

Issue 12

March 2016

MINOTAUR

The Official Webzine of the *Mazes & Minotaurs* RPG



GLORIOUS FINAL ISSUE!

72 PAGES OF FREE M&M GOODNESS!

VISIT THE CITY OF KANDARIA ~ PLAY AN ASSASSIN ~ UNEARTH THE HISTORY OF MYTHIKA ~ EXPLORE THE OUTER PLANES ~ CHANGE YOUR VISION OF BEASTMEN ~ DISCOVER NEW PERILS & WONDERS!





MINOTAUR n°12



A Word from the Editor

The Last Minotaur

Welcome, dear readers, to our twelfth and final issue of the *Minotaur*, the one-and-only official webzine of the *Mazes & Minotaurs* movement – yes, you’ve read correctly, this issue is the last one.

It has been long in the making (more than two years!) but its finally here, in all its old-school, retro-whatever glory: more than 60 pages of 100% free M&M material – including a mega-section on the City of Kandaria, the Assassin class, rules for playing heroic Beastfolk, new creatures and mythic items, the conclusion of our scholarly Mythic Annals, a fascinating glimpse of Mythika’s wider cosmos and a ton of other M&M stuff! Just have a look at the table of contents next page!

So WHY, you ask, is this the final issue? Well, as you know, all good things come to an end – but this is not, of course, the only reason. Over the last couple of years, various other ongoing creative projects (RPG-related and otherwise) made it increasingly difficult for me to produce each new issue of the *Minotaur* on a reasonably regular schedule (hence the two-year hiatus). And with its TWELVE glorious issues and HUNDREDS of pages of rule variants, adventure scenario, creatures, mythic items and other M&M goodies, our webzine has accomplished something quite worthy - well, as far as M&M and free RPG material are concerned.

But the end of the *Minotaur* does NOT mean the end of *Mazes & Minotaurs*! Be sure to check the web for some new M&M material in 2016!

In the meantime, enjoy our final issue – and be sure to check the “Last Shield Wall” on our final page, as a proper farewell to the zine.

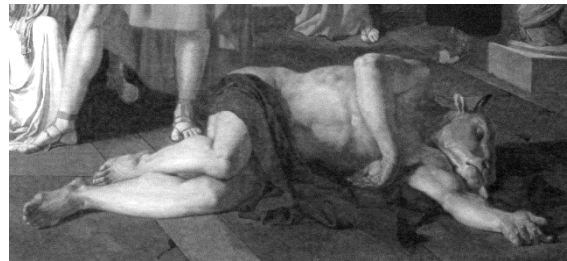
The *Minotaur* is dead!

Long live *Mazes & Minotaurs*!

Olivier Legrand (2016)

MINOTAUR MIRTH

THE MINOTAUR (2007-2016)



- Come on, big guy! Any famous last word?

Thieves Guild Membership Roster

Grandmaster: Olivier Legrand.

Loremaster (missing): Andrew Pearce.

Major Lieutenants: R. Dan Henry, Peter Larsson, F.A. Domene, Pat Mathis, Igor A. Rivendell aka Dorian Greville.

Undercover Assassin: Luke G. Reynard.

Purveyors of Objets d’Art: Emmanuel “Croquefer” Roudier, Molly Schaefer, Gwen C. Katz, Lyonart, Bc999, Prodigyduck and various illustrators.

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All game material included in this webzine uses the **Revised M&M** rules (Silver Jubilee edition).

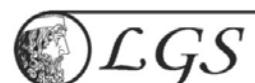


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mythika Gazetteer: Kandaria, City of Dreams	4
<i>Discover the secrets of Mythika's most fabled (and notorious) city</i>	
Article: Out on the Streets	20
<i>Muggers, gossipers, street performers and other urban nuisances for M&M cities</i>	
Adventure: The Order of Crows	26
<i>A low-level but high-flying M&M scenario set in the City of Kandaria</i>	
Griffin Archives: The Assassin	33
<i>An optional character class emerges from the shadows of the 1980s</i>	
Mythic Bestiary: Mythic Medley	35
<i>A selection of new creatures – including a few obscure leftovers from Greek myth!</i>	
Maze Master's Lore: The Whole Wider World	41
<i>Cosmography 101 – a look at the outer planes of Mythika</i>	
Bonus Article: Love & War	43
<i>What could Aphrodite, goddess of love, possibly have to do with warriors?</i>	
Pandora's Box: Gifts of Grace	44
<i>A selection of mythic items for the discerning, Grace-conscious adventurer</i>	
Variant Classes: Bring on the Beastmen!	46
<i>Acteon Champion? Rogue Bearman? Orycter Paladin? Really?</i>	
Adventure: The Five Islands	50
<i>How to turn a few random dice rolls into a fantastic adventure</i>	
Almanac of Mythika: Mythic History (3/3)	59
<i>Concluding our scholarly journey through the Homeric Annals of Mythika...</i>	
A Twist in the Maze: The Third Gender	64
<i>Introducing androgynous adventurers to the world of Mazes & Minotaurs</i>	
Another Twist in the Maze: Forging Your Own Legend	66
<i>Some alternative thoughts on what it really means to be a hero in M&M</i>	
Muse's Corner: Books, DVDs & OSTs	68
<i>Some recommended reading, viewing and listening for all Minotaurians!</i>	
Official Oracle: Creature Concerns	70
<i>Questions and answers on various aspects of the M&M game system</i>	
Play Nymph	72
<i>The last (and first) MINOTAUR Play Nymph!</i>	
The Last Shield Wall	73
<i>'Nuff said!</i>	

MYTHIKA GAZETTEER

KANDARIA

CITY OF DREAMS, CITY OF THIEVES

Written by Andrew Pearce



Kandaria, where every dream can be bought – or sold!

Kandaria... a city full of hard-bargaining merchants, charismatic charlatans and daring pickpockets. It is a place where 'truth' and 'justice' are malleable terms, where anything, no matter how illicit, is attainable, and every official is bribable at the right price. Its name has become a by-word for all that is corrupt, dissolute and decadent in Mythika.

And yet, Kandaria remains a city of allure, a place of excitement, and the source of endless possibilities and opportunities. Kandaria is commonly known by its people as the '**City of Dreams**.'

But not all dreams are destined to be fulfilled, and some turn to nightmares. Like a moth attracted to the flame, many a Minean traveler has succumbed to the temptations of Kandaria, only to be burnt in the process.

In spite of these perils, Kandaria still exerts an undeniable fascination, and few who visit the city find themselves unchanged by the experience. There is an old saying: '*When one tires of Kandaria, one tires of the world.*'

Welcome, then, to Kandaria, the City of Dreams.

A Tour of the City of Dreams

The City of Kandaria is located on the eastern seaboard of the Middle Sea, near the southernmost outlet of the **Oromedon Delta**. Three-fifths of the city's buildings (and inhabitants) are located within the so-called **Inner City**, a peninsula measuring a mile and three-quarters from north to south, and three-quarters of a mile from west to east.

The Inner City is divided into two sections: the small **Island of Melkart** and the much-larger **Harbor Island** (neither of which are actual islands). Harbor Island is the commercial heart of Kandaria. In addition to the halls of the principal guilds, it is also home to most of the warehouses, wharfs and factories of this busy mercantile center. The largest building within Harbor Island is the imposing **Chamber of Commerce**, which as well as being the economic hub of the city, also functions as its political center. It stands at the western end of the **Great Market**, an enormous outdoor market filled with hundreds of stalls, where all manner of goods and services can be obtained. Alas, the Great Market also provides many rich pickings on a busy day for members of the **Thieves Guild**.

Two important temples are located on Harbor Island: the magnificent **Temple of Ashtarte** and the smaller (but still impressive) **Temple of Asherah**.

Most of Kandaria's trade with the outside world is conducted by sea, and the city possesses two fine harbors. The **North Harbor** can accommodate up to one hundred vessels, and the larger **South Harbor** up to one hundred and eighty ships. Kandaria's small fleet of war galleys (fifty ships, mostly *biremes*) is usually stationed, when not on patrol, in the North Harbor.



Kandaria: Mythika's most cosmopolitan city

The tallest structure in Kandaria is the **Black Tower**, which stands in the south-west corner of Harbor Island. Built during the final century of the Age of Magic, it was used by the Autarchs who then ruled Kandaria, first as a prison, and later as a place where they carried out their most vile magical experiments. Today, this place of ill-repute is said to be haunted by malevolent spirits, and has stood abandoned for centuries.

At the foot of the cliff below the Black Tower, a pair of chains can be observed hanging from the rock-face. These chains are made of a wondrous jet-black metal, and show no signs of wear, even though they are hundreds of years old. The Kandarians hold that they were placed there by the Autarchs, and were used as a cruel means of slow punishment for particularly significant prisoners. The locals call them the **Chains of Wrath**. However, according to Minean legend, they mark the spot where Princess Andromeda was to be sacrificed to a sea-monster, only for her to be rescued by one of the greatest of all Minean heroes, Perseos. Mineans therefore generally refer to them as the **Chains of Andromeda**, and most Mineans visiting Kandaria for the first time will ask to see them – much to the annoyance of Kandarians, who give little credence to the tale of Perseos and Andromeda.

Harbor Island is separated from the **Island of Melkart** by a sturdy stone wall, the so-called **Inner Wall**. This is pierced by a great double-gate, known as the **Melkart Gate**. The Island of Melkart is home to the former **Royal Palace** (which has stood empty and decaying for 70 years, as it is believed to be cursed and haunted by a whole court of ghosts); the dwellings of the most-wealthy merchant-princes of Kandaria; and the grandest of all Kandaria's places of worship, the **Great Temple of Baal Melkart**.

The Island of Melkart also contains the ancient **Royal Burial Ground**, where most of the former native kings of Kandaria have been laid to rest; and **Point Melkart** (or **Phoenix Point**) – the most sacred locations in all Edon, where Baal Melkart is said to have appeared to **Belus**, the founder of Kandaria.

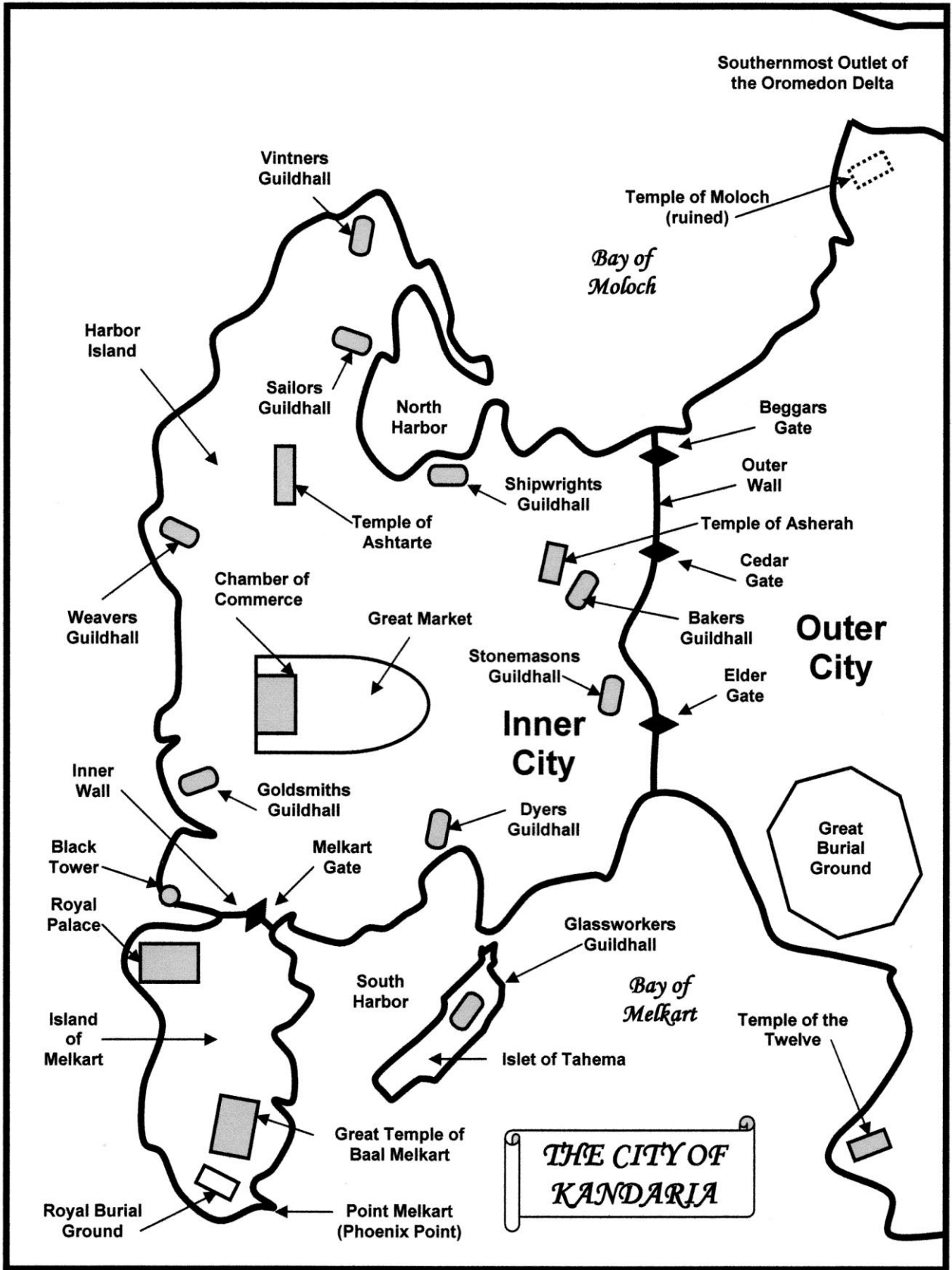
At its narrowest point, the isthmus joining the Inner City to the mainland is about half a mile wide. A strong stone wall runs across the isthmus at this point, separating the Inner City from the mainland districts, the so-called **Outer City**.

There are three gates that pass through the **Outer Wall**. From north to south, these are the **Beggars Gate** (so-named because it is the only Kandarian gate were beggars and cripples are allowed to congregate); the **Cedar Gate** (named after the beautiful avenue of cedars of Edon that form a stunning approach to it); and the **Elder Gate** (so-called because it is the oldest of the three – the stonework surrounding it dates back to the original city wall of Kandaria, built in the 1st century of the Age of Magic). The Outer City is where the poorest two-fifths of Kandaria's citizens live. Several minor guilds (including the legendary **Thieves Guild**) have their headquarters here.

Other notable features include the **Great Burial Ground** (where most of the citizens of Kandaria are buried); the **Temple of the Twelve**; and the ruined **Temple of Moloch** (destroyed in the final century of the Age of Magic).



Welcome to Kandaria, fellow merchant!



Scale: 10 cm = 1 mile

(Note: Buildings are not to scale)



- Ah, let me tell you about my homeland, Hyperborea...

Society & Culture

The Peoples of Kandaria

The majority of the inhabitants of Kandaria (perhaps 75% to 80% of the population) are Edonites, but representatives of most other cultures from around the shores of the Middle Sea can be found in this great cosmopolitan city. The Edonites are related to other eastern peoples, such as the Oromedonians and Hazarians, which accounts for some similarities in appearance, culture, religion and language amongst these people; these similarities are reflected within the general populace of Kandaria as well. Very few Akamen actually live in Kandaria, preferring to work – as elsewhere in the Oromedon province – through intermediaries. Whilst the various ethnic groups co-exist with one another fairly harmoniously on a day-to-day basis, there is surprisingly little intermarriage between them – in strong contrast to Midia, where such intermingling is common.

Language

The Edonite language is distantly related to the languages spoken in Hazar and Oromedon. It is also the mother-language of the Midian tongue. However, six hundred years of cultural and geographical separation has resulted in these two languages becoming almost mutually unintelligible to one another. Not surprisingly (given its highly-cosmopolitan population), many different languages can be heard spoken on the streets of Kandaria. Most native Kandarians are fluent in at least one other language besides their own. After Edonite, Hazarian used to be the most frequently-heard tongue in Kandaria – but over the last thirty years, Akamen (the new *lingua franca* throughout the Land of the Sun) has rapidly displaced Hazarian as the second language of the city.

Kandarian Names

Kandarian names are broadly similar to those used by their Midian cousins (see *Minotaur No. 7*, p. 11 for more details).

Most Kandarians have just a single name – but members of merchant-prince families tend to add the name of their ancestral founder, prefixed by **bar**, meaning ‘son (of)’. So for example, the current head of the influential Karkan clan is **Mattan bar Karkan** – literally ‘Mattan the son of Karkan’.

Female members of the family use the prefix **bat**, meaning ‘daughter (of)’: so Mattan’s daughter Bomilcah is known as **Bomilcah bat Karkan** – literally ‘Bomilcah daughter of Karkan’. She would *never* be introduced as **Bomilcah bat Mattan**.

Commoners are not permitted to use a second name – to do so would be the height of social presumption. Instead, they differentiate themselves by use of a trade or a descriptive term (e.g., Hiron the Shipbuilder, Mattanet the Weaver or Tabadan the Tall).

Male names tend to end in **-l**, **-m**, **-n**, **-o**, or **-r**. Common elements include **ab** (‘father’), **adan** (‘master’), **azer** or **eser** (‘strong’), **bar** (‘son’), **bel** (from the god Baal), **bo(d)** (‘servant/slave’), **hay** (‘valiant’), **hayel** (‘wealthy’), **hirom** (‘high-born’), **karkan** (‘ship’), **kirtan** (‘victorious’), **mattan** (‘bold’), **milco** (‘king’), **nitom** (‘night’), **sakken** (‘wise’), **shofet(t)** (‘judge’), **tab** (‘hawk’), **yam** (‘sea’) and **yaton** (‘priest’).

Here are a few examples: **Abadan, Abibel, Adayam, Adhirom, Agenobel, Azemilco, Barhirom, Beladan, Beleser, Bodyaton, Erubel, Hayadan, Hayelazer, Hirobel, Hirom, Itobel, Karkanadan, Karkanecer, Karkanibel, Kirtan, Kirtanibel, Malyon, Mattamilco, Mattan, Sakkemilco, Sakkenyaton, Shofeteser, Tabadan, Tabnitom, Yacobel**. Many of the masculine names used in Midia (see *Minotaur No. 7* p. 11) would also be perfectly suitable Kandarian names.

Female names tend to end in **-ah**, **-ash**, **-e** or **-t**. Common elements include **am** (‘mother’), **ash** (‘goddess’), **bat** (‘daughter’), **milcah** (‘queen’), **sam** (‘lady’), **sim** (‘joy’) or **yatonah** (‘priestess’).

Here are a few examples: **Amilcah, Batashe, Bomilcah, Hayatonah, Hiromah, Mattanet, Nitomashe, Sakkenet, Samnitome, Similcah, Simyatonah, Simye, Yamabat**. Many of the feminine names used in Midia (see *Minotaur No. 7*, p. 11) would also be perfectly suitable Kandarian names – however Midian female names ending in **-a** convert to their Kandarian equivalents by adding **-h** or **-t**.



A merchant-prince with his slaves and retainers

Social Classes of Kandaria

The old noble families of Kandaria – many of whom could proudly trace their ancestry back to the days of the First Dynasty – were virtually eliminated during the Autarch ascendancy. In their place, a 'new nobility' of **merchant-princes** – the leaders of the emerging guilds – came to dominate the social and political life of the city with the dawning of the Age of Heroes. They make up the top five percent of the population of Kandaria.

Any Kandarian-born Edonite (and sometimes Edonites from elsewhere too) who can raise the apprenticeship fees can join one of the city's guilds. Thereafter, they can theoretically rise through the ranks to the position of guild-master: but in practice the majority of masters and almost all guild-masters are selected from within the elite families of the merchant-princes. Most of these families tend to use a single guild as their power-base, but there are a few – such as the powerful **Karkan clan** – that have interests spread across several guilds. Most of the Guilds Major are so large and diverse as to be beyond the ability of any one family – no matter how powerful – to control single-handedly. By contrast, some of the Guilds Minor have effectively been 'family concerns' for generations.

Below the elite upper-class families of the merchant-princes are the middle classes that make up about a half of Kandaria's population. These supply the city with most of her skilled artisans and independent traders, as well as the majority of her most experienced mariners. Then there are the lower classes (those who are too poor to afford the

apprenticeship fees for even one of the lesser guilds), who make up the unskilled laborers of the city and the peasant farmers of the nearby villages. For many members of the lower classes, the only way to escape from grinding poverty is to join the city guards, become a common sailor aboard a Kandarian galley or merchant roundship, or join the Thieves Guild – the only guild that can proudly advertise that it has no apprenticeship fees.

Finally, Kandaria makes extensive use of slavery, in common with most Mythikan societies. Very few slaves are Kandarian-born themselves: most are imported from the Desert Kingdom, from Tritonis, from the city of Ishtar or, increasingly, from further east within the King of King's vast domains.

Trade

Kandarians are arguably the merchants *par excellence* in Mythika. They export many different items to both neighboring and distant lands, including gold, glass, dried fruits, and terracotta goods. However, three trade exports are particularly important to the Kandarian economy: cedars of Edon, Kandarian purple, and spiced wines.

The famed **cedars of Edon** are trees which grow in coastal woodlands to the north of Kandaria and are much prized for their strong, straight wood. In addition, they are wonderfully scented, making them an obvious choice for palace and temple furnishings made of wood. The trade in cedars of Edon, particularly to the Desert Kingdom (where hardwood is a scarce commodity), became firmly established in the first century of the Age of Heroes.

Kandarian purple is a purple-red dye that is extracted from a particular type of sea-snail. The dye is greatly prized because it does not fade: rather, it becomes brighter and more intense with weathering and sunlight. The snails are collected and left in vast vats to decompose, resulting in a terrible stench that is readily discernable in the Kandarian quarter where most of the dyers operate.

Kandarian spiced wines are exported far and wide across the Middle Sea. The exact combination of spices used is a carefully guarded secret, which many foreign merchants have tried unsuccessfully to obtain (though key ingredients are known to include honey, peppercorns and saffron).

Kandarians are also well-known for producing talented artists and craftsmen. As well as creating high quality finished metalwork, the Kandarians are particularly noted for their abilities in glass-making, terracotta sculpturing, ivory-carving and wood-carving. They are renowned for their skill in borrowing techniques from other cultures and improving upon them, whilst their own craft guilds are very protective of their own secrets.

Finally, Kandaria's merchant-mariners are famed for their willingness to travel extreme distances in search of lucrative contracts and exotic trade goods. Whether the cargo is pearls from Seriphos, amber

from Amazonia, furs from Hyperborea, silver from Midia or pottery from Umbria, Kandarian ships can be found to carry it. For several decades, in the late first century of the Age of Heroes, brave Kandarian mariners would even sail beyond the Bronze Gates in search of Sybarian white gold and exotic Charybdean animals (until heightened Atlantean hostility and extortionate Umbrian taxes at the Gates made such trade unviable).

Although trade has always been at the heart of the Kandarian way of life, it wasn't until the first century of the Third Age that the majority of the most powerful merchant-mariners began to organize themselves into trading guilds. The richest and most successful of these became known as **merchant-princes**, effectively the new nobility of Kandaria.

The Guilds of Kandaria

The most influential economical and political force in Kardaria throughout most of the Third Age has been the **College of Guilds**. The guilds of Kandaria began as associations of craftsmen and artisans based around particular trades, each of which sought to control the secrets of their respective disciplines, as well as the supply of skills, materials and finished goods.

The oldest of the Guilds of Kandaria is the **Dyers Guild**, which according to tradition was founded in the reign of Mattan II, in the early second century of the Age of Magic. The Dyers Guild was formed by leading producers of Kandarian purple, determined to maintain control over their lucrative business. The Dyers Guild went underground during the period of Autarch rule – becoming one of the major sources for internal resistance to the Autarchs – only to re-emerge at the beginning of the Third Age.

Other important guilds sprang up in the first century of the Third Age, as well as many lesser guilds and associations. During the reign of Yacobel I, these guilds began to form a College of Guilds, and to meet within the newly rebuilt Chamber of Commerce.

The hierarchy of each guild varies slightly from guild to guild: but in general, most guild members serve an **apprenticeship** of three to five years before being admitted to full membership as a **fellow**; and after fifteen years as a fellow, guild members who have reached a certain standard and/or wealth may apply to become a **master**. The head of each guild is known as the **guild-master**.

Some guilds allow women to join (such as the Dyers Guild, the Glassworkers Guild, and the Weavers Guild): others are only open to men. Most guilds have special induction ceremonies, and hidden codes, that are known only to their members. Betraying the mysteries of these rituals and passwords is treated just as seriously as betraying the secret techniques of the guild's craft, and often results in extreme forms of punishment.

Although all the guilds are members of the College, the administration of the College, the regulation of the Chamber of Commerce, and much of the governance of the city of Kandaria itself, is in the hands of the twelve most senior Guild-masters, the **Key-masters of the College**: and this has been the case since the reign of Yacobel II. Nine of the guilds (the so-called **Guilds Major**) automatically provide Key-masters of the College. The other three Key-masters are chosen by lot every three years from the Guild-masters of the smaller guilds (the so-called **Guilds Minor**).

Each of the Guilds Major has its own guildhall, all located (with the exception of the Glassmakers) on Harbor Island. In order of historic precedence, the Guilds Major of Kandaria are as follows:

1. Dyers Guild: The oldest and most respected of all the guilds, the Dyers are not the power that they once were. By ancient tradition, the Key-master of the Dyers Guild chairs all meetings of the College of Guilds. The Dyers are fierce rivals of the Weavers.

2. Shipwrights Guild: A powerful guild, responsible for the building and maintenance of Kandaria's large merchant fleet, the Shipwrights are bitter rivals with the Sailors Guild. The Shipwrights hold a nearly-monopoly on the export of cedars of Edon. Several lesser guilds are allied to the Shipwrights, including the Wood-wrights and the Silversmiths.

3. Goldsmiths Guild: Certainly the richest guild, the Goldsmiths Guild is disliked by most other guilds, who consider the Goldsmiths to be self-centered and deceitful. However, several lesser guilds are allied to the Goldsmiths Guild, amongst them the Gemcutters Guild.

4. Vintners Guild: Kandarian spiced wine is famous throughout Mythika. The secrets of its production are still carefully concealed after centuries of production by the members of the Vintners Guild. The Vintners are allied to the Sailors Guild and to lesser guilds such as the Potters and the Perfumers.

5. Weavers Guild: Staunch rivals of the Dyers Guild, the Weavers have suffered greatly in recent years as a result of increasing competition from elsewhere, including Ishtar and the Minean Cities.

6. Sailors Guild: Fierce rivals of the Shipwrights Guild, the Sailors Guild provides Kandaria with most of its mariners, river-boat men and pilots. They are closely allied to the Vintners Guild.

7. Bakers Guild: Perhaps the least influential of the Guilds Major – except in times of war and drought – the bakers have a strong reputation for piety. Their guildhall stands close by the Temple of Asherah, goddess of the earth and of farmers.

8. Stonemasons Guild: The Stonemasons tend to stand apart from the petty politics of the College. They regard themselves as gatekeepers and proud defenders of Kandaria, and are allied to several lesser guilds, including the Armorers Guild, the Blacksmiths Guild and the Ivory-carvers Guild.

9. Glassworkers Guild: The last of the Guilds Major to be founded (some two hundred and fifty years ago), the Glassworkers Guild was the least important of the Guilds Major until recently, largely because the very best Edonite glassworkers came from the town of Zaydon, and were reluctant to share their secrets with their Kandarian rivals. However, the destruction of Zaydon by Thukra IV half a century ago resulted in many Zaydonian glassworkers fleeing to Kandaria. The result has been a rapid growth in the importance and wealth of the Glassworkers Guild. As the youngest of the Guilds Major the Glassworkers found there was no room for them to practice their craft upon an already crowded Harbor Island, so they settled on the previously barren Islet of Tahema instead.

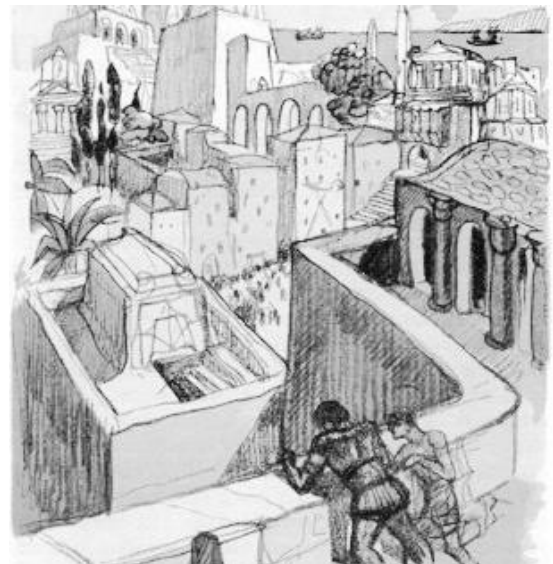
The exact number of the **Guilds Minor** tends to fluctuate, as new associations are formed, merged or disbanded. Well-known lesser guilds include the Armorers, the Blacksmiths, the Gemcutters, the Ivory-carvers, the Perfumers, the Potters, the Silversmiths, and the Wood-wrights. The most notorious of all the Guilds Minor is the **Thieves Guild** – which, despite the unsavory nature of its activities, is respected as a legitimate guild (much to the astonishment of visitors to Kandaria). At present, there are twenty-seven chartered Guilds Minor in Kandaria. The Guilds Minor Key-masters are currently the Guild-masters of the Blacksmiths, the Perfumers, and the Wood-wrights.

Finally, there's one guild that may not even exist: the **Mages Guild**. For centuries, sorcerers and elementalists have had a poor reputation in Kandaria – reinforced by the allegiance given by many of them to the Autarchs during their days of power. Reputedly, the Mages Guild was formed in the first century of the Age of Heroes to allow Kandarian sorcerers and elementalists to continue their craft in secret, without fear of persecution. Most Kandarians today believe that this guild is a complete myth. If its existence were to be proven, the reaction from the Akamen authorities would certainly be virulently hostile.

The Thieves Guild

The very existence of the Thieves Guild is a mystery to most visitors to Kandaria. Yet the Thieves Guild is actually the second-oldest of all the guilds of Kandaria, founded during the latter half of the second century of the Age of Magic, during the Desert Kingdom occupation of Kandaria. The Thieves Guild, like the even older – and altogether more respectable – Dyers Guild played a pivotal role in marshalling the underground resistance to the Autarch reign of terror. It is for this reason, at least in part, that the ordinary working folk of Kandaria retain their otherwise surprising respect for the Thieves Guild.

Another reason why the lower classes admire the Thieves Guild is that many of them see it as a means by which wealth can be 'redistributed' from the merchant-prince elite of Kandaria to the less-advantaged echelons of society.



Watch out, there's ALWAYS a thief about!

This bedrock of popular acquiescence, even approval, is crucial to understanding why this unorthodox guild has managed to survive so long. The influence of the Thieves Guild has grown steadily over the past century – first under the weak government of the Ninth Dynasty, and then as an outlet for Kandarians to resist the foreign rule of the last seventy years. As well as theft and burglary, the Thieves Guild also takes responsibility for regulating various officially-outlawed forms of commerce – such as smuggling and the trade in prohibited magical items and dangerous creatures.

Members of the Guild who are apprehended in their larceny usually get off with the payment of a hefty fine (and the return of the stolen goods). Only very stupid (or brazen) acts of theft are likely to lead to more serious punishments, such as imprisonment, or (in very rare cases) the forfeiture of the thief's hand (as this extreme punishment is likely to end the career of their members, the Thieves Guild has been known to exact vicious revenge against magistrates given to an excessive use of this punishment). Apprehended thieves who are not members of the guild, by contrast, usually receive capital punishments, even for relatively minor acts of pilfering. Members of other guilds may not like the Thieves Guild – but many of them have found that they have had reason to use the 'specialist services' of the Thieves Guild from time to time.

Kandarian Thieves

Edonite Thieves in Kandaria are automatically members of the local Thieves Guild. In game terms, this grants them a **reputation bonus** (equal to their level) when dealing with native Kandarians - yes, even with merchant-princes and representatives of the Akamen authorities. This *Underworld Notoriety* bonus reflects the effects of the Thief's connections and leverage, as well as the power of the Thieves Guild itself.

Religion

Despite recent efforts by the **Wise Ones**, the Mazdan priests of the Akamen Empire, to evangelize amongst them, the majority of Kandarians continue to follow the 'Old Religion' that they believe has served them well for centuries. The Kandarians worship four principal gods, as well as a number of lesser gods. The chief gods are:

Baal

The god of the sky, thunder and lightning, Baal is the head of the Edonite pantheon. His Midian equivalent is **Bel**. Baal has a number of different aspects that are worshipped under different names. As **Baal Melkart** ('Baal, the King of the City') he is particularly venerated in Kandaria, where one of his symbols is the phoenix, representing death and rebirth (see *The Kandarian Phoenix Legend*, p. 16). As **Baal Markod**, he is viewed as the Lord of Dance; as **Baal Amon** he is seen as a fertility god; as **Baal Hayel** he is the god of wealth, a favorite to the merchant-princes; whereas as **Baal Hadad** his aspect as god of thunder, lightning and battle is particularly emphasized (see *Minotaur No. 8*, p. 26 for more about Baal, and *Minotaur No. 7*, p. 16 for more about his Midian equivalent of Bel).

Asherah

The goddess of the earth, the mother goddess of the Edonite pantheon, Asherah was later made a hand-maiden of Tanit, the supreme goddess of the Midians (see *Minotaur No. 8* p. 25 for more about Asherah, and *No. 7* p. 16 for her worship in Midia).

Ashtarte

The goddess of love, Ashtarte is both sister and lover to Baal. Her Hazarian equivalent is Ishtar. Amongst the Midians, Ashtarte was later made a hand-maiden of Tanit, the supreme goddess of the Midians (see *Minotaur No. 8*, p. 25 for more about Astarte, and *No. 7* p. 16 for her cult in Midia).

Moloch

The god of fire and death, Moloch is little worshipped today. Indeed, his principal Kandarian temple remains in the same ruinous state in which it was left by the Autarchs. However, there are smaller shrines to Moloch in the city and elsewhere in Edon, and (unlike Midia, where the Cult of Moloch has long been suppressed), the worship of Moloch, whilst not widespread, is certainly not forbidden. Although the heinous practices of child sacrifice associated with Moloch were stamped out by the Kandarian kings of the Cedar Dynasty at the start of the Age of Heroes, they have resurfaced from time to time. It is probably only a matter of time until one of the Akamen kings, normally so tolerant of local religious sensibilities, moves to suppress the Cult of Moloch (see *Minotaur No. 8* p. 29 and *No. 7* pp. 16, 18-19 for more about Moloch). In his aspect as god of death, Moloch is often known as **Mot**.

Silent Gods

Unlike the Olympians, the Edonite gods do not manifest themselves in person. For this reason, the priests and priestesses of the Edonite faith are not treated as classic priests in the true M&M sense – i.e., they do not have access to Divine Prodigies or other magical powers as found amongst the priests of nations such as the Three Cities, the Desert Kingdom, and Midia. They are not, therefore, suitable as player characters, but only as Minor NPCs, with the same profile in game terms as the Umbrian Priestesses detailed in *Minotaur No. 4*, p. 17.

Edonite priests believe, of course, that they are 'guided' by their gods in rather more indirect ways: but why is it that the Edonite gods and goddesses do not intervene in the affairs of men by more obvious means? The fact that they don't is made even more puzzling when one remembers that some, at least, of these gods are worshipped in much the same way by the Midians. Yet they clearly have no problem at all with manifesting themselves in Midia, both directly and through the powers of their priests.

According to some tales, the Edonite gods used to intervene directly in the affairs of Edon and Kandaria throughout the Age of Myth and, less frequently, through the first two hundred years of the Age of Magic, but they gave up doing so during the Years of Fire, the final century of the Second Age. Virtually all the 'true priests' (i.e., those who had access to Divine Prodigies) were hunted down and exterminated by the Autarchs. Only 'lesser priests', without access to these insights and powers, were left when the Age of Heroes dawned.

Why the Edonite gods should have withdrawn in this way is something of a metaphysical mystery. Some Edonites believe that this '*Silence of the Gods*' (as it is called) is punishment for a 'lack of faith' during the days of Autarch oppression, or even divine retribution because many Edonites chose to convert to the Autarch cause rather than resist their ungodly rule. Others believe that the gods are simply testing the faith of their followers and that, when this test has been successfully passed, the past relationship between gods and people will be restored. In the minds of some, this belief is inextricably linked with the prophesied ascendancy of the 13th Dynasty.

Other Gods

Less prominent Edonite gods include **Anat**, goddess of war; **Ashimah**, goddess of fate; **Eshmun**, god of healing (see *Minotaur No. 7* p. 16 for more about his worship in Midia); **Kothar** the god of craftsmen; **Nikkalah**, goddess of fruits and orchards; **Shapash**, goddess of the sun; **Yam**, god of the sea and chaos; and **Yarek**, god of the moon.

These eight lesser gods, together with the four greater gods, are worshipped together as the pantheon of Edonite deities. Although each has their own shrines and temples in Kandaria and across Edon, they are all venerated collectively at the **Temple of the Twelve** in the Outer City.

Edonite Temples

Edonite temples are only partially built of stone and metal: cedar wood is heavily used in their construction, especially in the building of the inner sanctum of the temple. Only the most fragrant cedars are used for these purposes.

Notable Kandarians Today

Mattan bar Karkan

Mattan is the current *shofet* of Kandaria, and is responsible for the orderly running of the city. He is answerable to Phraortes, the satrap of the Oromedon Province, who governs the whole of the Land of Sun on behalf of the Akamen King of Kings. Mattan is painfully aware that for all his wealth and status, he is but an underling of the greater Akamen Empire.

Mattan bar Karkan has been *shofet* for six years – ever since his predecessor **Erubel bar Abyaton** was ‘summoned’ to Anshan to make a report to the Great King. Erubel’s report was clearly unsatisfactory, and he was never heard from since. Mattan knows better than to enquire as to the exact fate of his predecessor.

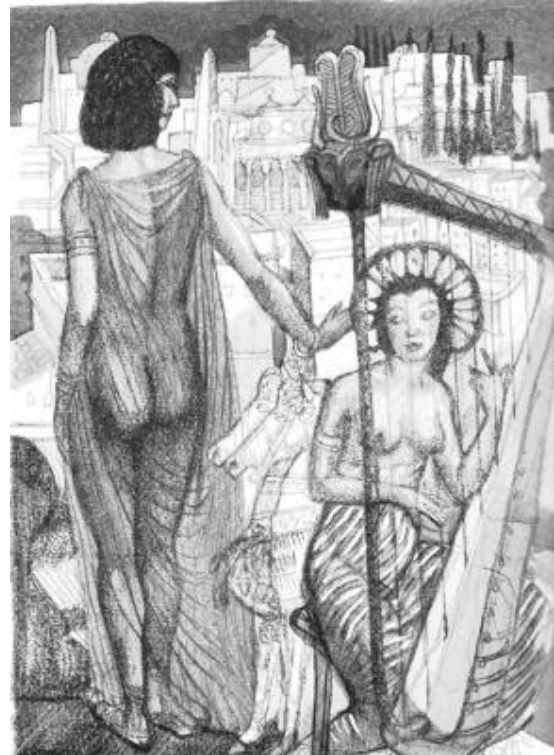
Now aged 59, he heads the powerful Karkan clan, which has long been a leading voice within the Vintners and Glassworkers Guilds, as well as several of the smaller guilds. His one regret is that he married late, and that he has been unable to produce a son and heir. He plans to marry his eldest daughter Bomilcah to **Malyon bar Bodeser** within the next few months.

Bomilcah bat Karkan

Bomilcah bat Karkan is the pretty and spoilt elder daughter of the *shofet* of Kandaria. Aged just 19, she is said to be horrified at the prospect of being married off in a few months time to a man old enough to be her father. The fact that Malyon bar Bodeser is well-known for his kindness and love of learning, and would certainly make a better husband than many other potential suitors, seems to have escaped the selfish Bomilcah.

Malyon bar Bodeser

Malyon is the current key-master of the Dyers Guild. Although the influence of the Dyers Guild isn’t what it once was, 45-year-old Malyon has agreed to the forthcoming marriage to the *shofet*’s daughter in the hope that it will boost the prestige of his guild.



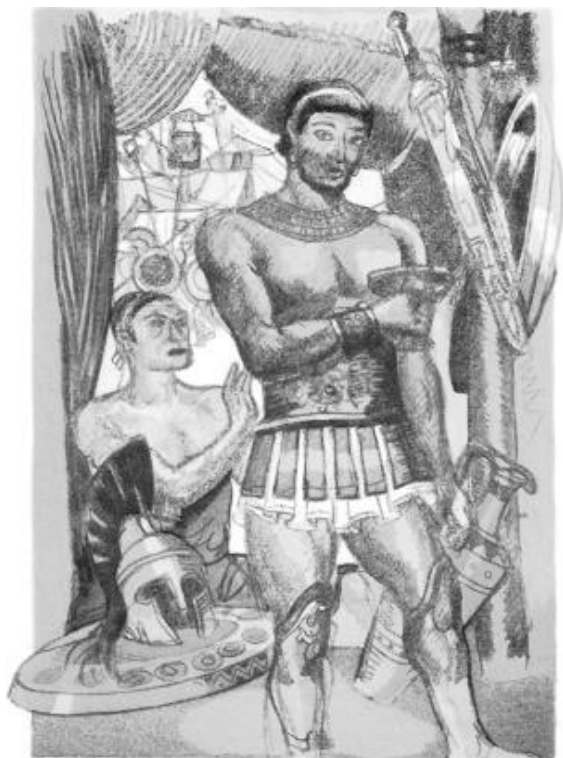
The vain and spoilt Bomilcah bat Karkan (left)

Azehirom the Black

Azehirom is unusual for several reasons. Firstly, he is of mixed race – a relatively rare occurrence even in cosmopolitan Kandaria. Alongside his Edonite father he has a Charybodian mother – which accounts both for his physical appearance and his nickname. Secondly, he has risen to the rank of guild-master within the Stonemasons Guild in a relatively short space of time – in so doing becoming the first ‘commoner’ key-master for over thirty years. Azehirom is still only in his early forties (his exact age is something about which he is extremely coy), and he makes an incongruous sight at meetings of the College of Guilds. He is nevertheless popular with many members of the lesser guilds, who see him as a willing champion of their cause in the circles of power.

Kamilco bar Nitomadan

Kamilco bar Nitomadan is guild-master of the powerful Shipwrights Guild, and head of the **Nitomadan clan**, one of the most powerful in Kandaria. Now aged 49, Kamilco makes little secret of his ambition to replace Mattan bar Karkan as *shofet*. He is believed to have his own extensive contacts in Ishtar, through which he hopes to gain the ear of the satrap Phraortes. He has recently learned, however, that the King of King has struck an agreement with the Tritonians to build a large fleet for the Akamen Empire. The fact that the Empire has neglected to consult the Kandarian Shipwrights Guild in this matter has greatly offended the proud Kamilco.



Tabadan the Tall, commander of the city guard

Tabadan the Tall

Tabadan the Tall is the commander of the city guard. Aged 53, Tabadan is a grizzled veteran who began his soldiering days as a member of the Oromedon army. Following the fall of Ishtar to the Akamen king Kyros, Tabadan returned to his childhood home, where he rapidly rose through the ranks of the city guard, becoming its commander thirteen years ago. A competent fighter who wishes he could have remained a soldier (impossible given the refusal of the Akamen to use Edonites in their army), Tabadan has a dark secret: his maternal grandfather was an Anakite. Although only one-quarter Anakite himself, this would be enough for him to suffer instant dismissal and disgrace should it be discovered. The days when Anakite sentries proudly guarded the gates of Kandaria are most certainly a thing of the past.

Simnitome bat Shofetbel

Simnitome is guild-master of the Weavers Guild. Aged 73, she is the oldest of the current key-masters of the College, as well as its only current female member. Although the influence of her guild is diminishing, her long service on the College means that her wise counsel is much respected.

The Red Ribbon

The 'Red Ribbon' is the well-known alias of the current guild-master of the Thieves Guild. His (or even her) true identity remains a mystery to all except the highest ranking masters of the guild.

Adventurers in Kandaria

With the exception of Thieves (who are probably more numerous in Kandaria than in any other city of Mythika) and the optional Mariner (see the *Minotaur N°1* or the *Triremes & Tritons* supplement), none of the basic classes detailed in the M&M rules exist among the native Edonite population.

Warriors

Amazons, Barbarians and Centaurs are obviously non-native characters, and while Merchant-Princes clearly form the aristocracy of Kandarian society, they cannot be defined as Nobles in the usual M&M sense of the term (i.e., heroic warriors favored by the gods or by destiny); since their main priorities are business and local politics, they care little about adventuring, questing and other typical M&M pursuits, and thus cannot be considered "player-character material". The same applies to the local guardsmen, who may fight with spear and shield but lack the heroic disposition and martial excellence of true M&M Spearmen: they too should be treated as non-adventuring Minor NPCs.

Magicians

The local priests fill the sacerdotal niche in Kandarian society but are not Priests in the usual M&M sense and do not have access to any form of Divine Prodigies; they never go on "divine missions" for their deities, being mainly, if not exclusively, interested in the social, political and theological aspects of their priestly role (making them Noncombatant Minor NPCs in game terms). As for Lyrists and Nymphs, they simply do not exist in Edonite culture.

So what about Elementarists and Sorcerers? Well, since any overt display of magic in Kandaria (or elsewhere in the Oromedon Province for that matter) is likely to lead to a very brutal response from the Akamen authorities as well as from the native population (visiting foreigners take note!), no Edonite in his right mind would bother to study the forbidden arts, especially when there are so many opportunities to make a fortune in business or thievery.

Specialists

Since there are no urban Hunters, this leaves the Thief as the only class described in the *Players Manual* allowed to native Kandarian player-characters – who even enjoy the extra advantage of Guild membership (see *Kandarian Thieves*, p. 10). In addition, their uniquely cosmopolitan upbringing allows them to start the game with three languages: Edonite, Akamen and one other chosen from Hazarian, Low Khemi, Midian, Minean, Tritonian or Oromedonian.

Conclusion: Most adventurers in Kandaria will be foreigners. This obviously adds to the cosmopolitan vibe of the place and also means that, for most adventurers, life in the City of Dreams will often be an adventure in itself, full of hidden dangers, shadowy intrigues and surprising discoveries...



Kandaria, a paradise for foreign adventurers

Other Places of Interest

Although Kandaria is the only major city in Edon, it is not the only place of interest. Other noteworthy locations in Edon include:

Ekeron

The ruins of the Anakite city of Ekeron lie eighty miles to the north-east of Loredo, and forty miles inland. For two hundred years, Ekeron was the very heart of the **Anakite kingdom**, from which they ruled over the whole of Edon. However, following the uprising of the Kandarians in the mid-third century BP, the Anakite kingdom rapidly declined. The last significant Anakite king, Ekosh, fell in battle with Agenobel I of Kandaria, and his sons quarreled disastrously amongst themselves over the succession. The city was left in half-ruins by the civil war, only to be sacked by Abibel, the son of Agenobel, in about 210 BP. The Anakites have never attempted to rebuild the city, and eight and a half centuries later it remains a sad and lonely epitaph to the lost glories of this remarkable race.¹

Erwad

This Edonite town, about sixty miles north of Kandaria, is situated at the head of a sheltered inlet that has long provided refuge for Edonite ships in times of storm and war. It is has become famous in more recent times as the birthplace of **Sakkenyatton the Mellifluous**, greatest of all Edonite poets.

¹ See *Minotaur No.3*, p. 36 and *Minotaur No.3*, p. 19 for more about the Anakites, including their sad fall from grace under the current Akamen regime.

Gebal

This Edonite town, some one hundred and twenty miles north of Kandaria, lies directly opposite the island of Tritonis. The Gebalites claim that the Edonite alphabet was actually devised in Gebal – not Kandaria as most other Edonites assert. With the fall of Zaydon, Gebal is now the largest Edonite settlement besides Kandaria itself.

Loredo

The town of Loredo is the most northerly of the principal Edonite settlements, situated two hundred and forty miles north of Kandaria. It has a sizeable Anakite population, as well as a notable Tritonian community. Some believe that the very finest cedars of Edon are to be found in the vicinity of Loredo.

Oromedon Delta

The great river of Oromedon is almost as important to the peoples of the Land of the Sun as the river Khet is to the Khetim of the Desert Kingdom. The Oromedon Delta is a large wetland area similar in size to the Khet Delta, and is filled with an ample abundance of wildlife, including many varieties of birds and fish. Unfortunately, the delta also serves as a breeding ground for various plagues that from time to time spread beyond the confines of the delta to Kandaria. The most deadly outbreak of plague in known history, the **Yellow Plague** of 157 AH, is believed to have had its origins in the Oromedon Delta.

The Oromedon Delta is home to various pockets of bandits, and the Thieves Guild is known to have several hidden bases within it. However, riverboat patrols from Kandaria frequently ply the waters of the Delta to ensure that relatively safe passage, at least, is maintained for the many boats and barges that travel along the river between Edon and Hazar.

Zaydon

The town of Zaydon, situated forty miles north of Kandaria near the farthest edge of the Oromedon Delta, was for centuries the second-largest settlement in Edon. It was noted for the excellence of its glass-working industry, and the jealousy with which it guarded its secrets – much to the annoyance of the Glassworkers Guild in Kandaria. However, it had the misfortune to be the site of the final desperate battle between Nabu-nasir, last king of Ishtar, and the forces of Thukra IV, the great but barbaric ruler of Oromedon. Thukra's forces annihilated the last remnants of the once-proud Ishtar army, and then proceeded to lay waste to Zaydon. Most of its citizens were slaughtered or enslaved, but a few escaped to Kandaria, including several of the town's most gifted glassworkers. Half a century on, Zaydon remains in ruins – but its fame lives on thanks to the glass-working techniques it pioneered, which have been brought to new heights by the Glassworkers Guild of Kandaria.

Edonite Lore

Important works of Edonite literature include the ancient *Edonite King Lists* (sadly, now very much fragmented and incomplete); the *Epic of Kirtan*, the story of an Edonite hero from the First Age; the *Baal Cycle*, a series of devotional poems in praise of Baal and other gods, dating back to the first century of the Age of Magic; the *Lament of the Broken Reed*, that tells of the coming of the Autarchs; the *Tale of Rapuma*, a tragic romance of unrequited love from the dark days of the Sixth Dynasty; and the *Firebird's Return*, an epic poem composed by arguably the greatest of all Edonite writers, **Sakkenyaton the Mellifluous**, about one hundred years ago, in the reign of the first Petal King, Beladan II. Some of the earliest of these works (like the first *Edonite King Lists* and the *Epic of Kirtan*) were written on clay tablets in a cuneiform script similar to that used by the Hazarians.

Later works were written (on papyrus imported from the Desert Kingdom) in the Kandarian alphabetic script developed the reign of Itobel II, and still used with little variation seven centuries later. Many of the greatest literary works of Kandaria, alas, were lost during the Autarch tyranny, whilst others were destroyed when the Library of Pisisiris was sacked by Thukra IV and his Oromedon hordes in 285 AH.

The History of Kandaria

Few regions of Mythika have experienced such a varied and turbulent history as Kandaria and the surrounding lands of Edon. Since the city's foundation nearly twelve hundred years ago (which makes it the oldest continuously-inhabited city in Mythika), Kandaria has been ruled by no less than nine different nationalities. Kandarians today refer to these various ruling royal houses of Kandaria as the **Twelve Dynasties**.

Dynasty I (533-451 BP)

Kandaria was founded, according to tradition, in 533 BP by a prince named **Belus**. Although possibly Hazarian himself, Belus married a Proteusian princess, the eldest daughter of the Bull King, named Eudore. The First Dynasty of Kandaria is also known as the **Proteusian Dynasty**. Following the downfall of the Bull King in 499 BP, many more Proteusians settled in Edon, forming an elite social class within Edonite society. Belus was succeeded by his son **Pygmalion** (famous for marrying an image of Aphrodite named Galatea), who ruled from 501 to 458 BP. He in turn was succeeded by his unpopular son **Paphos**.

In 451 BP, the Edonites rose up against Paphos and the increasingly unwelcome Proteusians. In so doing they were aided by the **Anakites**, fierce tribesmen who lived along the northernmost stretch of the Edonite coast. Unfortunately for the Edonites,

their erstwhile allies almost immediately turned against them, and imposed themselves as overlords of Kandaria in their turn.²

Dynasty II (451-240 BP)

The Second Dynasty of Kandaria (also known as the **Anakite Dynasty**) ruled Edon for some two hundred years. Noted for the oppressive and cruel nature of their rule, the Anakites came to be greatly hated by their Edonite subjects. The Anakites ruled over Edon from their own city of **Ekeron**. There were said to be ten Anakite kings of the Second Dynasty, but only the names of the first (**Gath**) and the last (**Ekosh**) are now known, as the original Edonite king-lists that gave details of the Second Dynasty were lost long ago.

Dynasty III (240 BP-145 AM)

The Third Dynasty of Kandaria (also known as the **Phoenix Dynasty**) was the first line of native Edonite kings to rule over Kandaria. The first king of this line was **Agenobel I**, who ruled from 240 to 215 BP.³ In all, there were seventeen kings of the Third Dynasty, whose reigns are recorded as follows:

Agenobel I	240-215 BP
Abibel	215-201 BP
Hirom I	201-167 BP
Beleser I	167-151 BP
Itobel I	151-125 BP
Beleser II	125-106 BP
Azemilco I	106-98 BP
Itobel II	98-63 BP
Agenobel II	63-49 BP
Beleser III	49-27 BP
Hirom II	27 BP-21 AM
Mattan I	21-42 AM
Malyon	42-67 AM
Azemilco II	67-101 AM
Mattan II	101-129 AM
Agenobel III	129-142 AM
Beleser IV	142-145 AM

The Third Dynasty governed Kandaria for far longer than any other royal house. It was easily the most successful of all the native Edonite dynasties to rule over Kandaria. The most-favored symbol of the Third Dynasty was the phoenix, which was used as a frequently-reoccurring motif in many Kandaria works of art and architecture from this period. Later rulers of Edonite ethnicity would often make use of the phoenix, a representation of rebirth, as a way of identifying themselves with the past glories of the Third Dynasty.

² More details about this period of Kandarian history can be found in *Minotaur No. 11 Mythic Annals*.

³ Minean legend speaks of a Kandarian king named Cepheos and a queen named Cassiopeia ruling in the mid-third century BP (see *Minotaur No. 11 Mythic Annals* for more details). However, the Kandarians themselves make no mention of this tradition.

Under the Third Dynasty, the Kandarians first became involved in the affairs of their great neighbor to the south, the Desert Kingdom of the Khettim. During the reign of **Hiom I**, the Kandarians first offered sanctuary to Ra-neptah, the rightful king of the Khettim, and then supplied Ra-neptah with an army to help him reclaim his throne from his usurping younger brother Samekhe.

Kandaria under the Phoenix Dynasty was virtually the only human civilization to survive through the Dark Days of the final century of the Age of Myth – for while the collapse of international trade did adversely affect Kandaria, at least their kings were able to maintain law and order across the Edonite territories themselves.

The Kandarian Phoenix Legend



According to the Kandarians, the phoenix firebird is a living incarnation of the supreme god **Baal Melkart**. The phoenix can live for hundreds of years, feeding on aromatic herbs and spices, and filling the air with its melodious voice. At the end of its life, it is consumed by fire, only to be reborn from the ashes.

The Kandarians tell how an aged phoenix guided **Belus** to the rocky outcrop near the mouth of the River Oromedon. The phoenix guided Belus to the furthest point, **Point Melkart** (or **Phoenix Point**) as it later became known. There the phoenix was consumed in flame, only to be reborn. Thus it was that Belus was given a divine sign that he should build his city upon that rock. In subsequent centuries, the people of Kandaria have suffered invasion after invasion – but always the survivors, like the phoenix, have risen from the ashes to rebuild their homeland.

According to some traditions, the phoenix has reappeared twice in Kandaria's long history: once during the reign of Agenobel I, first king of the glorious **Phoenix Dynasty**; and then again some five centuries later to Hirom III, liberator of the Kandarians from the Autarchs and founder of the almost equally celebrated **Cedar Dynasty**. According to some, the phoenix will return when the prophesied **Thirteenth Dynasty** is inaugurated.

The Epic of Kirtan

The **Epic of Kirtan**, the oldest surviving tale of Kandarian literature, dates from the reign of Hirom I. It tells of a battle between the heroic figure of Kirtan and the evil seven-headed serpent **Lotan**, an associate of the grim Edonite god **Yam**, god of the sea and chaos. Kirtan, a servant of **Baal**, is victorious. The epic may reflect a historic conflict between worshippers of Yam and Baal that paralleled (and was perhaps related to) the Desert Kingdom struggle between followers of Typhon (like Yam associated with chaos and the sea) and the sun-god Ra.

One advance that undoubtedly aided the Kandarians in this unsettling century was the development of the first quasi-alphabetic script, probably in the reign of **Itobel II**, which quickly replaced the cuneiform writing that had previously been used by Edonite priests and scribes. Although not a true alphabet (lacking as it did signs for vowels), this straightforward writing system, utilizing just twenty principal symbols, was far easier to learn than Desert Kingdom hieroglyphs, Hazarian cuneiform or the Linear B syllabary of the early Mineans. Consequently, for the first time in human history, literacy ceased to be the sole preserve of priests and scribes.

In the long and illustrious reign of **Hirom II** or **Hirom the Great** – later regarded by many Edonites as the most golden age of their history – the Kandarians first began to produce the famous '**Kandarian purple**', the dye which quickly became one of the mainstays of their economy.

Hirom II is also famous for the ban he introduced, in the final years of his reign, on the new (and, to his mind, rather sinister) Elementalists and Sorcerers who had begun to appear in Mythika in the first two decades of the Age of Magic. Although this ban may initially have helped preserve Kandaria from the malign influence of over-powerful magicians, in the long-term Kandaria's lack of native Elementalists and Sorcerers may have contributed to its inability to stand up to the Autarchs of Typhon when they emerged as a major power in the latter half of the Age of Magic.

Hirom II was succeeded by **Mattan I**, a great voyager, who even before ascending to the throne had begun to establish Kandarian colonies upon the islands of the Middle Sea. Mattan built the first fleet in Mythika consisting entirely of **penteconters** (previously these war galleys had been few and far between, almost exclusively the preserve of the rich and famous). Mattan had two children, a daughter named **Dido**, and a son, **Malyon**.

Mattan loved his daughter greatly, and decreed that following his death Kandaria was to be ruled jointly by Dido and Malyon. However, Malyon refused to accept his father's will, and following Mattan's death

seized the throne for himself alone. He also tried to force his sister to marry him – in contravention of the laws and customs of Kandaria. Dido, with the aid of her supporters, resisted her brother and departed Kandaria with nine ships in search of a new home, which she eventually found in Midia with the foundation of the city of Solus. Intense rivalry between Midians and Edonites has persisted ever since, right down to the present day.⁴

As the second century of the Age of Magic began, Kandaria found herself under increasing pressure from all directions: from the darks lords of Gorgoth to the north, the wizard-kings of Ishtar to the east and the kings of Seriphos under the House of Hypseos to the west. However, it was from the Desert Kingdom to the south, then approaching the height of its powers, that the decisive blow was to fall. In 125 AM, the Desert King Userkafre launched a campaign against Kandaria which, though unsuccessful, was to pave the way for further forays under his son and successor Akenre I. In 142 AM, **Agenobel III** fell in battle before Akenre, leading his first successful campaign into the Land of the Sun. A year later Akenre returned and forced Agenobel's successor **Beleser IV** to pay a heavy tribute to the Desert Kingdom. However, when two years later the tribute stopped, Akenre undertook a third expedition into the Land of the Sun, captured Kandaria, and carried Beleser back to the Desert Kingdom in chains. The glorious days of the Phoenix Dynasty had finally ended.

Dynasty IV (145-190 AM)

The Fourth Dynasty of Kandaria (also known as the **Khettim Dynasty**) ruled the city for almost half a century. The rule of the Desert Kings Akenre I, followed by Akenre II (who succeeded his father in 155 AM) was fairly benevolent, and most Kandarians accepted their new masters with surprisingly little resentment.

The Desert Kings governed Kandaria through native Edonite administrators, or *shofets* (literally meaning 'judges'). However, in 190 AM, the last of these Khettim-appointed shofets rebelled against the weakening authority of the Desert Kingdom, and re-established Kandaria independence, inaugurating the Fifth Dynasty.

Dynasty V (190-213 AM)

The Fifth Dynasty (also known as the **Broken Reed Dynasty**, from the only surviving literary work from this period) was the second line of Edonite rulers. However, unlike the great Phoenix Dynasty, the Broken Reed Dynasty was not destined to govern Kandaria for long. The first king of the Fifth Dynasty was **Azemilco III** (190-211 AM), former *shofet* under the Desert Kings. He was succeeded by his son **Beleser V**, who ruled for just two years.

In 213 AM, the Autarchs of Typhon launched a combined naval and overland (from the Khet Delta) assault upon Kandaria, burning much of the city in the process. Beleser V committed suicide by casting himself into the blazing ruins of his palace rather than surrender to the Autarchs.

Dynasty VI (213-300 AM)

The Sixth Dynasty (also known as the **Autarch Dynasty**, or the **Black Dynasty**) ruled Kandaria for nearly ninety years. As was common in most Autarch-ruled cities, power was exercised by a magiocratic council, with no one individual holding the title of king. However, certain influential Autarchs came to dominate the council.

The greatest – and most feared – of these Kandarian Autarchs was **Tabnitom the Terrible**, who directed the council during the last two decades of the Age of Magic. Tabnitom was a native Kandarian – proof that many Edonites were converted to the Autarch cause (something that most Edonites would prefer to overlook today).

Under the tyranny of the Autarchs, followers of the old Edonite gods were persecuted. Priests, in particular, were targeted, and almost all of the ancient temples of Kandaria were razed to the ground. Many Edonite historical records were also destroyed in the **Years of Fire**, as this dark century of Kandarian history is also known. However, underground resistance to the Autarchs continued throughout this period, much of it conducted by the fledgling guilds of this era – most notably the Dyers Guild and the Thieves Guild.

The Sixth Dynasty's oppressive rule came to an abrupt end in the cataclysmic Days of Wrath which ended the Age of Magic. The Kandarians, led by a valiant Edonite named Hirom, rose up against the last remnants of the Autarch regime. The phoenix of Kandaria was set to ascend once more from the ashes...

The Lament of the Broken Reed

This short work is the only surviving piece of literature from the Fifth Dynasty period.

It tells of the Autarch invasion, and how the Autarchs betrayed their promise to spare the city of Kandaria, in return for a generous tribute of gold. King Beleser V is quoted as saying of the Autarchs, *'If a plague asks you for a crown, give it two and it may go away'* (later one of the most memorable of all Kandarian aphorisms). Sadly, in the face of the Autarchs, it turns out not to be true, and the Lament ends with the suicide of the despairing Beleser, the *'broken reed'* of the story's title.

⁴ See *Minotaur No. 8 Midia: Land of Southern Promise* for more about Dido and the founding of Midia.

Dynasty VII (1-139 AH)

The Seventh Dynasty of Kandaria is also known as the **Cedar Dynasty**, after the cedars of Edon that were to become an integral part of the Kandarian economy in this period. It was the third line of Edonite rulers. Although not rising to the heights of the Phoenix Dynasty, the Cedar Dynasty did restore much of Kandaria's pride and self-confidence.

The first king of the Seventh Dynasty was **Hirom III** (sometimes known as **Hirom the Good**), who ruled from 1 to 33 AH. In total there were seven kings of the Seventh Dynasty:

Hirom III	1-33 AH
Yacobel I	33-59 AH
Itobel III	59-87 AH
Beladan I	87-99 AH
Azemilco IV	99-103 AH
Yacobel II	103-125 AH
Mattan III	125-139 AH

Hirom III was not only a capable tactician, but also an adept administrator and a renowned scholar. Reputedly a descendant of the old kings of the Phoenix Dynasty, Hirom rebuilt Kandaria, restored the worship of the old gods, and built several new and splendid temples, including the Great Temple of Baal Melkart.

His son and successor, **Yacobel I**, is generally credited with the invention of the **bireme** (although it was the Tritonians who eventually capitalized on this revolutionary new design). Yacobel also rebuilt the Royal Palace, the City Walls and the Chamber of Commerce. During his reign and that of his nephew and successor **Itobel III**, most of the great guilds of Kandaria received their charters.

Although the merchant fleets of Kandaria once again became familiar sights across the Middle Sea, no attempt was made to make Kandaria a significant military power, or to re-establish the Phoenix Dynasty's once impressive network of colonies. A number of trading posts were established in the opening century of the Age of Heroes, but by the beginning of the second century, the Kandarians found that they were being overshadowed on the waves of the Middle Sea first by the Mineans, then by the rising might of Tritonis.

During the reign of **Yacobel II**, the Tritonians used their growing naval superiority to intimidate the Kandarians into allowing them to set up several trading stations along the Edonite coast. These trading stations soon became outposts, then colonies, from which the Heptarchs finally launched a full-scale war against the Kandarians in 134 AH.

After five years of valiant resistance, the Kandarians realized that their situation was hopeless, and they surrendered. **Mattan III**, the last king of the Seventh Dynasty, accepted a pension and voluntary exile to the Tritonian island colony of Galypsos.

Dynasty VIII (139-215 AH)

For three-quarters of a century, the Eighth Dynasty (or **Tritonian Dynasty**) ruled over Kandaria. Although widely disliked by the Kandarians, the Tritonian hegemony was nothing like as brutal as that of the Typhonians. Nevertheless, Kandarians did have to pay heavy taxes to Acharnia. The Tritonians administered Kandaria through a succession of **shofets**, who each governed for a fixed term of seven years. Most of these were Tritonian, but at least three of them were Edonite.

In 215 AH, as soon as news reached Kandaria of the shattering of the Tritonian fleet by the mighty Atlanteans, the Kandarians rose up against their masters. For one final time, the Edonites took charge of their own destiny.

Dynasty IX (215-270 AH)

For just over half a century, the Ninth Dynasty of Kandaria (or **Petal Dynasty**, so-named from a common motif used in Edonite architecture and furniture of this period) governed the city. This dynasty provided the Edonites with the fourth (and, to date, their last) line of native rulers. The three kings of the Ninth Dynasty were **Beladan II** (215-246 AH), **Erubel** (246-259 AH) and **Yacobel III** (259-270 AH). This era was a time of great artistic accomplishment within Kandaria, but it was also a time of relatively weak government, when real power was exercised by the guilds. Beladan II had been elected to his throne by the College of Guilds, and this pattern was followed with his successors. During this period, many of the lesser guilds gained in prominence, amongst them the Thieves Guild.

At first the greatest external threat to the kings of the Petal Dynasty seemed to come from the Desert Kingdom. The adventurous Amunkhet I (190-225 AH) had already launched a couple of inconclusive expeditions against the Tritonian lords of Kandaria before they were overthrown by the Edonites themselves. Then, in 219 AH, the Desert King launched his most ambitious invasion of the Land of the Sun. However, with the help of Ishtar, Beladan II was able to force Amunkhet to retreat. An inconclusive battle (with both sides claiming victory) followed the next year in the Hills of Brass. Thereafter, Amunkhet abandoned his ambitions against Kandaria and Ishtar, and instead turned his sights towards building up the Desert Kingdom as a naval power – with disastrous results for the vainglorious Desert King.

By the time of the third Petal King, Yacobel III, the greatest danger to Kandaria came not from the Desert Kingdom, but from the Hazarian city of Ishtar. In 267 AH, a full-scale war between the two cities broke out. After three years of bitter fighting, the army of Kandaria was utterly routed by King Nabu-nadin of Ishtar. Yacobel III, the last native king of Kandaria, mysteriously disappeared, and the demoralized citizens of Kandaria opened their gates to the triumphant army of Ishtar.

Dynasty X (270-286 AH)

The Tenth Dynasty (also known as the **Ishtar Empire**) was the most short-lived of the Twelve Dynasties of Kandaria, and consisted of just three kings. The first of these was the great **Nabu-nadin**. A clever, if at times ruthless, king, he carried many of the sons of the merchant-princes of Kandaria back to Ishtar, partly to be held as hostages to guarantee the good behavior of their fathers, and partly to be trained as administrators within the Ishtar Empire.

The Ishtarans fought a brief but bitter skirmish with the Khetim in the Hills of Brass in 281 AH. Nabu-nadin began preparing for full-scale war, and spent two years amassing a large army and building a great fleet in Kandaria in readiness for a massive invasion of the Desert Kingdom. However, his sudden death in 283 AH brought an end to these preparations. His successor, **Nabu-suma II**, was more concerned by ominous developments to the north, where the Oromedon king Thukra IV was clearly amassing his forces on the border. In 284 AH, war broke out between Oromedon and Ishtar. Thukra IV stormed through the Hazarian heartlands, and within twelve months had captured Ishtar and killed Nabu-suma. His younger brother, **Nabu-nasir**, retreated with the tattered remnants of his army to Kandaria, and in desperation appealed to the Desert King Menemkhet II for help. The Desert King marched out in person in 286 AH, but on learning that both Kandaria and Nabu-nasir had fallen to the Oromedonians a month earlier, prudently decided to withdraw.

Dynasty XI (286-310 AH)

The Eleventh Dynasty (also known as the **Oromedonian Dynasty**) was another short-lived royal line. The barbarous and mercurial **Thukra IV** caused great destruction within Ishtar and many of the smaller Hazarian and Edonite towns, but Kandaria suffered little damage by comparison. Thukra's sudden death (in 293 AH), possibly as a result of poisoning, was nevertheless a great relief to Kandaria, as indeed to most of the subject cities of the Oromedonian Empire. A brief struggle for the succession ended with Thukra's nephew **Sinbunad** becoming king. Although a competent enough ruler, Sinbunad caused consternation in the last few years of his reign by his growing interest in the Cult of the Hazarian moon god Nannar.

Following Sinbunad's abdication in 306 AH to become a priest of Nannar, the Oromedonian Empire suffered the increasingly erratic mismanagement of his wayward son **Ashurbanipal**. As the Oromedonian government fell into paralysis, the Akamen troops gathered on the borders. On the eve of the invasion, King Ashurbanipal drank himself to an ignominious death. The city of Ishtar offered no resistance to the advancing Akamen army when they appeared before the city walls on Midsummer's Day 310 AH.

Dynasty XII (310 AH-Present)

The Kandarians made no attempt to regain their independence following the fall of the Oromedonian Empire, and meekly accepted the rule of what in the Edonite lands was referred to as the Twelfth Dynasty (or the **Akamen Dynasty**). So far, four Akamen kings have ruled over Kandaria: the great conqueror Kyros the Great (310-322 AH); the ill-tempered and erratic Ostanos II (322-325 AH); the wise administrator Ochus (325-338 AH); and young and inexperienced Teispes, the current King of Kings.

As part of what the Akamen know as the **Oromedon Province**, itself but one province amongst many within the vast Akamen Empire, Kandaria's influence today is small. Whilst a few Kandarians dream of independence, the majority are ready to accept their status as one group of vassals amongst many within the mighty realm of the King of Kings. So long as the Akamen monarch and his servants are able to enforce the peace, and keep the trade routes open, then Kandaria will be content.

The Thirteenth Dynasty



A well-known Edonite prophecy – dating back to the latter days of the Cedar Dynasty – spoke of a time when a **Thirteenth Dynasty** would rule Kandaria. This dynasty, according to the legend, would be founded by a 'Kandarian not born of Kandaria' (whatever that means), and would go on to rule most of Mythika. As proof of this prophecy, the ancient Phoenix of Kandaria would return to the city once more, and the gods would draw back the mysterious veil of silence that they had imposed since the passing of the Autarchs.

Some Kandarians scoff at this prophecy, but there are many others who put their faith in it. The fact that twelve dynasties have now ruled over Kandaria only serves to increase the yearning for the prophecy's fulfillment in the hearts of many. Kandarians do not openly speak of this prophecy in front of others, and it is not known whether the Great King in distant Anshan knows of it. If he does, it does seem to greatly trouble him... as yet.

OUT ON THE STREETS

Urban Encounters for Mazes & Minotaurs, by R. Dan Henry

Perhaps more than any other environment, the streets of a big city can provide a wide variety of encounters, from merchants plying their trade and citizens going about their daily lives to thieves, prostitutes and other shady characters, offering player-characters unique opportunities to establish new contacts (or make new enemies!), gather useful information and, of course, get involved in all sorts of trouble and misadventures.

The following is a method for generating random encounters in an urban environment.

It is suggested that a roll be made for every 4 hours spent in the city, or every 2 hours if the characters are particularly active. A roll may also be made every time the characters enter some active area, such as a marketplace, to see if any noteworthy encounter occurs as they join the crowd.

Chance of encounter: 4 in 6 by day, 3 in 6 by night

Table A: Encounter Type (1d20)

1-15	Citizen/Resident, roll on Table B
16-19	Outlander, roll on Table C
20	Other, roll on Table D

For more isolated cities, the Maze Master may wish to reduce the Outlander range to 17-19, while for particularly cosmopolitan cities, it might be expanded to 15-19. An ambitious Maze Master may modify the tables completely for individual cities as their particular character becomes clear to him, create different tables for different city areas, day/night, or even take season into consideration. This article provides only a general method for "generic cities", useful for cities that have not been much developed or as a starting point for creating tables for developed urban settings.

Roll (1d20)	Table B: Citizen/Resident	Table C: Outlander	Table D: Other
1	Aristocrat	Accursed Wanderer	Animate
2	Beggar	Adventurer, Lone	Animate
3	Children	Adventurers, Group	Beast
4	Citizen/Resident	Amazon	Beast
5	Gossip	Barbarian	Beast
6	Guard/Soldier	Diplomat	Beast
7	Harlot	Disguised Entity	Beast
8	Housewife	Exile/Refugee	Beast
9	Laborer	Mercenary	Folk
10	Mercenary	Merchant	Folk
11	<i>Plot Point</i>	Pilgrim	Folk
12	Priest	Priest	Folk
13	Scholar	Sailor/Caravaneer	Folk
14	Seer	Scholar	Folk
15	Servant/Slave	Space/Time Traveler	Folk
16	Street Orator	Spy	Folk
17	Street Performer	Tourists	Monster
18	Street Vendor	Wandering Performer	Monster
19	Thief	Wandering Performing Troupe	Spirit
20	<i>Roll Again Twice</i>	<i>Roll Again Twice</i>	Spirit

Description of Encounters

Aristocrat: One or more of the city's ruling elite is encountered, with attendants as suitable. This might be a classed Noble or the local equivalent.

Adventurer(s): These are wandering heroes, much like your own band. Or perhaps quite different. They might become allies, rivals, or outright enemies of the player-characters. There are enough possibilities that random generation of adventuring groups would constitute an entirely new article. A lone hero might be willing to join an existing group.

Accursed Wanderer: This poor individual has been forced to leave home by some kind of curse. Some may literally be cursed to wander, while others have curses that lead others to pressure them to move on and some will be wandering in search of a means to lift the curse.

Amazon: One or more warrior women are encountered. Generally, no more than one will be a classed Amazon NPC, while any others will be common Amazons as found in the *Creature Compendium*.

Barbarian: One or more barbarians are encountered. Generally, no more than one will be a classed Barbarian NPC, while any others will be common Barbarians as found in the *Creature Compendium*.

Beggar: The characters are approached by one or more individuals seeking charity. Often lame, blind, or otherwise afflicted (or, sometimes, faking it), these folk can sometimes be sources of information, to those who are generous.

Children: Youngsters may be playing their own games, running errands for their elders, harassing visiting foreigners, or hero-worshipping mighty champions.

Citizen/Resident: Regular townsfolk will usually be a dull encounter as they go about their business, but they might provide a clue as to the overall situation due to their reactions. They might appeal to heroes for aid if there is some current crisis. If the heroes have already saved the city, they will likely be thanked.

Diplomat: A representative of foreign authority, a diplomat usually is a means for communication between governments, but political factions, religious institutions, or business interests might also send representatives between cities.

Disguised Entity: A visitor to the city is not what it appears. A god or other individual capable of taking on another form might seem to be any other encounter, but with a different purpose. A disguised god will often test mortals.

Exile/Refugee: An exile has been barred from his home city/land, either permanently or for some set period. This is not an uncommon punishment and might be a result of what we would call a crime, the expression of heretical religious or political opinions, or failure in some public duty. A refugee has fled some situation, be it famine, plague, war, monster rampages, persecution, or any other disaster that would make one flee one's home. Exiles are usually singular, while refugees are typically in groups.



- Have you heard the word on the street?

Gossip: This denizen of the city loves to hear and repeat gossip. If tolerated, the gossip may provide useful information, but not without digressions into who is related to whom, current romantic statuses of all involved, the dredging up of old slights and favors, and generally useless fluff. Sorting out which piece(s) of information, if any, is actually a clue to the current adventure is up to the players. Clever Maze Masters will have gossips plant information that might be useful several sessions down the road.

Guard/Soldier: This is an armed representative of local authority. Usually, they travel in groups. Any will act to break up violence or stop crimes in progress. Depending on their particular duties, they may stop and question "suspicious" individuals or groups.

Harlot: This individual provides intimate company in exchange for coin (or other valuables). Harlots range from common streetwalkers to stately *hetairai*.

Housewife: A woman of the city, possibly accompanied by peers, slaves, servants, and/or children, this encounter is likely running an errand, doing shopping, out for a stroll, or otherwise engaged in normal human activities. She will generally not enjoy being interrupted.

Laborer: An honest (well, mostly honest, usually) workman, the laborer is often encountered in groups. Laborers may be at work, going to work, coming home from work, taking a break from work (e.g., having lunch), relaxing after work, or out looking for work. They are not fighting men, but heroes may still find them useful employees if there is normal work to be done.

Mercenary: Whether local or foreign, a mercenary is ready to fight for pay. Some will be willing to serve as henchmen to heroes. Others prefer to stick to normal warfare. There will usually be a group of them. If in doubt, 2d6 makes a good number.

Merchant: One who trades between cities is useful to know. The merchant may operate on a small scale, moving only such goods as he and a beast of burden may carry, or at the other end of the spectrum, he may command a fleet of trading vessels and hold minor princes as his peers. Such individuals must be knowledgeable of the paths they travel and the peoples with which they deal. When moving precious cargo

across hazardous territory, they may hire guards, including any heroes in need of direction in their lives.

Pilgrim: A pilgrim travels to some holy site. While this might be a temple, it is more often an oracle or the birthplace or infant hiding place of a god or the location of some important mythological event or a blessed spring or the like. Often, pilgrims travel in groups.

Plot Point: This encounter advances the current scenario, introducing some unplanned twist or tying up a loose thread. It might be a chance meeting with one of the important NPCs in the current scenario or with someone who can provide a missed clue, or even finding some physical clue lying in the street.

Priest: Not always a member of the Priest class, this encounter works for a temple, serving the god(s) and the community. They are generally fairly normal folk, with personalities more or less influenced by their service. Visiting priests may be traveling on temple business or for personal reasons. Local priests are more often found in groups.

Sailor/Caravaneer: This is an encounter with one or more workers in the transport industry. These are mostly ordinary sailors, caravan guards, animal handlers, and the like. These can be a rough crowd, especially when they have been drinking, and they may thus present an opportunity to employ the rules regarding pugilism.

Scholar: Men (or more rarely, women) of learning, scholars include philosophers, sophists, historians, physicians, mathematicians etc. Such individuals may be quite influential. At times, their expertise can be quite useful to heroes, and at other times, one may appeal to heroes for help in a bit of dangerous field research.

Seer: A seer is any person gifted (cursed?) with the power of foresight. These range from powerful oracles to beggars driven to drunkenness to deal with their haunting visions. All are inclined to an annoying tendency to speak in riddles.

Servant/Slave: This is an encounter with one or more of the city's lowly folk in service to the more fortunate. Typically, they will be out on some errand, although they might also be relaxing off duty. These individuals range from muck-shovelers to erudite tutors, so these encounters can be quite varied.

Space/Time Traveler: This encounter is not from contemporary Mythika, but has come from elsewhere in time and/or space. This could be a Voyager, an agent of the Lunar Oligarchy out to check on the exiled Selenites, a powerful ancient sorcerer who survived disaster by moving through time, etc.

Spy: An agent of some foreign power, the spy will be disguised as some other form of encounter. Unless in danger of exposure, a spy will generally have little interest in a group of visiting heroes (unless they have become involved in local affairs).



*What is worse than a street orator?
Two dueling street orators.*

Street Orator: Somebody is talking to the public. This could be a government propagandist, a street preacher, a political agitator, a ranting lunatic, a Socratic questioner, or anything else that the Maze Master can come up with.

Street Performer: This individual (or rarely, small group) provides a public entertainment in hopes of donations. These include jugglers, mimes, musicians, poets, acrobats, and more. Rarely, it might be a true Lyrist.

Street Vendor: A street vendor is a retailer who works without the formality of a fixed shop. Many use carts to transport their merchandise, but some simply carry their wares on their persons. Many sell on the streets for financial reasons, but it is also easier to sell black market goods from a mobile location.

Thief: There are many types of thief encounter. Roll on Table E (see the *Thieves & Other Rogues* subsection next page) to determine the exact encounter.

Tourists: Almost always traveling in groups, tourists are visiting for the novelty of a new environment. They travel to strange places, meet new people and creatures, and acquire souvenirs of foreign design. They are bit like wandering heroes, without all the fighting and seeking of peril.

Wandering Performer: Wandering performers may work alone or as part of a performing group called a "troupe". These include musicians, actors, athletes, dancers, etc. Unlike local street performers, these performers generally rate a fixed venue and formal performances. They may, however, do a bit of demonstration to help promote their events.

Roll Again Twice: There are multiple encounters in the period rolled for. These may occur in sequence, or they might be combined into a complex encounter. Go back to Table A for both of the rerolls.

Thieves & Other Rogues

Table E: Thief Encounters (2d6)

Roll	Encounter
2	Cutthroat
3	Burglar
4	Robber
5	Mugger
6	Cutpurse/Pickpocket
7	Snatch and Run
8	Fraudster
9	Conman
10	Street Urchins
11	Charlatan
12	Ringleader

With the exception of Ringleaders, thieves encountered as a result of these tables are Minor NPCs rather than members of the Thief class (which, like all classes, is restricted to player-characters and Major NPCs) – see each entry below for the corresponding stats.

Note that some of these Minor NPCs have been given a Ferocity degree of "Craven"; in game terms, this purely descriptive term has the same effects as Peaceful (i.e. a Ferocity mod of 0). Finally, these entries list no Glory award for these NPCs, since no Glory can be gained from defeating such lowlife rabble.

Burglars

A burglar enters a home or other building and removes valuables as stealthily as possible. A burglar does not want face-to-face confrontations, but a wealthy-looking group might be followed to where they are staying and chosen for later victimization.

Burglars usually work alone, but 1 time in 6, a small group of 2-4 (1d3 +1) will work together.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Craven

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +1

Damage: 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 4

Detection / Evasion: +2 / +4

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Stealthy (16), Uncanny Agility.



Pathetic charlatan or ruthless ringleader?

Charlatans, Conmen & Fraudsters

The **charlatan** is a liar, nay, a dedicated actor playing the part of a crippled beggar, the victim of a crime, or any other sympathetic individual who might hope to receive the aid of good folk. Whether gift or loan matters not the charlatan, for he intends to disappear with either. This method almost requires a lone operator, although more elaborate ruses with multiple parts being played are not entirely unheard of. If game stats are needed, charlatans should simply be treated as noncombatant Minor NPCs.

The **conman** uses charm and trickery to part his target from his money. The sucker bet, the rigged wager, the confusing patter, and the offer to "hold your money while you go in to haggle, so you don't seem too rich" are only a few of the tools of this versatile scoundrel. He may also try more elaborate business propositions than the fraudster. The fraudster will sell you a fake potion; the conman will sell you the fake potion recipe or map to the lost potion mine.

Also, unlike the fraudster or charlatan, the conman may work a long game, appearing to initially deliver and drawing off more funds over an extended period.

A conman generally works alone, although he may dupe others into doing some of his work. If stats are needed, treat conmen as noncombatant Minor NPCs.

The **fraudster** normally appears as a street vendor, though the "down on his luck" fellow desperate to sell at a cut-rate price is also a standard guise. The fraudster offers a business deal that appears attractive, but the merchandise is not what is promised. One in six has an accomplice to help sell the act. If game stats are needed, treat fraudsters as noncombatant Minor NPCs.



- Eh, not bad for a few minutes' work!

Cutpurses / Pickpockets

This thief attempts to steal valuables off a person by stealth. They prefer to target crowds, which provide cover for getting close to, and possibly jostling, someone, or drunks, who tend not to be alert.

Often (60% of the time) such a criminal works alone, although pairs are also common (30%), with one acting as a distraction. Rarely (10%), a group of 3-8 (1d6+2) cutpurses will go to work in a suitable crowd.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Craven

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 14

Melee Attack: +1

Damage: none (usually unarmed)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 4

Detection / Evasion: +4 / +6

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Stealthy (18), Uncanny Agility.

Cutthroats, Muggers & Robbers

A **cutthroat** kills his victims and then loots the bodies – some of them prefer to call themselves "adventurers". Most work alone, but 1 time in 6, there will be a gang of 1d6+1 cutthroats.

The **mugger** uses non-lethal force in order to obtain a person's valuables. Muggers will often take the most obvious, accessible wealth and flee the scene of the crime without searching for more. They often arm themselves with blunt instruments that have been only partially hardened, doing 1d6 subdual damage (as pugilism). One time in three, a mugger will work alone, otherwise the encounter is with a gang of 1d6 muggers. They typically will try to lay in wait and gain surprise.

The **robber** uses the threat of force to extort valuables from others. While willing to loot bodies, if necessary, robbers want to present an intimidating threat, take the goods, and make a quick getaway. Since they avoid targets that seem likely to fight back, heroes are more likely to rescue others from robbers than to be confronted themselves - although outnumbered or weak-seeming heroes may also be targeted. Robbers usually operate in groups of 1d6 individuals.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d6 (weapon) *

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 8

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Stealthy (14).

* In the case of Muggers (as opposed to Robbers), this is subdual damage (corresponding to saps, coshes and other similar "knock-out" weapons).

Ringleaders

This is a master criminal. The ringleader will not act directly, but through a proxy. This might be any of the other thief types, and more successful ringleaders may have multiple thief types at their command. A ringleader will be clever and may have many other strengths as well. One in six ringleaders will use a trained animal (e.g., a monkey or a raven) to steal. Of these, 1 in 6 will be a Beastmaster as described in issue #3 of the *Minotaur*. In other cases, the Ringleader will usually be a member of the Thief class.

Snatch and Run

This is an encounter with a thief who simply grabs something and runs off. If there is nothing that the thief thinks is worth the effort/risk, the thief may wait and observe awhile to see if anything is set down. Normally, this is the work of an individual. One time in six, there will be 2-4 (1d3+1) snatchers. This is unskilled thieving, but requires a swift thief who knows the area. Such 'thieves' are actually noncombatant Minor NPCs.

Street Urchins

This is an encounter with 3-8 (1d6+2) poor street children. They will gladly attempt begging, picking pockets, and the snatch and run technique in order to get a little for themselves. They are not above using the "those mean foreigners are picking on us" routine, either. These are non-combatant Minor NPCs, but generally know the streets of their city extremely well and employ agility and various tricks to evade pursuit.

Size: Small

Ferocity: Craven

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: 0

Damage: none (usually unarmed)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 2

Detection / Evasion: +4

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Stealthy (18).

Major NPCs

Table F is for use whenever a member of a character class is encountered and the Maze Master desires to determine the level of the NPC(s) encountered randomly. When a group of classed NPCs is encountered, the MM may roll for the level of each one separately or once for the entire group.

Table F: Random Levels (1d20)

Roll	Level
1-6	level 1
7-11	level 2
12-14	level 3
15-17	level 4
18-19	level 5
20	level 6

Creatures

There are no subtables for randomized rolling of results from the Other Encounters, because what creatures are appropriate to appear will vary from city to city. The following are lists of those encounters that are most likely to be appropriate to an urban environment, but selection (whether for a specific encounter or for the creation of a city-specific table) must always take the location and local customs into account. An elephant is unlikely to appear in a Minean or Umbrian city, while many of the animates are likely only if part of the local military establishment. Alseids may appear in cities which include ruins, but not otherwise. Centaurs might be barred from some cities. Any suitable monster might appear to attack the city, but a dragon, hydra, or cyclops appearing would be a major event, not a mere city encounter for a group of visiting heroes.

Animates

Automaton *	Iron Warrior *
Bronze Bird *	Mechanical Archer *
Bronze Bull *	Minotaur *
Bronze Colossus *	Skeleton *
Bronze Horse *	Stone Titan *
Golden Ram *	Titanic Statue *

Beasts

Artemisian Greyhound**	Horse
Cat ***	Horse, Diomedian *
Elephant	Horse, Magical *
Fox, Common	Pegasus *

Folks

Arimaspian	Cynocephal
Atlantean Noble	Hawkman
Bearman	Ratling
Centaur (and sub-types)	Ubasti

Monsters

Eagle, Olympian	Hippogriff *
Floating Eye *	Hooded Horror *
Fox, Magical	Leucrota *
Giant Rat *	

Spirits

Alseid *	Oracle Owl
Curete *	Shadow *
Empusa * (at night)	Sylph * / ****
Ghost *	

* These creatures may be encountered in specific sites of a city (such as ruins, temples, graveyards etc.) but will obviously never be met simply "wandering the streets".

** see Minotaur #2
*** see Minotaur #6

**** see Minotaur #11

THE ORDER OF CROWS

A High-Flying, Low-Level Kandarian Adventure, by Peter Larsson



Wings of Mystery

It happens without warning – as the characters are navigating one of the narrow alleys of Kandaria there is suddenly a loud thud behind them. Turning around, they see a crowd already gathering around a body splayed on the ground. Dressed in fine clothing and a curious wooden contraption covered in feathers strapped to his back, the deceased seems to have literally fallen out of the sky. Who is he? How did he die? And who, if anyone, is responsible? Seeking the answers to these questions will drive the characters into conflict with the nefarious Order of Crows.

What's Going On?

A new mystery cult has taken hold in Kandaria. Worshipping the mystical power of birds, it allows rising merchants and disaffected nobles an opportunity to forge useful connections across Kandarian society. It is a strict, hierarchical order – with a single-minded leader called 'The Raven' at its top – known as the Order of Crows.

The people falling from the sky are failed initiates – fatally failing during the rite of passage known as 'Flying the Nest' (more on this later). Its presence in Kandaria, and the unexplained deaths of established citizens, will soon pull the adventurers into a murky tale of power and ambition.

The Raven, the shadowy founder of the order, is in fact a Minean adventuress who has based the entire organization on a legendary artifact (the Wings of Daedalus, described in the *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 47) that grants its wearer the ability to fly.

She has bound her initiates to herself through the ritual known as 'Flying the Nest', which relies on the original set of wings. But now the organization has grown too large – and the Raven worries about losing the artifact. She is desperately trying to create copies of the Wings of Daedalus so that the group can grow freely. So far these contraptions haven't worked – with fatal consequences. But the Raven does not think twice about sacrificing some of her followers to reach her goal.

The scenario will gather pace through a series of key events that will hopefully set the characters on the right path. The Maze Master should give them time to make their own inquiries, but when the pace starts to slow down, should raise the stakes by bringing on the next events.

Walking through Kandaria

This scenario will give the adventurers the opportunity to explore Kandaria – both its rich residences and its back alleys (and rooftops). Use the description of Kandaria and the various random encounter tables provided in this issue of the *Minotaur* to flesh out their encounters with people and places in this great city.

The Order of Crows

The order considers crows, as well as ravens and all black-feathered birds to be semi-divine beings – close to the Gods through the power of flight. The order has nothing but disdain for common human society and human laws. It attracts young women and men frustrated by the local guild system or life in general – often those who have managed to secure some wealth and success but see their further path to the top blocked by the cosy nepotism of the Kandarian mercantile class. The order provides connections across guilds and ways to influence and wealth, not always constrained by laws or morality.

At the root level it operates as an organised crime syndicate, sending young noblemen prowling the streets of Kandaria extorting and mugging the locals. These "Magpies" are the lowest rung of the order, proving their loyalty through criminality and rule-breaking.

The next step up are the "Jackdaws", trusted adherents that are not yet ready for full initiate status. Jackdaws often act as troubleshooters or infiltrate merchant houses or guilds.

One such operative, "Master Jackdaw" is responsible for running the Magpies. For full Order initiation, a Magpie must undergo a harrowing rite of initiation – flinging himself from the top of a tall building carrying a sacred set of wings. If he is worthy, he will fly and be welcomed into the order as a Jackdaw. If he is not, the fall is likely to be fatal. In truth it is just a matter of whether he has the luck to be given the real Wings of Daedalus, or one of the useless copies.

Above the Jackdaw level are Rooks, who manage sections of the order, and the one and only Raven, the founder and iron-fisted ruler of the Order.

The order operates out of "nests", meeting places set up on top of towers, ziggurats and abandoned tall buildings. Here they meet, plan, gaze at the sky, and perform their suicidal initiation rites. The headquarters of the Order is called "**The Paradise of Birds**" and is an enclosed garden full of lovely flowers and brilliant birds located in the hills outside Kandaria. It is the permanent base of the Raven.

Major Events

First Fall

This is how the scenario starts: a young noble falls from the sky, the body landing close to the adventurers. He has jumped from a nearby rooftop and fallen to his death – as he was using one of the Raven's new copies of the Wings of Daedalus, rather than the real artifact. The characters may uncover the (now deserted) Nest (see Nests under Key Places), and may, through inquiries, find out that the deceased was an Apprentice at the Guild of Weavers.

Justice for the Dead

At some point after the First Fall events (pretty soon, if the characters haven't decided to start investigations themselves) the characters will be approached by a distraught gentleman of some standing who has heard of the adventurers and wishes to hire them (for a total, quite generous fee of 40-60 gold coins, depending on how well the characters barter) to investigate the circumstances of his daughter Banu's death – she fell from a tall building. He can tell them that Banu had become increasingly distant, spending late evenings with unsavoury friends and becoming increasingly aloof, seemingly contemptuous of friends and family. The only one of her new associates he can give any details on is a cloth merchant named Jamyat.

Banu's father is convinced that these unsavoury new friends are somehow to blame for Banu's death. He cannot confirm any details about how the body was found (and whether she was equipped with the same contraption as the previous victim) as he only saw her as she was brought to his home by people in the neighbourhood.

Magpies

Young Kandarians picked from the risers and the dissatisfied well-to-dos. Brain-washed by the order, they have nothing but contempt for their fellow Kandarians. They mug, steal or lie with swagger and bravado. Use the stats for *Cutpurses and Pickpockets*, p. 24 of this issue.

As the adventure progresses, more family and friends of the dead may come forward with similar tales – including the family of the first victim. The victims will be rising young merchants, nobles and socialites. The families will invariably offer similar tales of estrangement and personality changes.

You can use these meetings as an opportunity to provide various (and more or less valuable) tidbits of information about the order.

The Mugging

The characters stumble across the scene of an ongoing mugging: two Magpies attacking an elderly lady, armed with just clubs and daggers. One will be loose-tongued and warn the characters not to intervene in "the business of the Order of Crows". They will nevertheless try to flee should the adventurers intervene to stop the outrage.

If the adventurers manage to capture one of the Magpies alive, reward them with some tidbits about the Order of Crows – as a junior recruit, the Magpie only has limited information.

Gang Warfare

A small group of thieves tied to the Thieves Guild are suddenly attacked by a larger gang of Magpies. The scuffle soon escalates into bloodshed.

Let the characters accidentally stumble on the scene and choose whether to get involved or not. If they side with the thieves, they may earn their trust and access to their hideouts. If they side with the Magpies, they may temporarily end up in their good books too, be brought back to one of the nests and be introduced to Master Jackdaw.

Unkind Attention

Once the adventurers' investigation has attracted sufficient attention (sooner, if they are indiscrete, later if they proceed with caution), one of the Order's most dangerous allies will take an interest...

Sanabe is a skilled and cunning Huntress from the foothills of Arcadia, as well as a talented falconer and the owner of a mythic item granting her powers of bird control, the **Talisman of Korax** (see below for more details). She has allied herself to the Order of Crows, seeing an opportunity for rich rewards and recognition of her skills.

She will begin stalking the characters, spying on them from the skies using a single crow. This way she might find out details of their investigation, and if the characters are indiscrete enough, she will then report to the Raven, who will be ready for their arrival and will begin launching attacks using her Magpies (see Magpie scuffle). Sanabe herself will then attack the characters, calling a flock of crows with her Talisman of Korax. As soon as they are in an exposed and secluded place, crows will start crowding overhead, blacking out the sky – and then one after the other they will attack (treat as a Common Eagle, *Creature Compendium*, p. 38). She will try to drive the characters down the streets to an ambush she has set up with a number of Magpies (one per character).

Sanabe is dressed in her hunting gear and covered by a great traveller's cloak; her most prized possession is the Talisman of Korax, which she wears around her neck at all times.

Sanabe the Huntress

Level 2 Huntress

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

Combat: Initiative 15, Melee +4, Missile +6, Basic Defense Class 13, Hits Total 12

Weapon of Choice: Bow.

Special Abilities: Sanabe has a Hunting bonus of +5. She also adds +3 to all her missile damage rolls against Beasts.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +6, Mystic Fort. +4, Phys. Vigor +2

Personal Charisma: +3

Background Talents: Beastmaster, Healer.

Equipment: Sword, dagger, bow and arrows.

Mythic Item: Talisman of Korax.

Sanabe the Assassin?

Maze Masters may decide to make Sanabe more urban (and slightly more dangerous for the characters) by turning her into a level 2 Assassin (see this issue, p. 33, for a description of this new optional class). Her stats, scores, background talents and possessions stay the same – simply change her special abilities accordingly and her weapon of choice to dagger. She may also make use of blade venom on her dagger and arrows.

Talisman of Korax

This talisman appears as a crude, primitive necklace with three big, black raven feathers.

When worn by a Beastmaster, this item adds +2 to the magician's Animal Empathy and Mystic Strength when dealing with birds. In addition, when using Beast Calling to summon birds, the waiting time is always 1d10 minutes (no roll on the table needed).

If worn by any other character, the Talisman grants its user limited powers of Beastmastery on birds: in game terms, the character has access to the first three (Magnitude 1-3) powers of Beastmastery (Beast Soothing, Beast Calling and Beast Command), with an Animal Empathy of 2, a Mystic Strength of 14 and a reserve of 4 Power pts. (replenished every day at twilight). These powers can only be used on birds (with a waiting time of 1d10 minutes for Beast Call).

Magpies in a Scuffle

The adventurers may notice being stalked (detection roll) by a large group of cloak-wearing ruffians. These are Magpies sent out to scare off, or kill, the characters. They will try to isolate the characters or drive them into an alley or cul-de-sac, where they will warn the characters not to meddle in the affairs of the Order of Crows.

If the characters are defiant, or do not heed the first warning, then they will attack. Assume a number of two magpies per player-character. After five rounds of combat, the city guard will intervene – sending the Magpies running. If the characters do not do the same, they may end up having to spend a night in a cell for disturbing the order.

Enter the Thieves Guild

The Thieves Guild may at some point contact the characters and let them know that they share the same goals. This could be done by passing a message with their food at the inn they stay at – or under the door of their room. Once a meeting is set up – ideally halfway across at bridge or alone in an alley – a junior representative of the guild will explain that the competition from the Magpies is unacceptable, and that the guild knows when the next recruitment meeting for the Magpies will take place – maybe the characters will wish to infiltrate.

If they agree to cooperate, the Guild will provide limited equipment, mainly tools for burglary and subterfuge or some simple weapons.

See *Involving the Thieves Guild* below for further details and options.

Involving the Thieves Guild

Noticing the competition from the Magpies, the Kandarian Thieves Guild has sworn to stamp them out. Representatives of the Thieves Guild may approach the characters for help in getting rid of the competition. They are willing to provide a hefty reward of 80 gold coins for their troubles. At the Maze Master's discretion, they may also provide further information throughout the scenario - such as the whereabouts of nests or the movements of Magpies.

The Maze Master may also decide that one of the Thieves Guild's masters is actually a Rook of the Order, acting as its secret agent and informant within the ranks of Kandaria's premier crime syndicate. This infiltrated traitor will learn all that the characters choose to share; once he deems the threat significant enough, he will dispatch Magpies to scare them off.

Depending on their role within the ranks of the organization, members of the Thieves Guild have the stats of Burglars, Cutpurses or Cutthroats (see this issue's article on *Urban Encounters*, p. 20 for more details).



The mysterious Master Jackdaw

True Flight at the Royal Palace

On arrival at the Royal Palace the characters will see a gathering in the highest, crumbling tower of the Royal Palace of Kandaria – including Master Jackdaw and a group of Magpies. Making their way up would involve a lengthy and dangerous climb.

The initiate will launch himself from the uppermost floor of the tower – and fly. After a few minutes, the exhilarated initiate will return to ground, and hand the wings back to Master Jackdaw (who will take particular care in packing them away into a large barrel). The characters can take this opportunity to introduce themselves to the order, or they can follow the barrel and its guards back to the Paradise of Birds. If they attempt to interfere or steal the barrel, then Sanabe will interfere (she has been watching from a hiding place) along with a dozen Magpies. If defeated, the characters will be brought to the Paradise of Birds in chains.

Introduced to Master Jackdaw

Once the characters have managed to make contact with the Order, whether through Magpies or the Thieves Guild, they will be taken to one of the nests. A dour middle-aged man in a bird mask and a black-feathered cloak will receive them. He is the notorious kingpin known only as Master Jackdaw – leader of the Magpies. He will assume that the characters wish to join the Order – and will interrogate them about their background, their purpose and their interest in the Order of Crows.

Master Jackdaw

Level 3 Thief

Attributes: Might 11, Skill 14, Luck 19, Wits 18, Will 13, Grace 10

Combat: Initiative 16, Melee +5, Missile +8, Defense Class 17* (20* in melee), Hits Total 14

Weapon of Choice: Dagger.

Special Abilities: Master Jackdaw has a Thievery bonus of +7. He also adds +3 to his EDC vs. melee attacks, unless surprised.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +5, Danger Evasion +9*, Mystic Fort. +9*, Phys. Vigor +5

Personal Charisma: +5

Background Talents: Actor, Orator.

Equipment: Dagger, cloak and mask.

Mythic Item: Amulet of Protection, Cloak of Concealment (the black-feathered cloak).

** These include the +1 bonus from Master Jackdaw's Amulet of Protection.*

Master Jackdaw will be reticent about the nature of the organization – saying only that it is an association for those "who wish to live free as the Birds". To gain his trust, they must pass a test – see "A Fowl's Errand" next page.

If the adventurers have already attracted the full attention of Sanabe and her birds, then they will be attacked and thrown in chains – and make their way to the Paradise of Birds in this way.

A Fowl's Errand

Following from the introduction to Master Jackdaw, the characters will be asked to prove themselves to the order. Master Abibel, a high dignitary of the Guild of Vintners, has a great Inner City mansion where he stores records of the guild's saffron suppliers. These records would allow the Order to intervene and take over these trade contacts, and gain a stranglehold over the spiced wine market.

The adventurers may either go ahead to try to burgle the mansion, or approach Abibel or the Guild of Vintners for this cooperation – convincing him of parting with this commercially sensitive information would require a lot of convincing.

A Bird in the Hand

At various points during the scenario, the characters may have the opportunity to interrogate a member of the Order. While initially reticent, prolonged interrogation – in particular of new recruits – is likely to make the prisoner crack.

A Magpie would be able to tell the characters select information about the nature of the Order and will continue to come back to two things: the prominence of the Raven (“our Master”) and the Paradise of Birds (“our Safe Haven”). Anyone of a higher rank may also divulge the location of the Paradise of Birds, and that they have indeed successfully “Flown the Nest” – using a wing contraption (i.e., the real Wings of Daedalus).

Joining the Order

Once they have convinced Master Jackdaw of their commitment, the characters will be allowed to join the Order. The Master promises them a glimpse of the fabled “Paradise of Birds” – the holiest of holies for the Order of Crows – and an audience with “our great founder the Raven”, once they have passed the initiation ritual – Flying the Nest.

As previously stated (see *What's Going On?*), these initiation rituals are actually attempts to see if the Order's makeshift simulacra of the true Wings of Daedalus actually work – they don't, which means certain death for the unfortunate applicant.

The new recruits will be taken to a high building (in this case the Melkart Gate at midnight), given a set of wings (in this case makeshift ones) and asked to make a leap of faith for the Order. This is a very tricky situation – if the characters refuse, then they will be attacked and seized by the surrounding Magpies and the Jackdaw who do not wish non-initiated to spread their secrets.



- Oh no, NOT AGAIN!

If they jump, then they will fall to certain death. Let them come up with innovative solutions – but if they cannot think of any, then either they jump to their deaths, or resist and are captured by the Magpies.

A Ticket to Paradise

There are three apparent ways the characters may find their way to the Paradise of Birds. Either they are captured by operatives of the Order, they manage to infiltrate the Order and are brought there as recruits or they extract the info from a captured member of the Order. Whether they are brought in chains, conveyed as initiates or creeping in after dark, the scenario's finale will take place in this remote residence.

The Endgame

Once in the Paradise of Birds, the characters have the opportunity to put an end to the Raven's operation, and make themselves quite rich in the process. The Raven stays in her Chamber at night, and is either in the Secret Dungeon or with her followers in the Chamber during the day.

If the characters kill the Raven and/or steal the Wings of Daedalus, then the Order is doomed either in the short or in the long term. Without the charisma of the Raven and the exhilaration of actual flight, the bored cult members will soon turn to other pastimes. If the characters achieve neither, then the Order will remain as a potentially deadly enemy.

Regardless of the outcome, the paradise holds interesting treasures. The families of the deceased will require either convincing evidence, or a confession by the Raven before they pay out their rewards. The characters may well break the back of the Order without collecting enough proof during the scenario to receive their reward.

See p. 32 for the Raven's stats and description.

Key Locations

The Nests

On top of a number of tall buildings – guild halls, turrets, gates, minarets and ziggurats – are small platforms or hideouts that are used by the Order as meeting places and launching points for Magpie operations. Many ceremonies are conducted at Nests, notably the suicidal leaps of faith.

Each nest is marked by the crude outline of a crow scratched into the plaster or masonry. Sometimes there are tell-tale signs of people living there or activities undertaken – such as locked chests containing feathered capes and headdresses or stolen goods, sleeping mattresses or pots and pans. Use these items as additional clues as the investigations progress.

The Mansion of Abibel

Abibel lives in a grand mansion laid out in two stories, in a square around an inner courtyard. A room next to the main entrance houses a guard who will spot anyone trying to enter that way. Two guard dogs (use the stats for “Common Wolf”, *Creature Compendium* p. 125) – starts barking after one round of combat) patrol the courtyard.

The records are kept in a locked strongroom on the ground floor, along the southern wall, underneath the office of Master Abibel. The strongroom can be opened using a key hidden in an amphora on display in the Master’s office, or forced with a feat of strength. The noise from the latter, or from setting off the guard dogs, will wake the guard, who will then (two rounds later) blow a brass horn which serves as an alarm. Guild guardsmen will then arrive within eight battle rounds. Abibel will also wake and throw himself at the intruders. If he is killed or seriously wounded, then life will become very difficult for the adventurers in Kandaria.

The Thieves Guild’s Meeting Place

The adventurers are unlikely to see any of the real strongholds of this powerful organization; however, meetings may be organized in the Necropolis. An unused tomb, which bears the name “Ensid” serves as a convenient meeting point. It is filled with poisoned booby traps for those unwise enough to try to sneak in or eavesdrop – and wall-mounted sarcophagi house hidden bodyguards.

Houses in Mourning

Most victims of the Order of Crows live in the merchant district. Their investigations may take the adventurers to a number of well-heeled households. As a general rule, these consist of a house built around an inner courtyard, with a well-furnished reception room where the adventurers may recline on cushions and savor fragrant infusions.

The backrooms tend to be bare and utilitarian, and tend to include a kitchen, bedrooms, a servants’ or slaves’ quarter and store rooms. If given the opportunity to go through the rooms of the deceased, the following little clues may be picked up at various points and in different mansions – a stylized bird scratched on the wall, a medallion shaped as a magpie or stolen goods.

Jamyats’ Warehouse

This affluent trader with a winning smile bases his operations in his warehouse. He will not give anything away himself, but if the adventurers break into his warehouse during darkness they may find a secret tunnel behind one of the cloth bales which leads to a small office.

There Jamyat keeps correspondence with the Raven. Talk about the overall objectives (“our army of Magpies”, “a new society”, “the laws of birds replace the laws of man”). There is also an unopened letter from “Master Jackdaw”. If the adventurers choose to open it they will find an invitation to take part in a “Flying of the Nest” the following day (at noon) at a nest at the royal palace (see *True Flight at the Royal Palace*, p. 29)

The Paradise of Birds

Two days travel to the northeast of Kandaria, set among cliffs overlooking the desert, lies the splendid mansion of the Raven. It is entirely encircled by a drystone wall – you can just about make out the outline of the roof of the main building and some palm trees. The gardens between the walls and the main building make up a wondrous paradise of lush vegetation and exotic birds, and full of members of the order dressed in their feathered capes and hostile to any intruders. Various crows and other black birds fill the place with feathers and noise.

The building itself consists of adjoining rooms in two stories around an inner courtyard, with a balustrade along the second floor and archways framing the door of each room. Apart from sleeping quarters, kitchen and other mundane rooms it also contains the Grand Chamber of the Raven. The inner courtyard contains a carved altar with imagery of feathers and crows. On a gilded throne in front of the altar rests a feathered contraption – a copy of the Wings of Daedalus.

1. Grand Chamber of the Raven

This room is full of rich tapestries and ornate decorations worth up to 200 gc at the bazaars. In its center sits a grand black basalt statue of a raven, larger than a man. A close inspection (and a perception roll) will reveal that the beak of the raven seems to be more polished (or worn down?) than the rest of the statue; clicking on the beak opens a trapdoor leading to the dungeons (see below). On the other side of the trapdoor, the mechanism is operated through a simple lever.



2. The Inner Courtyard

A verdant paradise, guarded by five ferocious ravens (as Common Eagle) who will attack each newcomer. If they have not been defeated after three rounds, then the ruckus will attract a handful (1d6) of acolytes who will attack any intruding adventurers (treat as Magpies).

3. The Secret Dungeons

Only the Raven knows of these secret tunnels. The first two rooms after the trapdoor are filled with chests full of gold and gemstones – the true riches of the Order.

A final, larger room is the laboratory where the Raven has tried to copy the Wings of Daedalus. The wings are on display, splayed over a workbench. The room is full of sketches and papers and old, arcane, clay tablets.

A half dozen copies of the wings are strewn across the floor – some clearly smashed to bits in anger. They look fairly amateurish and similar to the contraptions the adventurers have seen smashed on the ground before. There is no comparison to the perfect workmanship of the real Wings of Daedalus.

Chalk markings and stains on the walls and floors show the evidence of desperate experiments and rituals – theories of flight jotted down next to the names of air demons. There are even some dark red stains on the floor to hint at what desperate (and futile) measures the Raven has gone to replicate the wings.

4. The Prisoners' Pit

An unceremonious well-like hole in the ground is covered by a grill. If captured, the adventurers will first be interrogated by the Raven herself and then be brought here and lowered down to await execution. Some of the stones are loose, and it is possible, with some effort (and a successful climbing roll), to scale the walls. Breaking through the rusty grill requires a *feat of strength*.

The Raven – Merexe



The Raven's real name is Merexe. A Minean treasure hunter and adventurer (Thief), she came upon the Wings of Daedalus after a shipwreck during her long voyages. Leaving her starving shipmates behind on a lonely island off Tritonis, she flew all the way to Kandaria. Once arrived, her plan to achieve wealth, power and luxury had already hatched. Using her only assets – her wings and her arching black eyebrows which give her a certain charismatic magnetism – she created the persona of the Raven and by extension the fanatic cult that she could use to infiltrate the powerful guilds.

Her attitude to the adventurers depends on how they meet. If captured, then she will interrogate them mercilessly, sure that they are agents of the Thieves Guild (which may well be the case). If they arrive as recruits, then she will regale them with grandiose visions of the coming Crow society. If confronted during a break in, she will use all her skills to survive and escape. When pressed, she will fight with her daggers.

Level 4 Thief

Attributes: Might 10, Skill 17, Luck 19, Wits 18, Will 15, Grace 15

Combat: Initiative 16, Melee +8*, Missile +11*, Defense Class 17* (20 in melee), Hits Total 16

Weapon of Choice: Dagger.

Special Abilities: Merexe has a Thievery bonus of +8*. She also adds +3 to her Defense Class against melee attacks.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +8*, Danger Evasion +11*, Mystic Fort. +10*, Phys. Vigor +7*

Personal Charisma: +9*

Background Talents: Actor, Beastmaster.

Equipment: Three daggers (including her Dagger of Aphrodite).

Mythic Item: Wings of Daedalus, Dagger of Aphrodite (+2 to damage vs. males), Ring of Good Fortune (+1 Luck mod, already taken into account *).

Each issue, **Griffin Archives** unearths an old Griffin magazine article from the last century

THE ASSASSIN

An optional specialist class for *Mazes & Minotaurs*



Assassins in M&M

Assassins are professional killers skilled in stealth, infiltration and poisoning. Most of them hire their services as freelancers, but some of them are in the (secret) service of a king or powerful organization, such as a secret cult or a politically influential guild.

It should be noted that, as player-characters, Assassins tend to make less versatile adventurers than Thieves (or even Hunters) and will work best in a predominantly urban campaign, as opposed to a more traditional M&M campaign involving lots of heroic exploration, sailing and wilderness travel.

Assassins in Mythika

Assassins are extremely rare in Mythika and can normally only be found in its eastern and southern regions, most notably Midia, the Desert Kingdom, the Land of the Sun and, of course, Kandaria.

Whether they act as freelance professional killers, as members of a shadowy Guild or Brotherhood or as devotees of some even more sinister secret cult, Assassins can never be truly part of the official social order; many of them lead double-lives, hiding their deadly trade beneath a façade of anonymity or even respectability; others are simply 'lone wolves' who live in the shadows at the fringes of society.

Since no respectable Minean deity would condone the practice of killing for money, Assassins cannot choose any of the usual Olympians as their divine patron (no, not even Hades – being the god of the dead does *not* make you the patron of professional killers). Most of them adopt an obscure or foreign divine patron, such as the Khetim serpent-god Sethos or the Midian death-god Moloch.

ASSASSIN

Class Category: Specialist.

Primary Attributes: Skill and Wits.

Gender: Assassins can be either male or female.

Basic Hits = 10

Deadly Hand: Assassins add their Skill bonus to their damage rolls when using a dagger (their mandatory *weapon of choice*) to make a *sneak attack* (base damage 1D6, see *Players Manual* p. 25) against humans or humanoid Folks. This Skill bonus is also added to the potency of any poison concocted by the Assassin himself (see *Assassins & Poisons* below).

Infiltration: Assassins have a special Infiltration bonus, equal to the sum of their Skill and Wits mods. This bonus is added to all the character's detection and stealth rolls, as well as to the target number of detection rolls made against them. An Assassin's Infiltration bonus is also added to his climbing rolls, just like the Thief's Thievery ability.

Weapon of Choice: All Assassins must choose the dagger as their melee weapon of choice.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives an Assassin +2 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Wits, Skill or Will (player's choice).

Possessions: All Assassins start the game with a dagger, a garrote (OR a set of six throwing darts), 1D6 doses of poison (type chosen by the player) and a personal wealth of 3D6 x 5 silver pieces.

Background Talents: All Assassins must select their two background talents from the following list: Acrobat, Actor, Beastmaster, Healer (as an extension of their knowledge of poison), Orator, Tactician, Woodsman and Wrestler.

Reputation: As masters of secrecy operating in the shadows, Assassins do not get any Reputation bonus (and they are Specialists anyway).

Advancement: Like all Specialists, Assassins rise in levels by accumulating Experience points. They gain Experience by using their Infiltration ability in the same manner that Thieves gain Experience for using Thievery and gain twice the usual Glory award in Experience for killing humans (or other Folks).



Time for another Physical Vigor saving roll...

Tools of the Trade

Poisons

Assassins are skilled in the use and preparation of ingested poisons and blade venoms.

Ingested poisons are mixed in food or drink. Each dose is good for a single, man-sized victim.

Blade venoms are invasive poisons which must be coated on the blade of a dagger (or similar weapon). The first victim injured by the blade will also suffer the effects of the poison; a single dose of blade venom is only good for a single strike.

Regardless of its delivery method, an Assassin's poison can have one of the three standard effects of the Poison special ability for creatures: death, quick death or paralysis (see *Maze Master's Guide*, p. 20), depending on the ingredients being used.

Normally, a natural poison attack can be countered by a Physical Vigor saving roll against a target number of 15. When the poison is prepared by an Assassin, the target number for this saving roll, which represents the *potency* of the poison, is increased by the Assassin's Skill bonus. Thus, an Assassin with a Skill of 16 (Skill mod +2) will be able to concoct poisons with a potency of 17.

Poison preparation is a delicate task, which requires time, concentration and special ingredients. For this reason, this activity can only be conducted between adventures. Furthermore, the special ingredients involved in the preparation of such poisons are quite costly: the base cost for each individual dose is determined by the delivery method (10 silver pieces for a single dose of ingested poison, 20 silver pieces for a single dose of blade venom) and must be multiplied by the effect factor (paralysis x1, death x2, quick death x 4). Thus, preparing a single dose of quick death blade venom will cost 80 sp.

(Note: While we're on the subject, be sure to check this issue's Official Oracle column (p. 71), which has some nifty optional rules about variable poison potency – Ed).

Poison Darts

Small, poisoned darts are the best way to combine the advantages of missile weapons with the effects of blade venom (since attempting to throw a poison-coated *knife* would be a very hazardous action).

In game terms, such small darts have a range of 20' and require a Missile attack roll to hit their target but only inflict 1 point of damage *per se* – with the added effect, of course, of its blade venom.

Garrotes

Garrotes are special weapons, which can only be used by characters with a Skill of 13+ (which obviously includes all Assassins). Since only Assassins are trained in its use, non-assassins who use this weapon will suffer a -4 penalty to their attack roll. In addition, non-assassins who use a garrote to kill a foe never gain Glory or Experience from such a dishonorable method of killing.

A garrote attack works as wrestling / grapple attack, except that the target number to break free is equal to the attacker's Skill score (instead of his Might). The attack itself does no damage but each round of strangling has the same effects as a round of drowning (see *Players Manual*, p. 44). Note that garrote attacks are only effective against humans and humanoid Folks.

Note that, in many cases, garrote-users will use the *sneak attack* tactic to approach their victim undetected and get the usual +4 attack bonus (which offsets the aforementioned -4 penalty for non-assassins), as well as the usual defense-reducing advantages (see *Players Manual*, p. 25).

A garrote has an Encumbrance value of 0.

Griffin Archives

The Other Assassin

Published back in the mid-80s, the above Griffin article was the official answer to a previous, unofficial version of the Assassin character class published in *Misdeeds & Madness* (1976), Justicars College's infamous apocryphal M&M supplement (which also included other 'dark' classes, including the Satyr, the Necromancer and the Dionysian Hierokerix and Maenad).

Written for the original (1972) version of the M&M rules, this unofficial take on the Assassin class placed much more emphasis on poisons, powders and other special substances, but could well have been used as an unofficial basis for the Assassin class which was presented in the *Griffin* almost 10 years later – a claim which, at the time, was voiced by the Justicars College folks but which was dismissed as "spurious hogwash" by the Griffin editor.

MYTHIC BESTIARY

MYTHIC MEDLEY

Eight New Creatures Inspired by Mythology, Fiction and Folklore

Dark Muse

Taxonomy: Spirit

Description: Also known as Leanans, Dark Muses are malevolent spirits who appear as alluring, beautiful (if slightly aloof) Nymphs. They possess a unique type of psychic vampirism, which allows them to drain the soul and inspiration of poets and Lyrists. Their usual tactic is to charm their victim by using their Psychic Powers of Compelling and Enslavement, before draining the target's creativity (see below for more details). The name "Dark Muse" is a deception, since these malevolent, soul-draining spirits have nothing in common with the true Muses, divine incarnations of inspiration.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Crafty

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d6 (iron-hard fingernails)

Defense Class: 14

Hits Total: 16

Detection / Evasion: +10 / +8

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Inspiration Drain (see below), Magic Resistance, Psychic Powers (Psychic Gift 5, Mystic Strength 17, Power 20), Regeneration (1 Hit per round), Sixth Sense, Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 100, Wisdom 500.

Additional Lore: According to some tales, Leanans were once true Nymphs who, like the Alseids, became corrupted by the powers of darkness; other sources, however, deny them any link with the forces of nature, presenting them as undead temptresses akin to the sinister Empusae.



Lyrists, beware the lure of the Dark Muse!

Inspiration Drain

This unique ability allows the Dark Muse to drain a Lyrists' Power points without even having to be physically present, once a vampiric bond has been created with the unfortunate Lyrists.

To create this bond, the Dark Muse must first Enslave the Lyrists using her sorcerous psychic powers. Once the Lyrists is under the creature's control, he becomes unable to use his powers of Poetic Magic and loses 1d6 Power points per day; if needed, these points can be added to the Leanans' own Power reserve, up to her usual maximum of 20.

This special tie to Lyrists is something of a double-edged sword, since Leanans are also highly susceptible to the effects of Poetic Magic; against the powers of a Lyrists, they do not benefit from their Magic Resistance ability, which reduces their Mystic Fortitude to +4. In addition, such creatures also take double damage from Songs of Wrath.

This special ability does not add anything to the creature's basic Wisdom award but Lyrists who manage to defeat a Leanans should be awarded an extra 50-point Wisdom bonus.



- Wrestling, anyone?

Gegenee

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A rare race of six-armed giants only found on some Mysterious Islands. Well, technically they are not really Giants because their Size is not Gigantic, so we could perhaps categorize them as "large humanoids". Except that they've got three pairs of arms, so technically, they aren't humanoids either. But you see what we mean, right?

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 2d6

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 30

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Crushing Damage (after Grapple), Extra Arms (4, see *Creature Compendium* p. 115), Grapple (Might 20, 24 or even 28 depending on how many pairs of arms they use), Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 320, Wisdom 30.

Ghoul

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: Known as *necrophagi* to Minean scholars, these nocturnal, greyish-skinned, sickly humanoids can be found in some ancient ruins and abandoned necropolises of the Akhamen Empire, usually in packs of 2-6 individuals, where they feed on corpses and carrion. Believed by many superstitious people to be living dead, they are actually neither undead nor supernatural in origin; evidence suggests that they are merely a particular breed of Degenerate Men, with claw-like nails, fang-like teeth and greater degrees of ferocity and cunning than their regular counterparts (not to mention their "ghoulish" appearance and habits).

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d6 (claw-like nails and fangs)

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +6 / +2

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Grapple (Might = 16), Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14).

Awards: Glory 45.

Additional Lore: Some scholars believe the Ghouls to be the last, degenerate remnants of a once mighty people whose civilization was destroyed by the Autarchs some time during the Age of Magic.



The unhealthy, greyish face of a female ghoul

Hippalectryon

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: This rare and rather absurd creature looks like a horse with the hind legs, wings and tail of an oversized rooster. It has been described by some philosophers as “a Pegasus parody” or as “an anti-Hippogriff”. Although its hybrid nature is obvious, scholars and adventurers are puzzled by the mystery of its existence, since the Hippalectryon can neither fly nor gallop, making it far less useful than a regular, normal horse. The two most popular hypotheses are that the first Hippalectryons were either created as some kind of cruel divine joke by a mischievous or mad god (Dionysos?), perhaps as a mockery of the graceful Pegasi or that they resulted from a failed experiment by some crazed Autarch trying to create Pegasus-Cockatrice hybrids.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d6 (hooves & talons)

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 12

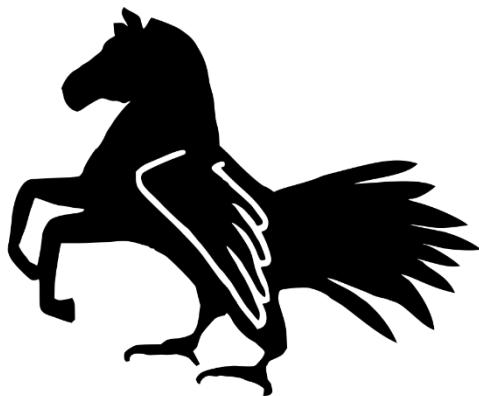
Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 14, Melee +4), Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor.

Note: Despite having wings, Hippalectryons are flightless and thus do not qualify in game terms as Winged creatures.

Awards: Sorry, no Glory, Wisdom or Experience award for vanquishing such a silly creature.



Is this a horse? Is this a bird? Is this a joke?



Mothers, beware the child-snatching Mormo!

Mormo

Taxonomy: Spirit

Description: These malevolent, nocturnal spirits appear as hooded, wraith-like figures with grasping, clawed hands. They creep up inside houses at night to drink the blood of sleeping children (or to steal sleeping babies and drain their life-energy at ease in their dark, cavernous lairs). Because many mothers use ghastly tales of the Mormo to scare their children into discipline, many people believe it to be an imaginary bogeyman – but these evil, elusive and very real creatures have brought horror and despair to many families and communities.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Crafty

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +3

Damage: 1d6 (claws and fangs)

Defense Class: 16

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +10

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Camouflage (in shadows, 22), Grapple (Might = 16), Life Energy Drain (bite), Magic Resistance, Sixth Sense, Stealthy (20), Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: Glory 95, Wisdom 120.

Additional Lore: According to some sources, the sexless-looking Mormo are actually the undead, cursed spirits of demented mothers who have slain their own children in a fit of madness. Other sources identify them as the revenants of mortals who dabbled in necromancy and forbidden rituals of child sacrifice during the darker days of the Age of Magic.



The grotesquely misshapen Ophiotaurus – but see next page for a different, equally monstrous Ophiotaurus!

Ophiotaurus (Bovine Version)

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Also known as the Stygian Bull, this monster appears as the obscene hybrid of a Giant Bull and a Giant Snake. A creature of primal chaos, the original Ophiotaurus was destroyed during the Age of Myth - but some of his offspring actually survived the Age of Myth, slowly growing into full-sized monstrosities in the darkest pits of Tartarus, and now ready to wreak havoc on an unsuspecting world. The Maze Master should decide how many Ophiotauri actually exist – perhaps only one and probably no more than three.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (hooves & horns)

Defense Class: 22

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Initiative 19, Melee attack +16). Fearsome, Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Tail Lash (see *Minotaur No.9*, p. 33), Trample.

Awards: Glory 1000, Wisdom 50.

The Entrails of the Beast

The original Ophiotaurus was slain by Titans during the Titanomachy, because its entrails were believed to grant the powers to *kill the gods* to whomever burned them; fortunately for the Olympians, Zeus sent his eagles to retrieve the fateful viscera before they could be used. This particular episode of the Age of Myth is only mentioned in a few obscure texts and should only be accessible to characters with the Scholar talent doing specific research on this supposedly extinct monstrosity. Whether or not the entrails of his offspring also possess this formidable, sacrilegious property is left entirely to the discretion of the Maze Master, who has three basic options here:

Option 1: The intestines of the surviving Ophiotauri are potentially as dangerous to the gods as those of their mythic progenitor.

Option 2: These deicidal properties do not apply to the surviving Ophiotauri, because we are no longer in the Age of Myth and the Olympians have firmly consolidated their divine power over reality itself.

Option 3: Something in between (such as the entrails granting immunity to Divine Prodigies).

Regardless of the actual truth, the *belief* that an Ophiotaurus' entrails do have such a power could be used as the central plot device of an epic, high-level adventure involving apocalyptic omens, the god-slaying schemes of a mad Atlantean sorcerer or Stygian necromancer (or an alliance of both?) and, of course, the gigantic monster itself!



A slithering, serpentine Ophiotaurus

Ophiotaurus (Serpentine Version)

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: This is an alternate version of the Stygian Bull described on the previous page. Instead of having the forelegs of a bull, this more serpentine Ophiotaurus has the full, limbless body of a giant snake, which gives it a different repertoire of special abilities (see below).

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (horns)

Defense Class: 22

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Fearsome, Crushing Damage (constriction, req. successful Grapple), Grapple (Might = 24), Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Tail Lash (see *Minotaur No.9*, p. 33).

Awards: Glory 1050, Wisdom 50.

The Two Ophiotauri

Why publish two versions of the same ultra-rare monster, you ask?

Well, you know what old Maze Masters say: you can never have too many bull-headed monsters in M&M, and two Ophiotauri are better than one.

More seriously, we had two different interpretations of the creature, as well as two different illustrations, and we simply were unable to make a choice, so we decided to include both visions of the Stygian Bull in this special, last instalment of the Bestiary.

The choice of which Ophiotaurus to use is left to the individual Maze Master – unless, of course, you want to include both (and why not?) in your campaign (in which case the more bovine, partially legged one should be known as a Stygian Bull and the more, well, ophidian version as an Ophiotaurus proper. In this case, the two monstrosities could be different descendants of the original monster from the Age of Myth or they could have completely different origins, causing some confusion among scholars, not to mention some interesting plot twists, especially if you decide that the whole “fatal entrails” thing only applies to ONE of the monsters.

Special thanks to the artists **Gwen C. Katz** and **Molly Schaefer**, who kindly gave us the permission to use their artwork for this special double-feature.

Stone Bride

Taxonomy: Animate

Description: Stone Brides appear as the perfectly sculpted statues of beautiful women. They are able to stand perfectly still and motionless, a trick which they often use to hide among groups of real statues, who may actually be their previous victims – for they possess the much dreaded power of turning living beings to stone by gazing into their eyes!

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 1d6 (stone fists)

Defense Class: 18

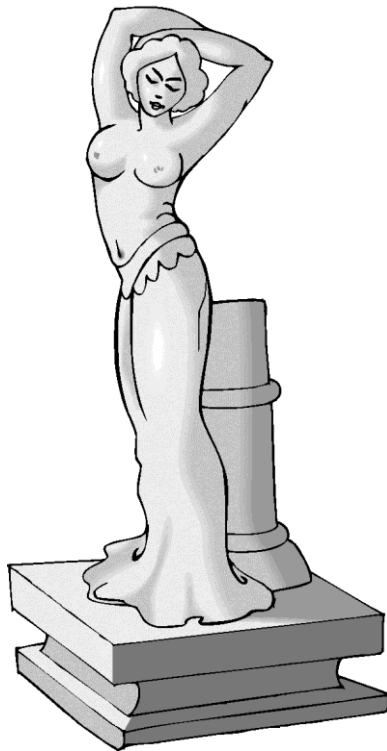
Hits Total: 16

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Camouflage (statue, 18), Magic Resistance, Mindless, Natural Armor, Petrification (40'), Stealthy (14), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 120, Wisdom 80.



Beware the petrifying gaze of the Stone Bride!



And beware the song of the Wood Witch, too!

Wood Witch

Taxonomy: Spirit

Description: These eerie, evil Spirits of the great Hyperborean forests appear as extremely beautiful pale-skinned Nymphs wearing their long silver-white hair as their only garment. Wood Witches lust after the life energy of mortals, especially that of healthy, vigorous men, luring their victims into their lair by using their powers of Vocal Entrancement.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Crafty

Mystique: Unearthly

Movement: 80'

Initiative: 21

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6 (bite)

Defense Class: 19

Hits Total: 16

Detection / Evasion: +10 / +12

Mystic Fortitude: +10

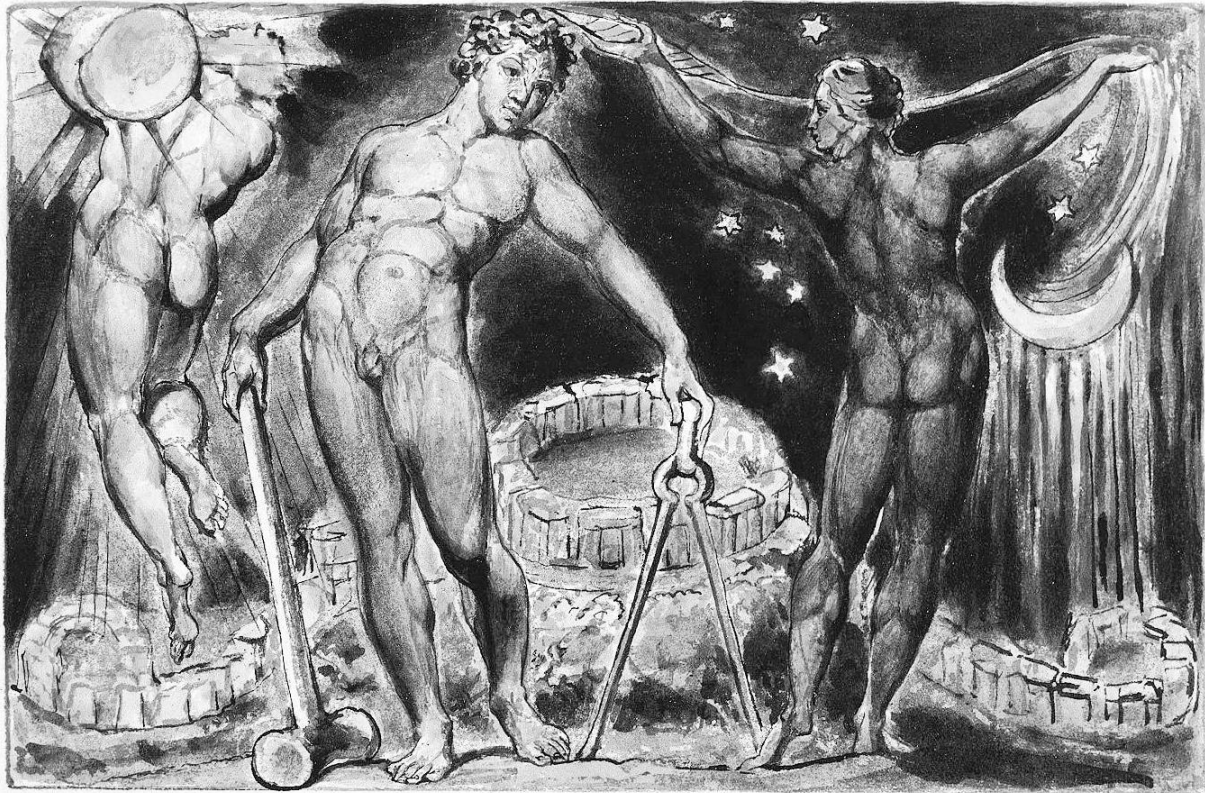
Special Abilities: Camouflage (in trees, 24), Life Energy Drain (bite attack), Lightning Fast, Magic Resistance, Sixth Sense, Stealthy (20), Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility, Vocal Entrancement (100', save vs. 17).

Awards: Glory 125, Wisdom 160.

MAZE MASTER'S LORE

THE WHOLE WIDER WORLD

Exploring Mythika's Macrocosm, by Igor A. Rivendell



Cosmography 101

The world of Mythika, along with its sun, moon, planets and stars, actually exists within a far greater, wider universe known as the **macrocosm**.

According to most cosmographers, this macrocosm is made of no less than twelve **planes of existence**, also known as **realms**, divided into three different metaphysical dimensions, also known as **worlds** or **cosmoses**: the **visible world**, the **invisible world** and the **divine world**.

The Visible World

The visible world includes two planes:

- The **material plane**, also known as Mythika, Gaia, the mortal world or the terrestrial realm.
- The **celestial plane**, also known as Ouranos (or, simply, "the sky"), which holds the sun, moon, stars and other celestial bodies.

The Invisible World

The invisible world includes five planes:

- The four **elemental planes** of Earth, Air, Water and Fire, respectively known as the Chthonic, Aerial, Aquatic and Pyretic planes, which are directly connected to the material plane and interact constantly with it, in the form of the four classic elements. Some cosmographers also purport the existence of elemental "demiplanes" between the four elemental planes.
- The **Ether**, also known as the ethereal or astral plane, which permeates the entire metaphysical fabric of the material, celestial and elemental planes. The Ether is traditionally identified with "the fifth element" (or "quintessence") and may well be the source which fuel the powers of Light and Darkness Elementals. Most cosmographers also identify the Ether with the so-called "spirit world" purported by various non-Olympian religions (such as the Animists of Charybdia).

The Divine World

The divine world includes five planes:

- **Olympus**, home of the Olympian gods and the supreme apex of the macrocosm.
- **Oceanus**, the endless sea, which is connected to the oceans of Mythika and the elemental plane of Water; it is often envisioned as the personal cosmic demesne of Poseidon – a marine version of Olympus, if you will.
- **Hades**, also known as the Underworld, the Netherworld and the Land of the Dead – the kingdom of Hades, brother of Zeus and Poseidon, and Persephone. It is connected to various “lesser underworlds” of Mythika - as well as to Tartarus.
- **Tartarus**, the hellish pit of primal darkness where the Titans and other monsters were banished by the Olympians at the dawn of the Age of Myth. Some cosmographers identify Tartarus with Erebus, a place / force / god of primordial darkness mentioned in various mythological texts.
- **The Dreamlands**, which are visited by mortals when they are dreaming; this realm is ruled by the mysterious divine duo of Hypnos and Morpheus. The reality of the Dreamlands is constantly shifting, an ever-changing reflection of the dream and nightmares of sleeping mortals, under the inscrutable gaze of its two divine lords.

Mortals and Magic

On a general basis, mortals and other living beings from the visible world cannot interact with the other planes of existence. The main exceptions are Priests and Elementalists, whose mystical powers come from a supernatural connection with the divine plane of Olympus (in the case of Priests) or with the various elemental planes (in the case of Elementalists). Most other magicians (including Sorcerers, Nymphs and Lyrists) derive their powers from some innate supernatural ability rather than from a special extraplanar link.

Spirits and Deities

The planar connections of Spirits vary according to their nature and association. They may be tied to the visible world, to the Ether, to one of the four elemental planes or even (for the most powerful among them) to one of the five planes of the divine world. In all cases, regardless of their plane of origin, all Spirits can manifest themselves in the visible world, either as physical beings or as insubstantial entities.

As the supreme beings of the macrocosm, deities inhabit the divine world and are assumed to have unlimited access to all other planes of existence – although many gods and goddesses will have their favorite (and disfavored) planes: Poseidon, for instance, usually inhabits the divine plane of Oceanus and would also be at home on the

elemental plane of water and in the various marine regions of the material plane, but would probably refuse to manifest himself in places like the Ether or the elemental plane of fire.

When moving to another divine plane, deities will usually address a formal request to the ruling entity rather than trespassing uninvited and unnoticed – this is especially true regarding the domains of the three brothers Zeus, Hades and Poseidon, who are all quite touchy and territorial, each in his own inimitable manner.

Oblivion and Chaos

Is there something beyond the macrocosm? This metaphysical question has given birth to two opposite schools of thought among the cosmographers of Mythika. The most traditional view is that nothing can truly exist outside the macrocosm – “nothing” or, in more poetic terms, “the Void” or “Oblivion”. The second school of thought theorizes that Mythika’s macrocosm is just one universe among a myriad (or even an infinity) of universes, each with its own set of planes, forming a “megacosm” or “multiverse” which may or may not be surrounded by the aforementioned Void.

Some of the bolder cosmographers also raise the question of a possible thirteenth plane, which would correspond to the concept of Primal Chaos – a plane of endless and constantly changing mutation, devoid of any form of structure or temporality. Some Philosophers go as far as to consider Primal Chaos not as a “thirteenth plane” but as the polar opposite of the Void: according to them, the macrocosm (or multiverse) exists as the metaphysical conjunction of form and substance, whereas Primal Chaos represents substance without form and Oblivion a complete absence of either substance or form.

Extraplanar Adventuring

Some mythic items (or some long-lost eldritch rituals from the Age of Magic) may allow characters to travel between the various planes, either in a very freeform manner akin to some sort of dimensional sailing or through portals existing between two (or more) specific planes. Depending on the nature of the item (or on the type of magic involved), these gateways may be temporary or permanent – such as the various subterranean borderlands which connect various underground caverns in Mythika to the true Underworld of Hades.

Maze Masters may use the possibility of extraplanar travel either as a simple excuse to transport the PCs to all sorts of weird and dangerous places where the usual laws of reality do not apply or as a major plot device; a high-level M&M campaign, for instance, could involve a multi-adventure odyssey across various planes (such as the otherworldly seas of Oceanus or the ever-shifting Dreamlands), with the added complication of getting back home. In all cases, any incursion in a different plane of existence should be a truly *mythic* experience, taking your heroes where no mortal has gone before...

LOVE & WAR

A study of Aphrodite as a Divine Patron in M&M, by Pat Mathis

Since **Priests** are all about dedication to their deity, it seems logical to start with a quick examination of the powers and strengths of Aphrodite's Priestesses. A Priestess of Aphrodite can use Divine Blessings to improve her own (or an ally's) Danger Evasion, Mystic Fortitude or Personal Charisma and her Divine Gift of Presence to grant automatic success with Mystic Fortitude or Personal Charisma rolls. As they advance in level, Priestesses of Aphrodite can add 2 pts to their Will, Wits or Grace; many players will probably choose to use their attribute increases first on Will and then on Grace. In play, their high Personal Charisma will often make them act as negotiators or party spokespersons.

Quite a few **Lyrists** also choose Aphrodite as their patron; they, too, make good negotiators and diplomats.

Another obvious choice is the **Nymph**. A Nymph devotee of Aphrodite will often use her Nature's Guises power to impersonate someone's wife or lover. Depending on your group's gaming tastes, such deceptions and seductions could be roleplayed (with humorous double-entendres and innuendos) or treated in a more abstract manner, using the optional rules for influence and seduction given in the *M&M Companion*. Like the Priestess, the Nymph devotee of Aphrodite is likely to use her level attribute increases on Grace and Will to improve her Personal Charisma (and, if you use the optional influence rules, her Seduction bonus).

As can be seen from the above examples, Aphrodite makes a very interesting patron deity for several types of magic-using characters. But what about *warriors*? At first glance, Aphrodite may not seem like a sensible choice here – but let's not forget some interesting precedents taken from the mythic sources of M&M...

Before leaving on the Quest for the Golden Fleece, Jason made sacrifices to all the Gods, but made an extra sacrifice to Aphrodite. This favoritism to Aphrodite proved critical to his success as without the favor of the Goddess of Love, Jason might not have won the heart of Medea. Paris chose Aphrodite as his divine patron and that choice set off the Trojan War. The ancient Spartans considered Aphrodite to be the patron goddess of their city. Julius Caesar's family traced their lineage back to a son of Venus the Roman equivalent of Aphrodite... So how can we utilize Aphrodite as a divine patron for warriors in M&M?

Nobles are probably the most obvious choice for warrior devotees of Aphrodite – be they male, female or androgynous (see this issue's *A Twist in the Maze*). A Noble with Aphrodite as a divine patron should select Grace (rather than Wits or Will) as his / her non-martial Heroic Heritage attribute, combining this superior Grace to his / her superior Skill or Might (in which case the character will probably fit the stereotype of the brawny, athletic, good-looking masculine hero).



A graceful, heroic Noble devotee of Aphrodite

The *M&M Companion* also mentions that Nobles can become divine agents of Aphrodite – but the mythic items she may grant as divine boons are clearly more useful to magicians than to warriors. This issue's *Pandora's Box* details several Grace-based, warrior-oriented mythic items which should definitely be added to Aphrodite's list of possible mythic boons.

Amazons usually chose Artemis or Athena as their divine patron, but there is nothing in the rules to prevent an Amazon from choosing Aphrodite instead. Such a character would of course belong to the classic version of the class (as opposed to the alternate version detailed in the *M&M Companion*), with Grace as her forte.

And then, there are **Spearmen**. Yes. Did you know that the ancient Spartans revered Aphrodite in her war-goddess aspect, giving her the name "Areia" (a female counterpart of the war god Ares)? Taking this into consideration, there is no reason why a Spearman shouldn't be allowed to select Aphrodite as his patron deity, instead of the more usual Athena or Ares. Such a Spearman will tend to favor Will over Skill when gaining new levels, improving his Personal Charisma and Leadership in the process. The rules in the *M&M Companion* do not say that Spearmen can be divine agents of Aphrodite but do not explicitly prohibit it either. If the Maze Master does allow this option, the character will need a truly exceptional score of 18 in Grace to qualify – and this requirement would have to be met right from character creation, since Spearmen cannot increase Grace upon gaining new levels. In other words, Spearmen divine agents of Aphrodite are likely to be extremely rare (even as divine agents go), if not nonexistent – which makes perfect sense, since the war goddess / Areia aspect of Aphrodite is a relatively minor one, as opposed to her position as the goddess of love.

Pandora's Box

Gifts of Grace

An Array of Artifacts and Accessories for Attractive Adventurers

By Pat Mathis and Olivier Legrand



- Beware the arrows of Eros!

Arrows of Eros

In addition to their normal damage, these arrows cause the target to either fall in love or become jealous of another person or creature – unless the target makes a Mystic Fortitude saving roll. The object of the feelings of love or jealousy must be named by the archer when notching the arrow, and the target number of the Mystic Fortitude roll depends on this chosen object: 10 if the object and the target are from two different taxonomy groups (Folks, Beasts, Monsters, etc.), 15 if they belong to the same taxonomy groups but to different species, and 20 if they are of the same species (such as two human beings). Mindless creatures are immune to the powers of the Arrows of Eros but CAN be chosen as objects of love or jealousy.

Belt of Hestia

This magical belt allows devotees of Hestia with a Grace of 13+ to add their Grace bonus to their Defense Class and Mystic Fortitude. (Enc 0)

Bow of Paris

The magical virtues of this bow can only be used by the most Graceful warriors or specialists (i.e., those who have a Grace of 13+). It allows the user to add his Grace bonus to his attack and damage rolls when using the bow – but only against *surprised* targets (Enc = 1).

Javelin of Heartbreak

This javelin allows Graceful warriors (i.e., those with a Grace score of 13+) to add their Grace bonus to both their Missile attack roll and damage roll. Note, however, that the Javelin of Heartbreak cannot be used as a melee spear. (Enc = 1)

Coronet of Empowerment

This coronet can only be used by Priestesses of Aphrodite with a Grace of 13+, allowing the wearer to add her Grace bonus to her Spiritual Aura (which also increases her Mystic Strength). (Enc = 0)

Coronet of Inner Beauty

This coronet can only be used by Priestesses of Hera, revealing their inner beauty in a truly wondrous manner. It allows the wearer to add her Spiritual Aura to her Grace score, up to a maximum of 21. (Enc = 0)

Coronet of Virtuous Grace

This coronet can normally only be used by especially Graceful (Grace 13+) Priestesses of a particular goddess, to whom the coronet is explicitly dedicated. It allows the wearer to add her Grace bonus to her basic Defense Class and to her Mystic Fortitude, but may not be combined with the use of a helmet. Other female characters (i.e., non-Priestesses) with a Grace of 13+ can use the coronet if they so wish, but are sure to cause feelings of hostility and resentment among the rightful wearers (i.e., the Priestesses of the relevant goddess). (Enc = 0)



Helmet of Athena + Shield of Aphrodite + Spear of Grace!

Ring of Hera

This ring allows Priestesses of Hera to use their Divine Vision power at half cost (one Power point instead of the usual two). In addition, if the Priestess has a Grace of 13+, she may add her Grace bonus to her % chance of success when using Divine Intervention. (Enc = 0)

Ring of Hestia

This ring allows Priestesses of Hestia to spend only 2 Power points when using their Divine Vitality power (instead of the usual 3). In addition, if the Priestess has a Grace of 13+, she may add her Grace bonus to her % chance of successful Divine Intervention. (Enc = 0)

Sandals of Artemis

These sandals always come in pairs. They can only be worn by Hunters with a Grace of 13+, giving a Hunting bonus equal to their Grace mod (Enc = 0)

Sandals of Graceful Agility

These sandals always come in pairs and can only be used by characters with a Grace of 13+, allowing their wearer to add his Grace mod to his Initiative score. This bonus may also be applied to the character's Danger Evasion in situations requiring a superior agility or swiftness of movement (which includes stealth rolls, but not detection rolls) as well as to his Athletic Prowess when climbing. (Enc = 0)

Scepter of Radiance

This lordly wand can only be used by Nobles with a Grace of 13+. It allows the user to shoot forth bolts of bright magical light that do (1d6+Grace mod) in damage, up to a range of 20'. These magical missiles do not require any attack rolls and can only be avoided with a Mystic Fortitude roll vs. a target number of 15 + the user's Grace bonus (Enc = 1)

Seed of Demeter

If this seed is planted in the ground by a Priestess of Demeter, it will grow overnight into a bush that will produce a number of fruits equal to the Priestess' Grace score (i.e., twelve fruits for a Grace of 12). Each fruit, if eaten just before a call for Divine Intervention, will increase the Priestess' chance of success by 1%, up to a maximum % bonus equal to the Priestess' level. The fruits last a number of days equal to the Priestess' level before spoiling. (Enc 0)

Shield of Aphrodite

The magical virtues of this beautiful shield can only be used by warriors with a Grace of 13+. It allows its user to add his Grace bonus to his Defense Class (in addition to the regular +2 bonus granted by the shield itself) and his Danger Evasion rolls against Petrification. This bonus is in addition to any other defensive bonus the character may have. In the hands of any other character, the shield will simply function as an ordinary shield, providing the usual +2 defensive bonus – unless the character has a Grace of 8 or less, in which case the user's negative Grace mod will be applied to his Defense Class. As its name implies, this item is often given by Aphrodite to her divine agents (Enc = 2).

Spear of Grace

The magical virtues of this spear can only be used by classic Amazons (or by alternate Amazons with a Grace of 13+). It allows the wielder to add her Grace bonus to his Initiative and Melee attack roll when the spear is used to *Charge into Battle*. (Enc = 2).

Sword of Aphrodite

Created as a gift for the Noble divine agents of Aphrodite, this sword can only be used by Graceful warriors (i.e., with a Grace of 13+), allowing them to add their Grace mod to damage rolls. (Enc = 1)

Tunic of Artemis

The magical virtues of this tunic can only be used by Hunters with a Grace of 13+, allowing them to add their Grace mod to their Hunting score. (Enc = 0)

Tunic of Grace

This beautiful, wondrously woven tunic adds +1 to the wearer's Grace modifier. It comes in both male and female versions, with a wide choice of absolutely divine colors (pure white, celestial blue, summer lilac, chartreuse green, etc.). (Enc = 0)

BRING ON THE BEASTMEN!

New Nonhuman Character Classes for Mazes & Minotaurs

Various articles in previous issues of the *Minotaur* have explored the possibilities of playing Tritons, Satyrs and even Golden Minotaurs (not to mention Charybdean Mammuteps!) – but what about other nonhuman Folks? Sure, since adventurers are supposed to be “hero material”, playing brutish Boarmen, heinous Hyenakin or treacherous Tragos obviously goes beyond the scope of M&M as we know it – but some of the most honorable Beastmen kins, like Leonids or Bearmen, could really find their place in some parties, depending on your chosen setting, campaign theme or style of play. This article takes a 180° turn from the usual M&M perspective by turning some of the Beastfolks from the *Creature Compendium* into playable character types.

Acteon Champions

Acteon Champions are the champions and noblest warriors of the Acteon beastfolk (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 5). They belong to a unique, ancient bloodline of royal descent, claiming the mythical stag-king Herneos as their ancestor. Thought by many scholars to be extinct since the Age of Magic, the last remnants of the Hernean lineage have recently begun to leave their deep forests to roam Mythika in search of glory, adventure and, if some half-whispered tales are to be believed, the fabled Spear of Herneos, a sacred artefact which will herald the return of the Horned Kings of yore among the Acteons...

Class Category: Warrior.

Primary Attributes: Might and Skill.

Gender Restrictions: Acteon Champions are male (sorry girls, no “amaz-hinds” in the forest).

Basic Hits: 12

Stagman: Acteon Champions can use their antlers to *Charge into Battle* even if unarmed, causing normal charging damage (1d6). These antlers, however, prevent them from wearing any type of helmet. Their supernatural vitality also makes them immune to most poisons.

Extraordinary Agility: Acteon Champions add their Skill mod to their Defense Class against melee attacks (as well as against missiles when using *full movement*), unless they are *surprised* or wearing a breastplate.

Weapon of Choice: Spear or club.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives an Acteon Champion +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Skill or Will.

Background Talents: Woodsman and Healer.

Patron Deity: All Acteons revere Artemis (despite the fact that their ancestors were cursed by the Olympian goddess of the hunt).



Possessions: Acteon Champions start the game with two weapons (including their weapon of choice) and little else. Like all Beastmen, they do not receive any starting wealth.

Reputation: Acteon Champions receive a reaction bonus equal to their level when dealing with other Acteons.

Newtling Rangers

Newtling Rangers are the heroic protectors and defenders of the Swamp Folk race (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 112), guarding their marshes and swamps against the incursions of Lizardians, Troglodytes and other enemies of Newt-kin. Since there are very, very few Newtling Rangers in existence, those who do choose this dangerous calling are often forced to travel extensively from one Swamp Folk settlement to another - a necessity which can easily bring them to cooperate with (or seek the help of) human adventurers or Heleads.



Class Category: Specialist (Hunter variant).

Primary Attributes: Skill and Wits.

Gender Restrictions: None.

Basic Hits: 10

Amphibian: Swamp Folks never need to make swimming rolls and are immune to the effects of drowning. Their tough, scaly skin also gives them a +2 bonus to their Defense Class against all forms of attacks.

Defender of the Swamp: Newtling Rangers receive a damage bonus equal to their Skill mod against Lizardians and Troglodytes, the two greatest enemies of their folk, as well as against swamp Monsters (such as Bapharons and Swamp Horrors). This bonus applies to melee *and* missile attacks.

Weapon of Choice: Spear or javelin.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Newtling Ranger +2 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Skill, Wits or Will.

Background Talents: All Newtling Rangers have the special *Swamp Scout* talent, which gives the same advantages as Woodsman when operating in swamps and marshes, as well as the Healer talent.

Patron Deity: "The Swamp", an all-pervading entity of environmental awareness and general swampiness.

Possessions: Newtling Rangers start with a dagger, three javelins and a net. They do not possess any form of material wealth.

Reputation: Rangers get a reaction bonus equal to their level when dealing with other Swamp Folks.

Orycter Paladins

Orycter Paladins are the last heirs of a once mighty clan of Orycter warriors (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 88) who acted as the elite palace guards of the Aardvark Emperor (hence the name "paladin"). They roam the savannahs and deserts of the southern continent of Mythika in an everlasting quest for lost Orycter lore, relics and communities,

sowing the future seeds of a new, restored, invincible Aardvark Empire! When not busy resurrecting the glorious past of their race, they also often hire themselves as outdoor guides to foreign adventurers (especially those who lend a sympathetic ear to their cause).

Class Category: Warrior.

Primary Attributes: Skill and Will.

Gender Restrictions: None.

Basic Hits: 12

Humanoid Aardvark: Their tough skin gives them a +2 bonus to their Defense Class against all forms of attacks – but their (really) big ears prevent them from wearing any type of helmet.

Martial Training: The rigorous discipline and training of Orycter Paladins gives them the same special abilities as Spearmen (Martial Discipline and Defensive Fighting, see *Players Manual*, p. 11).

Weapon of Choice: Spear.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives an Orycter Paladin +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Skill, Wits or Will.

Background Talents: All Orycter Paladins have the Pathfinder and Desert Scout background talents (described in *Minotaur* No.10, p. 24, and *Minotaur* No.5, p. 28, respectively).

Patron Deity: Orycter Paladins worship the almighty Tarkos and Kerebos, the two royal Orycter divine twins who founded the Aardvark Empire.

Possessions: Orycter Paladins start with a spear, a dagger, a shield and little else.

Reputation: As living paragons of the glory that was the Aardvark Empire, Orycter Paladins receive a reaction bonus equal to their level when dealing with other Orycters.





Rogue Ursids

Whereas Acteon Champions and Royal Leonids represent the paragons of their respective Folks, Rogue Ursids are the outcasts of the Bearmen folk (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 13); they exist outside of traditional Ursid society – most often as a result of a rare, mysterious phenomenon known to Bearmen as “the Call”. The Call manifests itself in some Ursid cubs as a growing urge to leave the tribe as soon as they are able to fend for themselves, starting a new life of wandering and adventuring, outside the strict tribal clan structure of their forebears (ah!). Led by this strange wanderlust, Rogue Ursids often develop a unique personality: while many of them can only be described (even by Ursid standards) as asocial brutes, others seem to embody the “noble savage” archetype and some of them even display the boastful, good-natured gusto of the proverbial lovable rogue.

Class Category: Warrior.

Primary Attributes: Might and Will.

Gender Restrictions: None.

Basic Hits: 12

Blood of the Bear: Their tough skin gives them a +2 bonus to their Defense Class against all forms of attacks – but their big head prevents them from wearing any type of helmet. Their supernatural vigor also makes them immune to most forms of poison.

Battle Might: When using their weapon of choice (a big club), Rogue Ursids receive a damage bonus equal to their Might mod.

Weapon of Choice: Club.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Rogue Ursid +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Will or Skill.

Background Talents: All Rogue Ursids start with the Wrestler talent, plus a second talent chosen among Healer, Mountaineer or Woodsman.

Patron Deity: Artemis, in her most primeval aspect as the goddess of the Moon.

Possessions: Rogue Ursids start with a club and little else. They do not possess any wealth.

Reputation: Despite their outcast status, Rogue Ursids do get their reputation bonus when dealing with other Bearmen – but this bonus actually reflects uneasy awe and grudging respect rather than any actual form of social prestige.

Royal Leonids

Also known as Lion Princes, Royal Leonids are the noblest and most heroic warriors of the Leonid race (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 68); the last remnants of a few ancient bloodlines which reigned on the deep, dark jungles of Charybdis back in the Age of Myth (or the *Time of the Wild*, as it is known in Charybdian tradition). They now roam the Dark Continent in search of the lost lore of their people, as well as (if some sources are to be believed) in the hope of uniting the now scattered Leonid prides into a new leonine empire. As with many other aspects of Charybdian history, the exact reasons for their ancestors’ downfall have now been forgotten; some Griots hint that it was ultimately caused by the Royal Leonids’ own pride and arrogance – but only some Mammutep sages (see *Minotaur* No.10 for more details) know the truth of the matter...

Class Category: Warrior.

Primary Attributes: Might and Will.

Gender Restrictions: All Royal Leonids are male.

Basic Hits: 12

Fury of the Lion: Royal Leonids add their Will mod to their EDC in melee, unless they are *surprised* or wearing a breastplate - but their big head (not to mention their majestic mane) prevents them from wearing any type of helmet.

King of the Jungle: Royal Leonids receive a +4 bonus to all their detection and stealth rolls and are also able to track their prey or foes, using the same tracking rules as Hunters. Their supernatural vigor also makes them immune to most forms of poison.



Weapon of Choice: Spear.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Royal Leonid +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Will or Skill.

Background Talents: All Royal Leonids have the Pathfinder (*Minotaur* No.10, p. 24) and Orator talents.

Patron Deity: The Lion King, one of the twelve Beast Lords of Charybdis (*Minotaur* No.10, p. 13).

Possessions: Leonids start with a knife, a spear and little else. They do not possess any wealth.

Reputation: They receive a reputation bonus equal to their level when dealing with other Leonids.

Ubasti Vagabonds

With its high degree of cunning, its kittenish mix of curiosity and independence, and its three distinct degrees of breeding (Common, Noble and Royal Blood – see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 122), the Ubasti folk seems like an ideal choice for a nonhuman player-character race in an ‘extended’ M&M game – but players and Maze Masters should keep in mind the decadent and cruel streaks of the Cat People (not to mention their typically feline laziness and fickleness), which tends to make them more interested in games (including those of power and intrigue) than in heroic quests, epic journeys and other arduous, long-term enterprises. There is, however, a single exception to this rule: those the Ubastis call Vagabonds – rogue, stray Ubastis who survive by their own wits, after having chosen (or been forced by circumstances) to abandon their native territory, often after their entire clowder has been wiped out in one of the byzantine and bloody power games that regulate the daily life of Ubasti society. Some Vagabonds wander the wilds in search of fun, danger and prey, while others chose to settle in the cities of men, hiding their presence from those pesky hairless apes and living the life of the unseen, daring nightprowler.

All Vagabonds are of Common Ubasti stock. Ubastis of Noble or Royal blood who find themselves on the losing side of a power struggle are the key targets of such conflicts and thus are often the first ones to be assassinated by their rivals. On a more metagaming level, proud, high-born Ubastis would *never* accept to become scavenging, *adventuring* lowlives, even in the face of certain death – so even when a Noble or Royal Ubasti does survive the decimation of his clowder, he remains outside of the field of what may constitute “player-character material”.



Class Category: Specialist (Thief variant).

Primary Attributes: Wits and Luck.

Gender Restrictions: None.

Basic Hits: 10

Natural Thief: Ubasti Vagabonds possess a natural Thievery ability, which is calculated and works exactly like that of standard Thieves.

Quick & Swift: Ubasti Vagabonds receive the same Wit-based Evasion bonus as Thieves and also have a basic movement allowance of 80’.

Weapon of Choice: Dagger.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives an Ubasti Vagabond +2 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to either Skill or Wits.

Background Talents: All Ubasti Vagabonds have the Acrobat talent but no other background talent (that’s what you get for being lazy, blasé felines).

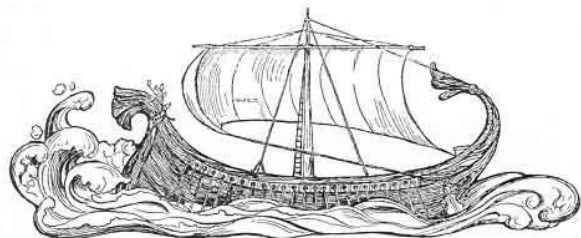
Patron Deity: All Ubastis worship the goddess Bastet (see *Minotaur* No.5) as the divine mother of their folk (and all cat-kin in general).

Possessions: A dagger and no financial wealth.

Reputation: As exiles and runaways from their own kin, Vagabonds never receive a reputation bonus.

THE FIVE ISLANDS

An Adventure in Random Island Generation, by R. Dan Henry



Once again, our heroes sail out in search of adventure...

Random Islands in M&M

There are a number of ways that a Maze Master can use randomly generated mysterious islands. Sometimes you just need something to throw into the mix in the middle of an adventure, because you need the characters to be a bit more experienced before the next planned encounter, because you need to stall for time to get that next encounter (fully) planned, or just to add some variety. Sometimes the heroes suffer some fate (shipwreck, most commonly) which leaves them on some island. Then there is the random odyssey approach, where a string of mysterious islands becomes the whole setting and exploring them the whole adventure. This is fine, and a good Maze Master can just roll up an island as needed, sketch out a quick map, and run the heroes through their exploration.

However, just randomly wandering can lack a little something after a while. It is a bit like episodic television. The individual episodes may be fine, but if there's nothing happening over the course of multiple stories, it starts to seem stilted and unreal, as each episode (or island, in our case) seems to exist in a bubble, disconnected from the rest of the world except by the reuse of characters and setting. Now, character development can work to overcome some of that, but that relies on the players doing all the work. Even if they are up to it, should not the Maze Master seek to take his just share of the burden?

It is still possible to simply generate each island as you go along and improvise connections as one goes along. This is easiest if one has a central theme in mind at the start, or finds one early on. Maybe the islands being explored were the location of some ancient Atlantean colonies, destroyed in the wars with Lemuria. Atlantean writing, ruins, and artifacts might be scattered around, with clues eventually leading the players to work out the history of the area. That would be easy enough to work into whatever was rolled up. For this example, I am going to show a way to use random generation without creating everything on the fly. This is just as well, since this is a printed article and if you use it, it is not improvising on the spot. However, all rolls were made in one go and all results were kept as rolled. (Of course, the Maze Master can and should overrule the dice when necessary.)

Rolls & Results

The five islands were rolled up using the **revised mysterious island tables** from issue #11:

Island One: On Table A1, I roll an 11. A variety of coastline exists. On Table B1, I roll a 3. No humans are to be found here. On Table C1, I roll a 9. This leads to a roll on Table C2. This is a 3d6 roll, so I must total my rolls of 2, 4, and 6 to get 12. This indicates a remote temple is to be found on the island. Rolling 1d3 to determine how many times to roll on Table D1, I roll a 3. These rolls were a 1, leading to table D2 (Folk); a 3, leading to Table D3 (Monsters); and a 6, leading to Table D5 (Animates). Rolling on D2, I get a 1, leading to Table D2a, on which a roll of 10 results in Bee-Folk. A roll of 1 on Table D3 leads to Table D3a, where a roll of 8 results in Bapharon. Finally, a roll of 5 on Table D5 leads to Table D5c, where a roll of 16 indicates that the island is home to a Tragic Floating Head.

Island Two: Rolling 3 on Table A1 means it is ringed by reefs. Rolling 3 on Table B1 means that there are no human here, either. Rolling a 1 on Table C1 and then a 16 on Table C2 means that there is a Labyrinth on the island, but a roll of 4 indicates that it does not have a Minotaur. Rolling 1d3 indicated only one roll on Table D1 for creatures. A roll of 6 on Table D1 was followed by a roll of 2 on Table D5 and a roll of 3 on Table D5a, indicating the presence of Mechanical Archers.

Island Three: Rolling a 9 on Table A1 indicated a varied coastline. A roll of 8 on Table B1 meant there were still no humans. A roll of 8 on Table C1 followed by a 10 on Table C2 indicated a ruined fortress. Two rolls on Table D1 (3 and 2) lead to a roll of 2 on Table D3 followed by a 17 on Table D3b, indicating Demon Dogs, and rolls of 2 on Table D2, 7 on Table D2a, and 1 on Table D2d, indicating Acteons.

Island Four: A roll of 2 indicates an island ringed by reefs, and a roll of 5 results in another human-free island. A 10 followed by a 13 indicates territorial markers are present. There are two creatures to be rolled and both of these have an initial roll of 5 on Table D1, so there are two types of Spirits on the island. Rolls of 2 and 14 on Table D4 indicate a Cacodemon and some Lemures are present.

Island Five: A roll of 14 on Table A1 indicated an island ringed by reefs and with a coastal lurker. A roll of 5 for coastal lurkers indicated that I must roll on Table A3, where a roll of 12 revealed that a deadly Sea Hydra prowls near these shores. A roll of 10 on Table B1 finally indicated a human presence, albeit a hermit or sage of some type. A roll of 4 on Table B2 indicated that this person was a magician of some kind. A 12 followed by 15 indicated an unguarded treasure on the island. Finally, with only one roll on Table D1, a 5 followed by a 12 indicated a Hamadryad.

Interpreting the Results

The First Island

A Tragic Floating Head is pretty scary stuff. It could have easily removed the humans that might have built the ruined fortress and the remote temple. It also shows up on the first island, while a magician lives alone on the last island. If the magician can provide the key to defeating the Tragic Floating Head, that should make for a decent story arc.

The lack of humans is made up for by the rolled races present on the islands. Both Bee-Folk and Acteons can be the sympathetic peoples in need of aid and provide social interactions. In particular, the Bee-Folk are situated on the first island and probably would be happier without a Tragic Floating Head in their neighborhood. So, the Bee-Folk will ask for help and provide a rumor about a powerful magician who knows how to defeat the Tragic Floating Head without inviting, well, tragedy. At the end, the heroes should return with the means of victory and vanquish the TFH. Now that I have an overall plot concept, I can go develop each island with an eye towards how it fits in.

The first island is called **Hivestone** by the Bee-Folk. Since they are the only sociable inhabitants, that is as official a name as it gets. Hivestone has a varied coast. This is useful, because I can put the inviting sandy beaches in the area where the Bee-Folk live, making it likely that they will be the first inhabitants encountered. Bapharons live in swamps, so some of the coast needs to be a salt marsh. Some pebble beaches and cliffs will round things out.

If the characters think that they can just take on the Tragic Floating Head on their own, that could be a problem. Either they succeed and derail my plans, or even worse, they could get wiped out at the very beginning of things. Of course, if they encounter this main foe, but flee successfully, that would be great. However, it is not worth the risk. The Bapharons will worship the Tragic Floating Head and act to defend it. Why? Well, why not? Who knows how monsters think? The one element of the island not yet accounted for is the temple. I want to use that, and it makes sense to make that the location of the climax. Some type of appeal to the god of the temple with the proper offering will rouse the god to dispose of the Tragic Floating Head. The Bapharons can oppose the heroes at that point in order to prevent it, giving us a final battle without moving the TFH out of the "too terrible to fight" category that I want it in for this adventure.

The Second Island

The second island will be dangerous to approach thanks to the reefs, but I want to make it worthwhile for those who take the risk. Since the labyrinth does not have a Minotaur and I need a place for the Mechanical Archers, I decide to combine the two. A true labyrinth does not play to the Archers' strength, though, so I come up with an alternative that I call the Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen. Within, I shall place a prize that will help deal with the terrible Sea Hydra. I can have the Bee-Folk drop some clues about that to ensure the heroes have a decent shot at picking it up.

Mysterious Cartography 101

For this example, I am doing sketches of all the islands myself. Generally, that is all that is needed for a mysterious island. If you want something a bit nicer, collect maps of islands to have a collection ready. These can be real islands or fantasy islands mapped for games, books, or the art of cartography. It likewise helps to have a collection of ruins, temples, inns, mazes, and anything else you might want to drop in at a moment's notice. However, you never really need a map to do more than make it clear where everything and everyone are located.

The Third Island

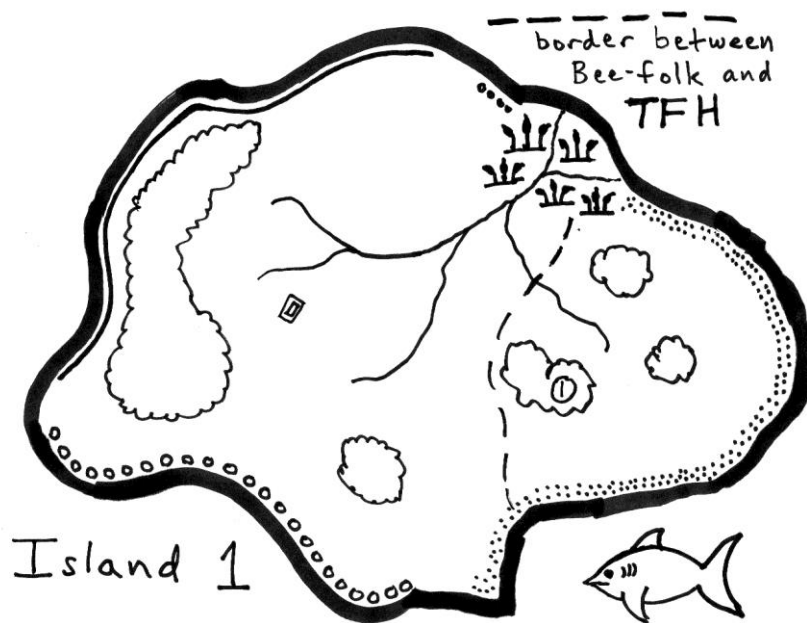
The third island has a varied coastline, so I can again use friendlier landing places to lure the heroes into meeting the Acteons, who could use some help against the Demon Dogs that have made the ruined fortress their home. The ruined fortress is a good chance for some general treasure, as well as some records relating to the Tragic Floating Head to reveal the sad fate of the former occupants, along with a few more hints for the players, so that the Bee-Folk do not have to reveal everything I want them to know. Since the Acteons live here, they could give the island a name, but would just call it "our island". The old name, **Alsis**, may be discovered in the ruined fortress.

The Fourth Island

The fourth island has the hazard of reefs and the inhabitants are life draining fiends. This is just a bad place and the Acteons may warn of the terrible reefed island best avoided. Those who ignore such warnings might still note terrible territorial markers indicating the realm of the Cacodemon and deal only with the Lemures (who are bad enough). Not everything can be connected, and any activity here will be a distraction from the primary quest.

The Fifth Island

The final island has a complex mix of elements. This is a hazard to approach, thanks to the reefs and the Sea Hydra. The dangers can be diminished if the Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen was raided successfully. The fortress on Alsis can include a reference to the Sea Hydra to allow that to be a clue that this is the reef-ringed island to be sought, not the one to be avoided. The treasure is unguarded by any creature, but it can still be surrounded by traps and, most importantly, by some enchantment that keeps the magician away. The magician and the Hamadryad should know each other, being the only inhabitants. They could be working at cross purposes, but I prefer to make the magician a Sorcerer and the Hamadryad his lover. She was a Dryad, forced into Hamadryad form (the little woods on the island do not even need one) by Hermes as punishment for some minor crime. Since it was only intended as a temporary punishment, the means to restore her is on the island, but the Sorcerer is barred from the location. Since a god set it up, I can make the treasure protection as outrageous as I like. Of course, in addition to the means to change the Hamadryad back into a Dryad, there should be some treasure for the heroes, too. That is, after all, what the roll indicated.



Putting It All Together

I now have the general outline of the adventure and just have filling in the details to go. I need maps for each island, the Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen, the ruined fortress on Alsis, the treasure location on the final island, and the temple. Nine maps in all. Fortunately, none of them need be elaborate. If I were doing this simply for my own use, rather than for publication, I would probably just use maps from my collection for most of these. Only the Gallery has a specific design I want to use. However, since I need something I have rights to for this article, I must draw them all myself.

Once I have my maps, I can finally write up the locations in detail. Note that all location maps with square grids have 5' by 5' squares.

Island 1: Hivestone

The eastern part of the island is home to Bee-folk, who call the island "Hivestone". They are friendly to strangers, which cannot be said of the island's other inhabitants. A Tragic Floating Head roams the western parts of Hivestone, while the Bapharon tribe that worships it lives in the swamp.

The building located in the Tragic Floating Head's territory is an old temple of Poseidon, abandoned but intact. It is described at the end of the location details because it is meant to be the site of the grand conclusion to the adventure of the Five Islands.

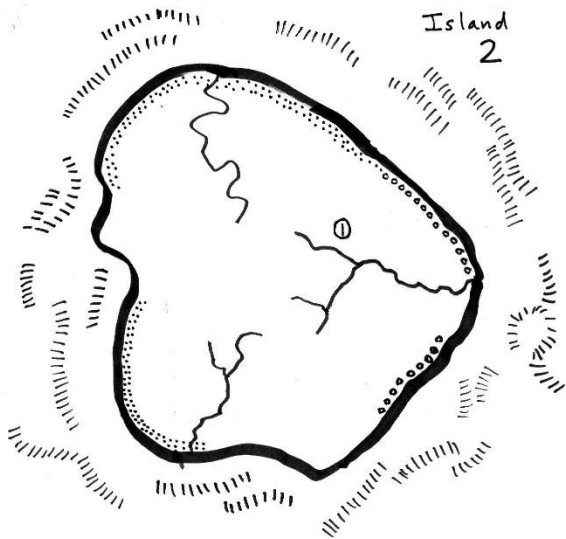
Nobody can say why the Bapharons worship the Tragic Floating Head, but they do, and any attempt to deal with the Tragic Floating Head must deal with them as well. Although they normally reside in their swamp, they may travel anywhere outside of Bee-folk territory in order to accomplish their goals. Only extreme provocation could lead to a Bapharon daring to intrude on the Bee-folk's lands.

The Bee-folk have many individuals and small groups scattered around their territory, so they will quickly become aware of any intrusion. Unless the visitors appear particularly fierce, they will attempt peaceful contact. If they expect hostility, they will gather their forces (several hundred Bee-folk warriors) and meet the intruders with a show of force, while hoping that their display of strength will avert conflict.

(1) Here the Bee-folk have built a tree-house city, sprawling across dozens of trees. Here also is the court of Queen Ulsiak. If the party is friendly, they will be brought here and presented to the queen. Ulsiak will appeal to any heroes, explaining that her people are unable to expand into the greater part of the island because of the Tragic Floating Head. Queen Ulsiak knows little of the history of the island, besides the fact that her people once coexisted with humans before the Tragic Floating Head destroyed the human colony, killed many Bee-folk, and settled into wandering the western part of the island. The Bee-folk have some oracles, who drink mead laced with a special herbal mixture in order to enter visionary trances. Thanks to them, Ulsiak can share the following information:

- Hivestone is part of a group of five islands.
- The Tragic Floating Head can be destroyed at the old temple on Hivestone.
- A magician on another island knows how to defeat the Tragic Floating Head.
- A magical drum hidden underground on yet another island will be useful when visiting the magician.
- Going to the temple without seeing the magician first would be ineffective.

Ulsiak can describe the geography of the island in sufficient detail to guide the characters to the temple. She will warn them that the Bapharons will interfere with any attempt to destroy the Tragic Floating Head, whether by direct assault or at the temple.



Island 2: Isle of the Archers

Gently sloping to a central peak, this island is grassy, with scattered shrubs and trees. At (1) is a white obelisk marking an opening where an iron ladder set into stone leads down into the **Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen**. A small ball of green fire floats along the ceiling in the center of each room, keeping the Gallery well lit.

Each star is the position of a Mechanical Archer. It will not move from its position, but can react to fire on anyone moving through its line of sight at any time during a round (although each can still only fire once per round). They will never run out of arrows and act as one (the fact that each can sense as all of the others is what allows them to fire on someone briefly exposed in a corridor intersection). Together, they make this an exceptionally deadly location, though they lack true intelligence and cannot adapt to a clever strategy by an intruder. If multiple targets present themselves, each Archer will select randomly each round.

1. The ladder from the surface ends in this chamber. It is bare. The Mechanical Archer in the next room will begin attacking as soon as an intrusion is noticed

(automatically unless the intruders have successfully used stealth to enter, in which case they may be able to stay out of sight after spotting the Archer first). Actually sneaking past the Archers will be extraordinarily difficult. If even one detects an intruder, all will become aware. Without invisibility, moving past an Archer in its room is absurdly difficult to begin with: the Archer gains a +10 bonus to its detection roll.

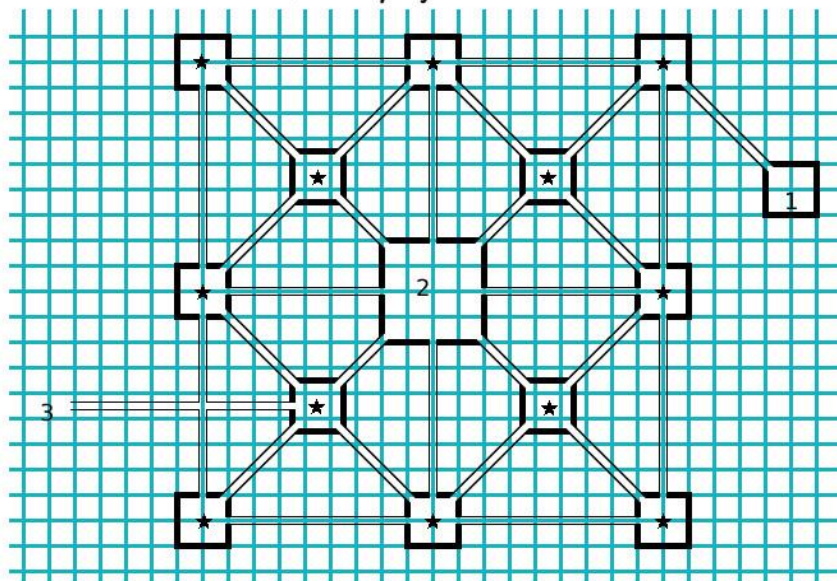
2. Here are 417 silver pieces and 28 gold coins, but they are loose and it will take a round to gather thirty coins, during which the gatherer is exposed to all dozen mechanical archers.

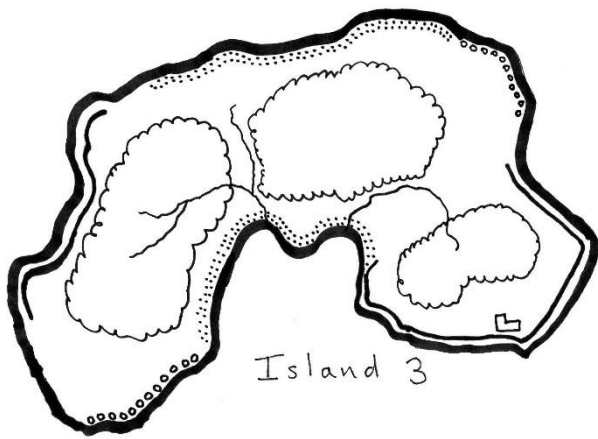
Other treasure located here:

- A barbarian sword: no special abilities, but a garnet worth 350 sp is embedded in the hilt.
- A Spear of Defense
- A beautifully decorated shield: no powers; this display piece is worth 275 sp.
- A gold necklace worth 500 silver pieces.
- A bag full of sand (1 Enc): just normal sand.
- A small drum (1 Enc): This is the **Serpent's Caller**. If played, it will cause every snake or part-snake creature within 300' to come to the player, unless the creature makes a Mystic Fortitude saving roll (target number 20). Creatures that fail to resist this effect will be irresistibly drawn toward the source of the sound, stopping only if necessary for self-defense; as long as the creature is under the influence of the drum, it will fail any further Mystic Fortitude rolls and will be unable to attack the drum player. Playing the drum requires one's full attention, and the effects end when the playing stop. The drum also has the effect of driving away all forms of Hydra, which hate the sound as much as snakes love it – again, this effect can be resisted with a Mystic Fortitude saving roll (target number 20).
- A small phial: a Potion of Healing.

3. This exit is hidden from the surface. A secret door, appearing as normal rock from the outside, opens behind a screen of bushes.

The Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen





Island 3: Ruins of Alsis

The western and central forested areas are home to Acteons, while the eastern section is the territory of a pack of Demon Dogs, who have made the ruined fortress their den. The Acteons will be cautiously friendly towards visitors, and will ask friendly heroes for help in ridding their island of the Demon Dogs.

The Acteons know that their island is part of a cluster that the former human inhabitants called "the Five Islands", but know little else beyond their own home. They do know, and will warn of, a reef-ringed island haunted by spirits better avoided. They are also aware that humans and Bee-folk once lived in harmony on another of the islands, but have had no word since the humans on their island were destroyed.

The Demon Dogs will be completely unhelpful, and will treat any visitors as invaders, with intent to kill. If the adventurers agree to fight the Demon Dogs on behalf of the Acteons, a dozen young Acteon males will accompany them. If the MM feels the need for more combat encounters, Demon Dogs can attack on the way to the fortress. While none of them have ever been there, the Acteons can lead the party to the fortress, so normally there will be no risk of getting lost in the woods or blundering into natural hazards.

Ruined Fortress: This crumbling ruin still has strong walls along most of its perimeter. The rear wall is largely rubble, and the gatehouse is damaged.

1. The old bronze gates are immobile with corrosion, but gaps allow entry: one outer door is missing and the wall around the inner doors is breached on both sides. There is a 50% chance that 1-2 Devil Dogs are watching this location. The roof of the structure is intact.
2. The old central tower is missing its doors and part of the front wall, while bits of the north wall lean out. The roof is long gone. Amid the rubble in the corner, a few gems sparkle. They are actually glass fakes, with a total worth of 10 silver pieces. They are bait to draw intruders into this enclosed space with a single exit, where they can be trapped.
3. If searched, the rubble here yields up a small, but intact chest. It contains a beautiful helmet (400 sp value, adds 1 to Personal Charisma when dealing with metalworkers or people who appreciate art), what was once some nice clothing (now rotten with age), a pair of horn-handled daggers, and a collection of scrolls.

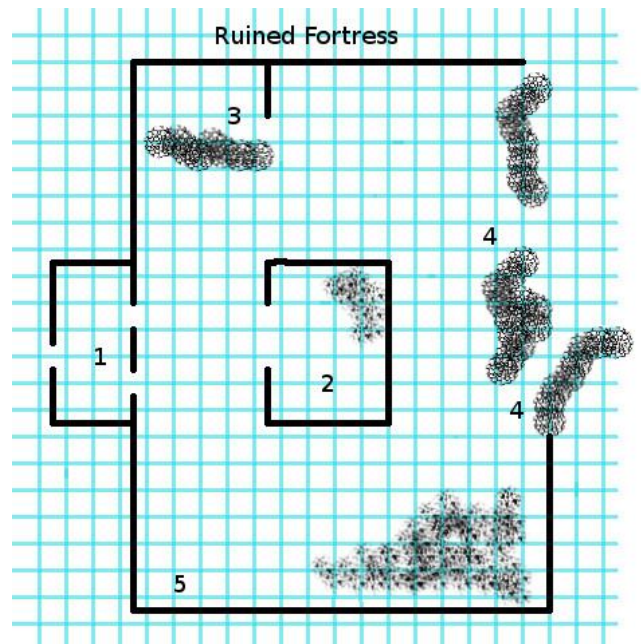
The scrolls will take three hours to study (by a reader of Minean). They record how men of Lodos, a city-state long allied with Thena, sent colonists to the Five Islands, building a temple and towns on Primera, as they called it, and a town and fortress on Alsis. For a time, they prospered, but then a terror came upon them, a thing of flying stone that turned men to stone. Panic and despair came upon the colony and the townsfolk attacked the fortress in desperation, believing a rabble-rouser who claimed that the commander of the fortress could stop the monster, but chose not to. The final entry calls this event the final blow to the colony, leaving no hope of stopping the doom that had come upon them.

Regarding the islands as a whole, the scrolls describe three as guarded by reefs, stating that one contains an underground death trap, while another is home to nothing but terrible demons. The last, however, is also guarded by a Sea Hydra. This island is described as a pleasant place, often used as a home by retired magicians seeking the privacy of a well-guarded isle.

The Maze Maser may embellish the scrolls as he sees fit, either for flavor or to drop more clues (or red herrings).

4. There are two paths through the rubble where the wall fell. Each is always watched by a Demon Dog ready to sound the alarm or to ambush an unwary intruder.
5. The Demon Dogs have dug a den at this corner of the fortress, where 1-6 pups (treat as Common Wolves in combat) will be watched over by a female Demon Dog.

Additional Demon Dogs may be located throughout the ruin. There will be three Demon Dogs, plus one for every 2 levels in the party, in total (e.g., if there are four 1st level adventurers, there will be a total of five Demon Dogs). Good tactics, the aid of the Acteons, and the use of any henchmen will be useful.





Island 4: Isle of the Lemures

Lemures haunt the hilly forests of the southern portion of the island. Each hour spent in their territory brings a 1 in 6 chance of encountering 1-3 Lemures. For every encounter after the first, add one Lemure (i.e., the second encounter is with 2-4 Lemures, the third with 3-5 Lemures, and so on). If the Lemures feel threatened, they will attempt to lure their enemies into the region beyond the territorial markers, but will not dare cross that threshold themselves. The markers themselves are mounted skeletons of past intruders, sometimes displayed on trees, but more often on masts or oars from their ships.

The northern island is home to a brutal Cacodemon. It generally lurks on the heights of the island's only mountain, but it will come down to defend its territory, preferring to harass a group with stealth and sorcery before picking them off with more direct attacks. It has excellent senses and will have spotted any arriving ship, and it always knows when any intelligent being passes the line of its territorial markers.

Island 5: Isle of the Riddle

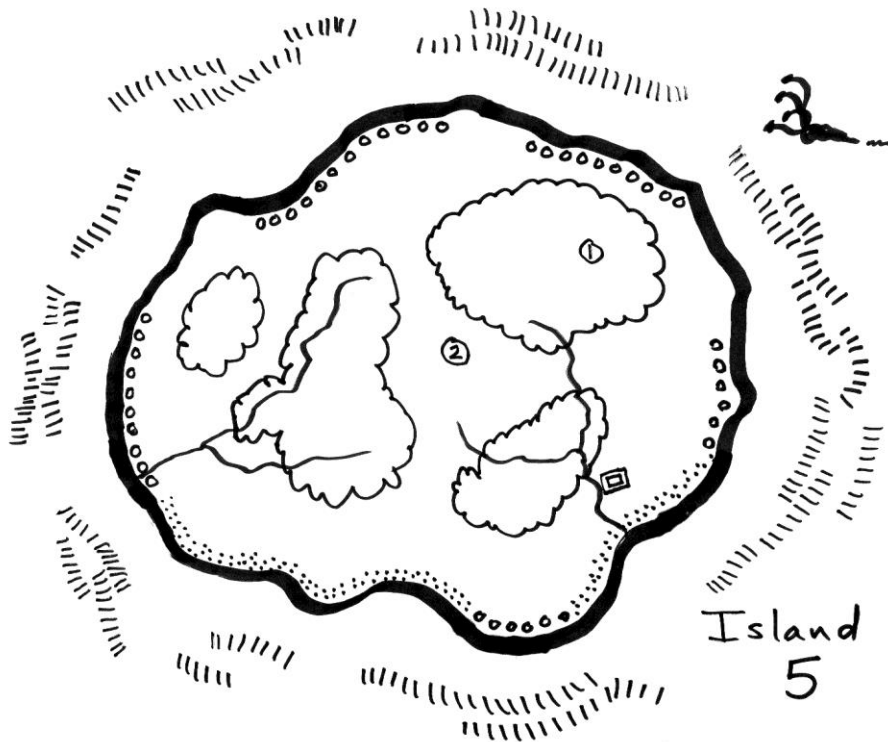
The reefs around this island are a hazard, but the four-headed Sea Hydra that patrols these waters is a greater risk. If the drum known as "the Serpent's Caller" has been recovered from the Gallery of the Dozen Bowmen, it can be played to drive away or to keep away the Sea Hydra. Otherwise, each hour there is a 2 in 6 chance of an attack so long as a ship remains in the vicinity of this island.

The standing building on the island is a large and comfortable home for a lone hermit, built of stone and two stories tall. It is quite old, but well-maintained. It is currently home to Ariphron, a retired Sorcerer. He is past youth, but not yet old. He will appeal to any heroes for aid. He himself once wandered Mythika to make his name (magicians have a 1 in 6 chance to recognize "Ariphron" as the name of a sorcerer who led the rout of an Umbrian fleet that attacked Zethos almost twenty years ago). In that time, he fell in love with a Dryad named Nyssa, who returned his feelings. They eventually retired to this island to live out the remainder of Ariphron's life in peace and privacy.

When they departed, they had made the rounds of the Olympian temples to offer thanks for their successful careers as adventuring heroes. Unfortunately, in their haste, they neglected the temple of Hermes. The god could not overlook this snub, and when they arrived on the island, Hermes greeted them and transformed Nyssa from Dryad to Hamadryad.

Fortunately, the god was merely annoyed, not truly angry. The curse was inconvenient, but not a great hardship in the short run, and a means of lifting the curse and restoring Nyssa to her proper status was left on the island. Of course, it had to be placed out of reach of the couple, so Hermes created a small maze from which Ariphron and Nyssa are magically barred.

Ariphron will ask the adventurers to enter this maze, the Hermetic Riddle, and recover the green pearl that can restore Nyssa. The adventurers will likely have mentioned the matter of the Tragic Floating Head, as Ariphron is rather obviously the magician mentioned by



the Bee-folk queen, but even if they do not bring up the subject on their own, they will probably have spoken of it in response to Ariphron's questioning. If they have insisted on avoiding the subject of the Tragic Floating Head, Ariphron will not force his wisdom on them. Normally, however, he will send them into the maze with the additional instruction to bring out the great trident that they will find there, since it is needed to defeat the Tragic Floating Head. In any case, so long as he gets the pearl, he is willing to let the adventurers have any treasure that they find within the Hermetic Riddle.

Although not aware of all the details of the story, Ariphron does know how to destroy the Tragic Floating Head: restore the trident to the statue of Poseidon in the old temple on Hivestone, offer up a sacrifice of a mythic item, and pray for Poseidon to resume his protection of the island until the statue responds.

(1) This is where Nyssa's tree is located. It is an oak of modest size. She will normally be here, although she often wanders the small island woods or visits with Ariphron. She will prefer to stay out of sight until the green pearl is recovered, at which time, she will appear, swallow the pearl, and become a normal Dryad again, after which she will thank the heroes for their help and offer healing to any who were injured in solving the Hermetic Riddle.

(2) The Hermetic Riddle:

1. In the side of a hill, a pair of brass doors will open easily to any except the pair who live on this island. The doors are decorated in elaborate knot-work designs.

2. An inscription in the wall in many languages, including all those known by the exploring party, reads: "The way forward is the way forward. That alone is straightforward."

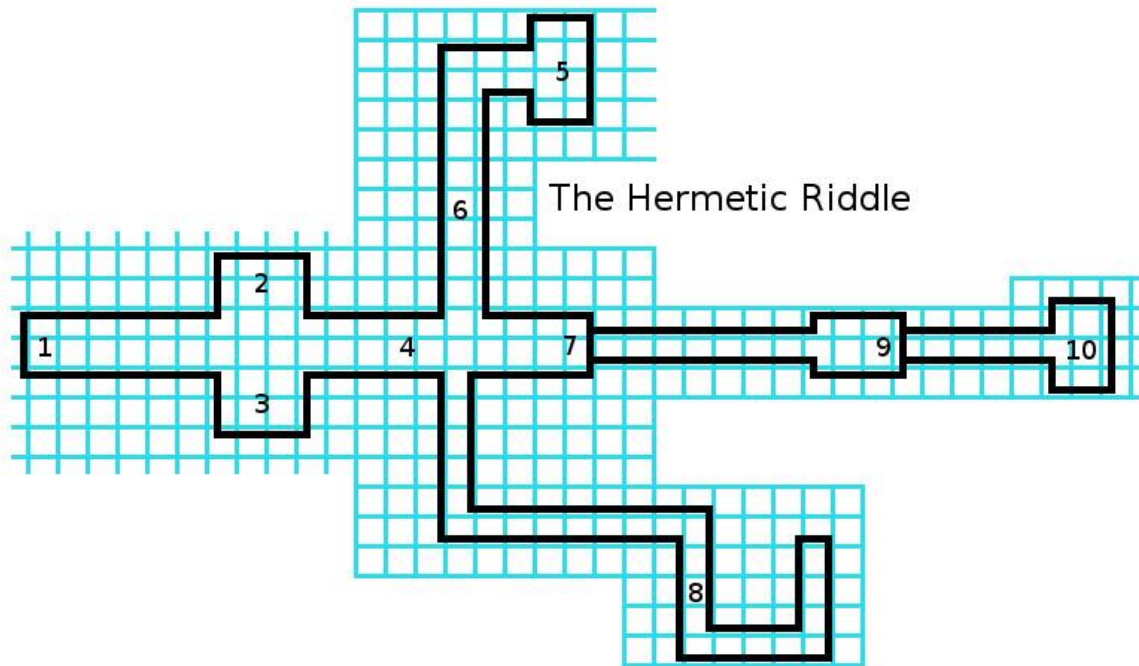
3. A selection of musical instruments is arranged here, including all the common instruments of Minean cultures and some of the prominent instruments of other cultures around the Middle Sea. If tried, they prove to be perfectly tuned and a Lyrist may play here to recover Power points at twice the usual rate. However, if one attempts to remove an instrument from this place, it will vanish, only to reappear here.

4. When this point is first approached, a phantasmal image of a sphinx appears and asks: "One eye made me. Two eyes use me. All eyes see me. What am I?" The correct answer is "a thunderbolt": forged by Cyclops ("one eye"), used by Zeus ("two eyes") and seen by everybody ("all eyes"). Adventurers with a Wits of 13+ should roll 1d6: if the result is lower than or equal to their Wits bonus, the Maze Master should give them the following clue: "One eye is most probably a reference to Cyclops."

If the correct answer is given within three minutes (of real time), the sphinx will smile and vanish, leaving behind a statue of a cat. If the answer is not given within the time limit, the sphinx will roll its eyes and say, "Here's a hint!" It will vanish as miniature thunderbolts strike everyone, doing 1d3 Hits of unavoidable damage.

5. In this room, each wall bears an inscription in many languages, including all those known by the exploring party. One reads: "The magician makes the unreal real; that which is real, he undoes." The second reads: "The merchant makes money appear where there is none." The last reads: "The thief makes that-which-is disappear."

6. At this point in the corridor, a trap may be detected. If it is not disarmed or avoided, triggering it will cause the ceiling to open up and the entire corridor from where it branches off of the main corridor to where it turns will have feathers rain down to cover the floor a foot thick.



7. This wall appears to be a dead end, but contains a secret door which is easy to open once discovered.

8. At this point in the corridor, anyone passing will be subjected to a rush of freezing cold air. There is no Danger Evasion roll allowed to detect or avoid this (it is divine magic, not some common trap). Those failing a Physical Vigor roll will take 1d6 damage.

9. This room is the heart of the Hermetic Riddle, the Riddle of Opposites: a series of creatures are represented in small blocks of stone protruding from the walls on either side as one enters. The Maze Master should describe those that the adventurers would not recognize from experience, but just name those which they have encountered. On one side are a Phoenix, a Cockatrice, a Cerberus, a Derros, and a Fury. On the opposite wall are a Spider, a Lare, a Lemure, a Sea Serpent, and a Siren. Even a gentle touch will send the stone retreating to be even with the wall and activate its effect:

Phoenix: Everyone in the room is subjected to a sudden freezing cold, like that at location 8.

Cockatrice: Any stone items in the room will come to life. Gems will become brilliant beetles, common stones (as a slinger might carry) will be plainer insects, statuettes will be as they appear, etc. Only divine items (like the trident at location 10) are immune. The statue of a cat that may be gained at location 4 will become an exceptionally clever and loyal pet.

Cerberus: The unmarked wall reveals a hidden door, which slides into the floor, revealing the passageway to location 10.

Derros: Each individual in the room experiences some form of equipment failure. Sophisticated devices will

malfunction, and these are preferred targets for the effect. A bow string could snap, as could the lacing of a sandal. Somehow, some way, some form of technology on the individual breaks down.

Fury: Every individual in the room is healed of 6 + 1d6 points of damage.

Spider: This produces a release from bondage. Any curses or hostile spells are lifted from anyone in the room. Any physical restraints are undone.

Lare: Everyone in the room becomes hungry. Unless an individual immediately eats a full ration of food, he will be at -2 to Initiative and all D20 rolls until he does, due to the distraction of hunger.

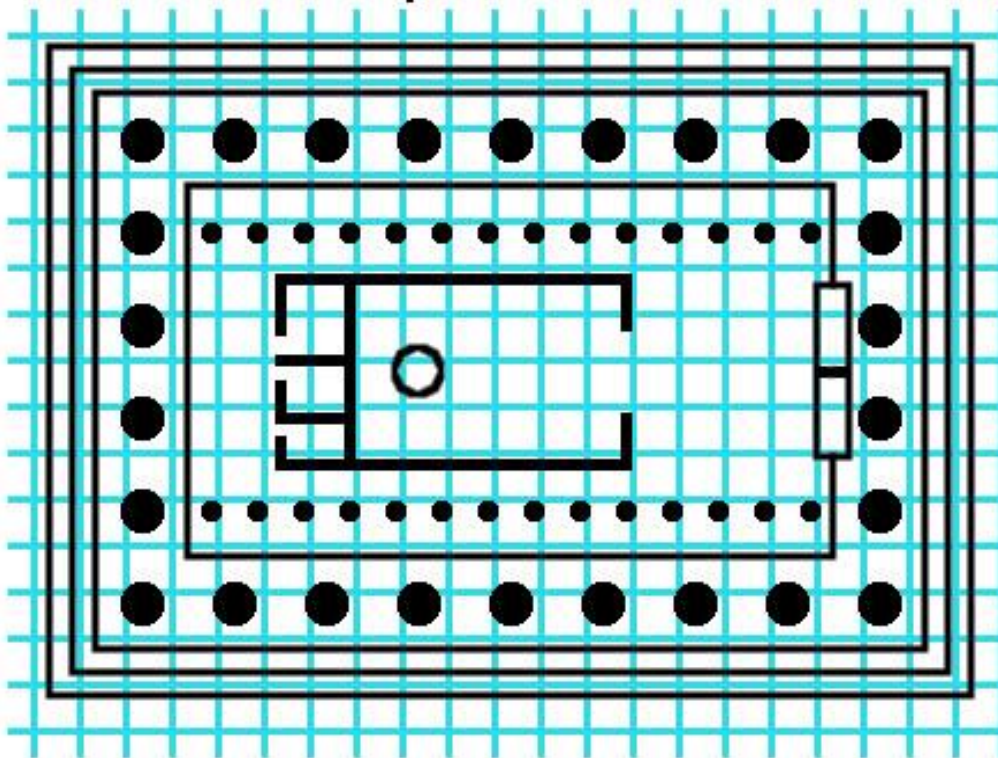
Lemure: The individual who pressed the stone receives a minor mythic item (of the Maze Master's choosing), while everyone else in the room gets a small bag containing 2d6 silver pieces.

Sea Serpent: All ships at the island are repaired completely.

Siren: Silence falls. The individuals in the room may not speak, play music, or otherwise make any sound for so long as they remain in the Hermetic Riddle.

10. Here is the treasure: six Acheronian Arrows, a Bow of Apollo, a Spear of Vigilance, three Potions of Healing, a Potion of Strength, a Caduceus, a Ring of Good Fortune, and an Amulet of the Merfolk, a small coffer containing 6 gold coins and 38 silver pieces, the green pearl, and an over-sized (5 Enc) trident decorated in gold and silver and precious stones. The trident is worth hundreds of gold coins, but if it is taken as loot, rather than returned to Poseidon's temple, it will bring the sea-god's wrath.

The Temple of Hivestone



The Temple of Hivestone

The temple of Poseidon is intact, but abandoned. The great bronze doors of the temple swing inward easily. In the inner temple, the great statue of Poseidon stands empty-handed. The trident from the fifth island must be placed into its hands to begin the ceremony that will defeat the Tragic Floating Head. As soon as this is done, a Bapharon will appear at the temple doors, with hostile intent. Another Bapharon will join it every other round until the Maze Master senses that the party is hard-pressed, at which point the supply of Bapharon will run out (until the party gains the upper hand, which is the cue for more reinforcements to appear).

The second step is the sacrifice of a mythic item. This must be performed by a priest (not necessarily of Poseidon); if the adventurers do not include a priest, a Bee-folk priest (no special powers; use normal Bee-folk stats) will come with them to assist them in religious matters. This will take six rounds, or only four if the priest conducting the ritual serves Poseidon.

The third step is prayers to Poseidon for his aid and protection. This takes eight rounds, subtracting one round if a priest of Poseidon is present and one round if an Agent of Poseidon is present (if both are present, only six rounds of prayer will be required). At least one person must spend the whole round in prayer (no other actions) for it to count. The rounds need not be consecutive, however.

When the process is complete, the trident will glow with divine light, and the form of Poseidon will come alive. The Bapharons will flee and hide in their swamp. Then Poseidon will speak.

"You have done well. This island is again under my protection. The Tragic Floating Head is being dealt with. Let the Bee-folk know that they may roam safely, so long as they do not intrude on the Bapharon swamp."

Then the statue will become a statue again. Any follower of Poseidon will gain 300 Wisdom or 100 Glory/Experience, while others present gain half that reward.

The smaller rooms behind the inner temple are storage and work rooms for the priests. There is nothing of particular interest there except for some scrolls, which record (in Minean) some details of the lost colony. It will not take long to find some pertaining to its last days.

Some priest recorded that the trident of Poseidon was stolen from the temple. As punishment for the carelessness of its guardians, Poseidon removed his protection from the colony until the trident was replaced. That was mere weeks before the appearance of the Tragic Floating Head. Divine decree is not simply reversed because of unintended side effects, but the priest pleaded with Poseidon that if he could not defend the island's inhabitants, he could still protect everyone else. As the priest asked, the Tragic Floating Head became trapped in the region around the temple, ensuring nobody beyond the island, and even those Bee-folk sheltering on the eastern part of the island, would be threatened by it. The record concludes with the priest declaring that he shall perish "smiting the Bapharons for their contemptible heresy of worshipping the monstrous head as a god".

MYTHIC HISTORY

(Part Three of Three)

by *Anagnosis of Thena*, translated (and annotated) by **Andrew Pearce**

In this final part of our mega-article, we delve into the seventh and final book of Homeros, Mythika's storyteller supreme.



- Sing, o Muse, of the Glorious the Age of Myth

The End of the Mythic Age

Midas and Sesephus

Sarpedon, second king of Seriphos, was succeeded by ten kings whose deeds have largely been forgotten. However, the thirteenth king of Seriphos, Midas the Golden, acquired a fame that exceeded even that of his ancestor Minaeus. A great warrior, devoted to Athena, Midas spent the early years of his long and prosperous reign building up the navy of Seriphos. He began a successful series of wars against the Minean cities of Cadmea, Herophile and Thuria. After a decade of fierce fighting, all three cities were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of Midas and, like the rulers of Phaistos, to acknowledge the lords of Minea as High Kings.

Now of all the Minean lords, the one who resisted Midas most fiercely was Sesephus, eleventh king of Thuria. Sesephus was a cunning, but cruel, ruler, who had outwitted both mortals and Olympians on many occasions. One of his greatest adversaries was Autolykus of Heraphile, accounted the greatest thief of Mythika, who had received from Hermes himself the power to disguise any beast that he stole, changing them from horned to unhorned, from black to white, from long-haired to short-haired, and so on.

Even after becoming king of Heraphile, Autolykus continued his tricks. And so it was that Sesephus noticed that his own herds were growing steadily smaller, whilst those of Autolykus increased, though at first he was unable to convict him of theft. Therefore one day Sesephus engraved the inside of all his cattle's hooves with the monogram SSPHS, for Sesephus. That night Autolykus helped himself as usual. Then Sesephus rode to Heraphile, demanded to see Autolykus' stable, and recognised his stolen beasts by their marked hooves. In his desire to avert war, Autolykus returned all that he had stolen from Sesephus to him: but such was the anger of Sesephus that he seduced Autolykus' young daughter Anticleia by way of revenge. Their offspring, Laertes, was the father of Oulixeus, who later won fame in the Thessalian War.

Now, by the time Midas made war against the Land of the Three Cities, Sesephus was already old, and had reigned for fifty-five years – far longer than any previous ruler of Thuria. This was because twice before he had successfully cheated death. On one occasion, Hades himself came for Sesephus, but the Thurian king would not be daunted: he cunningly placed Hades himself in handcuffs by persuading him to demonstrate their use, and then quickly locking them. Thus Hades was kept a prisoner in Sesephus' house for nine days – and during this time, no mortal was allowed to die: an impossible and intolerable situation. Eventually Ares, who feared that his interests as a lover of war and bloodshed were being threatened, came searching for Hades: and he released Hades, and delivered Sesephus once more into his clutches.

Sesephus, however, had another plan. Before descending to the underworld, he instructed his wife not to bury him. Then, on reaching the palace of Hades, Sesephus went straight to Persephone, and told her that as an unburied person he had no right to be there. 'Let me return to the upper world,' he pleaded, 'so that I can arrange for my burial, and avenge the shameful neglect shown to me. I will return in nine days.' Thus was Persephone deceived: for as soon as he had returned to the world of light, Sesephus repudiated his promise.

Then Hermes, the messenger of Hades, sought out Sesephus. 'Very well,' said Hermes. 'You have proved yourself cunning, and will be permitted, for a time, to carry on living in the world of men. But the day will come, sooner than you would wish, when a mortal man will send you once again to the underworld. You will not be able to escape a third time.'

And so it came to pass, after ten years of fighting, that Midas and all the hosts of Seriphos gathered before the gates of Thuria: and Seseplus sallied forth with his own men to meet them.

The battle that followed was long and hard-fought, but in the end Midas stood face to face with Seseplus, and slew him with a single spear-thrust. Thus it was that Seseplus finally met his doom: and Hades had prepared an exemplary punishment for him. When he arrived in the underworld, he was shown an enormous stone which he was commanded to roll up to the brow of a hill, and thereafter to topple it down the far slope. He has never yet succeeded in doing so, for as soon as he has almost reached the summit, he is forced back by the weight of that dread stone, which bounces back to the bottom of the vale once more, and Seseplus must wearily retrieve it and begin his futile task again.

Thus was Seseplus punished for his mockery of the Gods. And having lost most of his sons in battle, Laertes, the youngest and least regarded of them, succeeded Seseplus as king of Thuria: and Laertes bowed down before Midas as High King.

The King with the Golden Touch

Even more than his military prowess, Midas is remembered for his greed and, in particular, for his love of gold. Indeed, his military achievements were probably a direct consequence of his love for the precious metal, because he insisted that all tribute brought to him should take the form of gold: and his conquering spirit was driven first and foremost by this desire. It is for this reason that Midas' wars are usually known as the Golden Wars.⁵

Following his wars of conquest, Midas dedicated himself to constructing his Palace of Gold. After fifteen years of hard labor, the lavish gold-leafed exteriors of the palace were complete: but Midas bemoaned the slow progress of work on the interior, where he had determined that the furnishings of his house should be made of solid gold. In a fateful moment, the goddess Athena appeared to him and offered to grant him any one wish. Midas' instant reply was to ask for the ability to turn everything he touched into gold. Athena granted this wish, and Midas immediately set about adorning and beautifying his palace.

For three days, such was his excitement that he never ate nor slept, seeking only to fill his palace with ever more wondrous artifacts. Then his queen, Aurore, came to greet him, and congratulated him on his achievements. He embraced her with joy – only to discover, to his horror, that his ability to turn things to gold was not confined to inanimate objects, but extended to living beings too. In vain he cursed Athena for his dreadful gift – and then, mindful at last of hunger, Midas tried to satisfy his appetite – only to find that no morsel of food could pass his lips without being transformed into heavy, inedible gold.



King Midas the Golden

After many more days of torment, Athena appeared before him and told him how to be freed of his curse. Midas was instructed to visit the source of the river Auris, and there to wash himself. This he did, and was at once freed from the golden touch.⁶ However, the Goddess was either unable or unwilling to undo the effects already achieved by the golden touch. The statue of Aurore remained in the heart of the Palace for many years until most of the building was destroyed by an earthquake. Some tales tell that when Midas died two years later, he was found by his courtiers locked in a final embrace with his beloved, lost queen – the only thing, it is said, he valued more than gold.⁷

The Hellenic Games

Midas was succeeded by his son Antagoras, a tyrannical ruler much given to excess. Antagoras lacked his father's obsession with gold for gold's sake, but recognised its value to others. Within a few years of coming to the throne, Antagoras was stripping his father's palace of its gold, and using it to mint the first recorded coins, which quickly became the predominant medium of exchange within the Minean economy (with Antagoras being the main beneficiary).

Antagoras was also a brutal warlord, and following his accession acted quickly to ensure the continuing loyalty of his vassals. A paranoid man, much given to suspecting treason, usually without good cause, he soon acquired a reputation for capricious cruelty. However, he greatly indulged his two sons, Perilaus and Memnon. Both – like their father and grandfather – were fine tacticians. Perilaus, the elder, long remained unwed: such was his devotion to his soldiers and to the battlefield, despite the urging of his father.

⁵ The traditional date usually given for the Golden Wars is 185 to 175 BP.

⁶ A adds, 'It is said that the sands of the river Auris remain bright with gold to this day.'

⁷ The dates usually given for Midas' reign are 199 to 158 BP.

Then, in his thirtieth year, Perilaus visited the city-state of Acheiros on a diplomatic mission. There he became obsessed with the beautiful princess Helene, daughter of king Tyrandeos, the grandson of Perseos. The cunning Tyrandeos offered his daughter's hand in marriage to the winner of the so-called Helenic Games that he undertook to hold the following year, expecting that some large inducement would be offered by Perilaus to rig the contest in his favour. However, the equally shrewd Antagoras instead used his overlordship of the other Minean cities to compel them to send champions who would be no match for mighty Perilaus as their representatives to the Games.⁸

However, neither Antagoras nor Tyrandeos bargained on the remote Minean city of Thessalia sending a representative to the Games. The Thessalian champion, Prince Hectis, favored son of King Podarces, succeeded in defeating those champions that he faced, as also did Perilaus in the initial rounds, but, the night before the deciding contest between Hectis and Perilaus, Hectis broke into Helene's apartments and spirited her away.

Antagoras was furious that the one Minean city outside his dominion should have so daringly insulted him – as he saw it – and demanded that the Thessalians hand over Helene to Perilaus. However, Podarces refused, declaring that Hectis and Helene truly loved one another. Henceforth, he declared, the princess would be known as Helene of Thessalia.

Tyrandeos, not wishing to be caught up any further in this unexpected diplomatic morass, declared that he himself had no interest in the outcome of the quarrel: but Antagoras summoned his vassals from Cadmea, Heraphile, Phaistos and Thuria, and together they pledged themselves to make war on Thessalia. They spent three years amassing the Minean fleet – allegedly the greatest navy ever assembled, made up of a thousand ships. And Antagoras consulted the oracle at Telphos to ascertain the outcome of his venture. He received the ominous answer: 'The Mineans shall see victory – but the sight of victory will elude you.'

The Thessalian War

It is said that the Gods were divided in taking sides in this conflict.⁹ The great earthquake that struck Seriphos the year before the fleet set sail, as well as the terrible plague that at the same time broke out within Thessalia, were both seen as offering proof of divine displeasure. Yet the warlords on both sides refused to pay heed to such signs, and the preparations for war continued.

Exactly three years to the day after Helene's 'abduction', the Minean armada set sail for Thessalia. The war lasted seven long years, and many epic deeds performed during it are recounted in the *Thessaliad*, the greatest of the works of Homeros.¹⁰

⁸ The traditional date of the Helenic Games – supposedly the first ever athletic contest – was 136 BP. The famous Tritonian Games (see *Minotaur No.8*) held every three years, is a relatively recent event. It nevertheless claims to trace its roots back to the Helenic Games.

⁹ H adds 'save Zeus alone, who remained aloof.'

¹⁰ The usual dates given for the Thessalian War are 133 to 126 BP.



A familiar scene from the Thessalian War

On many occasions, as the casualties mounted, the leaders of the Minean vassal cities tried to persuade High King Antagoras to abandon what seemed like a foolhardy obsession, for the walls of Thessalia were strong, and the spirits of its warriors remained undaunted. But proud Antagoras and his equally proud sons refused to admit defeat.

After six years of fighting, even as his health began to fail, Antagoras called his commanders and vassal kings together, and made them swear allegiance to Perilaus his son as his successor and as their new High King, and to continue the siege for as long as was necessary for victory to be achieved. And so died the son of Midas, far away from the golden halls and the opulence of his youth: a bitter death without the walls of the one Minean city that had defied him.

Perilaus, desiring a final end to the war, then challenged Hectis to single combat, calling him craven to hide behind the walls of his father's city: the last contest, as yet unplayed, of the Helenic Games. So Hectis came out and fought the High King, and Perilaus had the victory. But even though their valiant prince lay dead before the walls, the Thessalians refused to surrender: for Helene declared that never willingly would she give herself to the man who had slain her beloved Hectis. Such was the love that all in Thessalia now felt for Helene that none would hand her over to Perilaus against her wishes. Therefore Perilaus, in his anger, tied Hectis' body to the rear of his chariot and dragged him behind as he rode back in triumph to the Minean camp, and he refused his opponent the proper rites of burial. Thus, it is said, he earned the wrath of the Gods and the undying hatred of Helene.

Another year passed by, and still the fruitless siege continued, and the murmurings within the Minean camp against the House of Midas grew louder. Then Oulixeus, who had become King of Thuria following the death of his father in battle three years earlier, devised a plan which he believed would assure the Mineans of victory.



Clever, cunning Oulixeus

Now Oulixeus, though a Thurian, was a devotee of Poseidon, lord both of the sea and of horses. And Oulixeus proposed that the Mineans build a giant horse as an offering to Poseidon – but that within the belly of the horse, he and nine other chosen warriors, two from each of the allied cities, should be concealed. Then the Minean fleet should seemingly depart from their camp, giving the impression that they had abandoned the war – but, secretly, they would put into a bay a few miles further along the coast, and from there would make a secret approach at night towards the city. In the meantime, the Thessalians would bring the giant horse into their city, never suspecting the ruse. Then, after nightfall, the ten hidden warriors would emerge and let their fellows into the city.

Memnon, the brother of Perilaus, scoffed at Oulixeus' plan, but Perilaus, fearing the failure of the Minean cause, and the revolt of his vassals, agreed to it, desperate though it seemed. As Oulixeus had predicted, the Thessalians brought the giant horse into their city, and, believing that the Mineans had fled, held a great victory feast. Then, in the middle of the night, Oulixeus and his band of men emerged and unbarred the gates of the city. The city was quickly overrun, and for three days the ransacking of Thessalia continued unabated. Podarces, his remaining sons, and the whole of his household fell in battle, and Helene was taken prisoner and brought before Perilaus. Never again would the city of Thessalia rise to its ancient greatness, though many of its people escaped to the surrounding countryside, and the region would in later years gain a reputation as the home to wise women and doughty warriors.¹¹

But the Minean allies also suffered casualties in the final battle, amongst them Memnon, the brother of Perilaus: and with his last breath he cursed Oulixeus, whom he blamed for his death, saying, 'May he spend as long on his journey home as he has already spent camped on this accursed shore.' And so these words came to pass, for Oulixeus did indeed take seven years on his epic voyage home, as recorded by Homeros in another of his works, the *Oulixead*.

¹¹ A adds 'Some tales tell that a grandson of Podarces, Alexandros, survived and that it is prophesied that one day a descendant of this child – bearing his name – will unify the Minean cities once more, and restore the glory of Thessalia.'

The Oulixead

Strangely, the only one of Homeros' works that Demosthenes does not draw upon for his *Annals of Mythika* is the final Scroll of Homeros, containing the *Oulixead*. This tale records the homeward journey of Oulixeus following the Thessalian War, his various encounters with Sirens, Cyclopes, an Enchantress, and many other monsters and obstacles, and his eventual return – after a fourteen year absence in total – to Thuria, only to find his throne threatened and various suitors pursuing his faithful wife Penelope. The *Oulixead* ends by telling how he used all his guile to regain both his throne and his wife. With its radically different approach to his previous works, focussing on but a single hero, some scholars have even suggested that the *Oulixead* was not penned by Homeros, but by a later writer. For once, Cleonthides of Argos and I are in complete agreement in rejecting this theory. However, why Demosthenes chose not to use the *Oulixead* as source-material for his *Annals* remains an unresolved mystery.

The Fall of the House of Midas

Perilaus returned to Minea, and his vassals returned to their various homes, but he did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his victory. One night, seven months after his homecoming, as he was at his bath, Perilaus was stabbed to death by Helene who, though she had feigned love for him, had in truth never stopped hating him from the moment he had slain her beloved Hectis in single combat. Then Helene hung herself, seeking death's embrace for herself and the unborn child of Perilaus that she carried.

The only living descendant of Midas was the eight year old nephew of Perilaus, Telamon the son of Memnon, born just a few months before the Minean armada had set sail for Thessalia. A council of regents was appointed to guide Telamon whilst he was still a child. Chief amongst this council was King Parmedon of Phaistos, a cunning and ambitious man, who used flattery and bribes to gain ever greater power and influence amongst his fellows. Shortly after Telamon entered his fourteenth year, Parmedon finally felt confident enough to arrange for the king to be poisoned. However, his plan to have himself declared High King in Telamon's stead backfired when it became clear that most of the other regents saw no need for a king of Minea at all – and certainly not a High King. Civil war broke out on the island of Seriphos, with several distant relatives of the House of Midas coming forth to claim the crown, whilst the vassal Minean kings in the Land of the Three Cities declared themselves unwilling to pay any further tribute to a High King in Minea.

In the midst of this chaos, quite unexpectedly, the first great eruption of Mount Phaesta took place. Many of the buildings in Minea, Phaistos and the lesser towns of Seriphos collapsed, and thousands died as a result of the choking ash cloud and sulphurous rain. What little authority remained on the island rapidly disintegrated: the Minean Empire of Midas had fallen.¹²

¹² The date usually given both for the murder of Telamon, and the eruption of Mount Phaestra, is 119 BP.



The eternal torment of Prometheus

The Dark Days & the Theft of Prometheus

The Minean cities of Cadmea, Heraphile and Thuria knew only a few brief years of independence and renewed glory before they also fell into darkness. It is said that the last king of the House of Heraphile, named Caeneos, enlisted the aid of Barbarians from Hyperborea to help him defend his city against the latest act of Thurian aggression. The Hyperboreans defeated King Leucippus, son of Oilixeus, fourteenth and last king of Thuria, and razed his ancient city to the ground. But alas, the Barbarians then turned against the Heraphileans who had hired them and ransacked the whole of the Land of the Three Cities, and so the Dark Days came upon them too.¹³

The final century of the Age of Myth was a time of barbarity and senseless war, starvation and disease, loss of learning and overwhelming injustice, for the whole of mankind: not only for the Mineans, but also the Khettim of the Desert Kingdom, the peoples of the Land of the Sun, and for those dwelling in almost every part of Mythika. Rightly were these years named the Dark Days.

The people called out to the Gods, but the Gods made no response – perhaps still quarrelling amongst themselves in the aftermath of their meddling interventions in the Thessalian War. But Prometheus, last of the Titans, was once more moved to pity at mankind's plight. Fearing that his children would destroy themselves if the Gods callously stood by and did nothing, he decided to share with them the most jealously guarded of the gifts of the Gods – the secret of magic.

¹³ The usual date given for the sacking of the Three Cities is 99 BP.

Prometheus' action changed Mythika forever, and led to the first appearance of Elementalists and Sorcerers. With this gift, Prometheus believed that mankind could take charge of its own destiny, free from the manipulations and petty jealousies of the Gods.

Zeus was filled with wrath that, once again, Prometheus had put mortal interests before those of divine ones. This time, he declared that the Titan had gone too far. So Zeus had Prometheus chained naked to a pillar in the Thanatari Mountains¹⁴, where a greedy vulture tore at his liver all day, year in, year out, and there was no end to his torment, because every night (during which Prometheus was exposed to cruel frost and cold) his liver grew whole again.

With the punishment of Prometheus, an end was made to the Age of Myth, and a new era had dawned for mankind: the Age of Magic.

Thus ends our scholarly study of the seven books of Homeros, Mythika's storyteller supreme.

Editor's Note: *This final installment of the Mythic Annals is dedicated to Andrew Pearce, who somehow lost the way to the world of Mythika. Perhaps one day he will hear the Sirens again. Farewell, my friend – and as the poet used to say, the road goes ever on. Shield wall!*

TOMB OF THE BULL KING

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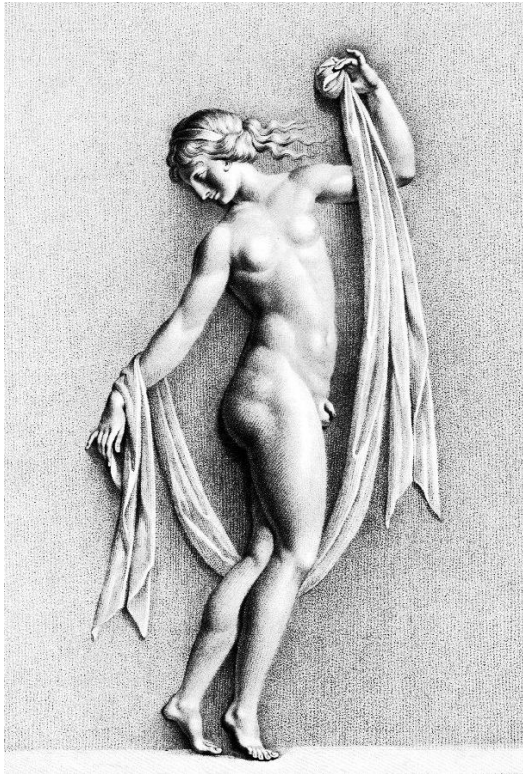
¹⁴ T places the imprisonment of Prometheus in the 'Thanatari Mountains'. H says 'Arcadia', whilst A has the 'Helicon Mountains'.

A TWIST IN THE MAZE

A Regular M&M Column by Luke G. Reynard

THE THIRD GENDER

Bringing Hermaphrodite Characters to the M&M World



M&M and Gender

It's a fact that, unlike many fantasy RPGs, M&M has some gender-restricted character classes: for various cultural, mythical and more-or-less obvious reasons, Amazons and Nymphs can only be female, while Barbarians, Centaur warriors and Spearmen (who are the M&M equivalents of Greek-like hoplites) can only be male. All other classes described in the *Players Manual* (Nobles, Sorcerers, Priests, Lyrists, Elementalists, Thieves and Hunters) can be chosen by either male or female characters – a fairly sound and reasonable approach if you ask me.

The M&M game system also includes a few genre-specific quirks on the subject of gender, such as the different starting ages for male Sorcerers and female Sorceresses, or the rule which restricts male Priests to male gods and Priestesses to goddesses (so no Priestesses of Apollo or Priests of Demeter in M&M).

Most old-school gamers are also familiar with the discussion of sexist clichés in fantasy gaming which, as far as M&M is concerned, eventually gave birth to the

variant, 'liberated' version of the Amazon character class, which is now included in the 2012 Silver Jubilee edition of the M&M Companion as a fully official (if optional) variant of the classic warrior-woman.

But what about Hermaphrodites? Since this very name comes from Greek myth (Hermaphrodite = Hermes + Aphrodite, in case you didn't already know), shouldn't they have a place in M&M too? Let's take a look at the ultimate gender bender.

Hermaphrodites in Mythika

In M&M, Hermaphrodites, also known as *androgynes*¹, are human beings who are neither male nor female but share the anatomical characteristics of both sexes – just like their famous mythical namesake, the child of Hermes and Aphrodite (see below for more details).

Since most human cultures in Mythika tend to be based on separate and very different social roles for men and women, hermaphrodites tend to be seen as freaks of nature by other humans who are aware of their "difference" (more on this later), often resulting in social stigma and ostracism; even humans who are not disturbed by the androgynes' ambiguity (such as followers of Aphrodite and Hermes) tend to view them as living wonders, testaments of the gods' prodigious powers of creation (rather than as normal people who just happen to be neither male nor female).

These prejudices tend to be restricted to human communities – Nymphs, for instance, have absolutely no problems with hermaphrodites, whom they often find easier to befriend and comprehend than mortal men or women (see below for more details on the Nymph-Hermaphrodite connection).

Hermaphrodite Characters

Hermaphrodite adventurers can only select character classes which have no gender restriction and which can have either Hermes or Aphrodite as their divine patron: Noble (with Skill and Grace as favored attributes), Thief, Lyrist and Sorcerer are the most obvious choices among the standard classes. Because they tend to be rejected by traditional social structures, androgynes usually avoid priesthood, but if they do embrace the Priest class, it will usually be as servants of Aphrodite or Hermes – or as Dionysiac Hierokeryxes (see *M&M Companion*, p. 31). Speaking of *M&M Companion* optional classes, Shapeshifters and Beastmasters are two other interesting choices for androgynes.

In game terms, the Hermaphrodites' unique place (or lack thereof) in the standard social gender paradigm gives them one special advantage and one special disadvantage. Depending on the clothes they wear (and the mannerisms they choose to adopt), androgynes can easily pass for men or women, fooling even the most alert observers, which can be a great asset in all sorts of adventuring or social situations. On the other hand, if (or once) their gender identity is known, they will almost always be treated with suspicion or unease by non-androgynous humans who are aware of their difference but do not know them on a personal basis; in game terms, this can be reflected by a -2 or -4 penalty on some *first reaction* rolls, depending on the degree of prejudice present in a given community or culture (note that such a penalty never applies to followers of Aphrodite, Hermes or Dionysus).

Sex, Genetics & Magic

In case you were wondering, as far as M&M is concerned, gender has nothing to do with sexual orientation. In other words, some hermaphrodites are attracted exclusively to men, some exclusively to women, some to men and women – and if you add other hermaphrodites to the picture, you end up with a surprisingly high number of possible combinations (seven, unless I'm mistaken).

But where do Hermaphrodites come from, anyway? In the legendary, magical reality of Mythika, their origins are magical rather than biological: they are the children of Nymphs and mortal men. The child of a Nymph and a human male may either be a Nymph, a human son, a human daughter or a human androgyne.

All this leads us to the Other Big Question – that of fertility and offspring. Can hermaphrodites carry children or impregnate women? Are they all sterile? Well, the answer will depend on your own ideas and sensibilities – but remember that in a world like Mythika, mythology always trumps biology and other scientific nonsense. So here are the various possibilities the Maze Master might consider:

- All Hermaphrodites are sterile.
- Hermaphrodites can father children but cannot become pregnant. As an extra option, their anatomy may or may not become fully masculine once they have taken this path.
- Hermaphrodites can become pregnant but cannot father children. As an extra option, their anatomy may or may not become fully feminine afterwards.
- Hermaphrodites can get pregnant or father children, depending on their chosen role during the act of conception. As an extra option, this may or may not trigger a "gender shift" in their anatomy, as per above.
- Hermaphrodites can only have children with other Hermaphrodites (with one of them acting as the biological "father" and the other as the biological "mother") – and yes, we even have a sub-option here, these children may or may not be automatically Hermaphrodites.

- Hermaphrodites can only father children on Nymphs. These children may either be Nymphs or Hermaphrodites.

- Hermaphrodites can only be made pregnant by Satyrs, giving birth to children who will either be Satyrs or Hermaphrodites.

- Both of the above.

Mythology & Philosophy

As mentioned above, the existence of Hermaphrodites is firmly rooted in mythology, with the tale of Hermaphroditos, the child of Hermes and Aphrodite (and the "ancestor" of all other androgynes, as far as M&M is concerned). According to this story ², the divine child was born as a boy and nursed by Naiads, back in the Age of Myth. At the age of fifteen, he attracted the attention of the Naiad Salmacis, who was struck by his beauty and attempted to seduce him, but was rejected. Becoming obsessed with the boy, the Nymph eventually managed to lure him into her pool – and it was there, thanks to some mysterious magical phenomenon or divine intervention, that Salmacis and the boy became a single, androgynous being.

In some versions of the tale, the newly-transformed Hermaphroditos asked his divine parents Hermes and Aphrodite to give the pool the virtue of transforming in a similar manner all those who would bathe in its wondrous waters, but this might simply be a poetic embellishment. It should also be noted that some paintings and statues of Eros (aka Cupid) depict the god as an androgynous character, which might point to another, alternate divine origin of Hermaphrodites.

Interestingly, the Philosophers of Mythika (who tend to despise and disregard religious lore and mythic tales) have their own explanation of the androgynes' existence. Some of them believe that, when the universe came into existence, the first human beings were actually spherical creatures, with two bodies attached back to back, resulting in three genders: all-male beings (who were associated with the sun), all-female beings (who were associated with the earth) and (wait for it) male-female or "androgynous" beings (who were associated with the moon) ³, which is why the most pedantic Philosophers of Mythika often refer to Hermaphrodites as "lunars" or "moon-born".

Editor's Note: This column is dedicated to the memory of *Herculine Barbin* (1838-1868), a human being destroyed by human intolerance. Rest in peace.

¹ Although "Hermaphrodite" and "Androgyny" do NOT mean exactly the same thing, as far as M&M is concerned, the two terms are synonymous. Let's not split semantic hair here.

² This tale is actually a "Minotaurized" version of a story from Greek myth - check Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for the classic version.

³ Make an Academic Knowledge roll. If you succeed, you recognize an overly simplified version of a well-known passage from Plato's *Symposium*. If you want more detail, read the original or just check Wikipedia (at least before someone out there decides to delete yet another perfectly legitimate page – Ed, 'just joking').

ANOTHER TWIST IN THE MAZE

FORGING YOUR OWN LEGEND

Yet Another Alternate Advancement System for *Mazes & Minotaurs*



Bookkeeping is nice when you are into that kind of stuff, and while the academics from *Thena* may not have the slightest problem with that, many story-oriented players and Maze Masters tend to view the standard M&M advancement rules as something of a hassle (*What is this? A New School Revolution or something?* - Ed).

In the *Minotaur* #6 (p. 84) Luke G. Reynard brought us a wonderful system to get rid of the usual bookkeeping. *Adventures & Advancement* discarded the traditional accumulation of Glory, Wisdom or Experience points in favor of a far simpler, sleeker system mainly based on the number of successfully completed adventures, providing Maze Masters with a collective, rules-light advancement system, as opposed to the personal, meticulous meritocratic system of the official rules. But how about trying to find some middle ground between these two vastly different, opposite approaches – something that remains rules-light and freeform, while still rewarding personal accomplishments?

Heroic Tales

The ancient epic tales from which M&M draws its most primal spark of inspiration give us some food for thought here. Sure, these epics tell the tales of heroes reacting to what happens around them - their *adventures*, in the truest sense of the word - but also go beyond this simple adventuring pattern: each mythic hero has his own agenda, the true motivation behind his actions and the deeper reason why the adventures happen around the character – remember, Odysseus was just trying to get back home when he encountered Circe, Sirens, Cyclops and the adventures associated with them.

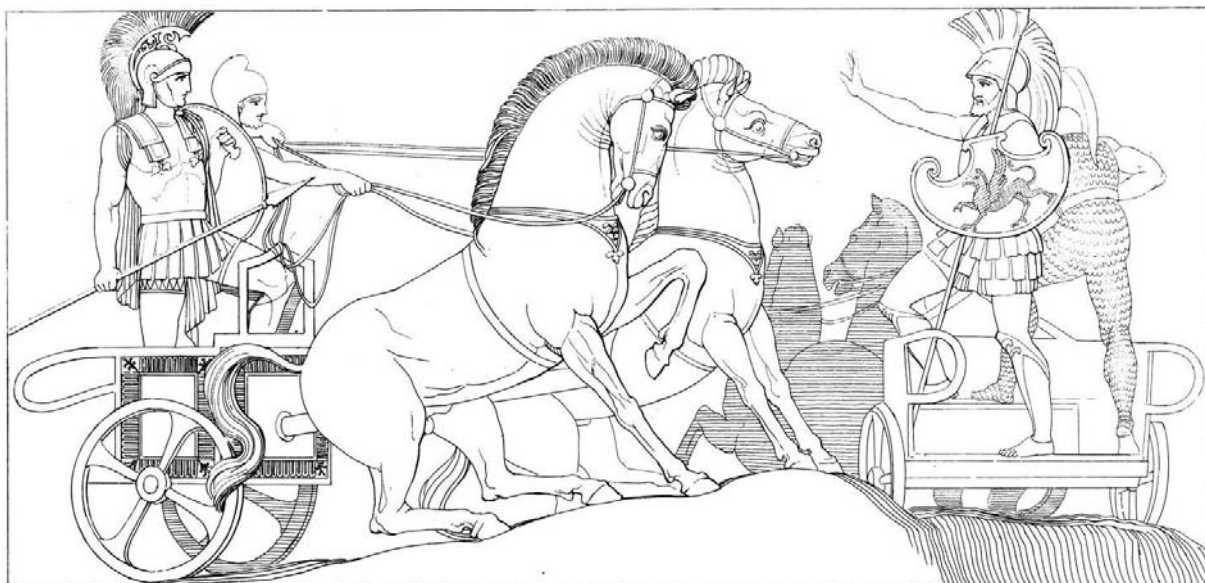
The goal of this article is to present a rules-light, character-related and lightly meritocratic advancement system for M&M adventurers, by adding some extra touches of personal background and character history to the character creation system and by using these elements in play, using Luke G. Reynard's alternate *Adventures & Advancement* rules as a basic framework.

This variant approach to character advancement increases the “sandbox” aspect of M&M adventuring while giving an extra sense of purpose to the characters' adventures, since it allows them to combine collective quests and expeditions with the pursuit of more personal goals.

This system also rewards players' creativity, giving them a chance to weave their own ideas into the background of a campaign, and replaces the Maze Master's bookkeeping duty with a more creative approach to story-building, while providing him with a powerful tool for creating adventures.

Personal Goals

When creating your adventurer, you should think about the character's overall motivation and choose his personal goal. This personal goal does not necessarily represent the ultimate motivation of the character, but rather his current objective, his first step on the path of his destiny. Ideally, a character's personal goal should be related to the character's background; it should also be approved by (or even defined with) the Maze Master, so that he can interweave this goal with the character's forthcoming adventures.



Character Advancement: The Two Approaches

- Get out of the way, you railroading, old school collectivist! I've got a personal goal to achieve!
- Maybe so – but first, you've got an adventure to complete! I'm talking serious Glory points and mythic items here!

Once a personal goal has been chosen and validated, the Maze Master gives it a difficulty value, ranging from 1 to 5, reflecting how hard the quest is likely to be. An especially easy quest, such as *go to the Akademia and talk to Adryas*, will have a difficulty of 1, while something far more ambitious or heroic, such as *holding back the Umbrian army with my hundred hoplites until reinforcements arrive* may qualify for a value of 5. Such a high value should, however, remain the exception rather than the rule, and most personal goals will have a value of 2 or 3.

When your hero achieves his current personal goal, he immediately gains a number of Legend points equal to its value. If somehow you fail a goal (for example, the sister you are trying to save dies) you cannot choose a new one until the adventure is over. This also applies when a character decides (or is forced) to give up his current personal goal.

Character Advancement

Instead of accumulating Glory, Wisdom or Experience points, player-characters advance by accumulating Legend points. Legend points represent a mix of renown, destiny and personal accomplishment and are gained by completing adventures and achieving personal goals.

The number of Legend points a character needs to gain a new level is equal to 5 times this level. Thus, it would take 10 Legend points to reach level 2, then 15 more to reach level 3, and so on. Reaching the supreme level of 6 would require 30 Legend points - corresponding to an accumulated total of exactly 100 points (10 + 15 + 20 + 25 + 30).

Legend points can be gained in two ways:

Collective Achievement: This occurs when the group successfully completes an adventure or quest. In this case, each member of the group receives 1 Legend point (or 2 in the case of an especially difficult or perilous major adventure).

Personal Achievement: This occurs when the character completes one of his personal goals and can bring a character from 1 to 5 Legend points, depending on the magnitude of the goal, as detailed above. Thus, characters will forge their own legend by accomplishing great deeds with other heroes, by fulfilling their personal destiny and by achieving their own quests, dreams and goals.

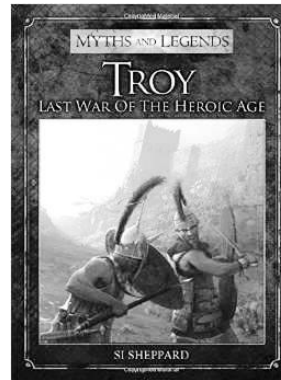
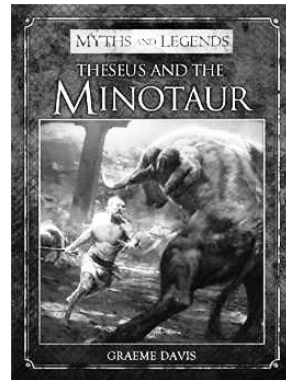
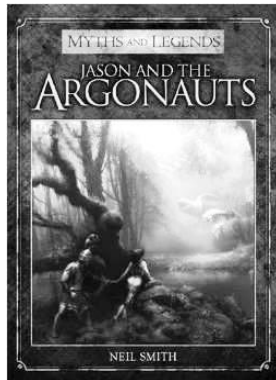
Adventure Building

In addition of emphasizing each adventurer's sense of purpose and destiny, the concept of personal goals also provides the Maze Master with a powerful dramatic tool which can be used in multiple ways. The most obvious one is to combine the overall objective of a scenario with the personal goals of one (or several) of the characters, making the adventurer's personal quest coincide with some greater, adventure-oriented goal – but a character's personal objectives may also interact with a predetermined plot in different ways, as a minor diversion, as a major plot interference or even as a dilemma or conflict of objectives – creating a richer, drama-based structure for the campaign.

F. A. Domene & Dorian Greville

Muse's Corner

Books, Movies and Other Sources of Inspiration for M&M players and Maze Masters



Recommended Reading

Osprey Publishing has a well-established reputation in the field of beautifully illustrated and expertly researched books about historical wars, battles, armies and uniforms.

More recently, it has begun to expand its editorial line into more mythical territories, with an *Osprey Adventure* label which includes a *Myths & Legends* collection of 80-page, 18.6 x 24.9 cm, fully-illustrated books on topics like Robin Hood, the knights of the round table, Charlemagne's paladins, dragons, wizards and, of course, Greek myth – a field of particular interest to M&M enthusiasts – with no less than three books on the subject: **Jason and the Argonauts**, **Troy** and (written by RPG luminary Graeme Davis) **Theseus and the Minotaur**.

Each book contains a detailed but very accessible account of these epic stories, including some lesser known episodes and (especially in the case of *Theseus and the Minotaur*) later adaptations or alternate versions; the 80-page format allows the authors to explore their subject in detail, without losing focus or embarking the reader on academic digressions, making these books the ideal addition to more encyclopedic collections of mythic tales.

As you've come to expect from Osprey, these three books are lavishly illustrated with original artwork (including some full-page color plates), as well as with pictures from a variety of sources, including maps, stills from movies, photographs of ancient sculptures and mosaics and classic BW illustrations.

With their clear, no-nonsense mix of storytelling and source material, these three books are ultra-recommended reading to all Maze Masters and M&M players who wish to refresh, deepen or broaden their knowledge of these legendary tales.

Recommended Viewing

The Jim Henson workshop gave us (among other things) the Muppet Show, a pair of fantastic 1980s movies (*Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth*) and the utterly brilliant sci-fi series *Farscape* – but back in 1990, it also gave us a wonderful TV mini-series called **Storyteller – the Greek Myths**, available on DVD (actually a spin-off of the more folklore-oriented main series *The Storyteller*, also available on DVD).

The single Greek Myths DVD includes four episodes of 24 minutes each: *Theseus and the Minotaur*, *Perseus and the Gorgon*, *Orpheus and Eurydice* and *Daedalus and Icarus*. The four standalone episodes are united by a common framing device in the person of (wait for it) a storyteller, played by the great Michael Gambon, and his talking dog (whose voice is that of Brian Henson himself).

With their short duration and their focus on storytelling, these episodes are not epic movies full of spectacular Hollywood FX, but clever, beautifully-crafted retellings, in a mythopoetic vein very rarely seen on TV. And as you might expect from the makers of *Dark Crystal* and *Farscape*, the mythic creatures are very well done, in the usual Henson style (animated puppets, actors with massive make-up and no CGI); like the fantastic stop-motion creatures of Ray Harryhausen, the Hensons' creations have a unique magic of their own – and one that speaks deeply and dearly to every true Minotaurian heart.

Last but not least, the cast features some stellar actors, including the great Derek Jacobi himself as Daedalus and an excellent Lindsay Duncan (remember her as Servilia in HBO's *Rome*?) as Ariadne. A must watch for all M&M enthusiasts – and an ideal way to introduce younger viewers to those fantastic tales.



Music for Mythika!

As many players and GMs know, a good soundtrack can add a lot of atmosphere to a roleplaying game session – and *Mazes & Minotaurs* is no exception to the rule! So for all you musical Maze Masters and Minotaurians out there, here is a selection of nine great movie soundtracks with the M&M vibe!

Jason and the Argonauts (Bernard Hermann)

The soundtrack of the 1963 movie, full of dramatic drums, bombastic brass and haunting harps, with a few festive flutes here and there. The epic bits are excellent, but it is in the darker, creepier pieces, such as the themes of Talos the Titan or the Hydra's Teeth, that Hermann's genius really shines.

Clash of the Titans (Laurence Rosenthal)

The soundtrack of the original *Clash of the Titans* (1981) clearly tried to emulate the style and feel of the 1963 *Jason and the Argonauts* soundtrack but was somewhat less inspired than Hermann's classic score. It has its moments, though, and will definitely infuse your sessions with a nice 1980s retro feel.

Clash of the Titans (Ramin Djawadi)

The terrible 2010 remake of our beloved cult classic actually had a very good musical score, with a very rich and epic atmosphere – and it should come as no surprise, since the composer is none other than Ramin Djawadi, who made the awesome soundtrack of HBO's *Game of Thrones* TV series.

300 (Tyler Bates)

This is Spartaaaa! A score full of badass beats, epic choirs and somber moments – especially recommended for M&M games featuring Umbrians, Heraklians and other grim, warlike peoples. Be sure to check the soundtrack of *300 – Rise of an Empire*, by one Junkie XL, for more in the same vein.

Troy (James Horner)

Classic epic stuff – this Homeric score does the job, but is clearly not Horner's more inspired work. The rejected soundtrack composed by Gabriel Yared was far more original, with a beautifully haunting theme song, but may be quite difficult to find, since it was never released officially.

Helen of Troy (Joel Goldsmith)

Back in in the first issue of the *Minotaur*, this column praised this excellent 2003 TV mini-series starring (among others) Sienna Guillory as Helen of Troy and Rufus Sewell as Agamemnon. It also has a remarkable soundtrack – far more evocative and varied than the score of the *Troy* movie.

Gladiator (Hans Zimmer & Lisa Gerrard)

Back in 2000, the soundtrack of Ridley Scott's epic movie set the new standards of the genre, with its mix of Mediterranean influences and Wagnerian grandeur (not to mention Lisa Gerrard's beautiful, haunting voice). Although its feel is definitely more Roman than Greek, it is a must-have for all musically-inclined Maze Masters!

Conan the Barbarian (Basil Poledouris)

The mother of all heroic fantasy OSTs – and one of the best movie soundtracks of all time, period. Often dark and epic, heroic and brooding, sometimes entrancing and decadent, this is the true sound of the Hyborian Age (but will work equally well with any sword-and-sandal game setting).

Conan the Destroyer (Basil Poledouris)

The soundtrack was probably the best part of this disastrous sequel. While not as inspired and masterful as the music of the original *Conan* movie, this OST has some fantastic moments – in a lighter, more "adventure movie" vein that makes it even more Mythikan than its predecessor.

O. Legrand



OFFICIAL ORACLE

Official Oracle is a semi-regular column offering answers to questions about the **Mazes & Minotaurs** game rules and how they can be interpreted in situations which are not explicitly covered in the various M&M rulebooks.

CREATURE CONCERNS



Got a question? Just ask the all-seeing floating eye!

Creatures & Psychic Powers

How do creatures with Psychic Powers regain their Power points? I could not find an answer to this question in the description of the Psychic Powers ability (Maze Masters Guide, p. 20), nor anywhere else in the rules, for that matter. Is this an oversight or have I missed something?

You're right – this IS an oversight, which should probably have been addressed for quite some time.

During a typical M&M adventure, this question will only matter if the adventurers encounter the same creature with Psychic Powers several times within a reasonably short time span (such as a single day), with enough time between two encounters to allow the creature to recover a part or the totality of its expended Power points..

As a rule of thumb, assume that a creature with Psychic Powers recovers a number of Power points equal to its Psychic Gift for each two full hours of sleep (for Folks and Monsters) or complete inactivity (for Spirits).

Thus, an Empusa with Psychic Powers (Psychic Gift 5) would recover 5 Power points per 2 hours of complete inactivity and could thus replenish her maximum total of 20 Power points in 8 hours.

The Eunotaur Parapraxis

In issue 7 (p. 45), the description of the Eunotaur states that "Eunotaurs are to Minotaurs what bulls are to oxen." Shouldn't it be the other way around or have I missed something?

You're perfectly right. Since, as their name implies, Eunotaurs are eunuch Minotaurs, the sentence should actually read: "Eunotaurs are to Minotaurs what oxen are to bulls." Sorry for this pathetic typo, which may well have been some kind of Freudian slip (known as a "parapraxis" among the pedantic scholars of Mythika).

Awards for Tiny Creatures

How come that Myrmidons, Rhabdosians and Muscusii don't have a Wisdom award of 10, since they all have Supernatural Vigor? Is this a typo? An oversight? Some special exception?

It is not a typo, but a special exception that should have been explained somewhere but obviously did not. The reasoning is that you should never get any Wisdom points from a Tiny creature's Supernatural Vigor, since its effects really are negligible (we are talking about +1 Hit here). But you are free to ignore this clause if you so wish.

Creatures & Poisons

According to the description of the Poison special ability in the Maze Masters Guide (p. 20), the Physical Vigor saving roll of the victim is always made against a target number of 15. I don't find this very realistic, since it can easily make some high-level warriors almost immune to such attacks. Shouldn't the potency of such a poison vary from one creature to another?

Why not? Keep in mind, however, that the Mazes & Minotaurs rules were never designed to be 'realistic' but to simulate the kind of heroic and fantastic adventures found in mythic legends, fantasy stories and movies. Also remember that, since minor NPCs never get to make Physical Vigor saving rolls, the Poison ability remains an extremely effective (and often deadly) mode of attack against mere mortals; only heroes and major NPCs can enjoy the "virtual immunity" you are mentioning.

That being said, if you really want to make some poisonous creatures more dangerous, you can easily do so by increasing the required target number of the victim's Physical Vigor saving roll, using the following optional rule.

The target number of the victim's Physical Vigor roll represents the potency of the creature's poison. Instead of always being equal to 15, this starting potency of 15 is increased by +1 for each of the following abilities: Large or Gigantic, Supernatural Vigor, Regeneration.

Thus, a monster will all three characteristics (such as a Chimera or a Stygian Serpent) would have a potency of 18 instead of the usual 15.

Note that these bonuses only apply to natural venoms; if the Poison ability reflects poisoned arrows or weapons (or the artificial contraptions of some Animates) its potency simply remains at 15.

Here is a list of all the creatures with the Poison ability described in the Creature Compendium, ranked according to their poisonous potency:

15 = All creatures with poisoned weapons.

16 = Daughter of Arachne, Giant Scorpion, Giant Spider, Scorpion Folk

17 = Giant Snake (if poisonous), Lamia, Manticore, some Dragons.

18 = Chimera, Stygian Serpent, some Dragons.

Can poison be used to kill creatures?

Yes. Keep in mind, however, that preparing and even using poison properly is not an everyman's skill. The description of the Assassin class in this issue's Griffin Archives gives some useful guidelines on the matter of poison use and preparation.

Also keep in mind that creatures with Supernatural Vigor are completely immune to the effects of non-magical poisons (which does include quite a lot of Monsters) as are, obviously, Insubstantial creatures, making poison only useful against natural Beasts, humans and the less vigorous Folks.

In addition, the creature's Size should also be taken into account: it will probably take a massive dose of poison to affect a Gigantic or even a Large creature.

Since Centaurs in the Creature Compendium are given the Supernatural Vigor special ability, this makes them immune to natural poisons – does this also apply to Centaur player-characters?

Yes – it would make no sense otherwise. Immunity to natural poisons is an unmentioned side-benefit of the Centaur class. And while we're on the subject, this should apply to Nymphs too.

(If you worry that this extra benefit will upset game balance, then you should ~~really get a life~~ keep in mind that both Centaurs and Nymphs also suffer some significant drawbacks: their hybrid anatomy prevents Centaurs from engaging in all sorts of "normal", bipedal activities (such as, say, climbing) and Nymphs only get a single background talent when ALL other characters have TWO.)

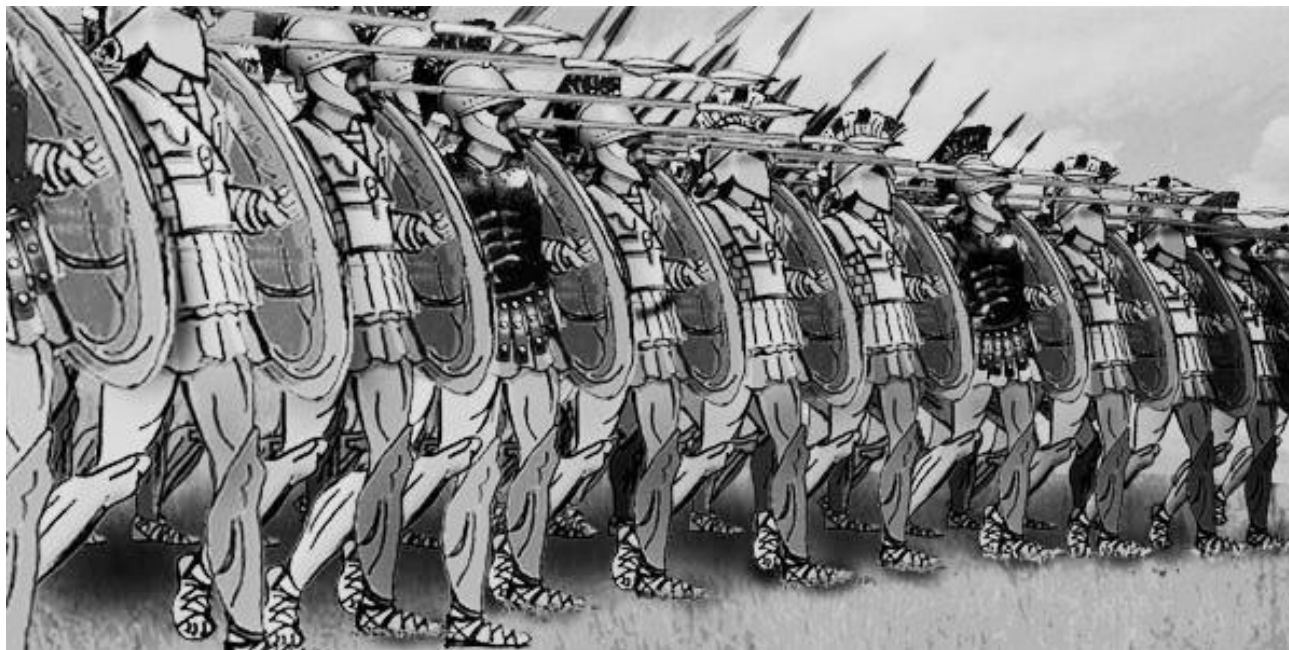
To get back to the subject at hand, immunity to natural poisons should also apply to all nonhuman player-character classes based on creatures with the Supernatural Vigor ability – which includes Tritons (see our first issue or the Triremes & Tritons supplement), Satyrs (see our last issue) Uroks (see issue 7) and some of the classes from this issue's article on Beastmen characters (see p. 46): Acteon Champions, Rogue Ursids and Royal Leonids but not Orycter Paladins, Newtling Rangers or Ubasti Vagabonds.

Minotaur Play Nymph n°12



Minotaure Posant, by Lyonart (2004)

THE LAST SHIELD WALL



Before we close this final issue of our beloved MINOTAUR, I'd like to give a Hearty Minotaurian Salute to all those who contributed to the webzine and the life of the MAZES & MINOTAURS RPG over the last eight years. So, without further ado, I bring you the M&M Grand Hall of Undying Gratitude. My most sincere thanks to the following people (and my humblest apologies to those I may have forgotten):

Paul Elliott, the opener of the bronze gates, who dreamed up the concept of M&M back in 2002.

Luigi Castellani, who gave us some fantastic covers and (among other things) the first *Twist in the Maze*.

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Kevin Scrivner, explorer of the mysterious East and grand master of the Tritonian Games.

Erik Sieurin, master of subsystems and M&M's own original Old School Grumpy Grogard.

Andrew Trent, master storyteller of Atlantis and writer of our own classic trilogy.

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Sergio Mascarenhas, expert game critic, for his enthusiasm and priceless advice, **Jeff Rients** and **Spinachcat** for their enthusiastic support and tireless promotion of M&M around the web.

To all of you: SHIELD WALL!

Signed: Olivier Legrand (aka Igor A. Rivendell, Danielle R. Virgo, Dorian Greville and, on some occasions, Luke G. Reynard too).