glory 10.



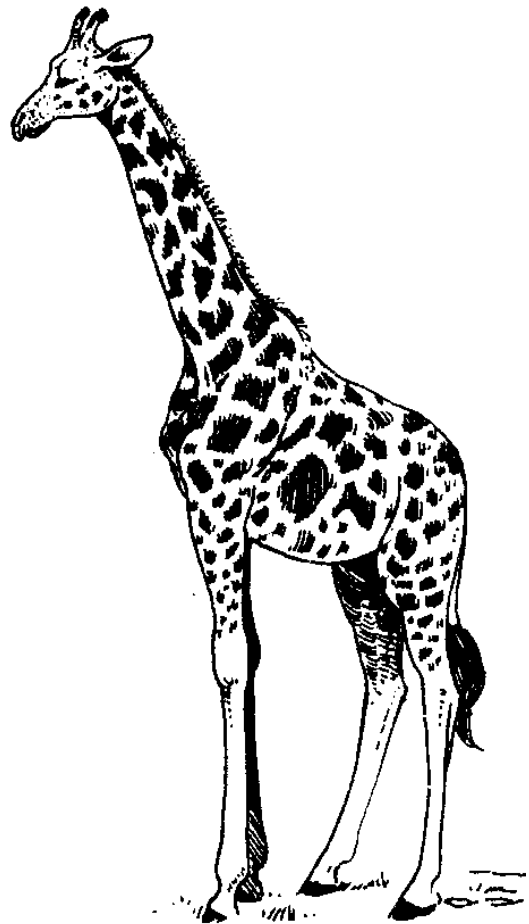
- Not very impressive, are we?

Well, wait until you can no longer count us...

What, No Gnu?

The deep jungles and vast wildlands of Charybdis obviously contain many other animal species, which could not be included in this *Bestiary* for lack of space; we chose to focus on species which seemed more in keeping with the adventure spirit of M&M.

However, should the Maze Master wish to include additional animal species in his Charybdis adventures, the game stats for such Beasts can often be very easily derived by adjusting the existing stats of another, reasonably close species, as shown in the section on Gazelles above. Chimpanzees, for instance, could be statted up as Smaller but Clever Gorillas, while Gnus could be defined as more Aggressive Antelopes without the Lightning Fast and Uncanny Agility abilities but with an extra Trample attack.



The Giraffe, also known as the great space-filler

Giraffe

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic long-necked herbivore.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Peaceful

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 10

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 2d6 (kick)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +4 / 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Sharp Senses.

Awards: Glory 10.

Gorilla

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic Charybdian great ape – see below for the Giant and Gigantic versions!

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +4 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Crushing Damage (bear hug, after successful Grapple), Grapple (Might = 16), Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 55.

Giant Gorilla

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: 10' tall gorilla – the terror of the jungle! But see next column for an even bigger version!

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: +7

Damage: 2d6

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 24

Detection / Evasion: +4 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Crushing Damage (bear hug, after successful Grapple), Grapple (Might = 20), Sharp Senses, Stealthy (12), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 220.



Medium, Large or Gigantic? Choose your own size!

Gigantic Gorilla

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Truly titanic monster – think King Kong. Gigantic Gorillas are extremely rare and can only be found in some remote parts of the Great Jungle, where they are often worshipped as living gods by brutish and superstitious Apemen, who view them as the embodiment of the great Gorilla Beast Lord.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 3d6

Defense Class: 16

Hits Total: 40

Detection / Evasion: +4 / 0

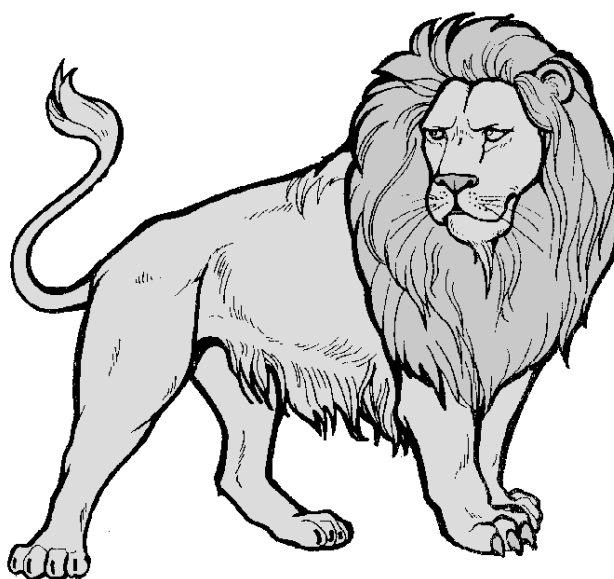
Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Crushing Damage (bear hug, after succ; Grapple), Crushing Missiles, Fearsome, Grapple (Might = 24), Sharp Senses, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 650.

Kong, the Living God!

If the Apemen are right and Gigantic Gorillas are *really* the direct manifestation of the great Gorilla Beast Lord, then they should also be given a Deadly Ferocity, an Eldritch Mystique, Magic Resistance and Supernatural Vigor, raising their Initiative to 15, their Melee to +10, their Defense Class to 18, their Hits Total to 60 and their Mystic Fortitude to +8, for a nice, round total Glory award of 1000... and a Wisdom award of 30.



- Yeah, I've got 4 more Hits than those Creature Compendium mountain upstarts (not to mention my +7 Melee mod)

Great Charybdian Lion

Description: The Common Lion described in the *Creature Compendium* corresponds to the mountain lions found in most regions of Mythika; Charybdian Lions, while not huge enough to qualify as Large creatures, are significantly bigger and fiercer, which modifies their stats as follows:

Ferocity: Deadly

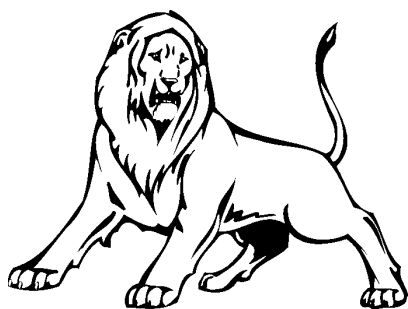
Initiative: 20 (22 when Charging)

Melee Attack: +7 (+9 when Charging)

Hits Total: 16

Awards: Glory 70.

The Great White Opar Lions



The Opar Mountains are home to a unique breed of Great White Lions. These majestic beasts have the same stats and abilities as other Great Lions, except that their stark-white fur gives them a Weird Mystique (which raises their Defense Class to 15, their Mystic Fortitude to +2 and their Glory award to 75).

Hyena

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: Contrary to popular belief, hyenas are *not* cowardly scavengers and often attack living prey. They are predominantly nocturnal.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d6 (teeth & claws)

Defense Class: 12

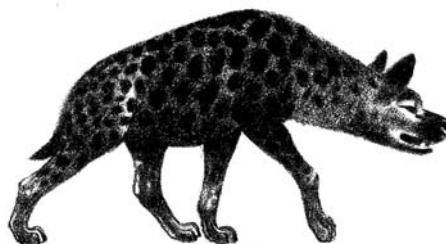
Hits Total: 8

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +2

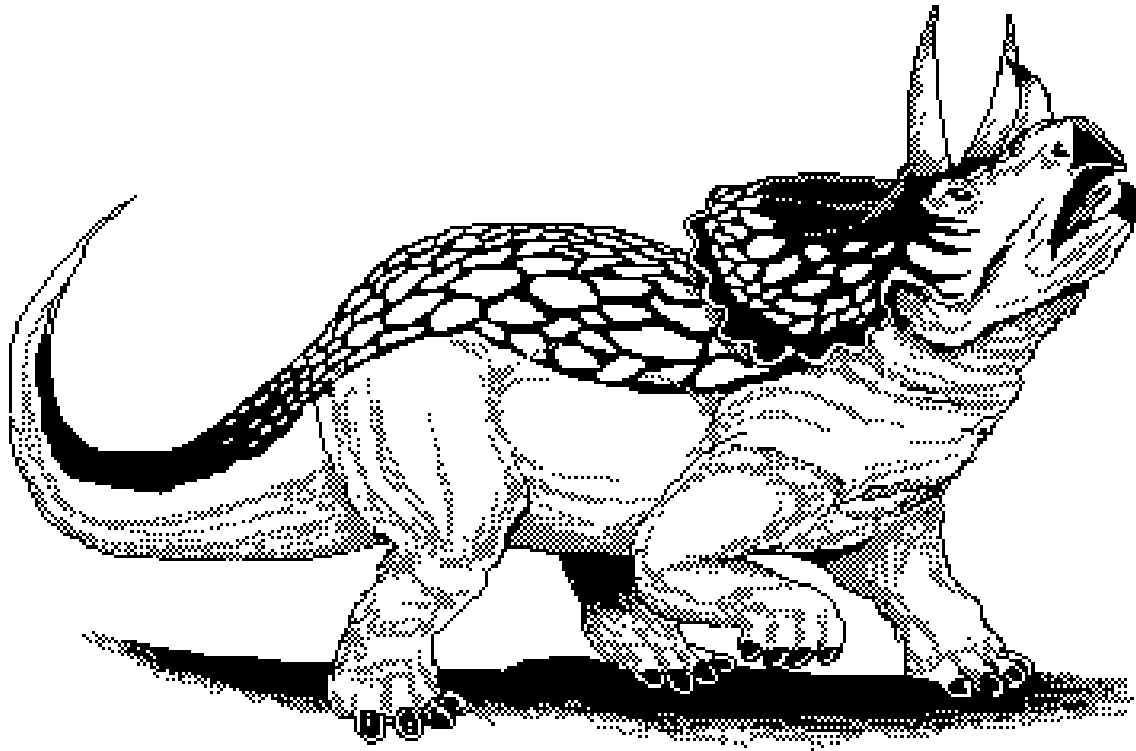
Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14).

Awards: Glory 25.



The stealthy, skulking, cowardly hyena



Watch out, there's a Horned Juggernaut about!

Horned Juggernaut

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Gigantic, amphibious triceratops-like monster, known for killing hippopotamuses and even elephants. It dwells in the southern borders of the great Kongos river. The Babanga pygmies call this creature "Emela-Ntouka" (*the Great Destroyer*) and view it as a semi-divine being.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (tusks and bite)

Defense Class: 18

Hits Total: 50

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Amphibian, Charge Into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee Attack +16), Fearsome, Natural Armor, Trample.

Awards: Glory 600.

Behold the Mighty Emela-Ntouka!

If the beliefs of the Babanga Pygmies are true, then the Horned Juggernaut should also be given an Eldritch Mystique, plus Supernatural Vigor and Magic Resistance.

This would raise its Defense Class to 20, its Hits Total to 60 and its Mystic Fortitude to +8, for a total Glory award of 850 and a total Wisdom award of 30.

Iduban

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: Physically, Idubans are to Zebrans what Equinians are to Centaurs (i.e. Zebra-headed humanoids) but for some mysterious reason, they have zebra-like rather than human-like feet. Their ancestors are believed to descend from the forced union of Zebran males and human women and they are reviled by humans and Zebrans alike – Zebrans hate them with the same passion as Centaurs hate Equinians and will gladly hunt down and kill any Iduban foolish enough to enter the sacred Ibrahari Wildlands. For this reason, Idubans usually stay well away from Zebran territory. It should be noted that Idubans are *not* herbivores and even have a particular fondness for the flesh of humans, zebras or quaggas. In game terms, Idubans have the same stats as standard Equinians.



The Kakodyle: pure, unadulterated evil

Kakodyle

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Also known as *Mokele* or (mistakenly) *Dragon Men*, these nightmarish creatures of pure evil appear as huge (10') humanoids with a crocodile-like head and a skin that looks like cracked stone; their fetid breath reeks of sulphur and a stinking, ooze-like substance drips and dries from the cracks in their skin.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (fangs & claws)

Defense Class: 20

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Amphibian, Breath Weapon (fiery sulphur, 30' range), Fearsome, Magic Resistance, Natural Armor, Regeneration (2 Hits / round).

Awards: Glory 400, Wisdom 60.

Additional Lore: These truly monstrous creatures are most probably the results of some demented magical experiments carried out by the Veiled Ones during the Time of Power. According to another theory, the ancestors of Kakodyles were evil Sons of Sobek (see *Minotaur* n5, p 42) from the Desert Kingdom, who got corrupted and transformed by the dark powers of the Nine Abominations. Some sages also point out the similarities between Kakodyles and Hellephaunts: both are monstrous parodies of existing animals (with Breath Weapons and other unnatural powers added in) and may well have been created by the same mad creature-crafters.

Kalonoro

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: White-furred anthropophagous apemen who inhabit the lost ruins of Xanth where they worship a mysterious, dark god known to them as "*the Forgotten One*". They have the same characteristics as standard Apemen, except that they are more Dangerous; their particular heritage also give them a Weirder Mystique.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6 (club)

Defense Class: 15

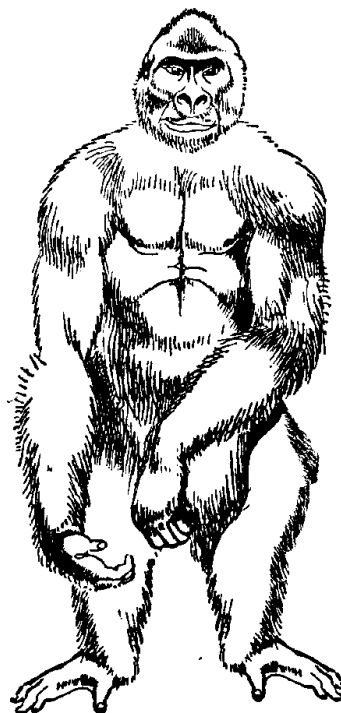
Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: 0 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Initiative 15, Melee +5), Grapple (Might = 16), Stealthy (14), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 50.



Behold the might of the Kalonoro!

Mammutep

Description: Some legends from the Time of Power speak of the Mammuteps, an ancient folk of elephant-headed humanoids who were allies of the lost empire of Kesh and became extinct when it fell. According to other tales, the last members of the Mammutep race departed Charybdis at the end of the Time of Power to migrate back to the homeland of their ancestors, in the mysterious east. Still, many Griots and Jengu seem to believe that Mammuteps still live on the Dark Continent, south of Charybdis, in one of the seven cities of Entopan.

See the bonus article on p 44 for more details.

Man-Eating Tree

Taxonomy: Animate

Description: Vaguely tree-shaped carnivorous vegetal life-forms with many coil-like limbs which secrete streams of viscous honey-like and extremely potent digestive acid. Like normal trees, they are firmly rooted in the ground and cannot move at all – which is their main weakness.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: none (rooted)

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: n/a

Damage: special (see below)

Defense Class: 17

Hits Total: 16

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Entangle (10' reach, special *), Fearsome, Mindless, Multiple Arms**, Regeneration (1 Hit / round), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 110, Wisdom 40.

* *This is the creature's only mode of attack. In addition to the usual effects of Entanglement, the entangled victim suffers 1d6 damage per round because of the creature's extremely potent digestive acid. This doubles the basic Glory award of the special ability (from 10 to 20).*

** *Its numerous coils allow the Man-Eating Tree to make up to three Entangle attacks per round (against different targets) and add +20 to the creature's Menace Rating.*



A Man-Eating Tree in action

Rhino-Eating Tree?

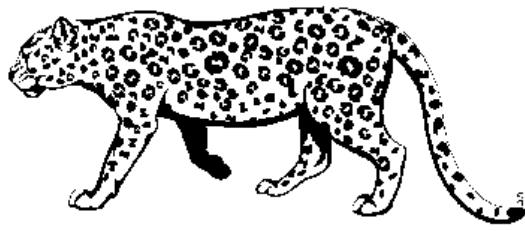
Large specimens of these horrors actually exist in the deepest parts of the Great Jungle.

Their Large Size raises their Hits Total to 30, their Regeneration rate to 2 Hits per battle round, their Entangle reach to 20' and their digestive damage to 2d6.

Large Man-Eating Trees are worth 220 Glory.

Nillekma

Description: The Charybdian jungles are also home to a very rare species of magical one-horned antelopes known as the *Nillekma*; these elusive and fantastic beasts are the Charybdian counterparts of Unicorns. Nillekma look like one-horned okapis and have exactly the same stats, characteristics and special abilities as classic Unicorns (see *Creature Compendium*, p 123). Some tales also speak of a Dark Nillekma, associated with the powers of famine and disease and similar to the Malacorn (see *Creature Compendium*, p 124).



Can you... spot the Panther?

Panther

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: Also known as leopards; the classic spotted big cat – see below for the jet-black variety.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 80'

Initiative: 20

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6 (claws & bite)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +8 / +10

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Camouflage (jungle and savannah, 22), Charge Into Battle (Initiative 22, Melee +7), Gallop (320'), Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (18), Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 75 (150 Experience for Hunters).

Black Panthers of Charybdis

Black Panthers have the same stats as leopards, except that their jet-black fur gives them a Weird Mystique, which increases their Defense Class to 15, their Mystic Fortitude to +2 and their Glory award to 80 (or 160 Experience for Hunters); their Camouflage ability applies to night and shadows.



A Quagga (not to be confused with a Zebra)

Quagga

Description: Quaggas are horse-sized zebra-like animals, bred, trained and used as mounts in various Charybdian communities. They have exactly the same stats and abilities as Horses (*Creature Compendium*, p 58).

Tokoloshe

Taxonomy: Animate

Description: A human transformed into a pain-driven, zombie-like humanoid whose flesh is slowly turning into living wood. This horrendous process causes terrible agony to the unfortunate subject, driving him mad, warping his body into a grotesque parody of humanity and eventually turning him into a mindless, semi-vegetal undead. Tokoloshe are the results of infection by the Hili seed (see next page).

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d6 (claw-like nails)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 16

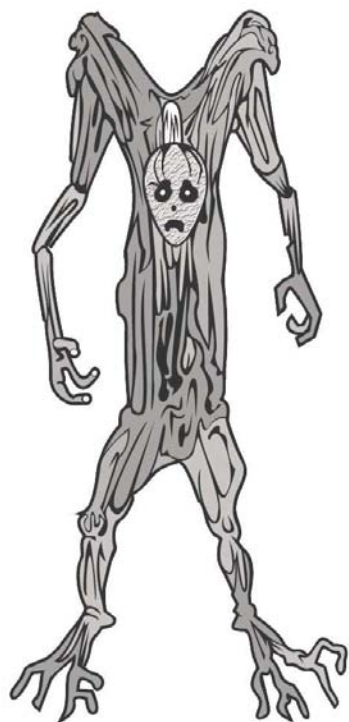
Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Magic Resistance, Regeneration (1 Hit per round), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin. Once the transformation is complete (within 1d6 days of initial exposure to the Hili seed), the creature also becomes Mindless.

Awards: Glory 55, Wisdom 40. Add +10 if Mindless.

Because their flesh is partially made of wood, Tokoloshe are particularly vulnerable to fire, taking twice the usual damage from natural flames and magical fire-based attacks.



A grotesquely warped Tokoloshe

Seeds of Doom

The Hili seed is a particularly dreadful vegetal (and probably semi-magical) toxin used by the Red Hill Pygmies to bring a fate worse than death to those who have offended them. The usual method of delivery is through the use of a coated dart or javelin but the poison can also be mixed with food or drink but has a distinctive, bitter, "woody" taste.

In all cases, the victim must make a Physical Vigor saving roll against a target number of 15.

If this saving roll fails, the victim immediately falls unconscious for 1d6 hours, after which he will awaken in incredible pain, transformed into a Tokoloshe. 1d6 days later, the Tokoloshe will become Mindless, usually obeying the orders of its vicious creators (as long as these orders are not too complex).

There is no natural way to prevent this horrible and irreversible fate: only magical healing can prevent the transformation, provided it is given before the fateful 1d6 hours have passed (use the rules for curing poison by magical means given in the *Minotaur* n°3, p 44).

Only the Red Pygmies know how to brew this concoction – and trying to steal this secret from them is a sure way to end up as a Tokoloshe...

Tree Vampire

Taxonomy: Spirit

Description: These malevolent jungle spirits who dwell in hollow trees are also known as *Biloko*. They look like ugly, mishapen dwarf-sized humanoids whose skin is the color of dried leaves. They attack those who trespass on their domains, draining their life-force with their big, sharp teeth. Bilokos are usually found in groves of 1d6 hollow trees, each with its own resident Biloko.

Size: Small

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 45'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d3 (bite) + 1d6 energy-drain

Defense Class: 18

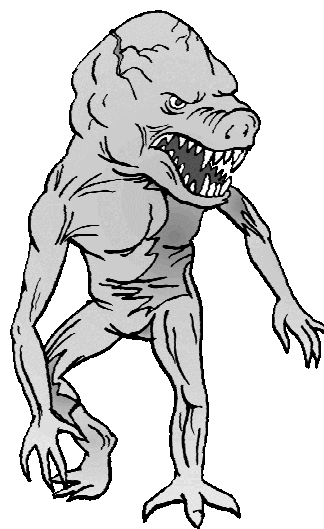
Hits Total: 8

Detection / Evasion: +8 / +8

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Camouflage (jungle, 22), Life-Energy Drain (bite attack), Magic Resistance, Sixth Sense, Stealthy (18), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 20, Wisdom 120.



The Charybdian Tree Vampire : short but mean, green (well, greenish) and dangerous

Vulture

Common Vulture

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic scavenger

Size: Small

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 45' (180' in full flight)

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d3 (beak and talons)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 4

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Dive Into Battle (Initiative 13, Melee +3), Winged.

Awards: Glory 5.

Bird of Doom

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A unique breed of man-sized Vultures native to the Atas-Antar, the sinister Mountain of Doom. They are significantly larger and more ferocious than standard vultures and do not hesitate to prey upon living creatures. According to some tales, the first Birds of Doom were bred in Stygia, to guard the unholy site of the Atas-Antar.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60' (240' in full flight)

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d6 (beak and talons)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Dive Into Battle (Initiative 15, Melee +6), Winged.

Awards: Glory 70.



- Oy! Wot are you lookin' at?

Zebra

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic striped herbivore from the Charybdian wildlands.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Peaceful

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60' (240' galloping)

Initiative: 10

Melee Attack: 0

Damage: 1d6 (hooves)

Defense Class: 12

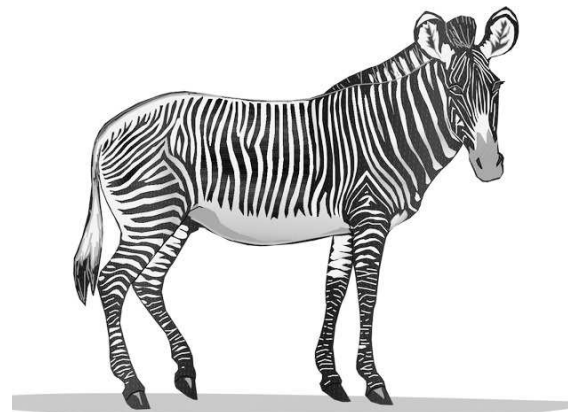
Hits Total: 4

Detection / Evasion: +4 / 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 12, Melee +2), Gallop, Sharp Senses, Trample.

Awards: Glory 15.



A Zebra (not to be confused with a Quagga)

MAZE MASTER'S LORE

THE POWER OF NAMES

An in-depth look at Charybdian true names, by **Olivier Legrand** and **Andrew Pearce**



Animists are the keepers of their tribe's true names

What's in a Name?

As mentioned in this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, every being in Charybdis (including beasts and spirits) is believed to have a *true name*, which holds that being's very spiritual essence. Having a true name, however, does not mean *knowing* it: in fact, most beings live their whole existence in complete ignorance of their own true name. Only those who receive the revelation of their true name during their Rite of Passage (i.e. most Charybdian humans) are aware of it. Within the Charybdian animistic belief system, the revelation of one's true name is seen as a spiritual privilege: when an Animist or Griot gives a child his secret true name, he brings that child into a higher level of unity with the world, making him aware of his true place in the spiritual landscape of the Living Land. In other words, a being's true name holds the key to its very spirit, essence and destiny, which gives it an intrinsic magical power.

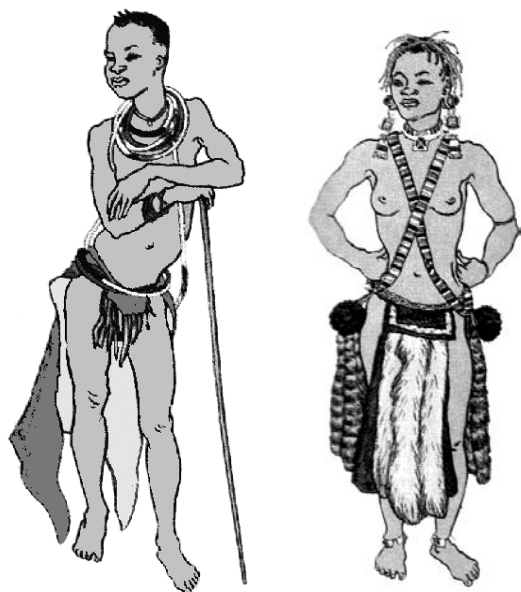
All the true names in creation are known to only one single being: First Son, also known as Anansi, the ancestor of mankind and the inventor (among other things) of the spoken word.

Names and the World

Every **human** is assumed to have a true name – but as noted above, only those who were given their true name during their Rite of Passage are aware of it. This includes all human adults of Kari and Keshite culture; humans who lack the knowledge of their own true names include all non-Charybdians (who have neither the knowledge nor the intuitive understanding of the secret power of names), the Opari, the Negaran Amazons and a few other Charybdian communities such as the Babanga pygmies – see p 11 for the whys and wherefores of these cultural differences.

Nonhuman **Folks** are not aware of their own true names – a fact which clearly shows how much First Son favored his human children over all other sentient beings.

Beasts have true names, too, but are completely unaware of them – a fact which most Animists see as the essential distinction between Man and Beast. The true names of Beasts are only known to Anansi (who knows all true names) and to the Beast Lords themselves, who will never share this secret knowledge with anybody else (no, not even with Beastmasters); indeed, it is precisely this secret knowledge which makes them Beast Lords, giving them dominion over all the Beasts of their species.



Young Charybdians about to receive their True Names



Beware name-stealing Sorcerers!

According to most Animists, **Monsters** do not have true names, since they are wholly unnatural creatures and thus do not have a designated place in the spiritual landscape of the Living Land. Some magicians disagree with this interpretation and believe that the true names of Monsters are known only to Gagorib and the other Abominations.

Everybody, however, seems to agree on the fact that **Animates** do not have true names, since they are not truly living beings but artificial things.

All **Spirits** have a true name; in fact, an individual's true name is believed to be the name of his spirit. A Jengu knows her true name right from the moment of her birth and will never disclose it to anyone, unless Compelled to do so by a Sorcerer (see below). Kari and Keshite believe that spirits of humans who die without knowing their true name are not allowed to join their ancestors in the afterlife and fall into oblivion; Negaran Amazons, Opari Barbarians and Zebrans believe in a different form of afterlife, which allows the spirit of a worthy person to join the spirits of his ancestors in an eternal sojourn located in the clouds (Opari), on the moon (Amazons) or in the sun (Zebrans).

All **higher beings**, such as First Ancestor and the various Beast Lords, also have a true name – at least in theory, since nobody will ever find out the truth of that matter. The only certain exception is the primal force of the Wild, which has no true name and thus will *never* be tamed or dominated by anybody – not even First Ancestor or the Beast Lords. As for the Nine Abominations (which are also known as “the Nameless” in some ancient tales), the topic is simply *never* discussed, even by the most foolhardy or demented Sorcerers: there are things that man was simply not meant to know.

True Names and Sorcery



The following optional rules were designed for Maze Masters who wish to make true names more than just a cultural concept, by giving them real magical power in game terms.

Only Sorcerers will ever use an individual's true name against him. Animists and Griots will never do such a thing: if they did, they would immediately be stripped of their powers by First Son, the supreme keeper of oaths, secrets and names. The reason why Sorcerers get away with it is that, unlike Animists or Griots, they have no sacred connection with the Living Land – which does dispense them from any form of moral, social or spiritual obligation.

Although a person may be forced to reveal his true name (or any other true name that person happens to know) through trickery or coercion, magical compelling is the most common method. A Sorcerer can use his Compelling power to force a target to reveal his true name – which is one of the reasons why Sorcerers are particularly feared and reviled among Charybadians.

Once in possession of another individual's true name, a Sorcerer can use its power against that individual: this advantage will give him a +5 to Mystic Strength on all his further attempts to use Compelling, Psychic Attack or Enslavement against that specific individual.

This also works in reverse: knowing a Sorcerer's true name will give you a +5 to Mystic Fortitude bonus when resisting this Sorcerer's attempts at Compelling, Psychic Attack or Enslavement. Thus, if both the Sorcerer and his target know each other's true name, the effects cancel out.

Lastly, it should be noted that these strictly optional rules only apply to Charybodian Sorcerers and targets, since the very concept of true names has no reality outside the Charybodian spiritual and cultural context.

PANDORA'S BOX

TREASURES OF CHARYBDIS

Tribal Talismans, Fantastic Fetishes & Ancient Artifacts from the Living Land



Although they serve the same purposes and may bestow similar abilities on their user, Charybdian magical treasures (or *fetishes* as they are usually known) differ in design and origin from the classic mythic items with which M&M adventurers and Maze Masters have become familiar – just like the spirit magic of the Charybdian Animists differ from the Divine Prodigies of Minean Priests.

This installment of *Pandora's Box* details various mythic items from the Living Land: some of them have similar properties to some items detailed in the *Maze Masters Guide* or in previous issues of the *Minotaur*, as noted in their description, while others are exclusively Charybdian.

Charybdian fetishes are imbued with the very power of the spirit world. Like all other arts and techniques, the secret magic needed to manufacture such items was taught to men by Grandfather Man himself - but was used in such an excessive and dangerous manner during the Time of Power that, on the very first day of the Time of Twilight, the First Ancestor decided to withdraw this gift from the minds of mankind, leaving the various fetishes and artifacts created during the Time of Power as testaments and vestiges of a bygone age.

Amulets & Talismans

Amulets of Health and **Amulets of Protection** (see *Maze Masters Guide*; p 43) are as common in Charybdis as in other parts of Mythika.

Other typically Charybdian amulets include the **Talisman of Seduction** (similar to the *Amulet of Aphrodite*), the **Talisman of the Hunter** (similar to the *Amulet of Artemis*) and the **Talisman of Good Fortune** (similar to the Ring of the same name).

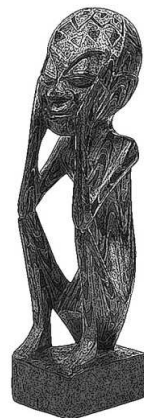
Ancestor Statuette

Often mistaken for “primitive idols” by outsiders, these statuettes appear as stylized renditions of a human being (or, according to some Animists, of Grandfather Man himself). They may be carved in wood, stone or ivory. An ancestor statuette does not represent a specific individual but acts as a magical focus for communing with one's ancestor spirits.

The magical properties of these statuettes can only be awakened by a true Animist. To use the power of the statuette, the Animist must be within 10' of the item and must be able to see it, in order to focus his mind on it.

The statuette has the following effects: it halves the Power cost of Spiritual Vision (1pt instead of the usual 2) and also adds 1 to the character's D6 Power recovery rolls (i.e., an Animist meditating for 4 hours in front an ancestor statuette will recover 2D6+2 Power points, instead of the usual 2D6).

Carrying multiple ancestor statuettes does not grant any extra power or benefit. (Enc = 2)



A meditative ancestor statuette

Ancient Spear of Kesh

The powers of this magical spear will only awaken when the weapon is used by a warrior of Keshite descent (Spearman or Noble), adding +1 to his Initiative, Melee and damage rolls when using the spear in melee. (Enc = 2).

Animal Talismans

These amulets can only be used by Beastmasters. There are several types of Animal Talismans, each shaped after a species of Charybdian Beast, such as Lions, Elephants or Crocodiles. A Beastmaster wearing an Animal Talisman adds +2 to his Animal Empathy bonus (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his powers of Beast Soothing, Calling or Command on animals of the designated species.

Fetish Loincloths

Some Charybdian adventurers have been known to wear a **Loincloth of Protection** or a **Loincloth of Strength**, local equivalents of the Girdles of the same name detailed in the *Maze Masters Guide*.

Fetish Shield

This Charybdian equivalent of an Aegis shield (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 37) is probably one of the most common fetish items found in Charybdis, along with the various types of magical spears.

Fetish Weapons

The most common forms of fetish weapons are the spear and the bow.

Fetish spears include equivalents of the various magical spears found in the *Maze Masters Guide*: **Spears of Casting, Conquest, Defense, Striking and Vigilance**, Spears of Athena (known locally as **Spears of Skill**), as well as **Spears of Monster Slaying** (*Minotaur* n², p 37) and **Spears of the Great Hunter** (*Minotaur* n⁴, p 31). This article also details three other types of fetish spears.

Fetish bows include equivalents of the *Bow of Apollo* and *Bow of Artemis* detailed in the *Maze Masters Guide*, respectively known as **Bows of Skill and Bows of Long Shooting**. Zebran lore also has its equivalent of *Arrows of the Sagittarius*, known as **Arrows of the Ixionid**.



A typical assortment of fetish armaments



Let's see: *Fetish Spear* - check, *Headdress of Tribal Command* - check, *Loincloth of Protection* – check.

Harp of the Ancestors

This fetish harp adds +1 to the Voice of the Ancestors bonus of any Griot who uses it (Enc = 2).

Headdress of Tribal Command

This impressive but slightly cumbersome (Enc = 1) headdress doubles the Tribal Renown reputation bonus of any Tribal Spearman, Opari Barbarian or Negaran Amazon who wears it, boosting the wearer's Personal Charisma and Leadership.

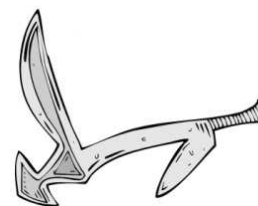
Headdress of Victory

This impressive tribal headdress can only be worn by a warrior with a Will of 13+. It adds the wearer's Will bonus to his Initiative and Defense Class, but only in melee combat (Enc = 1).

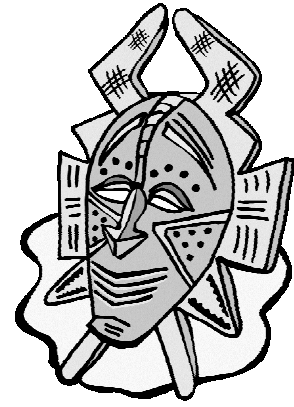
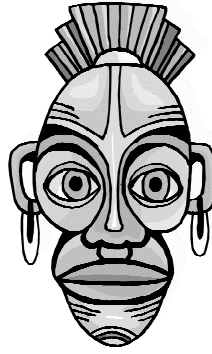
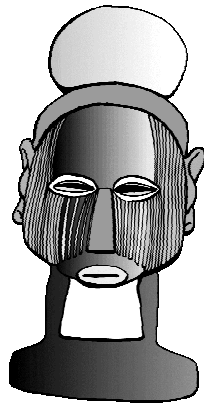
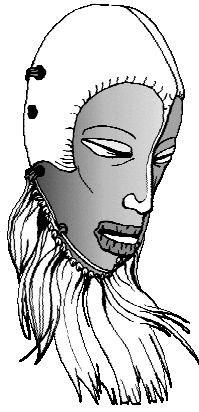
Knife of Death

This vicious-looking, asymmetrical, multi-bladed knife is so oddly shaped that it cannot be used as a proper melee weapon; when used as a missile weapon, however, it has twice the range of a normal throwing knife (40') and does 2D6 of damage.

Like all throwing knives (see *Minotaur* n⁴, p 49), it requires a Skill of 13+ to use and receives no bonus at short range. Its bizarre shape makes it more cumbersome than a standard dagger. (Enc = 1)



Yes, that's a Knife of Death



Behold our wide selection of authentic Charybdian ritual masks!

Juju Wand

This sorcerous wand has the same properties as a *Staff of Command* (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 42), halving the Power expenditure for Compelling and Enslavement. It can only be used by Sorcerers and will feel repulsively sorcerous to any Animist who tries to use it. (Enc = 1)

Mask of Confusion

When worn by a Sorcerer, this mask adds +2 to the magician's Psychic Gift (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his Confusion power.

Mask of Hiding

When worn by a Sorcerer, this mask adds +2 to the magician's Psychic Gift (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his Cloaking power.

Mask of Spirit Battle

When worn by an Animist, this mask adds +2 to the magician's Ancestral Insight (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his Spiritual Attack power (see p 21) as well as to his Mystic Fortitude saving rolls against Sorcery and Psychic Powers.

Mask of Spirit Control

When worn by an Animist, this mask adds +2 to the magician's Ancestral Insight (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his Spiritual Command and Spiritual Binding powers (see p 21).

Mask of Subjugation

When worn by a Sorcerer, this mask adds +2 to his Psychic Gift (as well as to his Mystic Strength) when using his powers of Compelling or Enslavement.

Combining a *Mask of Subjugation* with a *Juju Wand* would give an evil Sorcerer a frightening degree of power over the minds of his victims.

Mask of the Healer

When worn by an Animist, this mask adds +2 to the magician's Ancestral Insight when using his Spiritual Vitality power (see p 21).

Charybdian Ritual Masks

Ritual masks are a uniquely Charybdian type of mythic items, divided into two broad categories: masks intended for use by Animists and masks intended for use by Sorcerers (which are always more sinister looking).

In both cases, the special abilities granted by the mask only awaken when it is worn by a character of the proper magician class.

A third, lesser category of Charybdian magical masks also exist: masks which are intended for use by non-magicians and thus are not usually referred to as *ritual* masks, such as the *Mask of the Hunter* or the *War Mask* detailed next page.

All masks are quite bulky, having an Enc value of 1 when worn and 2 when simply carried around. They also provide a certain degree of facial protection in combat, adding +1 to the wearer's Defense Class.



Ah! It's Spirit Subjugation time!



Beasts of the jungle, beware the Masked Hunter!

Mask of the Hunter

The powers of this magical mask can only be awakened when it is worn by a Charybdian Hunter. It adds +2 to the character's Hunting score, as well as to his Danger Evasion, Missile and Defense Class (instead of the usual +1 to EDC for other masks). (Enc = 1 if worn, 2 if carried)

Net of Entrapment

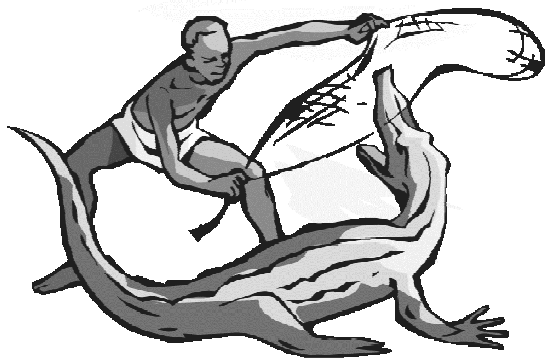
This magical, indestructible net suffers no penalty when used against Large or Gigantic targets and has a Might of 24 for purposes of breaking free from its entanglement (see the *M&M Companion*, p 15 for more details on nets). (Enc = 1)

Spear of Might

This weapon can only be used properly by a character with a Might of 13+. It allows the user to add his Might bonus to his damage rolls (Enc = 2).

Spirit Spear

This fetish spear can injure Insubstantial creatures as if they were fully material; in addition, when used against such beings by a character with a Will of 13+, it receives a melee damage bonus equal to the attacker's Will bonus. (Enc = 2)



- Hey! Have you seen my new Net of Entrapment?



- Ancestral Wisdom? Spirit Command? Let's check!

Staff of Ancestral Wisdom

This fetish staff has the same properties as a Staff of Power – but for Animists rather than for Sorcerers (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 42). It also gives its Animist user the ability to identify other Charybdian mythic items without any risk of failure (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 49). (Enc = 2).

Staff of Spirit Command

This staff is similar to a *Staff of Command* (*Maze Masters Guide*, p 42), except that its effects apply to the Animism powers of Spiritual Command and Spiritual Binding (see p 21). (Enc = 2)

War Mask

The powers of this magical mask can only be awakened when it is worn by a warrior – and especially by a Tribal Spearman. In this case, it adds +2 to the character's Initiative, Melee and Defense Class (instead of the usual +1 to EDC for other masks). If the wearer belongs to another Charybdian warrior class (Keshite Noble, Opari Barbarian, Negaran Amazon etc), this bonus is reduced to +1. Non-Charybdian warriors receive no bonus at all. (Enc = 1 if worn, 2 if carried)

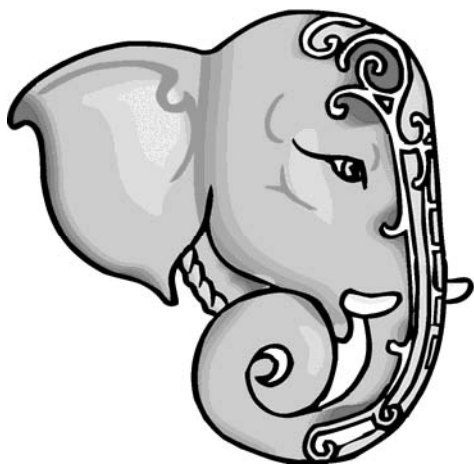


War Masks work best on Tribal Spearmen

THE MIGHTY MAMMUTEP

An Optional Folk & Character Class for Charybdian Campaigns

By Shaun Burke & Olivier Legrand



Unlike most other Beastfolks, Mammuteps were traditional friends and allies of humans and were also noted for their deep wisdom; they sided with the empire of Kesh in its war against the minions of the evil Ancient Ones. During the Time of Power, they gave the Living Land many heroic defenders in its constant struggle against the corrupting influence of the dark deities – such as the illustrious Yush-Kalon, who fought many battles and died a hero's death at the end of the War of the Yellow Gate.

Thanks to their phenomenal memory, Mammuteps also act as the keepers of lost knowledge, including the forgotten history of Kesh, which now only survives in their orally transmitted lore.

The Mammutep race has a long and rich history of its own, which predates the foundation of the Keshite empire by several generations. Their ancestors originally came from *“the Lost East”*, bringing with them the golden idols of their great ancestor Ya-Kosha as well as their own language, which was eventually adopted by their human allies and became High Keshani, the aristocratic and sacred language of the Keshite empire (see *The Mammutep Tongue*, below, for more details).

At the dawn of the Time of Power, the Mammuteps founded the great city of Kalaar in the southernmost part of the Great Jungle; according to Mammutep lore, it was the foundation of Kalaar itself which marked the transition between the primitive Time of the Wild and the majestic Time of Power.

The entire Mammutep folk lived in Kalaar, under the wise and benevolent rule of a long line of kings and queens - but after many generations of splendor and serenity, the city was utterly destroyed by the dark powers of the Ancient Ones, during the last days of the War of the Yellow Gate, along with most of its inhabitants. In Mammutep history, the fall of Kalaar is known as the Disaster and the period of chaos which ensued as the Exodus.

Mammuteps are now a dying race, whose last families are scattered around the land of Charybdis, living a semi-nomadic life and maintaining contacts with various human communities, especially among the southernmost Keshite Enclaves. A deeply fatalistic people, they have never attempted to rebuild Kalaar and only return to it when they feel death close at hand, to lay at rest with their ancestors and their ancient memories, in the majestic ruins of what has become known as the “Cemetery of the Mammuteps”.

The Mammutep Tongue

As mentioned above, **Mammuk**, the ancestral native language of the Mammuteps, is directly related to **High Keshani**. For simplicity's sake (and as far as game rules are concerned), these two languages should be treated as a single tongue. Mammutep player-characters are also assumed to be fluent in the Charybdian common tongue. Lastly, it should also be noted that the Mammuteps also adhere to the Charybdian supremacy of the spoken word – not because of any form of religious belief but thanks to their prodigious memory, which dispensed them from ever needing to develop any form of writing.



A proud, mighty Mammutep warrior

In a Charybdis-based campaign, Maze Masters may wish to introduce the near-extinct, half-mythical Mammuteps as friendly nonhuman creatures whose unique knowledge would be priceless to any Griot or other seeker of forgotten lore – or even as a fully playable (and quite exotic) character class.

Mammutep

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: Mammuteps are an ancient race of man-sized elephant-headed humanoids, who live south of the Great Jungle of Charybdis. They have stocky, powerfully-built bodies, with thick elephantine feet and hands. They often decorate their short, stubby tusks with gold rings.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +4

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Initiative 15, Melee Attack +4), Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin

Awards: Glory 50, Wisdom 30.

MAMMUTEP

Primary Attributes: Might and Will.

Gender Restriction: All Mammutep warriors are male. Female Mammuteps lead a peaceful family-oriented life and never become adventurers.

Starting Age: 2D6+15 (same lifespan as humans).

Basic Hits = 12

Elephantine Body: Mammuteps add +2 to their starting Might score but must allocate their two lowest scores to Skill and Grace. Their tough skin also gives them +2 bonus to their natural Defense Class.

Imposing Presence: Mammuteps usually have a low Grace score - but they do possess an uncanny aura of ancient nobility and serene strength, which allows them to add their Might mod to their Mystic Fortitude and Personal Charisma.

Elephantine Memory: The memory of a Mammutep is as strong as his body and reaches deep into the collective ancestral memory of his race. This gives them access to ancient, often obscure knowledge about the creatures, spirits and secrets of Charybdis (see *Background Talents* below). This insight grows stronger with each new level, as the Mammutep's mind reaches deeper into the collective memory of his race, giving Mammuteps the same bonus as magicians when trying to identify mythic items (see *Maze Master's Guide*, p 49).

Weapon of Choice: Mammutep warriors favor the axe or mace as their weapon of choice.

Advancement: Although they are clearly warriors, Mammuteps advance by accumulating Wisdom rather than Glory, at the same rates and conditions as magicians. This obviously makes their priorities and attitudes quite different from those of other warriors.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Mammutep +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Wits or Will (player's choice) – but not Skill.

Possessions: Axe or mace, shield, 3D6 x 5 sp.

Reputation Effect: Tribal Renown (as Amazons, Barbarians etc) among the Mammutep folk.

Background Talents: Their Elephantine Memory gives all Mammuteps the equivalents of the *Exorcist* and *Scholar* background talents.

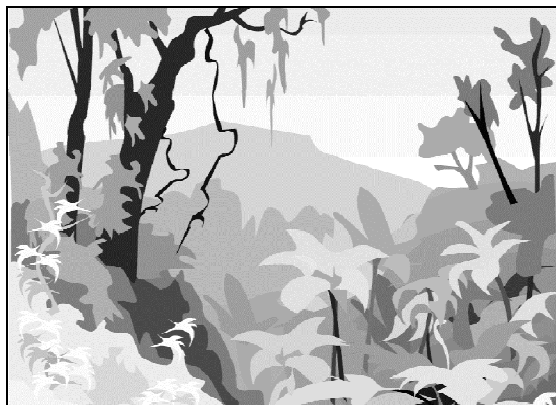
Patron Deity: Mammuteps do not worship any form of deity in the classic sense of the word. Their religion is an abstract form of ancestor worship, centered around the great spiritual entity of "the Memory" (the collective memory of the Mammutep race itself).

THE SPEAR OF TAMRO

An Epic Three-Part Charybdian Adventure

PART 1: THE CALL OF THE WILD

As told by a Griot to **Andrew Pearce**



Adventure and mystery await in the Great Jungle...

The Spear of Tamro is a three-part epic adventure that is unusual in two respects. Firstly, it is ideally designed for a larger than usual party of players and/or characters. Secondly, it makes use of pre-generated characters. This approach may make the scenario unsuitable for some gaming groups – but it also gives the players the opportunity to play unique, fully fleshed-out Charybdian characters.

The Heroes of the Tale

There are ten principal characters (the 'New Worthies'), each of which in terms of class and race 'echo' one of the original Worthies. Two of the characters should ordinarily be controlled by the Maze Master, namely the Griot **Mbande** and the Mammutep **Yor-Dlembo**.

The remaining eight adventurers (**Amdo** the Keshite noble, **Kibwe** the Zebran, **Ataro** the Animist, **Tembo** the Shola spearman, **Goganga** the Tupari spearman, **Juma** the Opari barbarian, **Lela** the Negaran Amazon and **Zanele** the Jungle Jengu) are designed to be player-characters.

All these characters begin at level 1 (except for Mbande, who is a level 6 Griot). Over the course of the adventure, it is expected that the characters will advance to level 3 or higher. The profiles for these eight player-characters as well as the stats for Mbande, Yor-Dlembo and other NPCs can be found in the **Appendix** of the adventure (pp 64-67).

Players & Characters

The adventure is designed for four to eight players: if there are eight players, each will play one of the available adventurers; if there are four players, each should play two characters; if there are five to seven players, then there will be a mix of some players with one character, and some with two. Ideally, players with two characters should play contrasting characters (e.g. warrior / magician, male / female, human / nonhuman etc).

If the players already have existing Charybdian characters that they would like to substitute for some of the pre-generated characters, they may do so at the Maze Master's discretion, with the following restrictions. The characters of Amdo, Kibwe and Ataro are essential elements of the tale and should *not* be replaced; in addition, any existing player-character used instead of one of the original characters should have a similar class and background and be not more than level 2.

Thus, if a player has already played a level 2 Opari Barbarian in the Charybdian setting, the Maze Master may allow him to play this character in *The Spear of Tamro*, substituting him for Juma; on the other hand, if a player insists on playing his level 3 Minean mariner, the Maze Master should refuse, on the grounds that such a character's level, class and background are inappropriate for this adventure.

If the Maze Master feels that playing both Yor-Dlembo and Mbande (as well as all the NPC antagonists) is too much, he may *either* dispense with the character of Yor-Dlembo altogether, *or* ask a player to play Yor-Dlembo as a player-character (provided still that no player has more than two characters). However, the Griot Mbande should *never* be a player-character, for reasons that will be made obvious later.

If the Maze Master wants or needs to run this adventure with a smaller party of characters, then he will need to adapt certain aspects of the scenario. It is recommended that, at the very least, he include the core characters of Amdo, Kibwe and Ataro, plus Mbande as an NPC. However, much of the flavor of the adventure will inevitably be lost when played out against a smaller scale.

Prologue: The Old Griot

The boy was running, breathless, through the streets of the city. He knew that his mother would be angry with him for neglecting his chores, and that he would return home to a harsh beating: but a good story would undoubtedly make it worthwhile.

He turned a corner. There, in the dusty courtyard before him, gathered around an open fire, was a circle of chattering children. The boy pushed his way roughly to the front, ignoring the yelps of protest from some of the smaller children, and sat cross-legged directly opposite the focus of attention: an aged figure garbed in a tattered, grey shawl, and wearing the sacred cap of a Griot. The lop-sided way in which he wore the cap may have looked comical: but one glance at his wrinkled face, and his curious eyes – one brown, one hazel – would have been enough to dispel any temptation to laugh. Here, without doubt, was a face that could look into the deepest recess of one's soul...

The boy gulped uncomfortably, and looked down: but the Griot simply smiled, and said in a voice that seemed to echo the sound of *jimela*-leaves in the wind, *'Now I think we are ready...'*

The children fell silent, and turned in rapt attention towards the story-maker.

'I have a story to tell, and the story must be told,' began the old man, using the ages-old introduction to any grand tale, *'I am a Keeper of the Living Flame, and I do not forget.'*

The Griot stirred the contents of the *popene*-pot at his side with the metal-capped end of his *jubula*-wood staff, and the sweet, heady smell of the incense filled the air.

'Look into the flame, my children,' he continued. *'Look, listen and behold as my tale of the Living Land come alive. For I have a story to tell...'*

Note to Maze Masters

The Spirit of the Tale

The style used in describing this Adventure is a deliberating echoing of the story-telling tradition of the Griots of Charybdis. The Maze Master should take note of the way in which the Griot's story unfolds, but should be prepared to make changes to it as he sees fit. In any case, the interaction between players and Maze Master will inevitably change the way their version of the story plays out. Actual conversations, actions and outcomes may be significantly different from the story as presented here, which should only be regarded as a guide.

Remember, every story changes in the telling...



It all starts with a Griot's story

'...And the story must be told,' murmured the children in response, completing the sacred litany. As the boy looked into the flames of the fire, and slowly breathed in the *popene*-incense, it was almost as if he could make out images in the dancing flames, as the old Griot continued his story. *'The story begins with a young boy, a prince, of the mighty city of Tatambor...'*

Act 1: One Day in Tatambor...

Amdo and his Friends

The city of Tatambor was the greatest of the Keshite enclaves. The tale of the *Spear of Tamro* and the *New Worthies of Charybdis* began a few months after **Tamro the Bold** became king, or *Alaafin*, of Tatambor, following the death of his father, **Tamro the Proud**, in battle against the Opari barbarians. Tamro had two brothers: the watchful, scheming middle brother, **Shakera**; and young **Amdo** – least regarded of the sons of Tamro the Proud, but, in truth, the one who had the most special destiny...

In those days, Tatambor was a cosmopolitan city of great character and vibrancy, and it was not unusual to see members of other non-Keshite tribes living and trading within its walls – even the occasional Zebran warrior, or Jengu wanderer. However, Prince Amdo was most unusual, for one from his privileged background, in his readiness to talk with and befriend members of other tribes and races – a fact which caused much disapproving comment amongst the conservative-minded Tamburu nobles.

Amdo's closest friend was the Zebran **Kibwe**, the son of a Zebran chieftain who had been brought to Tatambor as a hostage of war by Amdo's father Tamro the Proud some eight years previously. Amdo and Kibwe soon became friends, and remained almost inseparable as they grew to adulthood together.



Prince Amdo, a really nice guy

Amdo's other great childhood companion was **Ataro**, a member of an impoverished, little-regarded noble family. Together, Amdo, Kibwe and Ataro would often be seen wandering around the city, amiably enjoying one another's company. However, the day came when Amdo began to see rather less of Ataro, as he commenced his apprenticeship with the greatest living Animist of Tatambo, the wise **Mengambe**. Mengambe was an effective but also a strict teacher and Ataro consequently had little time to spend with his boyhood friends.

In the increasing absence of Ataro, Amdo came instead to rely upon another childhood friend, **Ogun**, for human companionship. Ogun was a skilled warrior, an accomplished quagga-rider, and a valued 'comrade-in-arms'. However, he had little time for Amdo's other friends, and was given to sneering at the 'womanish skills' of Ataro and the 'strange ways' of Kibwe. This rarely bothered Ataro, who took little notice of Ogun's slights; but Ogun had far more success in irritating Kibwe, and more than once the Zebran had had to hold himself back from making a forceful physical response to one of Ogun's barbed comments. In truth, Ogun's inclusion within Ataro's circle of friends had cast something of a shadow upon it, though this was something that Ataro himself seemed unable to fathom...

Perhaps the only other person who would have been described by Ataro as a childhood friend was an old wandering Griot named **Mbande**. Mbande had for many years been a friend and advisor to Amdo's illustrious grandfather **Tamro the Swordsman**. However, Mbande incurred the jealousy of the Swordsman's son, Enkele. Ten years ago he succeeded the Swordsman as Tamro the Proud; and Mbande had not been seen in Tatambo since. Amdo remembered him as a teller of wonderful stories, but also as some-one whose calm demeanor and self-deprecating sense of humor seemed, at times, to be a guise for a sharp, commanding intellect. Only Mbande's bright eyes would sometimes betray this other side to his character...at times reassuring, at times rather frightening.

The Dream of Amdo

In the days of Tamro the Bold, Amdo began to be troubled by disturbing dreams...

Amdo stands on a high place, a mountain height with a commanding westward-facing view, it seems, of the plains, rivers and jungles of Charybdis. Smoke appears to be ascending from some of the forests, and the skies above him are completely darkened, shrouded in ash grey clouds, pendulous and brooding. A cold wind whips around his head, the ground beneath his feet is shaking, and a voice that seems both strange and familiar cries out, 'Pick up the spear, young Tamro! You cannot falter now, at the last!' Amdo looks down, and sees at his feet an ornately-carved spear, with a brightly-burnished spear-head that seems to glow with a supernatural light as he bends down and grasps the shaft...

Amdo woke from his dream covered in sweat. It was the third successive night that he had awoken from such a dream...but this time it had seemed more real and detailed than ever before. Try as he might, he was unable to return to sleep, and he spent the rest of the dark night before the swift sunrise pondering the meaning of this unwelcome nightly visitation...

The next morning (**Day 1**), Amdo resolved to tell his closest friends of his dream. Kibwe and Ogun appeared early in the morning at his hut, as was their usual custom: but Kibwe looked troubled, and became increasingly restless as Amdo recalled his dream. The reason soon became apparent: as Ogun tried to laugh off the dream as a consequence of Amdo eating too much fruit of the *roku* tree, Kibwe cut him short, and revealed that he too had had a similar dream over the past three nights.

Ogun started quarrelling with Kibwe, dismissing his claims as yet another attempt to impress Amdo: but at that moment, Ataro turned up unexpectedly. It soon transpired that he too had been troubled by similar dreams.

Amdo swore his friends to silence: especially the sullen Ogun, who seemed to be torn between scepticism and jealousy given that *he* hadn't had any strange dreams. Amdo decided to seek the advice of Mengambe the Animist, whom he knew to be wise in the ways of the Spirit world; for he greatly feared that some evil spirit had chosen to torment him and his friends...

Mengambe was initially angry that Ataro had gone off without permission to see Amdo, neglecting his tasks for the day. However, he listened to Amdo respectfully, and it soon became clear that he was greatly disturbed by the young prince's tale. Mengambe promised to ponder the matter carefully, and to seek the advice of the Spirits.

The Circle of Tatambor

One of the oldest sites in the city, the Circle marks the place where Shoke, the great-great grandfather of the first Tamro, fought for three days in single combat with the tyrant Adinge. After defeating Adinge, Shoke ended the ancient traditions whereby the kings of Tatambor were chosen by trial of combat. Instead, the title of Alaafin became an inherited one, but one that was confirmed by acclamation of the Council that met hereafter upon the tiered stone steps of the ancient circle of combat.

The Alaafin's Council

Amdo returned to his hut, only to find himself summoned to a Council by his brother, the Alaafin. Also at the Council was his other brother, Prince Shakera; and, much to his surprise and dismay, there sat next to Shakera was his friend Ogun – who studiously and pointedly refused to meet his gaze. The Alaafin chastised Amdo for being late, and ordered him to take his place in the Circle.

Standing before the Council were two strangers: Kari warriors from two different tribes that had long been regarded as fierce rivals to one another. The warriors introduced themselves as **Tembo** of the Shola tribe and **Goganga** of the Tupari tribe; and Amdo noted that both were looking warily in his direction as he took his seat in the Circle.

Tembo and Goganga explained that, independently, they had been sent by their respective tribes to seek the aid of the Alaafin of Tatambor. It transpired that both tribes had recently come under threat from outsiders from the north – an Umbrian army led by an adventurous nobleman named **Alkeinos**.

'The white-skins have fought against the Ulendi, the people of Enkhosa, and have defeated them,' said Tembo, grimly. *'The Ulendi have called upon the spirits of their ancestors, and have been forsaken. Our chieftains believe that just as Tamro once aided our forefathers, so the sons of Tamro must come to our help today.'*

Prince Shakera then carefully questioned the Kari suppliants, and asked how they came to meet one another and how it was that they hadn't attacked one another on first sight – given that everyone was aware how much the Shola and Tupari hated one another. Tembo and Goganga replied by saying that they met one another on the road and that, despite initial distrust, they quickly realized that they had been sent out on similar errands, and so had decided to put aside ancient enmities for the sake of this common purpose. Shakera nodded, seemingly satisfied with this explanation, but Amdo knew his sly brother well enough to realize that this was just an outward front. Shakera had clearly seen that there was more to this strange meeting of sworn enemies than met the eye...



- You shall have my spear!

The Alaafin then gave answer to the Kari suppliants by saying that their request would be carefully considered, and that in the meantime they were welcome to remain in the city as honored guests. As they were escorted away, once again they gave Amdo an uneasy glance. Amdo had no time to ponder the meaning of this, for the Alaafin then declared:

'There is another matter of some import that must be dealt with before we consider this news from the north. My brother, Prince Shakera, wishes to address the Council.' Shakera stood once again, bowed to the Alaafin, and strode into the Circle.

'Noble warriors, princes of Tatambor, my lord Alaafin,' declaimed Shakera, *'it is always a matter of high state when a prince of the realm conceals, or charges another to conceal,'* (and here he looked at a smug-looking Ogun) *'affairs which may be of importance to the well-being of our city. Where a prince of the realm is concerned, there can be no issues that are entirely of private interest.'*

'It is with great regret, therefore, that I must ask my brother Prince Amdo to explain why he has concealed from the Alaafin matters pertaining to dreams or visions that he has received over these past three nights. He must also explain why he has seen fit to discuss these matters with individuals who are not even members of this Council – namely an apprentice Animist, and a Zebran hostage – and yet has felt unable to share them with his very closest flesh and blood!'



Mbande the Wanderer

Uproar broke out amongst the Council, and several members shook their fists angrily at Amdo, as Shakera retook his seat – and it took a moment or two for the Alaafin, beating on the *ukulu*, the ancestral council drum, to restore order. The Alaafin looked at his brother with cold distaste, and said:

'Will Amdo step into the Circle to answer these charges?'

Before Amdo was able to respond, however, another voice, firm and strong, rang out across the Circle: *'Perhaps the Alaafin will allow an old friend of Tatambor to address the Council, and to speak on his brother's behalf?'*

There was stunned silence as an old man, wearing the sacred cap of a Griot and leaning heavily on a *jubula*-wood staff, slowly entered the Circle.

'Mbande,' spat the Alaafin distastefully. *'You come when you are not bidden, and refuse to come when you are called. Where were you when my father summoned you before he made war against the Opari?'*

'I have no interest in fool's errands,' replied Mbande coolly. *'And as your father had taken no interest in me throughout his undistinguished reign, why should I have chosen to answer him in his final hour? And as for coming when I am not bidden...well, "not bidden by you" does NOT mean "not bidden".'* He chuckled.

'I could have you killed for such impudence!' exploded the ruler of Tatambor, his hand grasping his ceremonial spear tightly.

'You could try,' replied Mbande lightly. *'But never mind that: you haven't answered my question. May I address the Council?'*

Amdo noticed the Griot's curious, bright eyes – one brown, one hazel – yes, just as he remembered from childhood.

'Very well,' said the Alaafin. *'But none of your long-winded, Griot ways!'*

'You haven't had the chance to listen to a first-rate Griot since you were fourteen,' sighed Mbande. *'Your father sent most of the good ones in Tatambor packing soon after he got rid of me. Still, I will keep what I have to say short.'*

He turned towards the assembled Council.

'Noble warriors, princes of Tatambor, my lord Alaafin, you do Prince Amdo a grave injustice if you suspect him of treasonous or duplicitous behavior. I have not seen young Amdo in the flesh since he was but nine years old, when he was known simply by his birth-name – 'Meerkat', was it not?'

There was laughter from some of the assembled nobles. *'I see he is somewhat embarrassed at my indiscretion – Meerkat it was. Now how did he come by that birth-name? Well, I suspect that it was a foretelling that he would be one who would constantly be on the look out for other members of his tribe – much like the Meerkat. Amdo has always given great loyalty to his friends – and that loyalty extends to his people and his city too.'* Mbande waved his hand expansively around the assembly.

'But more than that,' continued the Griot, *'Amdo has a great love of the Living Land itself, and of ALL its peoples. He sees all of them as part of his tribe – all children of Anansi. In this regard he follows in the footsteps of his ancestors, and your ancestors, O puissant Alaafin: amongst whom are to be numbered some of the wisest and noblest and truest of all the descendants of that very first Tamro who vanquished our darkest foes before the Yellow Gate at the end of the Time of Power.'*

'Noble warriors, princes of Tatambor, my lord Alaafin,' cried Mbande, urgently *'know this: a time of great darkness and danger is fast approaching. You have already this day received an embassy from the north that tells of an implacable foe, bold and pitiless, that marches against the Kari tribesmen. But these are not the only, or the worst, enemies that we will face in these evil days.'*

Mbande turned back towards the seated king.

'I know that you dream, gracious Alaafin,' he declared, *'of restoring the might and splendor of the lost Empire of Kesh. It is a noble and worthwhile dream, but one doomed to failure whilst the tribes of Charybdia remain divided and distrustful of one another. Your father's pointless war against the Opari – which I know you intend to continue – is just one example of this.'*



Ataro, the Animist's apprentice

Mbande raised his hand and pointed it at the king. *'If you pursue that path, mighty Alaafin,' he warned sternly, 'then you will fail. The warriors of the Shola and the Tupari that have presented their petition to you this day offer a better way. The Shola and the Tupari have been enemies for many generations – the cause of their quarrel lost in the Time of Twilight. But they have not always been spears drawn against one another.*

Even without a Griot worthy of the name these past ten years, surely you have not forgotten that once a Shola spearman and a Tupari fighter were accounted blood brothers in the battle against the Ancient Ones? Were not two of the Nine Worthies from these very tribes?'

Mbande paused, as a murmur of agreement spread around the assembly. *'Would that we did not see but rarely such friendship, such self-sacrifice and loyalty as the Nine Worthies showed to one another!'* he continued. *'We will need something of their spirit for the times ahead. Put aside, therefore, the baseless suspicions of Prince Shakera. I suggest, my lord Alaafin, that you summon this Council to meet again tomorrow, when less inflamed by intemperate passions you may consider the wisest course of action in response to the petition of the Shola and the Tupari.'* Once again, the gathered nobles voiced their approval, and the Alaafin banged the *ukulu* again for silence.

'Noble warriors, princes of Tatambor, my lord Alaafin,' concluded Mbande, smiling triumphantly, *'I thank you for your courtesy in listening to my words. May the glory that was Kesh, and the grandeur that was Tatambor, shine forth once again.'*

Then There Were Seven...

In response to Mbande's eloquent speech, the Council decided to adjourn until noon the next day. Mbande declined the Alaafin's offer of hospitality for the night, and announced that he would retire to Amdo's hut; and, indeed, he then spent the rest of the day (**Day 1**) there, regaling him with stories of his travels, but refusing to be drawn into the reason for his sudden appearance in Tatambor.

As evening came, several others joined the Griot and the Prince, until Amdo's hut was quite crowded: first Kibwe, then a tired-looking Ataro, and finally, most unexpectedly, the two Kari warriors, Tembo and Gogonga. They still looked uneasy at the sight of Amdo, but the warm, easy words of welcome from Mbande seemed to sooth their nervousness. Only when these last two had sat down and accepted the offer of a bowl of *narjana*-juice, did the wise Griot put aside his pipe filled with noxious *dildil*-weed, and begin to speak of the strange events of the day.

'Well, young Amdo,' he said, *'you and your friends have waited patiently enough. My coming to Tatambor this day, and the dreams of which your brother Shakera so intemperately spoke – these are not unrelated matters, as I am sure you have guessed. I spoke truly to the Alaafin, when he accused me of coming unbidden, and I denied it. There are greater forces at work within the Living Land than Tamro the Bold of Tatambor. I HAVE been bidden...but not by any mortal man. You have been bidden too, Prince Amdo...and not just you.'*

He looked around the room. *'Who else has seen the young prince in their dreams these past three nights?'*

Much to Amdo's surprise, not only Kibwe and Ataro, but also Tembo and Gogonga, admitted to having shared his dream.

Then, from the doorway, came a soft, gentle voice: *'Master Griot, I also have dreamt of the prince; and also a bright, burning spear...'*

'Speak not of the spear for now, sweet sister,' interrupted Mbande. *'It is enough that you are here. You are welcome.'*

The owner of the voice stepped into the hut, revealing herself to be an alluringly beautiful Jungle Jengu.

'Now we are Seven,' said Mbande, looking around, *'but where, I wonder, are the others?'*

'Others?' asked Kibwe quizzically. *'What others?'*

'All in good time,' said Mbande. *'First, let us get to know one another a little better, and let us tell of the various paths that had led us to this meeting.'*



Zanele and her inimitable Jungle Jengu hairstyle

Under Mbande's gentle encouragement, the others shared that they had all had similar (though not identical) dreams. Some had actually seen one another in their dreams, such as Tembo and Gogonga (which explained why they had not fought each other on first sight, as might have been expected of a Shola and Tupari): others had been conscious only of themselves. But all agreed that standing in the centre of their dream was the prince Amdo, bending down in response to the command given by a disembodied voice...

'Wait!' cried Amdo, turning to Mbande. *'That voice! I DID know it – it was your voice!'*

'Yes,' said Mbande, with a hint of sadness.

'Is this dream a foreboding of the future?' asked Ataro anxiously.

'It is possible,' replied Mbande, *'but the wise know that the future is not fixed. What you have all glimpsed is something of a future that may yet come to pass...or, then again, may not.'*

'And of what did you dream, Master Griot?' asked the Jungle Jengu, who had revealed her name to be Zanele.

'Sister, I do not dream,' replied Mbande solemnly. *'My life IS dream.'*

'This is all so confusing,' cried Kibwe peevishly. *'All this talk of dreams serves just to make me feel sleepy.'*

'Alas, sleep is something you will get little of tonight,' said the Griot, urgently.

'Prince Amdo, our time is short. Even now I suspect your brother Shakera whispers into the ear of the Alaafin words of poison. He has already won the

trust of your former friend, Ogun. At the Council tomorrow he will move against you; and pliable though they have been to my words today, I judge that there will be few on the Council who will oppose your arrest, and that of your friends.'

He looked at Tembo and Gogonga. *'Nor will the Alaafin look kindly upon your petition, I fear. He is determined to avenge his father's death at the hands of the Opari – and he will ignore the pressing need to meet this dangerous foe to the north.'*

'Then our mission has been in vain,' rumbled the deep-voiced Gogonga.

'Most certainly not,' said Mbande.

'For there are far more important matters that await you than the petty schemes of an ambitious prince, the thirst for vengeance of an angry king, or even the sharp blades of white-skinned marauders. You have all been bidden...and now you must all decide which path to choose. Get what little sleep you can. If you are willing, we set forth before sunrise.'

'Set forth where?' cried Amdo. *'And what do these dreams mean? Mbande, you've told us so little!'*

'Hush,' soothed Mbande. *'There is no time to explain, and there are things of which I dare not speak within the walls of Tatambor.'*

I know I am asking much of each one of you.

For you, Tembo and Gogonga, the abandonment of a sacred duty to your chieftains.

For you, Zanele, putting your faith in mortals of whom you know so little.

For you, Kibwe, the breaking of a bounden truce between this city and your own tribe.

For you, Ataro, leaving a master to whom you are devoted before you feel ready.

And for you, Prince Amdo, perhaps the greatest sacrifice – the risk of utter rejection at the hands of your people.

These are weighty matters – but I must ask you to trust me, because all this is necessary.'

'But how do we get past the city gates?' asked Ataro. *'If you really mean us to leave before sunrise, be assured that the guards will not open them so early without authority from the Alaafin...not even for a prince.'* He looked apologetically at Amdo.

'Leave that to me,' smiled Mbande. *'Now all of you: sleep! But I must go and speak to my old friend Mengambe before I take some rest of my own. Will you come with me, Ataro?'*

Without waiting for a reply, the Griot stood up and with surprising speed stepped out into the dark...

Defenders of Tatambor

The **Wind Spirits of Tatambor** are the legendary spiritual defenders of the City of Tatambor. According to tradition, they *voluntarily* allowed themselves to be bound to two tall totems (made of enchanted *jubula*-wood) that have stood just within the city gates since at least the Time of Power. It is said that when called upon to defend the city or a 'true son of Tamro', they will respond. However, they can *only* be summoned by an Animist of extraordinary power and purity of soul, preferably with the aid of a Mask of Spirit Control. The threat posed by the *Wind Spirits* (treat as *Eolians*, p 40 of the *Creature Compendium*) is more psychological than physical, but it is sufficient to unnerve and unbalance most opponents. Note that the entire host of Wind Spirits of Tatambor (numbering a dozen or more individuals) can be commanded by an Animist as if they were a single creature.

Act 2: From Seven to Ten

The Wind Spirits of Tatambor

After a few hours' sleep – which for once was undisturbed by disquieting dreams – Amdo and his associates woke up and hastily prepared to depart (**Day 2**). By now, Mbande had returned, but he refused to share anything of his meeting with Mengambe, or to give more than the vaguest hint of how far their journey would be. *'Perhaps eight weeks, perhaps nine...'* is all that he would say¹.

Eventually, the Seven were ready to depart: they made their way through the silent streets of the city, travelling cautiously and quietly until they reached the city gates. As they approached the gateway of the city, a ringing command was heard from the high stone rampart near the gates. *'Who steals forth like a black panther in the night?'* Amdo recognized the voice as that of Mzeze, one of the Alaafin's finest warriors. Mzeze, he knew, rarely did guard duty at the city gates: for him to have been posted there that past night was a sure sign of trouble...

Before Mbande could speak, Amdo impetuously stepped out into the courtyard before the gates. *'It is I, Prince Amdo,'* he cried, *'and I wish to leave the city! Would you stand against me, Mzeze?'* Amdo gasped, as he received a sharp knock to the head from Mbande's *jubula*-wood staff.

'Quiet, you fool!' hissed Mbande angrily. *'Wait and be still!'* A sudden wind sprang up, and Amdo felt chilled to the bone, as if something had just passed through him. *'The Wind Spirits of Tatambor have come to our aid,'* said Mbande solemnly.

¹ Mbande uses the common definition of a week within south Charybdis, namely five days, i.e. is forecasting a 40-45 day journey.

Amdo shuddered again, as he felt *something* moving through the air next to him; then he heard cries of alarm all around, and especially from the gates. *'The Wind Spirits are against us!'* someone cried out, and as if in response, the voice of Mzenze was then heard cursing and crying, *'Hold fast! Remember your duty to the Alaafin!'*

Now We Are Nine...

Mzenze's rallying-call was in vain, as more and more of his men abandoned their positions in terror. Tembo and Gogonga ran forward and unbarred the city gates, whilst Ataro noticed a tall, masked figure moving slowly across the courtyard, arms stretched outwards towards the skies, and murmuring in a deep, sonorous voice. The ritual mask he wore disguised the figure, but even though heavily distorted, Ataro recognized with pride and anguish the voice to be that of his master, Mengambe.

'Stop them!' called out another voice that Amdo recognized at once – that of his brother, Prince Shakera, who had appeared at the far side of the courtyard, accompanied by a score or more of the city's finest warriors. Even in the pre-dawn gloom, Amdo was able to make out many of their faces – including, with a gut-wrenching pang of recognition, his former friend, turned betrayer, Ogun.

Some of Shakera's men ran forward, only to be driven back by the swooping aerial spirits commanded by Mengambe. But others were able to elude the Wind Spirits, and began to engage in hand-to-hand combat with Amdo and his allies...

Combat at the Gates

The Nine find themselves in combat, at first, with about twenty warriors – treat as Minor NPC Fighters (p 24 of the *Maze Masters Guide*). The battle should not seriously threaten our heroes with death or capture, but there should be some 'mild peril' for them. If the combat is too one-sided (in either direction), then *either* increase the number of NPC Fighters (more fighters will arrive, after all, the longer the battle lasts) or reduce this number (more of them being obstructed/intimidated by the Wind Spirits).

The only Major NPC who will engage in combat is Mzenze (rallying as many of the original guardsmen at the gate as he can). Prince Shakera will hold back from combat at all costs ('personal involvement' is never this somewhat cowardly prince's preferred option). Ogun will also hold back from the fight at first, until he is ready to make a dramatic intervention...

The battle lasts for several rounds, during which time the number of opponents for the Nine will gradually increase as more and more fighters arrive. The crucial turning point in the battle occurs when Ogun throws his spear directly at the masked figure of Mengambe...

Unexpectedly, as Amdo and his companions began to defend themselves, they found themselves with two new allies who had rushed into the courtyard from beyond the gates: a lithe Negaran Amazon and a tall, muscular Opari barbarian. On seeing these new allies, Mbande laughed joyously and cried out: *'Now we are Nine!'*

The Death of Mengambe

With a groan, Mengambe crumpled to his knees, the Mask of Spirit Control slipping from his face. Ataro ran to the side of his mentor, and listened as the old man spoke his last words:

'Doubt no more your abilities, Ataro. You are ready for this quest, and Amdo cannot complete it without you. Take this ritual mask...it will serve you well. Remember me no longer as Master Mengambe: remember me by my true name.' Ataro bent lower, and with his final breathe, Mengambe whispered his true name into his disciple's ear. Then he slumped to the ground, a look of supreme serenity and acceptance on his face.

In that moment, Ataro may have had good cause to desire the death of Ogun: but the increasing press of Shaker's men meant that there was no chance of getting to him. Mbande cried out with a loud voice, *'To the gates!'* – and the Nine retreated as fast as they could, knowing that they had but this one chance to make good their escape before they were overwhelmed by superior forces.

Two things aided the Nine further their escape. Firstly, the Wind Spirits of Tatambor were outraged by the killing of Mengambe and attacked Shaker's men with redoubled fury². Secondly, Mbande (who up to now had held back from spell-casting) started rhythmically shaking his *jubula* staff: its bells rang out in accompaniment to his singing as he began to chant a *Song of Wrath* against the Nine's foes.

With the help of these tactics, the Nine were able to make good their escape from Tatambor. As they moved out of sight of the city, Amdo looked back on his childhood home one last time. It looked resplendent in the first glow of the rising sun, and he wondered whether he would ever see it again...

The New Worthies

The Nine spent their first day of travelling (**Day 2**) moving as fast as possible, stopping only for short periods of respite, to attend to their wounds, and to make sure they were not being followed. They said little to one another during the course of the day. Following Mbande's lead, they moved in a south-westerly direction, close to the eastern banks of the mighty Kongos.

² Lasting for 1d6 battle rounds, after which they will vanish as they return to the totems to which they are normally bound, free of the effect of the Mask of Spirit Control.



Lela, a proud, dauntless Negaran Amazon

At the end of the day, the Nine made camp. Finally, Mbande seemed ready to tell his fellow adventurers more about their mysterious 'quest'...

Mbande began by asking their latest recruits to introduce themselves. The Negaran Amazon gave her name as **Lela**, and the Opari barbarian told them that he was known as **Juma**. Like the others, they had been troubled by dreams for several nights, once again featuring Prince Amdo. They had also felt a strong compulsion drawing them to Tatambor. This compulsion had begun several weeks ago, and had led them to leave their respective family homes in Negara and Opar Zingwane. In the case of Juma, this had clearly involved some strong sacrifice, given the enmity between his people and the Keshites of Tatambor: but he was clearly reluctant to speak of it further.

Lela too obliquely referred to the *'difficult decision'* to *'follow the strange call of my heart'*, but refused to offer any further explanation. She explained that she and Juma had only met up with one another on the road a couple of days earlier, as they had sought an unobtrusive crossing of the Kongos – but as they had seen one another in their shared dream (like Tembo and Gogonga), they had overcome their initial mistrust of one another and had come to accept that they were on a common mission.

The final confirmation of this had been a dream that they had had the previous night, of an old man wearing a Griot's cap calling out to them, saying *'Hasten to Tatambor, lest the Seven fall!'* Awakening from this dream, they had hastily finished the last few miles of their journey to Tatambor in the dark, fearing that they might be too late, and had arrived just in time to aid the Seven in the battle at the gates of the city.

The Seven each in turn introduced themselves to Juma and Lela. Then Mbande, having filled his pipe with *dildil*-weed, turned to them and said:

'You have all heard the tale of Tamro and the Yellow Gate? Perhaps you will indulge an old Griot who loves the sound of his own voice by letting me remind you of the story...'



Mbande then recalled at length the most familiar tale of the Time of Power: the rise of the Veiled Ones, the Great War, the building of the Yellow Gate, and the Quest of the Nine Worthies (see this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*, pp 16-17). It was a rousing tale, well-told by the Master Griot.

Mbande paused for a moment, and then said:

'Tamro and his comrades vanquished the Nine Abominations, and closed the gateway to the Black Void, but they paid a heavy price for doing so. All fell in that quest, save Tamro's Griot companion, Mjuanga. He needed to live, to tell the tale: for we Griots are the Keepers of the Living Flame, and we do not forget.'

'But what has this to do with us?' asked Kibwe, impatiently.

'We are the Keepers of the Living Flame, and we do not forget,' repeated Mbande, ignoring Kibwe. *'Evil was not defeated for all time by Tamro on the day he sealed the Yellow Gate. Now the time draws near when the Nine Worthies must stand firm against the forces of darkness once again.'*

Mbande looked around his comrades, one by one. *'Prince of Kesh. Zebran. Animist. Shola. Tupari. Jengu. Negaran. Opari.'*

He smiled, and his eyes seemed to twinkle in the light of the campfire. *'Griot. Nine Worthies. Nine New Worthies, answering the Call of the Wild.'*

'You're not serious, Mbande,' laughed Amdo. *'We're hardly the stuff of legend.'*

'That, I believe,' replied Mbande dryly, *'is what the first Tamro once said. And given your impetuous behavior at the gate, which nearly ended up with you skewered on Mzenze's spear, I'm inclined to agree. Still, "Stuff of Legend" or not, you're the ones who've been chosen. And the first task before you is to travel to the city of Xanth.'* The very mention of the name hung like a deadly pall over them.

'Xanth,' said Zanele, shivering, *'I have heard of that city. It is not a good place to seek.'*

'That is undoubtedly true, sister,' said Mbande. *'But seek it you must. It is there, in the lost abode of the Kalonoro, that you will find the famed Spear of Tamro. You will need the spear if you are to achieve the next task.'*

'And where is this lost city exactly?' queried Kibwe.

'Many miles from here, in one of the deepest and least-explored parts of the jungles,' replied Mbande. *'But enough questions for now: I am weary, and in need of sleep...as no doubt you all are.'*

The Worthies prepared to rest for the night, setting watches as they did so. Despite his protestations of sleepiness, it was Mbande who insisted on taking the first watch, alongside Ataro: and before sleep overwhelmed him, the last flickering image around the campfire that Prince Amdo was aware of was that of the old Griot quietly and gently consoling his friend, who after a day of grim silence now, at the last, began to weep copious tears in mourning for his dead mentor, wise Mengambe.

The Silent Griot

During the night, Amdo (and Amdo alone) had a new dream:

Amdo finds himself in a familiar hut. Unlike his own dwelling in Tatambor, which is stark and simple, this one is richly decorated with ornate tapestries, well-crafted spears and shields, and richly-carved footstools. It is the abode of his brother, Prince Shakera. In one corner sits Shakera and, opposite him, sits a shrouded figure, dressed in the garb of a Griot. There is something dark and sinister about him, and Amdo cannot help but let out an involuntary groan at the sight of him. He curses himself under his breathe: what if Shakera or the Griot noticed him? But then he realizes, to his relief, that neither can see him. He is an invisible spectator, an unseen presence.

'They acted more quickly than we anticipated,' snarls Shakera. *'That damned Griot!'* He looks at his companion angrily then smiles sardonically. *'I didn't mean you, friend.'*

The Griot slowly lifts his head. Only the lower half of his face is visible beneath this cowl. After a moment, he moves his lips, but no words can be heard. Yet Shakera seems to be paying close attention to the Griot...

'Yes,' says Shakera, as if in reply to some unspoken question, *'I suppose you're right.'* He pauses, then says, *'The important fact is that Amdo has been exposed as a traitor. The Alaafin has pronounced exile upon him in Council this day. And now I am free...'*

He pauses again, and again Amdo sees the Griot's lips move wordlessly. 'Yes, of course,' continues Shakera. *'We are free to take control of the city and the Council, without opposition. I have already presented the plan for the assault on Opar Zingwane to the Alaafin. He hesitates, but soon he will agree. He wants to live up to his name of Tamro the Bold, after all.'* Shakera chuckles...

The strangely-silent Griot stands, and retreats noiselessly into the shadowed recesses of Shakera's hut. Amdo blinks and looks again – the Griot seems to have vanished...

The next day (**Day 3**), Amdo shared his dream with Mbande. Mbande looked thoughtful, and then said:

'Prince Amdo, what you saw last night was a Silent Griot, a dark and terrible creature of the Spirit world. The Silent Griot speaks only when it chooses, and only to one person whom it has chosen to be its shoka.'

'Its shoka?' queried Amdo. *'What does that mean?'*

'It's a word in High Keshani that is little used and has no precise equivalent in other languages,' replied Mbande. *'Its mirror, its image, its soul-mate, its vessel...these words carry a little of the sense that Griots mean by shoka. To have become the shoka of a Silent Griot is a terrifying fate. When I saw your brother, at the Council of the Alaafin, I sensed that something dark had touched his soul. If it is indeed a Silent Griot...'*

Mbande's voiced trailed away, then he added in a grim whisper, *'Death would be a preferable fate.'*

The Son of Kalaar

The Nine continued journeying south-west along the Kongos for another day (**Day 3**), before making camp. During the night, Amdo had yet another new dream:

Amdo lies on the ground, bloodied and exhausted, barely able to move any part of his broken body. He knows that he is dying. He knows that he is in the same place as before...as he turns his gaze westward, he beholds the same view of the vastness of Charybdia. The same grey clouds cover the sky, and yet a light from the east seems to be breaking through, overcoming the darkness.

He feels a hand touch his shoulder – a rough, coarse hand, quite unlike that of any human, and he turns and sees the face of... no, it can't be, how ridiculous!... he blinks, and the figure has vanished.

Then he realizes that his right hand... the hand that was still grasping tightly his spear, his wondrous spear, the gift of the Spirits... is empty. He has let go of the spear, it has passed to another, and a voice – that old, familiar, yet strange voice – says to him: 'Time to let go, Tamro... time to let go on. Be at peace...'

The next day (**Day 4**), the Nine continued their journey up-river. As sunset drew near, Mbande declared that very soon they would reach their evening campsite: but as he did so, they heard the clear sound of fighting nearby. Mbande, Amdo, Lela and Juma scouted forward, and witnessed a strange battle in the clearing ahead.



A typical Charybdian Boarman

In the midst of the clearing there was a large standing stone, more than twice the height of a man, which had been shaped into the form of an outlandish-looking creature.³

More noticeable, however, were the creatures fighting before the statue. Six of them were clearly Boarmen (of the local Charybdian variety, with warthog-heads), but the seventh was of a type of beastman never before seen by Amdo, Lela or Juma – a live Mammutep, in every respect save that of size resembling the statue before which it was fighting for its life. Although clearly wounded, the Mammutep had obviously fought a valiant fight against the Boarmen – three of whom were already lying dead or dying on the ground. But it was obvious to any onlooker that the Mammutep could not prevail for much longer...

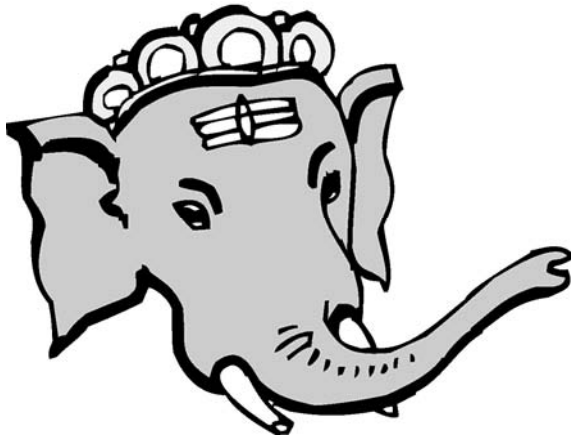
Mbande, Amdo and their companions charged into the fray immediately, taking the Boarmen entirely by surprise. It didn't take them long to dispatch the unpleasant beastmen.

In a flash, Amdo recalled the part of his dream from the previous night that had seemed so hazy – namely the identity of the mysterious figure that had stood over him, and that – yes, he could see it now far more clearly – had taken from his outstretched hand the spear. It was a Mammutep...

Combat with the Boarmen

The profile for the six Boarmen is identical to that of the listing on p 16 of the *Creature Compendium*, except that one of the Boarmen has taken 4 Hits of damage and another has taken 6 Hits of damage. The profile for Yor-Dlembo the Mammutep is detailed in the Appendix to this adventure – note at the point when the adventurers arrive, Yor-Dlembo has taken 6 Hits of damage.

³ Any magician character will immediately recognize the statue, despite its heavy wear, as a Mammutep, one of the legendary elephant-headed beastmen from the distant jungles to the far south of Charybdis.



Yor-Dlembo – is he the new Tenth Worthy?

Having successfully overcome the Boarmen (and having ascertained that there were no others in the immediate area), the adventurers attended to the wounds of the grateful Mammutep, who spoke Charybdian clearly (if with a strange accent).

The Mammutep introduced himself as Yor-Dlembo, and thanked the adventurers for saving him from the Boarmen hunting-party, which he had had the misfortune to encounter. He stared long and hard at Amdo, and finally said:

'You are the one from my visions. The one that I was destined to meet at the kasheela.'

'The what?' asked Juma suspiciously.

'I'm sorry,' replied Yor-Dlembo. *'The kasheela. It is a word in my language. I am unsure what you would call it. The shrine...no, monument...a place sacred to the memory of my people, perhaps. THIS is the place,'* he continued, pointing to the standing stone. *'This is one of our most sacred kasheelai. It marks the northernmost point of the realm that once was ours, long ago.'*

'Ah, Son of Kalaar, it becomes clear to me now!' cried Mbande suddenly. *'You are the Tenth Worthy, the Missing Worthy, the Forgotten Worthy. Why, though, oh why, had even I forgotten you...?'* he mused. Amdo noted a disturbing tone of uncertainty in Mbande's voice.

'Didn't you say, "The Keepers of the Living Flame never forget"?'' chided Kibwe.

'Except, clearly, when they do,' replied Mbande sharply. *'But now the veil is lifting, and I see clearly...listen, everyone! Listen carefully, lest I forget once again!'* Such was the urgency in Mbande's voice that none dared to interrupt him – even Kibwe – as he recalled the *Tale of the Tenth...*

The Tale of the Tenth

Unbeknown to the Griots of Charybdis, there were not Nine but Ten Worthies. The tenth one was a valorous Mammutep hero named Yush-Kalon who not only fought but actually survived the apocalyptic battle at the Yellow Gate. It was to this champion that Tamro entrusted his legendary spear, and the Mammutep resolved to take it back to his own city of Kalaar where it would be kept safe from evil hands.

Alas, on his return journey the Mammutep was ambushed and killed by a band of Hyenakins in the service of the last of the Veiled Ones. Perhaps it was as well that the great hero fell in this way, as in so doing he was spared the knowledge that during the last days of the War of Yellow Gate, the dark powers of the Ancient Ones had succeeded in destroying the great city of Kalaar.

'And this,' said Mbande, *'is the very place where Yush-Kalon fell! Look at the kasheela!'*

The adventurers all looked at the standing stone more carefully, and were able to discern beneath the covering of moss that the Mammutep figure was holding in his right hand a spear: *'Behold – the Spear of Tamro,'* declared Mbande.

'The Mammutep people clearly remembered the fall of their champion, and despite their own grievous loss they erected this stone to mark the spot, on the northern extremity of their ancient but now fallen realm.'

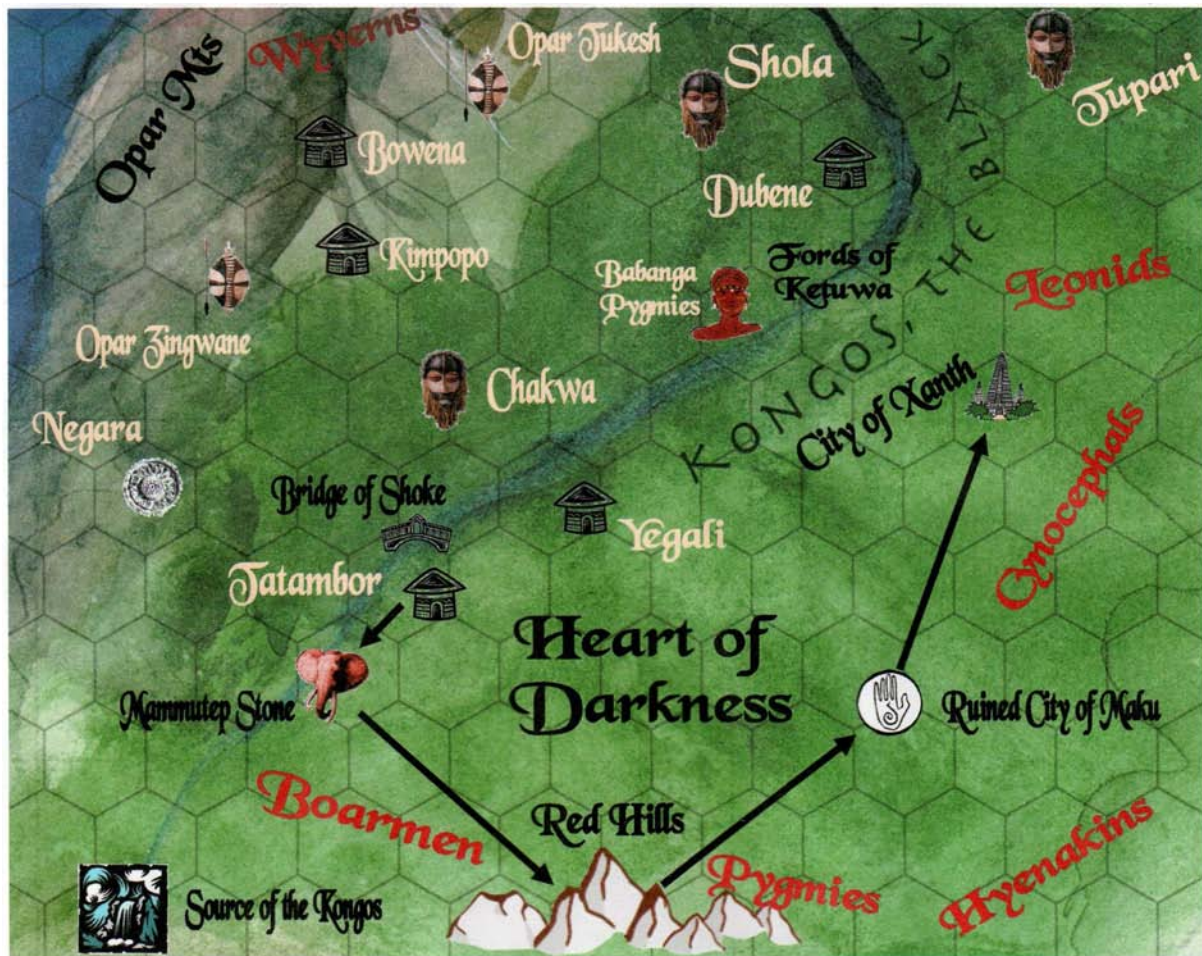
He looked at Yor-Dlembo. *'And now a Mammutep returns to this place, to join forces with the Nine Worthies, on a quest to avenge his forebear and to help regain the Spear of Tamro.'*

'But why only now do you tell us this tale, Master Griot?' asked Zanele. *'Had you truly no memory of the Last Worthy?'*

Mbande shook his head. *'Truly, not until this hour had I any memory of it. The Destroyer's Curse of Forgetfulness has caused much to be forgotten – but that I, and all Griots, should have forgotten this – it is a dark portent, indeed, that I cannot begin to fathom.'* Mbande, it seemed to Amdo, was seriously distressed and disturbed by this revelation.

In the end, it was the young prince who stepped forward and clasped the Mammutep's clawed hand, saying, *'I do not pretend to understand these matters, but as a prince of the Tamburu, and a descendant of Tamro, I say this: you are welcome, Yor-Dlembo, son of Kalaar. May our path be your path, and our victory yours. May you be worthy, and may we all be worthy, of those in whose footsteps we follow.'*

MAP OF SOUTHERN CHARYBDIS



Act 3: Through the Jungle

The Griot Guardian

The Worthies settled down for the evening. Mbande once again insisted on taking the first watch; and this time, Amdo chose to accompany him. Amdo could tell that Mbande was troubled.

Eventually, the old Griot turned to the young prince, and said simply, 'Tomorrow, young one, I must leave you. I must return to Tatambor, and discover if the appearance of the Silent Griot has anything to do with the....' He paused, as if searching for the right phrase, 'hole in my mind.'

'How can these things possibly be connected?' asked Amdo.

Mbande shook his head. 'I'm not sure. But I can only find the answer to that question in Tatambor.' He sighed. 'You must be strong, my prince. Tomorrow I will set you and your companions upon the path to Xanth, and you must continue on that path without me. But if all goes well, I will meet you again ere you reach the city of the Kalonoro.'

There is something I have been meaning to ask you ever since your return, Master Mbande,' said Amdo. 'My mother, shortly before her death, told me that when I was no more than three days old, a wicked spirit tried to steal my life from me. She called the spirit an Abiku – a Baby Eater. She said that the only thing that saved me was a wandering Griot who appeared on the seventh day of my possession – you, Mbande. She said that your friendship with Tamro the Swordsman, my grandfather, began that day – but that she had often wondered if it was because of me, rather than my grandfather, that you had chosen to make your home in Tatambor throughout the years of my childhood. Did my mother speak truly, old one?'

'Your mother spoke with the true insight that only her deep love for you could give,' replied Mbande. 'So I say to you now what I have said before to no one. I loved your grandfather. He was a valiant warrior, and a wise Alaafin; and he was a good friend. But it was you, not the Swordsman, who caused me to spend much of the next nine years in Tatambor. You had indeed been targeted by a Baby Eater. The Abiku have plagued the Kari people for centuries. They are wandering spirits, but it is rare that they travel as far south as Tatambor.'

Although they only attack babies in their first few months of life, it is unusual for one of them to target a child quite as young as you were. And I had never heard of one holding out for so long against their malevolent power.

'Of course, you were fading fast when I found you – a few more hours would have been too late. But you recovered remarkably from your ordeal. The only lasting mark of your possession was your propensity to dream in ways beyond the understanding of most men, and even, perhaps, to imprint those dreams upon others. The Spirit world has left its mark upon you, my prince. It was immediately clear to me that you were an important child – and, just as clearly, that you needed to be protected.' Mbande smiled. *'You see, young Meerkat, while you're destined to be busy looking out for others, someone else has to look out for you. So I became – at least for a time – your very own Griot Guardian.'*

'But if you were my guardian in childhood, and if you've come back for me now after ten years away, then why are you leaving me again so soon?' pleaded Amdo.

'Because I must,' said Mbande firmly. *'Don't worry, Amdo. Your whole life has been leading up to this moment. You're ready for what lies ahead. Now enough talk: you must get some sleep. And unless I am a greatly mistaken, you will be relieved to know that you will not be disturbed by perplexing dreams tonight.'*

The Departure of Mbande

The next morning (**Day 5**), Mbande broke the news to the astonished adventurers of his decision to return to Tatambor. Arguments broke out amongst the party, as some questioned the wisdom of going on without their guide, or even carrying on at all. However, it was Amdo who restored order by insisting that he would carry on the journey to Xanth: if necessary, alone. His companions were shamed into silence: then, Yor-Dlembo said quietly, *'I have been tasked by the elders of my people to honor the memory of Yush-Kalon my ancestor. Having found the descendant of Tamro, I would not besmirch Ysh-Kalon's memory by turning aside so shamefully.'*

There was a murmur of assent, and one by one, each of them pledged to continue the quest.

'Good,' said Mbande, *'that settles that. Now pay attention, as I show you the path you must take.'* Mbande then drew in the earth with his *jubula*-wood staff a rough map, marking with a cross each significant point along their journey.

'From this Mammutep Stone,' instructed Mbande, *'you must strike out for twelve days in a south-easterly direction. This will bring you to the northern edge of the Red Hills. You must then travel eastwards, along the edge of the hills, for four days. Especially beware the Pygmies of the Red Hills: they are treacherous and unforgiving of intruders into their territory. Then turn north-eastwards. After twelve days you will come to the Ruined City of Maku. Do not linger there longer*

than you must. Finally, you should travel north, and a little to the east, from Maku for another twelve days. This will bring to the City of the Kalonoro.'

'Eight weeks,' exclaimed Juma. *'Surely it would be quicker to go straight through the forest like so!'* He marked a fresh line on the forest-floor map with the point of his sword, straight from the Mammutep Stone to Xanth.

'No,' cried Zanele, *'we cannot travel through the Heart of Darkness! That is the most accursed place within the Living Land, marred by the taint of evil since the Time of Power. Even the Jungle Jengu, who love and know all the trees of the Living Land, avoid the Heart of Darkness.'*

'Sister, you speak aright,' said Mbande. *'It is for this reason you must travel south and east before you can turn northwards once more to Xanth.'*

'But why could we not have journeyed north from Tatambor via the city of Yegali?' asked Ataro. *'Surely that's a more direct route still, and also avoids the Heart of Darkness.'*

Kibwe snorted. *'You've spent too much time with your Animist mentor, Ataro, and too little listening to the warriors. The Alaafin has accused Okedo the king of Yegali of treachery and cowardice in withdrawing from the field of battle against the Opari three months ago. He believes Okedo's actions led to the death of his father Tamro the Proud, and the slaughter of many fine Tamburu warriors that day. Okedo responded by sending back some merchants of Tatambor minus their hands, tongues and eyes. It would be the height of foolishness for any Tamburu to go anywhere near Yegali at present – even as a fugitive like Amdo.'*

'Hush, Kibwe,' said Mbande. *'You should know better than to insult the memory of Mengambe, who gave his life for us at the gate of Tatambor.'* Kibwe looked downcast, and muttered an apology. *'Nevertheless, you are right,'* continued the Griot. *'The path to Yegali would not have been a wise one to take. Nor could we have tried to cross the Bridge of Shoke, journeyed through the territory of the Chakwa and passed back across the Kongos at the Fords of Ketuwa. The Bridge of Shoke is guarded too firmly, and the Chakwa too closely allied to the Tamburu to make that a viable choice. No, we have had to avoid the friends and enemies of Tatambor in equal measure. That is why you must take the path I have indicated. It may be longer, and there will be dangers and distractions aplenty on the way – but the Alaafin and his servants will not be among them.'*

'And now,' concluded Mbande. *'The morning is already getting old, and I cannot delay my return to Tatambor any longer: if all goes well, I will rejoin you before you reach Xanth.'*

'How?' asked Ataro. *'We'll be moving ahead, whilst you're going back. Unless...'* Ataro looked down at the forest-floor map, at the direct route so clearly marked out by Juma.

'You have your path,' said Mbande simply, *'and I have mine. Until they join again...I bid you all farewell!'*



Adventure and danger await in the deep, dark jungle

Travelling through the Jungle

Travel in the Wild

Most of the adventurers know the jungle well enough to know that travelling at night-time is ill-advised. The adventurers will therefore almost certainly restrict their journeying to the day-time hours.

Characters with the *Pathfinder* background talent are advantaged on all standard Danger Evasion rolls whilst traversing the Great Jungle. Those with the *Mountaineer* talent are similarly advantaged when traversing the edge of the Red Hills (**Days 17-20**).

Food & Foraging

The provisions that the adventurers brought with them from Tatambor will run out after **Day 11**. Finding water is not difficult: but after their initial food supply runs out, they will need to hunt for food (e.g. snakes, wild boars, antelopes) or gather food (e.g. nuts, berries, fruits, fungi). As there are no Hunters in the party, hunter/gathering will be a somewhat uncertain business. However, characters with the *Pathfinder* background talent are assumed to have a reasonable ability to locate food, and to be spending the equivalent of an hour or two each day looking for food (no more time can be spent on this without the party losing valuable journeying time).

Every day from **Day 12** onwards, *each* adventurer with the *Pathfinder* talent should make a roll of 1D20 plus Danger Evasion; Hunters add their Hunting bonus as well. Whichever adventurer gets the highest

total is the most successful hunter/gather that day, and their roll dictates the Foraging/Hunting success rate of the party as a whole:

Less than 10 = No food is found, and characters need to make Physical Vigor rolls (see Survival, p 46 of the *Players Manual*).

10-14 = Only enough food is found to feed the party on half rations. Two consecutive days of half-rations should be treated as the equivalent of a day without food, and therefore requiring a Physical Vigor roll.

15-19 = Enough food is found to feed the whole party but *only* for that day.

20 or more = Enough food has been found to feed the whole party for that day *plus* for the next day too (so that no Foraging/Hunting rolls are needed on the following day).

Getting Lost

Each day of the journey, there is a 10% risk (the Maze Master makes a secret roll of 1 or 2 on a d20) of the party getting lost.

If this happens, then characters with the *Pathfinder* background talent (and/or the *Mountaineering* background talent when traversing the Red Hills) have a chance of realizing that the party are lost and correcting the error. The Maze Master makes a secret Danger Evasion roll for each character with the appropriate talent: on a roll of 15 or more they realize the error, and take corrective action. If all fail their rolls, then no-one in the party will realize that they are lost, and the party will continue a second day in the wrong direction.

The Maze Master makes a second set of rolls for each Pathfinder (or Mountaineer, if appropriate) on the second day. This procedure continues until, eventually, some-one realizes the party has gone astray. Each day that is spent lost will add a day to the overall journey time.

Events & Encounters

For each day of travel following the departure of Mbande, and for each night of rest, the Maze Master makes a secret D20 roll upon the appropriate Random Event tables given next page – or, alternatively, simply choose encounters from the tables.

For day-time encounters, roll an additional D20. On a **1-10**, the encounter takes place in the morning. On a **11-20**, the encounter takes place in the afternoon.

For night-time encounters (when the adventurers are encamped), it is assumed that they will take four watches (2 persons per watch) through the night.

Roll an additional d20 for each night-time encounter. On a **1-5**, the encounter takes place on the first watch; on a **6-10**, it takes place on the second watch; on a **11-15**, it takes place on the third watch; on a **16-20**, it takes place on the last watch.

Journeying to the Red Hills

(Days 5-16)

Table One: Day-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-10	Nothing of Note Happens.
11	Natural Hazard: Flash Flooding.
12	Natural Hazard: Forest Fire.
13	Natural Hazard: Stampede.
14-16	Encounter with 6+1d6 Boarmen (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
17	Encounter with 1 Giant Snake (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
18	Encounter with 1 Giant Gorilla (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
19	Encounter with 1+1d3 Juju Trees (treat as <i>Stichios</i> in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Horned Juggernaut (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).

Table Two: Night-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-12	Nothing of Note Happens.
13	Natural Hazard: Flash Flooding.
14	Natural Hazard: Forest Fire.
15	Natural Hazard: Stampede.
16	Encounter with 6+1d6 Boarmen (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
17	Encounter with 1d3 Giant Spiders (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
18-19	Encounter with 3+1d6 Hyanas (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Leucrota (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

Flash Flooding

Sudden, persistent rain leads to flash flooding. Each character makes a Danger Evasion roll (*Pathfinders* advantaged, target number 15). Failure results in the target being caught up in the flood waters, and needing to make a Physical Vigor roll (target number 10) to avoid drowning. Failing this second roll results in the victim suffering 1d6 damage each round until either 'rescued' by his compatriots or drowned.

Forest Fire

Sudden fire spreads rapidly through the jungle. Each character makes a Danger Evasion roll (*Pathfinders* advantaged, target number 15). Failure results in the target being overcome by smoke, or trapped by fire, and suffering 1d6 damage from smoke inhalation or burns each round until 'rescued' by his compatriots (in a manner approved by the Maze Master) or overcome by smoke/flames.

Around the Red Hills

(Days 17-20)

Table Three: Day-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-10	Nothing of Note Happens.
11	Natural Hazard: Flash Flooding.
12-13	Natural Hazard: Rock Fall.
14-16	Encounter with 9+1d6 Red Hill Pygmies (treat as <i>Zorbas</i> in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
17-18	Encounter with 7+1d3 Red Hill Pygmies , accompanied by 2+1d3 Tokolshe (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
19	Encounter with 1d3 Giant Scorpions (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Gryphon (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

Table Four: Night-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-10	Nothing of Note Happens.
11	Natural Hazard: Flash Flooding.
12-15	Encounter with 9+1d6 Red Hill Pygmies (treat as <i>Zorbas</i> in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
16	Encounter with 7+1d3 Red Hill Pygmies , accompanied by 2+1d3 Tokolshe (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
17	Encounter with 1d3 Restless Spirits (treat as <i>Ghosts</i> in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
18-19	Encounter with 3+1d6 Hyanas (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Leucrota (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

See below for the effects of Natural Hazards.

Stampede

Sudden appearance of a mixed herd of fleeing animals (antelopes, wild boars, rhinos, elephants, etc.). Each character makes a Danger Evasion roll (*Pathfinders* advantaged, target number 15). Failure results in the target taking 2d6 of trample damage. 1d6 rounds after the stampede's passage, the cause becomes clear. Roll 1d6: on 1-2, flash flooding follows; on 3-4, a forest fire; on 5-6 a large or gigantic predator (Maze Master's choice) appears.

Rock Fall

Sudden avalanche of rocks takes the adventurers unawares. Each character makes a Danger Evasion roll (*Mountaineers* advantaged, target number 15). Failure results in the target suffering 2d6 in damage from falling rocks. There is a small (1 in 6) chance that the rock fall is not natural, but the prelude to an ambush by 6+1d6 Red Hill Pygmies.

From the Red Hills to Maku

(Days 21-32)

Table Five: Day-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-10	Nothing of Note Happens.
11	Natural Hazard: Ravine.
12-13	Natural Hazard: Swamp.
14	Encounter with 6+1d6 Red Hill Pygmies (treat as Zorbas in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
15-17	Encounter with 6+1d6 Hyenakins (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
18	Encounter with 1+1d3 Juju Trees (treat as Stichios in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
19	Encounter with 1 Giant Gorilla (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Tarasque (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

Table Six: Night-time (Roll 1d20)	
1-12	Nothing of Note Happens.
13-16	Encounter with 6+1d6 Hyenakins (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
17	Encounter with 1d3 Restless Spirits (treat as Ghosts in <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
18	Encounter with 1d3 Giant Spiders (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
19	Encounter with 1 Black Panther (see <i>Charybdian Creatures</i>).
20	Encounter with 1 Leucrota (see <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

Ravine

The adventurers' path is blocked by an unexpected ravine. They have three options: go around the ravine (possibly necessitating a considerable detour); travel through the ravine (probably encountering various unpleasant invertebrates, including giant versions, that live amongst the nooks and crannies of dark ravines); or cross over the ravine (using tree-vines as ropes, or looking for fallen tree-trunks as makeshift bridges). Whichever option is taken, there is a chance (as decided by the Maze Master) that up to a day will be lost in the passage of the ravine.

Swamp

The travellers' path takes them through an unpleasant swamp. Passing through the swamp, the adventurers encounters one of the following results (roll 1D6):

1: 1d3 Swamp Horrors (see *Creature Compendium*).

2: 1d3 Bapharons (see *Creature Compendium*).



Behold... the Swamp Horror!

3: Horde of Noisome Insects: Make a Physical Vigor roll (target number 15). Failure results in 1d6 damage and a fever which lasts for 1d6 days and which halves the speed at which the victim can travel (slowing the party down accordingly by 1-3 days).

4: Quagmire: The lead character makes a Danger Evasion roll (*Pathfinders* advantaged, target number 15). Failure results in the individual becoming mired. Once trapped in a swampy quagmire, individuals are very hard to extricate (rope and Feats of Strength will be required). After 1d6 rounds, the victim will vanish irretrievably beneath the oozing surface of the mire.

5-6: Heavy Going: Particularly thick and treacherous swamp results in the party being forced to travel extra slowly. Add one day to their journey time. If the party insist on travelling at normal speed so as not to lose time, there is a 50% chance that the lead character will encounter a quagmire (see above)

The Ruined City of Maku

After more than six weeks of travelling through the Great Jungle, the Worthies finally reached the ruined city of Maku. It was clearly an ancient settlement, and had obviously once been an important city, as witnessed by the ruined statues and broken pillars that littered the grand circular courtyard at the heart of the city. The great archway entrance – more than twenty feet high – and the colonnades beyond testified to the austere grandeur of the city.

Amdo noticed that the artistic designs carved on the archway and the cracked pillars were beautiful, yet simple geometric patterns – mostly consisting of swirls and circles, but with one particular image dominant – a hand contained within a circle, and bearing a whirl upon its palm.



The Mysterious Mark of Maku

Many of the stones were obscured by thick vegetation, and as they moved across the yard, some of the adventurers could not help but find themselves caught up amongst the thick fronds of what suddenly turned out to be unforgiving Vines of Maku!⁴

It took all the strength and determination of the other Worthies to free their stricken colleagues from the rapacious, suffocating grip of the vines. As they hacked through the vines, the eerie silence of the ruined city was broken by a high-pitched squealing that the adventurers realized, with sudden horror, was being emitted by the vines themselves.

Expiring at last, the treacherous vines fell silent and limp. As if in answer to the alarm they had raised, the air was now punctuated by the sound of angry, guttural voices. Appearing at the edge of the courtyard were two monstrous creatures whose evil nature was immediately obvious. A powerful and noisome stench filled the air, as the two creatures shuffled towards the party, and Amdo could not help but recoil at the sight and smell. He remembered tales of these creatures from his childhood, from some of the more fantastical anecdotes of Mbande...

'Kakodyles,' he cried, *'the Dragon Men of the Deep Jungle!'*

'There's another!' cried Juma, pointing back the way they had come. Looming large in the great archway through which they had entered the courtyard stood a third Kakodyle. *'We cannot retreat from these foul creatures. We must make our stand and fight!'*⁵

The battle against the foul Kakodyles was fierce, and several of the Worthies were sorely wounded. But as the outcome hung in the balance, a familiar figure appeared in the courtyard archway, his *jubula*-wood staff raised high over his head, and singing a song of raw power and radiant splendor. It was Mbande!

⁴ Treat as **Vines of Tantalus** (see p 124 of the *Creature Compendium*). Characters should make a Danger Evasion roll (*Pathfinders* advantaged, target number 15). Those who fail will find themselves under attack from the Vines of Maku.

⁵ The profiles for the three Kakodyles are identical to those given in this issue's *Mythic Bestiary*.

Amdo yelled with joy at the sight of the Mbande – and with the old Griot's aid, the Kakodyles were completely vanquished. But Amdo's delight soon evaporated as he saw the bloodied, tattered robes of his friend. What perils, he wondered, had befallen Mbande on the path that had brought him unlooked-for to Maku?

For a long moment, Mbande stood facing Amdo, smiling wearily, his hands held out in a gesture of friendship and triumph: but then, he stumbled, and crumpled to the ground.

The Griot's staff clattering loudly on the paving-stones of the courtyard as he fell...

Epilogue: The Old Griot

The Griot paused, and looked up from the flickering flames. There was a hushed silence, and it seemed as if every child was holding his breathe, desperately waiting the old man to continue.

'What happened next?' cried the boy, breaking the stillness at last, *'Was Mbande dead?'*

The Griot looked at the boy, and each of his eyes – one brown, one hazel – seemed to twinkle, as if reflecting the dancing flames of the fire. He smiled.

'All in good time, my hasty young friend: all in good time...'

To be continued in...

Part 2: The White-skinned Warriors.

Appendix: Characters

The following pages present the game stats and detailed profiles of the eleven main characters of the adventure: eight player-characters and three Major NPCs. The eight player-characters are listed in alphabetical order:

Prince Amdo of Tatambor	p 64
Ataro the Animist	p 64
Goganga the Tupari	p 65
Juma the Opari Barbarian	p 65
Kibwe the Zebran	p 66
Lela the Negaran Amazon	p 66
Tembo the Shola	p 67
Zanele the Jungle Jengu	p 67

The stats for the three Major NPCs (**Mbande the Griot**, **Mzenze the Spearman** and **Yor-Diembo the Mammutep**) can be found on p 68.

PRINCE AMDO OF TATAMBOR

Level 1 Keshite Noble, aged 19, youngest son of king Tamro the Proud.

For most of his life, Amdo has been overshadowed by his older brothers Nagendo and Shakera. Many of the more conservative elements within the Keshite nobility of Tatambor despise the way Amdo has befriended others from 'below his station' – most particularly Kibwe the Zebran, and Ataro the son of an impoverished nobleman. When Amdo and his brothers were children, he was particularly favored by his grandfather's wise Griot counsellor, Mbande. He was also the clear favorite of his mother – who on her deathbed had revealed to Amdo that Mbande had saved his life in infancy from a malevolent Baby Eater spirit. Since his older brother Nagendo took the throne as Tamro the Bold a few months ago, Amdo has felt more isolated from his peers than ever before. Yet he refuses to confirm to the expectations of his family: his generous, inquisitive and compassionate nature cannot easily be cowed. Amdo has always been given to vivid dreams: but just lately, they have started to frighten him with their intensity and frequency...

Attributes: Might 12, Skill 16, Wits 13, Luck 15, Will 16, Grace 11.

Combat: Initiative 15, Melee +4, Missile +5, EDC 18* (with shield), Hits Total 12.

Weapon of Choice: Spear.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +7*, Mystic Fortitude +7*, Physical Vigor +4.

Personal Charisma: +4 (+5 to other Tamburu)

Background Talents: Pathfinder & Orator.

Mythic Item: Fetish Shield (** these scores take into account the bonus granted by the fetish shield*)

Other Possessions: Spear, sword, dagger, goods equivalent to 800 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: High Keshani, Charybdian, Zebar.

ATARO THE ANIMIST

Level 1 Keshite Animist, aged 22, apprentice of Mengambe, wisest Animist of Tatambor.

Ataro is the younger of the two sons of an impoverished Keshite nobleman. In view of the impoverished status of his family, and his position as the younger son, there was never much likelihood of his father helping him to secure the 'bride-price' necessary to secure a wife. As a result, Ataro decided three years ago to begin to train as an Animist. By good fortune, he attracted the attention of the most famous living Animist in Tatambor, Mengambe. His apprenticeship has been rigorous, and has left him with little spare time for his childhood friends, including Prince Amdo. However, he has been a quick learner, and in truth Mengambe has been very impressed with his progress (not that the stern old Animist would ever let on to his young charge). Ataro is a quiet thinker, and when with his friends Amdo, Ogun and Kibwe is the least likely to rush forward with an opinion – but he is a good observer, and when he does speak, his words are usually worth listening to.

Attributes: Might 10, Skill 15, Wits 17, Luck 16, Will 17, Grace 10.

Combat: Initiative 15, Melee +4, Missile +7, EDC 14 (no armor), Hits Total 8.

Magic: Ancestral Insight +6, Mystic Strength 18, Power Points 7.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +7, Mystic Fortitude +9, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +5 (+6 to other Charybdian humans and Jengu).

Background Talents: Healer & Exorcist.

Mythic Item: Mask of Spirit Control (*adds +2 to Ancestral Insight & Mystic Strength when using Spiritual Command and Spiritual Binding powers*) – parting gift of the dying Mengambe.

Other Possessions: Dagger, staff, robes, goods equivalent to 110 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: High Keshani, Charybdian, Spirit Tongue.

GOGANGA THE TUPARI

Level 1 Tupari Tribal Spearman, aged 25.

A resourceful and well-travelled warrior of the Tupari people, Goganga has been entrusted by his king with a special message for the Alaafin of Tatambor. However, on his journey he has been troubled by strange dreams...

Attributes: Might 12, Skill 16, Wits 13, Luck 14, Will 14, Grace 9.

Combat: Initiative 13 (14 when fighting with a spear), Melee +3, Missile +4, EDC 17* with shield (19* versus melee attacks when fighting with spear & shield), Hits Total 12.

Weapon of Choice: Spear (advantaged when using spear in melee or missile combat).

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +3, Danger Evasion +4, Mystic Fortitude +3, Physical Vigor +2.

Personal Charisma: +2 (+3 to warriors of non-hostile Charybdian tribes – does not apply to the Shola).

Background Talents: Pathfinder & Healer.

Mythic Item: Loincloth of Protection. * *These scores take into account the bonus granted by the Loincloth of Protection.*

Other Possessions: Spear, dagger, shield, goods equivalent to 130 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Minean.

JUMA THE OPARI BARBARIAN

Level 1 Opari Barbarian, aged 20.

Juma is a hot-tempered member of the Opar Zingwane – an Oparian tribe that for many years has been engaged in conflict with the Keshites of Tatambor. Unbeknown to his fellow Worthies, Juma's father fell in personal combat with Tambo the Swordsman some fifteen years ago. Juma has sworn that he will not rest until he can avenge his father's death by killing a member of the Swordsman's family. Juma has already been frustrated in the battle against Tambo the Proud, the Swordsman's successor, just a few months ago, as another of his tribe took the Alaafin's life before he could act upon his oath. The strange 'Call of the Wild' that has resulted in Juma joining the other Worthies is unexpected and, in many ways, unwelcome. Juma is greatly conflicted in the knowledge that he may have a golden opportunity to fulfil his oath against the unsuspecting Amdo – but that a 'greater good' may require him to forsake it.

Attributes: Might 18, Skill 10, Wits 10, Luck 13, Will 15, Grace 11.

Combat: Initiative 10 (12 in melee when wearing the Headdress of Victory), Melee +4, Missile +1, EDC 15 with shield, 17 vs melee attacks unless surprised (+2 to melee EDC if wearing the Headdress of Victory), Hits Total 15.

Weapon of Choice: Oparian sword (Barbarian weapon), does 1d6+3 damage.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +1, Mystic Fortitude +3, Physical Vigor +6.

Personal Charisma: +3 (+4 to fellow Opari Barbarians).

Background Talents: Beastmaster & Mountaineer.

Mythic Item: Headdress of Victory (*adds +2 in melee to both Initiative and EDC*).

Other Possessions: Sword (Barbarian weapon), dagger, 3 javelins, shield, goods equivalent to 30 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Oparian.

KIBWE THE ZEBRAN

Level 1 Zebran, aged 20, son of a Zebran tribal chieftain.

Kibwe was just twelve years old when he was brought to Tatambor as a hostage for the good behavior of his Zebran tribe following their defeat in battle by Tamro the Proud. Tamro promised that after ten years, if his tribe kept their side of the truce, then Kibwe would be allowed to return home. So far, the truce has been honored. Kibwe has accompanied his friend Prince Amdo on the hunt and the battle-field on several occasions, and has distinguished himself well. He gets on well with Ataro, but has a strained relationship with another of Amdo's friends, Ogun, who delights in taunting him and reminding him that for all his apparent liberty, and his friendship with a prince, he is still a hostage. Kibwe has a sharp tongue and quarrelsome nature himself, and Amdo often has to intervene to prevent his friends coming to blows. For all his friendship with Amdo, Kibwe's greatest desire remains that one day he will return home to his native Ibrahari Wildlands.

Attributes: Might 18, Skill 17, Wits 12, Luck 14, Will 13, Grace 8.

Combat: Initiative 13, Melee +7, Missile +4, EDC 16 (versus melee & missiles when galloping, but 13 if surprised), Hits Total 15.

Weapon of Choice: Spear (+3 damage if using the Spear of Skill).

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +7, Danger Evasion +4, Mystic Fortitude +2, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +1 (+2 with other Zebrans).

Background Talents: Healer & Wrestler.

Mythic Item: Spear of Skill (*add Skill bonus to wielder's damage rolls*).

Other Possessions: Dagger, bow (and twelve arrows).

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Zebar.

LELA THE NEGARAN AMAZON

Level 1 Negaran Amazon, aged 19.

An aloof Amazon of few words (at least to men), Lela had been preparing to undertake the Rite of Sanctified Maidenhood, a path chosen by only a few Negarans. The Maidens serve as acolytes and attendants upon Queen Zenobia whenever she is acting as High Priestess for the Sisters. However, a strange 'calling upon her heart' has caused Lela to abandon her preparations. She has left Negara, without the blessing of the Queen, uncertain whether she will ever be able to return...

Attributes: Might 11, Skill 17, Wits 12, Luck 13, Will 11, Grace 14.

Combat: Initiative 13, Melee +4, Missile +4, EDC 15 with shield, 16 versus melee attacks unless surprised, Hits Total 12.

Weapon of Choice: Bow, does 1d6+3 damage.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +4, Mystic Fortitude +1, Physical Vigor +1.

Personal Charisma: +3 (+4 to fellow Negaran Amazons).

Background Talents: Bowyer & Pathfinder.

Mythic Item: Bow of Long Shooting (*allows user to fire whilst moving without penalty; doubled range of 600'*).

Other Possessions: Dagger, sword, shield, bow & twelve arrows, goods equivalent to 60 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Negaran.

TEMBO THE SHOLA

Level 1 Shola Tribal Spearman, aged 25.

Tembo is a proud warrior of the Shola people. He has been entrusted with a special message by the Shola king for the Alaafin of Tatambor. However, on his journey he has been troubled by strange dreams...

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 16, Wits 12, Luck 13, Will 16, Grace 9.

Combat: Initiative 12 (14 when fighting with a spear), Melee +4, Missile +3, EDC 15 with shield (17 versus melee attacks when fighting with spear & shield), Hits Total 13.

Weapon of Choice: Spear (advantaged when using spear in melee or missile combat).

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +3, Mystic Fortitude +3, Physical Vigor +4.

Personal Charisma: +3 (+4 to warriors of non-hostile Charybdian tribes – does not apply to the Tupari).

Background Talents: Pathfinder & Mountaineer.

Mythic Item: Amulet of Health (*doubles the wearer's healing rate*).

Other Possessions: Spear, dagger, shield, goods equivalent to 100 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Oparian.

ZANELE THE JENGU

Level 1 Jungle Jengu.

Zanele is an alluringly beautiful yet naive Jungle Jengu. Drawn like many Jengu to a Great Gathering at the Source of the Kongos – the most spiritually-important place in all Charybdis for Jengu – Zanele was chosen by her sisters to seek out Amdo and the other Worthies, and to represent the Jengu people in the struggle against the Great Darkness that the Jengu fear threatens Charybdis once again.

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 14, Wits 10, Luck 15, Will 12, Grace 17.

Combat: Initiative 11, Melee +4, Missile +3, EDC 14 (no armor), Hits Total 9.

Magic: Odylic Charm +5, Mystic Strength 17, Power Points 7.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +3, Mystic Fortitude +2, Physical Vigor +3.

Personal Charisma: +5 (+6 to fellow Jengu).

Background Talents: Musician.

Mythic Item: None.

Other Possessions: None.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Spirit Tongue.

MBANDE THE GRIOT

Level 6 Griot, age unknown.

Very little is known about Mbande. A wandering Griot who is well-known across much of Charybdis, he never stays in one place very long. Indeed, the nearest he has ever come to 'settling down' was during the childhood of Amdo, when he spent nine years in Tatambor as friend and counsellor to Tambo the Swordsman. Even then, he would sometimes disappear on mysterious errands for weeks, even months at a time, only to return unexpectedly. However, he has not been seen in Tatambor for ten years, ever since the death of the Swordsman. His reappearance after such a long absence has, not surprisingly, caused quite a stir in the city...

Attributes: Might 9, Skill 13, Wits 18, Luck 21, Will 20, Grace 17.

Combat: Initiative 14, Melee +6, Missile +9, EDC 17(no armor), Hits Total 18.

Magic: Voice of the Ancestors +10*, Mystic Strength 22*, Power Points 27.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +6, Danger Evasion +9, Mystic Fortitude +12, Physical Vigor +9.

Personal Charisma: +12 (+18 to fellow Griots and Jengu).

Background Talents: Orator & Musician.

Mythic Item: *Jubula-wood Staff*. * *These scores take into account the +2 bonus given by the Jubula-wood Staff.*

Other Possessions: Dagger, pipe and pouch of *dildil-weed*.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, High Keshani, Spirit Tongue, Negaran, Oparian, Indwa, Babangan, Zebran...

MZENZE THE SPEARMAN

Level 3 Spearman (Classical), aged 38.

One of the most respected warriors in Tatambor, Mzenze commands the Alaafin's personal guard of warriors, the highly-disciplined *Yellow-shafts* (so-called because of the bright yellow spears they customarily carry into battle).

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 19, Wits 12, Luck 14, Will 18, Grace 8.

Combat: Initiative 14 (17 when fighting with a spear), Melee +6, Missile +5, EDC 16 with shield and linothorax (20 versus melee attacks when fighting with spear & shield), Hits Total 21.

Weapon of Choice: Spear.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +6, Danger Evasion +5, Mystic Fortitude +4, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +3 (+6 to warriors of non-hostile Charybdian tribes).

Background Talents: Equestrian & Tactician.

Possessions: Spear, sword, dagger, shield, linothorax, goods equivalent to 270 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, High Keshani, Oparian.

YOR-DLEMBO THE MAMMUTEP

Level 1 Mammutep, aged 24.

Yor-Dlembo is a stoic Mammutep from the far south of the Great Jungle. He is a descendant of the great Mammutep hero Yush-Kalon, and, in common with the rest of his people, carries the memory of Yush-Kalon's deeds – strangely lost to most other inhabitants of Charybdis – deep within his heart. Following a rare meeting of tribal elders in the ruins of Kalaar, Yor-Dlembo was chosen to undertake the quest that would see the Tenth Worthy take his rightful place once more with the other heroes of Charybdis.

Attributes: Might 18, Skill 11, Wits 14, Luck 12, Will 15, Grace 11.

Combat: Initiative 11, Melee +3, Missile +1, EDC 16 with shield (includes tough skin bonus), Hits Total 15.

Weapon of Choice: Axe.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +3, Danger Evasion +1, Mystic Fortitude +6, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +5 (+6 to fellow Mammuteps).

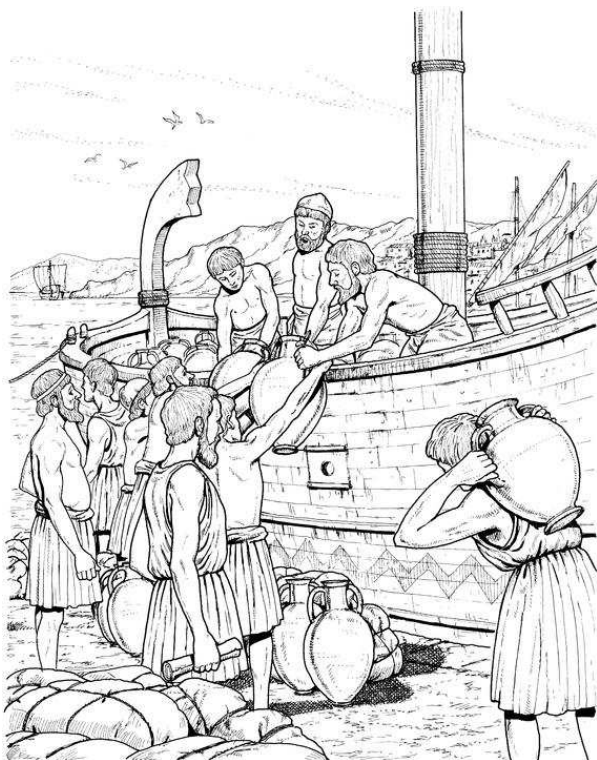
Possessions: Axe, shield, goods equivalent to 75 silver pieces.

Languages Spoken: Charybdian, Mammutep.

BONUS FEATURE ARTICLE

ISLANDS & COLONIES

A Study of Maritime Expansionism, by Anagnosis of Thena, translated by Andrew Pearce



Island colonies: a major aspect of Middle Sea economy

Introduction

As the sea around which the most ancient human cultures were arranged, the Middle Sea has always had a tremendous influence upon the way in which those cultures have developed. The Middle Sea (or **Inland Sea** as it is sometimes known) has shaped the way in which trade, warfare and colonization has been conducted between these nations. Just as significant, though, as the Middle Sea itself, are the many islands which are liberally scattered across it.

No-one knows exactly how many islands there are in the Middle Sea, but they are known to number in the hundreds. The largest of them – Proteus, Tritonis and Seriphos – have been homes to some of the greatest civilizations of Mythika. Many of the smaller islands are currently uninhabited by men. Some of them are home to monstrous creatures, tribes of beast-men, long-abandoned ruins and lost temples. Many have never been explored at all. But there are others that have been settled, and which are still inhabited, by humans.

The Origin of this Article

Recently I returned from an extremely well-received lecture tour around the islands of the Middle Sea. I was deeply struck by the cultural variety of these islands, and the diverse array of relationships between mother-city and colony that they exhibited.

In response to the repeated suggestions of my colleagues, it seems opportune, therefore, to present a paper giving a detailed analysis of the islands and colonies of the Middle Sea, as well as providing an investigation into the nature of colonization itself.

As far as I am aware, no-one has ever before compiled a general overview on this particular subject (there are, of course, a few excellent essays on individual islands, such as Chrysippus of Malos' detailed, if now somewhat dated, study into the mysterious origins of the people of Zethos).

In this monograph, I have included information gleaned on my recent lecture-tour, together with discoveries uncovered by my extensive research into the archives of the Akademia. I hope that my modest contribution will encourage others to indulge in some 'island-hopping' of their own.

Anagnosis of Thena

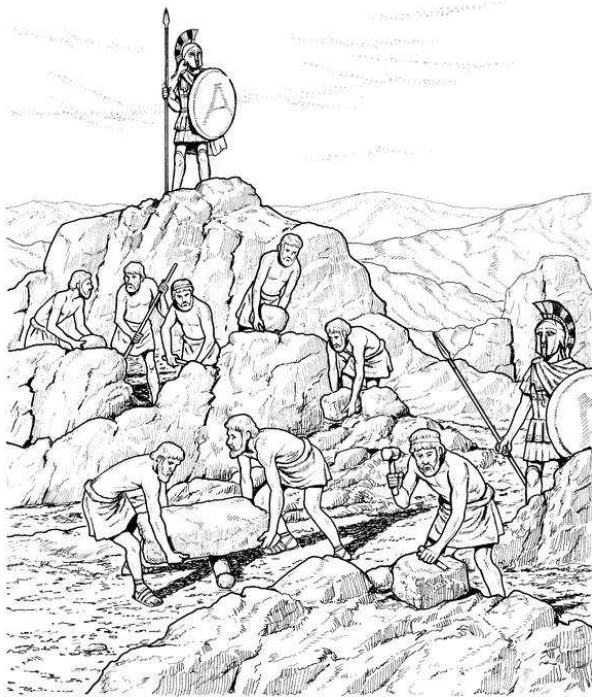
Most of these are trading outposts or colonies of the major powers around the shores of the Middle Sea – particularly the Three Cities, Tritonis and Umbria.

In this particular overview, we will explore the history of colonization across the Middle Sea; study the relationship between colonies and their mother-cities; and detail the most important of the many colonies found upon the islands and shores of the Middle Sea.

The History of Colonization

Only the most inward-looking of Mineans believes that the only important colonial power of Mythika is the Minean Coalition. In fact, through history, successive 'waves' of colonists have ventured forth from many different nations around the shores of the Middle Sea. Only in relatively recent times have the Mineans emerged as the colonizers *par excellence* of Mythika.

The story of colonization is – as usual – best considered according to the traditional 'Three Ages' scheme of Mythikan history.



Founding a new colony is rarely a fun venture

The First Age of Colonization

In the Age of the Myth, the first humans to seriously move out across the Middle Sea in search of new adventures, new opportunities and new homes were the people of Proteus. During the sixth century BP, Proteusian explorers and settlers visited many of the islands and coastlands of the Middle Sea, including, of course, Seriphos and the shores of Edon. Even today, adventurers visiting little-known islands in the eastern half of the Middle Sea will come across scattered remains from the past glories of Proteus.

Following the fall of the Bull King's realm, the next major phase of exploration and settlement came during the so-called 'Minean Diaspora' of the fifth century BP. During these years, the Mineans spread from their home island of Seriphos to the Land of the Three Cities and Thessalia. It was also during this century that the island now known as Tritonis was first settled, with the foundation of the city of Acheiros⁶.

Finally, in the second century BP, during the Golden Age of Seriphos under King Midas of Minea and then his son Antagoras, the so-called 'First Minean Wave' of Colonization took place, led by Seriphos. At least a dozen of the smaller islands of the Middle Sea were settled, but virtually all of these colonies were abandoned or fell into ruin during the Dark Days that followed the fall of the Minean Empire.

⁶ The exact origin of the Acheirans (as the ancestors of the Tritonians were at first known) remains a matter of great scholarly dispute. Although some have postulated a link with the Mineans (supported by certain linguistic and cultural similarities that persist down to the present day), others vigorously dispute this. The tale of the Sons of Deucalion (see p 98), of course, suggests a common origin for Mineans, Tritonians and Umbrians as descendants of Deucalion's first-born son Proteus: but more than this, it is impossible now to say with any degree of certainty.

Nonhuman Colonies?

Humans, of course, have never been the sole inhabitants of the islands of the Middle Sea. From the beginning, many of these islands were strongholds for other races – including Atlanteans, Lesser Cyclops, Titanians, and various tribes of beast-men. Others served as hideaways for many of the most dangerous monsters of Mythika.

Whether they are Animates, Beasts, Folk, Monsters or Spirits, many creatures (often extremely hostile) can be found on the many "mysterious islands" of the Middle Sea.

The Second Age of Colonization

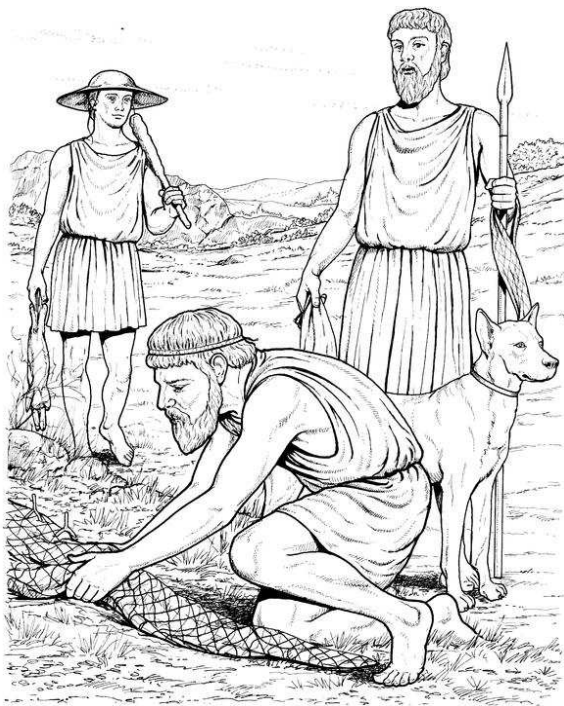
In the first century of the Age of Magic, the leading colonizing power was Edon. At least a dozen Edonite trading outposts or colonies were established during this period, including the cities of Etica and Solus on the southern coast of the Middle Sea – in the land that became known as Midia.

However, by the end of the first century, this Edonite expansion had come to an end. The Midian settlements were thriving, under the rule of the independent Queens of Solus: but the island colonies were threatened by a new, more vigorous 'Minean Wave'. This Second Minean Wave lasted throughout the second century of the Age of Magic. As with the first wave three centuries earlier, the prime movers were from Seriphos. Under the three greatest kings of the House of Hypseos - Lampados I, Labyrinthos the Great and Erastes - the Seriphans took over most of the Edonite outposts, and established perhaps a dozen more.

However, the fall of Seriphos before the might of the Autarchs spelled doom for her colonies. In the third century of the Age of Magic, the Autarchs of Typhon obliterated virtually all of the Minean outposts across the Middle Sea. In their stead, half-a-dozen Autarch settlements were established – principally to serve as way-stations for the Autarch fleets sailing between Acheiros and the Autarch dominions scattered around the shores of the Middle Sea – in Kandaria, the Khet Delta, the Land of the Three Cities, and elsewhere.

The third century is also the time when the Atlanteans made their greatest incursion into the Middle Sea. According to some tales, the Bronze Gates were built around about this time by Wizard-Engineers allied to the Autarchs, and were eventually used to stop the Atlanteans from bringing reinforcements from the Great Ocean into the Middle Sea.

Most of the Atlantean outposts in the Middle Sea were destroyed by the Autarchs after many terrifying battles – others fell in the cataclysmic Days of Wrath that ended the Age of Magic. However, it is rumored that one or two of these outposts have survived down to the present day, watching and waiting for their brother Atlanteans to come surging into the Middle Sea in all their might once more...in the absence of the strong magic of the Autarchs, would the peoples around the Middle Sea be able to resist them?



The simple pleasures of colonial life

The Autarch ascendancy over the Middle Sea took a century to build up, but just three days to overthrow. In the Days of Wrath, all of the Autarch outposts were destroyed by the Olympians – in many cases by Poseidon himself overwhelming them with devastating waters from the deep. Indeed, quite a number of these so-called ‘drowned islands’ remain the target for adventurers and treasure-seekers today, hoping to find long-lost hoards buried beneath the waves.

The Third Age of Colonization

The first century of the Age of Heroes saw two competing sea-powers seeking to establish themselves as the principal colonizers of the Middle Sea. These were the Midians and the Mineans.

The Midians settled mainly along the Charybdiian coast, and the southern part of the island of Amphissa. The Mineans – with the Three Cities rather than Seriphos now at the forefront – settled the northern part of Amphissa, and many smaller islands right across the Middle Sea. It was on Amphissa than these two spheres of influence met, and it was here that warfare between the rival powers of Midia and Argos finally broke out. Argos, supported by Heraklia, succeeded in vanquishing her Midian opponents, stripping the Queens of Solus of all their overseas colonies.

The ‘Third Minean Wave’ continued for a time into the second century of the Age of Heroes: but within a few decades, a new rival had emerged that would provide a far more vigorous challenge to the mariners and merchants of the Three Cities than the Midians. This was the Heptarchy of Tritonis.

Aided by the *bireme*, a new ship design actually developed a few decades earlier by Kandarians (but which the Tritonians were first to use extensively), the Sea Princes of Acharnia proved themselves more than a match for Minean sea-power. By the beginning of the

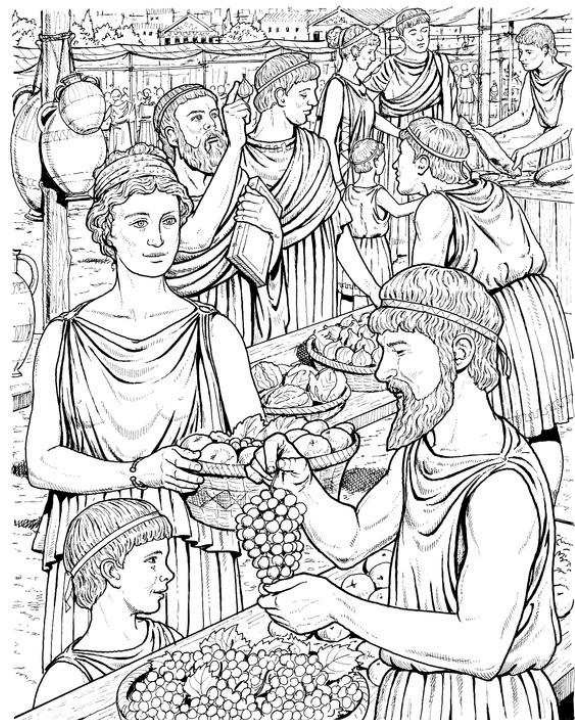
third century, the Three Cities had seen their overseas holdings reduced to half-a-dozen islands, whilst the Tritonian sea-empire had expanded to encompass nearly thirty trading posts and colonies right across the Middle Sea, as well as taking control of Midia, and Kandaria and the rest of the Edonite coast.

Then, hubristically, the Tritonians decided to challenge the Lords of Atlantis on their own territory. In 215 AH⁷, their great fleet sailed into the Great Ocean – confident of the support of Poseidon – only to meet utter defeat. Only a handful of ships made it back to Tritonis.

Word of the debacle quickly spread, and the subject peoples of the Tritonian Empire rose up against their masters. Within less than a decade, the Tritonians found themselves reduced to just a few colonies beyond the home island.

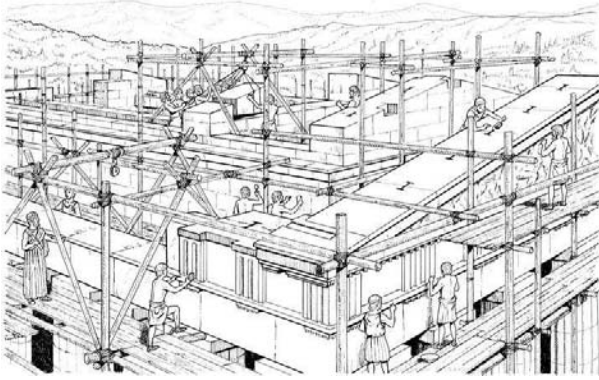
The sudden collapse of Tritonian sea-power left a vacuum that the Three Cities found themselves best placed to fill. A ‘Fourth Minean Wave’ of Colonization began in about 220 AH, and has continued right to the present day. There are now something like forty Minean colonies and outposts – nearly half of them Argosean, the rest evenly split between Heraklia and Thena – on the islands of the Middle Sea and the Midian and Charybdiian coasts. The development of the *trireme* – a powerful successor to the *bireme* – by Argos at the beginning of the Umbrian War (and the Argosean foresight in immediately sharing this design with the other three members of the Minean Coalition) probably had much to do with their success.

Proteusians, Seriphans, Edonites, Autarchs, Midians and Tritonians – each, in turn, have established thriving trading empires across the Middle Sea. But none have been so persistent, or so successful, as the Mineans of the Three Cities, with their many outposts and colonies.



A thriving colonial market

⁷ AH = Age of Heroes



Building a Minean boomtown

The Nature of Colonies

What is a Colony?

A **colony**, essentially, is a small city-state founded by a larger, older one – the so-called ‘**mother-city**’ (or *metropolis*).

A colony is distinguished from a mere **outpost** in the following ways:

1. An outpost usually has a single purpose – e.g. trade, re-supply, a base of operations for exploring the hinterland or guarding a strategic location. A colony typically serves all these purposes, and more.
2. An outpost is entirely dependent upon the mother-city for the provision of a leader (generally referred to as a ‘commander’). After the first generation, colonies generally provide their own leader from within their own population.
3. Those who reside in an outpost tend to do so for a limited period of time – a ‘tour of duty’, if you will. Consequently, they are always considered citizens of the mother-city. By contrast, those who dwell in a colony do so upon a long-term basis, and may well have been born in the colony. Whilst retaining an attachment to the mother-city, they are always considered citizens of the colony first and foremost.
4. Outposts are dominated by a single section of society, e.g. military outposts by soldiers, trading outposts by merchants. Colonies are much more varied, with representatives of many different classes.
5. Outposts are generally small (typically a hundred persons or less, though some military outposts may be greater in size). Colonies are bigger (typically at least five hundred persons – larger, older colonies may have two or three thousand citizens or more).

Of course, particularly successful outposts may become colonies, whilst unsuccessful colonies may be reduced to the status of outposts (or abandoned altogether).

Establishing a Colony

The establishment of a colony is usually regarded as a solemn and sacred event. If a Minean city decides to establish a colony, it is customary to consult an oracle (usually the oracle of Telphos) for guidance. Sometimes citizens are invited to volunteer for an expedition; on other occasions, they will be elected by lot, with one son being chosen from every household where there are several sons. The leaders of the first generation colonists continue to be honored long after their deaths, both by the mother-city and by the colony itself.

The colony generally honors the same patron gods as the mother-city (though there are exceptions to this rule), and are expected to send embassies and votive offerings to the mother-city’s principal festivals.

Obligations to the Mother-City

Although this does vary according to time and culture, in general colonies tend to have three key obligations towards their founding cities:

1. **The obligation to receive citizens from the mother-city.** Any citizen of a mother-city is allowed to travel to a colony, and become a citizen instead of the colony. Mother-cities will often encourage their citizens to travel to the colonies, especially as a way of alleviating population pressure at home. Because colonies (especially younger ones) tend to have greater social mobility than their mother-cities, members of lower classes, in particular, will often go overseas in search of new opportunities. This is often known as ‘pursuing the Minean dream.’⁸
2. **The obligation to pay taxes to the mother-city.** All colonies pay taxes to the mother-city, usually in the form of duties upon goods and services supplied by the mother-city. These taxes are supposedly used to help maintain the fleet of the mother-city, which might be called upon to assist in the defense of a colony in time of war. However, colonials are often suspicious of how these revenues are actually spent (e.g. every time colonists hear that a new temple is being built in the mother-city). Although it is usually quite low, this ‘colonial duty’ can always be increased (e.g. in times of war or as a way of punishing badly-behaved colonies).
3. **The obligation to support the mother-city in times of war.** All well as taxes, colonies are also expected in times of war to provide both ships and men in defense of the mother-city. In theory, this obligation is two-way, with mother-cities being under an equal obligation to come to the defense of their colonies. In practice, this is not always the case.

⁸ Conversely, citizens of a colony have no automatic right of citizenship within the mother-city (although an exceptionally talented or influential individual might be able to attain it). The only circumstances in which this is not the general case are in times of severe crisis for the mother-city (e.g. following a time of disease or famine, such as the terrible Yellow Plague of 156 AH), when citizens from the colonies might be actively encouraged to ‘come home’ to the mother-city – even if they had never actually been born there! Residence (as opposed to citizenship) is another matter entirely, and colonials are generally granted the right of residence in the mother-city even if citizenship itself is denied.



- What do you mean "insurrection"?

Colonial Governance & Discipline

Most colonies have a similar pattern of government to their mother-city. Often the ruler of a colony is a hereditary noble – generally referred to as a 'lord' or 'prince' (but *never* as a king). This is the case with Tritonian, Umbrian and Heraklian colonies. Most Argosean colonies are ruled instead by a 'governor' who is appointed for life by the King of Argos, but who may not pass on the governorship to a son. A similar arrangement was common until recently amongst the Thenan colonies: but lately most of them have tried to emulate the mother-city by embracing democracy, via elected governors. This unusual experiment has not, however, met with universal success.

Colonial rulers are usually assisted by some kind of advisory council – which may consist of nobles, oligarchs or democratically-elected citizens, again depending on the nature of the government.

Mother-cities rarely intervene openly in colonial governance, as this might adversely affect colonial loyalty to the homeland – but indirect interference is tacitly accepted as being commonplace. Extreme forms of intervention (such as the forcible removal from office of a colonial lord or governor, or the suppression of an advisory council) are rarely contemplated, and even more rarely enacted.

Colonies rebelling against their mother-cities are relatively rare occurrences – but they are not unknown. Historically, colonial uprisings have generally been unsuccessful, and usually result in savage reprisals from the mother-city. However, there have been exceptions – which almost always involve substantial aid being provided by a third party.

Three Famous Colonial Insurrections

The Falling Axe of Bastilos

The oldest recorded instance of a colony rebelling against its mother-city is also one of the strangest. Towards the end of the second century of the Age of Magic, the Seriphian colony of Bastilos was the site of a particularly brutal uprising. Supplies to the colony had been disrupted by the fierce Megamedian War then taking place on Seriphos. The starving colonists gathered in the courtyard of the colonial governor. The unsympathetic governor's wife is said to have remarked 'let them eat cake', which did not go down terribly well with the colonists. The victims of the subsequent rebellion included both the governor and his wife, who along with many of their servants were executed by means of an unusual mechanical contraption nick-named the 'Falling Axe' (devised, it is said, by a visiting Wizard-Engineer). The island of Bastilos was then governed according to principles that, reputedly, were not so very different from the democratic ideas today being practiced in Thena (though, it would appear, in a much more haphazard fashion). However, Bastilos' experimentation with new ways of government proved short-lived: ten years after the uprising, the ruthless Autarchs of Typhon ravaged the island. Today, only a few ruins testify to the fact that this island was ever home to a thriving human settlement.

The Treason of Mytilenos

During the Umbrian War, most Minean colonies fully supported the Minean Coalition. However, three years into the war, the Argosean colony of Mytilenos unexpectedly defected to the Umbrian cause. After a six-month siege, the Argoseans successfully regained the city. On hearing the news of Mytilenos' re-capture, the Argosean King, Argolin II, ordered that a ship be dispatched to Mytilenos with orders to execute all the male adults, and to enslave the women and children. However, the next day the king came to regret his injudicious edict, and he ordered the fastest ship available – one of his new *triremes* – to make haste to Mytilenos to countermand the original order. The second ship managed to arrive at Mytilenos less than an hour after the first, and in time to ensure that the original command was not carried out. Instead, only the ring-leaders in the rebellion were executed. Mytilenos continues to be a significant – if not particularly warmly-regarded – Argosean colony today.

The Minotaurians of Bostos

The most recent instance of colonial insurrection dates back only a few years. The Thenan colony of Bostos bitterly resented a sharp increase in the tariff on wine. The citizens of Bostos, noting the advent of democracy within Thenos, demanded to know why they should not have a direct say in decisions made by the mother-city that had such an obvious effect upon them. 'No taxation without representation!' became a common cry heard on the streets of Bostos. This increasing resentment culminated three years ago in the ransacking of a new shipment of Thenan wine by masked Impostors calling themselves the Minotaurians. This incident, the so-called Bostos Wine Party, inevitably provoked an angry response from the Thenan authorities. In the resulting crackdown, many suspected members of the Minotaurian society were arrested. Although a full-scale uprising was avoided on this occasion, resentment towards the mother-city remains high on Bostos, and the possibility of further unrest (provoked by the now proscribed Minotaurians) cannot be discounted.

THE MIDDLE SEA

A Guided Tour, by Anagnosis of Thena, translated by Andrew Pearce



Can you locate the nine island groups on this map? Of course you can!

Geography of the Middle Sea

Whilst there are several hundreds of islands scattered across the Middle Sea, they are not evenly distributed; many of them actually are found in fairly close proximity to other islands. These island groups are spaced out in such a way as to allow 'island-hopping', and this has greatly-aided the expansion of many civilizations – most notably, of course, the Mineans – across the vast expanse of the Middle Sea.

The nine main island groups of the Middle Sea are: the Archipelago of the Seven Islands, the Greater Umbrides, the Lesser Umbrides, the Long Islands, the Mineades, the Proteades, the Southern Tritonades, the Typhonades and the Western Tritonades. All are described in the following paragraphs, with their approximate locations.⁹

⁹ Note that only those islands having an area of more than 4 square miles (i.e. roughly 2 miles by 2 miles) are included in this inventory of island groups – about a hundred in all. The majority of islands and islets in the Middle Sea, whether part of an island group or standing in isolation, are smaller than this. The location of many of the smallest islands of the Middle Sea recorded in tales from the Age of Myth are now unknown. *The locations of the nine main island groups are based, somewhat approximately, upon the magnificent Map of Mythika produced by Emmanuel Roudier. Maze Masters are, of course, free to add islands (or even entire island groups) as they see fit.*

Archipelago of the Seven Islands

Sometimes known as the **Western Archipelago**, or even just the **Archipelago**, this group of seven islands, to the west of the Mineades, is regarded by some just as an extension of the Mineades.

However, although the major islands of **Atreion** and **Zankros** (as well as several of the smaller ones) are populated by Mineans, the history of the Archipelago is quite distinct, and the culture of the Archipelago has developed independently, for the most part, of the influence of the Three Cities – unlike the nearby Mineades. The island of **Draxos** became a base for a band of pirates about seven years ago.

Greater Umbrides

Four islands in the western Umbrian Sea, all firmly under the control of the Umbrians. The most easterly of them is home to the Umbrian colony of **Poikonia**.

Lesser Umbrides

A group of six small, fairly insignificant islands, to the east of the Greater Umbrides and the west of the Long Islands. At least one of them is believed to have become home recently to an Umbrian outpost. Others have been little-visited for centuries.

Long Islands

A collection of six islands, so-called because they are all much longer than they are wide, that are strung out along the north coast of the Middle Sea, roughly two to three hundred miles to the northwest of Zethos. The Long Islands are inhospitable, wind-swept and largely barren, and although several attempts have been made in the past to colonize them, none have borne long-lasting fruit. It is believed that at least one band of pirates is currently operating from a hidden location within them.

Mineades

The largest, and most scattered, of all the island groups, the Mineades is a general term used for the many smaller islands surrounding the principal Minean islands of **Amphissa**, **Seriphos** and **Zethos**. The exact number, and precise bounds, of the Mineades is often disputed, but a figure of thirty-nine islands is often cited – indeed, the **Thirty-Niners** is a well-known alternative name for this island group.

Two-thirds of these islands are inhabited by humans, and they include many important Minean colonies, including the Thenan colonies of **Bostos**, **Pylene** and **Xekanthos**; the Heraklian colony of **Herataea**; and the Argosean colonies of **Mytilenos**, **Saphos** and **Theinos**. Other islands are currently deserted, or home to fierce tribes of beastmen.

Proteades

A set of twelve islands that form a roughly circular island chain off the north-east coast of **Proteus**. The largest of these islands, **Agathe**, is the most important Heraklian colony today. Other important Minean colonies found within this island chain are **Cresos**, **Lyrika** and **Propheon**, as well as the former Argosean colony, now sovereign city-state, of **Dekelea**.

Other islands of note in the Proteades include the one-time Seriphian colony of **Bastilos** and the now equally-deserted island of **Tegeos**.

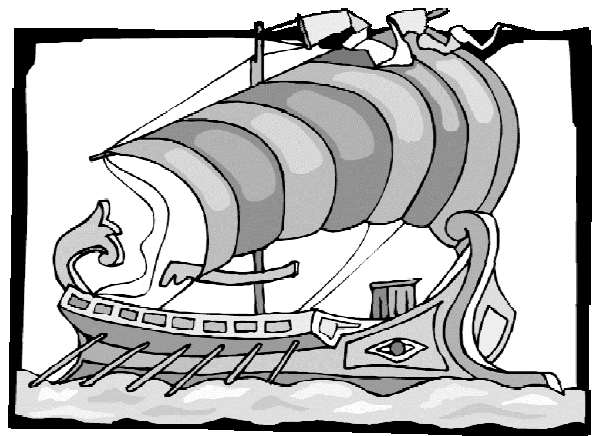
Southern Tritonades

A collection of six islands off the south-west coast of Tritonis. With the exception of the most easterly of them, the Tritonian colony of **Galypsos**, these islands are currently devoid of human habitation, and most are home to a whole host of unpleasant monsters.

Typhonades

A chain of sixteen islands that jut out into the Typhon Sea. Originally a spur of the Thanatari Mountains, the Typhonades were created in the Age of Myth when the surrounding lowlands were drowned in the cataclysmic struggle between Zeus and Typhon that created the Typhon Sea.

Although many human colonies have been established in these islands in the past, no true colonies are known to exist there today, although the Typhonades provide a home to some of the most vicious pirates currently operating in the Middle Sea.



Wait a sec - haven't we used this illustration, already?.

Many of the islands are also inhabited by various monstrous creatures, some of them having migrated to the Typhonades from the Thanatari Mountains in the Age of Magic.

Western Tritonades

A group of three islands off the west coast of Tritonis, all currently home to small (and, to be honest, fairly insignificant) Tritonian outposts.

A Colonial Compendium

The following is a list of significant colonies and/or islands of the Middle Sea (as well as important colonies from some of the surrounding coastal regions). This list is not exhaustive, but includes most of the noteworthy colonies and islands in Mythika today.

Amphissa

The fourth-biggest island of the Middle Sea is home to no less than three colonies today.

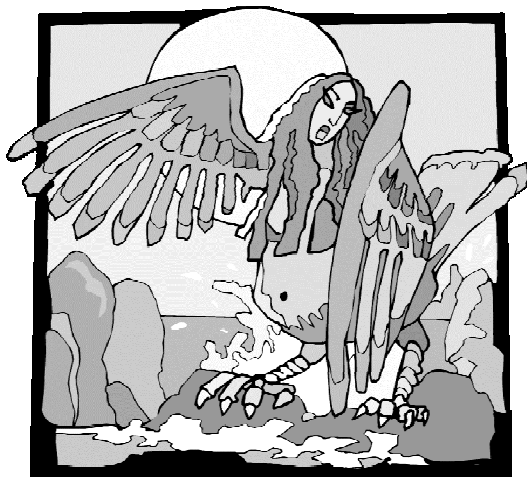
The oldest of them is the Argosean city of **Augentos** (founded two hundred and eighty years ago) on the northern end of the island.

The second-oldest is **Thalasa** which was built by the Heraklians on the western coast, shortly after the successful Amphissan War waged by Argos and Heraklia against Midia. Thalasa was the childhood home of the renowned pankratiast Nastes, perhaps the greatest exponent of the art after Bruxos himself.

The youngest colony is the city of **Malos**, founded by Thena just before the beginning of the Umbrian War. This was situated near the ruins of the old Midian colony of Hodoshir, on the southern end of Amphissa. Malos' greatest son was the famed historian and philosopher Chrysippus.

Apoikos

This Argosean settlement, on the Charybodian coast, began life as a Midian colony. However, following the Amphissan War, it became an Argosean port.



- Beware the Sirens of the Middle Sea!

Of the four Minean colonies initially established along the Charybdian coast (the others were the Argosean settlement of Magentum and the Heraklian ports of Caudis and Propontaea), Apoikos was the only one to thrive. Caudis was overrun by Charybdian tribesmen just a few years after its foundation; Magentum was abandoned during the great Yellow Plague outbreak; and over the course of two centuries Propontaea has withered to little more than a medium-sized outpost. Apoikos, by contrast, has flourished. It is a major centre for trade between Charybdis and the rest of the Minean world. However, it is known that the Umbrians have acquisitive ambitions towards it, and in recent years the Argoseans have greatly increased the size of their garrison at Apoikos, both in terms of ships and men.

Agathe

The largest of all the Heraklian colonies today, the island of Agathe was actually first settled by the Seriphans in the Age of Magic. Reputedly, it was the home island of Hippokratos, the greatest Sacred Healer of the Age of Magic. Like virtually all of the Minean colonies from the Second Age, Agathe was overrun and destroyed by the onslaught of the Autarchs. It was resettled by the Heraklians towards the end of the first century of the Age of Heroes. The weapon-smiths of Agathe are amongst the finest in all Mythika. It is unlikely that Hippokratos would recognize the proud, martial spirit of those living on his home island today.

Archipelago, The

A remote group of seven islands, the Archipelago was founded by Minean refugees in the last century of the Age of Magic, led by the great hero Damocles the Valiant. The descendants of Damocles have ruled as kings of the two largest islands, **Atreon** and **Zankros**, throughout the Third Age. Rivalry between the two islands has often resulted in conflict between them, most recently in a forty-year-long war (For more details, see *Minotaur N°9: Seven Days to War!*).

Arkalia

One of the three Minean colonies along the Midian coast, Arkalia was founded by Thenan colonists just over ninety years ago.

Bastilos

This island was home to a Seriphian colony during the Age of Magic, long since abandoned.

Bostos

One of the oldest and largest Thenan colonies (founded almost two hundred and fifty years ago), Bostos is amongst the most prosperous colonies of the Middle Sea, famous for its black marble, which it exports far and wide. Unfortunately, recent disputes with the mother-city of Thena may well endanger the long-standing prosperity and stability of this island colony (See *Three Famous Colonial Insurrections*, p 73). The Lyrist Skyron is one of the most noted citizens of Bostos living today.

Cresos

A medium-sized Argosean colony, Cresos (founded shortly after the end of the Umbrian War) is famous for its salted goats' cheeses, a much-demanded delicacy throughout the Minean lands. It is also the home island of Anaximander, one of the finest scholars teaching at the Akademia today.

Cyrenos

The oldest (and largest) of the three Minean colonies along the Midian coast, Cyrenos was founded almost one hundred years ago by the Argoseans. It is home to Callippus of Cyrenos, one the most famous scholars of the present day.

Dekelea

Originally a small Argosean colony, founded on this island just before the beginning of the Umbrian War. During the War of the Two Cities, Dekelea rebelled against her mother-city, and with the help of the Heraklians was successful in establishing itself as an independent city-state – a state of affairs that the Argoseans were forced to accept at the end of the war.

The kings of Dekelea remain staunch allies of Heraklia and, under Heraklian influence, have encouraged their citizens to embrace Ares as their patron deity.



- Sirens? Don't make me laugh (six times)!

Galypsos

One of the few remaining Tritonian colonies, a holdover from the Tritonian Empire of two centuries ago. The islanders of Galypsos are dour and resentful, highly suspicious of outsiders, and clearly desire nothing more than a return to past glories.

Herataea

This Heraklian colony (founded a few years after the downfall of the Tritonian Empire) is highly unusual in honoring as its patron the goddess Hera – a throwback in some ways to the ancient traditions of the city of Heraphile, Heraklia's precursor from the First and Second Ages. However, the way in which Hera is worshipped on this island bears little resemblance to how she is generally viewed within the Minean world. Instead of the scheming, jealous wife of Zeus, Hera is portrayed as a dutiful mother dedicated to the raising of strong warriors in the Heraklian cause.

The Temple of Hera on Herataea – one of the largest of its kind in Mythika – has become a place of pilgrimage sacred to all Heraklian women. Many of them will make at least one attempt in their lifetime to travel to Herataea to offer prayers for their sons.

Ithkos Minor

This Umbrian settlement, guarding the southernmost of the Bronze Gates, represents a significant Umbrian presence on the shores of Charybdia. It is governed by an Umbrian warlord who takes his orders directly from the High King at Talos, rather the Pentarch of Ithkos on the opposite shore (which does not stop the Pentarch interfering from time to time in the affairs of Ithkos Minor). The strategic importance of Ithkos Minor to the Umbrians cannot be overestimated.

Lyrika

Originally the site of an important Tritonian port, the island of Lyrika fell to a vigorous Heraklian assault three years after the downfall of the Tritonian Empire. As a Heraklian colony, it has never thrived as it once did under the Tritonians.

Mytilenos

Home to a medium-sized Argosean settlement, and one of the oldest, founded more than two hundred and fifty years ago, the island of Mytilenos was for many years Argos' most loyal and well-regarded colony.

However, all this changed following its unsuccessful rebellion during the Umbrian War (See *Three Famous Colonial Insurrections*, p 73).

Although not treated as harshly as first intended by the mother-city, it has struggled to dispel the widespread suspicion (still held by most Argoseans today) that its citizens are perfidious and untrustworthy.



The bygone days of Nemedé's tranquility

Nemedé

A bold experiment, the colony of Nemedé was founded as a result of a joint expedition from Argos and Thena one hundred and twenty years ago.

For almost half a century Nemedé (located far out in the western Middle Sea) was a peaceful and secluded refuge for philosophers, peace-lovers and artists. In a unique arrangement, successive governors were provided by Argos and Thena every five years in turn.

Following the outbreak of the War of the Two Cities, its population grew as more and more sought the tranquility it offered. Alas, seventy-five years ago, the visitation of a Tragic Floating Head to the island resulted in disaster. Nemedé has been a desolate and accursed island ever since. (For more details, see *Minotaur N2: The Wisdom of Stones*).

Poikonia

A relatively recent colony, established by the Umbrians only fifteen years ago as a 'forward base' – part of their wider expansion into the Middle Sea. Outsiders are discouraged from visiting this island by the vigilant squadron of Umbrian ships based at Poikonia. As a result, the exact strength of the Umbrian forces stationed here remains unknown – but it is feared that they are substantial.

Propheon

The island of Propheon, home to a small Argosean colony (founded two hundred and thirty years ago), is even better known as the home of the Oracle of Propheon, the third most important after Telphos and Pagaea. This Oracle is noted for the way in which its decisions are guided by the casting of the Sacred Dice of Propheon, a gift from the god Hermes, who is viewed as the source of the Oracle's divine inspiration.

Proteus

Largest of all the islands of the Middle Sea, home to the ancient – and mysterious – domain of the Bull King. Following the fall of the Bull King, only a few remnants of the ancient Proteusian civilization survived, in the ancient towns of **Tomis**, **Arkhan** and **Tylssos**.

Five years ago, the city of **Coristea** was founded by the Heraklian prince Belerephon. As a reward for slaying the great sea-serpent Coristos than had for centuries plagued the waters about Proteus (See *Minotaur N8: The Serpent of Proteus*), Belerephon was given permission by his father Thalos of Herraklia to style himself king. However, it is said that the ancient curse of Proteus has returned to plague this Heraklian colony and its young ruler.

(See the mega-module *Tomb of the Bull King* for more details on the island of Proteus and its history).

Pylene

This small island is the site of a fairly obscure Thenan colony, founded just over two hundred years ago. It is most celebrated today as the home of Demosthenes of Pylene – one of the three founders of the Akademia, and author of the *Annals of Mythika*.

Saphos

A small Argosean colony (founded ninety-five years ago), Saphos is today most famous as the home of the controversial feminist Lyrist Lesbe. In recent years, Lesbe has gathered quite a large following at what she refers to as her 'commune' in one of the more remote corners of the island. This commune consists entirely of young women (including, it is said, a number of Nymphs). Men are most obviously not welcome.



The famous Lesbe of Saphos

Seriphos

Third-largest island of the Middle Sea, and cradle of the Minean civilization (See *Minotaur N91: The Sleeping Lion* for a full account of Seriphos).

Skonnos

The youngest (and smallest) of the three Minean colonies along the Midian coast, Skonnos was founded eighty-five years ago by the Argoseans. The Heraklians had coveted the site for themselves, and their resentment at the establishment of this latest Argosean colony along the southern shores of the Middle Sea was one of the causes of the War of the Two Cities that broke out a year later.

Sphaeros

Founded as a colony of Thena exactly one hundred years ago (soon after the Umbrian War), Sphaeros' most famous hero was Pittheus, who helped save the life of Aegeus, the young prince of Thena, on at least three occasions when they were adventuring together in the Helicon Mountains. As a reward, the grateful King Atticas of Thena made Pittheus lord of Sphaeros. Pittheus' daughter Aethra later married Aegeus, and their son is, of course, the famous Theseos of Thena.

The island is renowned for its strong wines – it is said that Dionysos himself allows the wines of Sphaeros to be served at his banquets from time to time, the only 'mortal wine' deemed worthy of this honor. Sphaeros has grown in importance over the last half-century, and is now Thena's largest and most valued colony.

Tegeos

Once home to a fair-sized settlement, Tegeos was founded as an Argosean colony more than two hundred years ago. However, during the War of the Two Cities it was besieged by a Heraklian fleet. Despite a valiant defense lasting almost a year, Tegeos eventually fell to the greatly-superior Heraklian forces.

In one of the most shocking and vicious acts of the war, the Heraklian commander ordered the execution of all the male survivors, and the enslavement of all the females. *The Rape of Tegeos*, which recounts this event with brutal honesty, is one of the most powerful poems written by Lesbe of Saphos. The island has remained uninhabited ever since, and the rare visitors to its shores invariably speak of the unsettling atmosphere that pervades the dreadful ruins of Tegeos.

Thelnos

The island of Thelnos is home to a middle-sized Argosean colony that was founded ninety years ago. In recent years it was plagued by a particularly vicious Chimera, but three years ago it was delivered from this creature by the fearless Amazonian champion Titania.



Nice decorative space-filler, don't you think?

Tikvalut

Also known as the *Island of Hidden Hopes*, this mysterious island is located somewhere in the western half of the Middle Sea. It serves as a secret refuge for the Queens of Midia in times of crisis (See *Minotaur* n7, p 21 for a full account).

Tritonis

Second-largest island of the Middle Sea, and home of the proud and ambitious Sea Princes of Acharnia (See the *Mythika Gazetteer* of our first issue for full details).

Xandare

This remote island, located in a secluded part of the western Middle Sea, was once the site of the Autarch fortress of **Nes**, designed as a bulwark against Atlantean incursions. Much of this fortress was ruined in the Days of Wrath that ended the Second Age.

However, the famous Lighthouse of Nes (rumored to be the inspiration for later examples built as Pstatis and Lectis) is said to have remained largely intact right down to the present day (See *Minotaur* N4: *Wrath of the Sea Witch* for more information).

Xekanthos

A small Thenan colony, founded soon after the collapse of the Tritonian Empire, Xekanthos is renowned for the succulent edible sea-weed that is harvested along its craggy shores. The approaches to the island are notoriously treacherous, and there are only a few safe routes to its harbors. Many of Mythika's finest seamen are reputed to come from Xekanthos.

Zethos

The fifth-biggest island of the Middle Sea, and perhaps the most enigmatic. No-one knows for certain – not even the Zethans themselves – when Zethos was first colonized, or by whom. The island was first mentioned by Homeros in his account of the Giants' Revolt, and was supposedly formed from the large missile thrown by the goddess Athena against the giant Enceladus. It was also, reputedly, home to many monsters during the Age of Magic. The earliest firm reference to human habitation upon the island dates from the first century of the Age of Heroes, whilst the records of the Zethans themselves go back no further than the beginning of the second century of the current age.

The Zethans themselves are clearly Minean, but they speak a rustic dialect that seems unrelated to any of those of the Three Cities or Seriphos. Indeed, certain similarities between the vocabulary of Umbria and Zethos point to a possible historic connection between them. Zethos has no major city, but only a number of scattered villages and farmsteads.

Unusually, the Zethans worship Demeter as their patron goddess. They are ruled not by a king, but a hereditary lord (perhaps a descendant of the first colonial governor: but of which city?).

Zethos was the site of one of the first battles in the Umbrian War, and ever since Umbrian influence upon the island has been strong – even though Zethos is an official member of the Minean Coalition.

Conclusion

We should never look down upon our fellow Mineans 'from the colonies'. The common prejudice, held by many who live in the Three Cities, that they are superior to their colonial counterparts should be firmly resisted. Many of our greatest minds – both past and present – have come from the islands, and the Akademia would be greatly impoverished without them.

And let us not forget that many of the finest heroes and champions of Mythika have come from the colonies.

If the Three Cities remain the heart of Minean culture, then the islands and colonies are its blood vessels, helping to ensure that the vital life-blood of our Minean traditions is maintained and circulated right across the Middle Sea. Certainly it would be almost impossible for the many threats to our way of life – whether Atlantean, Tritonian, or Umbrian – to be held in check without the support of the colonies. So let us never belittle them.

MYTHIC BESTIARY

BENEATH THE WAVES

A New Collection of Undersea Creatures for Mazes & Minotaurs

Amphydra

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A small but very vicious undersea creature, with a snake-like head and six tentacle-like appendages. It uses its venomous fangs to paralyze its prey before devouring it slowly.

Size: Small

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 45'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d3 (bite) + poison

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 6

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Camouflage (as alga, 20), Entangle (5', Might 12), Poison (bite, paralysis), Stealthy (undersea, 16).

Awards: Glory 24.

The Amphydra's usual tactic is to use its Entangle attack to hinder its prey and then use its poisonous bite Melee attack on the following round.



Beware the paralyzing bite of the Amphydra!



- What are you staring at?

Cetoceros

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A huge cetacean with a vicious frontal horn. The Cetoceros is not a mundane animal but a rare magical creature (see *Additional Lore* below).

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90' (360' cruising)

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +7

Damage: 2d6

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 30

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +6

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Charge Into Battle (Initiative 19, Melee +11), Cruise, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 240, Wisdom 30.

Additional Lore: The ivory horn of the Cetoceros is (wrongly) believed by some Sorcerers to be imbued with virtues of increased vigor and longevity, making it a vital ingredient in the preparation of some much sought-after "powders of immortality" and other (totally ineffective) "elixirs of long life".

Lyrian

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: Lyrians are a renegade clan of Titanians (see *Creature Compendium*, pp116-117), whom Poseidon blessed with the ability to breathe and live underwater (see below for the full story). They live in the undersea citadel of Lyrios, below the waves of the Middle Sea. Their favorite weapon is the trident and many of them also use nets in combat (see *M&M Companion*).

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +6

Missile Attack: +3 (+5 with net)

Damage: 2d6 (large trident)

Defense Class: 15 (17 with shield)

Hits Total: 30

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +4

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Amphibious, Charge into Battle (Initiative 17, Melee +10) Grapple (Might 20), Magic Resistance, Missile Weapons (net, range 20', Might = 20), Sixth Sense, Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 150, Wisdom 40. Those with shields or nets are worth +10 Glory.

The Children of Lyros

Back in the Age of Myth, there once was a powerful Titanian king named Lyros, who, like all the other Titanians, despised the Olympians and honored the defeated Titans as the "true gods".

Lyros and his people lived on a small island of the Great Ocean, whose name has now been forgotten. One day, his kingdom was suddenly attacked by a mighty force of undersea Fomoros (see *Creature Compendium*, p 42), who wanted to seize the island for themselves.

Lyros and his Titanian warriors fought valiantly but they were no match for the fearsome Fomoros, who commanded the very powers of the Abyss.

Faced with certain defeat and destruction, Lyros cursed the sleeping Titans for not coming to his people's rescue. These desperate words were heard by Poseidon, who then manifested himself in all his might and majesty.



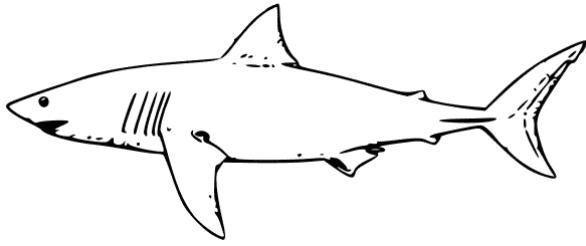
*A mighty Lyrian warrior
(and a majestic original illustration by Croquefer!)*

The King of the Sea told the Titanian King that he would gladly save him and his brethren and help them vanquish the Fomoros menace – if Lyros and his clan swore eternal and total allegiance to him.

Lyros accepted the bargain and Poseidon raised his divine fury to destroy the attacking Fomoros. In the process, Lyros and his kin were given the power to live underwater, where their island and city were relocated by the god of the sea.

Since that fateful day, the descendants of Lyros, known as the Lyrians, have been loyal and faithful servitors of Poseidon and have served him well in his wars against the Fomoros. They are, however, viewed with a certain degree of suspicion by Tritons and other Poseidonian folks, who have not forgotten the Titanian origins of Lyros and his kin.

Their forsaking of the Titans in favor of Poseidon has also made the Lyrians renegades and betrayers in the eyes of the "true" Titanians, who have sworn the total destruction of these "mutated, degenerate traitors". Should the Titanians manage to establish a lasting alliance with the Fomoros, the Lyrians will find themselves in a very tight spot.



- Explain to me again, why I had to wait TEN issues of the Minotaur to finally see my stats in print...

Shark

Common Shark

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The well-known marine predator.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 80' (320' cruising)

Initiative: 20

Melee Attack: +7

Damage: 1d6 (bite)

Defense Class: 16

Hits Total: 16

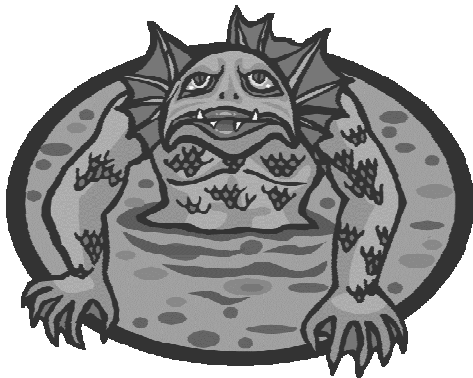
Detection / Evasion: +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Charge Into Battle (Init 22, Melee +9), Cruise, Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (16), Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 75.

Note: White Sharks have a Weird Mystique, which raises their Defense Class to 17, their Mystic Fortitude to +2 and their Glory award to 80.



The Siluros rises again!

Giant Shark

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Think JAWS. Huge, absolutely deadly, monstrously tough and deviously clever.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 120' (480' cruising)

Initiative: 23

Melee Attack: +9

Damage: 2d6 (bite)

Defense Class: 18

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: +8 / +10

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Charge Into Battle (Init 24, Melee +13), Cruise, Fearsome, Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (16), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 400, Wisdom 20.

Note: Giant White Sharks have a Weird Mystique, which raises their Defense Class to 19, their Mystic Fortitude to +2 and their Glory award to 420.

Siluros

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Huge, shambling, carnivorous fishmen with a rudimentary intelligence. Siluros tend to be solitary creatures but are sometimes used as slaves or 'war brutes' by the Sons of Dagon.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90' (60' on land)

Initiative: 11

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 2d6 (claws)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 20

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Amphibious, Grapple (Might 20), Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 80.

Tritonide

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: These fighting mermaids could be described as the Amazons of the Undersea. They are actually young Mermaids who have decided to forsake their traditional feminine and melodic roles to become warriors – just like their Triton fathers and brothers. Needless to say, this very recent and marginal liberation movement has been met with utter contempt and even violent anger by the very irritable and traditionalist (or is that chauvinist?) Tritons, who have simply banished those “deranged females” from their society. Exiles from the various undersea clans have now formed a tribe of their own, calling themselves the Tritonides.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 80' (320' cruising)

Initiative: 19

Melee Attack: +3

Damage: 1d6 (trident)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +4 / +10

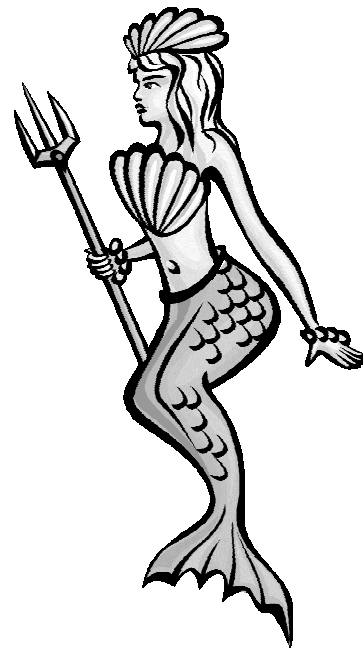
Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Cruise, Lightning Fast, Stealthy (18), Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 60, Wisdom 10.

Note: *While they lack the male Tritons' Tough Skin and sheer physical strength (Charge Into Battle), Tritonides have retained their Mermaid's Clever Cunning and Stealthy agility, making them very effective "commando warriors". Tritonides have chosen to forsake the Vocal Entrancement power of 'true' Mermaids because they saw this gift as incompatible with a true warrior's vocation. For a Tritonide, using Vocal Entrancement would mean a complete betrayal of her chosen beliefs – and this would cast her out of the nascent Tritonide society.*

Additional Lore: Although they have been banned from traditional Triton / Mermaid society, the Tritonides remain fiercely loyal to Poseidon. It should be noted that, so far, the God of the Sea has not reacted in any way to the Tritonides' declaration of independence or to the Tritons' outraged anger. Perhaps he has special plans for the Tritonides, in his future wars against those who still defy his supremacy (such as the Fomoros).



- Sorry, did you just call ME a Mermaid?

So You Wanna Play a Tritonide?

If you are a Maze Master running an undersea campaign that allows Tritons as player-characters (see our first issue or the *Triremes & Tritons* compilation), then there is no real reason why you shouldn't allow Tritonides as a player-character class – especially since they are such an obvious undersea equivalent of Amazons.

Tritonide player-characters should be created as Triton player-characters, but with Grace and Skill as their primary attributes and without the *Toughness* special ability of Tritons.

The special melee Initiative bonus granted by their *Aquatic Agility* should be based on Skill and Grace (instead of Might and Skill for Tritons).

Their *Aquatic Agility* is even greater than the Tritons', allowing them to add this special Initiative bonus (sum of Skill and Grace mods) to all their Danger Evasion rolls *except detection rolls*. Lastly, the unique and novel fighting style of Tritonides allow them to use Grace instead of Might when calculating their Melee score.

Every level above the first allows a Tritonide to add +4 to her Hits Total, +1 to her Luck score and +2 to Skill, Wits, Will or Grace (player's choice).

Lastly, a Tritonide's Reputation Effect should affect all undersea Folks – *except* Tritons, for whom a Tritonide's Reputation bonus will actually act as a negative reaction modifier.

Whale

On Mythika, these titanic sea mammals can only be encountered in the Great Ocean – and they are, of course, perfectly at home in the seas of Midgard, the world of *Vikings & Valkyries*.

Common Whale

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic sperm whale.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 120' (480' cruising)

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 3d6

Defense Class: 18

Hits Total: 40

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +2

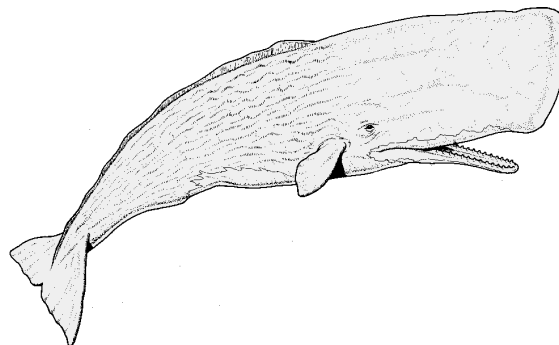
Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Charge / Dive Into Battle (Init 21, Melee +14), Cruise, Fearsome, Natural Armor, Sharp Senses.

Awards: Glory 275, Wisdom 10.

Unique Ability: Whales are so big that they can ram ships, just like Sea Serpents (see *Creature Compendium*, p 101).

Note: *White whales* have a Weird Mystique, which increases their Defense Class to 19, their Mystic Fortitude to +2 and their Glory award to 300.



- Save the whales? Save the ship, more like!

Orca (Killer Whale)

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: The classic *orcinus orca*.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 120' (480' cruising)

Initiative: 19

Melee Attack: +7

Damage: 2d6

Defense Class: 16

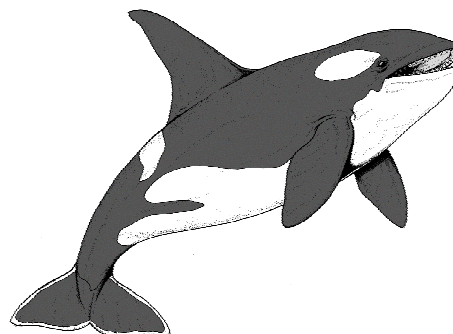
Hits Total: 24

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Charge / Dive Into Battle (Init 23, Melee +11), Cruise, Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 120.



- Okay, WHO cried "Jump, Willy, jump!" ???

Whales in the Game

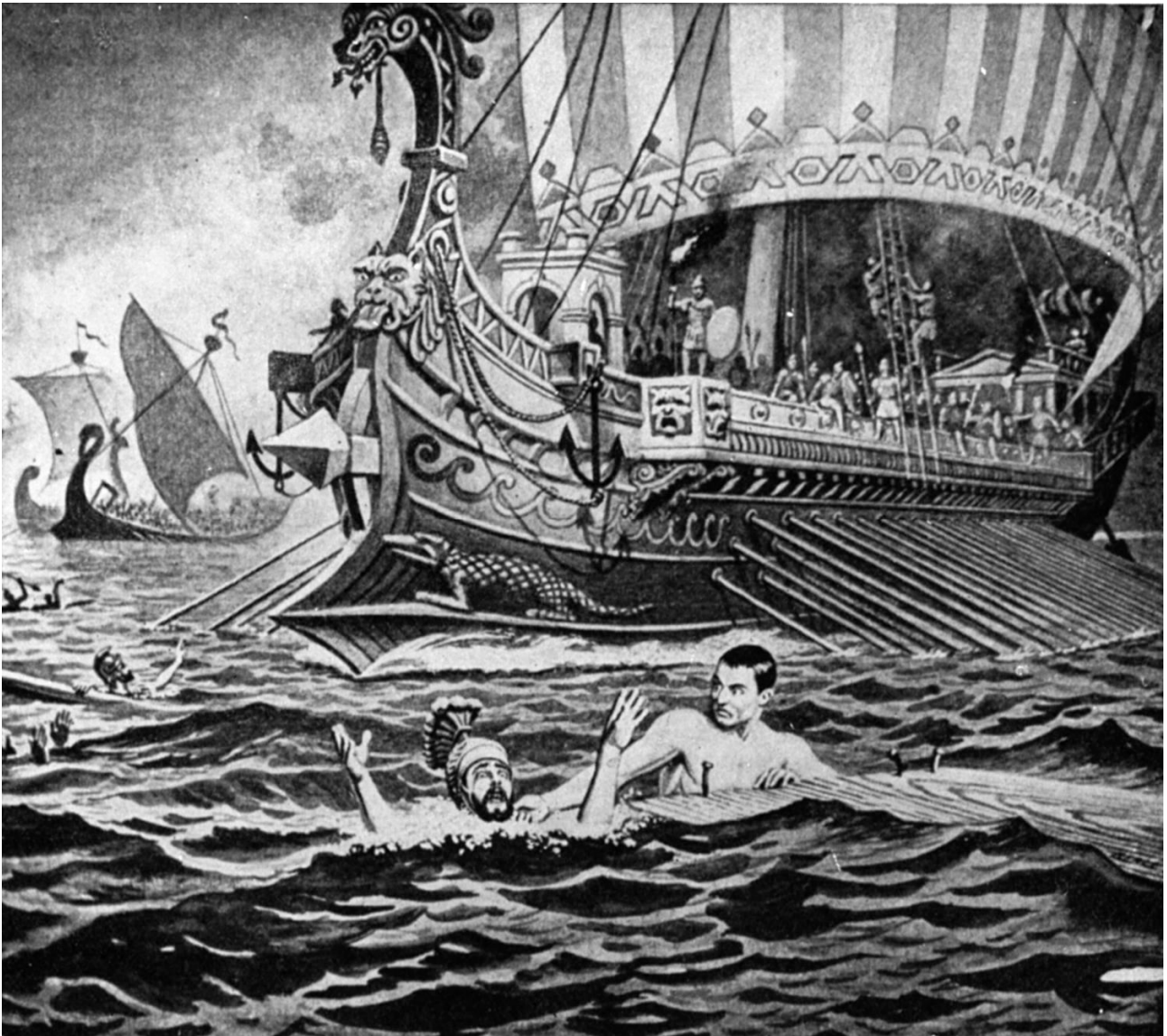
Although their sheer size and might make them Dangerous in game terms, common whales are peaceful creatures – and are unlikely to attack unless provoked first. Some Nereids of the Great Ocean have been known to charm them.

Eco-friendly or new-agey Maze Masters may wish to give whales a higher degree of intelligence and empathy, as well as a form of spiritual majesty. In this case, they should be given a Clever Cunning, an Eldritch Mystique, as well as the Sixth Sense and Magic Resistance special abilities (which are also possessed by Dolphins in M&M) but would no longer be perceived as Fearsome creatures.

Each issue, **Griffin Archives** unearths an old Griffin article from the glorious 80s

ONE THOUSAND SHIPS

A History of Mythikan Naval Warfare, by Andrew Pearce



The First Days of Naval Warfare

The **war galley** as we now know it is the product a long history of change and refinement. In the First Age, the earliest form of the war galley was the **triaconter**, a vessel with thirty oars (fifteen on each side).

Towards the end of the First Age, before the Dark Days, the larger **penteconter** was developed – a vessel with fifty oars (twenty-five on each side). According to legend, the very first **penteconter** was the **Argo**, upon which Jason underwent his heroic quest.

Penteconters certainly were used in the Thessalian War. However, they remained the preserve of the very wealthy – kings and a few important princes – and were greatly outnumbered by the smaller *triaconters*.

In the Second Age, the *penteconter* became the leading type of war galley. Whereas in the First Age they had been used (like *triaconters*) simply as a means of transporting fighting men (who also acted as rowers) from one place to another, now a number of naval tactics were developed to enable them to be used as weapons of war in their own right.

Autarchs & Atlanteans

The Typhonian Autarchs who dominated the Middle Sea with their fleets of *penteconters* in the final century of the Second Age developed two important tactics.

The first was **shearing**, which involved coming alongside the enemy ship and using the weight of one's own ship to break the enemy's oars – a tricky tactic to deploy without damaging one's own oarsmen, but, if successful, one capable of crippling both an enemy ship and its crew.

The second tactic involved placing an Elementalist on board each ship, who would then be tasked with firing balls of supernatural fire at the enemy ship, in the hope of starting a conflagration. This tactic, which was unique to the Autarchs, was sometimes referred to as deploying **Typhonian fire**.

The most deadly rivals of the Autarchs at sea were the Atlanteans. Not only were their galleys far stronger than those of their rivals, but they were also equipped with **catapults**, which the Atlanteans used to fire metal bolts with devastating effect upon the crews of enemy ships. The naval battles of the Age of Magic, with bolts of metal and balls of fire flying in opposite directions, must have been an awesome and terrifying spectacle.

The Bireme Revolution

In the mid-first century of the Third Age, a new revolutionary development took place within naval warfare with the building of the first **biremes**.

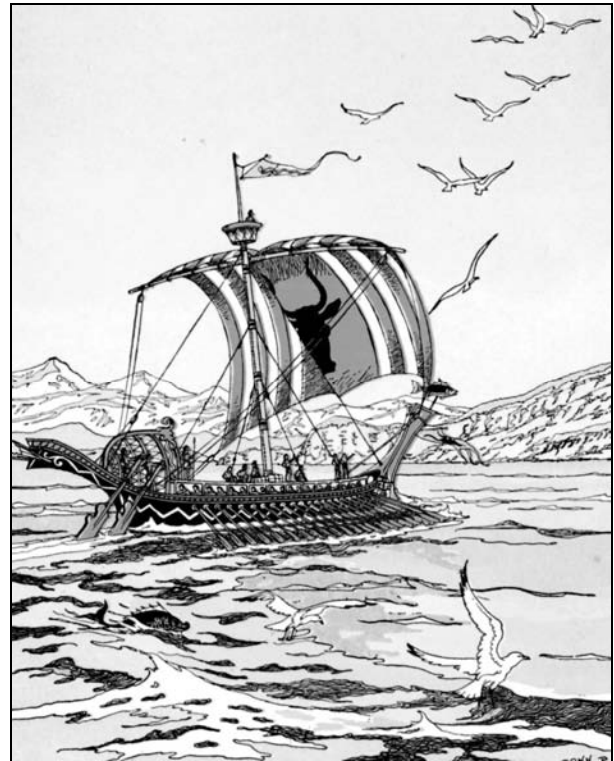
Up to then, all war galleys had used a single bank of oarsmen. But now, for the first time, oars were double-banked, resulting in increased speed and maneuverability. *Biremes* were virtually the same length as *penteconters*, but had crews of one hundred, who were now specialist rowers, not fighters.

Biremes also carried detachments of twenty fighters, whose job was to engage in **boarding actions** against enemy ships.

Most *biremes* were also equipped with a ram – usually made of bronze – which allowed a new tactic, **ramming**, to be developed. These new techniques – boarding and ramming – alongside traditional tactics like shearing, made naval combat more skilled and varied than ever before.

The first *biremes* were developed by the Edonites, but within a few decades the Tritonians had copied the design, adding further refinements (such as the ram) and using these new, powerful ships to establish their dominance over the Middle Sea.

In the second century, the Mineans of the Three Cities began to overhaul their fleets of *penteconters* by introducing *biremes*, but far too late to mount an effective challenge to the Tritonian naval hegemony. However, the destruction of almost the entire Tritonian fleet in their foolish engagement with the Atlanteans in 215 AH changed all that. The Mineans quickly re-emerged as the dominant naval power, a position they have retained to the present day.



Holy Poseidon! Isn't this the cover art from our first issue?

Enter the Trireme

Just over a hundred years ago the last great development in the evolution of the war galley took place, with the building of the first **triremes**. In a further refinement to the *bireme*, the oars of the *trireme* were triple-banked, with a crew of one hundred and fifty, and carrying a detachment of forty fighters. The *trireme* was heavier, but faster and more maneuverable, than any previous war galley.

Developed by the Argoseans shortly after the outbreak of the Umbrian War, and quickly embraced by the other members of the Minean Coalition, the *trireme* soon became the dominant war galley within the fleets of the Three Cities and Seriphos. Later, it came to be adopted by some rival naval powers (including the Tritonians and the Umbrians), though others still rely largely or exclusively on the older *bireme* (such as the Desert Kingdom, the Edonites and the Midians).

In recent years, several attempts have been made to develop a **quadrireme**, either by adding a fourth bank of oars, or by putting two rowers each to a double bank of oars. However, critical problems with stability and maneuverability remain unresolved, and most naval engineers now firmly believe that the *trireme* will remain unchallenged as the apogee of war galley development.

Pirates of the Middle Sea

Pirates, still a scourge in many parts of the Middle Sea despite relentless attempts to eliminate them, generally eschew the use of war galleys (whose maintenance require both iron discipline and reliable funds far beyond the means of most pirate bands). Instead, pirates make use of merchant roundships.

Fleets of Mythika

War galleys generally have a life-span of 25-30 years. Most of the major sea-powers around the Middle Sea have fleets of one hundred and fifty or more war galleys, meaning that they have to build five to ten ships a year to maintain their fleet strength.

In times of war, this figure is often far higher. In terms of numbers of available war galleys, the strongest power of the Middle Sea today is Tritonis, with its mighty fleet of three hundred *triremes*. Next is Midia, which also has three hundred war galleys (although most of them belong to the older *bireme* design).

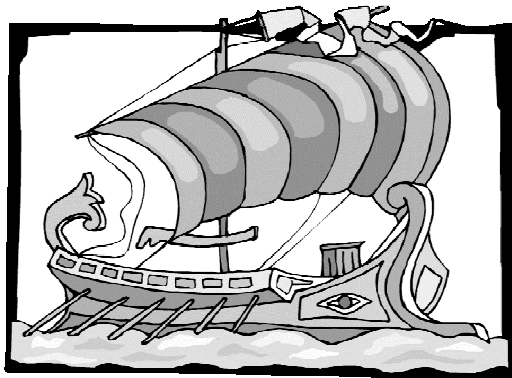
The Argoseans have the largest Minean fleet, at two hundred war galleys, compared to the Thenans with one hundred and fifty, the Heraklians with one hundred and the Seriphans, also with one hundred. All these ships are *triremes*, and the combined might of the entire Minean Coalition is without equal on the Middle Seas. However, getting them to act together effectively, even in time of dire emergency, would be no mean feat.

The Minean colonies rarely have fleets of their own, except in the case of a few of the larger colonies (such as Agathe and Sphaeros). The minor sovereign Minean powers (such as the islands of Atreon and Zankros in the Archipelago, Dekelea and Zephos) also have their own small military fleets.

Of the rest, the Desert Kingdom has a hundred and fifty war galleys (all *biremes*), mostly manned by foreign hirelings; the Edonites of Kandaria, despite possessing one of the largest merchant fleets, have only fifty or so war galleys, mostly *biremes* (although it is rumored that the Tritonians have accepted a commission to build a powerful fleet of *triremes* for the Edonites and their mysterious new masters to the East); and the secretive Umbrian warlords have at least one hundred and fifty ships, mostly *triremes* (and, according to some reports, perhaps far more).

Finally, it's anyone's guess as to how many ships the long-dormant power of Atlantis has – doubtless waiting patiently, as they have for centuries, to return with terrifying might to the waters of the Middle Sea.

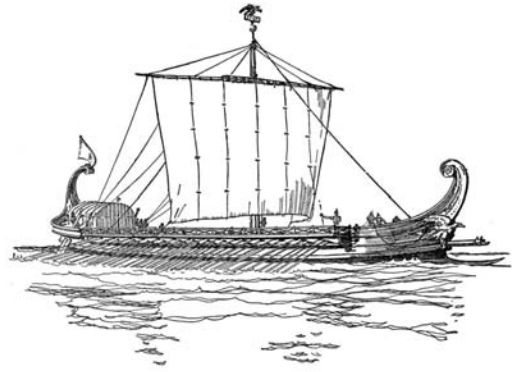
Who knows what form the next great battle on the high seas will take?



Oh no, not THAT ship – AGAIN!

Bonus 2011 Material

Ships & Stats



Sa

iling on the seas of old-school adventuring...

Maze Masters who wish to translate the concepts explored in this *Griffin Archive* article in game terms should use the guidelines given below. Also, be sure to check our friend Luke G. Reynard's Naval Warfare rules, detailed in *Minotaur* N°1, pp 30-31!

Biremes

Treat Biremes as War Galleys with only 10 Structure points, and a carrying capacity of 20 fighting men.

Triremes

These are the 'standard' War Galleys, with 12 Structure points and a carrying capacity of 40 fighting men.

Pirate Ships

Treat Pirate Ships as Merchant Roundships with 8 Structure points and a carrying capacity of 15 fighting men (*not* 20, as per the normal rules for Merchant Ships used as fighting vessels, as Pirates *always* allow a certain amount of room on their ships for 'booty').

Quadrirèmes

Treat experimental Quadrirèmes as 'super' War Galleys with 16 Structure points and a carrying capacity of 60 fighting men. However, the design flaws inherent to this type of ship give it a negative Fortune mod of 1d3+2.

THE QUEST FOR PRINCE ARGAN

A Complete Campaign Plot for a Heroic M&M Odyssey



Prince Argan, the missing heir to the throne of Argos

This campaign framework was created to give a long-term goal to the characters – as well as a perfect excuse to go island-hopping in the Middle Sea, exploring mysterious sites, facing all sorts of perils and having exciting adventures in the grand, good old *Mazes & Minotaurs* style.

As often in M&M, this long-term goal takes the form of a quest to fulfill – in this specific case, finding Prince Argan, the missing heir to the throne of Argos, before his scheming brother usurps the crown. Prince Argan went sailing in search of adventure across the Middle Sea a few years ago and has not been heard of ever since.

This uncertain and perilous quest will probably take our heroic adventurers to many mysterious islands – and depending on the whims of the Maze Master, may also lead them to the shores of Charybdis, Midia, Tritonis, the Desert Kingdom or even the Land of the Sun¹⁰.

¹⁰ Lands which, incidentally, have all been described in detail in their own *Mythika Gazetteers*

A Modular Odyssey

In this daring and secret venture, the adventurers act as “deniable agents” for Princess Niobe in her secret struggle against her brother-in-law Prince Kyros, with the future of the Argosean monarchy in the balance – see *Background* next page for more details. While she cannot herself join the expedition (since, as Kyros was only too eager to remind her, her duty as Admiral of the Fleet forces her to stay in Argos), Niobe will cover all necessary expenses for the quest – including (if the player-characters do not already have one) a ship of the best quality, complete with crew and captain¹¹.

The length of the campaign depends entirely on the Maze Master’s wishes – or, to put it another way, on how hard he wants to make things for the adventurers: depending on the plans of the Maze Master, the quest for the missing Prince of Argos could be concluded in three adventures or span a dozen scenarios or even more.

The structure of the campaign also depends on what happens once the adventurers have located the elusive Prince Argan: does the story end here, with Prince Argan returning to Argos to “sort things out” with his brother and the adventurers leaving Argos before the internecine struggles begin? Or is this just the end of the first act?

In its more ambitious version, the quest for Prince Argan can be played as a three-tiered campaign, as detailed below. Each tier of this epic odyssey would include several adventures (or “chapters”). This three-tier structure could also correspond to the player-characters’ advancement: they could start the first tier at low level (1-2), reach level 3 or 4 over the course of the second tier and reap their last levels and rewards at the end of the final tier.

¹¹ And of course, this captain could be none other than the famous Barros One-eyed, already featured in *The Lost Lair of Laodice* and the epic *Against Atlantis!* trilogy published in previous issues of the *Minotaur*.



- Where the heck is Prince Argan?

Background Information

The main goal of this campaign is based on the current political situation in Argos¹².

After many years of seemingly endless senescence, Argon the Proud, king of Argos, has (finally) died, leaving two sons (as well as more than twenty daughters, but that's another story): the romantic and adventurous Prince Argan and his younger brother Kyros, a far more practically-minded and ambitious young man. Despite being heir apparent to the Argosean throne, Prince Argan has never shown any interest in politics, leaving such "petty concerns" to Kyros and his father's counselors. Argan had far more interesting things to do in life than learning to rule a kingdom: he wanted to become a heroic adventurer and accomplish legendary deeds. Two years ago, after several years of adventuring, Argan embarked with his men on yet another heroic expedition, which was supposed to take them to the shores of Charybdis... which he apparently never reached.

Since then (and because of his father's growing senility), Kyros has become the *de facto* ruler of Argos, acting as regent and gaining support from many powerful Argosean aristocrats. Far from being a despotic tyrant, Kyros has shown a true political acumen – as well as a genuine taste for power.

And now that King Argon is dead, Prince Kyros finds he cannot accept the idea of seeing the romantic and carefree Argan inherit the crown; simply put, he has become tired of being the proverbial power behind the throne and has decided to become the next king of Argos. But he also knows that Argan has always been far more popular than him – and that his prodigal brother would be perfectly capable of returning to Argos upon hearing of his father's demise. .. All Kyros needs is to make sure that his brother never comes home to claim his crown.

¹² This situation was detailed in the *Mythika Gazeteer* of our second issue. This situation is summarized below, but Maze Masters should definitely check the background material on Argos in *Minotaur* N°2, pp 12-14.

Still officially acting as interim regent of Argos, Prince Kyros has decided to send an expedition led by some of his most loyal supporters in search of his brother; the official mission of these men is to locate the lost prince and bring him back to Argos. Their real mission, which is known only to their leaders and to Prince Kyros is to make sure that Prince Argan is already dead – and if it's not the case, to eliminate him, along with any potential witnesses, and come back to Argos with the tragic tale of Argan's last quest and heroic death (as well as his body, if possible). After all, everybody knows that adventuring is a dangerous business.

Argan's wife however, the valorous Princess Niobe (who is also the Admiral of Argos, see *Minotaur* N°2, p 14) has begun to suspect her brother-in-law of foul play: an adventurer herself, she volunteered to take command of an expedition to find her missing husband right after King Argon's death; Prince Kyros denied her this request, on the grounds that, in this dark hour of royal mourning, her foremost duty as head of the Argosean Fleet was to stay in Argos to protect the city from any potential maritime attack. Although Niobe knew full well that such an attack was highly unlikely, she had no choice but to comply. Her gut feeling is telling her that Kyros is about to seize the throne but she has no proof of this, and has not voiced her suspicions to anybody – a wise move in a royal court full of intrigue, hidden agendas and power struggles. Faced with this very tricky situation, Niobe has decided to secretly hire a group of foreign adventurers to locate Prince Argan and bring him back to Argos before his brother seizes power (or before Kyros' agents find Argan and kill him). Enter the player-characters...

Part One: Sea Voyage

The player-characters look for Prince Argan on various islands and shores of the Middle Sea, having quite a few perilous adventures en route - and eventually gathering some reliable clues on the current whereabouts of the missing Prince. This first tier ends up when the adventurers finally find and meet the missing heir apparent of Argos.

This part of the campaign should of course involve many mysterious islands¹³, storms and other natural perils, encounters with sea creatures and all the traditional elements of classic M&M adventuring; it should also allow the characters to gain one or two levels and a few useful mythic items before facing the greater challenges that lie ahead.

If you are playing with novice players, this first part would also be an excellent opportunity to show them how the game mechanics works and what "old school adventuring" is all about.

With more experienced players, Maze Masters should probably put a greater emphasis on the "race against time" aspect of the quest – and on the actions of the other search party, the one sent by Prince Kyros to find his missing brother (and dispose of him discreetly). Ideally, the adventurers should cross the path of their rivals at least once before getting to the second tier.

Part Two: Exotic Adventures

More Trouble Ahead

Whether he has found a lost city in the Charybdiian Jungle or become embroiled in some dangerous situation in Sybaris, Tritonis or Kandaria, Prince Argan must deal with some serious trouble of his own before he can get back to Argos – and, of course, the adventurers will have to help him solve these problems, especially if they too have become embroiled in this local situation – a "twist of fate" which any reasonably devious Maze Master should be able to ensure. Either because of his own heroic code of honor or of circumstances that are beyond his control, the heir to the throne of Argos will be unwilling (or unable) to leave his current location before these problems are solved.

And don't forget the rival search party - who may also have tracked down Prince Argan and whose orders are to eliminate the missing heir and all potential witnesses before bringing home the sad news of Prince Argan's unfortunate demise at the hands of some terrible monster or unknown peril. It would be especially fitting to have Prince Kyros' agents appear right after Argan and the adventurers depart for Argos, having sorted out (or so they think) all their intermediate problems...

The Plot Thickens

Ideally, this part of the campaign should allow the player-characters to deal with more complex situations (involving, for instance, the lost mysteries of Charybdis or some nasty power struggles in Sybaris) and face more dangerous menaces – including one or two major monsters.

¹³ These island-hopping expeditions would be an excellent reason to visit the various Argosean colonies of the Middle Sea, which are detailed in this issue's *Bonus Gazetteer*.

Argan could also have become obsessed with some unique mythic artifact which he absolutely needs to find before returning to Argos – especially if this particular quest has been placed upon his princely shoulders by one of the Olympians.

Cherchez la Femme

In addition to these various dramatic elements, Prince Argan's romantic streak and devil-may-care behavior could allow the Maze Master to introduce the following subplot.

While adventuring, Prince Argan has fallen in love with a Nymph or exotic princess, whom he had to rescue from some dire peril. And now he must leave her to return to his kingdom... unless he decides to bring her back to Argos with him – a choice which would have some interesting consequences, given the part played by his faithful wife Niobe in this epic campaign (including her fate in the third and final tier – see below for more details).

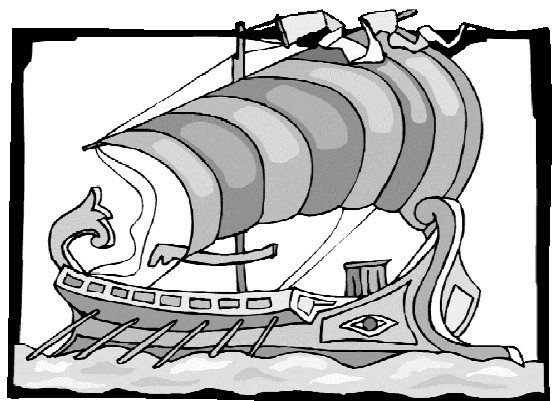
Part Three: Return to Argos

Argan's Homecoming

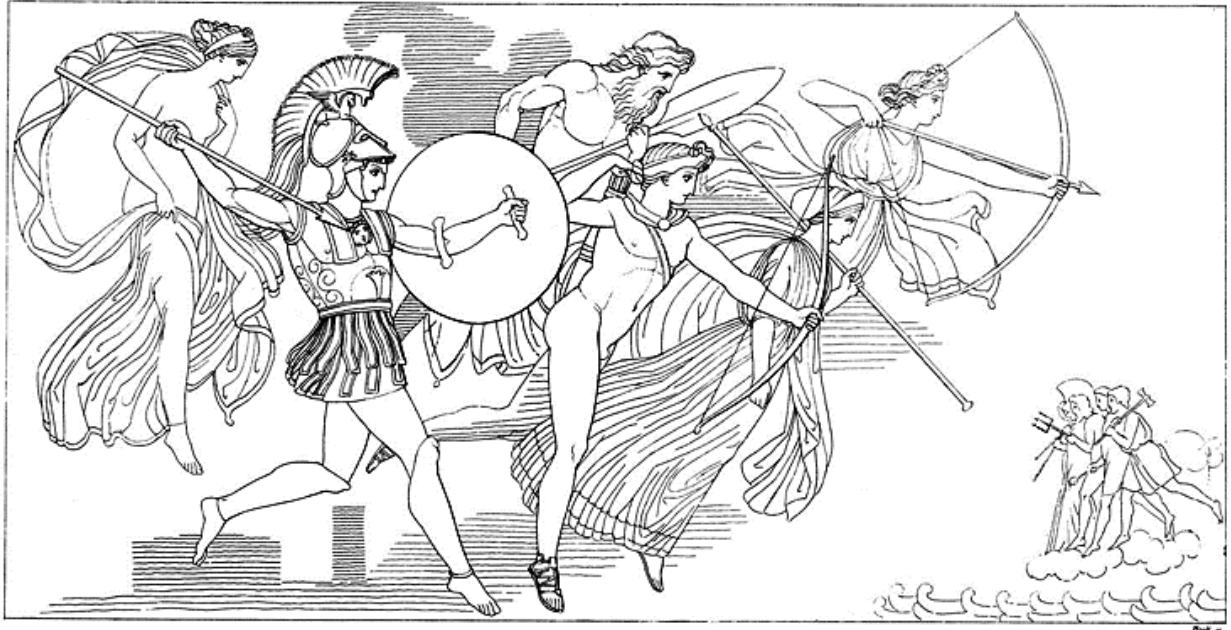
It is now time for Prince Argan and his new friends (the adventurers) to finally reach Argos... where the return of the royal heir ignites a fully-fledged civil war. While the adventurers were busy adventuring with Argan, Prince Kyros has finally lost patience and seized the throne for himself, after making an official proclamation of his brother's death.

Upon hearing the sad news, Princess Niobe finally decided to lead an open rebellion but was betrayed by some of her supporters and is now a political prisoner awaiting her judgment. That's where things stand when the gallant (and very much alive) Argan arrives in Argos with the adventurers...

The most obvious goals for this third and final tier are to free Niobe, muster some loyal forces around Argan, overthrow Kyros the usurper and instate Argan as the only legitimate monarch of Argos.



AGAIN?! Right, that does it – I'm writing the editor!



Will the Argosean Strife escalate into a full-blown War of the Gods?

Civil War

In its simplest version, this final part of the campaign will involve mass warfare and military action (a chance to use the mass combat rules from the *M&M Companion* – or even the mass naval warfare rules found in the first issue of the *Minotaur*)... but Maze Masters may also decide to run things differently, by diverting the player-characters' tasks and missions from the central military or political battleground and lead them to yet another heroic quest: perhaps Kyros' forces are so overwhelming that Argan and his allies need a unique magical artifact to shift the situation in their favor - or perhaps they must placate one of the city's divine patrons (Poseidon and Hermes) by going on a particularly perilous and epic mission on behalf of this deity.

And since we are speaking of the Gods...

Enter the Olympians

While the city-states of Heraklia and Thena are unlikely to intervene in an Argosean civil war (since such a decision would shatter the already-fragile status quo of the Minean league and could lead the Land of the Three Cities into a fully-fledged war), the two patron deities of Argos could well come into conflict over King Argon's succession.

Each side could be supported by its own Olympian, with Poseidon supporting Prince Argan as the legitimate heir of his old devotee King Argon and Hermes choosing to help the more practically-minded and politically adept Kyros.

Maze Masters wishing to complicate this situation a bit further could have Hermes call for Zeus' arbitration or even convince the king of the Gods to support his own choice - and before you know what is happening, the whole Argosean situation could escalate into a nascent "war of the gods", with the irritable Poseidon refusing to acknowledge his brother Zeus' authority in the matter, leading other Olympians to take sides – all except Athena, who would probably try to reconcile the two brothers before things get too apocalyptic¹⁴. And of course, high-level adventurers would be ideal candidates for playing a crucial role in this divine conflict.

Rewards for the Heroes

Provided they have succeeded in instating Prince Argan on the throne (and perhaps contributed to avert a full-scale "civil war of the gods"), our heroic player-characters should be rewarded with immense wealth and privileged positions as the new king's closest advisers and counselors.

Or perhaps some of the Olympians involved in the Argos crisis could decide to recruit them as their full-time Divine Agents... But that's another story!

Olivier Legrand (2011)

¹⁴ This would work especially well in this setting, since Athena's Argosean priestesses have often played an important role in the history of their city, as noted in the *Mythika Gazetteer of Argos* (Minotaur n°2, pp 12-14) and in the *Against Atlantis!* Trilogy (remember the quest for the Sextant of Eryximachos?).

A TWIST IN THE MAZE

A Regular M&M Column by Luke G. Reynard

MARKSMEN & MISSILES

New Missile Combat Options for Mazes & Minotaurs Sharpshooters



Playtesting the new Careful Aim option

Why should melee fighters get all the fun? They have access to a whole repertoire of special tactics and techniques, while all missile users have to do is to shoot their bow, throw their javelin or do whatever-it-is-they-do-with-a-sling until they run out of projectiles. Here are four new options for those who want to give missile combat a bit more pizzazz and flexibility. As usual, all this is strictly optional and subject to the approval of your Maze Master; as far as I'm concerned, these rules are the best stuff ever written for M&M since my brilliant piece on armor coverage and relative size in melee (yes, Luke, that was *FOUR* issues ago - Ed).

Careful Aim

Only characters of above-average Skill (13+) may use this option. The shooter waits an entire battle round before firing his bow or throwing his missile; in other words, he spends one full round aiming and makes his attack during the missile phase of the following round. This gives him a bonus on his Missile attack roll equal to his Skill mod; this bonus will be lost if the character's concentration is broken (by an opponent's attack etc) while he takes his Careful Aim.

Vital Spots

As its name implies, this special missile attack aims at a target's most vulnerable spots. It can only be used by characters of above-average Skill (13+) and is useless against Animates (who have no vital spots to speak of).

The character must take a Careful Aim (see above) but instead of adding his Skill bonus to his attack roll, he suffers a -4 penalty; if he does hit, however, his Skill bonus will be added to his damage roll.

Note that this damage bonus is cumulative with the Skill-based damage bonus of Amazons and Hunters, making this option truly devastating in the hands of a true marksman (or markswoman, sorry girls).

Quick Shot

This maneuver allows a character to sacrifice accuracy for speed. It can only be used by a character of above-average Skill (13+), using his *weapon of choice*.

When making a quick shot, the character's Skill mod is added to his Initiative score but his attack only uses a single D20 instead of taking the best roll of two (i.e. the attack roll is resolved as if the character wasn't using his *weapon of choice*).

Since the attack still occurs during the missile phase of the round, this option is only really useful against other missile-users; it obviously cannot be combined with a Careful Aim.

Run & Throw

This option can only be used when throwing a javelin or spear and requires an above-average Might (13+).

It allows the character to add his Might mod to his Missile attack roll, provided he waits for the *melee* phase of the current round to make his Missile attack roll *and has not been engaged in melee* by an opponent with a higher Initiative. The character also needs to run for at least 10' (during the movement phase) to gather the required momentum – but since he must stop this movement before throwing his missile, this maneuver does not qualify as a case of "firing while moving".

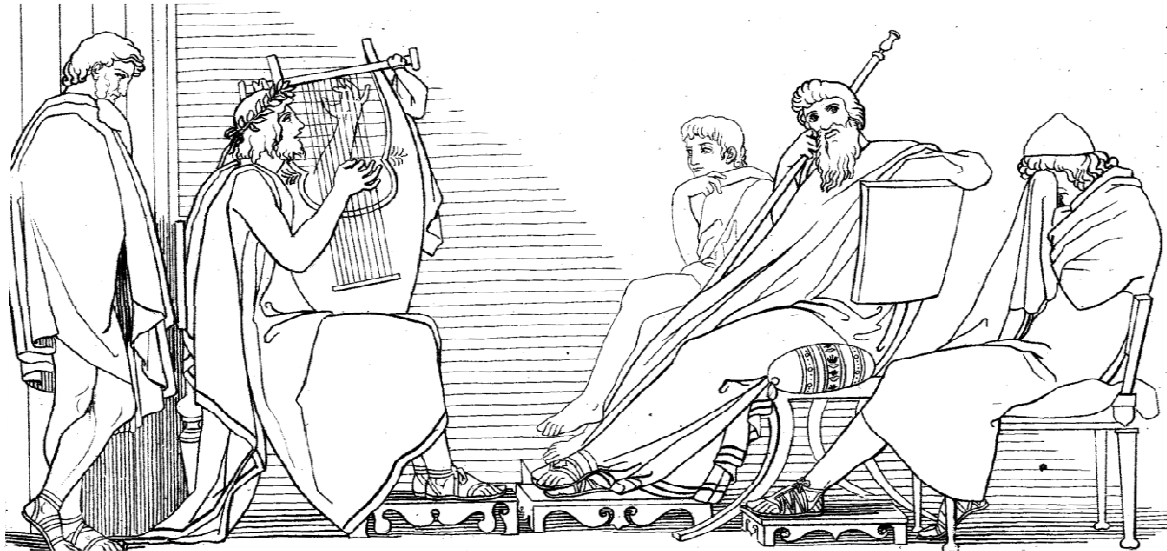
This option cannot be combined with a Careful Aim, Quick Shot or any other Skill-based option.

ALMANAC OF MYTHIKA

MYTHIC HISTORY

(Part One of Three)

by *Anagnosis of Thena*, translated (and annotated) by Andrew Pearce



For centuries, tales of the Mythic Age have inspired, entranced and moved the souls of men

'Speak to us, O Sacred Muses,
ye who know of the beginnings of the world.
Tell us of the deeds of the vanquishers of Titans,
the Immortal Sons of Kronos, the celebrated Gods,
who rule over sea, earth, sky, and the dark abyss.
Sing to us of the revels of Nymphs and Satyrs,
and of the beguiling beauty of the Goddesses
who make their homes in timeless Olympus.
Chill our souls with tales of Cyclopes and Gorgons,
Hydras and Manticores, Minotaurs and Sphinxes,
the fell creatures of the Night, dark and pitiless.
Enthrall us with stories of doughty champions,
who with valiant hearts wield sharp-tipped spears,
deadly swords and bright-burnished shields.
Share with us the Lore of the Age now passed,
of Gods, Monsters and Heroes.'

Opening Words of the First Scroll of Homeros

Many poets, oracles and storytellers have told of the First Age of Men, the Mythic Age of long ago. Of course, the original sources for these tales are oral ones: not until the days of Homeros, in the second century of the Age of Magic, was any attempt made within the Minean lands to write down 'the Lore of the Age now passed', as the great Lyrist puts it.

In the centuries since the time of Homeros, many lesser poets and storytellers, some claiming divine inspiration, have added to the great body of legends from the First Age. Sometimes these later stories are at odds with those recorded by Homeros, or with one another. It is increasingly difficult, therefore, to

distinguish between genuine tales of the Age of Myth and later invention: and no two scholars are entirely in agreement in their interpretation of the available manuscripts and oral traditions.

Who was Homeros?

When we consider his importance, it is surprising how little we know about Mythika's greatest storyteller. Although born towards the end of the first century of the Age of Magic, his exact date of birth is unknown, and several different places have claimed him as their son: Cadmea, Thena (or, rather, the city of Thuria that stood on that site in the Second Age), and the island of Zethos. Even less certain is the place where he died (although Thessalia is the most likely of several contenders), allegedly at the advanced age of 87. His unlikely disciple was a Midian mariner named Bosubel, who faithfully collated Homeros' **Complete Works** together after his death. Normally distributed as a set of seven scrolls, Homeros' odes, songs and epics remain the very pinnacle of Minean literature five-hundred years later. The three longest works (making up the whole of Scrolls V to VII) were the **Cadmead**, the **Thessaliad** and the **Ouilixead**. Perhaps the greatest of these is the **Thessaliad**, which tells the tale of the war fought towards the end of the First Age over the great beauty Helene of Thessalia. Later writers like Hesidos of Seriphos, the royal poet Pindaros of Argos, and the daring female Lyrist Lesbe of Saphos have achieved high renown but only Orpheus himself is held in greater honor amongst Lyrists.



Homeros, *Mythika's* greatest Lyrist and storyteller

Perhaps the most significant figure of more recent times is the great Demosthenes of Pylene. Born on a hitherto obscure island of the Middle Sea about one hundred and forty years ago, Demosthenes' legacy continues to influence us greatly today. He was one of the three founding fathers – alongside Ptolemeos of Thena and Anacreon of Seriphos – of the Akademia of Thena. He was also the deviser of the now-widespread 'Three Ages' scheme of History. But perhaps most notably he was the author of the important work known as the *Annals of Mythika*, published in 243 AH.

It is easy to dismiss the *Annals* as 'a condensed prose version of the works of Homeros, lacking both the richness and the beauty of the original' (in the sneering words of Cleonthides of Argos). This analysis is far from true. I am not alone in believing that Demosthenes has successfully preserved much of the grandeur of Homeros' stories in his carefully-measured retellings.

Whilst a study of Demosthenes' writings can in no way substitute for the magnificence of Homeros (as any Lyrist will certainly tell you), the *Annals of Mythika* do score over the earlier works of Homeros in two respects. Firstly, they are very much shorter, and written in a more accessible idiom, lacking the linguistic archaisms and literary conceits that casual readers find so off-putting in Homeros' poetry. Secondly, they contain many important tales that, for whatever reason, Homeros omitted (though Homeros' apologists have been apt to blame his compiler, Bosubel, for any implied shortcomings in this regard) – including several that Demosthenes undoubtedly picked up from his travels to Kandaria, where he reputedly spent several years in his youth. Copies of the *Annals* were carried after the death of Demosthenes to Argos and Heraklia, such was their popularity. Alas, the original of Demosthenes' work was lost many years ago, and variant versions of

the *Annals* have developed in each of the Three Cities. Scholars generally refer to these differing versions by the initial letters of the cities that possess them, namely **A** (Argos), **H** (Heraklia) and **T** (Thena).¹⁵ The much-abbreviated version of the *Annals of Mythika* that follows is a conflation of these three somewhat independent versions. Whilst I usually follow the source **T** as being most faithful to the original text, there are occasions when I prefer a reading found in either **A** or **H**. Textual differences of significant interest will be pointed out in footnotes. My re-telling, following Demosthenes (and Homeros before him), makes the customary division of a great work into seven books (or scrolls).

The Lost Histories

Like Homeros, Demosthenes confined himself to tales of the First Age (and tells us virtually nothing of earlier mythic events, such as the War against the Titans). It is said that in the years before his untimely death in 247 AH (allegedly at the hands of an academic rival), Demosthenes was working on a sequel to the *Annals* that would have covered the Second Age and early Third Age, entitled the *Histories of Mythika*. Even today, nearly a century after his death, rumours abound that this lost work was actually completed, and that Demosthenes himself deliberately hid it shortly before his death. Many have searched for the missing masterpiece over the years – without success.

¹⁵ Interestingly, Demosthenes' work was never brought to Seriphos. Even today, most scholars from this island are somewhat dismissive of Demosthenes, and even more so of Homeros, preferring to laud the works of Hesidos, their own national poet. The fact that Homeros' *Thessaliad* gives a fairly unflattering depiction of Seriphos and its ancient royal family may be at the root of this antipathy.



The Mighty Zeus, Monarch of the Sky

Book the First: Early Deeds of the Gods

The Division of the World

At the beginning of the First Age, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, after deposing their father Kronos, shook lots in a helmet for the lordship of the sky, sea and underworld, leaving the earth common to all. Zeus won¹⁶ the sky, whilst Hades was allotted the underworld, and Poseidon the sea.

And Zeus made an abode for himself and his fellow Olympians on Mount Olympus: but from the beginning Hades refused to sit amongst his brothers, and is not counted as a God of Olympus, whilst Poseidon comes rarely to join the counsels of his fellow Olympians, out of jealousy of Zeus.

The Birth of Aphrodite and Athena

Now Aphrodite, Goddess of desire, rose naked from the foam of the sea and, riding on a scallop shell, stepped ashore on the island of Seriphos.

Grass and flowers sprang from the soil wherever she trod. Some hold that she sprang from the foam which gathered about the genitals of Ouranos, when Kronos threw them into the sea. And Zeus adopted her as his daughter.

¹⁶ **A** adds 'through trickery'. Perhaps significantly, Argos is the only one of the modern-day Three Cities where Zeus is not a patron god.

A Note to Maze Masters

More than most articles in the *Minotaur*, Maze Masters should approach this new installment of *The Almanac of Mythika* with a degree of caution. The tales detailed below are only one possible interpretation of, and extrapolation upon, the mythological and historical data found in the Revised M&M books (particularly the Maze Masters Guide) and the various issues of the *Minotaur* published to date.

Many of the tales in the Annals will be instantly recognizable to those who are familiar with the ancient Greek mythos – albeit with many alterations along the way. These include retellings within the world of Mythika of some of the most famous of the Greek myths – such as the stories of Oedipus, Perseus and Midas. However, many other famous Greek myths have been excluded – such as the tales of Jason and the Argonauts, and the Wanderings of Odysseus. This has been done deliberately so as to encourage Maze Masters to see the works of Demosthenes as being an incomplete account of the legends of Mythika, to which they will doubtless add to themselves in their own way. Ultimately, it is for each and every Maze Master to decide how much use (or how little) he wishes to make of the *Annals*.

Now Zeus took the Nereid Metis, and lay with her, but immediately feared the consequences: for it had been prophesied that Metis would bear extremely powerful children, the first a daughter, and the second a son more powerful than Zeus himself, who would one day overthrow him.

Therefore Zeus tricked her into turning herself into a fly and promptly swallowed her: but too late, for Metis had already conceived a child. In due process of time, Zeus was seized by a raging headache, so that his skull seemed about to burst, and he howled in rage until the whole firmament echoed.

Then Prometheus¹⁷ clove Zeus' head with an axe, and Athena leaped from Zeus' head, fully grown, armed and armored, with a mighty shout.

The Children of Zeus and Hera

Then Zeus sought out Hera on Mount Thornax (that overlooks the plain where the city of Heraphile was later built) and courted her, at first without success. She took pity on him only when he adopted the disguise of a bedraggled cuckoo, and tenderly warmed him in her bosom. There he at once resumed his true shape and ravished her, so that she was shamed into marrying him.

¹⁷ **T** and **H** both read 'Hephaestus'. However, given that Hephaestus has not yet been born, the reading 'Prometheos', although found only in **A**, is to be preferred.



Hephaestus the Smith God

And all the Gods brought gifts to the wedding, and Gaia gave Hera a tree with golden apples, the very first of their kind. And to Hera and Zeus were born Ares and Hephaestus.¹⁸

Now Hephaestus the Lamé was so weakly at birth that his disgusted mother, Hera, dropped him from the heights of Olympus. The newborn survived this misadventure because he fell into the sea, where the Nereid Thetis rescued him, and raised him as her own. With her help, Hephaestus made an underwater grotto, where he set his first smithy, and rewarded Thetis' kindness by making for her all sorts of ornaments. Now one day, Hera met Thetis, and spied her wearing a brooch of Hephaestus' marvelous workmanship. Hera forced the truth from Thetis, and, filled with shame, fetched Hephaestus back to Olympus, and arranged that he should marry Aphrodite.

The Last Three Olympians

Now amorous Zeus lay with numerous Nymphs and, after the creation of man, with mortal women too. Three of the great Olympian deities were born to him out of wedlock. First, he begat Hermes on the Oread Maia, who bore him in a cave on Mount Cyllene. Then soon after he begat the twins Artemis and Apollo, on the Dryad Leto, in the Great Hyperborean Forest. Now Leto brought forth Artemis without travail, and for that reason women in labor will often invoke Artemis. But Leto labored nine days and nine nights for Apollo.

¹⁸ H adds 'though some tales tell that Hephaestus was son to Hera alone'. This attempt to give Hephaestus a lone parent, paralleling the tale of Athena's birth, is not generally accepted in most Minoan cities, or by the priests of Hephaestus themselves.

With the birth of Artemis and Apollo, the number of the Olympians was completed, and the twelve Gods have since ruled the wide world below from the courts of Mount Olympus.

The Tale of Hermes and Apollo

Now one day, whilst he and Apollo were still young, Hermes went looking for adventure and stole his brother's fine herd of cows.

Then Apollo, discovering the theft, was sorely vexed: but Hermes showed Apollo his newly-invented tortoise-shelled lyre, and played such a beautiful tune upon it, all the while singing praises to the nobility, intelligence and generosity of Apollo, that he was forgiven at once. He led the surprised Apollo to the cave on Mount Cyllene where he had been raised by the Nymph Maia, and where he had hidden Apollo's cattle.

But Apollo declared, 'You keep the cows, and I will take the lyre.' And Hermes agreed to the bargain. And for this reason, Hermes became in time the patron God both of merchants and thieves. Now Zeus was much amused when he heard of the resourcefulness of Hermes, and made him his herald, giving him a round hat to shield himself against the rain, and winged golden sandals which carried him about with the swiftness of the wind.

And some say that Hades too engaged him as his herald, to summon, if he might, the dying gently to the Underworld. But Apollo, thanks to the invention of Hermes, became in time the patron God of poets, harpists and Lyrists.¹⁹



Wing-footed Hermes, Messenger of the Gods

¹⁹ Strangely enough, this well-known tale is not found in the works of Homeros.



Poseidon, King of the Sea

The Children of Poseidon

The offspring of Poseidon, God of the sea, are many. Two of them, named Charybdis²⁰ and Scylla, were very loyal to Poseidon in his endless striving with Zeus. They rode the hungry tides after Poseidon had stirred up a storm, and led them onto the beaches, submerging fields, drowning forests and claiming them for the sea. They won so much land for their father's kingdom that, in the end, Zeus became enraged and turned them into monsters.

Charybdis was turned into a creature whose face was all mouth, and whose arms and legs were flippers, and who would swallow huge amounts of water three times each day before spewing them back out again, creating whirlpools.

Scylla was turned into a terrible monster with many eyes, and six heads at the end of six long necks, each head containing three rows of vicious teeth. She would constantly rove the Middle Sea, each new day settling upon a rocky islet of her choice, and always with her sister Charybdis close by, ready to seize any unwary sailors passing too close to her lair. Should the unfortunate sailors steer too far away from Scylla, they were likely to be caught in the maelstrom that was Charybdis' maw.

²⁰ Not to be confused with the jungle-realm of Charybdis, or Charybdia. While some over-imaginative scholars have offered various far-fetched theories explaining why Mythika's so-called Dark Continent had been named after a semi-divine sea monster (or the other way around), the most plausible explanation is a case of linguistic confusion between the sea-monster *Charybdis* and the Dark Continent's native name of *Karibdia* (which, in the Kari language, means 'the Living Land').

Some believe that the Atlanteans, a race of sorcerers older than mankind, are descended from Poseidon (though others believe that they share some kinship with the Titan Atlas, whose unique punishment for his role in the War between Titans and Olympians was to hold up the heavens upon his shoulders for all eternity).²¹

The Atlanteans made their home on the great island of Atlantis, far out into the Great Ocean. In the First Age they warred against many foes, including the Serpent Folk, and the ancestors of the Derros, the people of Lemuria. In those days they had few dealings with mankind.²²

Among the most fearsome of Poseidon's many offspring were the Fomoros, mighty and fiendish undersea cyclopes with green scaly skin, iron-hard claws and very sharp teeth. In the early days of the Age of Myth, the Fomoros ruled over a mighty empire of islands beyond the Bronze Gates. In their arrogance, they rebelled against their divine father, challenging his command over the seas. Poseidon therefore raised a great maelstrom which sank their kingdom to the deepest abyss of the Great Ocean.

Book the Second: The Coming of Men

The Birth and Downfall of Mortal Man

With the consent of Zeus and the help of Athena, the Titan Prometheus formed mankind, both men and women, in the likeness of the Gods. He used clay and water, and Athena breathed life into them. But it is said the soul of mankind was supplied by certain wandering divine elements, which had survived from the beginning of all things: and it is for this reason that the destiny of mankind lies beyond the full comprehension even of the Gods.²³

Now Prometheus was the wisest of his race, and alone amongst the Titans had prudently fought on the side of Zeus. Athena taught him architecture, astronomy, mathematics, navigation and many other useful arts, which he in turn passed on to mankind. But Zeus grew angry at the increasing powers and talents of the children of Prometheus.

Prometheus had imprisoned all the Spites that he feared would otherwise plague mankind. But Zeus, learning of this, ensnared a woman named Pandora. She was a woman of great charm and beauty, but also foolish, ambitious, mischievous and idle. And Zeus told Pandora of a marvelous treasure, guarded by Prometheus, which would elevate any who opened it to the level of the Gods.

²¹ See *Minotaur N° 5 'The Other Gods'* (pp19-20) for information on how the Atlanteans themselves view their Gods.

²² **A** adds 'Only with the advent of the Age of Magic, and the rise of the Autarchs, did the Atlanteans take much interest in the world of men.'

²³ **H** adds 'But some hold that the Fates know what the ultimate fortune of mankind shall be. If so, they have revealed this doom to no-one, not even Zeus himself.'



Pandora and her infamous Box

So Pandora seduced Prometheus, and after much questioning she learnt from him where the box containing this 'treasure' was hidden. Then Prometheus warned her to keep the box closed, but Pandora would not listen. She opened it, thus releasing Old Age, Labor, Sickness, Insanity and Passion into the world.

But Prometheus, in his wisdom, had also stored Hope in the box, and this too was released by Pandora, for the final consolation of mankind.

Deucalion's Flood

Now a certain Lycaon, a mighty chieftain amongst men, angered Zeus by sacrificing a boy to him. He was therefore transformed into a wolf, and his house struck by lightning. But the sons of Lycaon continued in the evil ways of their father.

News of their crimes reached Olympus, and Zeus himself visited them, disguised as a poor traveler. The sons of Lycaon had the effrontery to set umble²⁴ soup before him, mixing the guts of a human with the umbles of sheep and goats. Zeus was not deceived, and rejected this loathsome offering, changing all of them into wolves. These sons of Lycaon are the progenitors of the race of beastmen known as Lycans.

On his return to Olympus, Zeus in disgust let lose a great flood on the earth. For nine days, the rains fell incessantly, and the rivers roared down to the seas, washing away every city and village of the coast and plain. And so the entire world was flooded, save for the highest mountain peaks.

²⁴ A adds 'that is, soup made from the heart and kidneys.'

Now Zeus had planned to wipe out the whole of mankind: but this intention was thwarted by Prometheus, who warned his mortal son Deucalion to build an ark and to victual it. On completing it, Deucalion went aboard with Pyrrha his wife. The ark floated about for nine further days after the rains had ceased, until the waters subsided: and it came to rest on a peak in the Helicon Mountains.²⁵ And it is said that Deucalion was reassured by a dove which he sent on an exploratory flight.

Disembarking in safety, they offered a sacrifice to Zeus, and prayed also to Rhea his mother. They pleaded humbly that mankind should be renewed, and Zeus, hearing their voices from afar, sent Hermes to assure them that whatever request they might make would be granted forthwith. Then Rhea appeared in person, saying: 'Shroud your heads, and throw the bones of your mother behind you!'

Since Deucalion and Pyrrha had different mothers, both now deceased, they decided that the Goddess meant Gaia, Mother Earth, whose bones were the rocks lying on the river bank. Therefore, stooping with shrouded heads, they picked up rocks and threw them over their shoulders: and these became either men or women, according to whether Deucalion or Pyrrha had handled them. Thus was mankind renewed, and spread far and wide across Mythika: and the anger of Zeus was abated.²⁶

The Sons of Deucalion

Now Pyrrha later gave birth to four sons of Deucalion, and these were the fathers of the four ancient races of mankind.

The eldest son was skilful Proteus, and he was the ancestor of the people of the island that bears his name. From that lineage came all the peoples of the West: the Minean lands, Umbria and Tritonis.

The second son was fierce Hyperboreus, and he was the ancestor of the fair-skinned Barbarians of the North, and the wild women of Amazonia.

The third son was cunning Phaeton, and he was the ancestor of all the swarthy-skinned peoples of the East, that dwell in the Land of the Sun and the Desert Kingdom.

The final son was hardworking Charybdition, and he was the ancestor of the dark-skinned peoples of the South, that dwell in the jungles of Charybdis.²⁷

²⁵ H reads 'Thanatari Mountains.'

²⁶ Many other peoples also tell of a great Deluge. See, for example, *Minotaur N° 5 'Observations on the Desert Kingdom'* p 13 for a similar tale told by the Khettim; and also the *Hazarian Epic of Bilgamesh*.

²⁷ This tale is not found in the works of Homeros, although a similar account is found in the works of Hesiodos. This is the only known instance of Demosthenes adapting a tale first written down by the Seriphian poet.

Book the Third: Feuds of the Gods

The Rebellion of the Gods

Now Zeus and Hera bickered constantly. Vexed by his infidelities, she often humiliated him by her scheming ways.

Now a time came when Zeus' pride and petulance became so intolerable that Hera enlisted the aid of Hypnos, the God of sleep, who caused Zeus to fall into a deep slumber. Then Hera, Poseidon, Apollo and all the other Olympians, except mild Hestia, surrounded him suddenly as he lay asleep on his couch and bound him with thongs knotted into a hundred knots, so that he could not move. Zeus cursed and threatened them, but they had placed his thunderbolt out of reach and laughed insultingly at him. They celebrated their victory, but soon began quarrelling amongst themselves as to who was to be his successor.

Then Thetis the Nereid, foreseeing a ruinous civil war amongst the Gods, brought many Nymphs to Olympus, and together they swiftly untied the thongs binding their master.

Because it was Hera who had led the conspiracy against him, Zeus hung her up from the sky with a golden bracelet about each wrist and an anvil fastened to either ankle. The other Gods were sorely vexed, but dared attempt no rescue for all her piteous cries. At last Zeus undertook to free her if they swore never more to rebel against him: and this each in turn grudgingly did.

The Tale of Persephone

It is said Demeter, Goddess of the cornfield, bore Kore to Zeus, her brother, out of wedlock, and great was the love between mother and daughter. But Hades fell in love with Kore, and went to ask Zeus' leave to marry her. Now Zeus feared to offend his eldest brother by a direct refusal, but knew also that Demeter would not forgive him if Kore was taken to the underworld. He therefore answered that he could neither give nor withhold his consent. This emboldened Hades to abduct the girl.

For nine days and nights, neither eating nor drinking, Demeter searched for her daughter.²⁸ Then Hecate, the dark Goddess of witches, came to Demeter and reported that dark Hades had seized her daughter. Demeter was so angry that, instead of returning to Olympus, she continued to wander the earth for six months, forbidding the trees to yield fruit and the herbs to grow, until mankind and many of the beasts stood in peril of extinction.

²⁸ **H** adds 'and in her sadness she transformed herself into a mare. In so doing Demeter incurred the lust of Poseidon, who transformed himself into a stallion and covered her.' This text (curiously not found in **A** or **T**) is perhaps related to Poseidon's sacred association with horses.

Then Zeus sent Hermes with a message to Hades: 'If you do not restore Kore, we are all undone!' And Hades reluctantly agreed to restore her to her mother, provided only that she had not yet tasted the food of the dead.

Then Hades tricked Kore into eating six pomegranate seeds: and on this account refused to let her depart. But Demeter refused to remove her curse upon the land. So Zeus prevailed upon Rhea, the mother of Hades, Demeter and himself, to intervene. As a result of her counsel, a compromise was reached, whereby Kore should spend six months with Hades as Queen of the Underworld, with the title of Persephone, and the other six months of the year with Demeter. Hecate offered to make sure that this arrangement was kept, and to keep constant watch on Persephone.

The Tale of Dionysus

Many stories are told of the origins of Dionysus. Some say that Zeus fathered him on Demeter, others Persephone, and still others Lethe, the Nymph who guards the river of Forgetfulness that is named after her.²⁹ But the common story is that Zeus, disguised as a mortal, had a secret love affair with a mortal named Semele.

Then jealous Hera, disguising herself as an old neighbor, advised Semele, then already six months with child, to make her mysterious lover a request: that he should no longer deceive her, but reveal himself in his true nature and form. How, otherwise, could she know that he was not a monster? Semele followed this advice, and, when Zeus refused her plea, she denied him further access to her bed.



One of the many visages of Dionysus

²⁹ **A** adds 'for the oblivion of Forgetfulness is gifted by Dionysus to all who imbibe too generously of his wines.'

Then, in anger, the Lord of Olympus appeared as thunder and lightning, and Semele was consumed. But clever Hermes³⁰ saved her six-month's son, sewed him up inside Zeus' thigh for three months longer, and in due course delivered him. Thus Dionysus is called by many of his followers 'twice-born'. Now Rhea his grandmother hid Dionysus from the wrathful anger of Hera in the farthest East, where in time Dionysus grew to manhood. It was on Mount Nyssa that he invented wine, for which Dionysus is chiefly celebrated.

When he was fully-grown, Hera finally found him, having searched fruitlessly for him for many years. In revenge for Zeus' shameful behavior, Hera drove Dionysus mad, and thus he began his wanderings all over the world, accompanied by his drunken tutor Silenus, and a wild army of fierce Maenads and debauched Satyrs, armed with the thyrsus, an ivy-twined staff tipped with a pine-cone. Wherever he went, Dionysus taught the art of viniculture.

Eventually, Zeus caught up with his wayward son, and brought him to Olympus. Some say that he sits now at the right hand of Zeus himself as one of the twelve great Olympians, and that the humble goddess Hestia resigned her seat at the high table in his favor: but the priestesses of Hestia vigorously deny this tale themselves.

The Infidelities of Aphrodite

The infidelities of Aphrodite, Goddess of love, were many, but undoubtedly her most long-lasting affair was with Ares. Now Hephaestus knew that Aphrodite was having an affair with the God of war, so he decided to punish them.

One day, during his apparent absence, Hephaestus trapped the guilty pair in the bedchamber that he shared with the shameless Goddess, by use of an unbreakable invisible net. Ares and Aphrodite hung in the net, and the more they struggled, the more tightly they were caught up in it: and they were both naked. Then Hephaestus invited the other Gods to witness the humiliated adulterers, who became the source of much amusement and ridicule. Hephaestus wanted to leave them trapped in his net, but he reluctantly agreed to release them on payment of a fine at the insistence of Poseidon, who greatly admired the beauty of Aphrodite himself. Poseidon offered to pay the fine due to Hephaestus in return for the freedom of Aphrodite and her lover. In return, Aphrodite slept with the sea God.

Hermes also admired Aphrodite's beauty, but she declared herself uninterested in him. Hermes became so depressed with longing that Zeus decided to intervene on behalf of his son. Zeus sent an eagle to steal Aphrodite's favorite pair of sandals, and Aphrodite had to enlist Hermes' aid to retrieve them. His price was a night with the Goddess, and so Aphrodite reluctantly surrendered to Hermes' lust. She thereafter became mother to his son, a beautiful boy named Hermaphroditus.

³⁰ T alone attributes this act to Apollo, not Hermes.



Aphrodite, the divine Seductress

One day, Hermaphroditus encountered a Nereid named Salmacis. This Nymph fell madly in love with Hermaphroditus, but failed in her efforts to seduce him. However, when he was bathing in her spring, Salmacis leapt upon the frightened youth and clung to him, with arms and legs around his handsome body. Salmacis then prayed to the Gods, so that they might never be separated from one another.

They answered her prayer by merging their bodies together. Hermaphroditus was so horrified by this shameful transformation that he prayed to his divine parents that any man or boy who bathed in this spring should suffer the same fate: and it is said that this prayer also was granted. None know for certain where this spring is located: and so the prudent man always offers a prayer to Hermes and Aphrodite when bathing in a strange spring, that it be not the spring of Salmacis.

The Giants' Revolt

Enraged because Zeus had confined their brothers, the Titans, in Tartarus, twenty-four terrible giants plotted an assault on Mount Olympus. Without warning, they seized rocks and fire-brands and hurled them upwards from their own mountain tops, so that the Olympians were hard pressed.

Now Hera counseled that the Gods could only win this contest if first they had found a certain herb of invulnerability, which grew in a secret place on earth. Zeus therefore commanded Selene to cover the face of Helios for a while, and so occurred the first eclipse in the history of Mythika. Then, under the feeble light of the stars, Zeus groped about on earth in the region to which Hera directed him, found the herb, and brought it safely to Olympus.



An ancient depiction of Zeus' victory over the monstrous Typhon

Invigorated by the herb of invulnerability, the Gods could now join battle with the giants. Apollo let loose the first arrow against Alcioneos, the enemy's leader. Athena threw a vast missile at Enceladus, which crushed him flat and became the island of Zethos.³¹ Hermes, borrowing Hades' helmet of invisibility, struck down Hippolytus, and Artemis pierced Gration with an arrow. Hephaestus scalded Mimas with a ladle of red-hot metal. Poseidon felled Polybutes with his mighty trident, and Ares skewered Ephialtes upon his spear. Dionysus struck down Eurytus with his thyrsus.³² Only the peace-loving Goddesses Hestia and Demeter took no part in the conflict, but stood dismayed, wringing their hands. But most of the giants were turned to ash by the fearsome thunderbolts of Zeus.

Typhon, Echidne and their Offspring

In revenge for the destruction of the giants, Gaia gave birth to two last children: Typhon and Echidne.

Echidne was half woman, half serpent. She bore a dreadful brood to Typhon, including the forefathers of many of Mythika's most terrible monsters: the three-headed Cerberus, the many-headed Hydra, the fire-breathing Chimera, and the enigmatic Sphinx. The last of her offspring was the hundred-eyed Argus, father of the Argusoids: and it is said that Argus was so disgusted by the sight of his own mother, from which he was unable to hide, that he killed her while she slept, exhausted from his birth.

Typhon was the largest monster ever born. He had countless serpents' heads instead of hands, his vast wings darkened the sun, and fire flashed from his eyes. When he came rushing towards Olympus, the Gods

fled in terror to the Desert Kingdom.³³ Athena alone stood her ground, and taunted her father Zeus with cowardice.

Then shame-faced Zeus returned to Olympus and, mounted upon a chariot drawn by winged horses, pursued Typhon with thunderbolts, wounding him frightfully. For nine days and nine nights Zeus and Typhon struggled with one another, and the earth shook greatly from the violence of their conflict, and a great rent was formed on the plain where they battled, to the north of the Middle Sea betwixt the Helicon and the Thanatari Mountains. This ruined land quickly filled with tempestuous waters that ever since have been known as the Typhon Sea. It is said that the fierce and unpredictable storms that plague these waters even today are but an echo of the terrible conflict between Zeus and Typhon.

At long last, Zeus gained the upper hand, and Typhon fled to Stygia, and to the mountain later known as Atas Antar, the Mountain of Doom, and there met with the Stygian Witches, who offered him fruits which they pretended would strengthen him when, in reality, they would sap him of his strength. Then, as Zeus drew near in his sky chariot, Typhon picked up the Mountain of Doom and prepared to hurl it at the Lord of Olympus: only to be crushed beneath the mountain as his strength faded.

And it is said that Typhon has remained buried deep beneath Atas Antar from that time to the present day. The earthquakes sometimes felt in that region are said to be the result of Typhon's periodic struggles for release, which one day will succeed.

Next issue: *From the First Great Kingdoms of Mankind to the Cycles of Cadmea and Thessalia.*

³¹ H omits Athena from the list of combatants.

³² A alone adds: *'The satyr Silenus claims to have fought alongside his pupil Dionysus, spreading panic amongst the giants by the braying of his old pack-ass: but Silenus is usually drunk and cannot distinguish truth from falsehood.'*

³³ See *Minotaur* N° 5 'Observations on the Desert Kingdom' p 11 for further reflections on the possible link between the Olympian and the Desert Kingdom Gods.

OFFICIAL ORACLE

REVISIONS & REVELATIONS

Olivier Legrand tells you all you could possibly want to know about the forthcoming Silver Jubilee Edition of the Revised Mazes & Minotaurs rules - with some annoying comments by Luke G. Reynard.

So, Olivier, what is this “Silver Jubilee” edition?

As you may know, a Silver Jubilee marks the 25th anniversary of something – and in M&M’s continuum of origin, the Revised rules came out in 1982, 25 years ago. In our own, real-life continuum, 2012 also marks the 5th anniversary of the release of the Revised rules – so we definitely had to celebrate this.

Will it be a “Third Edition” of the game?

No, not at all. We don’t think M&M needs a Third Edition. The Silver Jubilee PDFs will be the same good old books, with the same tables of contents, game system, old school spirit of adventure and glorious color covers by Luigi Castellani - but they will feature a few corrections, modifications and additions here and there. Later this year, the currently available versions of the four Revised M&M core books will simply be replaced by their Silver Jubilee versions, which will be the One and Only Official versions from then on. And of course, all this will be 100% free, in the usual M&M spirit.

You mentioned some rule changes... Will they be the same as the ones introduced in the “2011 Special Edition” of the Players Manual, currently available from the M&M website?

The Silver Jubilee Players Manual will include the various changes introduced in the 2011 Special Edition (such as alternate formulas for Danger Evasion and Mystic Fortitude, a more balanced Noble class, clarified rules on movement and action, variant powers for Lyrists etc), as well as a few new modifications, such as modified ranges for magical powers or a new system for feats of strength. The “heroic development” option (i.e. being able to bring your primary attributes up to 21) which was first introduced in the M&M Companion will also be integrated in the *Players Manual* as the standard rule for all characters, since everybody is using it. There will also be quite a few clarifications and adjustments regarding some magical powers.

So the 2011 Special Edition Players Manual will become obsolete, too?

That’s right. The 2011 Special Edition of the *Players Manual* was a sort of “transitory” version between the original Revised rules and the Silver Jubilee edition; once the Jubilee books become available, the 2011 Special Edition will become obsolete and will vanish from the M&M website, along with all earlier versions of the four core books.



Who said all game designers had to be photogenic?

Will some of the new rules from the 2011 version be invalidated by the Silver Jubilee edition?

Yes, for a couple of them. The 2011 Special Edition introduced variant, supposedly simplified rules for the Sorcery power of Confusion – but they didn’t work as well as the original effects, so we’ll backtrack on this one. The 2011 book also replaced the magnitude 6 Poetic Magic power Song of Glory with a resurrecting power called Song of Life, which was first introduced in a *Minotaur* article (*Singing a New Tune*, issue 4). While pretty much everybody agrees on the necessity of replacing Song of Glory with something else, Song of Life never felt quite right and will be replaced with yet another power, on which I am currently working – something tied to the prophetic gifts of Orpheus, the role model for Lyrists.

Tell us about the new range rules for magic...

In the current version of the game, magical powers which can be used from a distance tend to have a very limited range. The system also showed an arbitrary mix of fixed and variable ranges (including the bizarrely Mystic Strength-based ones of most Elemental powers). I’ve decided to simplify and harmonize all this; aside from a few exceptions, the range of a distance magical power will now always be equal to 10 times the magician’s talent in feet.

So, most magicians will now be able to use their powers from a greater distance?

Yep. Some mediocre magicians may end up with a lower range than with the original rules, but on the whole, these changes will greatly advantage magic-using characters, making the improvement of their magical talent even more important in game terms.

A Priest with a Spiritual Aura of +5, for instance, will be able to use his Divine Wrath attack from 50' (vs. 30' in the current rules). This new approach will also make things far simpler for the Maze Master, who will no longer have to keep track of completely different ranges for different powers; aside from a few specific exceptions, all ranged magical powers will use this new (talent x 10') formula.

What is the reason behind this rule alteration?

Over the course of 2011, I had a serious ongoing discussion and brainstorm on the subject with our Minotaurian friend Lyzishadow, who had quite radical views on the subject. After taking his arguments in consideration and conducting my own tests and experiments, I finally decided to give most ranged powers a new, improved range based on the user's magical talent – without, however, turning magicians into long-range missile shooters.

Psychic Attacks, Divine Wrath and other ranged magical attacks are not here to turn magicians into missile-users: if this was the case, characters like Amazons, Hunters or Archers would lose their own *raison d'être* and distinctive edge. Such attacks simply cannot compete with arrows or even javelins as far as range is concerned but they will come far more useful than mundane missiles in all sorts of tricky situations – such as when facing Invulnerable or Insubstantial creatures. Magic in M&M was never intended as a standard battlefield resource.

Ah, sorry for the rambling & raving... I'm beginning to sound like Luke G. Reynard! (*And what would be the problem with THAT? - Luke*)

Speaking of Luke, will the new system for feats of strength be the one he presented a few issues ago in his Twist in the Maze column?

No. (*WHAT? - Luke*) Luke's variant system was an interesting one (and one that works quite well in play, I hear) but I found it a bit too complex and it would have taken too much page space anyway (*WHAT? - Luke*). Feats of Strength will work as they do now, except that a successful Physical Vigor roll will allow you a second try after a failed attempt; that way, we manage to integrate Physical Vigor into the system, without making things too complex.

What about the Maze Masters Guide?

Since the main bulk of the rules are in the *Players Manual*, the *Maze Masters Guide* will be left virtually untouched. The original black & white map of Mythika will be replaced by one of Croquefer's gorgeous, full-color maps and we've also seized this opportunity to correct the infamous East / West typo about the location of Charybdis.

Aside from these minor cosmetic changes, the only real rule fix will be about the Vocal Entrancement special ability – nothing too drastic, just a clearer and neater description.

Let's talk about the Creature Compendium. Will it be reformatted to include all the new creatures published in the Minotaur?

No – but these creatures will have their own book, a 'Creature Compendium 2' or something along these lines, which will be released later this year, once the four Silver Jubilee core books are afloat.

As for the *Creature Compendium* proper, the Silver Jubilee edition will mainly be a corrected version. Giant Eagles now have the Grapple attacks they were entitled to and Tritons can now Cruise as fast as their Mermaid companions (sorry, girls, no more Cruising away from hubby). Speaking of Mermaids, they will now be able to use their powers of Vocal Entrancement in a collective manner for greater effectiveness – and so will Sirens and Keledones.

And what about the M&M Companion?

Unlike the *Maze Masters Guide* and the *Creature Compendium*, the *M&M Companion* has undergone some massive revision. The Silver Jubilee version will be an upgraded, updated and augmented edition – and will be exactly 50-page long (vs. 43 for the current version), just like the *Players Manual* and the *Maze Masters Guide*. These extra pages will be filled with rule additions taken from the pages of the *Minotaur*.

The Character Options chapter will include the "liberated" variant of the Amazon class and the Combat Options chapter will include the rules for knife-throwing and staff-fighting, as well as Luke's excellent alternate rules (*Ah! Justice at last! - Luke*) on historical weapons and armor, as well as his no-less-excellent option (*Stop that, it is beginning to sound a bit weird - Luke*) on armor and relative size in melee. The ever-popular Beastmaster class will be added to the Magic Options chapter and the rules for curing poison will be included in the Miscellaneous Rules chapter.

The Silver Jubilee edition of the *Companion* will also include a few minor rule adjustments for Divine Agents, Light & Darkness elemental magic and the powers of Druids – not for the sake of changing the rules but to harmonize them with the modifications made in the *Players Manual*.

You mentioned earlier that the new creatures detailed in the Mythic Bestiary would get their own Compendium. Will it also be the case for the Pandora's Box mythic items?

Absolutely. And we're also planning some sort of *M&M Companion 2* (that's a working title) compiling all the other great stuff from the *Minotaur*, such as the Healer and Pankratiast classes.

Anything you want to add?

Where did you get this awful photo of me? I thought we'd agreed on Rufus Sewell in *Helen of Troy*!

Minotaur Play Nymph n°10



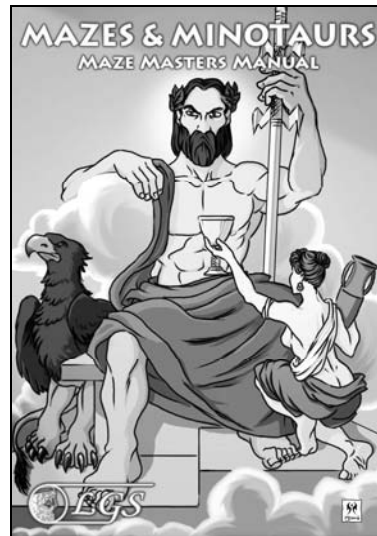
Syrinx, by Arthur Hacker (1858-1919)

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