

# EARTH DAWN



Tableau Infractus #4



# TABLEAU INFRACTUS

*All name-givers are created equally? Ha! What an ill-informed concept.*

•Icehiar, Skyraider captain•

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*Issue 4, Summer 2010*

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**Tableau Infractus**  
**An Earthdawn Fanzine**

**How to contact me:**  
**Dru1138@ yahoo.com**

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## CREDITS

Writing  
Andrew Tobin  
Design

Andrew Tobin  
Cover Artwork:  
David Martin

*Dragons*  
*1<sup>st</sup> edition*  
*(used with permission)*

Cover Design  
Andrew Tobin

Internal Artwork:

All internal derivative artwork by Andrew Tobin.  
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*This is a work by a fan for fans.*

*In short please don't litigate against me.*

Volume #1 Issue #4 Earthdawn Tableau Infractus

## AUTHOR'S CORNER

Slavery in any fantasy setting is a tricky concept. The idea that one person has the right to own another person is so denigrated in modern society it can be difficult to understand why such a concept is included in a game. Let me purpose that slavery is not only good for your fantasy setting but desirable. Here are some ideas to add into your game framework, if you should want to of course. I have classified them as **Right, Wrong, Public, Disciplinary,** and **Protective.**

**Right:** Historically there was a common idea in many countries, that idea being there is an innate right to own individuals of a lower class than one's self. This idea provided permanent servants to even the lowest classes, the rich could own the poor and the poor could own the homeless. The homeless spent their time avoiding being owned. People that owned the slave never considered that what they were doing was wrong. Perfectly good people owned slaves. That one person was as good as any other and deserved to be treated with dignity and respect simply because they were a thinking being, was an alien and dangerous concept. It was the concept that allowed the idea of a single person's freedom to develop. The Anti-slavery campaign works very well in this framework.

**Wrong:** The idea that slavery is wrong is a "civilized" idea. That nobody should ever own another person is offensive and grounds for combat on every level. This is the "standard" of most fantasy games. Slavery is never mentioned except to show that the slaver is "The Bad Guy".

**Public:** Slaves that build for the benefit of a society. They are fed, housed, clothed and the like, essentially supported by the governing powers. These slaves are the type least likely to fight against their "masters".

Yes they toil, and they do not have the rights of citizens, but they also never worry about their needs not being met. This system of slavery is one of the most difficult to try and break and therefore a worthy campaign for players.

**Disciplinary:** The threat of being thrown into slavery is often a very good deterrent to breaking laws. "Criminals" are most likely to fight being captured and tossed into slavery. In this setting the slave is the lowest form of life. A slave that is starved and maltreated is common. The general populace recognizes the unpleasantness of slavery and saves it for the least accepted portion of society. This is also a difficult form of slavery to attempt to break because it is in the best interest of the population to keep it going.

**Protective:** The least common form of slavery and can be viewed as "benevolent". In this system the slaver has great power because of political pull, military strength, wealth or magic. This individual keeps their slaves healthy. Treats them well and provides for their wellbeing. This is done because the slaves are in danger of being hurt or destroyed. The benevolent slaver takes great pains to prevent the slaves from recognizing their situation as slavery. The individual slave is easily manipulated especially if they are young and born into the situation. The older the slave and the longer they have been in the care of the slaver the harder it will be to get them to renounce their captivity.

I have included a version of the public slave in my Earthdawn setting for Iopos ([see issue 2](#)). The background for the troll sky raiders has a version of slavery that fits well within the protective slaver concept. Thera supports the idea of the right to own and the disciplinary slave. Throal is of course firmly against any version of slavery.



## THE STRATUM OF POWER

*The city of Iopos and the house of Denairastas understand and acknowledge that all name-givers are masters of their own soul. The city of Iopos and the house of Denairastas would then amend the council compact to include that all name-givers are in complete control of what happens to their soul. This is not to be construed that the body of a name-giver is an extension of that soul. If that were the case then the soul of any name-giver with a deformed body would be a deformed soul. Because the city of Iopos and the house of Denairastas do not accept the idea of a deformed soul, other than in a horror, the council compact is lacking in its ability to lay claim to the idea that slavery, when used appropriately, is inherently destructive to society...*

*-Excerpt from Iopos' response to Throal regarding the Council Compact-*

Iopos is a city populated by many name-givers of many diverse backgrounds. These variations of capability are capitalized upon by Iopos in an effort to create a more perfect society for everyone. As it is our responsibility here at The Library of Enlightenment, we have attempted to place these variations in their appropriate societal context.

### NAME-GIVERS

*These are individuals of no magical capability, but are full of life, strength of character and passion. They are the most predominant citizens of our nation.*

Every city in Barsaive, perhaps throughout the world, counts these people as their most numerous and vocal members. These are the common folks that are seen every day plying their trades and selling their wares. There is not a single facet of any city, town or village that does not depend heavily on the name-giver that has no magical ability.

Some of the greatest thinkers and philosophers of any age have been name-givers without magic. Artists that cannot cast a spell or draw power from the astral plane can still stun a viewer with the work that they display.

Skill is the strength of the average name-giver. Through determination and skill greatness can be made from the most humble beginnings.

Yet it has been shown that a non-magical name-giver by their vary nature can, and will,

perform miraculous acts. Such as having a child and then naming said child. The act of creation is a form of magic that Nethermancers throughout the centuries have attempted to replicate.



It is said that it was the name-givers that named the passions and gave them form. The act of naming the passions created them and bestowed upon them the powers that they in turn use in the interest of name-givers. That without the name-giver the world would be a barren and unforgiving place.



## Non-Magical Name-Givers

### Attributes

All attributes for a Non-Magical name-giver are generated the same way as for any player character.

Or consider an average value for each attribute and then vary it by up to 3 point either positive or negative, this will provide a very wide selection of options.

### Characteristics

All characteristics for a Non-Magical name-giver are consistent with their race. If the race has Astral Site then the Non-Magical name-giver will also have astral sight.

### Skill Rules for Non-Magical Name-givers

Because the non-magical name-giver cannot follow a discipline they spend their time building their skills. To represent this dedication to their various skill based lives they have a slightly faster learning curve for skills. This means that a non-magical name-giver will master their skills faster than an adept.

	Training Weeks	Applying Weeks
Rank1	1	2
Rank2	2	2
Rank3	3	4
Rank4	4	7
Rank5	5	11
Rank6	6	18
Rank7	7	29
Rank8	8	46
Rank9	9	76
Rank10	10	

### Interaction Options

Non-magical name-givers interact with each other without issue generally. Most treat any name-giver with magical ability with a level of caution. The following table presents options to consider when non-magical name-givers are faced with a magic wielding name-giver.

	Non-Magical Namegiver Attitude
Same Race	Positive
Same Gender	Neutral
Opposite Sex	Positive
Adept	Guarded
Cultist	Very Guarded (Assumed known)
Lightbearer	Cautious (Assumed known)
Grim Legion	Very Guarded
Questor	Positive
Mad Questor	Very Negative
Slave	Neutral (dependant on nation)

## Using Non-magical Name-givers

## in Your Game

The basic name-giver forms the mass of the population. They are everywhere and are involved in everything.

Consider that a Moot of Trolls is not just a few adepts with a bunch of non-player characters. Rather they are a collection of driven individuals that have to face a harsh climate and survive together. Their actions should take this into consideration.

Non-magical name-givers are not generally adventurers. They live in their towns and cities, surviving as they have for generations. Choosing their mates from the groups they know, and raising their children in the same locations where they were raised. They will rarely move beyond their natural sphere of influence.

They have the time to dedicate to their choice of skills. A non-magical name-giver can begin their apprenticeship in their skill just after the time of their maturity. One that is dedicated to their skill can master it in about five years of continuous effort. For example: A human at the age of fifteen years elects to become an alchemist. By the age of twenty years this person could have mastered the skill, though they would be hard pressed to do anything else.

Generally it is a small selection of individuals that make decisions that affect the entire group. Often fear is a motivating factor for a group where it is not a motivator for an individual. Realize that a large crowd of fearful non-magical name-givers can overpower any adept if they feel threatened enough.

Two thoughts are dominant in the non-magical name-giver. "There is safety in large numbers" and "that which I don't understand is a threat". Most will never know that these thoughts are motivators. Some do know and have worked hard to rid themselves of it.



## SANCTIONED ADEPTS

*Excerpt donated from the training manual of The Holders of Trust.*

Congratulations! Your selection for training with The Holders of Trust is an acknowledgement by your fellow citizens of your potential to help Iopos and everyone that is protected by the Malachite Throne.

You have been selected to participate in adept training because of the aptitude you displayed during the selection. As an adept in the service of the Holders of Trust you will have numerous responsibilities. Upon your release from training you're your priorities will be...

- 1) Protect Uhl Denairastas and his line.
- 2) Protect the Malachite Throne.
- 3) Protect The Holders of Trust.
- 4) Protect Iopos and all Iopan Interests.
- 5) Protect Iopan Citizenry from all threats internal or external.

These priorities will be your focus during your service in the Holders of Trust. The cynical name-giver will comment "That service in The Holders of Trust is for life." This is true, what makes that a cynical statement is that it assumes you are here against your will. Every citizen participates in the selection with an understanding of the necessity for the defense of Iopos, and their loved ones. A life of service to keep your loved ones and Iopos safe is a laudable existence.

As an adept in The Holders of Trust you will receive training in a discipline that is needed by Iopos and appropriate to your personality. This training will be at no expense to you and your family will be free of financial duty during that time.

Each circle that you attain will be celebrated by The Holders of Trust. You will be assigned a mentor to teach you your new circle and you will in-turn be expected to mentor lower circle members. In this way

you will build trust and understanding with all members of the Holders of Trust and the citizenry of Iopos.



Many foreign adepts visit Iopos on a regular basis. Each of these visitors is to be monitored without excuse or exception. Adepts from foreign nations pose a unique opportunity and threat at the same time.

They threaten our continued stability by attempting to undermine our structured and ordered lives. Iopos is a city of great strength, wealth and pride. There are other nations that desire to bring about our downfall and will attempt to use their loyal adepts to achieve these goals.

The opportunity to study the adepts of a foreign power is not to be squandered. Understanding what is important to them, what motivates them and what we can expect from them is key to knowing how to defeat them.

As a Holder of Trust you will be the first, last and only defense for Uhl Denairastas, Iopos, and all the citizenry of our great nation. Welcome to the rest of your life.



## Adepts

This section is not intended for a player character though a player may develop some ideas from it.

A Game Master may benefit from applying the following concepts to their primary non-player characters, and their random encounter non-player characters.

### Attributes

All attributes for adepts are generated using the standard rules for character creation.

### Characteristics

All characteristics for adepts are consistent with their race using the standard rules for character creation.

### Interaction Options

Many Adepts interact with each other with caution at first. This comes from the understanding that every adept follows a discipline, and every discipline requires respect.

Most treat any name-giver without magical ability with a level of respect consistent with their station.

Adepts that are not officially allied with a particular nation are often times treated with cautious reserve and respect.

Adepts that are officially allied with a particular nation are often times treated with awe and deference by members of that nation depending on their legendary status.

The following table provides options to consider when aligned adepts are faced with non-aligned or non-hostile adepts.

	Adept Attitude
Same Race	Respectful
Same Gender	Neutral
Opposite Sex	Positive
Cultist	Negative (Assumed known)
Lightbearer	Respectful (Assumed known)
Grim Legion	Respectfully Guarded
Questor	Positive
Slave	Neutral (dependant on nation)

Slave adepts are a possibility. Simply by preventing an adept from performing their karma ritual, a slaver can drain the capabilities of an adept and force them into servitude. There is precedence for this concept, J'role, Releanna, and Ania were all slaves at one time in their stories.

## Using Adepts in Your Game

In Earthdawn every player character is an adept. This is a basic tenant of the game. Non-player characters can also be adepts and they can make some of the most interesting adversaries.

Reoccurring adversarial adepts or friendly nemesis adepts can provide many plot links and story hooks. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes and Moriarty are classic example of reoccurring adversaries. While Sega games Sonic and Knuckles are good examples of friendly nemesis, where each party is after the same result while trying to out do the other.

Over all adepts are held in a strange mix of awe, reverence, and fear by non-magical name-givers. It was adepts that designed and reinforced the kaers that allowed the populations of name-givers to survive the scourge.

Individuals known to be adepts are given a wide berth in towns and cities. Because of their relative rarity, adepts are monitored by governing authorities when it is possible. It would not due to have an unregistered living weapon in your city.

By their nature adepts are strong willed. It is possible that this is a reason so many of them take up adventuring. Of course in some the drive is to protect individuals that are not as capable as the adept. In others the drive is to dominate what may be viewed as a lesser species of name-giver.

Once an adept is trained, the training never fully goes away. The understanding is always there. Though an adept may suffer from talent crisis they will never lose being an adept. Some examples of this are Ania who spent years living alone not practicing her craft and J'role who spent years living in isolation. Each of them suffered talent crisis and yet their adept natures reasserted themselves.



## CULTISTS AND THEIR WAYS

*Even in our most enlightened of cities we suffer a malady. Long before the scourge this malady existed and it is possible that as long as there are name-givers it will continue to exist. This malady has a strange attraction to the weak minded and easily mislead. The only cure proven to work is to cut out the infection and destroy it completely. This malady is benignly referred to as legend cults.*

--- Ji'hanis in a public forum before the Malachite Throne.

Cultists are not illegal in Iopos. The law provides that, as long as private associations do not participate in activities that negatively affect the Denairastas family or Iopan interest, they will be left unmolested by the Holders of Trust. However, acknowledged cultists may not maintain any public office or participate in cult activities within Iopan national boundaries.

Cultists that defy these laws are subject to imprisonment, forced public labor, or forced removal from the nation of Iopos. In very extreme cases re-naming of cultists has been performed by high ranking Denairastas family magicians.

Some very particular cults are welcome in the nation of Iopos. Uhl's Children and Treasures of Tomorrow are all two of these cults that are accepted by the people of Iopos. These cults enjoy a freedom that other cults do not, in that their practices are not discouraged by the Holders of Trust. In fact members of Uhl's children can be found within the copper ranks of the Holders of Trust.

Iopos as a nation has been accused by the

expansionistic former lapdogs of the Theran Empire, the Throal Kingdom, of mindlessly following our Denairastas leaders. It is obvious that since Throal broke away from Thera, it has attempted to cement it's version of law across Barsaive. Though our valiant Holders of Trust protect Iopos and her citizens, the whispering campaign of Throal forces them to be very cautious of private membership groups. It is this caution that prevents spies from Throal and Thera from fomenting dissidence within our nation.



Some cultist groups participate in the political intrigues that can be found in many small villages around Barsaive. When this type of behavior is discovered in Iopan controlled lands it is discouraged. By removing the offending cultists from the villages the Holders of Trust help to keep peace and harmony through out the nation.

Ever vigilant citizens provide information to the Holders of Trust when they believe a cult that is dangerous has taken root in their communities. Many examples exist of the power members of these cults can attain through the use of blood magic. It is this knowledge that is the motivating factor for the public support for the laws of Iopos.

When a new cult is located it is monitored and its true goals are determined. Should these goals be diametrically opposed to the best interest of the Denairastas or Iopos the cult will be eradicated. If it is determined that the new cult is benign it's members will be served with a writ explaining the laws of Iopos and the expectations that the cult members are required to follow.



## Cultists

### Attributes and Characteristics

All attributes and characteristics for Cultists are consistent with their race using the standard rules for character creation.

### Uhl's Children

This is a simple cult that draws on the popular Iopan idea that Uhl is an immortal. Their belief can be summed up in the following common prayer.

*Belief in Uhl leads to Enlightenment.*

*Faith in Uhl leads to Hope.*

*Understanding of Uhl leads to Solace.*

*Participation in Uhl leads to Prosperity.*

*Trust in Uhl leads to Protection.*

### The benefit of Uhl's Children

Any member of Uhl's Children that interacts with any other member of Uhl's Children gains a single step bonus in all tests regardless of the type of test.

### Treasures of Tomorrow

Leading cultists of the Treasures of Tomorrow are members of the Gold branch of the Holders of Trust. This is not common knowledge. The cult acts as an independent group, scouring Barsaive for ancient pre-scourge artifacts. Their public and low ranking members believe that the cult's interests are for preservation of knowledge and for the betterment of tomorrow for the future generations.

### High Ranking Treasure of Tomorrow Ability

When making interaction tests High Ranking individuals gain a success level for every five members present. This applies to interaction with individuals that are not part of the cult.

### Low Ranking Treasure of Tomorrow Ability

When making research tests Low Ranking individuals gain a success level for every five members present.

## Using Cultists in Your Game

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Cultists are just like any other name-giver in that they may or may not be an adept. Players are not encouraged to be cultists regardless of the positives that may come from being associated with a cult.

Focused religion is not a common occurrence in Earthdawn as the pantheon is based on the passions of name-givers. Individual name-givers that place the strength of their belief into some other power can easily become consumed with their

desire to share their concept with others. Proselytizing a cult is a good method of getting forcibly removed from a city or village.

Not all nations of Barsaive and the world are open to such ideas. Many actively attempt to repress cultists of certain faiths due to their anti-nationalist bent. Some examples of these cults are, The Hand of Corruption, The Keys of Death, and the Crown Breakers.

Cultists from provinces other than Barsaive may be misunderstood or mistreated depending on their particular beliefs. The followers of the Passion Prima, or The-One-Who-Is-Yet-To-Come are hotly deterred in most of the cities and rural communities in Barsaive.

Players that learn of a cult's activities may want to keep that information to themselves depending on the "apparent" goals of the cult. Most of the cities in Barsaive would like to know about the goings on in the cult circles within their borders. Cults generally do not want their private information shared with anyone.

Should a player wish to join a cult be certain to remind them that by being a cultist they are setting up a possible character crisis later in the campaign. Then at some point a few games later you supply that crisis. Have a high ranking member of the player's cult request the player to perform their cult required duties in a manner that might expose the cult and the group to the authorities.

When any name-giver, adept or not, becomes a cultist they must perform the blood oath rituals that will tie them to the cult and give them the special abilities of that cult. For example the cult for the Passion Prima cult requires the members to sacrifice livestock and swear their loyalty regularly. The only claimed benefit of this action is to remain in Prima's good graces.



## QUESTORS OF THE PASSIONS

*Many cultists have claimed to be Questors for their beliefs. All name-givers know the truth of a Questor for the passions leave no doubt.*

*--- Ji'hanis in a public forum before the Malachite Throne.*

Here in Iopos we have faith in the Passions, the Denairastas, and ourselves. We know the truths of the Passions and the Fallen Three. Every name-giver can feel the passions. Living life, is existing in the presence of the passions. No facet of life is untouched by them. Here in Iopos all of our Questors are held in high esteem for they are our living, breathing representatives for the passions.

Oft repeated legends are the attempts of people that have never experienced an act of heroism, to feel the passions that a hero must feel. They are the vessels that are used to teach a name-giver the correct way to direct their passions.

Questors are the living embodiment of the passion that has chosen them. They live every day in a manner consistent with the concepts of their passion. Even the most trivial action taken by a Questor will betray the deep reverence that they maintain for their passion.



The Passion's Pavilion rings the seat of authority in Iopos, the palace of the Malachite Throne. Each passion has a Tower Temple that is maintained and occupied at all times by their various Questors. The exception to this is of course the Tower Temples of the Fallen Three.

Each Questor in Iopos performs their roll for the betterment of the citizenry at large.

National songs, murals and entertainment houses are all contributions provided by the Questors of Astendar.

Every Trade House in Iopos owes their continued existence to the Grand Market and the organized Chorrolis Questors.

The various feast days and festivals are purview of the Questors of Floranuus, with each Questor attempting to out do the others.

Because of the dedication of Crimson Cross, Garlen's healing touch is felt throughout the nation of Iopos and beyond.

The sustenance farms, apiaries and linen fields all gain benefit from the attentions of Questors of Jaspree.

Some would think there was no place for Lochost in a civilized society, yet this passion is felt in the trading caravans, airship corps and explorer branches of the Holders of Trust.

Iopos' system of laws wielding the Holders of Trust as the instruments of justice, hinges on the teachings of Questors of Mynbruje.

The Questors of Thystonius out number all others in the ranks of the Holders of Trust Expeditionary Forces.

Questors of Upandal assist in the design of everything from new buildings to the design of internal societal support methods.



## Questors

### Attributes and Characteristics

All attributes and characteristics for Questors are consistent with their race using the standard rules for Questor character creation.

### Non-Magical Name-Giver Questors

Characters that are not adepts but have chosen to become Questors still gain the benefits of being a Questor of their passion.

Because they are non-magical name-givers the optional rules for skills would still apply (see page 4).

### Questor Cultists

It is not inconceivable that a Questor might find a cult that shares enough of the same basic beliefs that the Questor also joins the cult.

If a Questor becomes a cultist then the character gains the advantages and disadvantages of both the Questor concept and the cultist concept.

The Cultist Questor will suffer a Questor Crisis and lose all Questor abilities if they should participate in any action that is counter to their dedicated passion. This loss of ability will continue until the Questor can perform an adequate penance.

### Questor Interaction Options

The following table provides options to consider when aligned Questors are faced with non-hostile name-givers.

	Questor Attitude
Same Nation	Positive
Same Race	Positive
Same Gender	Positive
Opposite Sex	Positive
Cultist	Neutral (Assumed known)
Lightbearer	Neutral (Assumed known)
Grim Legion	Guarded
Questor	Positive
Slave	Neutral (dependant on nation)

### Questors in Iopos

All Questors, even foreign ones, in Iopos gain a bonus success level when interacting with the common populace. This bonus ceases if the Questor is publicly denounced as a threat.

When dealing with Silver Rank or above members of the Holders of Trust there is no interaction bonus.

All Questors, even foreign ones, in Iopos' city limits are expected to spend at least one day of service a month in the Tower Temple that is dedicated to their passion.

## Using Questors in Your Game

Questors are just like any other name-giver in that they may or may not be an adept. Rules are currently in place for player characters to become questors.

Cultists and Questors are not the same. Questors derive there abilities from the passions where cultist derive their abilities from the focus object of their cult. Questors are welcome in every village, town and city throughout Barsaive, not so with cultists.

A Questor that has taken an oath to become a cultist must be very careful to not violate either the Passion's or the Cults tenants. Passions lose questors and rarely take vengeance on the former questor. Cults lose a member and the entire cult will conceivably hunt the way word member down.

Questors are viewed in a positive light by all of the name-givers in Barsaive. Should a Questor prove to be disreputable the story would spread very quickly. Honesty is not an aspect of all the passions so a dishonest Questor is a possibility. Such a Questor could be the target of a series of adventures.

Players wishing to be Questors should spend some time developing the appropriate behaviors of their chosen passion. Take some time and plan adventures in such a manner that would allow that player to display the passion's behaviors before ever becoming a Questor. For Example if the player wanted to be a Questor of Thystonius provide the opportunity to participate in the destruction of a slaving caravan.

When players have an opportunity to display their chosen passion allow them to do so unhindered. The passions are living entities in Earthdawn. So if the players are planning a desperate raid, a preparation ceremony complete with a personal vision of Thystonius would be very appropriate.



## THE DENAIRASTAS FAMILY

*This is a short family chronology in reference to our illustrious leading family and their great deeds throughout the history of Iopos. For a fully detailed family account a request must be sent to the Denairastas family representatives at the Palace of the Malachite Throne.*

*--- S'flint senior scribe of The Library of Enlightenment.*

The story of the Denairastas family is the story of our fair nation of Iopos. As with many great cities, several hundred years before the scourge Iopos was a small trading village. The Denairastas family was only one of the many families that farmed the land and hunted the wilds. The town of Iopos was prosperous and happy.

It is said that a Denairastas sat on the first town council. For three hundred years Iopos grew. Several of the original families became the first trade houses, developing great fortunes. The Denairastas family, having little desire for the trappings of business, cultivated their line into powerful magicians.

It was as a cadre of magicians that the Denairastas family first made their desire to protect Iopos felt. Legends say that a nation of ork scorchers began to raid small villages outside the borders of Iopos. During one of these raids a member of the Denairastas family was kidnapped. This kidnapping caused the entire of the Denairastas family to declare vengeance on the ork hordes. One week after the kidnapping the victim was returned. A scrawny, skinny, spindly ork that could barely remain on his horse escorted the victim in to town. Legends say that the Denairastas had caused the entire horde to starve and eat each other.

Another tale recounts the battle prowess of the Denairastas by their being successful at fending off a dragon that was menacing a caravan. As the story goes the caravan had seen the dragon from the distance and the Caravan master had plead to the passions to deliver him and his charges to safety. A member of the Denairastas family was with

the caravan at the time and magically sent for help from his brethren. When the dragon arrived there were fifty Denairastas magicians prepared to fight. The dragon seeing the power arrayed against it landed and parlayed with the family leader. After the parley the dragon flew away and the caravan was saved.

Perhaps a century before the scourge the Denairastas family rose to prominence in the political arena of Iopos. It is said that the family patriarch had a dream in which the earth would be blackened and that Iopos would be destroyed if no way could be found to prevent this occurrence. The kingdom of Thera arrived some time later claiming that the darkness of the Great Scourge was coming and that they had the knowledge of how to survive it. Our leader deeming the cost of survival to be high but the chances of survival without the help to be low, conceded and for the one time in its existence Iopos was beholden to a foreign power.

The Denairastas worked day and night for years to complete the citadel that would house our great city for the duration of the scourge. When it was complete and the doors were sealed against the horrors of the scourge the Denairastas were among the first volunteer defenders.

During the scourge the citadel was violated by very powerful horrors and many citizens lost their lives fighting them. It was through the strong leadership and magical skills of the Denairastas that these horrors were either destroyed or expelled from our citadel.

Today we have Uhl Denairastas as our guiding light into the future. With his unflinching leadership Iopos will become the center of all enlightenment and understanding. Neither the nobles of the Throal Kingdom nor the Havenherds of the Theran Empire can prevent this. Iopos owes much to the Denairastas and they have asked for surprisingly little in return.



## Denairastas Family

### Attributes and Characteristics

All attributes and characteristics for Denairastas family members should take into account that they are dragon-kin. The physical dragon-kin family traits are generally of the lighter, easy to hide or explain variety.

Common physical Dragon-kin traits that show up in the Denairastas family.

- 1) Small bony protrusions along the spine
- 2) Oddly colored irises
- 3) Very long or sharp finger nails
- 4) Extremely calloused skin
- 5) Notably pointed ears for a human

All members of the Denairastas family are adepts. All are human dragon-kin. All of them practice at least one magician discipline. If they practice a second it may be another magician discipline or a martial discipline.

### Players as Denairastas Extended Family

Players that wish to create characters as members of the Denairastas family must understand that they are Dragon-kin. Being of such a bloodline leaves the character open to the racial hatred that Dragons and Drakes have for Dragon-kin.

The Denairastas family is very careful about who in the family is allowed to interact with the general population of Iopos. Should a player character raise suspicion towards the family, there will be repercussions. The least of these repercussions would be a clean quick death.

All of the extended family is unaware of the full goals of the Great Dragon Denairastas. Only Uhl and some of his inner circle family are partly aware of these plans.

### Denairastas Cultists

It is not inconceivable that a member of the Denairastas family might find a cult that they believe to be useful.

If a Denairastas becomes a cultist then the character gains the advantages and disadvantages of both the Denairastas concept and the cultist concept.

The Denairastas Cultist should attempt to direct the actions of the cult to coincide with their understanding of the family's goals. To this end the Denairastas should work their way in to the position of supreme power in cults structure.

## Using the Denairastas Family in Your Game

The Denairastas are intended to be vile adversaries of heroes. They are the puppet masters of Iopos, the Holders of Trust, and many other groups.

Characters that make enemies of the ruling family of Iopos also make enemies of the great dragon Denairastas. Players that have thwarted extended family members are not enemies of the family. Players that hunted Jada during the *Prelude to War* story line are considered possible allies if they can be turned to the Denairastas' view, if not then they are a threat and must be destroyed.

Having your players provide assistance to a group of Iopan citizens is a good method of introducing them to the Iopan view of the Denairastas family. Have your players perform a great humanitarian deed in the name of Iopos. It can provide the impetus for extended family members to approach the characters with the concept of alliance.

Players that are of Iopan ancestry and are not Denairastas, will treat the ruling family with awe and reverence. These players will always side with the family regardless of how unacceptable the behavior of the Denairastas family members. Of course if the players are of Iopan ancestry then they should already be members in the copper branch of the Holders of Trust.

Denairastas Family members never become questors of Astendar, Jaspre, Lochost, or any of the Fallen Three. All family Questors are in the Golden Branch of the Holders of Trust.

Most Denairastas family members are removed from the city proper as soon as their formal training in the Holder of Trust is complete. This allows for a wide dispersal of the family's influence across all of the Iopan controlled or influenced territory.



# THIEVING, ITS NOT JUST FOR ADEPTS

Urk'nip views himself to be a very successful business troll. Urk'nip is not a thief adept. He will be the first to tell you this, and it will be the only actual truth about himself that he will share. When people ask him of his origins, he mentions that he was born in the city of Urupa. To the casual listener his accent appears to be accurate enough for a name-giver that has not lived in their home city for years. He operates a small trade house in Iopos.

In reality Urk'nip was born on the sandy beach outside the boundaries of the city of Urupa. His mother was a fish-wife and his father was a fisherman. His first years were spent surviving the rigors of troll youth in a family of five siblings.

At the age of ten summers he became restless and tired of living with his family and their meager existence. During a particularly hot afternoon when the air was thick and still, Urk'nip traveled to the city of Urupa. Alone and without any previous experience with the city Urk'nip quickly became overwhelmed. People that were not trolls, clothing that was a riot of colors, and the smells of food he had never tasted all conspired to drive home to him that he would never return to his family.



In a manner of weeks he learned that the other name-givers had a particular set of expectations about him. They expected him to be gruff, loud, aggressive and violent. His strength was obvious to anyone that looked at him, so he must be these things. He decided that if he denied these behaviors and acted in a manner completely opposite of his appearance he might succeed.

That simple decision to appear as an untamed troll and yet develop skills that would put people at ease turned out to be his path to success. He spent years playing on the fears and of others while maintaining an air of sophistication. Urk'nip learned that name-givers, when deprived of their expected interactions became rather docile and trusting. Especially if they were prepared for violence and it was revealed that had no reason to worry.

Urk'nip developed a pattern of fleecing his marks in a manner that appeared as though he were the victim. He would make business arrangements to have expensive product shipped via a caravan, then make arrangements for "something" to happen to his product. The caravan owners would be responsible and be required to reimburse him for his losses. This particular method of larceny translated well into many other scams. In a few years time Urk'nip found himself relatively well off financially.

His trade house in Iopos is relatively new but Urk'nip has faith that Chorrolis is never wrong.



## ROLE-PLAY VS ROLL-PLAY

So there we are playing our game. When one of the players decides that their favorite rule of combat is being ignored. They prepare their argument, line up their facts and arm themselves with the rules from the books. At the most inopportune time the player interrupts the game with “you know I think we are doing it wrong”. Argument ensues and the game goes right in to the toilet.

“Rules Lawyering”, is it a Role-play or Roll-play behavior and is the result worth the time it take away from the game?

Ask any rules lawyer if they provide a positive service and they will respond with an affirmative. I happen to know several excellent rules lawyers. In a Role-play game however, I find rules lawyering to be more of a detriment to the experience.

A good rules lawyer knows their chosen game’s rules. They know where to find their rules and can generally quote from the source materials. This is excellent when playing a board game or card game. Rules lawyering is an infinitely useful skill when teaching a new player how to play any game. A good rules lawyer can sometimes be consulted rather than a rulebook if house rules are a common occurrence. So a good rules lawyer has their uses.

Why will a rules lawyer participate in their particular pastime in the middle of an in opportune moment? Simple because it seems to them to be the most advantageous and appropriate time. Note the order. A rules lawyer will take center stage just to prove their point. Failure buy the game master to address the issue at that time is grounds for the rules lawyer to escalate the issue to argument level.

During a tense moment in an adventure,



or when the game master has spent time preparing the scene, these are not good times to begin to litigate the values of using a particular rule. Should your group be in the middle of an epic battle and the game master elects to not use the rules, arguing with them about it will only make the “epic” feel take second place to the awesomeness of the argument that will take place.

Generally it is when the rules lawyer feels as though their character is not receiving the appropriate bonuses or their enemy is not receiving the appropriate negatives. This feeling of loss of rules advantages places the rules lawyer directly in the realm of the Roll-player.

A simple solution to head off the rules lawyer is by stating at the beginning of the game that any disagreement is to be resolved after the session. I have found that this will have two very positive results. 1) The game will run without a hitch. 2) The rules lawyer has ample time prepare for the discussion. Often times the issues resolve themselves in a well run game.

These are the descriptions I use to pigeon-hole players.

- **Role-play:** Character driven, possible in character interaction, stats are there to support the concepts of the game.
- **Roll-play:** Stat driven, limited in character interaction, stats are there as a means to the next level.



## AN ARTIST OF RENOWN

The Earthdawn artwork has always been one of the strongest elements of the game. Most of the first and third edition covers are strong in composition and color. They do not look like every other fantasy game rulebook.

In the first edition rulebook there is a series of full page full color inserts that are very inspiring. The image of the Shadowmant is my favorite of these. I thought the coloring on it was very cool and really wanted a tattoo of it, until I was talked out of it by my girlfriend at the time. (I should have done it, I really should have.)

This issue David Martin has agreed to be interviewed and share with us some of the history of Earthdawn. He is the artist of the original full color Barsaive map from the Barsaive boxed set. He also has the dubious celebrity of being the artist for the cover of the Dragons pdf that is the landmark last release for Earthdawn by FASA. The Dragons Cover is my absolute favorite of his work and that is why it is this issues cover. The Interview was conducted over several e-mail correspondences.



**TI)** What prompted you into doing artwork for role-playing games?

*David) I've been a fan of SF and Fantasy literature since I was fifteen. I tried getting work doing covers for SF paperbacks and hardcovers and found that the work was pretty much reserved for about a half-dozen fantasy artists on the East Coast. After several years of having no success I met Steve Jackson at a local SF con and did a "Battlesuit" piece for his line. This was around 1980 or 81. His "Illuminati" game came from a suggestion I made when Steve was sitting at my house drinking his second glass of wine. I had read the trilogy of books by Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea and I knew it had a big following among the 18-24 year old crowd, which was our target audience. I remember that Steve was dubious, but he went home, read the books, wrote the rules and later that year he had his first million-dollar year in sales. I went on to do more work for him and in 1984 attended the "Origins" convention in Dallas, Texas.*

*If there is such a thing as a 'big break', then this was mine. I rented a booth at the con and made a point to speak to every major producer of games in the industry. I was the only artist at that convention and I walked away with seven new clients. I.C.E., TSR, GDW, FASA, West End, Task Force and Grenadier Magazine. Things started to roll after that, and I realized that the gaming field was completely open to new art that was effective and well-crafted. It offered an opportunity for me to actually be paid for doing what I loved. To answer your question directly, I suppose I fell into RPG games rather than deliberately set out to become an RPG artist. I liked the crowd I worked with and fortunately, they seemed to like what I did for them.*



**TI)** You have created lots of artwork work for lots of different games. Do you play those games?

*David) You may find this appalling, but I don't play RPG games. I suppose I'm an artist first, and playing games is way down the priority line. Besides, I never had time to actually play them. I was too busy painting the covers. The only one I've played is Steve Jackson's "Illuminati" game. That was when he invited me to help he and his crew playtest it. I still think it's a rocking game. Some of the conspiracies built in the game have an element of humor that I find really cool. The IRS controls the Mafia which controls the Boy Scouts, etc.*

*I do love playing electronic games and have illustrated some of those as well. I did around eleven covers for MicroProse Software, mostly military stuff which didn't interest me. I especially love CAPCOM games. I've enjoyed almost everything they've produced, especially "Resident Evil". One of their masterpieces is "Dead Rising" where you get to run through a shopping mall cutting zombies in half with a Kitana. For some real fun, try running them down with your car in the parking garage! I guess I just love socially irresponsible games.*



**TI)** The artwork from the first edition Earthdawn rulebook, particularly the color plates are some of my favorite. How did you get involved with the Earthdawn line?

*David) At the Origins con in 1984 I met the Wiseman brothers and convinced Jordan that the way to increase sales was to use slicker art on the covers. Ugly art makes the game look amateurish. Mort thought the cover wasn't important, and that they should save money by using a cheaper artist. He said this right in front of me, and although I respected his candor, I think it was Jordan who had the imagination in the family.*

*I did work for FASA for many years, and eventually they assembled their own in-house art staff. These guys were artists themselves and were very talented in their own right. If memory serves, Jim Nelson was art director when I did the cover you like. We met at a con in Chicago after already having worked together for years. I'd never met any of those guys face-to-face and took them all out to pizza so that we could find time to chat. I think the FASA crew were the most talented art department in the industry at that time. I not only did work for Earthdawn, but Battletech and Shadowrun as well. Each game had its own flavor and I changed my approach for each of them.*

*One key to my survival as an illustrator has always been versatility. Most of the maps and playing fields in FASA and TSR games were created by me. It was another untouched area in gaming art that no one else did. I've done counters (cardboard heroes), logos, maps and playing grids, black and white, color interiors and covers.*

**TI)** Some of the artwork is really quite inspiring. Have you ever played Earthdawn?



**David)** *Sorry, but I haven't. I do understand it's a great game. Almost all of FASA's games were well-designed. It's always a pleasure working with professionals.*

**TI)** The covers you created for the first edition were some of the more memorable and lovely (in my opinion); will you be doing more for the third edition produced by Redbrick?

**David)** *I don't work with Redbrick. Are they based in the U.S.? After FASA disbanded they sold each property to various companies. I spoke with a group in Germany who bought Battletech and with another company that owned Shadowrun, but I'm unfamiliar with Redbrick. Perhaps you could suggest my services...*

**TI)** That I will do, I know some of the staff reads the Tableau so perhaps that will happen before I get the chance. I know I am skating the possibility of a non-Earthdawn answer here but, do you have a favorite cover?

**David)** *"Illuminati" is still my most recognizable piece, but it seems so primitive to me now. For "Earthdawn" it would be the "Theran Empire". I did the logo for that as well as the "Earthdawn" logo. I like several of my FASA covers, but oddly, I find that my favorites are not the favorites of the fans. Sometimes I like a piece of art because I learned something when I painted it; that 'eureka' moment when you find something that works. Asking me which ones I did, at this point, is a little like asking a Star Trek actor about a line he delivered in episode #42. For him it was just another job, and that's the way it was for me.*

*I'd have to dig through old tear sheets just to list the covers I produced. Jog my memory with some titles, and I can tell you which ones were mine. Between 1980 and 1994 I did around 140 published covers for every major company in the industry. Some of those covers were for books published by Doubleday, Baen, Penguin, TOR, and some small foreign publishers. So I did eventually get the book covers I wanted, but the heart of my work has always been RPGs.*



*In the mid-nineties I started doing interior color work and less covers. Everyone was competing for high-profile covers, and there simply wasn't enough work to go around. WotC (wizards of the Coast) made 65 million in one year and started buying competing companies. Eventually Hasbro bought them. The end result was that fewer companies were buying art. I did lots of work for Dungeons and Dragons and Magic: The Gathering after they bought TSR. Career-wise this may have been a mistake since no one pays attention to interior art. I actually think my skills grew immeasurably when I found myself under this kind of pressure. In the same amount of time other artists produced a single cover painting, I would produce twelve to eighteen images, each one requiring its' own good composition, color and rendering. In short, I became a factory, and I learned a great deal.*



**TI)** With the advent of online gaming, have you noticed a drop in interest in paper and dice games in favor of online RPGs?

**David)** *I think this was inevitable. Newspapers are suffering the same fate because people read the news online. There is still something to be said for having a tangible product that you can hold in your hands; a perceived value that you don't get when you switch your computer off. Both mediums will survive. There will always be newspapers and there will always be paper RPGs because that's what people want. What we're seeing is a shift in interest, and doubtless some will go out of business while others survive. The important thing in business is: 'roll with the punches'. Maybe we can save some trees.*

**TI)** [Pen & Paper](#) online database has a huge selection of products assigned to you. It is an impressive list. At the bottom of the list it is mentioned that not all the product is from the same David Martin, what percentage of that list really is yours?

**David)** *I'll have to check this out. I'm tickled that someone has compiled a list of credits for me when I don't currently even have a website of my own work.*



**TI)** When we started this interview you had mentioned that you were busy, is it perchance producing more awesome covers?

**David)** *Not extremely busy, but I had things to do which were important to me, if not to the gaming community. My work for RPGs has dropped to almost nothing, mostly because I no longer pursue that type of work. I still do things for Palladium once in a while, but an experience with Hasbro left a very bad taste in my mouth.*

*I contacted them after they hired a new staff who were not familiar with my work. Hasbro is a publicly traded corporation and after their stock dropped thirteen points they gutted the art department. I produced sketches based on what I considered very bad designs of their own and waited for approval. About a week later the AD informed me that they had cancelled the assignment. It wasn't my fault, but a committee decided that the initial idea sucked. As per our contract I received a \$300.00 'kill' fee for one month of work. Could you live on this much money for a month?*

*In short, Hasbro, the only company still paying decent rates, has become so corporate that each and every decision goes before a committee. In that type of environment there is always someone who wants to make political points for tearing the initial idea apart. Things are constantly undergoing revisions. There are so many hurdles to the creative process that almost nothing gets done. I've always had a 'key man' policy with the companies I work with. That means there should be only one person I have to please, not a committee. To be honest, it was a little like going back to high school after you've graduated from college.*



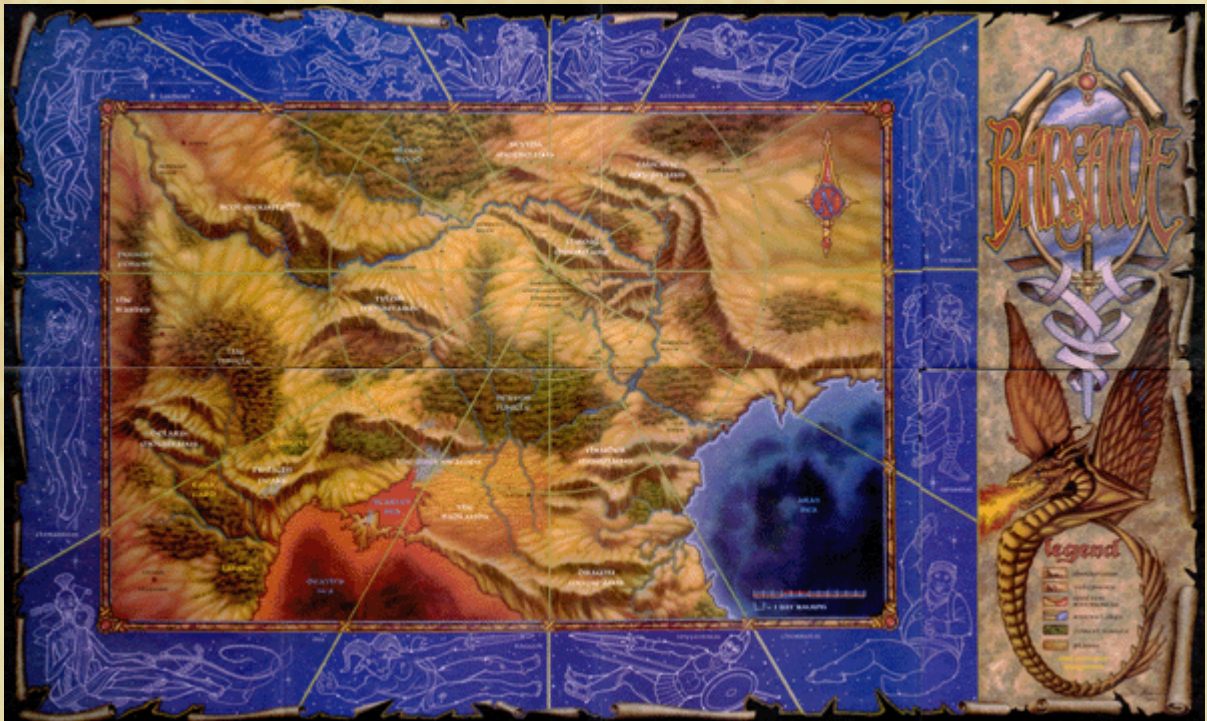
*These days I take care of our home and pets. I clean, repair, build and organize the lives of my wife and myself. She has a very well-paying job as a polymer technician at Sandia National Laboratories. Occasionally I do something creative such as building a six-foot Easter Island head in our front yard. Let's see what the neighbors think of that!*

*I consider myself semi-retired and taking a well-deserved rest from politics and deadlines. I do artwork for myself and would be happy to send some JPGs of never-before published work for you and your readers. You have to understand that the cover you like is almost twenty years old. You should see the new work. You may not like all of it since it was done for galleries and other venues, but I think you'll find it interesting.*

**TI)** That is a thought I had not considered, perhaps in a later issue we will do a gallery. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this interview, I know I have enjoyed it and I hope that the readers will as well.

**David)** Thanks for honoring me by asking about my work. Best of luck with your fanzine.

David Martin's contributions to Earthdawn appear throughout the first, second, and third editions in illustrations. To get a real feel for the quality of his ability though get your self a copy of the Barsaive Boxed set and introduce yourself to the map of Barsaive. It is reproduced below this interview but much smaller and with far less quality.





# OBSIDIMAN MINIATURE GALLERY



Obsidiman  
Ral Partha 20-003



Obsidiman Wizard  
Heartbreaker ED301



Obsidiman Warrior  
Heartbreaker ED325



Blood Pebble & Sword  
Redbrick RBO-1



Warrior w/ Mace  
Redbrick RBO-2



Sword & Shield  
Redbrick RBO-3



Mace & Shield  
Redbrick RBO-4



Warrior w/ Sword  
Redbrick RBO-5



T'skrang Nethermancer  
Heartbreaker ED309