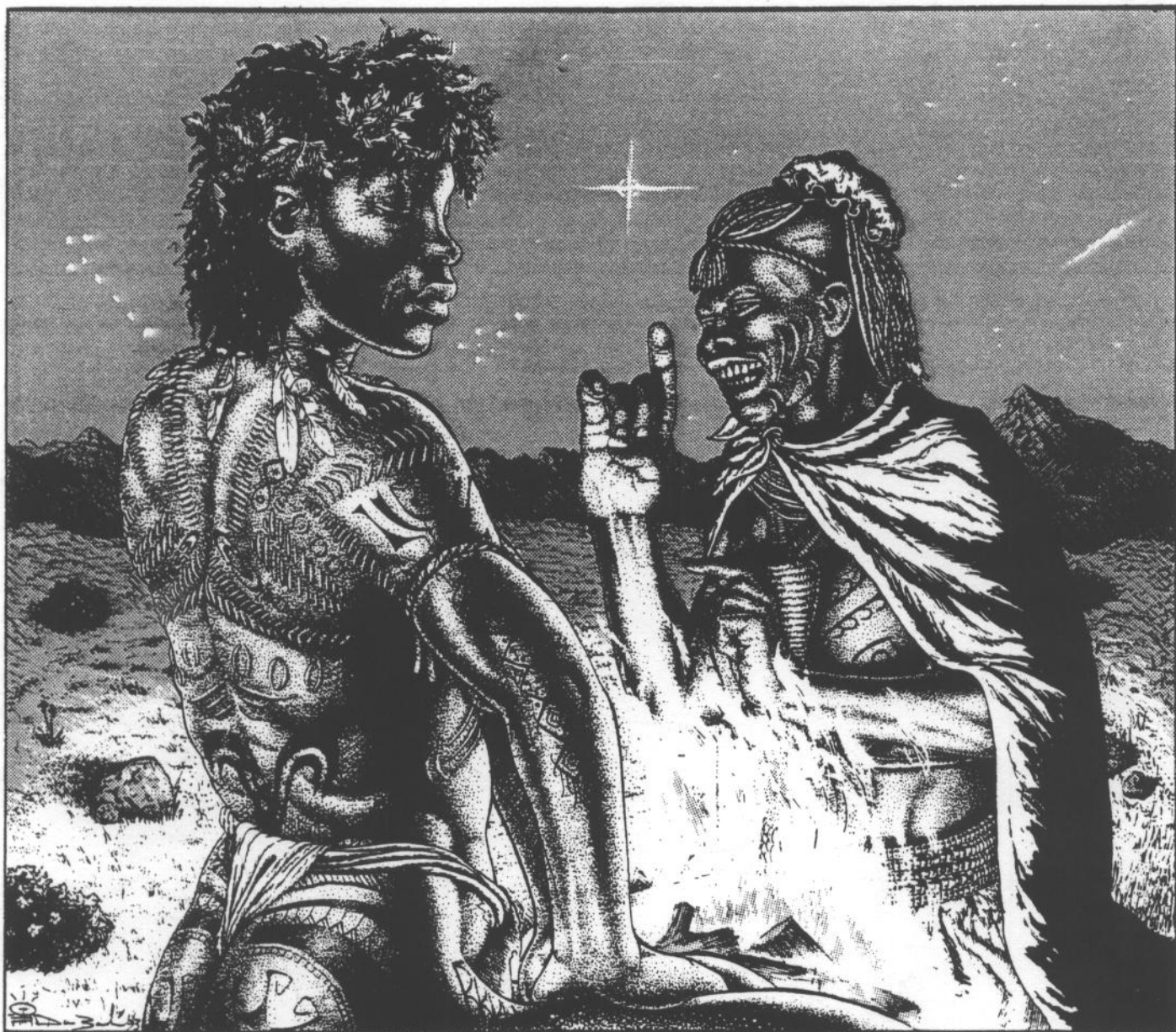


# Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

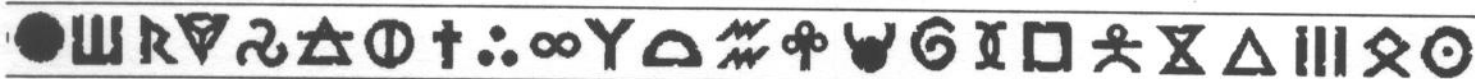
*The Gloranthan Magazine*

*Issue 11 Spring 94*



## **Pamaltela: Great Southern Land**

*with Groomquest, The Cult of Pamalt, Veldt Trek,  
The Land of Jolar, plus Reviews, Maps & Gossip*



## Tales of the Reaching Moon

### The Gloranthan Magazine

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Address: 21 Stephenson Court, Osborne Street, Slough SL1 1TN, England  
Telephone: (0753) 523169 E-Mail: 100116.2616@compuserve.com

## Editorial

Editor & Publisher: David Hall

Associate Editors: Michael O'Brien & Steve Thomas

Special Guest Editor: David Scott

Graphic Design: Michael O'Brien

Chief Proof-reader & General Dogsbody: Nick Brooke

Cover Artwork: Dan Barker

Authors: Peter Erickson, David Hall, John Hughes, Philippa Hughes, Finula McCaul, Michael O'Brien, Sandy Petersen, Paul Reilly, Eric Rowe, Greg Stafford.

Artists: Dan Barker (p.14, 21, 22, 33, 36, 44), Garen Ewing (p.48), Michael Gütton (p.3), Ralph Horsley (p. 32, 35, 55) Walter Moore (p37), Wayne Reynolds (p.5,6), Merle Insinga (p53, 54) Pamaltela Map (pp 28-29) drawn by Shaun Appleby and Phil Dexter from originals by Greg Stafford. Other maps (p. 11, 27, 37) by Steve Thomas.

Notes from Nochet compiled & translated by MOB. Contributors: Ian Gortick, John Hughes, John Lawson, MOB, Sandy Petersen, Paul Reilly, Mick Rowe, Greg Stafford.

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Single issues: £2.50 plus 50p postage. Subscriptions: £7.50 gets you a three issue sub, including postage. Available from David Hall. Please make cheques or postal orders to "David Hall".

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## Contributions

Contributions are gratefully received, especially artwork. Write to the editorial address enclosing an SSAE or International Reply Coupon for our writers guidelines. All written contributions should be double spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! We can accept discs in various formats - write for details. With artwork contributions please don't send originals by normal post, good photocopies are preferred.

As ever, the generous reward for publication is a FREE copy of the issue!







Welcome to Pamaltela

# The Great Southern Land

Welcome to the Great Southern Land - Pamaltela, *RuneQuest's* undiscovered country. We offer the exploration of it as part of the RQ Renaissance, the new beginning that started with the recent Avalon Hill publications and Greg Stafford's *King Of Sartar*.

As we grow older, our roleplaying tastes change. The Greg Stafford who gave us *Pendragon* and *King of Sartar* is not the same Greg Stafford who gave us *White Bear & Red Moon* and *Apple Lane*. Roleplaying itself is growing - look at *Vampire*, *Amber*, systemless gaming and freeforms - and Chaosium is still up there with the leaders.

Yet Glorantha (and *RuneQuest* in particular) is showing its age. The world dates from Greg Stafford's adolescence, and it has changed and adapted itself as Greg has changed, as roleplaying has changed, and indeed as western culture has changed. It still carries a lot of unnecessary baggage from our wargaming past (those of you who have seen the drafts for RQ4 will know what I mean). Glorantha is a world of imagination, a world where we can challenge our preconceptions and prejudices or simply reinforce them. The choice is ultimately yours - the prime reason for roleplaying or reading Glorantha is naturally to have fun, fun fun (and to roleplay ducks). But if you wish to remain true to Greg's vision of Glorantha, and to escape, however briefly, from the patriarchal, self-centred views of western culture, there is an obligation to challenge your imagination (otherwise, you might as well play DnD).

Greg invites us to consider the power of myth and cultural diversity, and as a result, Glorantha is a tremendous place. We're about to explore and set down a new continent. Will Pamaltela turn into a simple vehicle for male heroic fantasy, with primitive natives, funny customs and weird monsters - another DnD supplement? Or will we try to take its uniqueness seriously, trying to create a continent with cultural depth and consistency, a vehicle for storytelling, drama, self-discovery and wonder (plus the occasional bad pun and firefight)? With this issue, I hope you'll see that we have opted for the latter.

The common view of Pamalt tribal life seems to be African plains of the colonial period (Masai in anti-western/survival mode, Tallensi, Nuer etc). The Pamalt cult as written certainly reflects this view, and those Doraddi who follow in the Right Footpath of Pamalt are in many ways analogous. Yet Greg Stafford envisages another side to the plains, one that is much more Koori (Australian Aboriginal). These are the Doraddi who follow the Left Footpath. John Hughes, Tales's resident anthropologist, explores this new vision in the pages of this issue. You'll become more aware of this perspective and tension as you read.

Pamaltela is as wide and diverse as Genertela to the north, and this issue we have chosen to focus primarily on the Doraddi folk of Jolar. Choosing what to include and exclude has been a difficult job, and I apologise to those whose material I have had to pull. There is a wealth of Pamaltelan material out there which we have only begun to tap. In future issues of *Tales* we intend to feature the northern coastal areas in more detail, the mysterious land of Rahmuktara far to the south, and other equally fascinating places.

Until then, may Guidefather Pamalt watch over you as you tread the Questlines of the Great Southern Land!

## The Power Rune

The God Learners often distorted local patterns of worship to fit their own preconceptions and academic strictures. This was especially true in Pamaltela, a land whose culture and religious mythology were profoundly alien to God Leamer experience and thought.

Amidst this clash of realities, the God Leamer cult synthesis often obscured more than it revealed.

One example is the 'Pamalt' or Power Rune, a source of much confusion among visitors to Pamaltela.



The Power Rune belongs to Pamalt. In God Leamer documents, it refers to the unique influence Pamalt exerts over the land through his Necklace and Council, and his close kinship with the Earth.

Among the tribes of Pamaltela, the rune is one of a small number of secret/sacred runes used within the multiple levels of cultic and clan initiation.

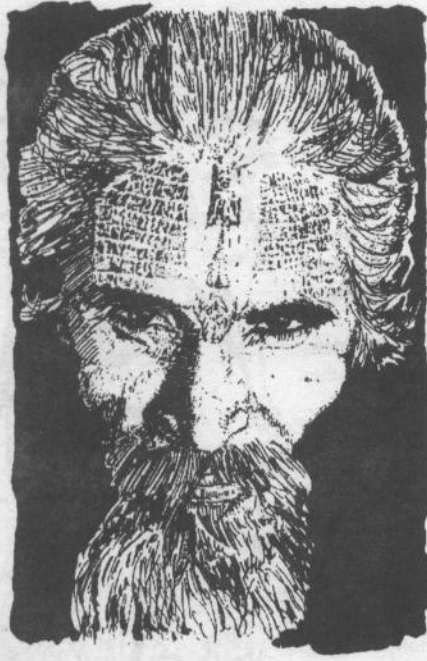
The exact meaning and power of the Rune can only be revealed to initiates, and the degree of understanding increases through the various levels of cult status. However, in general terms, the Rune denotes Order through Kinship, cooperation between groups, recognition of rights and obligations, and the proper placement of everything in the universe. All of these properties are closely associated with Pamalt Himself, who always follows the Laws of Kinship, and through the Teachings of the Right Footpath, is its keeper and protector.

However, Pamalt did not create Kinship. Kinship is a universal form rune, pre-existing and absolute. In Pamaltela, Kinship is often personified as Grandmother Spider, the Changing Woman, whose webs of order and understanding bind the universe together.

The Rune is universally recognised because it is often borne by emissaries, marriage parties, and pilgrims — those who leave their own lands in the service of a higher power.

Other secret/sacred runes include Beauty/Desire, Sight/Dreaming, Spider, Monsoon, Totem, Land, Singing, Creativity/Man and Wisdom/Woman. They are not runes in the universal God Leamer sense, but are powerful religious symbols of understanding and power.





# “Blood is Stronger than Death”

— the Roleplaying Possibilities of Kinship among the Tribes of Glorantha

In Glorantha, kinship is *the single most important* system of identity and social organisation.<sup>1</sup> In tribal societies such as the Orlanthei or Doraddi, a person's place in the scheme of things is largely determined by the circumstances of birth. Being born of particular parents defines your membership in a group, and places you in a network of obligation and cooperation that will extend throughout your life, from birth to death and beyond. Friends and rivals, advisers and marriage partners — all are predetermined. The crops you harvest, the roots you gather, the meat you hunt and the artefacts you create will often be distributed along kin lines. The persons you may or may not marry and the identity of your children are determined through kinship. *Without kin, a person is nothing.*

“The Gods themselves are bound by kinship. Even Lunars and Uz have kinship of sorts. The Mostali don't — but Mostali are crazy. Blood is stronger than Death.”

From our perspective, it is hard to understand a world where relationships with people are pre-eminently relationships with relatives. Yet visitors to a Gloranthan community must understand kinship before they can understand anything of how that community operates. They must try to fit themselves into the system, either through ‘adoption’ or through some distant (and often fictitious) connection. For strangers cannot be trusted, but obligations between relatives are viewed as morally binding, and their fulfilment ranks high among the paramount virtues of any tribal people. Kinship obligations symbolise the importance of the clan over the individual, the social good over greed and self-interest.

It is important to remember that kinship is a way of organising the universe, and often has little to do with actual biological relationships. It is also a system of ideal-case rules that sometimes have to be changed to meet the realities of life and death — always subject to inconsistencies or modification as people die or clans disappear. The history of any clan is filled with examples where prohibitions are forgotten, new rules ‘remembered’, or instances where people suddenly claim descent from previously unknown ancestors. After all, kinship is also politics, and politics is power.

*Your clan are the Snakepipe Dancers? Why didn't you say so! Our clan marry women of the Snake clan — you must be a distant relative. If I knew that I wouldn't have set fire to you. I am Kerola — my Tall Mountain clan make chiefs for this tribe, so I am your older brother. So is Terrin LongShanks, the one with the bad breath and sneaky undercut. Skadeema, the woman unbending her sword, is your sister — you must look after her and bring her gifts. Go to her when you need advice. You've already met Sigrin Mooneater — she is from the White Bull clan — the clan from which you might take a wife. Though from that wound you gave her, it may be a while — she can terrify the clan elders when she wants to. Try and be nice to her.*

*So, younger brother, come meet your relatives. Now be dutiful and carry your older brother's pack. And stay away from Sigrin for now; she has a bad temper.*

## Genertela: The Orlanthei Pattern

The tribal and clan system is the heart of Orlanthei society. The dominant pattern of Orlanthei descent is traced through **exogamous (out-marrying) patrilineal (male-centred) clans**. At least seven classes of marriage exist, reflecting the individuality and freedom of Orlanthei culture.<sup>2</sup> The basic social unit is the **husband and wife pair**, which can take many different forms. Unusual among Gloranthan societies, Orlanthei marriage is a **union of individuals** as much as an agreement between groups. Marriage is exclusive and monogamous, though not necessarily permanent.

Normally a wife will join her husband's household after marriage. She brings with her a

dowry (usually household goods or cattle) to help her maintain economic independence and to compensate her for the loss of family estate. The husband pays **brideprice** (often a mixture of practical and ceremonial goods), compensating his wife's kin group for the loss of her work services and reproductive labour. All children of the union will belong to the husband's clan.<sup>3</sup>



“Orlanthei had the first clan. We will have clans, like Orlanthei.”

— Heort's Laws

*I know you love him, daughter, but spare the crockery and listen to an old man. My heart is also sad, but I speak wisdom. Listen to my voice. His clan is strong and rich and many; we are weak and poor and few. How could I ever raise such a dowry as his elders will demand? We still follow the Wind, and are poor as a result. ‘King takes the cow, Lunars the calf. Baby still cries for milk.’ I married off your sister three years ago, and we still go hungry during LongStorm as a result. The brideprice we received was fair, but you can't sell off marriage cups — sacrilege! — so they sit on the mantle and we go hungry. Perhaps you'd like to marry Craven Wolf instead — he may be a stickpicker but the dowry will be cheap.*

To understand the system, examine the fairly typical Orlanthei family tree given in **Figure Two**. (The conventions of kinship diagrams are given in **Figure One**). Take the effort to understand these dry little diagrams; they hide a largely untapped wealth of roleplaying possibilities.

Note that this model, in unifying males round the clan homestead while scattering females to other villages, promotes the male solidarity so typical of Orlanthei society. The core of the clan is male, and it is male offspring who will continue the clan. Female children are expensive — they must

be provided with a dowry by the clan — while males will raise their own brideprice as part of preparation for adult initiation and married life.

**Pamaltela: The Doraddi Pattern**



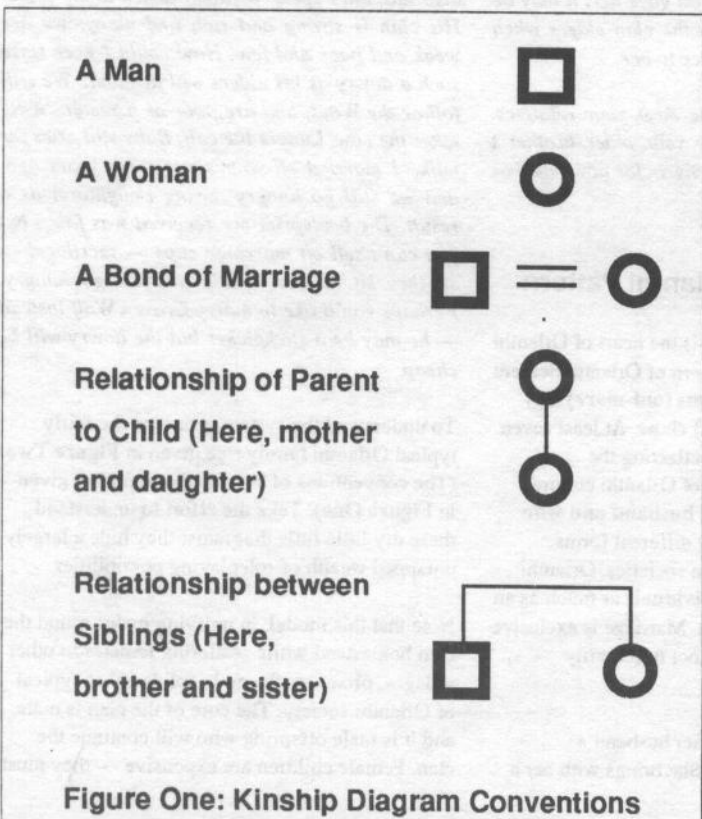
**“Pamalt’s Women are the wisest of marriage makers.”**  
 — EarthDancer Dreaming

To understand Pamaltela, you must understand kinship. The southern continent has literally *hundreds* of different kinship systems. The Agimori Doraddi peoples provide an example that is typical: yet one that stands in sharp contrast to Orlanthei customs of the north. The Doraddi system demonstrates how basic patterns of kinship shape identity, power and politics.

The Doraddi know Kinship as one of the Original Powers, first of the Old Ones. She is identified with Grandmother Spider, the Changing Woman, a universal all-pervasive force similar to Ginna Jar. “Even the Gods must obey Kinship, for she is their Blood and their Skin and their Duty.”

Doraddi descent is traced through **exogamous (out-marrying) matrilineal (female-centred) ‘skins’ or clans**. Outwardly, this may appear to be a mirror image of the Orlanthei system, with descent traced through the female line. However, these practices combine to create a very different worldview: one that determines the central features of Doraddi culture.

Rather than husband and wife, the basic social unit of Doraddi society is the **brother and sister pair**. To understand why, let’s see how a matrilineal system works.



A typical Doraddi family tree is given at **Figure Three**. The Doraddi model, in contrast to the Orlanthei, scatters male offspring while promoting **female solidarity**. The core of the skin is female, and it is female offspring who retain the herds, lands, rights, ritual responsibilities and identity of the clan. Female children are pampered and protected at all costs. Male children are used to further inter-skin links through marriage contracts and exchange.

In such a system, a man’s continuing identity is linked to his **sister’s children** rather than his own, and so he will take a very close interest in their upbringing and general well-being. Indeed, in Doraddi society it is *Kawkuka* (‘Uncle’ or ‘Mother’s Brother’) rather than *Nia* (‘Father’ or ‘Mother’s Husband’) who has the prime responsibility for raising a woman’s children. The title *Kadnini* - ‘Guidefather’ - is an honorific used to describe Mother’s Brother. In clans without kings or chiefs, the term is also used to describe Pamalt’s relationship to the Necklace and to his people.



**“We carry digging sticks, not spears.”**  
 — The Women’s Circle

Other unusual aspects of Doraddi kinship (at least from our perspective) are the marriage practices. Marriage is first and foremost a **contract between groups**; it is only incidentally a relationship between individuals. The Women’s Circle, comprised of a skin’s senior females (*Gundalin*, or ‘digging sticks’, the most useful, versatile and important of Pamalt’s many gifts) negotiate the marriage contracts between skins, and this is the basis of their social power.

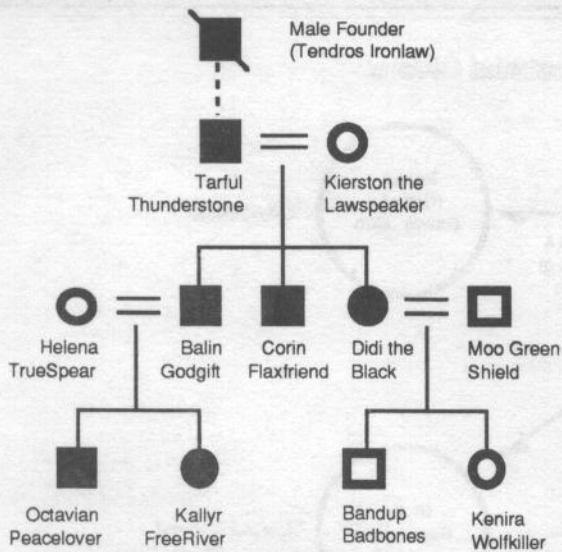
Exactly whom one can marry is determined by the web of relationships and obligations between a tribe’s different skins. Each stands in a relationship of either **husband-giver** or **husband-taker** to one or to a number of other skins. In the simplest systems, two skins exchange male offspring. More commonly, a tribe has four, eight or even more skins in complex interrelationship, giving and taking husbands to ensure the skin’s survival. The obligations created in these marriage contracts are played out in the realms of ritual, hunting, and warfare. In Doraddi society, politics is kinship.

**Figure Four** provides an example of skin relationships from the Aranjara people. Aranjara are born into one of four skins: these skins organise their social and ritual universe.<sup>4</sup>

Assume that Moonwatcher is a young man of the *Instamiru* (Sweet Clover) skin. Everyone of that skin is his immediate family — he calls them ‘mother’ or ‘father’ or ‘brother’ or ‘sister’. He has special terms for his blood family, his closest relatives and for those in special ritual relationships to him. Moonwatcher can never marry anyone from his own skin, nor should he have sexual relationships with them.

Nor can Moonwatcher marry anyone from the *Squaa* skin, for they are rivals. Both *Instamiru* and *Squaa* take husbands and wives from the other two skins of the clan, so they compete for good matches. Yet the *Squaa* also ritually ‘manage’ the ceremonies and lands of the *Instamiru* Dreaming — just as the *Instamiru* manage those of the *Squaa* — so they must also be respected as ritual partners. Most members of that skin are ‘aunt’ or ‘uncle’ to Moonwatcher. He must be respectful and unemotional in all his dealings with the *Squaa*.





**Figure Two: An Orlanthe descent group:** Part of the Snakepipe Dancer clan of the Tovtaros tribe, centred around the village of Ironspike in Northern Sartar.

Tarful Thunderstone is a linear descendant of Tendros, the Male Founder of the **Snakepipe Dancer** (black shading) descent group or clan. Tarful marries Kierston Lawspeaker, a woman of the **Ironspike** (white shading) clan. Their children, both male and female (Balin, Corin and Didi), belong to the 'Dancer clan. They will all live in the 'Dancer homestead or village. Upon maturity, son Balin takes Helena Truespear as wife. She is from another clan, but they too reside in the 'Dancer homestead. Their children (Octavian and Kallyr) also belong to the Dancer clan and reside in the Dancer homestead. (*Forget son Corin; to his mother's horror he became a snotty-nosed Lhankor Mhy, moved to distant Boldhome and effectively removed himself from clan affairs*). When daughter Didi marries Moo Green Shield, she will move to her husband's territory and homestead. Her children (Bandup and Kenira) will both belong to her husband's clan. In this third generation, Octavian Peacelover is the senior male in the line tracing back to Tendros.

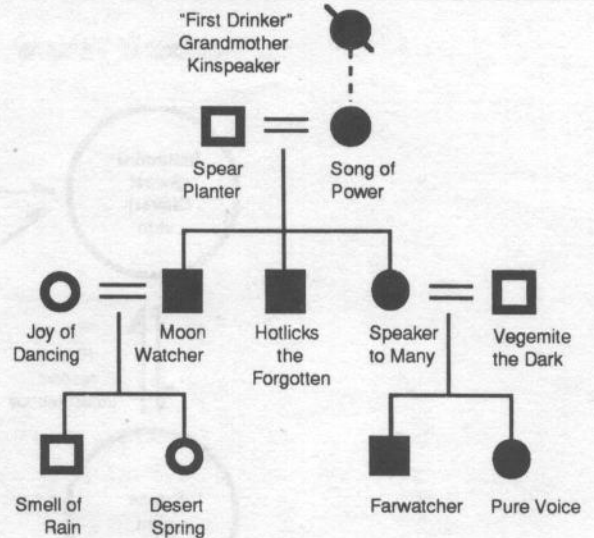
Incest prohibitions apply to members of Moonwatcher's skin and that of his 'manager' skin as though they were his own family.

Women of the Instamiru take husbands from the *Vol Ini* (Provider) and *Blood Bean* skins of the clan: those skins are 'husband givers'. Most members of those skins are 'nephews' or 'nieces' to Moonwatcher. His own wife will come from one of these skins, and Moonwatcher will live at their hearths.

Each of the Aranjara skins stand in mirror relationships to each other: There is usually no absolute seniority.

Conception totems, which are independent of skin, add a dimension to relationships that work across skins. Indeed, in some areas, people of the same conception totem form their own lodges or initiation groups. The webs of kinship are everpresent but everchanging, a complex web of age, skin and ritual authority.

Formally, Doraddi marriage is neither monogamous nor exclusive — sex and marriage are very different things in the Doraddi mind. In practice, however, most marriages are marked by openness and mutual respect. Divorce is uncommon, though a woman will often separate from an unsuitable husband. Both will continue to live in the woman's compound, but will be ritual partners only — each will discretely take a more suitable lover. For a man to seek public separation entails him leaving his wife's compound and being branded as selfish and ritually unreliable — it is a very



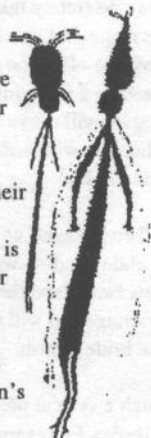
**Figure Three: A Doraddi descent group.** Part of the Sweet Clover skin of the Aranjara people, who dwell on the plains of Jolar in Northern Pamaltela.

Song of Power is a linear descendant of Grandmother Kinspeaker, the Female Founder of the **Instamiru (Sweet Clover)** descent group or skin. She marries Spear Planter, a man of the **Vol Ini (Gift of Dawn or Overnighter plant)** skin, who leaves his own village to do brideservice in the family compound of Song's mother, where she also lives. Their children, both male and female (Moonwatcher, Hotlicks the Forgotten and Speaker to Many), belong to the Clover skin. They will all live in the Clover compound, controlled by the most senior woman of the skin ("Grandmother"). Upon maturity, son Moonwatcher is matched to a wife (Joy of Dancing) from a skin in the correct marriage relationship, and he leaves to do brideservice in his new wife's compound. Their children (Smell of Rain and Desert Spring) will belong to Joy's skin and reside in her family compound. (*Forget Hotlicks; to his mother's horror he fell openly in love with a woman from a skin he he was forbidden to marry. They committed incest in the eyes of the tribe and so fled, removing themselves forever from the life of their village — a horrible fate*). When Speaker To Many marries (to Vegemite, who is of the proper skin), her husband comes to the family compound to settle and to perform his brideservice. Their children (Farwatcher and Pure Voice) will both belong to the Clover skin, and grow up under Speaker's guidance. In this third generation, Pure Voice is the senior female in the line tracing back to Grandmother Kinspeaker.

rare occurrence. A woman's skin can publically force an errant husband to live at his own skin's hearth — a form of humiliation and disgrace. Such arrangements underscore the power of women and the centrality of the brother-sister bond over that of husband and wife.

Young men and women are encouraged to fully explore their sexuality before marriage: they come to the formal union with obligations to their skin foremost in mind. Polygamy is not unknown among senior men and women, but this is for the purpose of ritual rather than social or sexual prestige. Young people seldom have the time or material resources necessary to fulfil the endless ritual obligations associated with multiple marriage. Virginity is not prized — a woman's children after all belong to her skin: nor is endless empty sexual conquest considered noteworthy or admirable.

Generally, the Doraddi are liberal and forgiving in matters of sexuality, but demanding and conservative in matters of friendship or skin obligations.



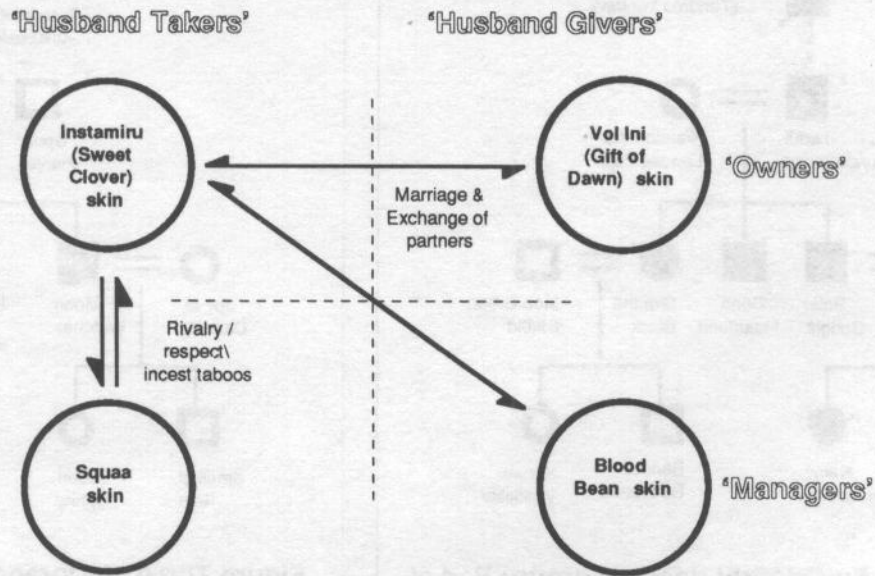


Figure Four: Kinship, marriage and exchange relationships between the four Aranjara skins.

Marriage is a long drawn-out process that involves a series of ceremonial exchanges and transactions between skins. This process does not end at marriage — indeed, it may continue after the death of both partners.

Two marriages — *one for the taking, one for the giving* — is the Doraddi ideal. Husband and wife are seldom, if ever, the same age. A male child will be promised at birth to a suitable woman of the correct skin. This woman may be already married to another man and already a mother. As the boy child grows, his future wife will be a familiar senior figure who plays a major part in his upbringing. This also is a central aspect of Doraddi society: all relationships of power or exchange begin with a display of parental magnanimity. Of course, with such a long familiarity and age disparity between husband and wife, sexual attraction is a very small part of a Doraddi marriage relationship.

A young groom-to-be may have 'fatherly' responsibilities toward 'children' his own age — this occurs when the aged husband of his promised wife dies. While awaiting marriage, he may discretely take lovers and sex partners his own age, but must be careful not to display too obvious affection or commitment. When he has become a full adult, the marriage will take place, and he will move to the compound of his wife. There he will perform brideservice to his wife and her kin.

When his aged wife dies, the husband — now middle aged — will take a younger woman as his new bride, and the cycle begins anew. That marriage too will usually have been organised at the bride's birth.

Such a system creates some unusual social stresses. For example, one's 'children' or future parent-in-laws are often your own age, and so potential sexual partners. To counter this, formal modes of conduct often determine how one may

act toward different classes of kin. "Joking relationships" involving humour and limited sexual licence between classes of relatives are one way of dealing with such stress. "Avoidance relationships" where one is forbidden any direct contact with a particular class of person are also common, for example, between bride and father-in-law.

**"Even the Gods must obey Kinship, for She is their Blood and their Skin and their Duty."**

In Doraddi society, every relationship is determined by kinship — one is surrounded by 'brothers' and 'sisters', 'fathers', 'uncles', 'mothers', 'aunts' and 'grandparents'. The actual blood relationship may be distant or non-existent, but kinship determines exactly how any two people will relate to one another. Overlapping systems of conception and power totems, age lodges, religious cults, clan ritual and ceremonial obligations further complicate the status of a given relationship. Functional titles such as 'chief' or 'hunt-leader' can be important, but kinship is always central.

Even foreigners and non-Agimori can be incorporated into the Doraddi social universe. Once a relationship has been established to a skin — be it through totem or name or religious affiliation — then even a stranger from another land will have brothers and sisters and fathers and children — friends and rivals, enemies and potential spouses. Thus has Pamalt ordered the Universe.

*After mourning her dead husband for seven seasons, the ancestors told MonsoonStorm that it was time for her to take a second husband. She knew her groom-to-be: his name was PlainsFire of the BloodBean skin, and he lived by his Grandmother's hearth at the end of the Three Women Dancing songline, some five days journey across the Spine.*

*Because his skin lived so far away, 'Storm saw him only at the MothGatherer Dreaming held every Sacred Time at the Brindabul Caverns. There the Bogong moths flocked together for their human skin to sing them new life: millions upon millions of great greasy moths filling the caves and valley walls. All the skins of the Aranjara gathered there, for there was much singing to be done, and the moths were sweet, ready to be scooped by the handful and thrown into the fires, sizzling and hot and fatty.*

*He had still been a boy when 'Storm last saw him, preparing for his initiation. He would be a man now — she would quest to bring him back to the Vol Ini hearth, where he would hunt as his brideservice and serve the elders of the skin.*

*With the blessing of her Grandmother and the Women's Circle, MonsoonStorm prepared for her marriage journey. Her younger sister and Guidefather would accompany her on the quest. Because her skin was a small one, several long-lost brothers — strangers from a far-distant clan — had also been co-opted. Everyone had their own unique part to play.*





The Journey would be both ritual and pilgrimage; heroquest and groomquest. Storm was Gundalin, she knew the songs of the dreaming track, knew the stories of the Songline, knew the dangers she would face along the way. With great ceremony, the entire clan — men and women together — sang the Songs of Power and danced the Three Women Dreaming to prepare the marriage party for the journey. Ahead lay the Spine, and the Songline that Faranar had followed when she sought Pamalt her husband. With digging stick and spear, song and spell, MonsoonStorm stepped alone into the wilderness with her family and new kin...

[And that, my friends, is the basis of the GroomQuest scenario that follows later in the issue.]

### John Hughes

#### Footnotes

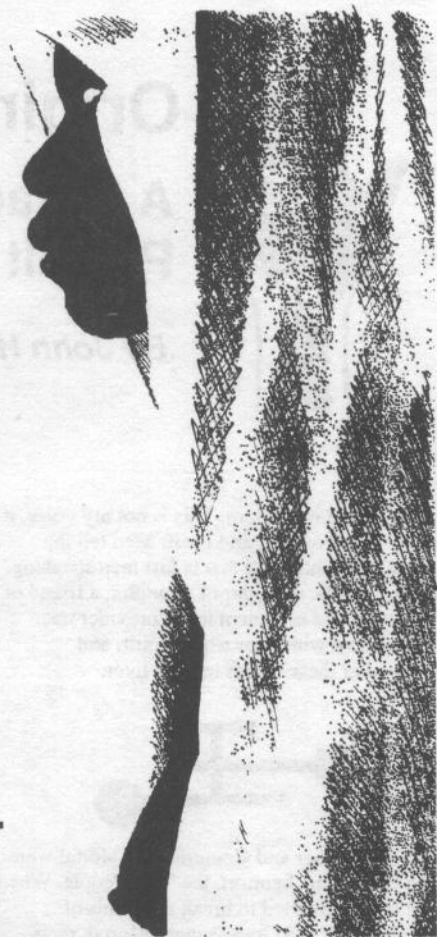
1. Even in Gloranthan cities, power is still largely exercised through tribal and family ties. Even cult temples are often 'family' concerns. By way of example, archaeological evidence has shown that in the ancient Mediterranean, even urban

civilisations such as the Roman Empire contained only one tenth of their population within cities. The rest resided in small (clan) villages or estates, or in semi-nomadic tribal formations.

2. See *King of Sartar* page 243.

3. See *Report On The Orlanthe* in *Jalk's Book* (*King of Sartar*, pages 238-260) for an exploration of Orlanthe concepts of kinship.

4. Clan and totemic names take many forms in Pamaltela, but a large percentage relate to the Earth and the plants that cover it. In the unpublished *Pamalt* book, Chaosium notes, "All Doraddi trace their skin descent through the female line to an ancestral mother of the line, called 'First Drinker', who later died and was transformed into a special type of plant. Members of that lineage have special relationships with those plants. Most importantly, after the death of a person, those medicine plants sprout from the grave. Lineage limits potential spouses, as certain lineages may not intermarry, and may affect the cults one may join. Lineage is marked by a scar or tattoo pattern, sometimes simple, but often quite complex."



*Notes From Nochet* takes on a decidedly Pamaltelan flavour this issue. The following entries come from a special section in *Book XXVIII*, which remains in the personal collection of the Sage Salokin Dyoll (despite pleas it should be returned to the Library proper.)

(XXVIII. 33-098) No one may enter the Maslo city of Jolin, in Flanch on the Onlaks peninsula, without a two pound bag of salt, which is used to poison the land around the city and prevent the jungle encroaching further. (XXVIII. 33-099) The huge Camudi snake of the Fethlon Jungle has a unique way of killing its prey. Rather than using poison or constricting its victims to death, the snake places its distended jaw over its prey's head and then waits for them to suffocate. (XXVIII. 33-100) Even before the coming of chaos, Ikadz was known for his brutality against his brother Simrust. Pain and torture were so much part of Simrust's life that he became immune to or perhaps even dependent on them. When the Unholy Trio unleashed chaos, Ikadz was quick to see an opportunity to spread his knowledge and joined with the chaos. Simrust, on the other hand, after knowing nothing but Ikadz's abuse, suddenly felt nothing. Fearing this new experience Simrust tried to follow his sibling, but Ikadz was too busy torturing others to worry about his brother. So Simrust sought out ways that he could cause the pain to himself; as he learnt more ways in which to inflict pain upon himself he knew momentary joy, but the joy was short-lived until the next time he would torture himself. And so in the pantheon of chaos Ikadz is known as the Torturer of Souls, while Simrust is known as the Torturer of Self. (XXVIII. 33-101) A young boy, whose skin had blue and white stripes like that of a zebra, was recently reported wandering the streets of Garguna. When asked who his parents were he answered Veldan and Warera. When asked what his name was he answered Valera. When asked what he was doing there he answered that he was waiting to be the Warden. When asked the Warden of what he answered the Warden of the World. (XXVIII. 33-102) The ignorant natives of distant Afadjann believe the sun to be Fida'is, a huge fiery bird that "tumbles" across the sky in death throes and then is consumed by its own flame. In the morning, it rises from its ashes and begins its journey again. *Quill the Wanderer*. Additional Note: Ormath-Am turned blue with rage to learn that his mighty Yelm was a stupid bird. Some rumours are worth spreading! *Sovent the Shameless*. (XXVIII. 33-103) Within the lands of remote Afadjann, there is said to be a mystical, fertile valley called Garni-muk. Surrounding it are twenty mountains, so tall, snow frosts their tops all year round, but so thin, a man could walk around one of their bases in but a day. They are the Yas-garni and are said to be the inert forms of primitive gods. The blue slaves of Afadjann claim they are their old gods, now dead and useless. *Quill the Wanderer*. (XXVIII. 33-104) In far Afadjann, the Knowledge God has said that at one time the people changed the names of their gods. With these new names, the gods gained new pasts and new identities. Now they have twice as many gods. This was called the God Switch. *Quill the Wanderer*. (XXVIII. 33-105)



# Origins of Kinship

## A Doraddi Myth Concerning Pamalt and his Children

By John Hughes

Listen, here is wisdom. This is not my voice, it is the voice of the Land itself. Men tell the story differently, but that is just men speaking. I am Surinda, daughter of Alundira, a friend of the truth, and my totem is the provider tree. Listen now with your whole spirit, and remember these words in your liver.



Grandfather and Grandmother Mortal were the first of the Agimori, the True People. When the Old Trees tried to break the heads of Grandfather and Grandmother Mortal, they were sorely hurt. Their flames were doused, they became frail and slow of thought.

Now the Parents had three children, two daughters and a son. They all lived in FirstCamp, a beautiful place that Pamalt had made for them.

The elder sister was called Provider (Engivi), and she loved to make things, and to surround herself with beautiful objects. Provider was stern and practical: it was she who fed and protected her two frail parents.

The younger sister was called Sweet Clover (Instamiru). She was beautiful and frivolous. Instamiru loved dreaming and ceremony and singing and telling tales. She did little about the camp, but everyone loved her because she made everyone happy with her songs and magic.

The youngest child was male, and his name was Spear Shaft (*IVonSay*)<sup>1</sup>. He was lazy, and spent a lot of time off by himself, watching the birds and animals and pretending to be hunting. (Men have not changed!) When he did bring back game, it was good food, so nobody minded all the time that he wasted.

One day Spear Shaft caught a Monsoon Snake, whose flesh is clean and white. Coming back to camp, he spied Sweet Clover in one of her secret places, singing and listening to the Earth. Now Spear Shaft was becoming a man, and he wanted to lay with his sister. He cooked her the snake, and said 'Lay down beside me'.

Sweet Clover said 'Only if you teach me all the animal and bird secrets you have learnt.' Spear Shaft did this willingly. When Sweet Clover knew all that Spear Shaft did, they lay together, just the once. Later, Sweet Clover gave birth to a son, and he was called Out Of Place (*Huuson*).

Spear Shaft thought he was now a man.

When he returned to camp, he sat on the north side of the campfire, and spoke first, and ordered everybody around. He ate the choicest cuts of meat and tried to lay with his sisters. (They hit him with their digging sticks, and that soon put an end to that). FirstCamp became an unhappy place, and everyone was miserable.

Now Pamalt loved the True People. It was Pamalt who gave them the Firebrand, and it was Pamalt who created the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes for them to live upon.

While all this happened, Pamalt was off wandering, singing aloud the Song of Order, creating the dreaming tracks and songlines. He assigned wide spaces where the old trees could not go, using Firebrand to mark the land. He created many secret places sacred to plant and animal and human and spirit.

When Pamalt returned to FirstCamp, he saw that the True People were unhappy, and that there was no order in their lives. So he consulted with Faranar his wife, and with the Necklace, and with the Old Ones who lived in his compound.



Then Pamalt called the True People to him and said, 'I have come to teach you Kinship, that you will know order and happiness in your lives.'

He said to the children, 'Because your Parents are old and frail, I will be GuideFather to you all. Like the male ostrich who broods his chicks, I will be responsible for teaching you the Right Footpath, and I will decide when you are ready to be men and women.'

So Pamalt taught them all the laws of Kinship, and the ways of making men and women properly, and the correct ways to address and treat each other. He taught them who it was proper to lay with and who it was not. He taught them the ways of rightful marriage and created the first skins. He taught them wisdom, we call this The Right Footpath.

When the time was right, Pamalt said that Provider should marry Out Of Place. She would be First Drinker to many skins and clans and tribes, and to her was given many lands and territories. From her are descended the Children of the Right Hand, who are practical and love order. The Children of the Right Hand are tall and thin, with black hair and eyes of many colours. They build villages and kraals, and

some tribes herd cattle or other beasts, and even plant gardens in the earth. The Right Hand Folk are many: they have chiefs and temples and are proud and strong. They brew beer and forge metal and make pots. They love trophies and beadwork and cloth of bright colours. They are a serious folk who love to speak in proverbs and riddles. Their ceremonies move earth and hell. They are the first of the True People.

Pamalt said that Sweet Clover should marry Spear Shaft, because what they did together could not be undone. Sweet Clover would also be First Drinker, but to her children would go the barren lands, and the isolated mountains and coastlines where no one else went. (This is because they lay together: their children still carry the shame.)

From Sweet Clover are descended the Children of the Left Hand, who are secretive and love magic. The Children of the Left Hand are small of build and broad of face, with flat noses and eyes of brown or grey. Their hair soon turns to white. They do not build or herd or plant — they do not change the land in any way. They are a happy and joyous folk, given to music and dancing and ceremony. Their singing can bring tears or laughter or sleep, and it can kill those who are evil. Their magic is great, they know the Songs of Power. So too is their wisdom, for they know all the secrets of the earth. They do not have chiefs, they do not have villages, they do not make war. They are the second of the True People.



This is why two very different peoples inhabit the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes — the Folk of the Right Hand and the Folk of the Left Hand. We respect each other, for we have the same parents, and Pamalt is GuideFather to us all. But we do not intermarry, nor trade, nor join for ceremony. Rarely do we enter each other's lands. We are different, we have little to share.

This is also why women are the Keepers of Wisdom: women think with their voices, men think with their spears. Men gave away their secrets to women long ago. This is why women elect the chief, and why men and women act together to initiate the young.

This is why we have GuideFathers to teach us the Right Footpath.

This is why we call the male ostrich 'GuideFather', and never hunt him or his chicks.

This is why no woman of our people may eat the Monsoon Snake.

This is why the elder sister is always practical and strong, and why the younger sister is always frivolous and unruly.

This is why we marry outside our skin. And why men leave their clan when they marry, while women remain to care for old and young.

This is not why men are lazy: men were like that from the very beginning!

So Speaks the Land.

1. The 'I' sound is used only in proper names, and is a sharp clinking noise made with the tongue against the roof of the mouth.





# JOLAR

## One of the Lands of Pamaltela, from Chaosium's unpublished Pamaltela Book

"I am (name) of the (X) lineage, born into the (Y) family."

**Description:** Jolar is everywhere a wide flat plain, turning into desert to the south and fading through light forest to jungle in the north. One reliable river, several usually reliable rivers, and many seasonal rivers cut the rolling lands, generally flowing from north to south into the Nargan.

The plain is covered with several types of ground cover, but includes no grass-type plants. Dominant in Jolar are the *in starniru* (sweet clover) and *vol ini* (overnighter) in river valleys and wetter areas. Several types of trees grow in the wet river bottoms, including the gnarled *bonchu*, the many-trunked *horundu*, and the multi-purpose *engivi*, fondly called "provider". In seasonal rivers the *urutkuru* (river-bottom tree) is ubiquitous, and the legendary *vonsay* (spear shaft) trees dot the open lands with their forlorn clusters. In the south the *pars an golok* (damn-my-luck) thornbushes are a warning that the dangerous lands and poor hunting are about.

The climate is mild year-round. The rainy season causes the hundreds of kinds of groundcover to blossom with a grandeur unknown in northern lands, where plains are blanketed by grasses. It is traditionally divided into the Six Lands: Taluk Tumaru, Molibaksu, Duruhan, Labuhan, Taluk Mormadak, and Kalali.

**Inhabitants:** All the non-chaotic intelligent natives are Doraddi humans.

**Culture:** Doraddi. All natives of Jolar belong to their Lineage. Each person traces his or her lineage through the female line to an ancestral mother of the line, called "First Drinker," who later died and was transformed into a special type of plant. Members of that lineage have special relationships with those plants. Most importantly, after the death of a person his medicine plant sprouts from the grave. Lineage limits potential spouses, as certain lineages may not intermarry, and may affect the cults which one may join. Lineage is marked by a scar or tattoo pattern, sometimes simple, but often quite complex.

All members of a lineage have responsibilities towards strangers of the same lineage. Members of a common lineage always recognize blood relationships with each other in terms of mutual support and friendship. Hence, orphans are unknown.

The monogamous marriage customs of the Arbennan are of interest. Customarily, a young man weds a middle-aged woman. They live together until the woman's death or retirement to an oasis. The man, now middle-aged himself, marries a young woman, beginning the cycle anew with reversed roles.

**Language:** Arbennan

**Government:** The largest organization in Jolar is the Arbennan Confederation, formed primarily to wage war on the Kresh. Independent tribes and families exist everywhere, as is the Doraddi norm. Membership is voluntary, but many have volunteered, excited by the thought of plundering the strange invaders' wagons.

**Military:** Military matters are foreign to Jolar. Doraddi neighbours do not fight one another. Large scale war has, until recently, been forgotten, though combat has always been waged against raiders from other lands or monsters. Most Doraddi men are skilled hunters and can defend their family well. The Vangono warriors maintain a strong tradition. Jmijie wanderers, with their incredible running speed, were excellent scouts in the ancient wars of Hon Hoolbiktu.

**Religion:** Pamalt Pantheon

### People of Note

*Ivi Kange:* Chief of the Arnji tribe, and King of the Arbennan Confederation.

*Hawi Kange:* The warrior cousin of Ivi Kange, and his right-hand man. He has banded together the warriors from all the member families of the Confederation, and taught them to share their booty with their kinsmen afterwards, even those who did not fight. He has introduced the novelty of

organised warfare to the plains, with officers, units of spearmen, etc.

*Kawar Karshe:* Titled the Great Fisherman, this gentle and wise man is the most honored and respected individual in the entire Lake Banini region. He spends most of his time upon boats sailing the calm sea, and never walks upon the earth, but instead treads on fish placed before him.

### History

In the Dawn Age, Taluk Mormadak was a land of dense pinewoods. Elf wars

### JOLAR REGIONAL ACTIVITY TABLE

*Roll weekly per camp*

- 01 All men from nearby settlement are moving out: many items for sale
- 02-08 Many men from nearby settlement are moving out
- 09-13 Many women are packing their gear to move: guards wanted.
- 14-15 Entire community packing to leave
- 16-31 Bountiful *engivi* harvest: free food for everyone.
- 32-36 Merchant from the northlands nearby: metal tools available
- 37 Standing Rainbow sighted: all skills doubled for 1 hour at noon
- 38-42 Northern Kareun wind blows bad luck: all skills halved for 1 day
- 43-82 Big Dance nearby
- 83-92 Famous storyteller nearby
- 93-94 Shamans contest nearby: your choice of spirit magic available
- 95-00 Warrior messenger nearby: possibly carries message from Ivi Kange

*Game animals also in sight 50% of time*

denuded the land and turned it into beautiful green plains. Soon it was settled by Agimori peoples who found the land wild, fertile, and unpopulated by other intelligent creatures. They have striven to maintain that condition, which they consider idyllic.

The Second Age saw the invasion of the Six Legged Empire, so-called because the men rode horses. They seized oases and watering places, built roads, constructed towns, and instituted strict travel laws. But at length their steeds died, their magic failed, and the hero Hon Hoolbiktu drove them out after many struggles. Their few ruins are accursed and shunned.

Recently the intrusion of the rude and strange Wagon People, or Kresh, has disturbed the natives of eastern Jolar. Several tribes have joined together to form the Arbennan Kingdom, ruled by the descendants of Hon Hoolbiktu in Kaioba.

## Places of Interest

**Arnji Fadar (Arnji tribal centre):** This tribe is the central headquarters for the Arbennan Confederation, a gathering of clans and families whose primary objective is to halt the intrusion of Kresh wagons into their lands.

**Banini Lake:** Legend says that a blue giant originally dug this lake which lies at the heart of Kalali. It is rich with many unique

types of fish, which the local tribes catch, process, and trade. Kawar Karshe lives here, usually found upon one of the great reed boats which ply the lake and rivers.

**Barinso:** This rich river valley is widely travelled by clans following age-old seasonal migrations. Somewhere in this stretch of river lurks the Monsterback Island whose progeny, the Hungry Islands, trouble travellers upon the waters of Barinso, Soe, and Rinka.

**Batu Batun:** The land just south of the Mari mountains is desert, cursed to be as dry as the Nargan. The only reason anyone ever goes here is to visit the trade centre of Sees Bananjarb.

**Batudu:** The land of Batudu centres upon the river of the same name. The river usually dries up for part of its length, but the clans who migrate through know how to live with it.

**Bostolos (Best Oranges):** At this oasis, the shamans of Pamalt can perform the rite of Going Westward for a prescribed fee. Most Doraddi who travel past Molibaksu consider it necessary to have undergone the ritual at least once.

**Dolorofey:** This hilly region marks the north/south watershed, beyond which to the north lies Laskal a part of Fonrit. In Dolorofey the migratory Doraddi people mingle among local sedentary settlements. These sedentary people, called *la Rawthi*

("Fort People"), show no loyalty to anyone except the local warlord, who inevitably rides upon a wheezing horse in imitation of northern ways.

**Dupax:** This region is the transitional zone between Jolar and Zamokil, the land of the Veldang. Migratory Venland and Doraddi meet and share many regions. Raiding is popular between the races, but xenophobia is absent

**Duruhan:** The wide rolling land is one of the Six Lands. Pamalt celebrated his first, third, and twelfth marriages with women from here. Vangono first breathed fire and burnt a charnjibber here. An unusual pack of all-white hyenas roams here, and it is considered to be good luck to see them hunting, especially if the prey is a field elephant.

**Fongolon (Deadly Bead):** At this oasis was once made one of the beads for Pamalt's necklace. The site, now ruled by a resident Pamalt chieftain, exports reproductions of that bead made of lions' teeth, which have special powers for certain priests. They are sometimes called Kalali beads, especially if they have clover vines binding red flowers to the tooth.

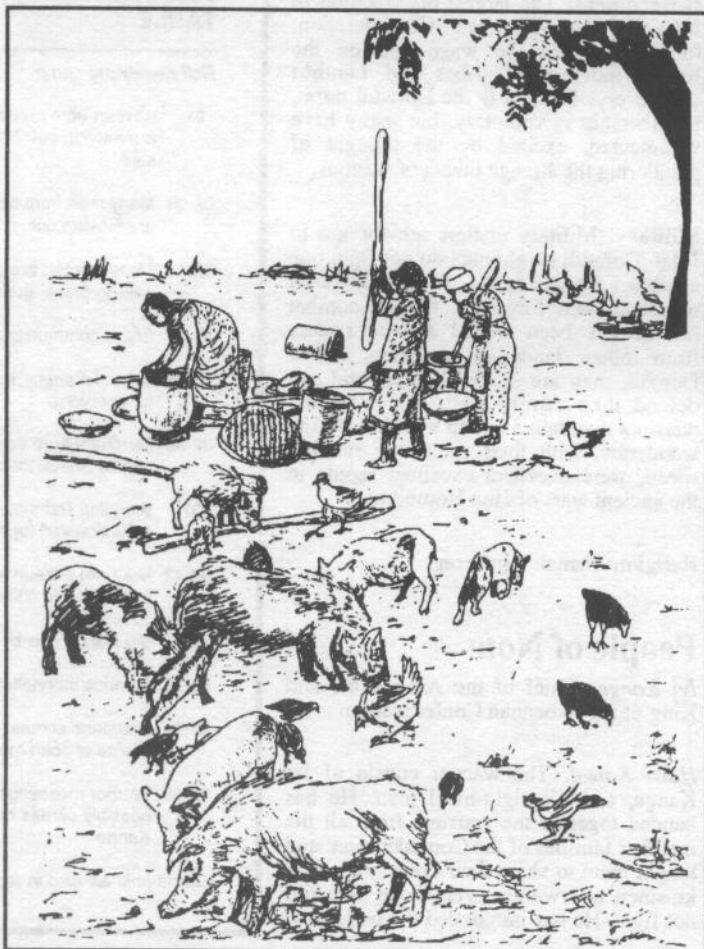
**Hosofori (Where Men Always Fart):** This oasis, mentioned in several common Doraddi stories about men who go wrong, is indeed subject to the curse of its name, enforced temporarily upon every male who enters its domain, and permanently on all males born there.

**Kalali:** This luxurious valley is beloved by hundreds of clans. Here live the two types of men who sing "daa daa" and "bennie bennie" during their meetings, contrasted to Labuhan, where men never sing at night. It is rich and lush, and many people congregate here during the rainy season. The wide valley is dotted by many ancient ruins, choked with the medicine plants which have grown from the graves of the warped peoples that anciently lived here.

**Kalali Erok:** The river of the lower Kalali valley occasionally dries up for much of its length, leaving a river of sand behind. On the one out of ten years of real drought the Varvachain Diggers perform their miracle and bring the waters up from their deep pits.

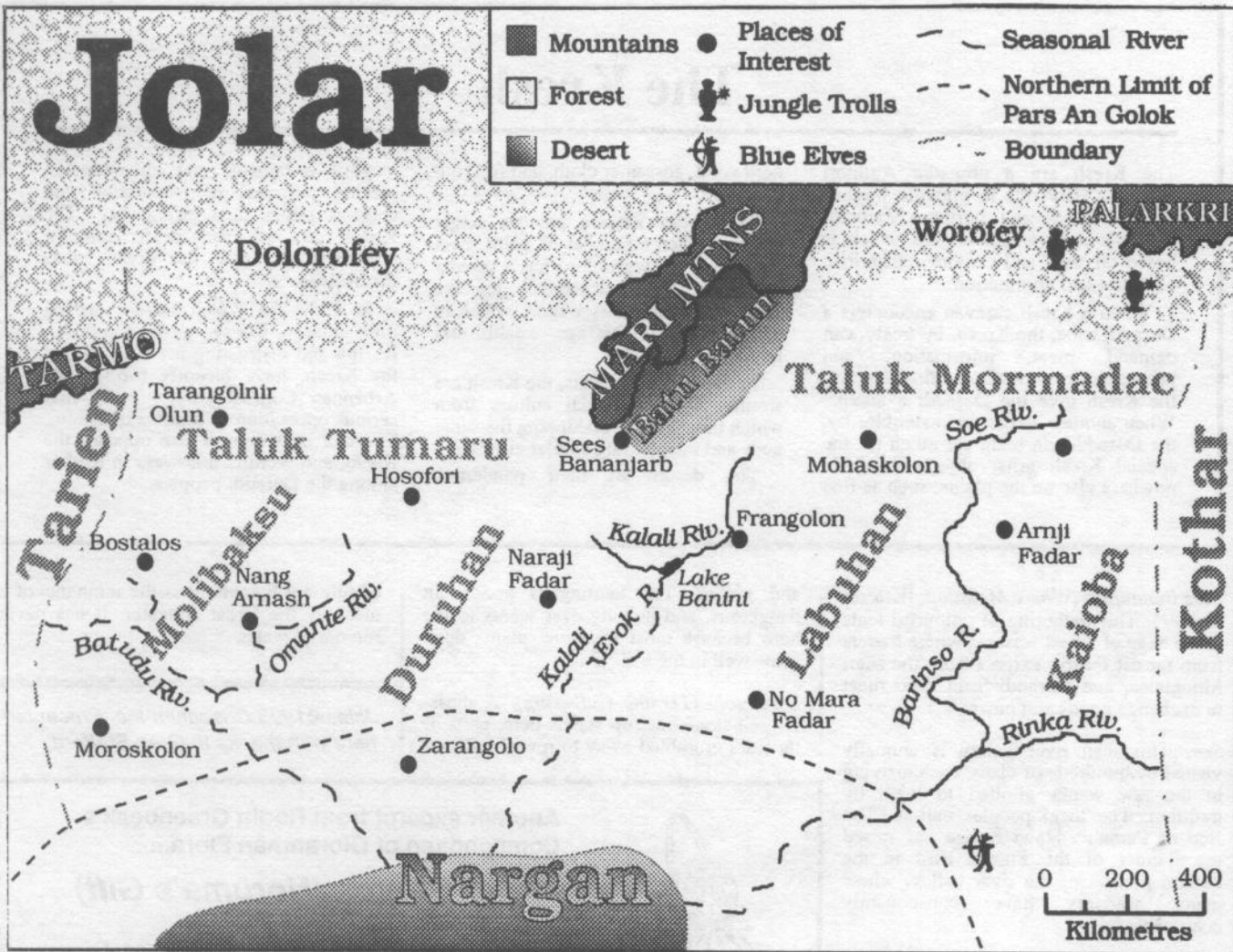
**Kaioba:** This land, between the Soe and Rinca rivers, is troubled by the intrusion of the Kresh wagon peoples. Its residents have formed the Arbennan Confederation to resist and messengers from here often pass through the rest of Jolar to ask for help against the menace. Not all the natives agree, but a frighteningly large army is gathering nearby.

**Labuhan:** This wide region includes all the land between the Kalali and Soe rivers. Most residents consider it paradise on earth, the result of their living steadfastly upon the Right Footpath of Pamalt. It is one of the two lands in which the blessed *vol ini* grows in profusion. The Elephant Mountain, striped with two trunks, wanders this region and is worshipped by



The *la Rawthi* (Fort People) are a sedentary people living in settlements in the hills of Dolorofey in northern Jolar.





hundreds of people.

**Mari Mountains:** This range of mountains is part of the wall which Lodril made for Pamalt to keep out the terrible northern powers. Now the wall is broken and breached everywhere, though a few bastions like this one remain. The unusual residents of this range are the exigers, combatant tribes who each specialise in a different type of magic battle. In general, this land is a dismal place, full of frozen mountain peaks, unfriendly dwarfs, and fierce warriors.

**Molibasku:** The plains here are watered from northern winds, making it one of the two lands of *vol ini*. It is a nice place, except for the occasional dinosaur which comes up from the hidden Home Cave of the Great Monsters. Pamalt's mother-in-law first learned to scold here, so sometimes it is called "Where Men Keep Moving."

**Moroskolon (Laughing Bead):** A handsome bead of many colours is made here. Whoever can master its use can make anyone laugh. Construction requires men from the Edible Fern clan, women from the Low Warm One or the Swaying Stalks of Yellow clan, and a hyena.

**Mohaskolon (Dancing Bead):** Here was first made one of the beads on Pamalt's magical necklace. Now everyone everywhere can make them to help keep them enlivened during the many long dancing sessions held everywhere. The beads are easy to make, but hard to keep because the legs keep breaking off.

**Naraji Fadar (Naraji tribal centre):** An important tribal centre and meeting place. The Naraji chieftain must come of the obscure *zacarana* (whitewomb) lineage, which has such extraordinary marriage restrictions that he has not found a suitable wife after six years of searching (his father took sixteen years). Each year, the chief holds a Marriage Festival in which suitable girls are invited to compete to win the honor of marriage to him.

**Nang Aranash (Moving Sands):** The sands of this place are wide bends in the river where the current is sluggish in the dry season. It is a favourite contest place and battleground between the men of the regional tribes, even if both live on the same side of the river.

**Nargan Desert:** This unlivable region was burnt when the sky tipped its fiery contents upon the earth to destroy the Artmali

Empire during the War of the Gods. Ever since then its soil has been ashes and poison, the land absorbs the rivers which flow into it, and no natural life can exist.

**No Mara Fadar (Charcoal Mara tribal centre):** The Charcoal Mara tribe are the only people who can turn the Swiftover Weeds into long-burning combustibles. The efficiency of this fuel is so great that people of this lineage are sought everywhere. At this oasis, a permanent water source even in drought years, every visitor receives a piece for free.

**Omathe:** Like most large rivers in Doraddi territory, this great hunting ground is frequented by many families, but claimed by none. The trap lines, pits, and annual hunts of each family are respected by all, and have been used since Pamalt's children first came here.

**Rinka:** This lush region is watered by a permanent river which meanders across the lands. It often changes its course over the rainy season. Several of the lineages in the region require that women shave their heads and that men notch their ears giving rise to the rumour that the people are extremely ugly here. The people can make reed river boats which speak out loud.



# The Kresh

The Kresh are a nomadic Agimori people. They ride in gigantic wagons across Kothar and northern Zamokil and rule a savannah empire which is based on trust and custom rather than conquest and domination.

When a Kresh caravan encounters a Doraddi tribe, the Kresh, by treaty, can demand meat, information, and protection from the Doraddi. In return, the Kresh give the Doraddi a token. When another wagon train rumbles by, the Doraddi can trade the token for the special Kresh gifts: objects available nowhere else on the plains, such as fine

hardwood, gossamer cloth, and fruit out of season.

The Kresh Empire has no single leader. When a number of trains meet together, each wagonlord has a greater or lesser voice dependent on the impressiveness of his wagon, which in turn depends on his age, wealth, and family.

In most other respects, the Kresh are similar to the Doraddi culture from which they grew, worshipping the same gods and maintaining similar customs.

The design of their ponderous

wagons is unusual and idiosyncratic, serving purposes of ostentation and comfort rather than efficiency. The Kresh do not use draft animals, preferring to draw the great wains themselves.

In 1550 the Kresh began moving into Jolar. Conservative chieftains, fearing and distrusting the new way of the Kresh, have recently formed the Arbennan Confederation - the first serious opposition to Kresh expansion. The cult of Vangono also opposes the Kresh, and recruits followers in Kothar among the Doraddi peoples.

*Sees Bananjarb (Where Mountain Walkers Gather):* This gathering of colourful tents at the edge of a vast waste is where traders from far-off Fonrit, exigers from the Mari Mountains, and Doraddi from Jolar meet to exchange goods and news.

*Soe:* This lush river valley is annually visited by hundreds of clans, each arriving in the few weeks allotted to them by tradition. The local peoples call it "The Bed of Pamalt". Hawi Kange has raised the Banner of the Furred Bird in the eastern portion of the river valley, where many warriors have consequently congregated.

*Taluk Mormadak:* This land is said to be Pamalt's founding ground. From here his children departed in all directions. In the First Age, it was covered with pine forests. Huge termite mounds dot the land, and the tops of some are carved into thrones for the Doraddi chieftains.

*Taluk Tumaru:* This wide and verdant territory is considered to have been spoiled by the intrusion of the God Learners in the Second Age. Most observers cannot find any difference in it from other regions of Jolar, but the natives insistently complain of a difference. They sometimes call the region "Pale Clover" in their stories. A curiosity are the two herds of miniature antelopes which have existed ever since the Second Age. These beasts are considered poison by the natives, who hunt them but never eat them or use their pelts.

*Tarangolnin Olon (Sees-at-night):* This bead can replace a normal eye and provide the wearer with sight even when no source of light is present. The availability of this bead has fallen since Hon Hoolbiktu's men used up so many several centuries ago. The king of this place wears a crown of salt.

*Worofey:* The traditional borderlands between the northern jungles and Jolar. The land contains scattered forests, hills,

and gullies. The hunting is good, but dangerous, and nobody ever wants to die here because most medicine plants don't grow well in the soil.

*Zarangolo (Termite Gathering):* A massive red stone outcrop stands here, parts of its sides crumbled away to reveal millions

of tiny ant tunnels. It is the remnants of a meal by the Great Anteater. It has never run out of water.

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## Another excerpt from Rodin Greenbeak's Compendium of Gloranthan Flora.....

### Water Gourds (Noruma's Gift)

*Aqua cucurbita*

Water Gourds dot the vast grasslands of Jolar and surrounding areas in Pamaltela. Recognizable only by the silver-grey edge of their leaves they resemble many useless Jolarian weeds. If one is found, the dirt

around the stem can be removed and the gourd itself revealed in its underground location. I had the unfortunate experience of sampling some of the water from one of these vile gourds. It was more bitter than that Kralorelan bittermelon-rice pastry I once ate and even my guide's fresh water from his skin failed to remove the aftertaste. I fail to see why the Agimori here venerate these plants, but it is most likely due to the following local legend one of my guides related.

Once, long ago in one of the more troubled times, the people of Pamalt grew thirsty and tired. Pamalt went to his friend Noruma, the chieftan of magic, and asked for his aid. In response to his lord's request Noruma captured a powerful spirit of rain and bound it within a handful of seeds he had in his pocket. These he gifted to Pamalt's people to spread upon the earth to grow. When they developed they were filled with the water that rescued Pamalt's thirsty people. To this day a thirsty man can recognize the leaves of one of Noruma's Gourds and quench their thirst with the plentiful water.

#### Gamemaster Notes

(1) The foul taste Rodin noted is most likely due to the activities of a Bolongo cultist. It is a favorite prank of theirs to spike the occasional gourd with a mixture of bitter herbs and then watch as some unfortunate drinks the result. More kindly Bolongists often spike the water with dried mango to give the recipients a more pleasant surprise.

(2) Rodin also probably destroyed the plant by poor use. Natives often just poke a small hole in the plant and suck through a hollow stem that the plant gratefully provides. This preserves the plant for later use, a tradition encouraged by followers of Jmijie or others who find themselves wandering the plains in the driest days of the fire season.

By Eric Rowe





# Pamalt

## EARTH-KING OF PAMALTELA

### I. Mythos And History

In elder days the world was inhabited by many gigantic and potent beings. Pamalt was one, a son of Ancient Grandmother. He took to wife Faranar the earth mother and they had many children. They lived among the other immortals.

In those days everyone had plenty of free time to do whatever they wanted. Pamalt wandered around, making friends and learning about the world, while everyone else practiced new magics or studied hard. Artmal, a pompous god, condemned Pamalt as no more useful than Trickster, and the people of Artmal shunned Pamalt afterwards. Pamalt instead turned his attention to a new race of mortals, called Agimori.

The old trees were jealous that the Agimori could walk and talk. One day Pamalt found some bad trees trying to break the heads of the oldest Agimori grandparents. Pamalt rubbed his fingers together and showed the grandparents how to make a fire which punished the trees. The Agimori were pleased with the place they had made to live, and Pamalt became known as the Plainsmaker. Pamalt gave his secret to Firebearer and that friend created the great wide plains for the Agimori to live and hunt in. In vengeance, the trees created their own people, called elves, to fight the Agimori and replant the hated jungle.

In those days the world was divided into two parts. Lodril, the good god, ruled the south, while Yelm ruled the north. When Yelm was killed, his realm was conquered by fierce and wild gods. Ever since then only bad has come from the north.

One time many invaders came from the north – trolls, elves, dwarfs, and pale humans in an unholy alliance against the Peace of the South. Pamalt told his friend Assegai to make weapons for the Agimori, and ordered his friend Lodril to protect the land. Lodril raised a barrier mountain against the foes, which held them back until the Agimori gained strength enough to defend themselves. Since that time the world becomes ever less calm as one travels north, and even the coastal fringe of Pamaltela is partly hostile or disbelieving of Pamalt's powers.

The Meeting Contest was popular then, just as it is now. When two great men meet they introduce themselves and offer a challenge to each other to use some skill or another. If one man is notably better at his skill, he wins and the other loses. To refuse a challenge is acceptable only if the foe refuses as well, for then both opponents lose nothing. Refusing a challenge when yours was accepted is an insult. In those early days, unlike our decadent times, there was never any guile or ill-will involved in these contests.

Pamalt always lost the first contest of each pair, because he was the oldest god and could not offer the first challenge. But every opponent lost to Pamalt in the second contest, and so no one lost any honor. This also showed that, although every god excelled Pamalt in some way, Pamalt excelled over everyone in another way.

One day a new challenger came to

the land, and his challenge was for all skills against all skills as the initial challenge. Worse, no one could think of what they might do to challenge the newcomer back. The stranger called himself Surprise-From-The-North.

One courageous god, who is remembered now only as First Lost, went to meet the challenge. He was so badly beaten that no one remembers anything about him now, except that when the women of Pamaltela heard of his doom, half of them died of grief (even today, to sing his funerary rites is to kill many who hear it). Second Lost was no luckier. When he disappeared all the food of the world changed to an inferior flavor. Third Lost left no trace at all. Some wise men say others also opposed the newcomer, all of whom perished forever. None of them went to the Land of Death, none became ghosts, no corpses were found.

All the gods gathered in their meeting grounds to discuss the problem coming their way. "Who will meet this one?" asked Mouse.

"I am the One," spake Pamalt, "I am He to take this task." He stamped his spear thrice on the field, shook his shield, and called the name of his grandmother and his tools to help.

He tried everything against his foe, and sometimes he lost and sometimes the monster lost. Pamalt was aided by his friends and neighbours. Kolat helped him hear a secret. Slor helped him douse a fire. The outsider was helped by his monster cronies, too. In the end, both were equal in wins and losses.

"My challenge to you, Filth-Which-Walks, is this: make something new, as I can." And Pamalt made a living necklace, and each shell, stone, and bead in it was one of his assistants. That is why his council of gods is called the Necklace of Pamalt.

The invader could make no such thing, but he and his minions exposed fearful weapons and attacked. All of Pamalt's friends were slain in that treachery, and only the god escaped alive to his home. Ever since that time anyone who attacks at a Meeting Challenge is also called Vovisibor, Filth-Which-Walks.

Pamalt took his newly made necklace and called out the powers which he had hidden there. The spirits of his friends came alive again, and together they plotted the downfall of his enemies. Ever since that time the gods of the south have followed Pamalt as king.

Two armies of foes left from the Ground of Evil Challenge. One of them absorbed the life from the dirt and rock, and so when they left the whole land disappeared from the world. The main army, under Vovisibor, went south, seeking Pamalt. They met and fought at the Field of Jaranpor, where all the friends and allies of Pamalt worked under his command, and fought the foes to a standstill. Then, Pamalt sang a song that made the sky break and vomit endless eternal flame upon the enemy army. The enemy army's enormous capacity for absorption was cancelled out with a terrible thunderclap which ignited the whole land and left behind





the Scorched Earth, which separates the realm of Pamalt from that of mortals.

The other army from the Ground of Evil Challenge were defeated by the dark warriors of Qualyorni, the Cold One. The remnants from that defeat were then crushed again at the battle of Sporebore, whose chaotic survivors fled into the Scorched Earth. But the fight was not over. Chaos armies crossed to Pamalt's land over a bridge of slime and broke upon the land like waves of acid. In the midst of destruction, Pamalt held true. Though realms of beauty perished forever, he fought valiantly to protect their dead shells. His persistence and refusal to admit the defeat bore fruit. All the wretched inhabitants of the land girded themselves and flung themselves into the face of the fearsome Enemy. With the variegated armies of Pamaltela behind him, he exposed the hollow horror of Seseine, healed the suppurating wounds caused by Krjalk, burnt out the impurities of Pocharngo, and slew the undead hordes of Gark.

When the carnage ended, Pamalt discovered that most of his powerful allies survived, and so did many of his mortal followers. Through the long gray age which followed Pamalt guided his peoples to survive and prosper, and personally conducts the annual Dance of Twenty-Seven which limits the growth and curse of the Scorched Earth.

The only threat which followed the defeat of chaos was Usurper Qualyorni, the Cold One. In Qualyorni's wake came a long train of ice-demons and other frigid beings. Qualyorni claimed that he was rightful ruler of the South because he, too, had conquered chaos and saved the land. He came to bring winter to Pamaltela.

King Artmal said, "I will beat him alone," and went to meet the Usurper. Qualyorni gave Artmal seven unhealable wounds and threw him off the top of the Tarmo Mountains.

Then Pamalt said, "I will beat him," and went with his friends to meet the Cold One. He took the spear of Stingray, the club of Ankylosaur, the shield of Tortoise, the armor of Pangolin, the magic drink of the Earth Witch, and the stomach of Molandro.

Thus prepared, Pamalt struck down the troll god, wounding him and making him a weak shell of what he had been. But the ice demons which Qualyorni had brought with him were able to live on in the lands where Artmal had been conquered. This is why Enkloso and Vralos are cold in the winter.

Pamalt has survived intact since then, relatively unchanged. His strength, and interest, lies with the vast grasslands and the common free man of Pamalt. The northern coast, while rich and diverse, is far from the heart of his realm.

Upon death, Pamalt grants loyal worshippers a choice: either to join him as an Earth Dancer to care for the land, or (when one's body has rotted away) to be reborn in one's tribe under the same conception totem. This is dependent in part on the rituals performed in one's present or past lifetimes. If a worshipper is reborn, usually Pamalt takes away their memories, but leaves the knowledge of their Song of Power.

Pamalt's Runes are Power and Mastery.

## II. Cult Ecology

Pamalt is King of the Pamaltelan gods. He is not the strongest, the most clever, the largest, or the most magical deity. However, he knows and understands all the gods under his rule, and is the King of the South. He directly controls the earth powers. Other deities are his allies, subjects, or foes, but never his peers.

Pamalt is the role model for the plains people (the Doraddi), all across the great grasslands of Jolar, Kothar, and Tarien.

Pamalt maintains the stability of the continent. Wise Pamaltelans contrast the destructive wars and disasters of Genertela with the comparative prosperity and happiness of Pamaltela, and give credit for this to the fact that Genert was killed during the Great Darkness, while Pamalt survived.

Pamalt is worshiped by most men of the grasslands, and many women. Few nonhumans worship him. Elves dislike Pamalt because he taught the plains humans how to clear jungles and turn

## VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

# Different Cultures' Ways of Worshipping the God

### Arbennan

The Arbennan people of the Pamaltelan savannah worship Pamalt pretty much as described above. The Pamalt pantheon has a large variety of different gods with highly useful spells - yet most individuals are nomad huntsmen, with only a limited access to great temples. This problem is resolved by the existence of oases. When an Arbennan becomes too old or too crippled to continue in the hunter-gatherer life, he or she retires to one of these oases. Most oasis-dwellers are at least acolytes in one or more cults, and they hold large or even great temple services for the benefit of any tribe that passes by. In this way, relatively imposing temples to even the most minor gods are generally available to worshippers at the price of one or two weeks' walk.

For those familiar with Genertelan customs, the contrast between the oasis-dwellers of Prax and those of the Pamaltelan savannah is striking - in both cases, nomad life would be nearly impossible without the oasis-dwellers, but in Genertela, the oasis folk are oppressed slaves, while in Pamaltela, they are highly honored members of all tribes.

### Kresh

The Kresh are a nomadic Agimori people. They ride in gigantic wagons across Kothar and northern Zamokil and rule a savannah

empire which is based on trust and custom rather than conquest and domination.

The Kresh social structure is different from that of the Arbennan, but they, too, worship Pamalt. Their enemies claim that Pamalt is not "truly" worshipped and this claim probably has some truth to it, at least insofar as the wagonmasters appear to be required to worship a secret deity, though Pamalt is often worshipped, too.

The Kresh are not the only people in Kothar - the bulk of the inhabitants are typical Doraddi folk, who belong to the Kresh Empire and fulfill their responsibilities to them.

### Coastal

Along the jungle coasts of Pamaltela, the worship of Pamalt has taken many strange routes. The city folk of Elamle and Flanch almost all recognize Pamalt's supremacy, but he is rarely the dominant religion in any city. Each city is very individualistic, approaching the worship of Pamalt in its own way.

### The Left Hand

Those who follow the Left Hand differ greatly in values and culture from the dominant Right Hand tribes of the plains. *Sons of the Totem, Daughters of the Dream* which follows describes how the Aranjara, a Left Hand tribe, follow their god.





them into plains. Trolls dislike Pamalt because he crippled their god, Qualyorni.

### III. The Cult In The World

Pamalt is god both of the commoner and of the chieftain. Most of his worshippers belong to the Agimori (black) race of Gloranthan humanity. His worshipers are restricted to Pamaltela, of course, where he himself lives. He is less popular along the northern coast of Pamalt - in Umathela, he is almost unknown.

Pamalt's temples come in all sizes. Temples and shrines are more likely to be natural features (sacred sites) than artificial buildings, and may not even be noticed by those who do not know the signs. Shrines teach *Gnome-to-Gargoyle*.

### IV. Initiate Membership

Pure-blooded Agimori can join the cult of Pamalt automatically by sacrificing a point of POW.

Non-Agimori must pass standard initiation requirements. Skills needed are Ceremony, Human Lore, Orate, Speak (Pamaltelan) Language, World Lore.

Humans of mixed descent (i.e., part-Agimori) are treated differently in different regions. Some people, such as the Kresh and Men-and-a-half, regard any trace of other blood as proof that the individual is non-Agimori. Other people are less restrictive. The inhabitants of the city of Katele in Fonrit permit anyone with "black hair, black eyes, and skin darker than a Kalaga fruit" to join the cult of Pamalt unconditionally. Many other local variations exist.

Certain spirit spells are taught for free to sworn members of the chieftain's tribe. These include: *Comprehension*, *Coordination*, *Endurance*, *Glamour*, *Pamalt's Touch*, *Strength*, and *Vigor*. The only limitation is that no more than one spell may be learned in a year, though as many points as desired can be attempted at once (note that all these spells are variable). If the initiate fails to defeat the summoned cult spell spirit and hence does not learn the spell, the chieftain's obligation to his follower is still fulfilled.

All other spirit spells are available from cult shamans at normal rates.

### V. Shamanhood

Any Pamalt initiate who becomes a shaman or who is already a shaman (in the case of new initiates) achieves this status.

Shamans of Pamalt may not become chieftains, though they may become acolytes. Shamans must give 90% of their time and income to the cult.

### VI. Acolyte Membership

Potential acolytes must meet the same requirements as do chieftains but, of course, do not and can not lead the tribe. They must donate 50% of their income and time to the religion.

Shamans are normally barred from becoming acolytes of Pamalt, but all a tribe's shamans are usually initiates.

A retired chieftain is also, technically, an acolyte. Acolytes that are still active members of their tribes must support the chieftain and may have greater responsibilities than non-acolytes.

### VII. Chieftains

A candidate for chieftainship must have a skill of 50% or more in Human Lore, Orate, Speak Own Language, and World Lore. He must have a combined score of 50% in all ritual skills combined. He must pass the Test of Holiness (POW x 3 or less on 1d100). Lastly, and most important, he must pass the tribal requirements for chieftainhood, which vary greatly.

Not just anyone can be a chieftain. Almost all Doraddi follow the rule that only folk from very specific lineages can be chief. The exact lineage varies from tribe to tribe, and sometimes other requirements are in order. When a tribe's chieftain is killed or

### Pamalt Special Spirit Magic

**Comprehension** variable  
*touch, temporal, passive*

This spirit spell increases the target's mental capacity, though his INT remains constant. Each point of Comprehension adds 5 percentiles to all his Knowledge skills while under the spell's influence. Knowledge skills at 00% are not affected.

**Pamalt's Touch** variable  
*touch, temporal, passive*

This spirit spell increases the target's chances of success in casting all non-ritual spirit magic by 5 percentiles per point for the duration.

### Pamalt Special Divine Magic

**Earthtouch** 2 points  
*touch, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

This spell lets the caster read the exact STR, CON, SIZ, INT, POW, DEX, and APP of any entity touched.

It also informs the user of the target's current hit points, magic points, and fatigue points. The spell can be boosted to sense through Countermagic or Shield.

**Gnome-to-Gargoyle** 1 point  
*ranged, temporal, nonstackable, one-use only*

This spell must be cast upon a gnome. It turns the gnome into a humanoid monster. This spell usually is cast only in times of combat.

The gargoyle produced has the STR and POW of the original gnome. The gnome's hit points remain the same and also become the gargoyle's SIZ. It lacks CON, INT, and DEX, moving only at the caster's command. The being so-produced attacks on strike rank 10 each round, with a chance to hit of 25% plus its attack modifier. Figure damage and skills modifiers.

When the spell expires, the gargoyle turns back into earth.

### Aleshmara Special Divine Magic

**Bounty** 1 point  
*touch, instant, non-stackable, reusable*

This spell must be cast upon a quantity of fruits, grains, and/or vegetables. The spell increases the quantity of food by 1 ENC for every full 10 ENC of food present.

### Cronisper Special Divine Magic

**Discern Magic** 1 point  
*ranged, instant, nonstackable, reusable*

This spell must be cast at a single individual within sight of the caster. Without needing to overcome the target's magic points, the caster separately comprehends the number of points of spirit magic which the target (and his fetch, if any) have memorized; the number of sorcery spells which the target has in mind; and the number of points of divine magic which the target knows. It also gives the caster knowledge of the exact POW of the target's fetch, if any. Discern Magic does not inform the caster of spells known by allied or bound spirits, familiars, or magic items, unless it is cast at the spirit, familiar, or item itself.



deposed, the Women's Circle gathers together to decide upon his replacement. No woman who belongs to a chieftain lineage may vote, nor may any woman who has married anyone in a chieftain lineage (however, such women can speak in the Circle). The Woman's Circle can summarily remove a cruel or incompetent chieftain and replace him at any time.

Sometimes the voting and negotiating for a chieftain takes weeks, and haggling can be very crass, to the point that one woman promises blankets or other goods to other women to buy their votes for her candidate. If one (or two) woman proves recalcitrant about a chieftain which the rest of the women agree on, she can be kicked out of the tribe on a temporary or permanent basis, so the others can get the chieftain elected. On very rare

occasions, it proves impossible for the women to agree on a chieftain, in which case the tribe may split, following two chieftains, or part or all of the tribe may merge with some other tribe.

In some tribes, chieftain lineages are few. A few tribes have been forced to merge with others because all qualified chieftains actually died out. But in other tribes, the bulk of the tribe qualifies for chieftainhood. Some tribes, such as the Neckring clan of southern Jolar, have as many as 90% of the tribe qualified for chieftainhood. In these tribes, the voting women (those few belonging to non-chieftain lineages) have great power, and sell their votes accordingly.

Chieftains must give 90% of their income and 10% of their time to activities on behalf of Pamalt and his worship.

**Common divine magic:** all

**Special divine magic:** Command Gnome, Earthtouch, Gnome-to-Gargoyle

## IX. Subcults

Pamalt has many subcults, but all are regional. Some, such as the Land Goddesses, stretch across a third of the continent. Others, such as the Riddle King of Catacadian, are restricted to a single oasis.

## X. Associated Cults

### Aleshmara

Aleshmara is Pamalt's mother-in-law, and he lives in her house. She gives him her spell of Bounty.

### Chalana Arroy

Chalana Arroy is called the Kind One. Though she is not a member of Pamalt's Necklace, she and her healers are never permitted to leave an encampment without being fed or given a present. She provides Heal Body.

### Cronisper

Pamalt's advisor, he is the eldest of the gods in Pamalt's Necklace. He gives Pamalt Discern Magic.

### Faranar

Pamalt's wife provides him with Know Lineage.

### Jmijie

Jmijie the Wanderer is Pamalt's Scout. He gives Pamalt Fleetfoot.

### Keraun

Keraun is goddess of the east wind, and is always considered benevolent to the Agimori, for she brings the rain that ends the long dry season. She provides Cloud Call.

### Lodril

Lodril is called the Firebearer and is a member of Pamalt's Necklace. He built the mountain ranges to hold back the jungle enemy from Pamalt's plains. He is one of the Old Gods and his powers are not often needed nowadays. But when he is called upon, he is still mighty. He gives Pamalt his most powerful spell, Summon Lodril.

### Nyanka

Nyanka's worship is popular among Pamalt's plains-dwellers. She gives a most useful spell, Pathway.

### Rasout

Rasout, Pamalt's loyal son-in-law, provides Sureshot.

### Vangono

Vangono is Pamalt's right-hand man and bravest warrior. He provides his innermost fire, the Soulspear spell, to Pamalt, his king.

### Yanmorla

Grandmother Earth sits in Pamalt's house and is one of the two elders that advise him. She gives Pamalt her Restore Magic spell.

## Faranar Special Divine Magic

### Know Lineage

*ranged, instant, nonstackable, reusable*

1 point

This spell may only be cast upon an initiate of Pamalt or one of Pamalt's associate cults. The caster receives the exact lineage, family, and tribe (if any) of the target.

## Jmijie Special Divine Magic

### Fleetfoot

*ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

1 point

This spell doubles the target's basic movement rate. Thus, a normal human could move at a rate of 6 (or 12 if expending double fatigue). It may only be cast upon an initiate of Pamalt or one of Pamalt's associate cults.

## Nyanka Special Divine Magic

### Pathway

*temporal, self, stackable, reusable*

1 point

Allows the user to determine the direction to the nearest oasis. If two points are stacked, then the closest and second-closest oases are known, with each additional point increasing the number of oases known.

The spell tells only direction and distance magnitude, not the actual distance.

## Vangono Special Divine Magic

### Soulspear

*ranged, temporal, non-stackable, reusable*

2 points

This spell must be cast upon a spear. The spear's head burns with a weird translucent black flame. When such a spear strikes an opponent, that opponent not only takes normal spear damage, but loses 1d6 magic points. This magic point loss occurs only if the spear has penetrated armor to cause at least one point of damage to his target.

## Yanmorla Special Divine Magic

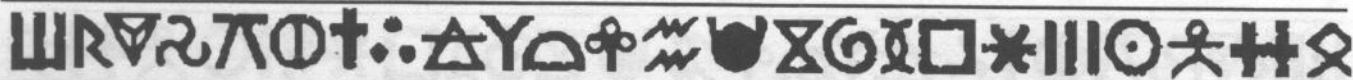
### Restore Magic

*ritual Ceremony spell, stackable, one-use*

1 point

This spell can only be cast upon an initiate of Aleshmara or of Pamalt who has access to reusable divine magic. For each Restore Magic cast, the target regains the use of 1d6 points of previously-cast reusable divine magic (chosen by him) without the benefit of any temple. If more points are regained than the user has cast, the excess is ignored. All points of a multiple point spell must be restored at once.





## THE GODS OF PAMALTELA

### Aleshmara

*The Woman - Mother-in-Law of Pamalt*

Aleshmara is the leader of women and the keeper of the sacred Basket of Life. She rules the divine family of gods. She is sometimes rendered in carved wood as a scrawny old woman holding a large basket. More often she is symbolised simply as a basket marked with her distinctive signs.

### Annilla

*Mystic goddess of the secret Blue Moon (also darkness, lunar and sea pantheons)*

Annilla was powerful in the Gods Age, when her son Artmal ruled the fabulous Artmali Empire. When the empire was destroyed she went into hiding, from whence she sends invisible forces to harass her enemies. Annilla is responsible for the ocean tides of Glorantha.

Annilla is represented by her Pamaltelan descendants (the Veldang of Zamokil) as a blue orb.

### Artmal

*Moonson, father of the Veldang*

Artmal is a son of the Blue Moon, Annilla. He came to Pamaltela during a time long-forgotten, and founded the fabulous Artmali Empire. Evil days befell his descendants when Artmal was maimed by wicked storm gods. The Empire became a wasteland and its people were enslaved by their neighbours and former friends. Artmal's blue-skinned descendants are now called the Veldang, and they still remember the glorious days when Artmal himself walked the earth and when Artmali ships sailed a lovely sea where the bleak Nargan desert now lies. The blueskins of the land of Zamokil now dance to Artmal once a year. They costume themselves in his image, donning straw wigs with animal horns, strapping-on an extra pair of artificial arms, painting an eye on their forehead, and wearing woven grass skirts and leggings (a clothing fashion unusual to the region). In the city-states along the north coast of Zamokil, Artmal is portrayed as an enslaved god, emaciated and chained.

### Bolongo

*The False God*

This empty being haunts Pamaltela, pretending to teach and pretending to mask secret wisdom behind his fooleries and mad actions. But there is nothing behind his mask. Those who are enthralled by him expend their lives in meaningless waste. Whenever anything goes catastrophically wrong, people know that Bolongo had something to do with it. The Arbennan have a saying, "wearing Bolongo's mask," which is applied to anyone acting in an unusually stupid manner, to anyone who is possessed, and to that person chosen as the annual scapegoat. Bolongo is always portrayed in art, myth, and legend as a mask.

### Cronisper the Wise

*Grandfather Sky*

Cronisper is companion to Yanmorla and the Earth Witch, and advisor to Pamalt. His beard encircles Pamalt's holy mountain and his staff supports the sky dome. He knows the name and secret power of every being on Glorantha, but only shares his wisdom with madmen and gods. Cronisper is rendered in wood as a thin old man with a pointed head, clutching a large staff topped by a sphere. His beard descends in a spiral about the staff.

### Faranar

*Pamalt's Wife*

Faranar is the daughter of Aleshmara and the wife of Pamalt. Several important chieftain

dynasties trace ancestry to her. Faranar's power lies in her family. In myth she is almost always with her husband, mother, and other members of the family of gods. Images of Faranar always show a woman of status and property, with a cloth skirt, a mother's headdress, and many shell necklaces.

### Jmijie

*The homeless god, the wanderer*

Jmijie is the spirit of travel who inspires Pamalt's people to wander across their vast, peaceful plains. Occasionally a worshipper of Jmijie is stricken and overcome by the wanderlust curse to travel from home to seek new places and experience. Jmijie is illustrated by a figure with his left hand shading his eyes, and with a travel pack on his back.

### Keraun

*The Cloud-Bearer, the good wind*

Keraun is the goddess of the east wind which blows rain clouds across Pamaltela. She is a friend, servant, or wife of Pamalt. She is usually shown as a woman bearing waterskins and riding upon the swallows which fly before the storm.

### Lodril

*Father of Volcanoes*

During the Gods War, the Sky Spear pierced the earth trying to impale a slimy thing of chaos. Rather than holding firm, the Spear snapped and broke freeing Lodril, the god who lived inside the weapon. He is sometimes thought of as the source of heat without light. He is depicted on the baskets of the Doraddi as a warrior carrying both a long and a short spear.

### Noruma

*The chieftain of magic*

Noruma knows all the spells and spirits of the world. The Homed God creates shamans, but Noruma trains and teaches them. He is usually shown as a man wearing an animal skin, carrying a tall drum, a double-gourd canteen, and wearing a string of flints.

### Nyanka

*Mother of life and childbirth*

During the Green Age, Mother Nyanka walked across the world and blessed the land. When the Bad Times came, the land dried up, and the people saw the true meaning of her blessing. Every place where Mother Nyanka had slept during her journeys became a green oasis. She also used her generative powers to teach people how to make children. Her image is often carved into the living wood of a nyanka tree, consisting for the most part of bulging breasts and belly, a serene face, and distinctive pregnancy earrings.

### Old Gods

*Annilla, Artmal, Bolongo, Cronisper, Dehore, Lodril, Magasta, Yanmorla, Yelm*

The Old Gods is a collective term describing those deities which once ruled in Pamaltela. Most were crippled or destroyed, but a few remain as advisors or old friends of Pamalt.

### Ompalam

*Chaos god of coercion and slavery*

This deity is the corruption of the powers of the Center, where all should



be balanced and harmonious but instead are used by Ompalam for self-gain and tyrannical exploitation. He is recognized in Pamaltela as the god of absolute rule, who teaches that slavery is the natural way of life and that each person owes his freedom to the man above him. The God-learners classed Ompalam as the "God of degenerative administration, of evil centralisation." He is usually shown as an obscenely obese, hairless figure, sitting and holding innumerable chains in his hands.

### Rasout

*The plains hunter*

Rasout is the hunter god of the Pamaltelan veldt. Each of his worshippers will, at least once in their life, see the Runthing - the prey which can never be caught. His carved image is that of a young man with runes carved upon his chest and arms. He carries a bow or spear.

### Sikkanos

*The bad wind, the dust storm*

Sikkanos is the enemy of mankind, the deadly breath of the Nargan Desert. He sends flaming monsters or poison winds from the desert's heart. In Pamaltelan combat rituals each spring one warrior dresses in this god's fashion - red ragged furs crusted with blood, carrying poison darts and leather bags full of poison wind.

### Vangono

*The Spear*

Vangono is the expert warrior of Pamaltela. He is the master of the spear, and he can breathe three types of fire. He is always either at the right hand of Pamalt or in the midst of slaughter. He is the reason that both sides in wartime always reap destruction and he is worshipped by those destined to die in battle. He is usually shown carrying a large shield and several spears.

### Vovisibor

*Pamalt's foe, Filth-Which-Walks*

Until it met Pamalt, this vile creature was undefeated in combat when challenged by a single foe. It was finally thrown down by the combined efforts of many gods, whose attacks were coordinated by Pamalt. Vovisibor hobbles across the vast plains of Pamaltela each Sacred Time, only to be felled again by Pamalt. Each time it appears wrapped in rotten meat and degenerate plant parts, and caked with dung.

### Yanmorla

*Grandmother Earth*

Yanmorla is the Wise Woman of Pamalt's Gods Council. She receives and comforts the souls of the dead and is sometimes paired with Cronisper. Her doorstep is guarded by the Earth Witch. She is usually represented in baskets as an old woman wrapped in a red shawl, usually sitting upon a three-legged stool.

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*"When we are born, we are given a child name; entering adulthood we are given an adult name, and with it goes full responsibility for our actions. We are named after other living things — the totems. Our responsibility is to always protect and nurture the totems, so they in turn will nurture us. They are our brothers and sisters; we are their custodians, we not only share with them, we also guard them.*

*The totem spirit is your superior. Respect it.*

*It can guide you and teach you through dreams and visions. It may lend you its form and body in the service of the Dreaming. And always remember, your totem is sacred. It may be only be hunted or eaten only at increase ceremonies.*

*Such is the power of the Dreaming. Thus has Pamalt given the Law."*

**Yimbun The Strong,  
Keeper of the Water Rush Dreaming.**

# Sons of the Totem, Daughters of the Dream

## THE WORSHIP OF PAMALT AMONG THE ARANJARA

### Great Southern Land

GuideFather Pamalt *lives*. Unlike dead Genert who perished in the Greater Darkness, Pamalt is the living guardian of the great southern land. On the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes, the land and its people are One — secure in the strength of Pamalt's Necklace and fortified by all those who walk the Right Footpath.

In Pamaltela, interrelationships between the gods, the land and its people are complex and beyond simple explanation or reduction, despite earnest God Learner attempts to the contrary. The boundaries between the realms are diffuse: there is much interaction and communication between god and spirit and mortal. The Great Compromise is honoured here as elsewhere, but Pamaltela is (and always has been) *different*.

### Aranjara Country — Aranjara Dreaming

The Aranjara are a Doraddi people of the Left Hand dwelling south east of the Batu Batun along the Northern borders of Kalali in Central Jolar. They call themselves *!Faranjara* — the Children of Faranar. (*The '!' sound is used only in proper names, and is a sharp clicking noise made with the tongue against the roof of the mouth*).

As Children of the Left Hand, the Aranjara differ greatly in values and culture from the dominant Right Hand tribes of the plains. This is reflected in the **Aranjara Dreaming**, the complex interrelationship between the Aranjara, their ancestor gods, country, totems and fellow creatures. Aranjara country is barren, and survival depends on an intimate knowledge of the landscape and its resources. Life and death dance perilous together in the annual cycle of Wet and Dry, and fertility depends on the coming of Keraun, the Monsoon Wind.

The Dreaming is the Godtime, not only in the past but also the eternal present, *parallel to and independent of Time*. The Dreaming is the realm of heroquest. The Aranjara assert that they exist in the Dreaming, while the tribes of the Right Hand exist in Time. Certainly, linear time as measured by outsiders means very little to them.

In Aranjara understanding, the whole of Jolar is crisscrossed with the **Songlines** (dreaming tracks, questlines) of the ancestor gods. In the beginning, all was flat, dark and featureless. **The Travellers** (Pamalt, Lodril, Faranar, and others) journeyed (and still journey) over the landscape, creating mountains, rocks, rivers and sacred places, and setting the proper balance between people, plants and animals.

Pamalt is known as **First Traveller**. His journeys impose order upon the universe. Pamalt's footprints, fingermarks, and campsites still dot the Pamaltelan landscape for all who have the eyes to see.

In the Dreaming, every object in the landscape has its creation story and associated myth. Knowing these myths and their associated ceremonies (the **Songs of Power**) allow the Aranjara to fully utilise the country's magical and physical resources. The first journeys were in the Godtime, the distant past, but they are also *here and now*. In a similar way, living men and women are at the same time themselves and their ancestors.





The Aranjara regard themselves as *literal* children of the Travellers. Pamalt and Faranar are not so much gods as supreme ancestors, and the Aranjara do not worship so much as cooperate in the sacred task of maintaining the land's order and fertility.

### GuideFather Pamalt

The Aranjara teach that Pamalt is Hunt-Leader and Last-To-Be-Hard of the Pamaltelan *Wanlii* or First Ones. (A *literal* translation of 'Wanlii' is 'esteemed tongues' or 'difficult to talk to' or even 'living off out there on their own'). Pamalt knows and understands all those in his family, and is the *Deep-Bantasii* (Wise One) of the South. He is close kin to the Earth powers: they listen to his wisdom, just as he listens to their counsel.

Other *Wanlii* are Pamalt's affines, allies, skin children, or ritual foes, but never his peers. Pamalt is GuideFather (mother's brother) to all. However, he is humble before his Parents-In-Law (to whom he gives brideservice) and always acquiesces to Faranar his wife. He is the role model for proper relations and cooperation between the True People, and his rune is often associated with the powers of kinship and order.

The Aranjara depict their GuideFather in many different ways, always reflecting a particular ceremonial role. In sand drawings and cave or bark paintings he is most often male, though he is sometimes depicted as female, or as a pair of human twins or an entire tribe. When depicted in non-abstract form, Pamalt is always accompanied by Faranar and other companions. Pamalt is also described as the great Rainbow Serpent (Far Traveller, The Earth That Embraces Keraun the Monsoon) or the Flaming Flat Plain that Stretches Forever, a conception as much impersonal force as anthropomorphic ancestor god.

### Pamalt's Brideservice — Care for the Land

Pamalt is responsible for the continued safety and fertility of the land itself. In this he is advised by his wife Faranar and by Grandmother Earth. It is his bride-service, the duty he has undertaken in return for living in the compound of Grandmother Earth and taking her daughter as companion and wife.

The Aranjara, as children of the god, share this duty. Individual skins within the clan are responsible for a particular songline and its associated ceremonies.

### The Songlines

A songline is many things. It is a sung myth cycle, called a **Dreaming**, relating how one of the Travellers journeyed through country, transforming the land. It is usually associated with particular species of plant or animal, reflecting the totems of the skin responsible for it — for example, the *Vol Ini* Dreaming. Knowing the song allows the Aranjara to navigate and survive in country, for it reveals the sites of waterholes and soaks, and tells which species might be hunted or gathered at particular times of the year.

Dotted along the songlines are **sacred sites** (the equivalent of shrines or temples). Here the Travellers perform(ed) acts of magic or wisdom, and here the **Songs of Power** are sung, rituals that guarantee the continued fertility of the earth and its inhabitants. The Songs are unusual in that they are communal, spells that may be cast only by a gathering from a particular tribe, clan or totem. It is unlikely that any single person would know an entire Song of Power: everyone involved has a unique part to play.

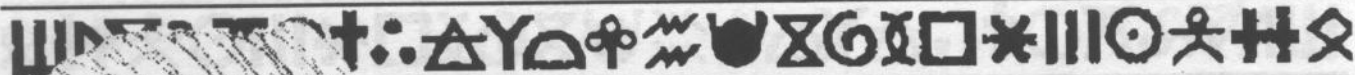
At the Dreaming sites, initiates may sacrifice for cult or totem magic, or address and petition animal or plant totems. Such sites are always secret and often dangerous, for they are reservoirs of stored power. They are approachable only by prepared initiates of a given sex, cult or skin.

The Aranjara follow the songlines in an eternal cycle, giving and taking from the land. Storytelling, magic and ceremony dominate their lives, a continual communal heroquest, a pilgrimage, an act of creation. They continually repeat the acts of the Travellers to ensure the land's fertility, and to keep the corruptions of Chaos and unfettered growth (Aldrya) at bay. Creation must be repeated continually, an annual cycle of birth and death, Wet and Dry.

### Cultic Organisation

Within the cooperative embrace of Aranjara culture, individual cults *as such* do not exist. All worship Pamalt and his kin, and though a particular

Kerasan ThreeLives,  
Tiddas Gundalin (Digging Stick Sister) of the Aranjara  
Keeper of the *Vol Ini* Dreaming



The "totem born" *Bantasii* (shamans) of the Aranjara are mercurial, dangerous... and extremely powerful.

member of the clan may have special allegiance to a particular ancestor or totem, all join equally in worship and service.

However, each Dreaming is controlled by a particular skin. The nature of a Dreaming determines the cultic allegiances and abilities of initiates within that skin. As each skin has responsibility for several Dreamings and many ceremonies, individuals may choose the Dreaming (cult) in which to specialise.

The Three Women Dancing Dreaming, for example, is owned by the *vol ini* skin. It contains a sequence and a site where Faranar calls her sister Miroune (Babeester Gor) for assistance. The site functions as a Miroune shrine, and Keepers of that Dreaming have access to spells and abilities as though they were rune levels. Most of the usual preconditions associated with the cult apply — for example, the Miroune ceremonies of the Three Women Dancing Dreaming are women's business.

The mysteries of the Dreaming are closely guarded, especially from outsiders, who have a history of attempting to appropriate its powers for their own purposes. "Right Hand got no Dreaming", say the Keepers. Within the clan itself, actual secrecy is not so important as keeping your mouth shut about things you are not formally supposed to know. These precautions are essential, for the Dreaming is powerful, and exposure to it can kill the unprepared.

Secrecy is also evident in the way initiates are taught. Nothing relating to the Dreaming is simple or unambiguous. Even seemingly basic truths may be modified or shown to be allegory as initiates grow in wisdom and understanding. With one's whole life an act of religious expression, there is plenty of time to dwell upon the shades of meaning surrounding a given truth.

As worshippers progress, they attain titles which generally correspond to God Leamer cultic categories.

**Initiates** are known as *Haltoni* — Earth Keepers or Guardians. There are at least eight different levels of Earth Keeper status, each passed by a combination of learning, service and valour. As they pass through each grade, Earth Keepers are taught the inner secrets of the Dreaming and participate more fully in the rituals that maintain the land's fertility.

**Acolytes** are known as *Gundalin* (digging sticks — the most useful, versatile and important of all Pamalt's gifts) or *Terapil* (Living Spears).

There are an unknown number of levels within *Gundalin* status. Men and women usually have separate rites and levels.

Only the eldest men and women ever attain the higher levels, and these are referred to as the Keepers of (Men's or Women's) Secrets or Keepers of the Dreaming. Keepers are the equivalent of **Rune levels**, and have ultimate responsibility for a particular Dreaming or sacred site.

**Aranjara shamans** are referred to as Thrice Wounded or Those Who See. The most common description for them is *Bantasii La*, literally "Women of Much Walking".

The Aranjara recognise two ways of becoming a shaman. The most common method is when an existing *Bantasii* takes an apprentice for training. More rarely, a person may be "taught by the totems". They will be afflicted by a serious illness and accompanying madness, flee the clan to survive for several years alone in the wilderness, and acquire the shamanic gifts through direct contact with the Dreaming. Such "totem born" *Bantasii* are mercurial, dangerous... and extremely powerful.

### Life After Life

Pamalt teaches that life and death are interwoven, a part of the Great Dance. The Aranjara do not regard life and death as separate powers — hence their frequent confusion between the Life (Fertility) and Death Runes.

Reincarnation is one of Pamalt's Gifts, and the Aranjara regard it as the norm for clan members. This is in keeping with their view that reality is cyclic, and that notions of past, present and future are meaningless illusions.

An Aranjara child is conceived when a **totem spirit** enters a woman's womb near a sacred site. The woman will feel her womb quicken and remember the spot — the site's guardian will be the child's **conception totem**. When the child is born, her guidefather and maternal grandfather will inspect the conception site, searching for a *churinga nanja* or flame stone. If such a stone is found, it is placed in the clan's sacred storehouse.

At initiation, the new adults of the tribe inspect the tribe's store of *churinga nanja*. Handling a particular stone sometimes provokes violent experiences: a sudden rush of memory or emotion. If so, it is said that the **flame** (store of experiences, immortal self that is unchanged through successive incarnations) of an ancestor has been awakened in the body of the initiate: she has discovered her true self and reclaimed her past from Manungaroo, the Woman of Memory.

Even if memories do not return, handling the sacred stones is the time when initiates will discover their *arita churinga*, true or secret name. This true name may only be uttered among skin members of the same sex; for to know a person's true name is to have power over their flame. A true name often provides a link to a clan ancestor, and initiations are joyful times where kin separated by several generations and by death may be reunited in flame.

Sometimes a flame stone is permanently placed *within* the body of a initiate as a continuing link with the power of the ancestors. It remains within the body until it is buried or otherwise lost at death. The totems of the Dreaming will return the stone when the flame is once again conceived.

### Totems

Totemism concerns the mystical relationship between a human and some natural object, usually a plant or animal. In Jolar, totems are usually plants or animals, but can be almost anything non-chaotic. Unusual totems include blood, thunder, vomit, spearheads, inspiration and crying stones.

Totems are powerful communal spirits formed as a result of cooperation and ritual between humans and plant, animal or elemental spirits. The power of the totems centre on the sacred sites of the Dreaming tracks, and are restricted to the immediate area of the songlines.

The Aranjara form relationships with several totems in the course of their lives. A **skin totem** is the plant for which each skin is named, and is shared by all members of that skin. Individuals take a **conception totem** from the site where their flame is believed to have entered their mother's body. At initiation, they take a **power totem** associated with their true name. And when elders become Keepers of a Dreaming, they often enlist **guardian totems** to teach and assist them.

Because of their association with the totems, the Aranjara, with the exception of *Bantasii*, do not take Allied Spirits.

By John Hughes







*It is 1623. Across the eternal plains of Jolar in Northern Pamaltela, the giant wagons of the Kresh continue their inexorable push westward. In Labuhan, the Arbennan Confederation attempts to unite the scattered and insular Doraddi People against the threat from the east. It is a difficult task, for the Doraddi, Children of the Left Hand and Children of the Right, have been at peace for many generations. Many have forgotten the nature of war.*

*Emissaries are despatched across the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes, following the Questlines, the paths of trade and kinship and ritual exchange. Some are welcomed, and the tribes listen to their story. Many are rebuffed or scorned, for the Doraddi cannot understand the Kresh, or the threat that they present. A few do not return at all, or are returned upon their shields.*

*In such circumstances, the Assegai of the Arbennan consider stronger action...*



## Surinda's Tale

It was all in that first conversation. Her answers — the prisoner I mean. Everything I had been commissioned to discover. Had I but eyes to see, ears to hear, liver to understand. *My knowing blinded me* — that and my exhaustion. Exhaustion and shame.

The previous day — our fifth since taking the spear — had been an evil one. We had fled with our prisoners in unseemly haste, two days of nervous retreat as we sought the safety of Awabakal lands. I am a warrior, SpearHand of Vangono, and I say we were afraid. Two days running without rest or prayer, like kin-slayers fleeing righteous ancestors. Shame burned in our brows, and the Sky felt it. Cronisper judged us.

*Judged us harshly.* The South Wind blew. Dust devils harried us with wet heat and unclean sounds. Biting flies plagued us despite the covenants we had pledged. Misshapen spirits trailed us across the open plain. A charmjibber's roar mocked us from the uplands, sensing we were not whole enough to stalk or hunt. Our prisoners would not speak. We were shamed, fearful.

We were unclean.

I finally spoke to her on the morning of the sixth day, when we had at last reached the safety of kinlands. It was nearly dawn, the time of prayer and planning. There was only the women's night-fire then, for our men were all dead. *We had not even stopped to sing their earth.*

The night I had spent sleepless, moving from watchpoint to watchpoint, calming my lance sisters. We had expected another outbreak of silent terror, death in the footprints of some soulless spirit. Yet all was calm. The power of the Aranjara had faded. In kinlands, it seemed, we were safe.

I remember her squatting in the firelight, silent, straight and unmoving as a spear-shaft tree.

By the standards of her people and mine she had considerable beauty; an inner peace and assurance that was still apparent in every movement. My prisoner was perhaps thirty monsoons, dark and lean, her complexion polished bronze in the light of Mahome's Gift. Her face was thin, with a sharp nose and over-large eyes. Her breasts and stomach were bountiful, limbs long and sturdy. A tattered bouquet of *vol ini* twined through the matted locks of her hair. Such beauty fed our common earth.

A lance sister had given her a flaxen cloak. It lay crumpled by her feet, despite the long chill of the dark. Fur string armlets, thick with grease and red ochre, adorned her arms and forehead. Otherwise, she squatted naked but for a bone and feather necklet and animal skin gurima. Her skin shone in a swirling mass of tattoos and ritual body scars. *I have known many tribes, but I could not read the life story told in those marks.* By the flickering

lowfire, it seemed that they sometimes moved of their own accord.

The prisoner had smeared her face and limbs with ashes, obviously a mark of mourning for her dead companions. Yet she showed no emotion, indeed no outward sign of my presence. She gazed back toward her country with soft green eyes, as still and silent as yesterday's dead.

*Green Eyes.* Despite my shame and exhaustion, the time had come for us to speak. Previously, (so I told myself) I had devoted my energies to the discipline and care of my surviving warriors. The strangeness of Aranjara Country had affected us all. It contained a terror that could not, would not, be named. Yet with the coming Dawn we felt safer, lance sisters and Jmijie scouts alike, seemingly secure in the embrace of kinlands.

Watching False Light bleed the eastern horizon, I shuddered, the events of the last days crowding in upon me. When we took the spear, we were thirty strong. Now we were only twelve. The men in our party had all died in a single night. *Died in their sleep.*

I dreaded making report to the Assegai, for we'd lost most of our prisoners as well. That was dishonour upon my public face and on my clan, for information and hostages were the reason for our silent raid into the untrodden wilderness of the Aranjara.

*Our silent raid.* We'd captured eight women at an isolated waterhole — taken them by surprise during one of their arcane rituals. None had weapons, few resisted. It was an easy capture: indeed, their surprise at seeing unfamiliar faces was greater than any fear of our intentions. They seemed childlike, helpless. *So we were deceived.*

The prisoners allowed themselves to be led forward, dumb, silent, unresponsive. Cattle before the herdsman.

Then came the strangeness. *The land turned against us.* That very night our men died, all of them. Silently. Shamefully. We saw no attacking spirits, no warriors, felt no magic. Yet they died.

The next day, as we led the prisoners under the Grandfather Stool, traditional boundary of Aranjara lands, they joined hands together, raising a chant in their shrill, piping tongue. *Calling the Earth.* My lance sisters responded quickly, but before we could break the circle the prisoners had collapsed, lifeless. Their spirits had fled to Dehore's Realm, a place only the Thrice Wounded might pursue. Dead. All save one, the tall *vol ini* woman with the green eyes...

*Green Eyes.* My brow burned with the shame of that memory. I had failed in my mission. Most terrible of all, I had failed my duty to the prisoners, for I was of course responsible for their safety. Was I of chaos, or a city dweller, that I had forgotten the value of a human life? How could I continue to carry a warrior's spear when I had no respect for the power of giving and taking?

*Green eyes.* Puzzlement, then a sense of sudden recognition. *The woman had green eyes!* I looked again, taking in her height and grace, the set of bones beneath the face, the wiry curl of her hair, the tone of her skin. This woman...

*Surely not.* In assessing her, I also sensed her power, and the hidden currents of a terrible anger. My shame returned. Yet perhaps Aleshmara guided me, for I squatted beside the fire, took up a cake of flat *vol ini* bread, divided it, and cautiously offered my prisoner half.

Her eyes met mine, for the first time acknowledging my presence. I saw disquiet there as well as anger, and, for the first time, something akin to fear. She took the flatbread and slowly raised a portion to her lips. Still she said nothing.

I slowly chewed the coarse, dark bread. The totems of the Doraddi are many, but the *vol ini* is blessed by all who dwell upon the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes. Sharing the flatbread is traditionally a way for strangers to find common skin. Gently now, and slowly, I addressed her in Arbennan, a tongue of the Right Hand, the tongue of my people. *Though not, I had first thought, of hers...*

"I did not mean for your sisters to die. We wanted to talk, and to make your people listen. We must join together to prevent an evil thing. If you tell me your name, I will join you in singing your sisters on their journey."

No response. She chewed silently, holding my gaze, assessing me. Her own eyes were now brimming with tears — clearly she



understood my words. Whatever the otherness of her people and her land, this woman felt pain and loss as deeply as I. In that, at least, we were alike.

Trembling out of shame as well as cold, I placed my weapons well behind, discarded my flaxen cloak. Let her read my tattoos, see the patterns of henna on my hands and feet.

I tried again. "I am Surinda, daughter of Alundira, whose name and wisdom are known through every lineage of the A!Mura, the White Buffalo Nation. We A!Mura are a Right Hand folk, dwellers of the Kalali to the north of Banini Lake. We are known for our mighty herds, for beadwork and leather and flax and richness in speech. Our sons are beautiful, our daughters bountiful. We know the true name of every animal of the Kalali. We are a strong folk, and gentle."

Those last words burned in my mouth. How much should I reveal? With so much lost already, trust was essential here. I paused momentarily, offering a silent prayer to Aleshmara before continuing...

"My mother has a magic bull, and a great herd of cattle — milk and meat and blood enough for all our clan. One day those herds will be mine. My skin is *engivi*, the provider tree, and my skin takes husbands from the *instamiru* and the *vol ini*. All my clan walk the Right Footpath, and our days are blessed. By conception my totem is yellow ochre, most beautiful of the Earth's gifts. I cannot tell you my power totem, but I am a friend of the truth. I am a warrior, SpearHand of Vangono, and like him I can breathe three types of fire. On this day I wear the leader's mark for the Twisted Lance. I would be a friend to you."

*It was done.* I had revealed much, most of my names. If she had bent magic, my flame was lost to her, my spirit also. But would she reply to the one who had killed her sisters?

Dawn touched the eastern sky at that moment, swallow-swift, foreboder of great heat. A pale spirit mist embraced the rocks of the lower valley, wrapping it in forgetfulness. A flock of cockatoos winged eastward, noisy and mocking. I noted their path — water would lie in that direction. The day stretched before me like a pilgrimage. Yet it promised an unknown trail.

Following my gaze, the woman rose and turned from me, facing First Gift. She bend forward, scooping up twin handfuls of thick red dust. I tensed, fearing the worst. With a fluid gesture, she flung the dust skyward, a thick dark cloud scouring the air around us. As it settled, she bent forward, wordlessly keening her grief and frustration to the rising sun.

She turned then to face me. I had not moved, though the red dust stung my face. She spoke — softly, in Arbennan, slow and clumsy at first, but with growing confidence as her tongue remembered the sounds. I was correct! The prisoner was Right Hand, at least by birth. She had green eyes.



"I am a woman who speaks with a voice and I must be heard. In time or out of it, I am Kirinuu Three Lives, digging stick sister of the Aranjara, keeper of the *vol ini* dreaming. My totem is *dangura*, the hunting dog; I am he. My skin is *vol ini*. If you speak the truth, and are truly human, then you are *kartachi*, daughter to the skin of my husband, and you must listen to me."

So. She was claiming superiority because I took husbands from her skin. She would speak, it seemed, only on her own terms.

"I listen to your words. I am no mimi, to take the form of the True People. How can you doubt this? We have shared bread together, you and I..."

"I see now that you are human, though my sisters were not so sure. How can True People treat each other so? My people have

lived here since the Godtime, yet you come among us with evil in your hearts and spears in your hands. We have not killed your kin, or broken vows of marriage promise. This is not your country! We have nothing you can take away!"

Part of me recoiled from the strangeness of her words. Was she lying, or mad — or was there truly something here I could not comprehend?

"*Pinari...*" I replied. *Aunt.* "*Pinari*, I do not understand. We have come to warn you of an evil thing. You are all in danger. We wish only to make your people listen. I do not understand. Why did your sisters die?"

She gazed back across the open plain. "You took us away from country. Our spirits are our country. My sisters have returned to country, to one day take the flesh again. I tell you, *kartachi*, the dead are close. The dead speak, and they too roam our country. They come and go as freely as they wish. They listen to us now."

Impossible. We had spirits of our own to guard the campsite. Nothing was making sense. Every answer begged more questions.

"*Pinari*, you did not *die*. Is this because you were not born to these people?"

She recoiled visibly: I had touched a sensitive wound. Starting angrily, she bent forward, once again clawing at the earth. A second cloud of dust spiralled upwards, thick and red and angry. Poison plants would grow there come Monsoon.

"Do not misjudge me, *kartachi*. I was far-born, it is true. My flame wandered. I was reborn in a strange body, and had to journey far before I recognised my true country. Do not be deceived though, my flame is Aranjara. I have lived here before. I have the memory. I reclaimed my churinga stone and my song of power. Many flames wander, it is their way. Perhaps you too are lost, *kartachi*, and have not yet found your true home."

The dust settled around us, clinging. I shrugged, confused. She spoke so casually of great mysteries. Her words tore.

"My country is pulling me back. I too will die — very soon. I swallowed pebbles, for I am the messenger, but soon I too will die." The flint edge in her voice had vanished, replaced now by a quiet sorrow.

"Messenger? But *we* came to warn *you*!"

Her look was impenetrable. "Warn us? Of what?"

"A mighty army threatens. They march westward. The Kresh. We must all unite together to defend our lands!"

I noticed then that her left shoulder and breast were adorned with an elaborate patterning of swirling tattoos. *Initiation marks.* They gleamed in the low fire's dance. She had many such marks...

"Ah, the wagon-folk who dwell in moving trees. Another came to us with such warnings. He had a name, but now he is dead — I must not mention it. We said to him what we say to you. These Kresh do not know our country. They have no kin here, there is nothing here they can take. Besides, the Kresh do not intend us harm. If they did, we would have dreamed it."

"That other who is now dead, he was of my tribe. He carried the feather cloak. Why did you kill him?"

"That stranger was a fool. He lost his own way. I remember he came carrying many things — skins of bright colours, cups of metal. He asked for our chief, and was angry when we said we had none. He gave what he was carrying to our warrior men — *gifts* he called them. They gave them to their wives, who gave them to their children. The children played with them and then forgot them — as I said, they were heavy, and the skins itched. This made the stranger angry too."

"Some thought he came from Bolongo, a trickster. His tongue was not good, but he was Doraddi, and had initiation scars, so we treated him as human. That was a mistake. He gave orders like a grandmother with an ache in her bones. When meat was served he did not thank the totem, nor did he listen to the conversation between the spirit and the fire. He ate too much of the kill and parts he was not entitled to. He sat at other skins' campfires without invitation and often on the wrong side. He interrupted old women and told young men what to do. Worst of all, he kicked a hunting dog!"

She scowled at the memory. "All the time, he told us, we must

fight! We told him, live unto the Law, we said. We told him, we do not fight. We told him, we cannot leave our country. We told him, we cannot join your army, we have no kin in your land, we cannot visit. He got angry, and threatened us with very strange things. He was too long in the desert without water. Then the Dreaming took him."

"You... killed him?"

"No. He followed after a ceremony group. They said, go back, you do not know the country, this is not your business. He followed them and died. Stupid."

"Died? Like my male warriors?" I saw again my dead companions. Friends, lovers, totem-kin. All dead.

"Their own fault. Country is full of sacred places. Places of power. Some of it is men's business, some of it women's. Children must never go to such places, the power is too strong. You do not know our country. You are children. You camped near a sacred spot. Totem magic. Women's Business. So the men died.

Such power. Such mystery. "No *pinari*, we are not children. But our ways are very different. We do not understand you."

She nodded. "GuideFather Pamalt taught us so. The Right Hand and the Left Hand. Different. Yet we are all his people. That is part of my message. He is very near."

She gestured to the thin strands of mist that hugged the ground around the camp, already fleeing as the sun took the sky. "See that smoke? Campfire smoke that. The gods are near. Their camp is just beyond that rise. They wish me to tell you something."

She stood then, her eyes locked with mine. She spoke, a voice of power, a voice of command. "Judgement is upon you, *kartachi*. You have done evil. I will miss my sisters. Why must you treat us this way?"

I could not deny the shame. My cheeks burned. Her accusation rang true. And yet, I was a warrior. I must deal in truth.

"A warrior must be true to a warrior's ways. I am judged by your words. I did not mean you harm... we did wrong. There are many false stories about your people. We feared you. We are so different, your people and mine..."

"Yes, *kartachi*, we are different. You Right Hand see things in order. We see things in place. You see the waking, we see the dream. You see the moon in its phases, we see the whole. Pamalt in his wisdom has granted us this difference."

Her anger melted then into tears. She approached, gently placed her hands upon my shoulders. We held each other and kissed, mouth to mouth, as only true kin may. Sharing breath. Sharing life.

"Surinda, my sister."

"Kirinuu, my sister."



Part of my mind rebelled. Was I no longer in command? She was my prisoner! Stop this — it could be some spell! Beware her power!

Yet I saw truth in her eyes, and sorrow, and even forgiveness. My suspicion faded to a dull disquiet. If it was a spell, then who was casting it. Kirinuu? GuideFather Pamalt? My totem?

She sat me down by the fire, and wrapped my cloak about me. I was shivering. Grateful for her kindness, I offered her a flask of *amergu*, buffalo blood mixed with milk, the basic diet of my people. She took it and swallowed, gagging. Yet she managed a smile as she passed it back to me.

"We are very different, your people and mine."

The sun had risen directly behind Kirinuu now, wrapping her hair in a halo of dancing light. Her fingers moved, tracing the forms of a blessing. Her voice rose and fell, powerful, ritualistic.

"Listen carefully, Surinda of the Twisted Lance. Turn and look back to my country — Aranjara country. Much sorrow has passed that you may understand. The fire listens. Lodril listens. Hear me and understand."

"I'm telling you that country is our mother and father. See that mountain. That mountain is country. That tree too. My spirit, my flame, my body, all in country — Aranjara country."

"Look at my country, Surinda. Country is the feeling of string, of blood through your body. In my blood, in my arm, that's where you'll find country. We are our country. We organise country, we manage country. Our stories make country, our dreams. And country makes us. We are our country's dreaming."

"GuideFather taught us this. Listen carefully, and his truth will come in your feeling, his Dreaming will come through your body. Become part of his country. He will go right down into foot and head, fingernail and blood, through your liver, through your heart."

"Faranar slept there, in Aranjara country, and when the monsoon wind came, she told Keraun to fill the tracks of her wanderings — to make the sacred waterholes. She named every one, and taught us the names, the songs of power. And Pamalt too. GuideFather wanders our country."

Off at the watchpoint, one of the lance sisters shouted a query. Her voice seemed distant, part of another reality.

"Can you smell that wind, *kartachi*? Keraun is coming soon. Not today, but soon. She loves our country. We do the ceremony and Keraun brings us the monsoon rain. The Dry will end. Everything lives again. I tell you, I love that wind. And Keraun, she loves us. When the monsoon comes, you listen to the leaves; and you hear yourself. The tree bends, you bend with it."

"You have to learn this, my sister. The Kresh, if they come, they must learn this. In a dark time the eye begins to see."

She began singing then, a soft, tuneless humming. She was drawing in the sand with her finger, long sinuous curves and circles. She had said all she needed to say. For my part, I gazed unblinking into the sun, half listening, troubled, confused.

Without her country she would die. I believed that. And already stained with innocent blood, I would report failure. Others would come, and others would die. I had to decide. At my back, the country of the Aranjara called, beckoning. *So much mystery*.

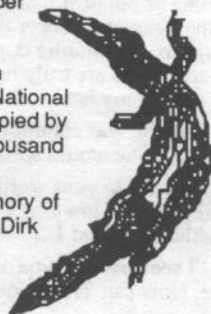
I listened then, and it seemed I heard a silent chorus of *vol ini* shout joyful greeting to the rising sun. I listened, waiting for Pamalt's word. I smelt the sweet bouquet of the earth, the promise of monsoon rain. He was speaking through my body. Pamalt was near, and I could feel him with my body...

"Aranjara Dreaming" was written by  
John Hughes

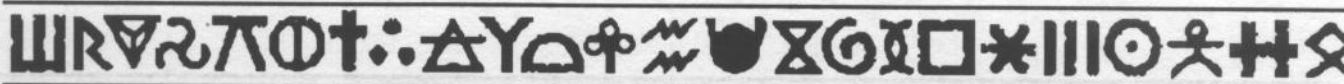
#### Author's Note:

Parts of this story were inspired by the book *Story About Feeling* by Bill Neidjie with Keith Taylor (Magabala Books 1989). This book records a series of stories told by Bill, an elder of the Buniti clan of the Aboriginal Gagadju people. Gagadju country is located in the Alligator River region of Australia's Northern Territory, site of the world-famous Kakadu National Park. The area has been continuously occupied by hunter-gatherer peoples for at least sixty thousand years.

Sumting Orother's epigram reflects my memory of similar comments by the Dutch sea captain Dirk Hartog, one of the first Europeans to view Australia's non-material Aboriginal civilisation.







# Pamaltela

## A Visitor's Guide

**P**amaltela, the Great Southern land of Glorantha, is about 6700 km long and 3300 km wide. Winds tend to blow from east to west, and occasionally from the hot south. The climate is tropical, and gets markedly warmer and drier to the south.



North of the continent lies the central Homeward ocean, and the island of Teleos, whose civilization was destroyed by the God Learners, and Justela, the God Learner homeland that was partially sunk when the world rose against them (it is now a bastion of the Elder races).

The eastern shores of Pamaltela are washed by the hot Togaro ocean, the eldest of the great waters.

To the South, beyond the inhospitable Nargan desert, lies a land and a sea of unending fire impossible for mortals to approach.

West past the lands of men rolls the chill Western Sea, which has no bounds.

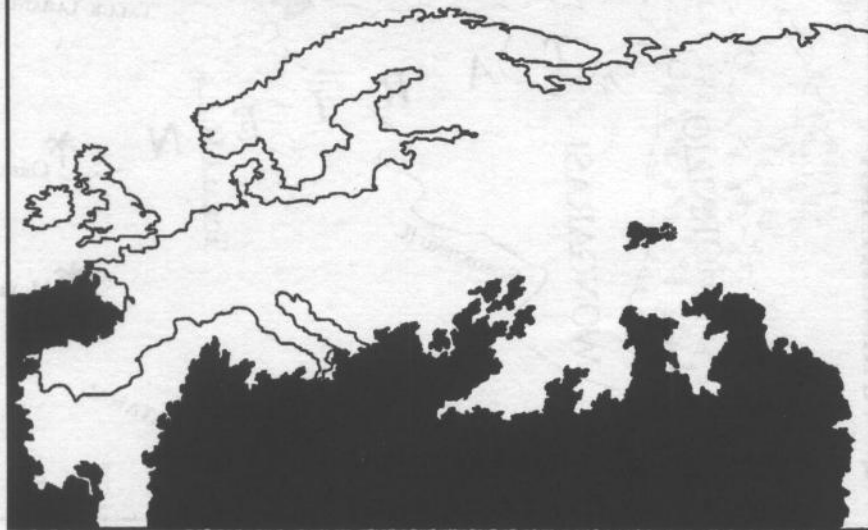


Like Genertela, Pamaltela was ravaged by chaos but recovered better than the north because Pamalt, ruling god of the land, survived. Relative peace and plenty continue in the land, so that many humans are able to live a lush, pastoral life. Many Elder Races are still powerful here - dwarfs, innumerable elves, and a variety of isolated and obscure creatures. Human cities dot the northern coasts.



Contact with Genertela, the northern continent, is infrequent and hazardous. With the Opening of the Seas 20 years ago, brave captains risk the Doom Currents and annihilation in Magasta's Pool in their crossing of the great Homeward Ocean (for the routes taken see *Tales #10*). No organised trade links have been established between the continents yet, but great profits can be made trading exotic rarities across the great divide.

### Size Comparison: Pamaltela and Europe



### Major Regions

**Dinal**  
Called the Peaceful Woods by elves. The Council of Seventeen rules it, and many Yellow elves consider it to be their heaven on earth.

**Elamle**  
A region ruled by the Novaroolpia tribe of Yellow elves. They tax and take tribute from the human cities which dot their coast, and are friendly with those humans whom they know.

**Enkloso**  
A temperate land, where snow sometimes comes creeping from down the mountains and frost rasps inland with the Brown Sea fogs. The people here are Green elves, with a long and proud history. The many humans in the lowlands and along the shore have Genertelan cultures.

**Fonrit**  
A region semitropical in climate and life. Its poor are all blue-skinned; as slaves, they are among the worst-treated in the world. The overlords, the Confederates of Fonrit, rule a hodgepodge of conquered duchies, satraps, principalities, and theocracies, and make common cause only against invading elves. The northern state of Kareeshtu is a great naval power.

**Hornilio**  
Here are only marshes and swamps, so low and level that tides wash far inland and the rivers flood far to sea. Huge monsters from earlier ages inhabit this place. All is dominated by the Red elves of the cruel Queen Karan Ilargor, legendary ruler who lead in the Gods War.

**Jolar**  
Nomadic Agimori and other peoples roam these wide

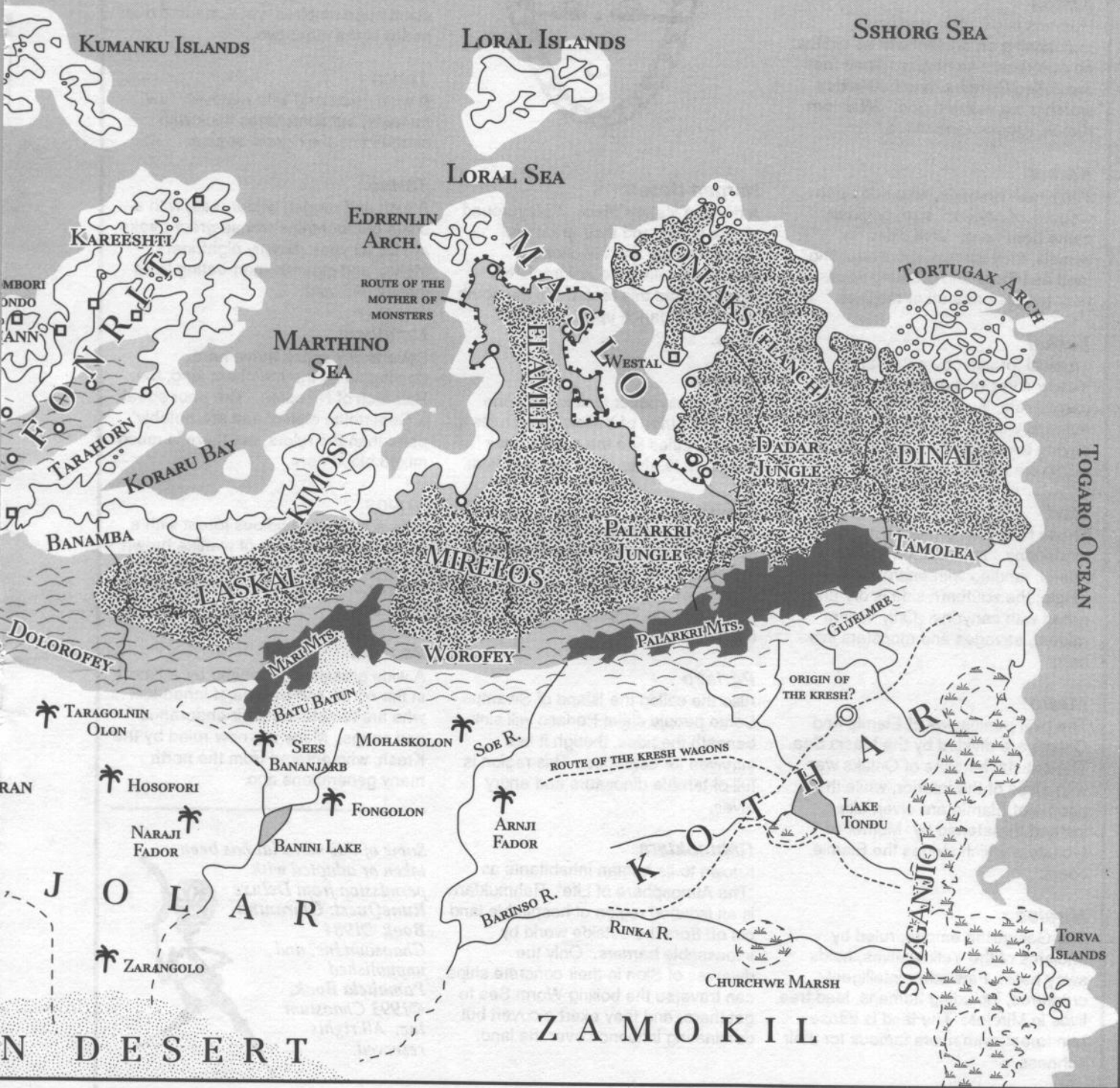
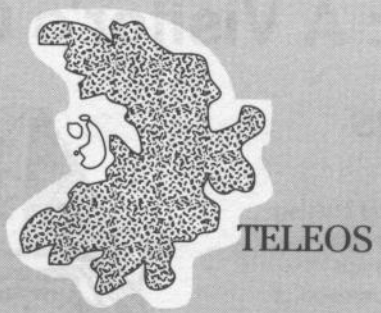




	ELF JUNGLE		FOREST - NO ELVES
	RIVER (SEASONAL)		SMALL/MEDIUM CITY
	MAJOR LAND REGION		LARGE CITY
	UNINHABITABLE DESERT		METROPOLIS
	SWAMP		OASIS/TRIBAL CENTRE

KILOMETERS

0      400      800      1200



# Pamaltela: A Visitor's Guide

## Major Regions

grasslands, herding cattle and hunting.

The Kresh invasion from the east prompted the organization of the Arbennan kingdom, a confederation of tribes.

### **Kimos**

Humans live on this peninsula, maintaining an ancient war so old that no one recalls its origins. Their foes are called Gorgers, and both sides worship the volcano god. "War-torn Kimos, ragged land of fire."

### **Kothar**

The Kresh nomads, who ride upon wagons of colossal size, originally came from here. With cities on wheels, they rumble about exacting food as tribute and granting access to their temples and other facilities.

### **Laskal**

Tropical forests cover this land. Yellow elves of many tribes, with no central rule, live here. Many tribes of humans wander among the woods, paying token tribute to the elves as fellow creatures of the wild.

### **Mari**

These lands are broken hot, harsh mountains. The northern side is humid, tangled with encroaching jungle; the southern side is dry and rutted with canyons. Only violent raiders, savages and monsters live here.

### **Maslo**

The twin peninsulas of Elamle and Onlaks are divided by the Maslo Sea. The coastal humans of Onlaks war with elves of the interior, while the people of Elamle are elven allies, instead threatened by Mother of Monsters which strides the Elamle coast.

### **Mirelos**

The Gaskallian empire, ruled by ancients of the Yellow elves, holds sway here. Few other intelligent creatures, including humans, lead free lives in Mirelos. The land is dense rain forest, with rivers famous for their richness.



### **Nargan Desert**

A dry and lifeless place, a playground for fire spirits and their great lord father Pamalt, and his chosen immortals called the Agiorani. No mortals tread this realm. To the south, live flames dance upon sand and stone.

### **Onlaks**

Rain forests cover Onlaks, and the Gargualia tribe of Yellow elves rules it. Human cities line the coasts; their people hate elves and war with them.

### **Palarkri**

A highland pierced by five great stands of jagged mountains. Among the peaks live the exotic inhuman Jelmre, who trade with the elves in the north, and the Empire of Kresh in the south.

### **Porlaso**

Also called the Island of Swamps. Some people claim Porlaso will sink beneath the tides, though it has survived for centuries. This region is full of terrible dinosaurs and angry elves.

### **Rahmuktara**

Known to its human inhabitants as "The Atmosphere of Life", Rahmuktara is an isolated region of hospitable land cut off from the outside world by impassable barriers. Only the dwarves of Slon in their concrete ships can traverse the boiling Worm Sea to get there, and they exert a covert but dominating influence over the land.

### **Slon**

A race of dwarfs inhabit this temperate land. They also rule many human cities, whose inhabitants pretend to be dwarfs. The dwarfs treat as animals the back-country aboriginal peoples of Slon.

### **Sozganjio**

Also known as the Endless Marsh. This is a steaming marsh inhabited by dinosaurs and Red Elves. So vast is this area that here three savage kings, each a descendant of the same hero, claim huge empires, yet none has ever heard of the other two.

### **Tarien**

A wide grassland with relatively few humans, but sometimes thick with slarges and their great beasts.

### **Tarmo**

A high and rugged wilderness, with a spine of mountains whose great peaks are icy all year. Mostly nightriders, frights, and gigantic man-eating trolls inhabit this land.

### **Umathela**

Several city states thrive here, dominated by the merchant king, the Patriarch of Nikodros. The poor speak a Genertelan dialect and are notably paler than the rulers, but there is much mixed blood here.

### **Vralos**

This is a large deciduous forest with a significant population of warlike brown elves. They are friendly with the neighbouring humans, and ally with them in war.

### **Zamokil**

A wide grassland inhabited by Agimori in the north, and by blue-skinned folk who are famous for their endurance and songs. Many are now ruled by the Kresh, who entered from the north many generations ago.

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*"Long and long ago, mighty Artmal ruled in heartless splendour. All was beautiful but none were happy. Since then Lodril has raised up mountains, Aldrya has choked the land, and the Inner Sea has boiled away. But some remnants of the Time Before have come down to us. One such is the Varalu."*

*A blueskin mystic of Fonrit*

# ↑ Veldt Trek ↓

## ***Paul Reilly takes us on an Epic Journey across the face of Pamaltela***

### **<sup>1</sup>Valuable sources referred to:**

*Glorantha Bestiary* (GB)  
*Elder Secrets: Races Book* (ER) and *Secrets Book* (ES)  
Annilla writeup in *Troll Gods* (TG)  
"Treading the Right Footpath" in *Read Me First!* from *Gods of Glorantha* (GoG)  
plus of course the whole of this issue...

### **<sup>2</sup>Example PC groups:**

**Lunars**  
A Lunar exploration and trade party with guards and hired native guides. The Lunars have Divined the existence of the Varalu, a Blue Lunar spirit from Godtime in the form of an indigo bird. The Varalu may provide vital clues toward the Healing of the Moon Element and the rising of the White Moon. Further Divination reveals its presence in Zamokil. The Varalu may greatly advance the Lunar Way and help to bring peace and healing to all.

### **Rebel slaves from Fonrit**

The Varalu is a magic song of Artmal's which was torn from their ancestors by Garangordos the Cruel. The song will give hope and courage to the slaves and with this spiritual renewal they may all rise up and throw off the oppression of their Fonriti masters.

### **Sun City**

Yelm and Yelmaliu initiates in a Sun-worshipping city are threatened by ever-escalating depredations of the Jungle Trolls. The Varalu is a magic horn which the Artmali once used to frighten away a troll army. Will the PCs get back with it in the nick of time?

### **Agimori**

A clan of Agimori (from western Jolar or even from Prax) have had no female children for nearly a decade. Their shaman goes on a spirit journey and finds that this is a long-delayed curse from the days when their ancestors fought Artmal's people, and that the Varalu must be retrieved to break the spell. The shaman or his

### **Introduction**

This cameo may be used as a scenario or extended into a full campaign. It begins at Dumanaba, the Floating City, situated at the mouth of the Baruling River in Fonrit and takes the characters on a thousands of kilometers trek across the continent to Zamokil<sup>1</sup>.

Characters could be native or foreign, even Genertelan seafarers. The characters should be devoted to something beyond themselves, perhaps a clan, city, or cult. The GM uses this devotion to motivate the Trek.

Little is known about the blue-skinned Veldang of distant Zamokil. They retain some knowledge of and even artifacts from the ancient Artmali Empire, and their shamans have much uncanny knowledge. One of these shamans controls access to the Varalu, which is Divined to be of some importance. Zamokil is inaccessible by sea, so someone must trek the length of the continent, find the shaman, retrieve the Varalu, and bring it back while there is still time. You, the Gamemaster, must decide just what the Varalu is and what it means to your campaign. It should be something that benefits the society of the PC's rather than just the PC's themselves. The situation that requires it should be of increasing urgency but with no preset deadline.

### **Building a Party**

Encourage character choices that are useful on the journey. If you have an existing group round it out with PCs or NPCs with skills the others lack<sup>2</sup>.

Good characters would include one with people skills (a merchant or con man), one with survival skills (a hunter) and of course magicians and fighters always come in handy. A sage with some knowledge about the lands they will visit would be useful and may also provide comic relief ("A whale? On land? We must investigate!")

### **The Call**

Once you have the basic motivation, the players should learn of the Varalu and its import. A wise person (eg. a priest of their cult or their clan shaman) has Divined the need for the Varalu and presents the idea of seeking it to the PCs. Don't let elaborate preparations bog down the journey. You can afford to be generous and let the party prepare generic supplies that include survival equipment and trade goods thought to be valuable on the plains, such as metal needles, tools, knives, etc. (Pamaltela is a living continent and so metals, which are the bones of the gods, are of course much rarer than in Genertela.)

### **Old Dobi**

Before they set out, introduce Old Dobi and his grandson. Old Dobi is a blueskin slave from Fonrit. He may be a family retainer of a PC, or could be given to them by the elder who suggests the mission. His grandson Mali has a rare malady that strikes only young Blues: he is troubled by strange dreams and feels he must journey to the southeast. There is no cure but going, and those who do not go often waste away and die. Dobi asks if he and the lad may join the expedition; he has many menial skills, notably cooking, and the boy is willing to work. Dobi is indeterminately old and Mali is about 12 or 13. Dobi is

assistant and a group of warriors, led by the chief's nephew, are dispatched to retrieve the Varalu.

<sup>3</sup>**Dumanaba**

**The Floating City (large city):**

The hero Bornotin was tricked by Kadiola, a wily water spirit, to build and maintain a floating bridge across the seven miles of the Baruling River mouth. Because no floating debris could pass to the sea Kadoila won a bet with his kin and became king. From the collected debris Bornotin built the first parts of the Floating City. Menaka, called Boatman, designed the rafts which have since housed the residents of this city. Hundreds of channels wind between the rafts, which often move away from one neighbour and next to another, thereby changing the winding channel. When the Invisible Fleet hunted down all the sleek war yachts of the Koraru Sea in 1077 the city open to receive a native fleet but forbade the evil God Learners fleet entry, which was thus destroyed.

<sup>4</sup>For a potential fight, let them find a Gulper's tracks (GB 22).

<sup>5</sup>**Suggested incidents**

- A Rascallu (Rhino-centaur, GB 35) charges up and stamps out their fire (remember the

fated to die in order to save the party (and his grandson) so that he can appear dramatically at The End. Give him a heroic death, battling impossible odds. In some encounter when it looks like a PC is about to be stomped or eaten by a monster, he dashes in and bravely makes a stand so that the PCs and Mali can get away. A dramatic death scene can be staged in the Mari badlands: a death at the tentacles of the Chamjibber.

**The Journey**

Use foreshadowing if possible; for example the colour red is 'bad' throughout the scenario. Sunsets are 'bloody', poisonous plants and animals are red, blisters are an 'angry' red, etc. Similarly, blue is a 'good' color. Use poetic justice to help construct the story as you go along. For example, note how the PCs treat Dobi and Mali. When they get to Zamokil, the Veldang will react to them based on how Mali, a fellow Veldang, has been treated. Dobi dies along the way; if the PCs treated him well his ghost will help them in the final Spirit Quest. Use the weather and sky descriptions in Elder Secrets to establish descriptions: E.g., it is summer and the Sky Storm, a sort of overhead aurora, should appear several times during the Trek.

**Dumanaba the Floating City**

The adventure begins in Dumanaba at the mouth of the great Baruling river<sup>3</sup>. Beyond the floating city stretches the great jungle of Laskal, thinly populated by the Embyli (yellow elves) and primitive human tribes who remain subservient to them.

Once one learns to pick one's way along the countless rafts to the great floating markets, the PCs can obtain trade goods and supplies and engage a forest guide. Metal is valuable in the Pamaltelan interior, so small items such as knives, needles, and fishhooks make excellent trade goods or gifts to ensure a warm welcome from the plains people. Armour would be a poor trade item and traders might even offer to buy the PCs' armour at cut rates.

The obvious choice for a guide is Joyar, a friendly little brown fellow who has come out to trade colourful feathers for metal goods. He has picked up the local Tradetalk, but has limited vocabulary and simple grammar: "Look! Good feathers! We trade! Sugar, knife, axe?" He is happy to guide the PCs to the other side of the forest for a price. He is canny and asks for more than he really wants ("Two knife, axe, bag sugar") but holds out for a big knife and a hatchet. If asked how long it takes to cross the forest, he says "Maybe so ten day." He tries to give each person a feather to wear and asks "What color?". If asked to choose, he gives obvious warriors red feathers and non-combatants blue feathers.

The PCs may have exported horses or other riding beasts to Dumanaba from their homeland, most probably at incredible expense. Unfortunately, attempting to bring them through the jungle and onto the plains is a futile exercise, something the merchants and traders of the city and Junglefolk such as Joyar will attest to. Horses have never been successfully established in Pamaltela, and only the Orlanthei who live along the cool coast of Umathela doggedly keep breeding them. Even there they are highly susceptible to a number of diseases that native Pamaltelan animals are immune to, or only suffer from mildly. If the PCs ignore the advice and bring the horses anyway, they should begin wheezing and limping soon after entering the jungle. Before they even reach the plains, many of them should be dead or broken down.

**The Forest**

The jungle environment is dim and relatively cool. Strange noises abound. The "path" Joyar follows seems to be only perceptible to him, and at first he scampers at a speed too great for the PCs to keep up with. He sometimes calls a halt and searches for his path while clucking to himself. After the first day Joyar revises his estimate of the journey's length to "Twenty-thirty day. You-all slow. Why you-all carry so much junk?"

Throw in a few encounters with strange animals and odd-looking plants. Joyar has a detailed knowledge of the forest and barks a short laugh as PCs make comical (to him) errors like sitting on a puffball or hiding when a harmless bird calls. However, he is there to save them from dangers such as well-camouflaged poisonous snakes. Occasionally Joyar hushes everyone while he runs off by himself. He allows no fires, saying "Little People no like fire"<sup>4</sup>.



Joyar of the Jungle

**The Embyli**



At some point a special Listen or Scan (or Joyar) reveals that the group is being shadowed by creatures visible only with glimpses through the dense vegetation, on the ground and at many levels in the foliage. They are small and seem to be wearing leaves as camouflage. These little people are Embyli, or Yellow Elves (GB 18, ER 26-43). Joyar says "Everybody no move" and begins chanting a song, over and over again. A group of Yellow Elves surround the group, and several dozen Runners leap and bound in the trees around them, chirping and cracking their rattan whipsticks. All the while a nervous Joyar continues the chant, which all the forest know. It signals their peaceful intent, and an offer to the elves of a token to let them pass.

There are about 15 Embyli, each about 1.5 meters tall, with brownish-yellow skin and banana-leaf hats (...or is that their hair?). The Embyli go up to the party, rummage through their packs, taste things, and so on. Five stand guard with blowguns. If anyone makes a hostile move or is wearing anything red (including one of Joyar's feathers) the runners use special rattan whipsticks to immobilise them. These wrap around wrists and ankles and then become as stiff as wood. They are left on when the elves leave and may be cut off later, although Joyar expresses uncertainty about doing anything that might go against the little people. The Embyli are very excited when they break open the packs of trade goods and find needles or pins; they happily take these. If no needles are there, they take something metal. As when dealing with each other, the Embyli simply take what they need.

Later on in the journey the party may run into a group of raiding Muri (Jungle Trolls: GB 41, TG 54, ER 54, 62). Some are Zorani; all wear red and black warpaint. They are following the party's trail and wait for nightfall before moving in to satisfy their curiosity (and hunger). The Embyli may show up and shoot trolls unless the PCs showed hostility to them earlier. The Muri retreat if seriously threatened.

### Out of the Jungle and Onto the Plains

The jungle begins to thin out as the party make their way into the region known as Dolorofey. To the west, the barren Tarmo Mountains rise high above the jungle, looking strangely cold and silent. Joyar leads the party up into the foothills of the Tarmo's easternmost spine until, at the top of a ridge, they can look down over the vast plains of Jolar, stretching off into the distant lands of fire. Joyar says, "Here World's Edge; beyond Bad Dry is," before taking his due payment and disappearing down the slope and back into the forest.

The opposite slope leads down onto the open savannah, sparsely dotted with low, gnarled shrubs.

A Plains Custom (for some Doraddi tribes at least) is to light a smoky signal fire when entering an area, announcing your presence. If this is done the tribesfolk are often more inclined to be friendly.

### The Jewel in the Skull

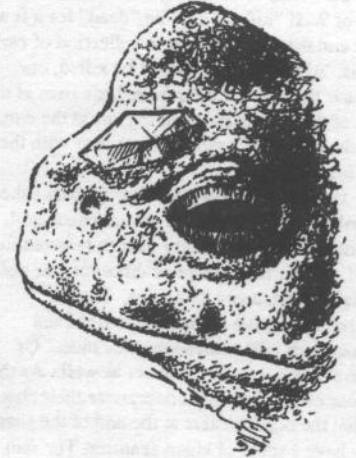
During their first evening in the open, the party hear horrific thrashing and yowling close by their camp. Upon investigation, they see flashes of red and green in the distance. Getting closer, the PCs come across two animals struggling, a large (SIZ 2) toad and a small ocelot. The toad has somehow gotten the cat's rear legs in its mouth. The green flashes were the ocelot's eyes and the red came from a large red carbuncle (gem) in the toad's forehead. If the PCs interfere and distract the toad the cat slashes back at it and limps away. If not a rather horrible devouring scene occurs. If its meal is interrupted the toad glares horribly at the PCs as if it is sizing them up for dinner before hopping off. If attacked the toad does not flee but instead fights back, trying to wrap its long, disgusting tongue around their legs and (impossibly) to swallow them. This behaviour is damned unnatural if anyone thinks about it (Animal Lore). If killed (it's rather tough but presents no real danger) the carbuncle can be pried out. The jewel radiates magic. It is in fact a 3 point Power Enhancing crystal (ES38), a highly desirable and useful item. For its value as a jewel alone, it is worth over 5,000p in civilised territory.

The carbuncle is an angry red and seems almost to glow from within. The "toad" is in fact a Charnjibber (GB 14) and its tongue was actually a long tentacle. The jewel is part of its living body and the creature is inexorably drawn to it. Any form it now takes has a small scar where the jewel should be.

### The Guide

Within the next day (if they lit a fire) or several days (if they didn't) a handsome Doraddi youth comes running up to them. He appears on the horizon in the morning and seems to run continuously for hours until he reaches them. This is Zhi, one whom, as he says, was struck by Jmijie's magic stick. If they are friendly to him he can be very helpful. He is curious and offers to accompany them as they travel through Pamalt's heartland. Zhi is not yet twenty but is already adept with the spear and at the chase. He can teach them the patois of the plains (a pidgin tongue like Tradetalk) and help them over any cultural hurdles. Zhi's tribe is the Komonora, a standard Right-Handed Pamalt tribe. He offers to take them to meet their king, who is currently dwelling at the Tarangolnin Olon oasis.

Compared the dry and dusty plains, the oasis is a paradise, with a cool waterhole and large shady trees. A small group of permanent inhabitants dwell here, mostly people in



### The Carbuncle

scene in *The Gods Must Be Crazy?*). He glares down at them and then bullies them for a while, probably taking something (*in our campaign, he also grabbed the spectacles from our ornithologist-sage, looked through them and was delighted to find that he could see properly! ...rhinos are notoriously short-sighted!*)

- Run a few encounters with clans: these could be small foraging parties or a main camp with a hundred people. In a full campaign, invent tribes with problems or adventure opportunities.

One episode might be a hunt, another a tribal wedding with the PCs as the surprise guests. Most clans are hospitable and share food and drink. Zhi is able to translate.

- Meeting Challenges from clans might include fights, races, storytellings, etc. The first challenger is normally a young hothead who wants to prove himself with skills less than the PCs'; the second may be from a chief or great warrior who is a master of the skills used in the challenge.

- The PCs could encounter a "Left Hand" tribe, such as the Aranjara - this presents an ideal opportunity to play out the *Groomquest* scenario elsewhere in this issue.

- A Ray of Hope: Describe their hunger and thirst, and the sensation of being lost in a dead wilderness. As night falls, the star called One Night Wish peeks shyly above the horizon. This happens but once a year and many Gloranthans make a wish if they are lucky enough to see the star. It is said that these wishes are sometimes granted in a subtle way; thus the custom is to wish for something that could happen naturally in the course of events.

<sup>6</sup>According to GB, Charnjibbers assume the form of whatever they last ate, plus tentacles. They appear as small critters near the beginning of the dry season, and wind up as great monsters toward the end, having eaten their way up to huge size. They sometimes have a



chaos feature to start and acquire those of what they eat. They are cunning animals with a fixed INT of 9. If "killed" they lie "dead" for a few days and then devolve into a collection of earlier forms. Although they cannot be killed, our guess is that there are far more little ones at the start of the dry season than big'uns at the end, and the big ones somehow disappear with the coming of the rains.

One theory is that the Chamjibbers (like Krashkids) are parts of a primal chaos-god, Chamjibber. It tries every year to reassemble itself, getting to elephant or dinosaur size before the rains wash away its bodies. Thus Chamjibbers have an instinct to fight and devour each other whenever they meet. Of course they eat other creatures as well. As they devour each other they concentrate their chaos, so that the big monsters at the end of the season may have a score of chaos features. The rain slowly washes them away, possibly leaving spores in the soil for next year.

### <sup>7</sup>*Sikkanos' Dust*

This corrosive alkali dust is found in the Nargan but the Sikkanos Winds which come in Fire Season blow in northward in storms. Creatures caught out in such a storm must seek shelter or suffer the effects of the choking dust, which damages unprotected skin and also eyes and lungs. Small animals burrow and large ones find what shelter they can. Specially adapted scavengers come out during these storms. Storms rarely last more than three days. Those who choose to travel in the Nargan can face this dust at anytime of year.

### <sup>8</sup>*Kothar*

The homeland of the Kresh is a wide and verdant plain, cut by clear rivers and teeming with herds. The natives consider it a paradise. It is well watered, and the oasis centres of Jolar do not exist here.

### <sup>9</sup>*Zamokil*

The Land of the Veldang, though several Doraddi tribes live here, too. Zamokil is hot year-round; its seasonal variations are in precipitation, not temperature.

### <sup>10</sup>*The Veldang of Zamokil*

The Veldang of Zamokil are the last free descendants of the Artmali Empire. They are devoted to perfecting themselves and to the memory of their glory days. They may seem heartless, as in their exile of any children who do not measure up to their standards. (The exiles are taken as slaves by the Kresh.) They are human in form, with slate-blue skin and wiry dark hair. They are modest in stature but robust and have great endurance. Their mental differences, whether cultural or genetic, are more profound; they place great value on memory and logic and view strong passions as the result of disease or aberration.

The physical culture of the Veldang is quite primitive; they are essentially stone age hunter-gatherers. Little clothing is worn; men and women wear loincloths but have little modesty about appearing naked. Body paint and costumes of natural materials such as straw and animal horns are employed in special ceremonies. They employ tools of wood, bone, horn and leather; good stone is valuable and

old age. The Komonora are also here at this time; one of their many stops of their seasonal wanderings.

The Doraddi greet the outsiders with the Meeting Challenge (see Cult of Pamalt). They are curious about the PCs' customs but dismiss most as "only for half-men" - armour is for the weak-skinned, writing a crutch for poor memory, and so on.

If the PCs act well toward their hosts they are treated well and may travel with the tribe from water hole to water hole across the dry plains. This is your chance to give the PCs an experience of Agimori culture. There may be a few tense moments when the PCs make a cultural faux pas (such as offering to share water, which may be interpreted as a sexual overture or marriage offer). When the tribe reaches the edge of its territory after a week or two, Zhi wants to go with the PCs.

The party has around two thousand kilometers of walking to do. Run as many or few plains encounters as you like<sup>5</sup>.

### *The Charnjibber*

The Charnjibber reappears as a wild dog with tentacles; this time it is no real threat. It has an ugly read weal on its forehead, in about the same place the carbuncle was on the toad.

A shaman or tribal chief can tell them about the species but will not realize that the Carbuncle is drawing a specific Charnjibber to them. Charnjibbers are uncommon and meeting several in a year is very strange<sup>6</sup>.

### *An Ill Wind*

The Sikkanos Wind<sup>7</sup> suddenly blows up a dust storm while they are on the open plain. Zhi shows them how to protect themselves by lying in a low spot, digging if necessary. While they hide from the storm the Charnjibber attacks again, this time as a tentacled lion. Because of the howling winds and choking dust, Perception rolls at -20% are needed to spot it coming, otherwise it is on a PC before anyone can react. Missile weapons are near useless in this wind and melee skills are at -20%. Once again the creature goes for the PC with its Carbuncle.

### *Into the Arbennan Lands*

As they plod through Jolar, they enter the lands of the Arbennan Confederation, a group of tribes who oppose the Kresh. Here they are treated with some suspicion and are taken before the Great Council, where every warrior is a clan chief and every old man a great priest. Let the PCs state the purpose of their journey. As long as they are honest the Confederation allows them to pass on through, and are given a coloured bead which is a sign that other tribesfolk should offer them hospitality and guidance. Should they lie to the Council they are humiliated and beaten but allowed to go their own way.

### *The Kresh*

Eventually the party pass into the southern fringe of the land of Kothar<sup>8</sup>, part of the "empire" of the Kresh wagoners. Packs of Midget Slashers (GB 30) are a major pest in this region; their night attacks are one reason for the great wagons of the Kresh. The Doraddi tribespeople who wander in this region are allies of the Kresh, and soon pass on news of their arrival to their masters. A group of Doraddi warriors are sent to escort them to a wagon train. If they resist they are outlawed and hunted.

The PCs are held in a wagon for several days (and many miles) until the train comes to a great wagon-city, where dozens of huge and ostentatious wagons are arrayed in a complex circular pattern. Many of these wagons are pulled by blueskin slaves. These know little of Zamokil; most were born into slavery but some were cast out from south Zamokil in childhood. Their endurance is remarkable, greater than that of Agimori.

Here they are brought before important Kresh elders, who consider them spies or agitators unless they can explain themselves. If the PCs' Oratory fails they are condemned as Arbennan agents. However, a Yanmorla crone intercedes for them and proposes an ordeal (e.g. Firewalking) instead of execution. As their mission is favoured by the gods, they hopefully survive such an ordeal and may travel Kresh lands.

### *Badlands*

The party's route takes them to the fringes of the *pars an golok* and into a badlands area, riddled with canyons. The maze of canyons conceals raiders, monsters, and savages but is still the most practical route east. One canyon is the haunt of a succubus, bound to it by a powerful shaman; she may send dreams to tempt the party to her. Stage the final confrontation with the Charnjibber here (unless they have ditched the jewel). It comes in the form of an Allosaur with tentacles for forelimbs, and relentlessly hunts them in a game of hide and seek with the dinosaur. The PCs may have to Climb up a canyon wall that the monster cannot, hide in an arroyo and so on, but it relentlessly keeps coming, drawn by the jewel. If Dobi is still alive he heroically runs up and pelts the monster with stones, distracting it while the others get away, then gets ripped apart by its powerful claws and teeth. At a critically dramatic moment the rains come and the monster slowly dissolves or



is washed away in a flash flood while the PCs scramble to safety. If the party somehow got rid of the jewel you could play out the same scene but with a normal dinosaur motivated only by hunger.

### The Veldang

After many adventures the PCs cross a pitiful river in a great riverbed and enter mysterious southern Zamokil<sup>9</sup>. They are soon met by a group of five male blueskins who come trotting up to them, carrying only those items that they need for survival and their "hobbies". Each Veldang in the group seems to have their own specialties, including both practical things such as hunting style and a "hobby". The "hobby" of some is immediately apparent, such as singing or sandpainting; others seem to be more abstract in nature. When not cooperating on practical matters such as travel each Veldang works separately on his own hobby. Two of them spend much time talking with each other in their own musical language; the other three tend to be loners<sup>10</sup>.

The Veldang use signing to invite the PCs to travel with them while the blueskins decipher their language. This goes surprisingly rapidly. The Veldang of Zamokil have astounding memories and need only be told or shown the meaning of any word once. Within a matter of a week or so they speak the common language of the party passably well. They are rather suspicious if the PCs seem to use language inconsistently or make errors in logic, and pursue such slips with an air of hostility. Any non-fumbled Fast Talk attempt covers such slips to the satisfaction of the Veldang. If a fumble is made on a Fast Talk the PC is caught in an outright lie or logic error and the Veldang cease speaking to them altogether. If any of the party are literate, the Veldang are mildly curious about their writing materials. Once it is established that writing is a sort of tool for helping people remember things, they lose interest. "We have no need of such," is their reply if asked about this topic. Once communication is well established the group of natives explain that they are a *zhren* sent to meet the foreigners. They have little interest in the purpose of the PCs visit to Zamokil although they listen politely to their story.

The *zhren* has been sent to ascertain whether the visitors are humans or some sort of counterfeits. If the PCs agree to a test of their humanity, the *zhren* escort them to a high shaman who may help them<sup>11</sup>. If the party will not agree to be tested, they are invited to leave Zamokil. If violence ensues, each Veldang is a master of his own weapon but they have absolutely no unit tactics; each fights independently.

### Grandmother Veldang

The PCs are taken south for a few days to meet with an old woman addressed by the Veldang as "Grandmother". One of the *zhren* who met them stays on as translator. Grandmother has servitors and is treated like a queen; the Veldang recall living in palaces and retain manners from those days. Mali is seated at her left hand as she listens to the PCs' tale.

She replies, "What you seek is not in this world. It is held by an old enemy of ours, a spirit once of Garanzarn. He foolishly clutches what he cannot use. Perhaps you can succeed in defeating him where others have failed."

When night falls, a fire is lit, aromatic leaves thrown on it and an acrid purple smoke rises up. A bowl with a foul drink is passed from hand to hand, starting with Mali and returning to Grandmother. Drumming begins and mist arises. They see a red glow in the distance. Grandmother whispers to Mali, who stands and then walks south towards the glow. She tells the others to follow. As the PCs travel toward the glow, the terrain slowly changes into a volcanic caldera. Mali guides them past sulphurous pits, steaming geysers, and red-hot lava flows. As they pass through a cloud of vapours, they espy a human form; it is Dobi, no longer old but young and strong again. His reunion with Mali is touching. Dobi leads the group to a crater; from it they hear screams and laughter. Dobi speaks: "Mali may not enter here; the rest come with me."

### The Red Giant's Camp

Within the crater is something like a chieftain's camp, centred around a lava pit where the fireplace would normally be. A celebration seems to be in progress, but the red-skinned revellers act strangely; they laugh for no reason, and sudden fights break out. Although there is much food the people eat the skins and bones and throw the succulent meat to their dogs, which resemble jackals with red glowing eyes. In the place of a chieftain's stool there is a huge wooden throne in which sprawls a sleeping red giant, with a huge belly and half spilling out of even such a large chair. A blue drinking cup is clenched in his sleeping hand; a red liquid spills from it.

Dobi seems puzzled and suspicious but cannot explain why. One of the drunken revellers comes forward, staggering and

used sparingly. A little metal is possessed, beautifully worked. Like other hunter-gatherers, they devote but a fraction of their time to survival. The rest of their time is spent perfecting seemingly impractical skills and knowledge; one may be a master poet and another a (purely theoretical) architect.

They are enamored of knowledge and have special song cycles that preserve *detailed* knowledge of Artmal's days of glory in Godtime. This gives them a knowledge of civilized ways that is incredible to visitors. In theory they could rebuild their civilization but choose not to do so in what they think of as the ruins of the old world. Their god is crippled and the Inland Sea they loved is now desert; why rebuild? Better to remember. Other songs preserve knowledge from an uncanny source: ages worth of Annilla's divinations have been collated into a fragmented view of the outside world. For example, they know details of the Red Goddess' journeys in the Underworld unknown to most Lunar magicians, because of Annilla's journeys in the Underworld.

They have great knowledge of the Sky World because Annilla spends half her cycle up there. Their knowledge of the Surface World is more limited but might include details unknown elsewhere, including details of unsolved assassinations and disappearances (both within Annilla's purview). Some of the song cycles that contain this knowledge last for weeks.

Reaction to visitors: They are curious about the outside world but fear pollution by Bolongo, whom they believe responsible for the downfall of their Empire. Visitors face special tests to screen out Bolongo's creatures.

Their culture is extremely conservative and their great shamans, known as The Perfect, are those who have passed every test of perfection, physical as well as mental and spiritual. The Perfect in turn enforce the standards of the culture and are responsible for training others.



The society is comprised of long-term associations based on mutual interest rather than affection or family ties. Breeding is managed by The Perfect, as are the ritual aspects of life.

The Veldang still worship the Old Gods of Pamaltela. Their own gods are Annilla and Artmal but they acknowledge the importance of other deities. They attribute most of the trouble of the world to Bolongo. Visitors face stringent tests to make sure that they are not his creatures.

<sup>11</sup>The Veldang have many tests to screen out Bolongo's counterfeits. One example is a Memory Test: a Veldang recites a passage of about two thousand words and ask one of the characters to repeat it. This is barely possible if one of the characters is a trained bard or some such. However, the Veldang have no objection if the PC's ask them to repeat the passage slowly while they write it down. Zhi may suggest using "memory feathers" (quill pens) if they don't think of it. Devise other tests involving logic, concentration or strength.

leering at the party. "Welcome, travellers!" he cries, smiling with his pointy teeth, "All you need is here!" Like the jackals; his eyes glint a feral red. He acts as their host, drawing them to the table and bidding them to join in the feast. If they eat, they find the food delicious but strangely unsatisfying. Other red folk talk in the background but their chatter seems to be just gibberish (astute PCs might notice that only one of the revellers make sense at a time).

If asked about the Varalu, their host says, "There are many treasures here; if you can best our champions you may have your pick." There are many games in progress here, united by a common thread: dice are loaded, cards marked, one spearman hits another while he is distracted and so on. The PCs may name any type of contest and the revellers will choose a champion. For a feat of strength, the PCs could be goaded into trying to pick up a cat or wrestle an old woman. A game like chess could be played with a child who seems to pay little attention; an old man wielding a wet towel might be their "warrior". The red-skinned champions are almost certain to win, however improbable it seems.

In a fighting contest, PCs who get hit are visibly wounded but don't really feel hurt. The only thing that causes real physical damage here is the heat from the lava pit; anyone coming too close might discover this. There is actually only one spirit here, the ghost of a Red Giant (TG 6) with a POW of 55. All else is illusion generated by its will. Attempts to challenge its "reality" counts as round of spirit combat. For example, the spirit wants them to lose a drinking contest with one of its "people". Ask the player to roll CON, but the outcome is secretly determined by a round of spirit combat. The winner's reality prevails and the loser loses MPs as usual. If a PC runs out of magic points he loses 1 POW to the spirit and falls under its control, joining in the general revelry. If everyone loses they awaken the next morning around a small dry crater on the plains, not far from Granny Veldang's camp. Everyone feels like they have an extremely bad hangover. Granny Veldang can perform the ritual again, as many times as needs be. Each time the scene manifests itself again, and the revellers again have no recollection of meeting the characters before.

## Keraun and the Charnjibber: A Kresh Tale

During the long night, when the Gods were like men and walked the earth, there was a great monster. Everything it ate, it added to itself, growing ever larger as it travelled across the plains. It had no true shape of its own, instead using the forms of those it had eaten.

Great fear preceded it, and the many people called out to their gods to save them from it. All was in vain. Vangono's fire failed to defeat it, then Pamalt himself failed. Even Death could not kill this monster. Indestructible it wandered about, eating everyone.

Pamalt's council gathered to find an answer. They could not find one who had not already failed. While they bickered, a stranger came to them. It was Keraun, daughter of Orlanth; the one whom they had

mocked and refused a place in council because she was foreign.

She spoke to Aleshmara, the real power on the council, and offered to resolve their problem for them. The council laughed at her, but Aleshmara silenced them. "None of us has triumphed; maybe an outsider can do what we cannot."

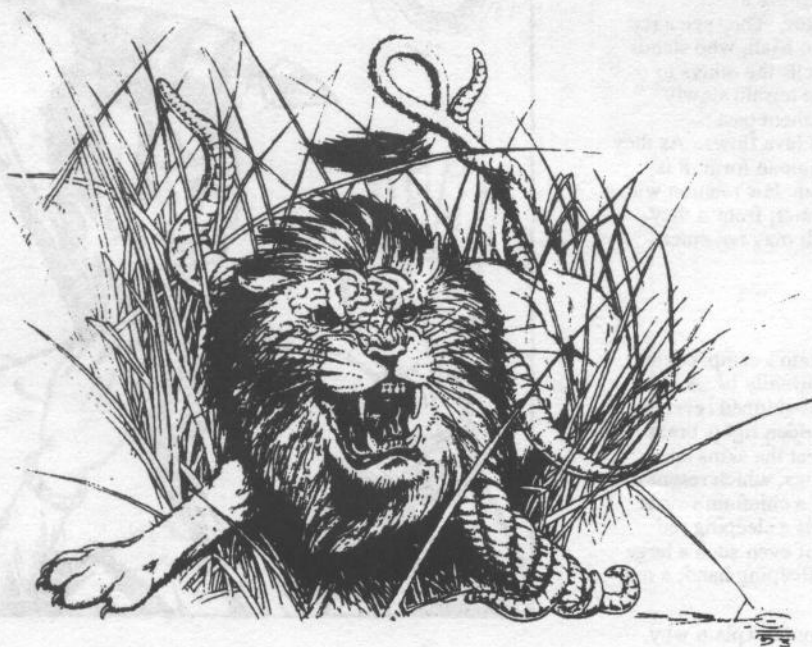
Keraun's price was a place on the council if she succeeded. Aleshmara agreed and also offered marriage to her son Pamalt if she returned. They agreed and Keraun set forth to find the monster.

Charnjibber was now so vast it filled the plain and almost reached the sky. Keraun approached it in her most comely aspect. When it noticed her she flirted with it, moving this way and that like her swallows. The monster could not but follow her. Then, as life-giving rain, she fell in many places at once. Charnjibber, in its lust to have all of her, divided itself to follow all the drops. Smaller and more numerous it became, until it was as tiny and plentiful as the rain itself. Then Keraun sank deep into the earth and the monster followed. From there she flowed away, escaping the beast and leaving its tiny fragments trapped helplessly in the earth. She returned to the council and took her reward.

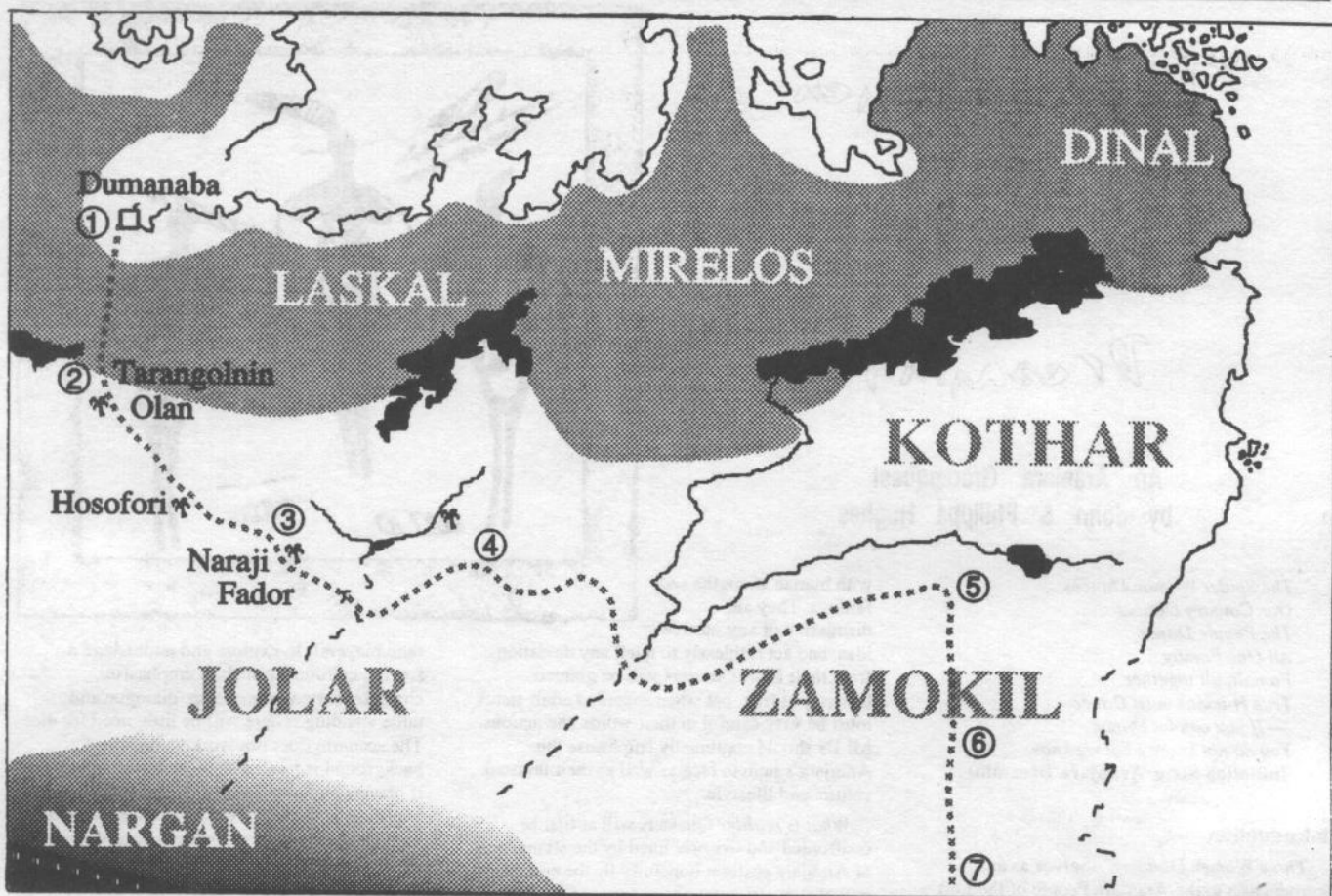
This is why there are many Charnjibbers which grow larger throughout the dry season and disappear with the rains. It is ever attempting to reform its great self and is ever distracted by Keraun's rains. The council agreed to let rains fall seasonally, to keep the monster small.

Thus was Keraun given an important place on Pamalt's council.

*Finula McCaul*







If the spirit is defeated, the scene vanishes and the chance to obtain the Varalu is lost this time. Anyone who has lost POW during this encounter has it returned. Granny Veldang can perform the ritual again if need be.

**Cheats Always Prosper**

The only way to win is to cheat, something the Veldang have never tried. For example, the PCs could gang up on a warrior during a combat challenge, steal or rearrange chess pieces, etc. Even simple, obvious cheating wins. Riddle contests can never be won with a fair riddle, only trick questions such as "What have I got in my pocket?" - Nothing!

Treacherously killing the sleeping giant is also a win, but waking him up for a fair fight is a big lose. Damage taken in such a fight is real and apparent. The giant has similar stats to a Pamaltelan Grey Giant (GB 21) and can also attack a character in spirit combat each round. The giant fights until it kills someone, and then attempts destroy the slain victim's spirit which rises from the body and hovers above it. To the others, it looks like the giant is trying to eat their comrade's soul. The only way to prevent this from happening is to reduce the giant to 0 hit points. The survivors awaken the next morning as described above, but with real injuries. The body of their dead companion lies beside them - resurrection is possible if the victim still has a soul.

If the player characters "win", they may pick any object in the hall to take with them. As they ponder the many treasures, Dobi points out a blue stone in the firepit. Grasping it entails great pain but it can be done. If they seize it, there is a shriek of rage and everything disappears, sucked into the pit. The PCs find themselves standing around a small crater, still smoking. The one who grasped the stone has the Varalu. Grandmother examines Mali and proclaims that his third eye is open; he will remain and be trained as her successor.

**The Return**

You can run this as a swift magical return to their homeland, aided by Granny Veldang if necessary.

Or you can make them walk!

# The Collected Griselda

We still have a few copies of this great book by Oliver Dickinson, chronicling the exploits of Pavis' most famous adventurer, in over twenty stories from the streets of the meanest city in Glorantha, some unpublished anywhere. There's a wealth of information on the characters of New Pavis (as detailed in the Big Rubble supplement), a Dan Barker cover and an intro by Greg Stafford. All for the knock down price of £6.00. Order your copy today!



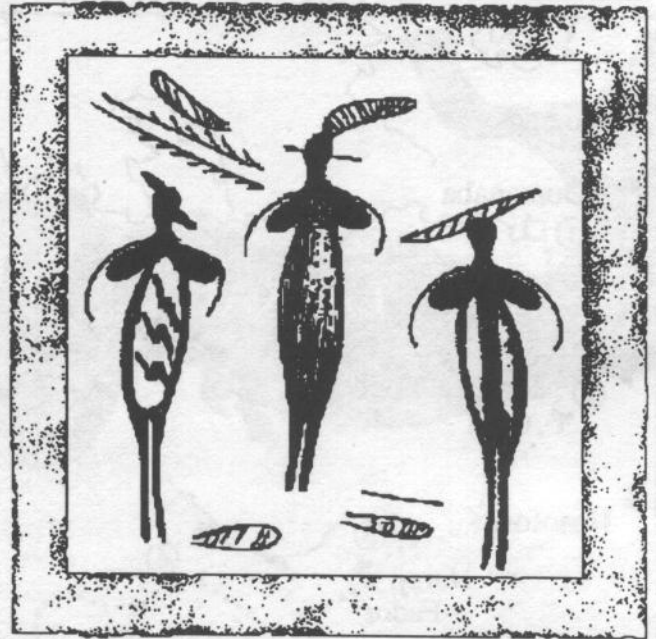
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# Three Women

Dancing

Dreaming

An Aranjara Groomquest  
by John & Philippa Hughes



*The Spider Woman Dances*  
*Our Country Dances*  
*The People Dance*  
*All One Family*  
*Pamalt, all together.*  
*True Humans must Dance*  
*—If you cannot Dance*  
*You do not know what we know.*  
**Initiation Song. Aranjara Dreaming.**

with human strengths and failings. They are dismissive of any outside idea, and act ruthlessly to quell any deviation from their Law. Questers will be granted leniency at first, but when accorded adult status must be very careful in their words and actions. MLDs should continually emphasise the Aranjara's human face as well as their unusual culture and lifestyle.

*What is reality?* Questers will at first be confronted and overwhelmed by the strangeness of Aranjara custom: hopefully by the end they will also question the strangeness of their own. To achieve this, MLDs must continually question player characters about their own customs and world-view through the mouths of the Aranjara.

Questers can never know if what they experience is objectively real or some subjective deception. The Aranjara have a reputation among neighbouring Right Hand tribes for illusion and deceit. Is this misunderstanding, or does it hold some grain of truth? Many events in this scenario are capable of either interpretation, just as the story *Aranjara Dreaming* suggests two very different interpretations of events. The scenario does not judge. The MLD must decide. Questers may never know, though they will often ponder.

### MLD Preparation

It is essential that the MLD be familiar with the supporting Aranjara and kinship articles — they contain most of the necessary background. If she is running another clan, she should have decided on the names and totems of the skins and on the basic relationships between them.

Questers will need to know their own kinship identities: their clan, cult spirits, lodges, bond rings or totems. If this has not been previously explored, it should be done before play begins, or within play before the party meet the clan. MLDs will also need to know if questers carry ritual marks or scars of initiation — tattoos, missing teeth or fingers, etc..

### Style of Play

This scenario is intended as a vehicle for exploration, a roleplaying ethnography. It concentrates on building a base for questers

(and players!) to explore and understand a foreign culture. As such, it emphasises characterisation, motivation, dialogue and understanding. There will be little need for dice. The scenario does not work well if the background is treated as descriptive dialogue, or if players sit around waiting for things to happen. Each will have to create their own links with the Aranjara, seek out friends and lovers, decide whether to accept or reject them, to act as superior outsider or humble *novicius*. It works best when both questers and MLDs participate as mutual storytellers and co-creators. Players need to create their own agendas, to generate their own subplots!

Advise the players to treat the encounter as a mystery to be solved. At the end of play, they may understand something of the Aranjara and their ways. They will certainly understand much more about themselves.

### PC Motivation — The Call

The MLD must provide a reason for the questers to spend time amongst the Aranjara. They might be employed as agents of the Arbennan Confederation, who need intelligence about the secretive Left Hand Folk as part of their strategy to unite Jolar against the Kresh. Alternatively, they might be recruited as scouts or spies for the Kresh themselves. Perhaps they need an isolated place to flee and hide from a powerful enemy, or are themselves searching for an outlaw, wandering sage or magical creature, or pursuing rumours of the golden body of a dead god rumoured to lie hidden in Aranjara territory. Most simply, they could sign on as part of a knowledge-seeking expedition, or as guards to an explorer, diplomat or missionary. The first two options are especially recommended as they provide an extra dimension of drama and subterfuge, and make quester actions and decisions all the more meaningful.

## I. WILDERNESS

### Aranjara Country

The Aranjara dwell south east of the Batu Batun along the Northern borders of Kalali in

### Introduction

*Three Women Dancing...* serves as an introduction to the Aranjara People of the Left Hand and the ways of their Dreaming. Questers take the part of outsiders who must reside for a time with the Aranjara. They will participate in daily life, experience a greater or lesser degree of culture clash, undergo or participate in a tribal initiation, and, as the Monsoon storms gather overhead, join a marriage party on a heroquest journey across the songlines.

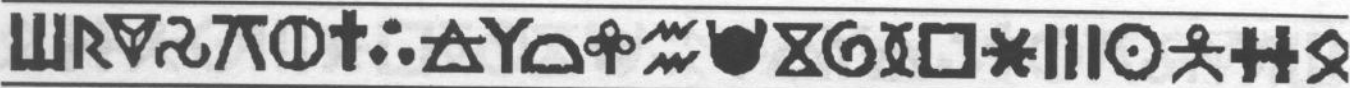
While the module as written is set among the Aranjara, the MLD (Master of Luck and Death) may wish (and is encouraged) to run it among a neighbouring Left Hand clan of her own creation. Our experience has shown that the easiest way to understand a kinship and skin system is to make it up yourself! The module and the accompanying kinship article should provide ideas. You don't need anything elaborate — a two or four way skin system with elementary taboos and rules will keep any party hopping and enthralled.

### Atmosphere and Theme

A heroquest is a journey that creates reality. A myth too creates reality, for it defines the correct way to view the world, and provides the categories and oppositions by which initiates understand the cosmos. The Aranjara take their myths very seriously: they have very little else. For them, life is a myth, and myth creates life. They claim to exist on the edges of time, in the **Dreaming**, a state that most Gloranthans would recognise as the Godtime. This claim may or may not be *literally* true - what matters is that it is *mythically* true. MLDs should emphasise and explore this claim at every opportunity.

The Aranjara have devoted themselves body, spirit and flame to living a particular ideal. It is doubtful whether any outsider could ever fully understand their ways. Yet they are human,





Central Jolar. Like all Left Hand country, it is a barren wilderness shunned by the dominant Right Hand tribes.

Very few outsiders know anything of the Aranjara or their country. Right Hand tribes have little to say about them, and nothing good. The Aranjara are feared as deceptive sorcerers who can steal a person's flame and spirit. The wilderness is said to be stalked by cannibalistic half-men, half-spirits who live inside stones, and to be plagued by strange mists that swallow you up forever. Beware, stranger, for chaos and worse lurk there!

A barren stony plateau divides the lush valleys of the Kalali from the flat desert of Batu Batun. It is dominated by gigantic uplifts of crumbling red sandstone and black polished uzbone, rock sculptures evoking fantastic textured images of decaying stone cities or petrified giants. Travel on foot is the only realistic option, and it is easy to become lost. To outsiders it is dangerous and hostile — a place of thirst and heat and thorns where the plants are barbed and the stones hide scorpions.

The scenario takes place near the end of what local tribes call the **Hot Dry** — the last desperate weeks before the coming of the Monsoon storms. No rain has fallen for several seasons — river beds are dry, and only a few waterholes remain. The ground has been baked to powdery dry leaves and dust. Vegetation is for the most part confined to thistles, briars and thorny weeds. The air is as tight and as dry as a drum skin, heavy and difficult to breathe.

### Into The Wilderness

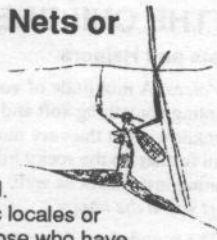
The first part of the scenario involves stripping questers down to their core — in both a physical and a spiritual sense. Everything that is not essential must be discarded.

Use the journey across the wilderness to emphasise the nature of the coming encounter. Concentrate on the strangeness and hostility of the environment. Concern for obtaining water and the dangers of heat exhaustion should be paramount. You might spend some time recreating talk around the campfire at night: the telling of myths, the repetition of bizarre stories about the Aranjara, the party's personal tales of lost loves and lost fortunes, lost gods and lost dreams. Campfire talk is an excellent means of establishing questers' kin connections within play.

Incidents and encounters in the wilderness might include the following:

- Pack animals are stamped by *something*, or the main pack animal is bitten by a poisonous snake. (The party must decide what equipment is necessary to their survival — they will have to carry it themselves.)
- At dawn, a strange mist hugs the ground ahead. Some will have heard the tales told of such mists. Should they risk further delay and valuable water by going around it? If they push through, what will befall them?
- A distant mountain that the party are using to establish direction seems to be *moving*!
- The party encounter small hopping animals with pouches that they have not seen before.
- The party wake up one morning with the conviction that the land around them has somehow *changed*, but they will be unable to determine exactly *how*. If this occurs, they will become much more susceptible to losing their way.
- The party discover a secluded waterhole retaining a precious few inches of water. Unless they make Scan rolls, they will not notice the pair of nostrils peeking up through the expanses of thick black mud surrounding it. A large crocodile (RQ CB: 13) has buried itself there, gambling as it must every year that the monsoon will come before the last of the water disappears. The crocodile is entering its breeding season, and is decidedly tetchy.
- A chaotic chamjibber roars challenge from the surrounding uplands (GB:14). The party face the prospect of hunting or being hunted. It is the very end of the Dry, so the chamjibber is probably very large — a giant snake or sabretooth cat or even a hoon.
- Lack of water and heat exhaustion become serious problems. (Seriously penalise anyone silly enough to wear metal armour!) Waterholes and riverbeds are dry, and even digging up tree roots provides a bare minimum of water. Surprisingly, the barren landscape reveals evidence of violent flooding!
- If they do locate a viable waterhole, the party will discover (one way or another) that it is being watched by a sabretooth cat (GB:37), taking its pick of whatever large game dares to drink. It's late in the Dry, and the cat is hungry!
- Reaching what is supposed to be the Aranjara home range, the party

### Mimi — also known as Net Nets or the Boulder clans



The Mimi are a mysterious wilderness race often linked with the tribes of the dead. They are nature spirits restricted to specific locales or dreaming tracks — perhaps the spirits of those who have defiled sacred sites.

Mimi appear as tall, thin, grey-skinned humanoids without faces. They have male and female organs, but are otherwise indistinguishable except by size. In spirit form they exist within large red-black boulders called **mimi stones**, which often conceal small caches of trinkets and other physical objects. Mimi assume physical form to hunt or steal. They are a timid, secretive yet tenacious race, and are always encountered in bands of 4 to 10.

Mimi hunt the spirit essence contained in the shadows of humans and animals. They will also make off with small children or wounded game, and often steal trinkets from isolated camps.

Mimi hunt with barbs that they create from their bodies (at a cost of 1 MP per barb). Successful hits strip D6 magic points from the victim, and sting enormously (CON\*3 to avoid paralysis of the limb). If a victim is stripped to zero magic points, the Mimi can then steal its shadow.

Mimi often entrap humans by their magical calls, which sound like a human child in distress. Unless PCs resist (POW\*3) they must seek the source of the calls. The longer they listen, the harder it is to break free (POW\*2, POW, POW/2). Obsessed, they will follow until exhausted.

In physical form, Mimi have hit points equal to their POW (2d6+6), but they do not have individual hit locations. Only the magical components of weapon attacks will affect them. Spells such as Disruption work normally.

If a victim has their shadow stolen, they will be affected by **Shadow Sickness**, the equivalent of Soul Waste, and lose a point of permanent POW each day they fail a POW\*3 roll. Without their shadow, they will be considered as unnatural by any animal in the immediate area (including pack animals), who will react with either extreme terror or extreme hostility. Only a very powerful healer experienced in Mimi ways can cure the shadow sickness. Even if cured, the victim's regained shadow will henceforth have a life of its own.

#### Move: 7

**Mimi Barb** SR 8 Attk% 60 D6+2+Special

**Skills:** Climb 70% Conceal 80% Move Silently 100%

can detect only tantalising traces of their presence — white campfire ash, elusive human footprints on animal paths, strange carvings on trees, tiny piles of vegetation erected over thorn bushes (shade canopies). The signs are leading them in circles, and water is getting scarcer and scarcer!

- A loud keening echoes along the canyons. It is a disturbing, pitiful cry, and it sounds human. Could it be the Aranjara? [It is in fact a **Mimi** call. The party are being stalked by the Boulder Clan.]

*So. Stuck by a nightfire in the middle of a major nowhere, probably lost, being led in circles by a non-existent clan of sorcerers, exhausted, short of food and water, harassed by shadow folk who steal your trinkets and refuse to stand and fight, potential fodder for any medium-size carnivore stupid enough to live out here, and moaning over the iron breastplate you had to stash on some forsaken hilltop. If you live, you promise to join that three year penance dance like your guidefather wanted you to. Faranar's Left Tit! Why didn't you stay in your own country, where you know the waterholes and danger spots, and where mountains don't move round like virgins at a fertility ritual. Even the stars seem different out here. Burn all day, freeze all night... What else could possibly go wrong? What do you mean, you're covered in a rash?...*



## II. THE CHILDREN OF FARANAR

### Tests and Helpers

**Voices.** A multitude of voices, male and female, young and strong, chanting something soft and lilting and incredibly beautiful. The language is unknown, but the very tune brings healing to your aching limbs. It comes from further up the rocky hill. You can hear clapping sticks and a low droning instrument as well. *Probably more chaos. Pamalt's Thighbone! At least you'll die happy...*

The sounds lead the party to a narrow cleft in the rock face. The cleft broadens into a hidden valley, protected from the sun's excess by high and narrow walls. The air issuing from the cleft is moist, rich with the smell of water. Even by starlight, it is obvious that this hidden waterhole is verdant and secure.

Small children splash and play on the edges of a deep and still pool. Beyond it, a mixed group of some twenty men and women sit cooking and singing by several flickering campfires. Further back, others lounge in the shelter of rock overhangs. Most are naked save for decorative trinkets and body paint. A few hunting spears, digging sticks and grinding stones are the only material goods in evidence. Hunting dogs abound. After the deprivations of the wilderness, the tableau appears like some scene from the Golden Age. The Aranjara have revealed themselves.

### Culture Clash

The party will be welcomed by the Left Hand Folk, who will provide the strangers with water and food and whatever comfort they can. Children will crowd round as soon as the questers appear, even if they bear drawn weapons. (The totemic powers of the waterhole will deal very quickly with anyone who turns violent).

The Folk speak to them softly in their high-pitched, sing-song tongue. Despite the apparent language barrier, the quester's needs will be quickly and quietly attended to.

**Note:** All Aranjara in fact understand Arbennan, the Doraddi tongue. Their own language is mainly ceremonial, with separate mens' and womens' dialects. They supplement both tongues with an elaborate gesture language, allowing them to communicate quite complex ideas without using their voices. However, they will only reveal their knowledge of the Doraddi tongue when they believe the party can be trusted. The Aranjara cultivate their own myths of secrecy.

The Folk will not appear surprised to see the strangers. Later they will claim they were warned in dreams, though cynical questers might prefer the explanation that they watched the party in their fruitless trek through Aranjara country.

Only one of the Folk will appear to speak Arbennan initially. This is an old man called **Back Bent** (*Iarapit*), who has been nominated by the Womens' Circle as *Speaker To Animals Without Hooves*, responsible for dealing with the strangers. (Of course, no one will reveal his title). The party will communicate through him, and may even regard him as a chief. In fact, his role is ritually demeaning and a mark of his relatively junior status.

Back Bent's initial advice will be simple.

*"You are strangers, you cannot bear very much reality. Respect age. Respect the Womens' Circle and the totems of the hearth. Respect the secrets that are too dangerous for you to know. Listen before you talk. Speak only when spoken to. Do not raise your voice. Sit only when invited. Treat everyone and everything with respect. Share everything you have, and take what you need. That is our Law. If a command is given, obey it, for even our children know more of this place than you. Walk only where we walk; it is dangerous for you to walk alone. Never cast any magic without asking our permission. Hunt and gather only what you need for the day ahead. Beware women who invite you to sleep at their hearth, and young men who take you into the bush to gather undatta (ceremonial down)."*

While demanding, this advice is good sense. Bent Back will realise that the questers are like children who do not understand the web of kin and cult obligations that dominate daily life. How closely questers follow this advice will determine how they are accepted in the days ahead.

### A Woman of High Regard

Any party member who is afflicted with Shadow Sickness will be recognised and taken aside by **Moon Woman**, the clan's shaman. She will quickly organise a group healing ceremony.

The afflicted questers will be sung to sleep, and Moon Woman will lead

them in spirit form on a raid into the mimi stone to retrieve their shadows. This can be as simple or elaborate as the MLD desires. Before returning, Moon Woman will cast a fishing hook into the spirit bodies of the questers, and pull *something* out. She will not explain this.

If successful, the afflicted will regain both shadow and POW. If unsuccessful, Moon Woman can still halt the disease, but the questers will never regain their shadow.

The shaman is not a Chalana Arroy healer, and so operates by her own moral code. During the ritual she used her spirit hook to obtain the **True Name** of each afflicted. If necessary, she can use this in future to bend them to her will.

### First Impressions

The questers will be invited to live at the hearth of Back Bent and his skin, where they will be given places on the south side of the fire, and from there can interact with the rest of the clan. Observing daily life, it will become very obvious that Aranjara values and concepts (of time, space, self...) are unusual and challenging.

The Aranjara women seem especially assertive, joking and free, while the men are relatively quiet and passive. All Aranjara are soft-spoken and emotionally very expressive — touching and embracing are common among both sexes. Teasing is common, and humour of a very earthy type. (Pity any Yelmic PCs).

The clan seems lazy and indolent. There is no concern with the passage of time in the normal sense. Most of the day they lounge under rock shelters to escape the heat, or swim in the waterhole. They spend their time telling stories (often accompanied by string-games), making ceremonial masks, arguing, or singing and dancing song-cycles that go on for hours at a time. Groups often go off on mysterious errands — questers will be told that it is initiated men's or women's business, and therefore secret/sacred.

The adult clan members seem easily distracted, and slip in and out of light trance states constantly. They sometimes talk to things that cannot be seen or detected.

In the early morning, women and children gather plants and small animals. Men hunt in groups, and sporadically bring back a large game animal or two. Even in this harsh environment, procuring food does not seem difficult, and takes only a few hours a day. Neither sex will hunt or gather more than is necessary for the day ahead. Both men and women display a phenomenal knowledge of the landscape, and can describe individual trees and boulders at places many days distant.

Children have complete freedom, and are never disciplined or restrained. Anyone who denies or upsets a child will be severely dealt with.

Apart from spears and digging sticks, the clan have no concept of personal possessions or ownership. The party's goods will disappear, to be used or worn in a bewildering variety of ways, and then discarded. Attempts to stop this will be regarded as criminally selfish.

The clan has no obvious leader, and no obvious hierarchical structure. Every decision seems to be taken only after hours of discussion. Everyone speaks in turn until a unanimous compromise is reached.

Some clan members will be infatuated by the mysterious strangers, while others will be sullen and hostile. Good rarely comes from those who have no dreaming. The outer world is a shadowy and unimportant place. Everyone will laughingly deny or be suspicious of most of the questers' tales.

Questers will probably find themselves tempted to join in sexual play by the unmarried folk of the clan, for new potential partners are very rare indeed. Until the Womens' Circle announces the strangers' true identity, they have no kinship status, and can therefore engage in love-play without fear of breaking skin taboos. (Of course, the party may have their own ideas). Once granted a skin identity, the potential for romance and play will be much more restrictive.

### Aranjara Assessment of the Party

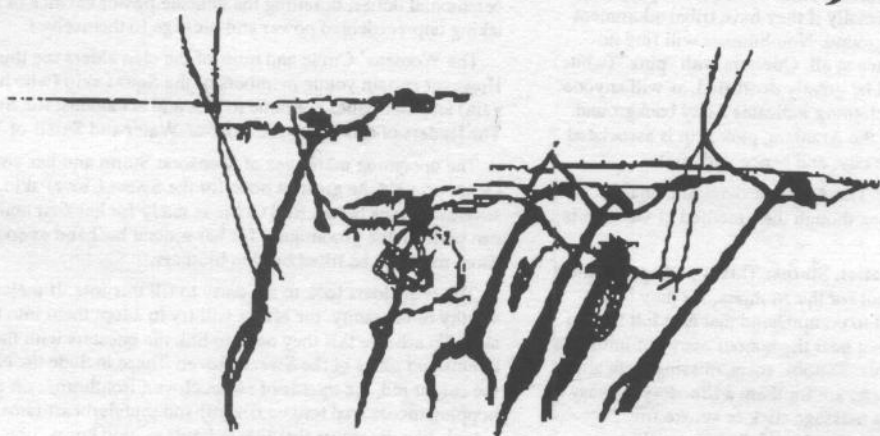
The Aranjara will be kind and initially non-intrusive, but the party are on trial. Are they distant kin, and so potentially human, or are they merely *bronwyi* (animals without hooves)?

Initial impressions that will guide the Aranjara in their view of the party include the following:

**Gender:** Female party members will be assumed to be leaders or senior advisers. (Aranjara find it difficult to distinguish the sex of people who wear clothes. They will grab strangers between the legs to identify them, as casually as one might offer a handshake.)



## Some members of the Aran, ara Clan



### The Sweet Clover (*Instamiru*) Skin

**Back Bent (*Iarapit*), 'translator', Elder of the Sweet Clover Skin, Keeper of the Firestick Dreaming.**

Back Bent is a frail and nervous man, crippled with the burden of nearly sixty monsoons. His right arm is withered and scarred from some ancient encounter with chaos. He has a wicked sense of humour and a love of his own voice. Back Bent needs the PCs to be recognised as belonging to the Sweet Clover skin, and will do whatever is necessary to achieve this.

He is the biological father of Monsoon Storm and Red Ochre.

**Bush Burner (*Jakal*), Elder of the Sweet Clover Skin, Keeper of the Red Mountain Dreaming.**

Bush Burner is a skilled hunter and tracker of some forty five monsoons. His body is strong and supple, but his face has been eaten by yaws into a mass of holes and pits. He seldom speaks, for the disease has eaten at his throat and nasal passages, and his voice is chillingly distorted. Made nervous and retiring by his affliction (which is regarded as punishment for a ritual failing), Jakal is in fact a perceptive and intelligent man who misses little around the camp. He is Guidefather to Monsoon Storm and Red Ochre.

**Monsoon Storm (*Karala*), Elder of the Sweet Clover Skin, Digging Stick Sister of the Hearth Fire Dreaming.**

Monsoon Storm is a headstrong and confident woman of some thirty-five monsoons. She is an elder of her skin — unusual for one so young, but an indication of the hard times befalling her extended family.

Storm's first husband died seven seasons ago while on a hunting trip. She does not believe the death was accidental, and blames her rivals Roar-of-Water and Smell-of-Rain of the Squaa skin.

Storm is about to quest for her second husband. She is also tutoring her younger sister Red Ochre in the ways of womanhood.

**Red Ochre (*IKyanpara*), Earth Keeper of the Sweet Clover skin.**

Red Ochre is a young woman in the first bloom of adulthood. She has only recently been initiated, and is learning the joys and responsibilities of adult life. Unmarried, she is passing through the stage her elders describe as 'hunting for meat', where she uses a combination of childlike innocence and emerging sexuality to devastating effect.

Though reckless and irresponsible, Red Ochre respects the leadership and guidance of her elder sister.

### The Squaa Skin

**Roar-of-Water (*Lo An*), *Terapil* of the Squaa skin, Stone Brother of the Anteater Dreaming.**

Roar is a handsome, muscular hunter of some twenty five monsoons. However, he is loud and bullying, and while popular with the young men of the clan, he is considered trouble by most elders.

The Squaa are ritual rivals of the Sweet Clover skin, and Roar does his best to humiliate and weaken them at every opportunity. He is guided in this by his sister Smell-of-Rain.

Roar will be a constant source of trouble to the PCs.

**Smell-of-Rain (*Tukas*), Digging Stick Sister of the Squaa Skin, Songster of the Secret Earth Dreaming.**

Rain is a warm though calculating woman of some thirty monsoons. Her eyes are piercing yellow. She has great skill in lore and ceremony, and is respected by the clan elders. It is presumed she will one day lead the Womens' Circle.

Rain covets the Dreaming of her rival Sweet Clover skin, but is patient and looks to long term advantage. She is the brains behind the actions of her brother Roar, but is careful to disassociate herself from his more controversial actions.

Rain realises the decisive role PCs might play in the future of the Sweet Clover skin.

### Others

**Wide-Flying Goose Wing (*Bulla IBullin*), Elder of the Vol Ini Skin, Last-to-Speak of the Womens' Circle, Keeper of the Bloodstone, Vol Ini and Moth Gatherer Dreamings.**

Goose Wing is an ancient, quietly composed woman who seldom strays from her place by the vol ini hearth. She will welcome the PCs, though speak little. No one will introduce her or make special mention of her name.

It will be almost by accident that the PCs discover she is leader of the Womens' Circle, the most powerful and respected person of the clan.

**Moon Woman (*Mitlyun*), *Bantasii La* (shaman), kinless one, Speaker to the Totems.**

Moon Woman is a large woman of perhaps forty monsoons, adorned by a mass of dust-white hair that shines softly in the starlight. Her body is covered in ritual tattoos, and the blade of her tongue is pierced by a hole. She is blind in one eye. The shaman carries a small dilly bag over her shoulder, mostly concealed by her armpit, in which she carries her talismans and charms. A live fire snake rests upon her shoulders. Moon Woman dwells almost permanently in the Dreaming, and has no time for tact or social skills.

**Age:** Aged party members will be accorded greater respect, especially if they carry marks of initiation.

**Race:** Black Doraddi will be accepted most easily, especially if they have tribal adornment and background. Non-humans will find no acceptance at all. Questers with "pink" (white) skin will be greatly distrusted, as will anyone whose clothing indicates a city background. Among the Aranjara, pink skin is associated with the city, and hence with evil.

**Cult:** The Aranjara share in Pamalt's Necklace, though their method of worship is unique.

**Initiation Status:** This is perhaps the most important for the Aranjara, for they find it difficult to comprehend that an adult human would not bear the honour marks of initiation and status. Tattoos, scars, missing teeth and fingers etc. are for them a life-story, as easy to read as a message stick or smoke fire. Examining the skin of the guests will be a priority for the Folk, even if they have to remove clothes to do it...

The most important aspect is **conduct and personal worth**. The questers will be severely tested in their first few days, both in the attitude of the Aranjara and in the very nature of their culture. How well they cope with these challenges will decide whether they are accepted or not.

#### Animals Without Hooves

The clash of values will not be one-sided. Some clan members seem to know of the outside world, though none will admit to having travelled there — "It is not our Country!" They will readily express the following opinions...

**Cities:** "Those dead holes are crazy! You kill the earth to build such abominations, and you all crowd together. Fires burn down your dwellings, disease kills you, and you are forever in the

smell of your own excrement! Stupid. Nobody there is kin — you are all strangers, you cannot live together properly. There is no order in your lives. You are jealous of each other, and of what others possess — so you fight and steal and kill. No one is happy — everyone always wants what others have. Cities are crazy!"

**Agriculture and Herding:** "Crazy. You sweat from dawn to dusk to make things grow where they do not want to, or watch over animals trapped in places they do not wish to roam! No one is happy. If the rain does not come, everything dies. Or when you gather all your food in one place, someone with a spear comes and takes it, and you have nothing. Crazy! I would rather plait my gunya. We are never hungry, and we have our time to ourselves. Farmers are crazy!"

**Kings and Chiefs:** "I cannot believe this! Someone leads just because they are born in a certain family? One person decides the good of all the clan? Stupid! You kill and steal because this person says so, and then say that it is right? If your king is bad, you plot to kill him. If he is weak, other kings seek to take your land. And if your king is a child, wicked women use him to further their own power! Kings are stupid."

**Material Goods:** "You never have enough, you always want more. Your clothes itch and wear out, you spend all your time toiling to replace what you have lost! You can never be happy — you always want something else. Someone with a spear can take what you have! We have nothing, but we want nothing. Everything is in Country, we take what we need. The sun is our friend, the moon our sister. Our time can be spent on important things. Outsiders are crazy!"

#### The Politics of Kinship

As described in the Gloranthan kinship article, the Aranjara clan is divided into four skins. Two skins, the Sweet Clover and the Squaa, are rivals who compete for husbands from the other two skins, the Vol Ini and the Blood Bean. (These two skins are also rivals).

In recent times, a combination of natural and unnatural disasters have nearly wiped out the Sweet Clover skin. Unless the skin can recover rapidly (through children and 'adoption'), it will be completely overwhelmed by the Squaa. They will take over marriage-contracts and ceremonial duties, upsetting the delicate power balance of the clan and taking unprecedented power and prestige to themselves.

The Womens' Circle and most of the clan elders see this as a disaster. However certain young members of the Squaa skin (who have the most to gain) and their allies continue to plot and act against the Sweet Clover skin. The leaders of this group are Roar-of-Water and Smell-of-Rain.

The upcoming marriages of Monsoon Storm and her young sister Red Ochre provide the greatest hope for the Sweet Clover skin. It will be several seasons before Red Ochre is ready for her first marriage, but Storm can perform the groomquest for her second husband as soon as necessary ritual roles can be filled by clan brothers.

The clan elders look to the party to fill this role. If they prove to be worthy of humanity, the elders will try to adopt them into the Sweet Clover skin. To achieve this they need to link the questers with the symbols, totems and runes of the Sweet Clover. These include the element of Fire, the colour red, the totems of sweet clover, ironthorn, rain cloud, truth, hopping mouse, red tongue (lizard) and thunderbeast (small, swift, ostrich-like dinosaurs that live in herds — you know, like in *that* damned movie). Skin scarification patterns include missing front teeth and the tattooing of circles on the left arm and legs. The skin has ritual links to the worship of Lodril, Jmijie, Maran Gor, Mahome and Vangono.

Elders and Sweet Clover members will exploit any links with these symbols to prove that the questers are in fact members of the skin. At the same time Squaa members will emphasise different interpretations. The nature of authority is sufficiently fluid (and the need for consensus sufficiently great) that the debate will be an open one. The party will only gradually learn the political realities behind this seemingly innocuous argument.

#### Acceptance

If the questers are deemed worthy, the Womens' Circle will call a fireside meeting of the entire camp. There they will announce (in Arbennan!) that some or all of the strangers are long-lost kin, and therefore human. They will reveal their skin identity. (Most, if not all, of the party should be recognised as Sweet Clover). They will also announce the initiation status of individual party members — whether they are to be considered as adults or children. Finally, **Wide-Flying Goose Wing** will speak.

"It is always a time of great joy when kin are reunited. You are welcome among us, we are one. You share with us now the **Thylacine** (marsupial 'wolf'), the sacred totem of all our clan. Stay with us if you will, learn from us, share your wisdom. You are strangers, you know little, but we recognise your heart as pure and your flame as Aranjara. Embrace your brothers and sisters, learn from your Guidefathers, care for your children.

You have come to us as one, so you will have the same age totem. It is the **Boab Tree**. The Boab we call friend of the plain, and we all share its Dreaming. It gives shelter, water, seed for food and ornament, gum for ceremony and bark for twine. We are Boab to you. To stay with us, learn the lesson of the Boab.

Keraun is coming soon. We gather in a few days to call her to Country. There we will welcome you, and if you will become men and women. There you will see the Dreaming, and will have your part to play."

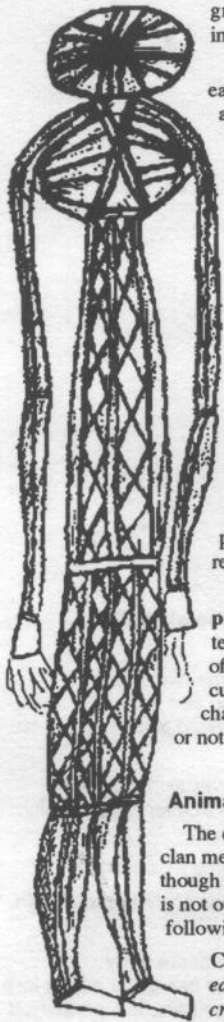
Questers not accepted will be allowed to stay (to send them alone into the wilderness is tantamount to murder), but will be increasingly ignored or shunned by the clan.

#### Daily Life

Over the next few days, the party will be initiated more fully into the customs of daily life. Aranjara ways will begin to seem understandable and even sensible, and the outer world will begin to retreat into memory.

**Kinship:** With their kinship status settled, the party will be introduced to their brothers and sisters, mothers, fathers and guidefathers. They may discover they have parental duties to clan members, for example, as Guidefather to Storm's small children. Back Bent or Bush Burner will become Guidefather to questers from the Sweet Clover skin. Elders of other skins will wish to speak of marriage contracts. Use the example of Moonwatcher in the kinship article as a guide to these relationships.

**Survival and Comfort:** The party will be shown the best ways to find water, the hiding places of small game, the best seasonal food plants and







how to prepare them. They will learn the secret of *Illyia*, seeds that burn the mouth but take away thirst and hunger. Questers will be coaxed out of their clothes so that they become acclimatised to extremes of temperature without discomfort. They will learn to sleep Aranjara fashion, knees bent, body curled around the fire for warmth, one ear to the ground and the other listening for movement in the darkness. They may take beauty tattoos, parallel scars cut into the skin with a flint knife and rubbed with charcoal.

**Hunting:** Hunters will learn what animals can be hunted in what seasons of the year. They will be taught the order of the hunt, and how kinship determines who will track and who will beat, who will set the grassfire and who will cast the first spear. If they express interest, they will be taught to use the hunting (non-returning) boomerang and the woomera (spear thrower).

**Hearth Etiquette:** The party will learn the ways of the campfire — where they should sit, who should speak first and last, who they should not speak to at all. They will also learn the ways of eating — how to properly divide a game kill, who may cut and cook it (hunter's right), who eats first (hearth elder) and who may eat what cut or organ (elders and senior hunters eat the prestige meat). They will be carefully instructed in the foods that are taboo for their skin, notably the totem animals that can only be eaten at special ceremonies.

**Law:** Totems protect the sacred sites, and death usually befalls those who desecrate these areas. Within the clan, individual differences are settled by public shouting matches, each party trying to shame the other. Serious personal differences may be settled using small clubs, fighting until one protagonist falls to the ground. Infringement of The Law may entail a public berating from the Womens' Circle, a spear in the leg, or in extreme cases, ostracism. Clan members will refuse to speak to or even acknowledge the presence of the exiled, and for Aranjara at least, this is invariably fatal.

**Dreaming:** Clan members are always willing to discuss the Dreaming, but can do so only in general terms because much of it is secret/sacred. Questers will be struck by its symbolic, contemplative and ecstatic elements. The Aranjara claim that to know the Dreaming one has only to learn to *listen* — it will then reveal itself.

Certainly, as they grow accustomed to Aranjara ways, Questers will catch disturbing glimpses of *otherness*. They will fleetingly perceive the spirit plane, see unfamiliar beings gathered round the campfires, glimpse human companions in their totemic form as animals or plants. They will sense the omnipresent though seldom manifest power of the Dreaming, and begin to perceive the entire landscape as a unitary living being.

It may well be the Aranjara attitude to life that causes the greatest potential for misunderstanding. They appear content to let things take their course, manifesting a "take it or leave it" attitude to life. They go out of their way to avoid conflict. For example, they know the Mimi ranges and chaos nests of their Country, but are content to simply avoid them. While infuriating, this attitude has a surprising corollary: the Aranjara are utterly without fear. Nothing in their universe can threaten or subdue them (*except perhaps their grandmothers*).

### III. INITIATION

The Aranjara will not completely trust the party until they have been initiated into clan ways. All of the party will need to undergo initiation, though questers considered to be adult will not be subjected to the full ceremony.

Initiation is a way of cutting someone off from one set of attitudes (childhood dependency, ignorance, self-centred pleasure, stagnation) and substituting another set in their place (adult selfdom, gnosis, conscious social will, growth). It tears apart one reality and replaces it with another. It is symbolic rebirth. Initiation rituals make use of fear, pain, hunger, thirst, exhaustion, isolation, ecstasy and transcendence to impart their lesson. Clan adults, totemic spirits and ancestors all take part. MLDs should tailor the suggestions below to the individual storytelling and transformative needs of questers. Initiation will complete the task of stripping them down to their core, and will begin their reintegration.

Initiation is dangerous, and sometimes deadly. Questers will never be told that they are being initiated, though they may guess. Several times during the ceremonies, PCs will enter visionary states. MLDs should regard these as **guided imagery** sessions, with players describing what their characters see and experience from their own imaginations. Facilitate the process through questions and answers. Note and draw out any references to birds or animals, for if a quester encounters one three times, it will become their **power totem**.

Questers may escape from or refuse to participate in the initiation

ceremony. If so, the Aranjara must pursue and kill them, for they are enemies to the Dreaming. If individuals fail the tests of initiation (by eating taboo food, or acting as cowards), they will always be less than children in the eyes of the clan.

#### The Feast

The Hot Dry is ending. It is the season of **Thunder Before Monsoon**. *Keraun is coming*. Grasshopper nymphs emerge into the still air. Flocks of magpie geese congregate around the dry waterholes, harbinger of life to come. The desert mouse covers the entrance of her burrow with pebbles. Tremendous thunderheads rise above the escarpment, dark and threatening, pregnant with rain. Lightning fills the night sky as Sons of the Sea Wind skirmish with the Daughters of the Desert. *Keraun is coming*. It may yet be weeks before the thunderheads spill their gift upon Country, but the entire landscape holds its breath in anticipation. *Keraun is coming*.

*Sky is Dark*

*That Cloud is for Country*

*Rain for Country*

*That Woman she does it.*

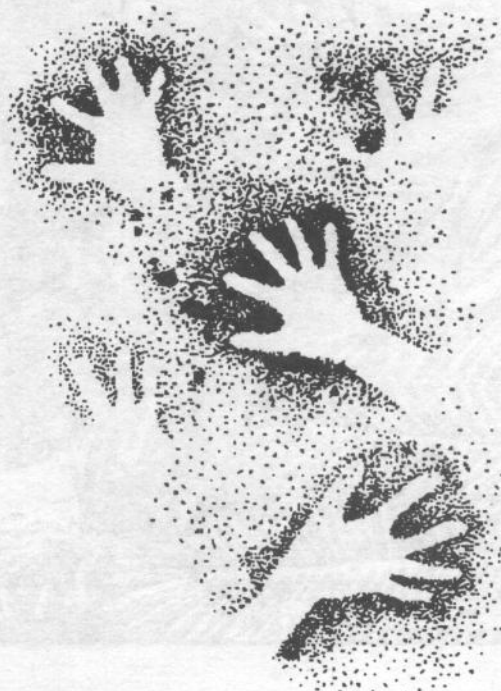
Around the camp, life slows to a standstill in the heat. More and more time is devoted to the Dreaming, with groups of men and women continually going off for ceremony.

The questers awake one morning to discover that most of the males in the camp have departed (only the party's Guidefathers will remain). Women of the questers' skins will seem sad and tearful. They will state that a feast is to be held that night, and that the party should spend the day creating ceremonial masks. All the women and children spend the day gathering food and collecting feathers, down, bark and ochre. They begin a long song-cycle, and will not talk to the party.

At dusk, the meal will be laid. Despite the barrenness of the surrounding landscape, the women have gathered small game, lizards, a horned turtle and fish from the waterhole, frogs, witchety grubs, honey ants, mangrove worms, engivi, narda (fem flour), vol ini, flame tree pods, yam vines, gidgi, leek lily, cabbage palm, loveseed, sneezeweed, blood bean, vanilla lily, rattlepod, bush onion, vegemite, mountain devil and many coloured lillipilli. A great feast, promise of the monsoon to come!

The women have adorned themselves with amber, down, feathers and ceremonial ochre. Questers will be instructed to grease each other down with animal fat, that the power of the ancestors may enter them. The women will then completely ignore them — in fact, they will talk about them as if they were not there, laughing at their strange customs and making ribald comments about their bodies and imagined sexual prowess. If any quester has dallied romantically, they will discover there are no secrets around the womens' campfire!

As the meal proceeds and the shadows deepen, a strange roaring echoes from the surrounding darkness (a sacred bullroarer). It will seem to the









questers that the women gradually transform into grotesque parodies of themselves, with huge gaping jaws and, in some cases, mouths of Gorgonna. Moon Women appears as a fat, bloated serpent. Some of the women are singing, and the world is spinning...

Let the tension build to breaking point. If the questers try to interrupt or leave, Wide-Flying Goose Wing will deign to notice them. Feigning surprise at their presence, she will berate them loudly. "Would you be children forever? You are less than nothing! We women will protect you no more! Go! Go away! Let things die!" At this signal the women will grab firebrands, and chanting songs of power, will drive the party into the darkness. The roaring deepens, louder...

Confused and disorientated, the party will realise they are not alone in the darkness. A crowd of painted thylacine (or men in thylacine masks — this deep into the ritual is there any difference?) set upon them and throw them into the air. If the party resist with force, the totems of the ritual will deflect their blows. The thylacine men throw them into the air again and again, up among the rain and the clouds and the stars, higher and higher, giddy and confused, as spirits shriek and threaten all around them...

### Dying to the Past

The party are thrown into a deep pit. The thylacine men crowd around the edge, threatening them with spears. They tell the party that they are about to die, and so journey to the Cave of the Dead. Their shame and dark secrets will be fearful burdens in that place, so they should share them now with the elders. They will not be punished if they speak now. It is in the past, and death will bring new life.

This challenge will be very difficult for any spies or criminals in the party. If they do not reveal their shame, success in the ritual will be very difficult, and their coming visions will be dark and unsettling.

Once the party have spoken, a woman adorned with feathers and leaves and wearing a magnificent ceremonial mask will appear at the edge of the pit. She will throw each quester a sprig of leaves from the boab tree, and entreat them to remember the lesson it teaches.

Questers will hear spirits crying out to them — the tribes of the dead. As this reaches a crescendo, the walls of the pit will suddenly close about them, smothering them in earth. As they choke into unconsciousness and perhaps death, they will each be assailed by a vision.

Each vision should come from the quester's own imagination, mediated and expanded by the MLD. It might reflect the quester's life, their dreams, and certainly on their expectations of the land of the dead. If a character has lied or otherwise deceived the elders, the MLD should introduce dark elements of pursuit and suffering. As each descriptive image fades, conclude with the image of a gigantic, green, vegetative net pulling the quester down...

### The Cave of The Dead

*Darkness.* The questers awaken to a cold empty darkness, a stony silence. They are naked, and writhing strands of plant fibre hold them to the cave floor. Their bodies seem distant and unresponsive, and are covered in white dust adorned with funerary markings. The boab sprigs are in their hands. Memories of the past seem distant and distorted. A low moaning echoes through the cave, as if from a great distance. Occasionally, creatures brush against them in the darkness — cave worms — a taboo food.

Give the players time to discuss their predicament. The cave periodically glows with a soft half-light of its own before fading again into darkness. It is physically situated amongst the bones (gold) and blood (magic crystal) of a dead god, so magic spells will not work in the presence of so much untempered metal.

Eventually a clan ancestor, an old woman, will appear and speak to the questers.

*"You are dead to the past. You may yet live again, as adults. Those without courage may flee this place — if you do, your fate is your own. Those who stay must remember what you have been taught. Listen and learn. Listen to the totems. Do not speak to others here, but listen to the Dreaming. When the time is right you must find the totem and eat it. It will grant you life."*

Characters who wish to escape can explore the winding shafts of the cave. They will, with luck and daring, eventually reach the surface. They will be naked, hungry and thirsty, stranded in the wilderness many days from safety, but they will have knowledge of a fortune in rune metal and crystal.

Characters who follow the ancestor's advice will be assailed by the tortures of hunger, thirst and cold as time passes. Scant drops of water condense on the cold crystal walls. Cave worms can be caught, but the clan has taught that they must never be eaten. Those who do listen to the Darkness will be fortified by the power of the earth, and will experience visions of wonder and encouragement. However, the pain and suffering continue...

To succeed, questers must be patient and faithful to the message. Nothing will seem to happen for a very long time, though each will be assailed by visions or spirit journeys. These experiences will seem to come half from the characters themselves and half from the Dreaming, for they reveal mysteries and tales of the ancestors. Days, perhaps weeks pass without event.

Pondering the lesson of the boab, a quester may plant the tiny sprig in the barren floor of the cave. If so, it will magically grow, providing seed to eat and water to drink.

When each quester has encountered their power totem three times in visions, the link is forged. Questers will begin to see that totem constantly in animal form, as part of everyday experience. And when they accept it enough to talk to it, the totem will answer back, sharing knowledge and experience from the Dreaming. It will offer to guide them out of the cave.

**Note:** A power totem can only manifest in Aranjara Country, and to its chosen companion. It is not a normal spirit; and can not be revealed by detect spells or second sight. Nor can it engage in spirit combat.

### Eating the Totem

The power totems will teach the party a dance (The Thylacine Dance) and an accompanying song of power. It is a wild, dervish movement, with much spinning and jumping. The questers must dance until they fall exhausted...

... and will find themselves on the surface, lying side by side on an elevated funeral platform amidst skulls and spirit poles. Each quester has been elaborately painted, and is clad in the pelt and claws of a thylacine. Their skin is raw and burned, as if they have been lying here a long time. The rhythms of the dance fill them with energy.

The sun is low in the western sky, a brilliant gold — blindingly so after the darkness of the cave. The sky is also dark with thunderheads; heavy and threatening. The air is expectant with the promise of a coming storm. *Keraun.*

A howl echoes across the landscape. A physical thylacine is nearby, challenging the questers to join in the sacred hunt.

The questers must hunt and kill the totem beast. It will lead them a long chase, testing their skills and tenacity (use the stats for a skilled though small wolf, RQ CB 41). The thylacine will eventually take shelter in a valley: a sacred *bora* ground that can only be entered by adults. If they have the confidence to follow, they can run the animal to ground at the end of a long gully.

There, urged on by their power totems, they must kill the sacred animal, tear it to pieces and consume its vital organs. As they do so, Yelm slides beneath the western horizon, and the first rains of the monsoon begin to fall. All the bloodlust and exhilaration of the hunt burst forth in a tremendous sense of power and confidence and *life*. Covered in hot sweat and blood, soaked in cool, life-bringing water, the party partake of something ineffable, a sense of the oneness of life in Country, a sense of sharing in something too large to understand, of the absolute *rightness* of their existence and purpose. This feeling is unforgettable, and will bring them a sense of strength and purpose whenever they bring it to mind. They have become Aranjara.

### Making Men and Women

*"Do not forget, thylacine brothers and sisters, to thank the totem for what it has taught you."*

The adults of the clan look down from either side of the gully, festooned in ceremonial paint and masks. The ritual designs are already smudged from the rain streaming down their bodies. There is great rejoicing, both in the return of the questers and the coming of Keraun.

The questers will be led back along the gully to a towering monolith called the *bora rock*. They will be invited to sacrifice POW to Country. If they do, for each point they sacrifice they will be able to draw the equivalent in magic points from the earth each day anywhere on Aranjara songlines. This is the beginning of a long process where their spirits and



flames become totally intertwined with Country itself.

The initiation is not yet complete, but the next phase is separate men's and women's business. Male and female party members will be separated. The adults of each sex will take them into sacred rock shelters high on the plateau. There the initiates will be seated facing the cave entrances, afforded a view of the monsoon clouds emptying themselves upon Country. Here, among much singing and dancing, the initiation will be made complete.

Male initiates will be instructed in the duties of manhood. They will be made to drink the blood of their skin brothers, who will likewise drink from them. Elders will grant each initiate a skin name, to be used at one's home hearth. Being warned to show no fear, initiates previously considered children will be taken to one side by their guidefathers. A tooth will then be knocked out as a sign of manhood. Skin tattoos will be cut in the flesh of all initiates, and they will be taught two male songs of power. The first is a love magic song (the initiates will be shown the secret men's cave where love magic is cast), and the second a hunting song that acts as a bladesharpening spell. Lastly (though most importantly) they will be taught **Lodril's Secret** — that it is men rather than women whose rituals maintain the fertility of the Earth.

Female initiates will be instructed in the duties of women, and in **Faranar's Command** — their timeless responsibility for the fertility and well-being of Country. Special oils will be rubbed on their skin. They will then join with the women of the clan in dancing the **Plant Sisters' Dreaming**, which brings luck and strength and fertility. They will be granted a skin name, and initiates previously considered children will be taken aside and have a tooth removed as a mark of womanhood and beauty. Skin tattoos will be cut, and the initiates will learn a song of power that can make men laugh at themselves, and so reveal their absurdities (as **Befuddle** spell). They will then be taken to the **Womens' Place**, where no male can ever enter. There they will then eat of the fruit bat, which is taboo to men and children.

### The Flame Stones

It will be dark by the time the separate parties return to the *bora* ground. The rain has ceased temporarily, and everyone can sense the entire landscape echoing to the touch of the rain and its promise of life to come. A feast has been prepared, but there is one more thing to be done. The sense of excitement and anticipation among the clan is obvious.

Wide-Flying Goose Wing will anoint the party with sacred designs in red and yellow ochre. Guidefathers will make cuts in questers' arms and legs, and use the resultant blood to cover their limbs in white down. Moon Woman will sing a terrible song of the punishments awaiting those who betray the **Dreaming**, and plaster the eyes and mouth of each quester with black mud, warning them that their eyes and tongue will rot if they even think of betraying the great secret they are about to share. As the clan sings, the elder men lead the party up the mountain-side, telling them they are about to encounter the **Heart of the Dreaming**, the past and future of the clan. Moon Woman trails behind, covered in protective designs, carrying a great barbed spear.

At various points the men shout to the totems, announcing they are bringing new adults, and imploring them not to strike the strangers dead. The party are eventually led to a well-hidden cave entrance, and in highly emotional voices, the men bid them to enter.

In view of the build up, the party will probably be very disappointed in what they see. Along the walls of the cave are a variety of small oblong stones, covered in runes and cult designs, sometimes wrapped in bark or animal pelt. These are the *churinga nanja* or **flame stones**. The elders will reverently pass the stones from initiate to initiate.

As noted in *Sons of the Totem*, handling a flame stone can provoke violent experiences: a sudden rush of memory or emotion. It is also the time when initiates will discover their **True Name**. MLDs should base these experiences on the storytelling needs and wishes of the players, for if a full memory is awakened, it is unlikely that the character will ever wish to leave the clan. One particularly effective storytelling strategy is to give one quester the memory of Storm's dead husband, including the memories of his murder. (He is dead, so his name cannot be uttered). Their love will still be strong, but circumstances have changed and they cannot be husband

and wife again.

Once the questers have discovered their true names and possible memories, they will return to the clan for a long night of feasting where they will be reunited as long-lost family. Elders will announce marriage contracts and eternal loyalty will be pledged. Skin members will link the true names of questers with dead kin, even if no memories are forthcoming. "You are my grandfather! You have returned to us! We have longed for this day."

Questers who awaken memories will find that their knowledge skills of Aranjara lore grow rapidly. More devious characters may realise just how important the flame stone store is; for if it were ever stolen or destroyed, the clan would surely die.

### IV: GROOMQUEST

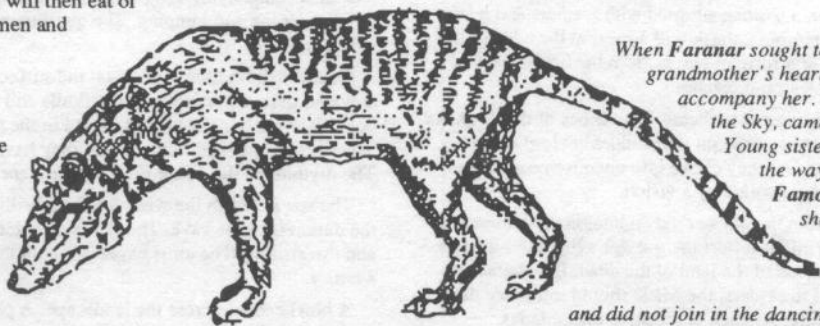
Having 'found' her long lost brothers, Storm can now quest with them for her second husband. Young **PlainsFire** of the Blood Bean skin resides at another Aranjara encampment some eight days journey across the rugged escarpment.

The timing and ceremonies surrounding this quest make it much more significant than a typical marriage party. The outcome is tied to the fertility and balance of the land itself.

Some party members will play ritual roles; others may journey to learn and to observe the power of the **Dreaming**.

### The Myth

As with all things connected with the Aranjara dreaming, every story has many levels and many secrets. The following version of the marriage myth will be revealed to initiates.



*When Faranar sought to bring Pamalt to her grandmother's hearth, she choose companions to accompany her. Cronisper, the Old One of the Sky, came because of his wisdom. Young sister Nyanka (life) came to learn the ways of womanhood. Evil sister Fomorde (Maran Gor) came, for she is always loyal to her kin. Dark sister Miroune (Babeester Gor) also came, though she was not asked,*

*and did not join in the dancing. Bolongo (Trickster) also came, for he claimed to know the way. Others helped: Dog and Snake and Firestick all had their part to play.*

*They travelled across Country, singing the songs of power as they went. They marked the landscape with signs of their passage, and Firebrand brought balance and new life to everything he touched. Many things happened, some of them you cannot know yet.*

*Bolongo led the party astray. Faranar skinned him and wore his hide as a cloak. She said she would give it back if he behaved.*

*When they came to Pamalt's country, they climbed the Great Mountain to look for the smoke of his family's hearth.*

*Old Six Eye Three Wing lived near the top of the mountain: an old and hateful spirit who did not share blood with any of the tribes of earth or sky. While Fomorde and Miroune fought his kin, Dog and Bolongo drew the hateful one away so the others could look down from the top of the mountain.*

*Now, some of Pamalt's kin said that Faranar was not worthy of the god (for they had other alliances in mind). To prove her worth, Faranar decided she would steal her husband from under their very noses! With the help of her companions she crept into the camp and stole Pamalt away. He laughed and was glad when he saw the cunning and determination of his bride.*

*Keraun was there at Pamalt's hearth. She loved the proud god, and wanted her parents to make a marriage contract. When she realised what had happened, Keraun pursued the intruders with all her strength. The Old Ones said if she found them the marriage would be hers, because the power of her love would be more powerful than the power of Faranar's skin. She called on her tribe to stop the party, and many spirits tried to block their way. Many times she nearly caught them, but all she ended up with was Bolongo's hide, which stank horribly and would not stay still.*

*Faranar brought Pamalt to her Grandmother's hearth, and the songs of unity were sung. To celebrate the joining of the different skins, a great*





garden was created by Aleshmara and the Plant Sisters. Hykim & Mikyh filled it with life, and Keraun promised to water it. (For she saw it was wrong to put herself above the needs of the tribe.) Pamalt cares for the garden now; it is his brideservice.

### The Ritual Roles

Participants must enact a ritual role upon the journey, acting out and embodying the attitudes of the First Travellers. This heroquest is concerned not with tests of magic or strength (though they might have their part to play) but with right conduct and cooperation ('becoming one with Country'). Success in the quest will mean fertility for both Storm and for Country. Failure will mean that the marriage cannot proceed, and may result in a deadly drought or flood.

**Faranar:** Storm will take the role of the Earth bride. She must inspire and lead the party. She embodies the power of romantic love.

**Nyanka:** Red Ochre takes the role of the young goddess learning of life and love. She embodies impersonal sexual power. She will be promiscuous, wanting to 'gather firewood' with male party members and urging them to sleep apart so she can lay with them.

**Cronisper:** Bush Burner, as Storm's guidefather, will take this role. He must guide the party as a whole while not detracting from Storm's leadership. He embodies agape, or communal good.

#### Party Roles

(SC = roles for Sweet Clover members).

**Famorde:** the Earth Shaker, embodying the powers of wrath and anger. (SC).

**Bolongo:** false god, empty Trickster, the eloquent bearer of great wisdom and great foolishness.

**Miroune:** A warrior should take the role of the earth's avenger. (SC).

**Dog:** The Hunter. A loyal and tenacious spirit. (SC).

**Snake:** Knower of the Ways of Darkness, Friend to Women.

**Firebrand:** The tool that can destroy. A spirit devoted to balance who becomes terrible when roused.

### Setting Out

The entire clan will gather together in ceremony to sing the party on its way. In preparation, each quester will be rubbed in fat and then painted in a manner appropriate to the role they take. They will be taught a song of power they can use on the song line to embody the power of those they represent on the quest. Each song corresponds to a Rune Spell. The power for the first casting will come from the songline itself; any subsequent use will use the caster's own POW.

The Songs are —	Faranar:	Know Lineage
	Nyanka:	Regrow Limb
	Cronisper:	none
	Famorde:	Shake Earth
	Bolongo:	Illusionary Sight
	Miroune:	Slash
	Dog:	Command Hunting Dog
	Snake:	Fear
	Firebrand:	Summon/Command Salamander

The questers will then be asked to meditate on the god or spirit they represent while women of the clan sing the Three Women Dancing Dreaming. As the women dance around each quester, the emotions experienced will become fixed and magnified within the quester's mind. For the duration of the quest, whenever these emotions arise, the quester must make a POW\*3 roll to avoid being dominated by it.

**Example:** Dog tries to meditate on loyalty to Faranar. If he is successful, he will find it easy to be loyal when circumstances demand. It will be automatic unless he makes a POW\*3, and even then he has free choice. However, if he is distracted by the dancing and lusts after the women, he will be plagued by this emotion and will succumb to its demands whenever he fails a POW\*3.

If the Bolongo character tries to interrupt the dance, the women will drag him off screaming into the darkness. Storm will return with a small part of the Bolongo character's body in a dilly bag. She will use this to extract loyalty and obedience.

At the completion of the dance, Wide-Flying Goose Wing will present Storm with a *churinga* stone wrapped in bark. It belongs to PlainsFire, and is the sign that she has come to take him from his home hearth.

To the sound of a bull-roarer, the party enter the wilderness, to spend the first night in silence and darkness.

### The Plain

The rains are still sporadic; the true monsoon is yet to arrive. The weather is hot and humid, with violent wind storms and cloudbursts. The country is alive with fresh growth, wildflowers and clover creating a multi-coloured carpet. Wildlife is seeking high ground. Tadpoles have spawned in small pools that are already drying out in the hot sun. The balance of life and death is still precarious.

Following the song line, the party will encounter a crocodile nesting on the escarpment slope, high above the usual high water mark of the riverbed. This is a bad omen, for it usually indicates a great flood ahead.

The first day's progress will be slow but steady, a mixture of mud and steep rocky slopes. Internal matters should occupy most of the parties attention, especially the actions of Nyanka and Bolongo.

### Keraun

Several days into the journey, the true monsoon will arrive. Rainstorms smash down for hours at a time, violent enough to knock questers to the ground, completely obscuring visibility. Yelm is seldom seen, and storm clouds buffet each other in hurricane winds. Water cascades down in torrents from the rocks above.

### Axis Mundi

The very top of the Spine, first goal of the quest, is commanded by a powerful Mimi tribe with a taste for human flesh as well as shadow. Their vantage point is such that can see the party approaching across the landscape.

The Party must find a way of reaching the top while avoiding the Mimi. Two facts may (or may not) assist them. Mimi are reputed to dislike the force of the Monsoon rains, and will not venture out during storms. Also, hunting dogs can detect Mimi nearby. The party will need to cooperate together to reach the top and so spy PlainsFire's camp.

### The Abduction

As in the myth, Storm must ritually 'kidnap' her intended mate from his grandmother's hearth. The party must then escape back to their own country, for if a woman of PlainsFire's own camp desires him in marriage, all they need do is recapture him.

Storm suspects that at least one young woman, a shapechanger called **Hunting Star** (*Djini*) will pursue PlainsFire.

The party's task will be made more difficult by the fact that only Storm, Red Ochre, and Bush Burner can recognise PlainsFire, and only Storm can handle the flame stone that will compel his cooperation. Of course, blood must not be shed in the course of the abduction.

### The Pursuit

If the party successfully extract PlainsFire from the Camp, he cannot speak to any of them until they reach the Brindubul Caves. However, he will not seek to delay or betray the party, for he plays the role of Pamalt, a role of honour.

The party will be pursued by a small but skilled group led by Hunting Star. The chase will be conducted across a flooded and dangerous landscape, dominated by fast flowing streams and treacherous rock faces, waterfalls and rockslides.

The pursuers will be no more than a few hours behind the party, and it is probable that they all will be trapped together at least once on a small wooded 'island' in the flood, probably in the company of several dazed and hungry animals as well!

Once they reach the lowlands again, the party will need to proceed at least partially by canoe. The worst of the storms will have passed, though the flooded landscape will be filled with dead animals and treacherous watercourses.

### The Brindubul Cave

The quest ends at the Brindubul caves, where the various sections of the clan will soon gather to celebrate the Mothgatherer Dreaming. Though the rains will continue, the worst of the monsoon has passed. The landscape bursts into brilliant flower, the air is full of dragonflies, and the waterholes

overflow with barramundi. It is **Bungadeen**, the season of flowers and fruit.

Arriving at the caves, the party will find evidence of a terrible slaughter — dead bodies and cold campfires. Weapons, tools and sacred objects alike lay discarded and abandoned. The dead, all adult men and women, have been cut down by metal weapons. The Aranjara questers recognise the dead as belonging to one particular hearth group. Of the rest of that group — some twenty men, women and children — there is no sign.

Neither Storm nor Bush Burner seem able to accept this intrusion. Shocked and disbelieving, they can only mutter, 'It is not in the myth. It is not in the Dreaming...'

### The Prospectors

The cruel answer to the tragedy will be discovered further up to the escarpment. A group of some dozen adventurers and prospectors from Sees Bananjarb (*city clothes, city smells*) are mining rune metal from the mountainside, brutally using the surviving hearth members as slave labour. By miracle or dark magic they have penetrated Country without alerting the clan or the totems.

Seeing the captives — huddled together round a single hearth, bound in ugly chains with no differentiation between age or sex or skin — may make the party realise how much they have grown in Aranjara ways. The presence of the prospectors will force them to face the challenge of the outside world. How they deal with it may prove to be the ultimate test. *What have they really learned?*

### Return and Beyond

Completion of the quest will mean complete acceptance into the clan, and the party will be entrusted with the secrets and powers of the Dreaming. If they continue in Aranjara ways, more and more of their spirit and flame will merge with Country, until they find it impossible to leave. If they return to the world of animals without hooves, they will find the outer ways strange and unsatisfying. Wherever they roam, their heart will remain Aranjara.

Whatever the party decide, the Children of Faranar will have need of them. The incursions of the Kresh and the formation of the Arbennan Federation mean that outside attention is being focused on the Aranjara and other Left Hand clans for the first time in centuries. This can only bring disruption and suffering to their orderly lives.

All of Jolar is about to engulfed in the tides of conflict. In the East, entire Kresh wagon communities have mysteriously disappeared. The power-lust and rivalry unleashed by the formation of the Arbennan Confederation have awoken ancient forces sleeping beneath the land. And in the south, foes as yet unsuspected swarm from the Nargan Desert. The Earth is in sore need of friends, both to defend it and to heal its wounds. The old ways will be severely tested, and men and women of courage must again seek to balance the forces of tradition and change. The Hero Wars have begun.

*One Law For Everyone  
I Know it  
You Know it  
Dance.*

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## LETTERS

### Agimori

Gary Billen  
Leicester, England

In the supplement *River of Cradles*, one of the most interesting and enjoyable sections was "Peoples of the Valley". However the details given of the Agimori race bring some uncomfortable questions to my mind. Perhaps I am being overly sensitive, in the way only white liberals can be, about the potential for racism and other undesirable aspects in RPGs (I am in no doubt neither Greg Stafford or Chaosium/Avalon Hill meant to be in any way racist). However, the way in which the physical differences and superiority of the Agimori are turned into separate (inferior?) creation myths echo many of the core ideas of white racist supremacist thinking. I remember as a child being told the reason the West Indies ruled supreme in the cricket world was that they had the best fast bowlers, *because* they had different bone structure of their hips, not due to their skills. I believed it and though that did not make me a racist for life it is an example of the insidious way racism can enter into everyday life. It can also be institutionalised with the thinking that that some Afro-Americans can only aspire to success in the sporting or pop world.

Perhaps rightly, some people will have a go at me, saying this is only a fantasy creation and the Agimori are just another fantasy race, just like dwarves. However, the Agimori are not just another fantasy race, they are the only black race in Glorantha, a fantasy world no less European (Aryan?) in its bias than all the others. Indeed, Chaosium/Avalon Hill have themselves stated in the *Glorantha Book* - "AGIMORI: a dark-skinned race similar to Earth's Negroes...". RPGs are undeniably sexist and racist in the make-up of their fantasy sociology and culture and one of the reasons *RuneQuest* is a superior game is that its maturity and complexity allow for at least an exploration if not eradication of these Western stereotypes.

### One True World?

Mark Holsworth  
Coburg, Victoria, Australia

A response to the debate in *Tales* #9 and #10 on the one world (sic) of Glorantha:

From *Empire of the Petal Throne* and *RuneQuest-Glorantha* onwards to *Cthulhu*,

*Pendragon*, *Paranoia* and *Cyberpunk*, it is evident that "one world" roleplaying games are the way to go: one world game systems have outdone multi-world systems, like Steve Jackson's GURPS. The reason being that one world systems provide a better integration of rules and background as well as a clear genre for play. However, there is really no such thing as one world; in every gaming session we create the world.

There are two alternatives in the One World debate: 1) to put complete authority for the world of Glorantha into the hands of Greg Stafford and Chaosium which means that ultimately *RuneQuest* will die because Greg Stafford is mortal, or 2) to maintain the idea of the world of Glorantha as the creation of many authors, to encourage diversity of interpretations and to tolerate heresies. The second is clearly the only viable alternative because *RuneQuest* is not just a game like *Monopoly*, but a system of shared interactive fiction in which every player is an author contributing to the world of Glorantha.

I think that there is a lesson to be learnt from the megalomaniac ravings of Gary Gygax. Gygax maintained that since he was the creator of D&D that he had authority over people's games - if it was not approved by him it was not D&D. Greg Stafford has not fallen into this psychological trap and has consistently set an "anything goes" attitude in contrast. However the danger seems not to be with the prophet but in the attitude of his disciples, including those editing *Tales*.

Paul Reilly  
Pitts., USA

Year after year, you faithfully buy everything published about Glorantha. Diligently you research some aspect of that world - say the ancient Brithini culture. Greedily you devour scraps of information, hoping to digest them into a coherent whole. The pieces fall into place and you begin to write new material, crafting it carefully to fit into the Gloranthan whole. You enter the material into your campaign - and everyone is pleased with it, recognising it as authentic Gloranthan lore. You may even submit it for publication, hoping that others will appreciate it as well.

Then, suddenly, disaster strikes. Out of the blue, something new is published which contradicts your careful additions to the Gloranthan corpus. Or you receive a letter back from the publishers, beginning with the dreaded





words, "I talked to Greg about your ideas. I'm sorry, but..."

*You have been "Gregged".*

Over the years I have been "Gregged" several times, and I'm sure many of you have also. I don't have a formula for dealing with the heartbreak this engenders, but I'll make some suggestions.

The most common way to be "Gregged" is within the context of your own campaign. This is not too much of a problem - within your own version of Glorantha you are the ultimate arbiter. Just keep track of where you diverge from published lore. In a long-running campaign this is inconvenient because more and more material comes out that diverges from the "truth" in your own campaign and it becomes difficult to keep track.

If you are running a series of short campaigns, you can choose to incorporate the changes into your world, sacrificing consistency within your campaign in order to be able to easily use published materials.

Preparing something for publication and having it "Gregged" is more serious. This has happened to me a couple of times. Perhaps someone with more experience could write a letter to *Tales* on this subject. I found it disappointing but since I had many other ideas to turn to I was not too upset. It's 'only' a game, after all.

There does seem to be a crisis brewing. I am told that Greg Stafford is changing many of his fundamental ideas about Glorantha. Since we have been explicitly invited to add to the Gloranthan corpus (see the end of the *Glorantha Book in Genertela: Crucible of the Hero Wars*) this can be rather annoying. It is difficult to write new material which builds on an ever-shifting foundation, rather like being a construction boss in Dorastor.

*An example:* I wrote up a treatment of Runic Sorcery, basing this concept on mentions of Death Rune sorcerers, Stasis Rune Sorcerers, etc. and statements such as: "Western Wizards and sorcerers love to use the standard Gloranthan Runes" (p.21 *Player's Book: Genertela*, authors Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen).

After sending it in I was told that in Greg's current conception the Western sorcerers do not really use the standard Gloranthan runes. Go figure.

Other reality shifts are equally hard to deal with - compare the history of the Sun Dome Temple with the information on the formation of the Yelmialo cult in *King of Sartar*. What, if anything, should be taken as canonical?

Perhaps others (even lofty Greg?) could address this issue. I am sure that many would like write about Glorantha but are inhibited by the chance of being Gregged.

P.S. I have great respect for Mr. Stafford and am grateful that he has made Glorantha available for us to explore. I admire his project of reworking the history and mythology of Glorantha as his ideas evolve, as evidenced in *King of Sartar*. However, it is hard for those of us who wish to contribute to Glorantha (as we have been invited to do) to hit a moving target.

If anyone can offer a solution beyond "grin and bear it" I would be pleased.

## Issue #10

**James Fitchett**  
Oxspring, Sheffield, England

Issue 10 made interesting reading. I particularly enjoyed *The Barren Isle* with its references to *The Odyssey*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest* (I can just picture Ingana/Miranda "Brave new world, that hath such men as these!"). Still my players are all illiterate so it will probably go right over their heads... Is it my imagination or are Gloranthan scenarios getting ever more bizarre?

What happened to Griselda? Has a Lunar literacy agent kidnapped Oliver Dickinson? Pay the ransom for goodness sake.

*De Editor:* Unfortunately, Oliver has run out of stories! Though he is working on one right now. In the meantime we have some new stories by Alan LaVergne, the first of which will appear next issue.

## More Inspiration?

**Steve Gilham**  
Cambridge, England

Just as we discover that the cult of the Black Sun is based on the guts 'n gore movies of Herschell Gordon Lewis (*Tales* #6), keeping our focus north in the Kingdom of Bliss in Ignorance, we see that some very strange folk have found their way into these lands. In the area called Koromodol, the Creature Whose Initials Are Y.B.B. is found, and the the inhabitants are said to "harvest the wild shrimp and watercress" from the coast (*Genertela Book*, p.25). In "The Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo", a poem in English humorist Edward Lear's immortal *Book of Nonsense* (1846), the YBB praises his land to his English lady-love as follows:

*"On this coast of Coromandel  
Shrimps and watercresses grow  
Prawns are plentiful and cheap..."*

This Coromandel is the south-eastern coastal area of India.

Later in the poem, deserted by his lady, who has sailed to England, the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo tries to follow, setting off on the back of a large turtle, which carries him to "the sunset isles of Boshen" - perhaps this reference explains the Hsunchen turtle folk of Boshan?

This is not the only raid that has been made on Lear's nonsense poems. The Jumbles, in the course of sailing in their sieve visit the "hills of the Chankley Bore", now to be found inland of Koromodol. Amongst the visitors who came to gasp at the Quangle-Wangle's hat were the "Fimble Fowl, with a Corkscrew leg", and the "Dong with a luminous nose". This latter dignitary stars in a poem all his own, which begins:

*"When awful darkness and silence  
reign  
Over the great Gromboolian Plain  
Through the long, long wintry nights;  
When the angry breakers roar*

*As they beat on the rocky shore;  
When Storm-clouds brood on the  
towering heights  
Of the hills of the Chankley Bore"*

In these circumstances one may see the Dong, who contrived his lummious nose as a symbol of his mourning for his lost love, one of the Jumbles who

*"...came in a Sieve, they did-  
Landing at eve near the Zemery Fidd  
here the Oblong Oysters grow"*

How this chap became the ghost of the defunct third eye of Sunstorm, I scarcely can guess.

My own conceit here is that, if we knew where the Zemery Fidd is, we might find that there was a Gloranthan Blue Oyster Cult which might have its own small but fanatical cult following.

## Revolution in Freeforming!

**Andrew Rilstone**  
Earlsdon, Coventry, England

I know for a fact that I invented Freeform games, sometime around 1987 in Langwith College Bar in York: I also know for a fact that people were playing similar games in Australia and the US several years earlier. So who invented what? Does it matter? My "Fantasy parties" were partly suggested by a "Come as your character" party mentioned somewhere in *Imagine*, partly by a remark that Tom Zunder made about cricket matches (no, seriously) in an early *Aslan*. The structure of the games go back at least as far as the "Bar Room Brawl, D&D style" in *White Dwarf* #10.

The truth is a lot of people were experimenting with similar things at similar times because it was basically a good idea. Steve Jackson says something similar happened with *Killer*: it grew up independently on a number of US campuses. (Come to that, wasn't *Colossal Cave* computer adventure circulating on mainframes prior to, or at any rate independently from, *Original Dungeon & Dragons*?)

Almost as silly as arguing about who invented what and when is arguing about The Right Way to Do It. Doubtless Sandy Petersen and Nikolas Lloyd have both developed styles which suit what they want to achieve. In York we used to run games with 20 players that were organised like small freeforms but were run on a week by week basis, varying the location from week to week. They sometimes changed between "live action" and being "round a table" on a minute by minute basis. Was this freeforming? On your definition, no: Sandy Petersen pretty much rules the idea out of court on the panel at *Convulsion*. But frankly, who cares?

Where I think you are positively wrong is where you say that LARP can't cope with "politics, romance... intrigue and double dealing." It can: I've done it. Basically, you dispense with "Fall in love cards" and "Persuasion" cards, and just roleplay the scenes out. I particularly dislike the idea, in the



Australian Freeforms Book, of "sneak" and "spy" cards. In my Freeforms, the way you sneak and spy is by, er, sneaking and spying...! But this, again, is probably more a matter of taste than anything else, a sub-set of the vexed "is roleplaying better with no rules at all?" question, that I have no intention of getting into at the moment.

*De Editor: Well, I think that just about wraps up this topic! I suspect the moral is that there can be a lot more to roleplaying than just sitting around a table rolling dice, fun as that is. Whether you call these games Freeforms, LARP, Interactive Literature, Fantasy Parties, Theatre, or even Murder Mystery Parties, they can be great fun. Try them - or make up a new variant of your own!*

## Japanese RQ

Kou Matoba  
Kanagawa, Japan

When I saw the ad about *Tales of the Reaching Moon* inside *Sun County*, I thought it was only available in the USA, Canada, UK, Europe and Australia, but I've now managed to get hold of copies. Thanks, *Tales* is great! I really enjoyed *Sun County*, especially "Garhound Contest - Melisande's Hand" and am now helping Hobby Japan Inc., the Japanese RPG publisher, to translate it and the future RQ series (the Japanese version of *Sun County* is now out, and looks damn nice! MOB)

Almost all Japanese *RuneQuest* players started after the RQ3 standard edition rules were translated in 1988. 13 supplements have so far been published, including a GM screen/book of charts, Companion, and revised rulesbook that were not originally AH versions.

## Free Classifieds

WANTED: Adventurers to join party hunting Chaos sheep near Cwmbrian, South Wales. Gathering to take place in Earth Season (September) after I return from a Heroquest to Kralorela (China). Contact: Adam Reynolds, 1 Calcot House, Cae Rhedyn, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbrian, Gwent, NP44 2BA. Phone: 0633 876 288.

SWAP *Tales* 1 - 5 for very good condition *Foes*, good *Questworld* and well-used *Gateway Bestiary*. Contact Colin McIver, 5 Rydal Avenue, Ramsgate, Thanet, Kent, CY11 0PT. Phone: 0843 589873.

WANTED: *White Dwarf* #10 & #12. Also, any out-of-print *Empire of the Petal Throne* material. Contact: Roger Pearse on 0473 683895. evenings or 0473 227315 office hours.

HEY! Anyone got a copy of the old Judges Guild *Citadel of Fire* pack? If so, please contact David Hall at the editorial address.

WANTED: Issues 1 - 6 of *Tales*. Also, any RQ2 supplements (especially *Big Rubble & Borderlands*), premium prices paid. Contact: Andi Clements on 0743 366626 after 6.00pm, or 0939 250383 during office hours.

NEW RQ GM needs Help! Back issues of *Tales*, RQ 1 or 2 material converted to RQ3, or RQ supplements or scenarios, or anything that may be useful to a new RQ3 GM with little time on his hands. Contact: Adam Rouse, 3 Haycroft Gardens, Willesden, London, NW10 3BJ.

WANTED: A copy of Chaosium's *Authentic Thamaturgy*. Contact: Phil Day, 125 Watford Stree, Christchurch 5, New Zealand.

WANTED: Back issues of *Tales*. Contact Kim Harries at 182A St. Andrews Avenue, Colchester, Essex. Phone: 0206-795210.

## ZINES

## SEEN

From De Hall:

### Read Pheasant Throughout #1

September 1993, A5, 48 pp. £1.30 including UK postage.

This fanzine is edited by Nick Eden, friend of Andrew Rilstone (late of *Aslan*). For me this is potentially the perfect fanzine. It has the sort of articles that I enjoyed in *Aslan*, and since Nick is a RQ fan it has Gloranthan articles too! This issue has: articles on freeforming by Phil Todd (who has convinced me that LARPs do freeform) and Andrew Rilstone; reviews of RPGS's, comics, fanzines and films; articles on character development & Xenophilia (this in part explores the problems experienced by roleplayers explaining our weird pastime to the world at large); and lastly a variant Cult of Donander and two reviews of *King of Sartar* (one by a fan, and one by a lay RQer forced to read the book - with dire consequences). I like it!

Available from: Nick Eden, 81 Fourth Avenue, Heworth, York, United Kingdom.

From De MOB:

### Australian Roleplayer, Vol.1 Issue #12

(formerly *Convention Clarion*, newsletter of the Australian Roleplaying Information Exchange Library, ARIEL)  
September 1993, A4, 22 pp. A50¢ (that's cheap!)

ARIEL's former newsletter is midway through a two-part transformation that will eventually see it as a tabloid available in game stores across Australia. To break away from its roots in the somewhat incestuous and insular Sydney RPG scene, editors in four states will compile news and articles about past and future events in the vibrant and innovative Aussie convention calendar. The zine also features topics of interest to roleplayers in

general: this issue's feature article is an interview with Penny Love, whose book *Castle of Eyes* is part of Chaosium's new direction into fiction. The interesting Multi Media column discusses *Babylon 5*, *Blade Runner Director's Cut* and *Jurassic Park* trivia. This revamped zine promises to give RPG gaming a higher profile here in Australia, and is an essential read for the well-seasoned convention attendee. I wonder if the cover price will stay the same when the next issue hits the shops?

Available from: John Hughes (national editor), 10/28 Frencham Street, Upper Downer, ACT 2602, Australia.

From De Nick Brooke:

### RQ Adventures #2

Fall 1993, 36pp.+4p. card cover; US\$ 5.00

Ducks, Ducks, and more Ducks! Just like Tolkien's hobbits, really: some people love'em above all other things Gloranthan, while others feel they drag a deftly-created world down to an unwelcome level of silliness. The latter will shun issue 2 of self-confessed Duck-nut John Castellucci's all-new *RuneQuest Adventures Fanzine*, out now in the States: its highlight is a 14-page Duckpack Section in which Steven Martin crosses parodies of *Trollpak* with Donald Duck's relatives (with a distinctive, if at times jarring, impact), rounded off with a write-up of the Quackodemon cult and brief tie-in scenario. But more tolerant and open-minded Gloranthan gamers will find a wealth of material herein: the (non-Duck) 18-page scenario "Dreams Dragons Bring" offers a tour across the lands around the Dragon's Eye, including interesting and useful myths, maps, NPC encounters 'n stats, and site highlights to make up for a slightly lame denouement. Generally good production is marred by sparse artwork somewhat a la Dobyski, while typography suffers from an over-exuberant use of fonts; a broadening of the contributor base beyond the two editors might redress the slightly quirky balance of material, but that's down to us, really. What more need I say? Like the first issue, it's good, it's Gloranthan, it's a labour of love: why not give it a whirl!

Available from: RQ Adventures, 2006 22nd Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116 USA.





# The Second Tales Questionnaire

This one tells a story...

1976	2	1985	27
1977	3	1986	17
1978	7	1987	10
1979	23	1988	12
1980	26	1989	5
1981	28	1990	8
1982	55	1991	2
1983	34	1992	3
1984	31	1993	1

Thanks to everyone who filled in the Second Tales Questionnaire (our first followed issue #3 and the results featured in issue #5). We had a 24% response rate across the world with the most forms being returned from Australia, the UK and the USA. This has enabled us to get clear picture of our readership and the directions you would like the zine to go in future issues.

If only it was '82 again!

### Popularity of Tales columns

(1 = none, 2 = less, 3 = about right, 4 = more, 5 = much more)

Glorantha Background	4.1
Maps	3.9
Glorantha Esoterica	3.6
Official Cults	3.6
Theme issues	3.5
Scenarios	3.4
Holiday Glorantha	3.3
Rumours	3.1
Rules	3.0
Letters	3.0
Divad Llah	2.9
Fiction	2.8
Writers' notes	2.8
Sun County writer's notes	2.7
Unofficial cults	2.7
Non-Glorantha articles	1.8
Non-RQ articles	1.6

The number of readers per issue suggest a worldwide readership of 4,000 - 5,000, in 20 countries (Poland being the latest!). However, of the 305 respondents a mere 6 were female.

The average age of readers was 27; 30 in the USA, and 26 in the UK. Last time round the average age was 25.5 The logical conclusion we can draw from this trend is that we Rune-Questers ain't gettin' any younger...

### Why did they like playing RQ?

(1 = No, 2 = partly, 3 = mainly)

Rules	2.3
Glorantha	2.8
Scenarios	2.0
Habit	1.5

### Their best supplement

(96% responded)

Glorantha: Genertela	17%
Cults of Prax	14%
RQ2 Trollpak	11%
Griffin Mountain	10%
Gods of Glorantha	10%
Others	38%

### Best RQ3 Artwork

(85% responded)

Sun County	40%
Glorantha: Genertela	16%
Games Workshop	7%
None	7%
Other supplements	30%

### Supplement most like to see reprinted

(91% responded):

Big Rubble	22%
Cults of Terror	18%
None	15%
Borderlands	12%

Others 33%

### Based on RQ3 supplements so far what do they want to see?

(1 = none, 2 = less, 3 = about right, 4 = more, 5 = much more)

Reprints	3.2
Scenarios	4.0
Background	4.3
Cults	3.4
NPC's	3.1
Rules	2.4
Monsters	2.5
Magic Items	3.0

Scenarios and background are the big winners here. We were surprised to see reprints score so high, given the amount brought out over the years.

### When did they start playing RQ?

Once again, more Background comes to the fore, followed by maps (these readers will be very pleased with the last two issues!). The message about non-Glorantha and non-RQ material is quite clear.

### Most Wanted Special Issues:

## What About the Rules?

On the rules questions the answers were mostly neutral. Most respondents thought that the rules needed amending, but didn't need major surgery (30% disagreed strongly with major surgery). They also didn't want to go back to RQ2, and definitely didn't want no rules at all.

They didn't want more rules, they wanted about the same number. They were completely neutral about realism, although they thought the loopholes should be covered.

On combat most agreed it was fine. They were neutral about making it simpler or more realistic (even slightly anti the latter). They definitely didn't want it to be more like a wargame.

Sorcery needed amending, and possibly a rewrite. It should not be scrapped and it was to be sung and shouted about!

The consensus disagreed with generic rules, and agreed pretty strongly with a Glorantha background.

The US responses on rules questions were analysed separately and the results were almost identical to the overall consensus. The only minor variations were a greater dislike of RQ2, a greater wish for simpler combat, they were keener on wargaming, and they were more supportive of generic RQ rules and less of Glorantha RQ rules.

**Most Wanted Special Issues:**

Lunar	160
Hero Wars	145
Magic	118
Prax	101
Wastes	101
Orlanthi	99
West	89
Nochet	83
Grazelands	82

Carmania got 26 votes and Baboons polled a pathetic 23. And there were 22 poor souls who actually wanted *Tales - The Mini Series*, starring Mel Gibson as MOB??.

**Readers' Libraries**

Our readers have bookshelves brimming with RQ material. 94% probably want the Reaching Moon Megacorp *Wyrms Footprints* book when it becomes available.

Ownership (or access to) various RQ products of the near and distant past is very high:

81%	Cults of Prax
63%	Borderlands
96%	Glorantha: Genertela
45%	Eldorad (though another 20% burned their copies)
90%	Sun County

**Best and Worse**

And, finally we come to the *Tales* honour roll! We found it interesting that certain issues or articles could feature in both the Best and Worst lists, indicating an eclectic mix of tastes among the readership.

First the issues themselves:

**Best issue of Tales**

1. Issue #7 (HeroQuest Issue)
2. Issue #5 (Humakti Special)
3. Issue #8 (Chaos Feature))
4. Issue #9
5. Issue #6 (Earth Cults)

**Worst Issue**

1. Issue #1
2. Issue #2
3. Issue #6
4. Issue #9
5. Issue #8

**Top Ten Fave Articles**

Score (weighted votes)

Jaxarte	104
Hut of Darkness	95
Garhound Contest	78
Griselda	72
Cult of Humakt	66
Grey Hare's Riddle	60
Sandy Petersen Interview	44
Greg Stafford HQ Quiz	34
Storm Bull Psychology	34
PenDragon Pass	33

Congratulations to these writers, in particular the Aussie RuneQuesters who scored gold, silver and bronze.

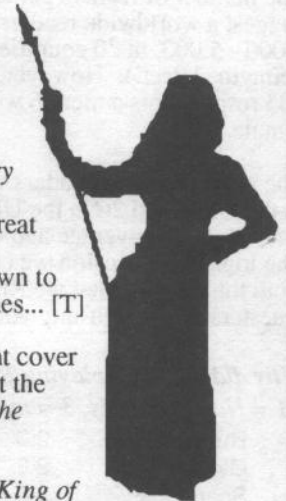
Now on to the flip side!

**Top Ten Worst Articles**

Coven of Five	192
Chr. of Khafre Menes	127
Hayward	72
Duck Soup	55
Griselda	45
PenDragon Pass	36
Broken Earth	31
Gordayan	27
Live Action Troll Ball	26
Legitimus Lightfinger	22

Thanks once again to all our readers out there who responded!

# Rumours



- Ignore what it says in the *Gloranthen Bestiary* about the fearsome Pamaltelan Grue being solitary. In fact, we now know they live in great hives, and bear an uncanny and intentional resemblance to a certain unusual species known to pester Sigourney Weaver in a trilogy of movies... [T]
- Take a look at the woman warrior on the front cover of *River of Cradles*. Now take a close look at the woman warrior on the cover of *Shadows on the Borderlands*.
- Greg Stafford now plans three follow-ups to *King of Sartar - Under the Red Moon*, covering the Lunar Empire; *Before the Moon*, describing pre-Lunar Dara Happa and Carmania; and a book about the boisterous pranks of teenager Lunars. *Shooting the Moon*.... [B]
- The Pentians must be the most technologically advanced race in Glorantha, after all, they did put a man on the moon... [B]
- Greg Stafford's wrist injuries earlier this year were the result of [take your pick]:
  - a. attacks by ninja, and he didn't do his blocking correctly;
  - b. a high speed motorcycle crash in which he expertly avoided sure death with a gymnastic recovery which, nonetheless, was not perfect;
  - c. playing with his son and falling off a grocery cart.
- AH's artwork will now all be done in-house (no more Roger Raupp covers) [Sad, but T]
- Look inside Gimpy's famous ever-replenishing "magic" stew pot and you'll see a nice simmering walktapie casserole... [R]
- Rare collectables to be auctioned at RQ Con include 4 mint copies of *Griffin Mountain*, a first edition *RuneQuest* autographed by Greg Stafford, and *The Secret of the Godlearners*. [B]

**KEY TO RUMOURS**

- T True
- B Generally true but also has a substantial false component
- R May or may not be true at GM's option



## Moon Review

# Dorastor Land of Doom



"Gain your grossest RQ character an honourable end on crusade against the spawn of chaos"  
(Avalon Hill ad in *Tales* #9)

Well, not quite.

The Dorastor we've all been waiting years for ain't exactly what you get with this new release from Avalon Hill. What you do get is the makings of two very different supplements inside the same cover, neither of which plays to the other. From a design perspective this is very odd, but as *Dorastor* is almost all new material, for the Glorantha fan it is certainly worth the investment and time. Unfortunately, this same rich level of detail is likely to overwhelm and daunt potential newcomers to the game at a time when the whole RQ line is in peril due to disappointing sales.

The two mismatched sections are what I'll call "Dorastor", the bulk of the book, and "Risklands", a shorter campaign section at the end.

The "Dorastor" section is lacking in any playable detail: GMs will have to do a lot of work to spin a campaign out of what is provided. Like the RQ2 release *Big Rubble*, short descriptions of major points of interest are given, ranging from a paragraph up to a page or so. However, key locations in *Big Rubble* - Balastor's Barracks, The Devil's Playground, Puzzle Canal - were brought alive by scenarios. I assumed that the major locations in *Dorastor* would have also been highlighted in this way - preferably as part of the promised Lunar Trading Caravan scenario (or dinner with Ralzakark!). Unfortunately, there are no such scenarios (or even maps), and only a very perfunctory section giving the GM tips on "improvising" a high level campaign (which amounts to a search for an Ancient Horror that knows an Ancient Secret, with lots of wandering monster encounters along the way. Ho hum...)

There are a number of quirky, humorous touches in the book, beginning with the Surgeon-Imperial's warning on the back cover: "Visitors to Dorastor have been determined to provide nourishment and amusement for big, rude, ugly, disgusting things." And how! The encounters pages are stacked with all manner of weird and nasty chaos, ranging from an illuminated Humakti were-stegosaurus (!) to Ralzakark himself. Ralzakark ain't quite the evil "dark lord" type you might think he is from Paulis Longvale's accounts in *Cults of Terror*, and one of his many guises, "Ralzakark's Face", is one of the most bizarre creations you could come across (until you meet Ralzakark himself!).

While the "Dorastor" section takes chaos nasties to new heights and then some, the scenarios in the "Riskland" section, on the other hand, are rather more low key. The Riskland Campaign consists of episodes with a focus on problem-solving rather than hack n' slash combat, for "low-to-mid level" characters. While placing some emphasis on the dangers of Dorastor, I must say that with just a few minor changes, the clan-based adventures of "Riskland" could be part of a *Sartar Pack*. Set on a border area of Dorastor, the Risklands are land grants where the Red Emperor has permitted Orlanthei to settle and practise their religion without persecution. This is certainly a good deal for the Lunars, as the

## **DORASTOR - Land of Doom**

By Sandy Petersen, Ken Rolston, Greg Stafford and many others.

Cover Art: Linda Michaels

Interior Art: John Snyder and Merle Insinga

Perfect bound, 128 pp; also includes 16 pp booklet and colour map.

Risklands settlements form a buffer between Dorastor and the empire proper.

The feeling of the danger and weirdness, exotic chaos and constant peril that comes out in the "Dorastor" section just isn't quite there in Risklands. Furthermore, the sort of characters who could take on the "big, rude, ugly disgusting things" in the first part could simply walk through the Risklands Campaign. Likewise, PCs suitable for Risklands would become mince-meat in a matter of strike ranks against most of the Encounters! In fact, the GM is warned that it could take "several game years in the comparatively sheltered Riskland setting" before such PCs are ready for the rest of Dorastor (eg. the first 84 pages of the book). A further book of Risklands adventures is planned.

The last part of the book contains three cult write-ups: Dorasta the local Grain Goddess, Telmor, father of the Telmori Wolfrunners and a detailed section on Nysalor Illumination. More cults, such as Thed and Krjalk are promised in a later release with the working title "Gods of Dorastor". Nysalor Illumination is covered in considerable detail, but I was disappointed that only one example of a riddle was given.

"The Talastar Papers", a 16 page booklet, comes with *Dorastor*. This is a collection of player handouts useful for both "Dorastor" and "Riskland" style campaigns, similar in style and content to parts of *King of Sartar*. Printed in "authentic" looking typesets, the effect is spoilt only once, when suddenly "referees" and "official Blank Lands" are incongruously mentioned (perhaps that's what the Lunars call the governors of these dull places). The "Riskland Broadside" is a classic example of perfidious Lunar propaganda, tempting disgruntled Orlanthei to the Risklands with promises of free land, with "fruitful soil, fine pasture, great forests, abundant game and rivers full of sparkling water and fat fish." (!) This booklet, along with the 36 page History in the "Dorastor" section, are vital sources for Glorantha buffs everywhere, offering a wealth of never-seen-before information about Dorastor and the lands around (Talastar, the Empire, etc.), both past and future.

The physical production standard of *Dorastor* is quite outstanding, consolidating on the improvements that began with *Sun County*. The interior artwork ranges from good to inspired: Merle Insinga's woodcut-style is particularly refreshing. The front



**Ralzakark**  
Broo King  
Of Dorastor

cover is a gem, once you realise it is meant to be a stained glass window.

The map work and graphics are by AH's new graphic designers, and are uniformly excellent, with some deft original touches: the depiction of the Tobros Mountains over the ages made me chuckle, and reminded me just how un-Earth-like Glorantha is supposed to be. Which is why I find one new section particularly intrusive and unwelcome: "Living in the World" on

p.86 compares parts of Dorastor to various places on Earth.

I have two problems with this: firstly, unless you've been there, stating that certain locations are based on terrestrial areas are not all that helpful: how many Aussie or European RQers know the Housatonic river valley in NW Connecticut well enough to visualize it? (Indeed, how many American RQers would?) Secondly, I would be reluctant to make such obvious and gross parallels in a publication, as it tends to cheapen the uniqueness and originality of Glorantha. If the Tobros Mountains are the Cascade Range, then why don't we just play our RQ in "Alternate Earth" and be done with it?

I was amused by the use of the term "key miles" in some of the maps: key miles - km - kilometers, get it? *RuneQuest* has always been officially (but not consistently) metric, and as usual some Imperial terms have snuck in. While the rest of the world despair waiting for these backward Americans to switch to metric, why not really make RQ-Glorantha different by dropping conventional measurement completely: Tarsh Stone instead of kilos, Imperial Cubits instead of meters, etc? Hmm, there's scope for a *Tales* article here...

I cannot end this review without a complaint about the exorbitant price AH are charging for *Dorastor* (over £15 in the UK). Sure, we inveterate Glorantha hacks are probably going to lap up the stuff even if it is highly priced, but I can't see how pricing releases far above similar products on the market is going to attract newcomers to RQ and Glorantha. It didn't work with the original RQ3 boxed set, and it won't work now!

The two very different supplements in the book could have been split in two and sold separately - the "Risklands Campaign" as an inexpensive 32 page scenario book with a level of detail ideal for newcomers, and the rest of the book (History, Inhabitants, Important Locations, Encounters, Cults), as a "Dorastor" source pack (with a high level adventure such as the Lunar trade caravan thrown in for good measure). Like the question "Who is Ralzakark really?", why these two incompatible parts were paired together in one cover is a mystery to me.

*Reviewed by Peter Erickson*

Quill does recount this Doraddi tale: "Once, during a blood feud skirmish between the Doraddi tribes of Ntombolo and Bakoroba, the djeli mistral of the Bakoroban chief was struck down by a javelin. When he asked the chief to remove it for him, the chief refused, stating that the wounded djeli had to first compose a song about the incident. The poet, with the shaft still in him, recited the following: 'I held a spear in my left hand/And glared with my eyes, they blazed like fire/Driving the people of Ntombolo like goats with a switch/and I was cast into the water/and struck by a heavy weapon...'" Addendum: Presumably the chief then removed the javelin. *Sovent the Shameless*. (XXIX. 33-106) When a priest of Gendayanya was confronted with the whole skin and skull and pizzle of an apparently identical species of zebra on the northern continent, he coolly responded that the two species are obviously and distinctly different: the Waste's zebras are white with black stripes, while Gendayanya's are black with white stripes. *Quill the Wanderer*. (XXIX. 33-111) "This is what I say, having been there, and there also.

In Pamaltela, the people, the lands, the spirits are as One - there are less firm boundaries and more interaction. Father Pamalt lives, and the power of the Gods and signs of their presence is stronger than here in Genertela, where your Genert lies destroyed and broken." *Ulus ul-Din of the Nine Seas, second astrologer aboard the ar-Ahkumanku, out of Kareshthu and lately berthed at this fair port.*

## A Gloranthan Dichotomy

To understand Pamalt, we need to understand the underlying reasons why things are done a certain way, things that, while strange from a western (or Genertelan) point of view, have an underlying consistency and logic that is very apparent from *inside* the culture. This table is by means a definitive version, and many of its assumptions are debatable. However, there's enough here to get you thinking!

### Orlanthi Genertela

Genert (dead) Orlanth vs Moon  
Male  
Outward  
Freedom  
Individual  
Change  
Warfare  
Conservative (stodgy!)  
Spell  
Material Wealth  
City  
Death  
Domination (city)  
Imposed Authority  
Leadership  
Command

### Doraddi Pamaltela

Pamalt (living)  
Female  
Inward  
Responsibility  
Clan  
Continuity  
Negotiation  
Liberal (weird!)  
Ceremony  
Spiritual Wealth  
Plain  
Life  
Coexistence (plain)  
Projected Status  
Consensus  
Negotiation





# Pamaltelan Population Statistics

## 01 - 40 FONRIT (11,000,000)

D100	%	culture	population
01-32	32	Afadjann	3,500,000
33-45	13	Banambam	1,400,000
46-54	9	Dumanaban	1,000,000
55-84	30	Kareeshtan	3,300,000
85-86	2	Katele Purists	220,000
87-89	3	Mondoran	330,000
90-92	3	Thinokan	330,000
93-00	8	Other	900,000

## 41 - 66 JUNGLE (7,000,000)

(inc. Dinal, Elamle, Kimos, Laskal, Mirelos, Onlaks)

D100	%	culture	population
01-13	13	Elamle-ata (Elamle)	910,000
14-21	8	Elamle-ata (Onlaks)	560,000
22-41	20	Elves, Yellow (Dinal)	1,400,000
42-50	9	Elves, Yellow (Feofaxia tribe)	630,000
51-55	5	Elves, Yellow (Gergualia tribe)	350,000
56-68	13	Elves, Yellow (Gaskaliatribe)	910,000
69-71	3	Elves, Yellow (Novaroooplia tribe)	210,000
72-81	10	Elves, Yellow (Zhnaquafia tribe)	700,000

D100	%	culture	pop'n
82	1	Gorgers (Kimos)	50,000
83-91	9	Hsunchen	630,000
92	1	Kimos	70,000
93-94	2	Pygmy	140,000
95-96	2	Trolls, Jungle	140,000
97	1	Waertagi	70,000
98-00	3	Other	230,000

## 67-72 KOTHAR (1,700,000)

(inc. Zamokil, Sozganjio & Palarkri)

D100	%	culture	pop'n
01-51	51	Doraddi	870,000
52-56	5	Jelmre	85,000
57-69	13	Kresh	220,000
70-72	3	Swamp Folk	50,000
73-92	20	Veldang	340,000
93-00	8	Other	135,000

## 73-80 JOLAR (2,100,000)

(inc. Tarien)

D100	%	culture	population
01-0	22	Left footpath tribes	50,000
03-64	62	Doraddi (Arbennan)	1,300,000
65-69	5	Doraddi (Oasis Dwellers)	110,000
70-88	19	Doraddi (Tarien)	400,000
89-93	5	Mountaineers	100,000
94-00	7	Other	140,000

## 81 - 97 UMATHELA (4,500,000)

D100	%	culture	population
01-16	16	Elves, Brown	730,000
17-40	24	Elves, Green	1,100,000
41-58	18	Malkioni (Umathelan)	800,000
59	1	Malkioni (Vadeli)	45,000
60-86	27	Orlanthi	1,200,000
87-97	11	Trolls, Dark	500,000
98-00	3	Other	135,000

## 98-00 OTHER (930,000)



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