

EARTH O DAWN



TABLEAU INFRACTUS #5

TABLEAU INFRACTUS

You are judged by your living enemies and the families of dead friends.

It is best if they are not one and the same.

•Iopan Adage•

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Tableau Infractus
An Earthdawn Fanzine

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This is a work by a fan for fans.

In short please don't litigate against me.

Volume #1 Issue #5 Earthdawn Tableau Infractus

AUTHOR'S CORNER

Much has happened in the intervening months between Issues Four and Five. I have relocated twice, first from a bustling city to a tranquil countryside, then to a residence by a lovely lake. The ghost in my machine left for greener pastures. A small fuzzy coffee colored creature with teeth and very sharp claws has been adopted and named. I also received a number of questions from you, my readers, and so I thought I would take this issues Author's Corner to answer them. They are paraphrased because I often get the same questions asked several different ways.

q) What does Tableau Infractus mean?

a) In the Second Issue I attempted to explain it. I can only assume I did not do so well. **Tableau** is a table or tablet for writing. **Infractus** is broken or shattered. A literal translation could be "Splintered Document". My imaginings is of a sheaf of papers blown in the wind. For a visual, take fifty sheets of paper and throw them straight up. The resulting storm of falling pages is how the magazine is viewed in my brain.

q) Why Iopos?

a) Simple really, I have always had a bit of a soft spot for the people of Iopos. They are portrayed as a strong people, but we all know that they are doomed. Eventually they will learn that they are toys to be tossed aside in a game for dragons. They are underdogs and don't even know it yet.

q) Will you be writing about other cities?

a) I have a long history in my gaming group of playing and writing adventures for Earthdawn. I have lots of material written for my own games. So yes I expect I will write about other cities when I tire of Iopos. Why? Do you have another city you would prefer to read about?

q) This is official release material?

a) No it is not official.

q) Can I use this in my games?

a) If you and your game group want to use the ideas put forth feel free it's one of the reasons I write this fanzine. I hope that you use whatever appeals to you in your games. If you want to tell me about it, I think that would be very cool to hear.

q) Do you work for Redbrick?

a) No, I do not work for Redbrick. Redbrick in no way endorses what I produce. So far I have not been asked to stop so I will continue until such a time as they ask me to stop.

q) Why not write a blog? Your skill is on par with that medium and I don't have to download it.

a) The web log format is not one I enjoy. I have a series of other comments on this that can be found in Issue Number one of the Tableau.

q) Aren't you afraid that your ideas will be stolen and used with out your permission?

a) Honestly I am not worried about it. This is the age of the internet. Information travels at the speed of light. All ideas are ephemeral and malleable to situations. So if somebody finds what I do to be of value then please use it. If they credit me that's cool, if not, then I do not have issues with that either.

Well off to the issue. I hope that you find it enjoyable and useful.

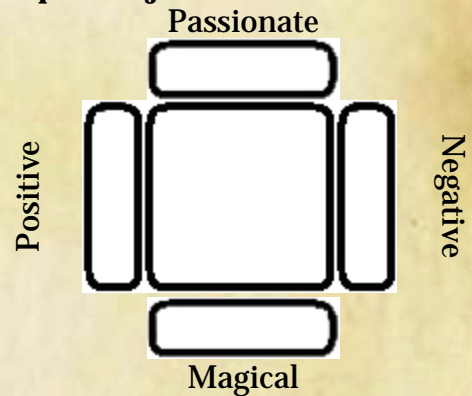
NATIONAL FLAVOR

*A lot can be learned from the rules and culture of a people.
- S'flint Senior Scribe of the Library of Enlightenment -*

THE RULES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Iopan written communication is simple. Every statement has a subject and one or more influences. The subject is the center of the statement. It is surrounded buy four influences; Positive, Negative, Passionate, and Magical. Every written statement can have multiple influences but only one subject. A subject is inscribed with all the relative influences. Once the thought is complete a new subject is selected and the process is repeated.

Example: Subject location and Influences



The diagram above shows how position determines which influences are applied to a subject. Multiple subjects are read from top of the page to the bottom, from left to right.

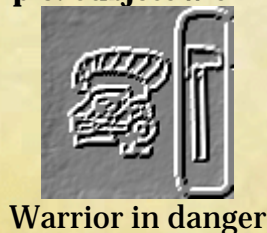
Example: Subjects



The Position of the subject's facing is in reference to the writer. Facing to the Right is threatening, to the Left is not.

The Position of the influences are in reference to the subject. A warrior facing to the right with an axe oriented toward the subject is a warning that the warrior is in danger. The orientation of the influence changes the meaning of the pictogram.

Example: Subject with influence



Example: Subject location and Influences



An analysis of the above pictogram.

A Horror is the primary subject. It is facing right thus an enemy of the writer, and representing danger to friends of the writer.

The influence is magical. In the influence we see the pictogram for Power to the right of the repeated pictogram of alliances. The alliances are shown facing down. The pictogram means that a horror has used magical powers to control friendly alliances.

Using Written Languages in Your Game

The thought process of a nation can be assessed by the rules of their verbal and written languages. The important cultural values are prominent. This values system is the fabric that holds a society together.

Earthdawn has the magical talent to read languages. This is the equivalent of the “universal translator” with multiple characters knowing multiple languages and learning them magically. This works for most aspects of the game and should not be tampered with unless you and your players agree that it needs to be changed.

I built a pictorial / reference language for my game dedicated to Iopos. The basis is in the real life languages of Mesoamerica.

Like Throalic, it is a visual language that is rich in flavor and context. Unlike Throalic it is not a language with a verbal component. If you are wondering about the Throalic language read “Poisoned Memories”. The rules for the Throalic written and verbal language are described in that book.

I have selected this method of written language because it allowed me to work some mental puzzles and clues in to my games. This provided my players with hours of distraction and entertainment. It can be very rewarding when your players begin to write their stories in pictographic language. When viewed as a single piece of art, the story is a very inspiring site.

Iopos is not a derivative city of Throal. The population of Iopos is mostly human and therefore the language needed to be very different. The only commonality with the Throalic language is that both are pictogram based written languages.

Pictorial languages can have thousands of individual images, I have presented a few to provide an example.

Examples of Subjects



Threatening King



Threatening Horror



Herb

Threatening
WarriorThreatening
Weapon / Axe

Power



Alliance



Wizard



Warrior

Examples of Influences

Here is a friendly warrior; the influence is in the positive with an axe facing / threatening the warrior. The translation is a defensive warrior that is friendly to the writer.



Defending Warrior

Here is a friendly warrior; the influence is in the Negative with an axe, turned away from the warrior. The translation is a warrior that is friendly to the writer has passed the enemy line.



Infiltrated Warrior

Here again is the friendly warrior; the influence is in the Passionate with an axe facing the warrior. The translation is a warrior over come with the passion of war.



Elite Warrior

This is the friendly warrior; the influence is in the Magical with an axe away from the warrior. The translation is a warrior adept at rest, or dead.



Dead Warrior Adept

BEAUTY IS NOT PERCEPTUAL

The idea that fashion changes are at the whim of the population is nonsense. Fashion accentuates the name-giver.

--- Timous Iopan Tailor

A popular phrase that seems to have arrived from Throal is “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”. This is simply not the case, beauty never changes and the precepts of beauty are immutable. Every name-giver race knows instinctively what is beautiful. The attributes are carried over from race to race and always the most beautiful subject is ones own racial sexual opposite.

It makes sense that the clothing of a culture should provide for functionality and beauty. Iopan style is versatile, functional and yet accentuates the beautiful. To this extent Iopan garments hide very little of the name-giver’s body. The design allows for free flowing movement and comfort.

Our years locked in the citadel taught us that clothing should be durable and easily personalized. To this extent all clothing in Iopos is created with panels to allow for easy repair. Mixing and matching colors, fabrics, and textures allows for personalization.

Sashes, semi-transparent veils, belts, long ribbons and tassels are common accessories. A brightly colored wide brimmed hat with a low crown is often seen during the days of spring and summer.

Pockets are needed to carry the minutia of life. Sleeves are deep allowing for small items to be stored and accessed with ease. Waist pockets are also found in many garments though these tend to be used mostly for the carrying of coins.



Warm Weather Clothing

Open topped shirts with a pull string to allow the chest to be covered in bright sun or cold wind adorn many of the Iopan citizenry of both sexes. Wide sleeves are gathered at the shoulder allowing for deep sleeve pockets.

Open free flowing legs for males allows for rapid travel and ease of cooling. The saying “you’ve not the calves for it” is a direct result of this style of dress.

Female’s skirts are longer, almost ankle length. The waist is pulled close to the skin and accentuates the female hips. Designs are often worked into the panels of these skirts to denote familial ties.

Cold Weather Clothing

All cold weather clothing consists of interlacing layers. The common Iopan man’s winter clothing consists of long pants that gather at the ankle and are laced into the boots. Torsos are covered with thick full blouses.

Due to the extreme cold during the winter most females of all races are encouraged to stay inside. Their clothing inside is the same warm weather clothing that is worn the rest of the year. If a woman must be out in the cold she dons the same cold weather clothing that is made for men.

A hooded full length cloak of bright color is valued highly during the cold times of the year. Warm woolen lined thick leather caps with flaps to cover the ears are a common site. Either sex can be found wearing these cloaks and caps during the cold weather.

Fashion

Every nation throughout the world has a different opinion of fashion. When groups from one nation come into contact with groups from another nation the styles of clothing present will tell much about each group.

Interaction Options

Characters are often judged before they are allowed to enter villages and towns. Their style of clothing gives away their outward taste and allegiance. This can be as much a variable for entrance in to a village as the success of an artisan skill.

The following table provides options to consider when your players encounter non-player characters. (These could be used in addition to the options provided in Issue #4, *The Stratum of Power*)

	NPC Attitude
Same National Style	Casual
Enemy National Style	Aggressive
Same Local Style	Positive
Different Local Style	Neutral
Military Style	Cautious
Tribal Style	Condescending

Fashion is not just clothing but also the accessories that often accompany it. In societies where personal strength is respected weapons may be worn brazenly in public. Depending on the society functionality may out weigh the aesthetic quality.

Functional Accessories

Epaulettes	Shoulder straps that can be used for decoration or for holding flexible items
Sling Bag	A shoulder or waist bag used for carrying items slightly larger than a name-giver fist.
Walking Cane	Generally used to hold oldsters upright, though it can also be used as an improvised weapon.
Hat	Head covering for protection from severe weather.
Anchor Rings	Metal rings held in place by fabric or leather to allow for the mounting of armor or hanging of various objects.
Fan	A hand sized fan used to move air around and provide a small amount of privacy.
Parasol	A hand held sun shade for women.
Umbrella	A protection from Sun or Rain for men or women.
Sashimono	A back mounted banner, flag, or pennant. Generally used to denote allegiance.

Using Fashion in Your Game

Fashion adds cultural flavor, information, and vital clues to your players. It would be a very odd occurrence to see a name-giver in Throlic fashion wandering the streets of Iopos. So unusual in fact that it will be noticed by almost everyone. If your players are not familiar with the fashions of other cultures, then they could be missing out on vital clues.

Several story lines present themselves when Fashion is treated as a component of a culture. For example, the Firescale Troll moot is very obsessive about the scales of the Firescale. These trolls will go the excessive lengths to punish name-givers that wear the scales if they are not part of the moot.

Wealthy patrons are always willing to hire adventurers to acquire unique, rare and interesting items for them. These Items are then used to display their fashion sense in public. Suppose a wealthy noble wanted a hair comb from the Bloodwood. What if the hair comb were then recognized in public by an ambassador from the Bloodwood?

The sashimono of a local brewery is found at the site of a murder. This could be the start of a war of brewers or something even more nefarious. The idea that a brewer or any business would use a sashimono makes sense, when you consider that “sandwich-boards” were a method of advertizing.

I have based my Iopos fashion styles on the Minoans. This design is relatively nude above the waist. An excellent choice considering that the citadel of Iopos had years during the scourge to figure out a way to reduce crime and violence. If the chest is bare then the likely hood of violence is minimal. Plus this adds to the concept of a society were very little is private. The idea that all members of the culture wear the same or similar style adds to the idea that an Iopan citizen is only one of many.

SOCIAL MORES

Some visitors to Iopos have commented on the prevalence of particular disciplines over others.

Adepts are a fact of life in Iopos. Their magical power comes with the responsibility to help care for wellbeing of their city. This idea is embodied by the Denairastas family. For without the Denairastas family of adepts the citadel of Iopos would have never survived the scourge.

After the Great Sealing it was determined that certain disciplines would be preserved only as a duty to the future. Initially the followers of these disciplines were not very accommodating of this view. They relented only when shown that their disciplines would be maintained and that it was in the best interest of the population. The Museum Adepts Corps was created to allow these disciplines to remain viable for future generations.

The disciplines placed in the Museum Adepts Corps were; Air Sailor, Beastmaster, Cavalryman, Scout, Sky Raider, and Thief. All racial disciplines were also included in the corps. There were three representatives of each discipline and they were treated with celebrity status through out the citadel.

During the scourge certain disciplines were encouraged. These disciplines were Archer, Swordmaster Troubadour, Warrior and Weaponsmith. City defenses and order were bolstered using these disciplines as a cornerstone.

The discipline of Inquisitor has a long and colorful history with Iopos. Only a handful of them were in the citadel at the time of the Great Sealing. It did not take very long for the leadership to recognize the benefits of such a discipline, in an enclosed environment with limited resources. Inquisitors became a common sight to the population in an effort to maintain peace and order. The saying

“there is a thread of truth to the story” finds its roots in the inquisitors of Iopos.

Wizards, Nethermancers, Elementalists, and Illusionists, were registered and trained by minor members of the Denairastas family. This tradition still holds today. Every Iopan adept of these disciplines owes a great deal to the Denairastas for providing training and circle advancement. Even adepts from outside of Iopos may apply for training.



Iopan Wizard studying a cursed puzzle box.

During the scourge all adepts were needed to help the population survive. Compulsory service was initiated early on and eventually became an acceptable part of life during the scourge. Now that the scourge is over, the adepts are needed to help protect Iopos from enemies both local and foreign. The service is no longer compulsory but no Iopan citizen would shirk their social duty.

All adepts native to Iopos are members of the Holders of Trust. By their very nature they hold positions of Silver and above. A triad will always maintain at least a single silver member. This visual reassurance of the presence of the Holders of Trust and adepts allows the people to carry on with their daily lives knowing they are safe and protected.

Inquisitor

Talents & Abilities

Initiate

Talent Options: Conversation, Dodge Blow , Evidence Analysis, Read / Write Language, Speak Language

First Circle

Discipline Talents: Karma Ritual, Search, Silent Walk, Tracking, Unarmed Combat

Novice

Talent Options: Anticipate Blow, Climbing, Disguise Self, Durability 5/4, Great Leap, Research, Sense Danger

Second Circle

Ability: The adept adds +1 to their Social Defense
Discipline Talent: Melee Weapons

Third Circle

Discipline Talent: Item History

Fourth Circle

Ability: The adept may spend one Karma point on Perception-only Tests.
Discipline Talent: Thread Weaving (Truthweaving)

Journeyman

Talent Options: Diplomacy, Direction Sense, Etiquette, Leadership, Resist Taunt, Surprise Strike, Steel Thought, Steely Stare

Fifth Circle

Ability: The adept may spend 2 points of strain to reduce the effects of being harried on their Physical Defense. This strain may be increased by 2 points for each additional harrying factor.
Discipline Talent: True Sight

Sixth Circle

Ability: The adept may spend one Karma point on Charisma-only Tests.
Discipline Talent: Astral Sight

Seventh Circle

Ability: The adept adds +1 to their Social Defense
Discipline Talent: Empathic Sense

Eight Circle

Ability: The adept may spend 1 Karma point on Social Action Tests made by the recipient of their Thought Link. Using Karma in this way counts as the adepts standard action for that round.
Discipline Talent: Thought Link



Inquisitors are by nature, curious and invasive people. Nothing is more enticing to an inquisitor than an unanswered question.

The influences of the scourge and Iopan necessity has developed a uniquely Iopan flavored take on this discipline. There are only eight circles to the Iopan Inquisitor, after all the scourge only lasted five hundred years, not nearly long enough to fully reinvent the discipline.

Important Attributes: Perception & Charisma

Karma Ritual: To begin the Karma Ritual the adept sits in a busy public location with their eyes closed. They listen to the crowd and select a single conversation. This conversation becomes the center of the adept's attention. The adept then attempts to determine the motives of the participants. The ritual is finished when the conversation is complete and the adept's determination is proven correct. If the determination is proven incorrect then the ritual must be repeated.

Artisan Skill: Body Painting, Acting

Half Magic: Inquisitor uses for half magic include gaining information on crime scenes, suspected or wanted criminals, and unlawful behaviors.

Using Flavor Adepts in Your Game

Thank you, Brian C. Schoner, for your vision of the Inquisitor in [Earthdawn Journal 2](#). It inspired me to adapt the concept to my version of Iopos. I have since adapted my version to the 3rd edition.

Just as the Dwarves of Throal prefer Crojen for their cavalymen other cities prefer other disciplines. Several reasons can exist for limiting availability to a particular discipline. Perhaps a city has made Thief Adepts outlaws or the local population has a taboo about Beastmasters.

Conversely there may be lots of a select few disciplines. A group of Scorchers for example might consist of predominantly only Cavalymen and Warriors, with a single Wizard or Shaman thrown in.

The flavor of a city can be heightened by either eliminating a discipline or by adding locally preferred disciplines. In this way the adventuring adepts become even more of a center of interest. Altering the talents of a discipline in a region is also a good method of providing your players with a more tailored and interesting adventure.

CIVILIZED IMPROVEMENT

One hundred thousand name-givers call the city of Iopos home. Approximately half that number more lives outside the city proper, in the small villages and towns within one or two days travel. Water and food is needed for all of these name-givers to survive.

Before the scourge a small branch of the Serpent River helped to provide water to Iopos. A series of aqueducts had been built to carry the water from this branch to the city and the out lying towns. During the scourge the aqueducts were destroyed and the small branch of the serpent ceased to carry water. The citadel survived during the scourge due to water rationing practices and recycling systems built before the great sealing.

When Iopos re-opened to the world, water was one of the first resources that needed to be secured. Large groups of laymen, masons and Elementalists under took the task of creating the wonder that is the water fields. In a short twenty year time frame hundreds of wells and cisterns were built to draw and store water.

As water became less of an immediate concern the newly re-emerged city grew in population. Surviving refugees from around the region found their way to Iopos. Individuals from the other nations in Barsaive brought with them even more destitute name-givers and survivors of failed shelters. In the last eighty years the population of Iopos has grown to the impressive number it is today.

Every citizen of Iopos recognizes that food and water must be provided for all. It is to this end that the great canal, known as Uhl's Gift, is being built. Citizens who work to build the canal are given a reprieve from their individual taxes for one year while they provide labor to the effort. After their year of service they are allowed to continue for another year if they wish.

The flow from Uhl's Gift will be used to provide for future growth for Iopos and all the outlying settlements. A new series of aqueducts are also under construction to provide the water a path to each village and town. The farming settlements have a series of irrigation canals being built to allow for the fields to be watered more effectively.

Great ceremonial magic is woven into the canal to help prevent it from being used as a weapon against Iopos, once it is complete. These ceremonies use life magic to reinforce the canal and its defenses. Willing volunteers from the city and the countryside provide the necessary materials for this magic.



A furlong memorial carving

Volunteers for the requirements of these ceremonies have a section named after them. Their sacrifices will be remembered by all that use the canal. Every furlong of the canals is named after a volunteer. Memorial headstones are erected at the borders of each section. Every name-giver that has dedicated their life in this way has their name engraved on a plaque above the canal as it enters the city. Above their name is the slogan, "By my passing, None shall pass".

National Monuments

Here are few of the major national monuments to be found in Iopos and Throal. The citizens of these cultures view their monuments to be more grand and impressive than the monuments of the other. Both nations take great pride in their respective cities' accomplishments.

Iopos

Malachite Throne

Every citizen in Iopos reveres the Malachite Throne as the seat of power. Every citizen knows where it is located and takes pride in the appearance of the palace that houses it.

Great Canal "Uhl's Gift"

Citizens volunteer to provide the construction skills and massive amount of manpower for the canal. They take pride in knowing it will service the entire Iopan nation.

Grand Market

This trade center is known throughout Barsaive as an hub of business. Many goods and services, both legal and illicit can be bought here.

Library of Enlightenment

One of the major learning centers in Barsaive open to all citizens of Iopos. Foreign bourn visitors may access the library with permission of the Denairastas Family or Holders of Trust.

Throal

Gates of Throal

Throalic citizens hold the Gates of Thoal in high esteem. They remember when the gates kept them safe during the scourge. A new visitor to the city will realize the grand nature of Throal, and they will view the whole of the city with an opinion colored by this first impression

Tournament Grounds

Name-givers across Barsaive are familiar with the Tournament Grounds of Throal. Many make the long trips from their own home cities just to be spectators at these events. Many adventurers from across the face of Barsaive come to participate in the events held here.

Great Library of Throal

Also one of the major learning centers in Barsaive, open to all name givers. The Great Library's public accessibility makes it a favorite place for adventurers to research information. Traveling Scholars of the Great Library can be found in the most remote locations in Barsaive.

Using National Monuments in your game

National monuments are a source of national pride for the nations that create them. Many cities throughout the world promote their monuments to foreign dignitaries and travelers. Player Characters should also have some emotional attachment to their nation's monuments. It is this pride that makes national monuments a very interesting plot device.

There are of course the common, "this bad element is trying to make a statement by destroying that national monument", style games. I do not need to cover that style of story.

How more interesting it might be to cover the unknown, or better yet unpopular, "real history" of a national monument. Consider the social repercussions if the population of Iopos discovered that their "volunteers" are in fact coerced. Or that the Great Library of Throal is feeding information to the Therans.

Nationally financed, politically motivated or publicly popular, monuments also provide an excellent base for a series of adventures. These story lines can range from simply getting materials for construction to rescuing the head architect from an enemy nation. The idea of competitive potlatches by wealthy name-givers and the destruction of their gifts, could also work, if the gifts given were monumental.

Name-givers are tied to their national identity and the national monuments are a physical representation of that identity. A simple story hook could involve an adventurer's family member being accused of verbally attacking a national monument. Public outrage in a bar, not an uncommon occurrence, might lead to said person being lynched. If the adventuring party interferes they risk the mob turning on them, if they do not, then the poor soul might get killed.

BL'OOD, SWEAT & TEARS

The single greatest resource of any nation is its citizens. What a nation elects to do with this resource is the responsibility of the ruling class. Iopos recognizes this basic truth. Every Iopan citizen also realizes their innate usefulness to the nation as a whole.

The Holders of Trust, selected as they are from the common populace, are a visual representation of the authority held by the populace. Iopan citizens treat the Holders of Trust with respect and affection because they are happy to have the Holders of Trust present. Several historic tales exist about the times when there were no Holders of Trust to protect the people. These tales are bleak and very unpleasant; every Iopan child is told these tales to teach them the necessity of the Holders of Trust.

An initiate to The Holders of Trust must make a series of blood oaths to be allowed to join the ranks. These oaths hold the power that binds the Holder to their word.

Wizards, Nethermancers, Elementalists, and Illusionists, all take blood oaths to the Denairastas and Iopos when they receive authorized training. These oaths protect Iopos from the possibility that the training provided will be used against the interests of Uhl and the city.

Citizens within the city walls speak oaths to the well being for Uhl Denairastas and his family line as a popular method of expressing happiness. These can be commonly heard recited throughout the day. The Grand Market being a location with the most vocal appreciations.

Common citizens can volunteer for many of the nation's social betterment projects. Most projects only require skills and manpower. Individuals that participate in these projects generally receive a reduction in taxes or an increase in social status in the city.



Musician Vey Ino walks the banks and plays music for the laborers of Uhl's Gift.

Businesses located in Iopos are taxed according to a series of flexible rules designed to promote business growth and prevent graft. When a proprietor pays their taxes they speak a mandated oath that the money they are paying is the correct amount in accordance with the applicable tax laws. Tax collection is performed daily in the Grand Market. Tax Collectors are required to take blood oaths to protect the funds that they collect.

Visitors to Iopos are required to recite an oath to behave in the city and to perform no action that will hinder Uhl Denairastas or Iopos, before being allowed entrance. Some foreign nationals refuse to recite these oaths and they are denied entrance to the city. This has led to some very unhappy would be visitors but safety and security are important to the people of Iopos.

Uhl Denairastas is the ultimate power in Iopos and the citizens would have it no other way. He is viewed with adoration and respect. None are worried that he will leave the Malachite Throne without an appropriate heir. When his last wife died during childbirth all of Iopos mourned the loss of both his son and his wife. He is welcome in any part of the city without fear. Any citizen would be honored to be singled out for any reason by Uhl Denairastas.

Oaths and Blood Magic in Iopos

The entire city of Iopos is controlled by a family of magicians and adepts. With blood magic being as effective as it is in maintaining loyalty, it makes perfect sense that the ruling family of Iopos would use it in a controlling manner.

The idea of blood magic can be particularly impressive to the uninformed or the misinformed. By convincing the population of Iopos that every citizen's oath carries the weight of blood magic, the Denairastas have developed a society where deceit is not common place. In such an environment people that are capable of deceit remain hidden out of personal safety.

Daily Iopan Oaths

The various oaths that are used to keep the population under control are as follows.

Meal Time Exaltations

Morning Exaltation: The giving of thanks to Uhl Denairastas for the safe passing of the night and the providing of food.

Midday Exaltation: The giving of thanks to Uhl Denairastas for the continued safety of Iopos and the providing of water.

Evening Exaltation: The giving of thanks to Uhl Denairastas for the shelter of the city and requesting for safe passage and an uneventful night.

City Entrance Oath

The oath requires the speaker to declare the ultimate power of Uhl Denairastas and that they have no ill intentions toward him or Iopos.

Street Passage Oath

The oath is spoken to triads as they pass on the street. It requires the speaker to declare that they are glad the triad is there and that they feel safe because of it. This is a free form oath that is judged by the triad. A simple "Good day nice to see you" is acceptable, generally.

Iopan Blood Magic Oath Occasions

When meeting Uhl Denairastas: the characters must swear a blood oath that they have no malicious intent toward Uhl.

Testifying before a Triad as to the innocents of the accused: The character expresses that Uhl Denairastas is their witness and that they have no intent to deceive the Triad.

Induction in to the Holders of Trust: The character must take the Holders of Trust oath to protect Uhl Denairastas, the Holders of Trust, and Iopos.

Using Iopan Oaths in Your Game

The Denairastas intend to tie up any loose ends in Iopos by the use of the various oaths that they have instituted. It is through these oaths that the population of Iopos has become very amenable to the Denairastas as the cities leaders.

During the scourge great blood magic was used to help keep the citadel from being lost. It was at this time that the Denairastas family started the oaths and exaltations that would become common place. Their original design was to help feed the individual that sat on the Malachite Throne magical energy. This energy was then used to power the shield spells that were used to protect the citadel.

When Uhl decided to open the citadel he altered the flow of the magical energy and it no longer powered the shields. The magical energy has been building up in him for the last eighty years. The result is that his aging has slowed and his power has increased.

So what if your players decided to interrupt this flow of energy? How would they go about doing so? How would they figure out how this feat is accomplished?

Uhl's sterility is a direct result of his body attempting to channel the magic welling up in him. No heir exists because he can not produce one. Uhl has dreams of becoming a passion. He sees Iopos as a stepping stone to that goal. He believes that he has hidden these thoughts from the great dragon Denairastas.

Uhl wants nobody to know what is happening, but some great dragons and heads of state have theories. Their theories might not be far from the truth. Throal would pay dearly to know this secret. The blood elf queen might find this information to be of great value when dealing with Iopos. The Therans would most definitely use this knowledge to help secure their borders.

WINDLING BITES

Zahnja of Sos-Ree, woke up. The air was still, dank and thick with stink. She took in the sight beneath her perch in a large tree. Below she saw a thick bodied multi-legged monstrosity. It lumbered to and fro as though sniffing the stagnant air. She held her breath lest it give her away to the thing below.

The thing shuffled on its many pointed legs as though it were not fully in control of its own movements. The body would be moving forward while the head was looking to the left or the right. Individual legs would trip over large stones that it should have easily avoided. The eyes glowed and dimmed only to glow again a few seconds later.

She waited. The thing shuffled under the limb supporting her. It paused, the head tilted back as far as it could. She could hear the grinding of bones on chitinous plates as the head was pushed past its "natural" flexibility. She held perfectly still. If her fernweave armor did its job the eyes should not discern her from the rest of the tree's foliage. The eyes from this angel had a slight luminous light emitting from them when they would glow. The glow passed over her, flickered out, and then flickered back, brighter.



She fought the urge to fly. The image of a large spider catching her and eating her popped into her mind. She remembered the patience of the sloth, the serenity through which it viewed the world and its uncaring appearance. She emulated it perfectly. She began to gently breathe, letting her chest move almost imperceptibly.

The eyes shifted away, and the head lolled to the side as though it no longer maintained a functional neck. Slowly it moved away from under her branch. Now she waited. She was as the jaguar, alert and ready pounce.

The hard chitin was black in the star light. Blacker than the shadows of the trees and she could see one small separation between the plates. It began to shuffle down the trail to the village. The one she was asked to help protect.

When she was certain it had not seen her and it was as vulnerable as possible, she attacked. Diving from the tree, her wings snapping in the putrid air, she dove for the one weak spot she could make out. She leveled her spear, and drove it with all of her might and weight in to the soft grey spot between the hard plates. The spear sunk into the putrid meat. The venom performed its duty perfectly. The legs twitched and the head flopped and the body was rocked in spasms.

In the short time it took for the monstrosity to turn in its defense it stumbled over its many legs, pitched to the side, and landed with the head at an odd angle. She could see the light in the eyes blinking. She flew at the eyes with her spear and blackened them forever. When she was certain it was dead she returned to the village with the head. A hot bath and warm food was soon to be hers.

ROLE-PLAY VS ROLL-PLAY

I have noticed over the years the penchant to make Player Characters more and more powerful. This is across the spectrum of all the games I play. I understand the justifications for this, "People don't want to play low capability characters", "Players want to play heroic games", "Nobody wants to have to grind up their character from a nobody". (This last statement being a direct result from the abundance of MMOs on the market.)

So how is it that Role-play vs Roll-play works in to this? Simple, Role-players tend to not care about stats and dice pools as much as the Roll-players. When game mechanics change in the direction of higher stats, larger modifiers, and overall less opportunity to fail, the Roll-player is abundantly happy. The Role-player rarely notices the changes in mechanics or, if they do, the changes are secondary to playing the character and participating in the story.

I know a game group that played a game of pygmy dinosaur riders. Being pygmies they had to think more about how to get things accomplished and less about how to maximize their dice pool. The game was completed in for four sessions. It is still referenced by that group as one of the coolest games ever. No I didn't get to run that game, but I did play in it and it was awesome.

Game Masters can be a major contributor to the power creep of players. If the Game Master is a Roll-player then it is a guarantee that the games will run in this vein. The players will have to learn to min / max their characters just to keep up with the Game Master's non-players characters and adversaries. Should the Game Master be a Role-player, then there is the danger of going too far the other direction where stats become irrelevant and dice become a



hindrance. Dice-less games like The Chronicles of Amber generally lend themselves to this type of play.

Power creep in Role-playing games is a common occurrence. As games age and players attempt to fit games to their particular play style house rules are instituted. Often times these house rules are purposed to the game manufacturer. Sometimes the manufacturer considers the house rule, play tests it, and then releases it as an optional rule or as a change to the core rules of a system. Several current systems have developed this feedback and redesign philosophy.

At its heart this is a good system. It can be, and has been, abused to such a way that some very good Role-playing games have suffered because of it. A perfect example of this is Dungeons & Dragons 4th edition. Many requests put forward by the Roll-play community lead to the removal of entire classes and races. The blow back from this was a loss of role-players to other systems or to the previous edition only. Power creep is a very subtle mental shift that needs to be addressed by any Game Master whose group maintains both Role-players and Roll-players.

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.

IOPPOS

THE JEWEL OF WESTERN BARSAIVE

To begin any description of the city of Iopos one must start with the foundation. The original village that would grow to the city of Iopos was positioned on a mountain top. The mountain is the only mountain on the plain that surrounds it for leagues in all directions. The plains were grasslands that were populated by nomadic peoples.

It is not recorded when Iopos first became a village. The village did keep records though only a handful of them have survived the centuries and the scourge. Much history has been lost to antiquity. This is why Uhl has so many archeologists and adventurers scouring Barsaive for clues to Iopos' history.

OUR WALLS, A WAY OF LIFE

Our city consists of four concentric rings, each is a road wide enough to allow four wagons to pass and not be crowded. The outer most road is *Summer's Shine*, followed by *Autumnal Glow*, and *Winter Peace*. *Spring's Promise* is the innermost road. Each of these roads is bordered by a wall that separates the city districts and acts as a pomoerium in case of city defense. Each wall maintains catwalks with parapets and crenellation towers. During the scourge these defenses saw much use. The outer wall still shows some signs of it as a reminder to the people that the city of Iopos weathered the scourge. Each wall is fifty feet higher than the preceding ground and twenty feet higher than the road that it protects. This places the wall guarding *Spring's Promise* one hundred forty feet higher than the ground outside the city.



The outside wall has four gates, two at the northwest and two at the southeast. The aqueduct entrance and sewer canal exits are located at the northeast and southwest. The walls not only function as the base of defenses but they house the paths of water that flow throughout the city. The method of water distribution reduces the necessity of larger aqueducts and lessens water loss due to evaporation. Sewage uses a separate series of troughs and paths, none of which are located in the walls of the city, but all of which exit through the two sewage canals out of the city to the countryside where it can be recycled and used as fertilizer.

The inner walls are twenty feet thick. Gates located in these walls use ramps within the wall to make the passage up from one district to the next an easy affair. Exits from the gates are often one hundred feet from the entrance of the gate. Each inner wall has eight gates, one for every

point and half point on the compass. These walls separate the city into defendable districts. Originally there were twelve boulevards, one for each of the passions. These were removed during the scourge due to The Fallen Three. Now each district has its own distinct roads. Remains of the boulevards can be found from time to time. These remains take the form a sign post or a small garden using a section of the original boulevard.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRADE SECTION

The Grand market is located in the southwestern portion of the city. Located in this section of the first district, are the business fronts for every trade house in the city. The great canal enters here and is intended to bring fresh water as well as river going ships. With this location as a port within Iopos, the city will become an even greater trade power in Barsaive.

All current trade imports and exports enter and leave Iopos from the airship ports in the northeast. The Great Canal will eventually flow here through a series of locks in the mountain allowing for exports of products to the rest of Barsaive via the Serpent River. The water will also feed into the aqueducts that provide water to the out lying towns, villages, and farming communities.

PASSIONATE PARTICIPATION

In Iopos the Passions can be felt in everything from the smallest detail carving to the Great Canal. The Passions Pavilion is one of the most frequented landmarks in Iopos. All of the passions are here. Each passion is represented with a tower dedicated to them. Questors maintain the tower of their passions.

Questors of the other passions rotate responsibility for maintaining the towers of Erendis, Rashomon, and Vestrial, revering the original meanings of those passions. The towers of the Fallen Three are not frequented by the general population. The towers are maintained in the hope that they will be a beacon to assist The Fallen Three in their return to sanity. No questors of The Fallen Three are allowed inside the city. Holders of Trust patrol these towers to prevent vagrants from taking up residence.

A PUBLIC VIEW OF THE WATCHER'S RING.

The government buildings in Iopos are all housed in the Watchers Ring. Every public service, from the Holders of Trust to the Sewer Scrapers Penitent Legion has their officers housed here. Taxes are transported here for distribution to the appropriate public facilities. Every guild, every banking institution, and every trade house in Iopos, all have a high ranking representative in the Watchers Ring.

The ring doubles as the residence of these individuals as well as a secure last wall before reaching the Central Spire. This wall like all the others before it, is twenty feet wide and fifty feet straight up from the ground in front of it. There are no windows on the side of the wall that faces the city. All windows face the Central Spire to remind the occupants that the ultimate power in Iopos is Uhl Denairastas, he who sits on the Malachite Throne.

Four gates, one at each point of the compass, allow passage through the Watcher's Ring. These gates are heavily guarded. Passage through The Watchers Ring is strictly controlled. Individuals that are found inside the Watcher Ring without authorization are arrested, and held until a member of the Denairastas Family can take the time to question them.

THE CENTRAL SPIRE, HOME OF UHL DENAIRASTAS AND THE MALACHITE THRONE

Here is the heart and soul of the city of Iopos. This is the home of Uhl Denairastas and the entirety of the Denairastas family. When Uhl Denairastas addresses the public, generally only on special occasions, it is from the top of this spire.

The design of the court yard is such that words spoken from the top of the spire echo down the tower and across to the Watcher's Ring. This allows all in attendance to hear clearly the messages the Uhl is delivering.

The Malachite Throne is housed within the walls of the Central Spire. A few citizens are selected every year to tour the spire so that they may tell of the experience to their family and friends. This provides first hand accounts of the ruling family. In this way the Denairastas remain as real and personable as other people.



Dragons eye view of the City of Iopos.

TROLL MINIATURES GALLERY

The Troll miniatures for Earthdawn are large. Very large. The designs for them are also very distinctive.

Ral-Partha, Heartbreaker and Redbrick all produced trolls for Earthdawn. I have not included the Redbrick releases because they are literally the same sculpts as the Heartbreaker miniatures.

These images are approximately 25mm in scale to give you an idea of the size of these miniatures.



Targ Boneslicer
Ral-Partha 20-002



Torgak, Troll w/ Club
Heartbreaker ED-349



Troll Illusionist
Heartbreaker ED-334



Cave Troll w/ Club
Heartbreaker ED-340



Crystal Raider w/ Sword & Shield
Heartbreaker ED-305



Bloodlore Troll
Heartbreaker ED-347



Southern Troll
Heartbreaker ED-348



Skyraider w/ Sword
Heartbreaker ED-343



Troll w/ Club & Dagger
Heartbreaker ED-306



Inebriated Troll
Heartbreaker ED-316



Troll w/ Club
Heartbreaker ED-329

ALTERNATIVE TROLL MINIATURE GALLERY

These Trolls were not released for the Earthdawn line. They are part of the Limited Edition Mage Knight Metal miniatures line. However they work very well within the size and design style of the Earthdawn line and so I thought I would include them. There are of course plastic pre-painted versions of these miniatures to be found regularly. All of the plastic sculpts are of a lesser quality than the metal, and even miniatures with the same name look completely different as they were Re-sculpted for the Limited Edition Mage Knight Metal line



Troll Chieftain
Ral-Partha mkm-551



Troll Artillerist
Ral-Partha mkm-522



Tribal Brute
Ral-Partha mkm-591



Half-Troll Hacker
Ral-Partha mkm-539



Troll Brawler
Ral-Partha mkm-522