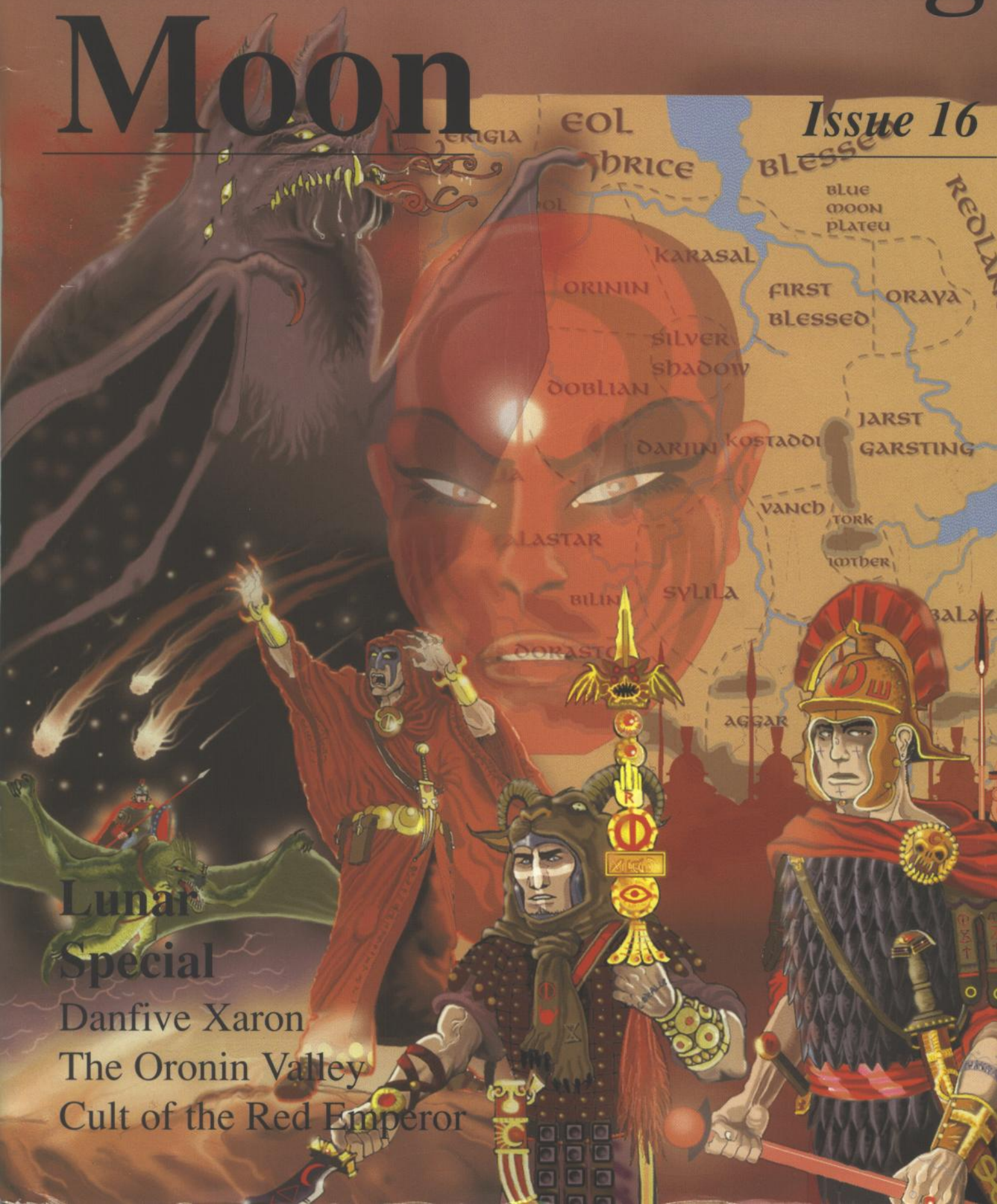


# Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

Issue 16



**Lunar  
Special**

Danfive Xaron  
The Oronin Valley  
Cult of the Red Emperor



## Tales of the Reaching Moon

The Gloranthan Magazine - ISSN 0960-1228

*Tales of the Reaching Moon* is an amateur magazine dedicated to Greg Stafford's world of Glorantha. The publication schedule can be erratic, but we aim to get three issues out per year.

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**Contributions:** Contributions are gratefully received, most especially artwork. Write to the editorial address enclosing an SSAE or International Reply Coupon for a copy of our full Submission Guidelines. All written contributions should be doubled spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! We can accept 3.5" discs only in PC format. 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!



# Edict

## Welcome to the Lunar Empire!

Huzzah! At last, the true spiritual home of the Megacorp, presented here for your delectation. The Lunar Empire has always been our favourite holiday destination in Glorantha, probably because everyone hates them so much, and because, if a Hollywood movie were ever made, all the evil Lunars would be played by British character actors...

In these pages you will learn of the true egalitarianism and majesty of the Empire. From the democratic traditions of the Lunar Senate, to the pioneering and liberal prison reforms of the Danfive Xaron cult. If you are lucky, you will experience the grand supernatural orgies of Glamour as well as the man-made wonders of the Daughter's Roads. No doubt you will gasp at the horrors of Chaos, tamed and made good by the light of the Benevolent Red Moon!

We urge you to enjoy your stay. But please don't forget to keep those rose-tinted spectacles on at all times!

## UK Price Rise

Back in the real world, please note that the UK price of *Tales* has gone up to £3.50 for a single issue, and £10.00 for a three issue subscription. Even so, we have added another four pages to each issue to help ease the pain!

## Gloranthan Hot Goss

### Well, rather a lot has happened. Let's start with Stratelibri...

The big news at Chaosium is the contract they have signed with Stratelibri of Italy to co-produce a Gloranthan skirmish miniatures game and associated supplements. The expected release date is 1997. To support this Chaosium will also be releasing the first of a series of non-system specific trade paperbacks in summer '97. The first of these will be a one-volume introduction to Glorantha. The second and third books will deal with the main combatants in the Dragon Pass Hero Wars.

Chaosium also hope to produce a Gloranthan RPG sometime in 1998, as well as new Gloranthan fiction. However, for now they are concentrating on the '97 releases. The production of a RPG depends very much on the success of the miniatures game, and on the state of the role-playing hobby as a whole.

The Megacorp were initially involved in the Gloranthan RPG design, but this has now been taken in-house by Chaosium. We hope to be involved in the development of the RPG when it is finally designed.

### But what of RQ and Avalon Hill?

## Chaosium Press Release: March 4, 1997

*Chaosium Inc. and Avalon Hill have officially ended their fourteen year business relationship. The trademark "RuneQuest" and the rules to the RuneQuest role-playing game are now the sole property of Avalon Hill. Chaosium Inc. will not ever produce RuneQuest again. All of the rights to Glorantha remain the sole property of Chaosium Inc.*

*Avalon Hill will continue to sell the Gloranthan products it has in stock, but no future Avalon Hill publications shall be Gloranthan.*

*When asked for a comment, Chaosium company president Greg Stafford stated, "This is another step in our own development of a full line of Gloranthan games and books. Avalon Hill can now pursue their own development and creative freedom with the RuneQuest line, and we wish them good luck with it."*



Previous to this press release rumours were rife about the status of RQ4 and Gloranthan RuneQuest generally. One of the authors of RQ4 faces serious criminal charges and this had put the future of that project into question. As for the previously touted supplements, Chaosium rejected Imther as a RQ-Glorantha project and development on Soldiers of the Red Moon had been abandoned by mutual agreement between MOB and Avalon Hill.

The Imther project is now being thoroughly stripped of all Gloranthan content and is under contract to Avalon Hill for a non-Gloranthan RQ project called Malatain. This will be a two-book scenario supplement. The first book, Edge of Empire, focuses on the magical ecology of a rural community. The second book, Winds of Deception, presents a border city with byzantine politics.

As for Tales, we will continue to support Glorantha, and (in the absence of a new RPG) Gloranthan submissions using the RuneQuest rules. Well, at least for as long as we are not infringing anyone's rights or trademarks.

## Convention Capers

**IX RQ Con, Germany.** May 16th to 19th 1997 at the magnificent Castle Stahleck at Bacharach, which towers over the river Rhine. Michael O'Brien, David Hall and Nick Brooke are the guests of honour. The price will be around 140DM (£56 or US\$95) which gets you good accommodation at a high spec youth hostel (the castle itself) and two filling meals per day. Highlights include Nick Brooke's Bachelor Party, a Ralios freeform game, Trollball (German style), beer, and lots more. Contact: Ingo Tschinke, Schevemoorer Landstr 33, 28325 Bremen, Germany. Email: tschinke@nordwest.de

**Glorantha-Con V.** July 25th to 27th 1997. Victoria, BC, Canada. The guests for this are Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen. The Megacorp will also be in attendance since the main LARP is Reaching Moon Megacorp's Life of Moonson. Other freeforms include Fall of the House of Malan and Revolt in the Redlands. Membership is US\$40 or Canadian \$50. Rooms (including breakfast) will be Canadian \$38 single and \$50 double. Contact: Neil Robinson at 2650 NW 58th St. Unit 1, Seattle, WA 98107, U.S.A. Email: neilr@wolfenet.com

**Glorantha-Con VI** is tentatively planned for January 1998 in Melbourne, Australia (the Washington DC Con is now cancelled). This time around they'll be having big chairs to sit on and, by popular demand, lots of BEER!!! The featured LARP is likely to be Life of Moonson. Guests are yet to be confirmed, but you just try and stop me going!

**Convulsion '98.** 24th to 27th July 1998 at College Hall, Leicester University. Rooms are expected to be less than £20 pounds B&B per night. The featured LARP will be Life of Moonson. Contact: Lewis Jardine, 43 Windermere, Liden, Swindon, Wilts, SN3 6JZ, UK. Email: Jardine@RMCS.Cranfield.ac.uk

Please note that I have retired from the organisation of Convulsion (hey, three times is enough!), but the good fight has been passed on to the rest of the committee, ably supported by an influx of new blood.

## Oberon Mole

For those of you tirelessly searching for out-of-print productions such as the Collected Griselda, the RQ-Con 2 Compendium and RQ Adventures magazine, check out Oberon Mole's Postal Game Emporium. They appear to be locked in a time warp six months to a year behind the Megacorp. However, you'd better act fast as they usually order light. Contact: Gareth Jones at 69 Atherley Road, Southampton, SO15 5DT, UK for a catalogue.

## The Wizard's Attic

A reminder to my North American readers that many small press Gloranthan publications are available from this low volume outlet. Publications include Book of Drastic Resolutions, Fortunate Succession, Glorious Reascent of Yelm, and the Broken Council Guidebook. Their US freephone number is 1-800-213-1493.

## Codex Returns?

After a long hiatus Codex is apparently returning with an Eastern Isles issue (#4). Mike Dawson tells me this is now 90% done, and only awaiting artwork. He also hopes to have a web site operating soon, which should allow Net Surfers to get more up to date news and views. Mike's address has also changed to 2303 Arbor Drive, Richmond, VA 23222, USA. The Email is still Codexzine@aol.com. Unfortunately, UK printing/distribution of Codex is no longer being done by Colin Phillips, who is returning all outstanding subscriptions.

New editions of Drastic Resolutions (Vol. Prax) and the New Lolon Gospel #3 are expected in mid-1997. RQA #6 is still missing in action, presumed dead.

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## Megacorp News

After much sterling service Steve Thomas has stepped down as associate editor of Tales. Instead he'll be helping us with various other projects, such as the Tarsh War and the Megacorp Web page.

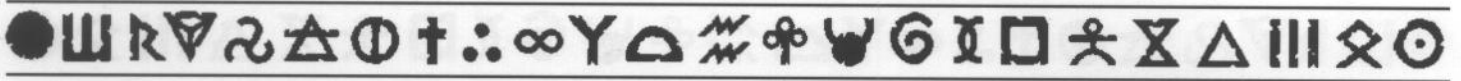
On the publications front, at long last the Meints Index to Glorantha (MIG) is available - our apologies for the delay! We also have the Tarsh War by CV Gidlow, a 12 player Lunar Army freeform set in Dragon Pass. With this you can lead the thin red line into the territory of the native Exiles and teach them how to show proper respect for the Great Red Queen. Or die horribly trying!

Our future plans include the publication of the elusive Best of Tales, a Convulsion 3D post-con book, and Questlines II. I shall expertly steer clear of announcing any ETA's on these...

Issue #17 still doesn't have a theme, and may just be a catch-up issue for all the material we having lying around in the vaults. However, MOB has threatened to give us his Rune Metal Jacket scenario for inclusion, and we have the Yanafal Tarnils cult write-up around here somewhere...

In issue #15 we failed to note that it was David Gordon who produced the fine statistics for The Hell Hound scenario. May Yara Aranis forgive us!





# WOW

## The Red Emperor

Governing Cult of the Lunar Empire

### Mythos and History

#### Origin

The Red Emperor was first born in the early years of the Zero Wane. Just one of the children of the Red Goddess, he bore the name of Doskalos. Knowing that even the highest rank must be earned, he strove to make himself worthy. Like the good child he was, he always obeyed his Mother's will.

Doskalos worked diligently to master the skills and magics which would be most useful to the Goddess. He became a model citizen of her New Moon Queendom. He did not seek the favourable treatment which his noble birth could command. Instead he sought useful employment, accepting the hardships which all have to bear, and more besides.

He became a famous gladiator, with the title "The Sword in the Eye." The Goddess looked with approval on her son's progress, in ability, humility and dutiful obedience. When he had mastered the god Orlanth, she commissioned him into her bodyguard, the New Moon Corps. As a soldier, there was no order he refused to obey. He was willing to brave even death in his Mother's service, fighting valiantly at the Four Arrows of Light, where the Corps was Full-Filled.

Soon after, he was appointed Commander in Chief of the Lunar Forces. In consultation with the Goddess, he co-ordinated the ground attack on Castle Blue. He was first into the breach, slaughtering the Veth Ethdisi. When Yar-Gan the Abominable sought to drag the fallen to torment in the Fifth Hell, it was Moonson who brought them back, earning his title Free-Keeper of the Souls. This he did by summoning the Four-Horned Demons, who serve him still.

There, in the ruins of Castle Blue, where the Old Gods abased themselves before the Red Goddess, the Commander received the Mandate of the Moon and with it the title of Red Emperor. He was to be the earthly counterpart of the Goddess, possessing all those aspects of the Goddess which she chose to leave on the Surface World. Prime among these aspects was her humanity.

As the Red Goddess ascended to her place in the Air, the Red Emperor led her heroes and companions in one great act of homage, the Dance of Returns. By this act he linked the powers together in a single web of empire, co-ordinated by his own Mastery and bound to the Red Moon.

Next the Red Emperor challenged Yelmgatha, Emperor of Dara Happa. He completed the Ten Tasks with ease and demonstrated his birth to be as high as any noble of the Tripolis. The halo of divine light descended upon him and he assumed the three-spired crown,



**The Mandate of the Moon**  
(Extract from a Moonson Youth training manual)

When the Red Goddess ascended into the Air, she bestowed the Mandate of the Moon on her son, the Red Emperor. By this he was given the right to rule over her Empire. He cannot be claimed by natural death, though he can be slain. When killed, he is born again as an adult. Sometimes his identity is only revealed sometime after his reincarnation and he lives in disguise until his power can be revealed. Although Moonson, as the Red Emperor is known, is the same man he has always been, he adopts different "Masks". Thus he looks and acts differently in various incarnations, as the Empire's needs dictate.





taking his place on the Pearl Throne. He was acknowledged as Emperor by all the people of Dara Happa, and by the One Hundred Gods and Goddesses of the Old Order too. Thus he demonstrated his will to foster both change and continuity.

The Red Emperor was entrusted with full and unlimited power over the Empire, which was his personal domain. However, he showed his humility, and his wisdom, by ruling with the advice of the Egi, the Council of Elders and Wise Ones on the Moon. To make this manifest to his subjects, he called together the wisest and most loyal members of the Dara Happan Senate to attend him in his new capital of Glamour. These Senators would act as a pattern to the citizens of wisdom, righteous living and prosperity. The Emperor would listen to their advice and accept their praise.

The Red Emperor also established new provinces and satrapies, to better transmit the Lunar Way to his Citizens far removed from the capital. The first Red Sultan was his eldest son, Vakthan.

## History

For almost four hundred years the Red Emperor has fulfilled the Mandate of the Moon. He has safeguarded the Lunar Way within the Empire and striven to extend its sway through Glorantha. His acts fill the annals of the Lunar Empire. His is a mission not without considerable risk. Although no natural death can claim him, he has died and been reborn at least fourteen times.

For the first three Wanes, the Red Goddess would restore her Son to life and return him, an adult, to his Empire. The Red Moon, though, is the Mistress of Illusion, the Veil and the Masquerade. From 4/40 she has bestowed the Mandate of the Moon in many a different way.

To confront the power of Sheng Seleris, Usurper of the Empire, it was necessary for Moonson to work in secret for eleven years, disguised as a weaving woman's husband in Doblían. Only then was he prepared to announce his Mandate and wrest control of the Empire from the nomads. He took new titles, that of Magnificus being most widely used, and his appearance was older than it had been until that time. Magnificus reigned for 46 years, but disappeared in the Nights of Horror. Within the year, the Mandate of the Moon had descended and the Emperor was once again enthroned in Glamour. This time his appearance was slightly different, and he took the title Artífex.

Thus began the Emperor's custom of assuming Masks. The Emperor explained that, although he already personified all known forms of Emperorhood, his mission was not completed. As a ruler over humankind, he must taste the forms and experiences of humanity once more. Each reincarnation or "Mask" appears very similar to his predecessors. He has all the knowledge accumulated since the Zero Wane and carries on the policies of his former selves, so it seems that one man has ruled the Empire for nearly four hundred years. In this continuity of rule, the Empire finds its greatest strength.

The Cult of the Red Emperor teaches as one of its mysteries that the Emperor has been many different men yet at the same time has always been the same man. In the same way, the Emperor prizes equally the individuality of his citizens and the collective strength of their unity.

## The Emperor Today

In 7/31 the Mask of Ignifer was badly wounded, perhaps even killed, at the moment of his greatest triumph at the Siege of Boldhome. The Emperor retired to Mephos in Doblían, to be with his family. Meanwhile, the Lunar Forces in Maniria were commanded by the Sultan of Silver Shadow, a dashing and handsome youth whose name is not recorded.

In 7/36, the weakened Emperor was slain in a dart contest. His assassin was described by eye-witnesses as "Neither wholly man nor wholly bear, neither good nor bad, light nor dark." Only seven weeks later, the shortest recorded time, the Emperor was proclaimed once more in Glamour. Although many senior members of the Imperial Presidium had been implicated in his murder, the new Mask showed his Clemency by granting them his pardon. His rule has continued to be peaceful and benevolent, earning him the love of his subjects. He delegates practical problems and the day to day running of the Empire to his close circle of advisors.

The Red Emperor is known by many titles. That of Moonson is used by his subjects when they seek a personal name by which to refer to him. When citizens wish to define the current Mask as opposed to those which ruled previously, he is called Argenteus. This title, as with those of every Mask, was chosen for him after exhausting divination by the Chronomancers, Mage-Priests of Kana Poor, Scribe of Time.

In accordance with the Lunar Way, the Emperor makes no claim about the fate of his followers after death. Instead, he promises that the actions of his citizens will receive due reward or punishment while they live, according to their loyalty and actions. On death, the State will provide burial on public land for those citizens who cannot make any other provision for their mortal remains.

The Red Emperor holds the Runes of Mastery and the Full Moon. Within the Glowline, he is ruler of the Mastery Rune.

## Cult Ecology

The Red Emperor is the Son of the Red Goddess. He is the living embodiment of the temporal aspects of the Goddess. He is the mediator between the Goddess and her worshippers and as such enjoys the title Bridge of Heaven. He is also called the husband of the Goddess and her representative on the Surface World. According to the Lunar Way he is described as the Masculine Portion of the Goddess.

He is the secular head of the Lunar Empire. It is his duty to spread and protect the Lunar Way. The Empire is the instrument which he uses for this task. He loves that which favours the Lunar Way and hates that which opposes it. He is the highest military commander, the Supreme Arbiter for all judgements and the source of Lunar Justice. The Emperor is the primary example of how a citizen in the Empire is expected to act.

The cult's High Holy Day is Full Half Day, Illusion Week, Fire Season. This is the anniversary of the day when the Red Goddess first bestowed the Mandate of the Moon on her beloved son, and he began the Dance of Returns.



## The Cult in the World

The Cult of the Red Emperor worships the Emperor as the perfect embodiment of the Lunar Citizen. It does so by enforcing his Justice, supervising the actions of all governing institutions in the Empire and providing structures for all citizens to aspire to the highest rank. As such, it determines the basic social structure of the Empire, overlying its previous disparate cultures. The essence of the cult is to provide officials capable of making decisions and so coordinate the many state organs to which power is devolved.

Every Lunar town has at least one shrine to the Red Emperor. Such shrines are inside the main temple there and usually consist of a statue, mosaic or icon of the Emperor. Shrines teach no spells.

All cities have temples to the Red Emperor. Building such a temple is the mark of a town becoming a fully self governing city of the Lunar Empire. Temples of the Red Emperor are known as Basilicas, and also serve as law courts and civic function rooms. A Red Senator is found serving as both priest and judge.

The Great Temple of the Red Emperor is in Glamour. The High Priest is the Speaker of the Senate and Chief Sycophant of the Emperor. He will be found serving the Great Temple, or in the Curia or Senate House on the other side of the Forum. He leads worship of the Emperor at official ceremonies in Glamour. The Chief Priests will always be with him. These are very aged Senators who reside permanently in Glamour.

The Red Emperor is an absolute ruler, and has no legal obligation to consult the Senate or to listen to its advice. In practice, the Senate always supports Moonson's policies, and is used for the public promulgation of laws and edicts. Senators do criticise other imperial agencies which have come under the scrutiny of the cult, and in this capacity they act as a useful counterbalance to bodies such as the Imperial Presidium or the Council. When Moonson decides between conflicting advice, it is the Senate which puts the case for stability, tradition and social cohesion. The Senate also acts a debating chamber, legislature and appeal court.



## Lay Membership

Lay membership is very easy to obtain. Lay members must merely burn incense to the Emperor in one of his shrines. A Lay Member acknowledges his position as a Subject of the Emperor. His duties are to obey the Lunar Laws and his rights are that these laws protect him. Lay ceremonies to the Emperor are ubiquitous, so practically everyone in the Empire, and many in the provinces, are lay members.

## Initiate Membership

Initiate membership is Citizenship. It gives further legal rights, including voting in town council elections, permission to trade, etc. Some citizens of the Lunar Empire, especially in culturally distinct areas like Carmania, are not initiates of the Red Emperor. They are classed as "Citizen Foreigners", and have a distinct legal position.

The cult of the Red Emperor is modelled on that of Yelm. It is divided into six subcults. An initiate belongs to only one subcult at a time. These subcults, from youth membership to priesthood, are ranked as follows: Youth, Citizen, Soldier, Judge, Imperator, Sage.

### Moonson Youth

The cult title is Lunar Youth. Boys and girls who have two Lunar parents ("full Lunar blood") can enter this subcult at a very early age, usually seven. Any other free man or woman living inside the Empire can apply to enter on adulthood.

Lunar Youths wear distinctive red scarves and the spherical amulets called bullae around their necks. They learn how to be good citizens by attending training camps, by taking part in parades and in other organised activities. These Moonson Youth cult activities are always in addition to regular schooling or apprenticeship, in the evenings, Full Half days and much of Fire Season, when the schools are shut.

### Moonson Citizen

The official cult title is Lunar Citizen. Lunar Youths who have been of good standing in the subcult for at least a year, and have reached the age of 15 are automatically initiated into Full Citizenship. There is a 100 Imperial fee for joining. They must also sacrifice a point of POW.

Members of this subcult are expected to be deferential towards members of the higher subcults, and to pay their taxes regularly. These amount to some 1% of their income. Initiates of this level are obliged to take part in communal activities. These range from parades and festivals to organising block watches and turning up to military training days.

### The Mandate of the Moon

(Seven Mothers catechism for new converts)

The first Red Emperor was the son of the Red Goddess. He was given the Mandate of the Moon when his Mother ascended into the Air. Although his life-span has no natural end, he can be slain. On death, he returns to the Moon, to join the Council of the Egi in the court of the Goddess. Many Moonsons, parthenogenic children of the Goddess, live on the Moon. A new one is sent to fill the position of the deceased. Each Moonson has the same appearance and policy as the previous one, but may adopt different "Masks", to emphasise particular aspects of the Lunar Way.





The bulk of the Red Emperor's initiates never progress any further than this subcult. Moonson Citizens do not sacrifice for cult Rune spells, though they may join the subcults of the Imperial Attributes.

## Moonson Soldier

The cult title for an initiate is Red Tribune. These initiates are junior officers of the state. Tribunes are very often employed as go-betweens co-ordinating the actions of other cults, for instance in town government or disaster relief. The cult may give them posts as local police captains, tax inspectors, inspectors general and so on. Alternatively, a Tribune may be seconded to work with another Lunar cult, ensuring Imperial representation in all aspects of society. Some are Junior Triarchs in the Red or Black Armies or officers in the civic militias. Others might be Notaries investigating corruption in the Imperial Scriptoria, state legal counsels, Inspectors of the Corn Dole and so forth. Tribunes can also be found acting as imperial couriers.

Moonson Soldier cultists are full initiates and must fulfil all standard requirements. A Citizen who has been of good standing for at least a year can apply to become a Tribune. He must have an ability of 50% or more in any five of the following skills: Scimitar Attack, Read/Write New Pelorian, Speak New Pelorian, Human Lore, First Aid, Search and Scan. He must also pass a formal written and verbal examination.

A Tribune works for the state for all but sixty days a year, but receives a generous annual salary of 7,000 Imperials. A successful Divine Intervention by a Tribune will alert the nearest responsible cult official to him of his plight. It is up to that official what action to take, though safeguarding the interests and personnel of the cult will be of prime importance.

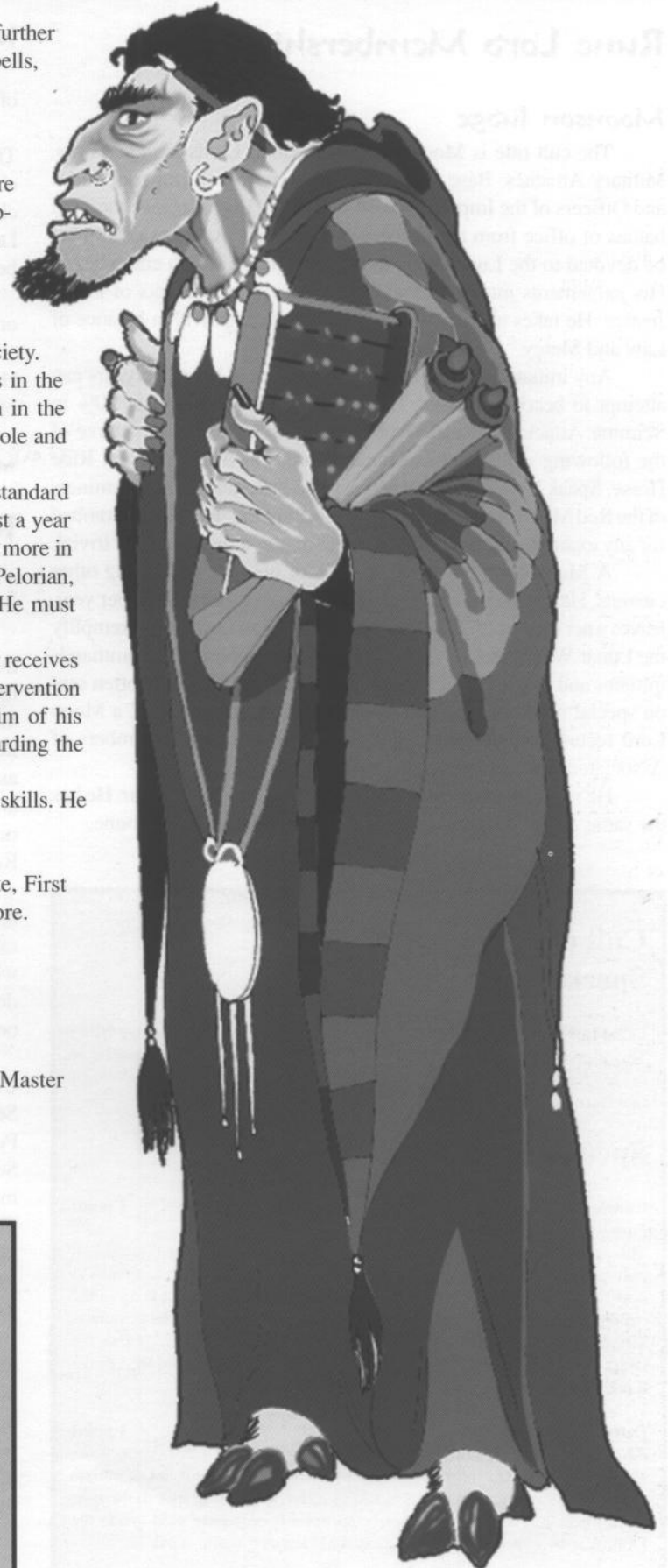
A Tribune receives 100 hours of free training a year in cult skills. He can sacrifice for the cult's Battle and Rune Magic spells.

**Skills:** Read/Write New Pelorian, Speak New Pelorian, Evaluate, First Aid, Human Lore, Legal Lore, Oratory, Scan, Search, World Lore.

**Special Battle Magic:** Compel Respect, Detect Foreigner.

**Common Rune Magic:** All

**Special Rune Magic:** Command Citizen, Compel Prostration, Master Official, Moonspear, Proclamation.



### The Mandate of the Moon

(Secret briefing by Marshal Volkhovos of the Blue Army)

Each Red Emperor is an adult. Until they reach maturity, they live normal lives, often not knowing their destiny. When they are called on to take up the post of Red Emperor, they are summoned before the Goddess and the Egi, her council formed of the Spirits of the previous Emperors. Here they receive the Mandate of the Moon, along with the accumulated wisdom of the previous Moonsons. Thus, although they wear different "Masks", appearances from the lives they lived prior to receiving the Mandate, they are able to rule with all the knowledge of their past lives.



## Rune Lord Membership

### Moonson Judge

The cult title is Moon Lord. The Moon Lords are Quaestors, Military Attachés, Base Judges, Procurators Fiscal, Imperial Aides and Officers of the Imperial Guard. All Moon Lords receive their red batons of office from the Emperor's own hand. A Moon Lord must be devoted to the Lunar Way and to the Empire which embodies it. His judgements must be in accordance with the precepts of Lunar Justice. He takes an oath to govern all underlings with a balance of Law and Mercy.

Any initiate who has been a Tribune for at least five years can attempt to become a Moon Lord. He must have a skill of 90% in Scimitar Attack and Read/Write New Pelorian, and at least three of the following skills: Battle, Human Lore, Legal Lore, Orate, Ride Horse, Speak New Pelorian. He must also be tested by the Examiners of the Red Moon for suitability. The records of the state will be combed for any example of misdemeanours, no matter how seemingly trivial.

A Moon Lord must devote 10% of his time to training other citizens. He receives a salary which, although taxed at 20% per year, leaves a net income of 20,000 Imperials. A Moon Lord must exemplify the Lunar Way, especially the Justice of the Emperor. He commands initiates and must protect and lead them responsibly. He is often sent on special missions or given an army command. In return, a Moon Lord receives great respect and honour. He outranks members of Associated Cults, except high priests.

He receives a panoply of Silver Armour and a Scimitar. He has the same access to magic and Divine Intervention as a Tribune.

### Cult of the Red Emperor Special Skills

#### Legal Lore (Knowledge 00%)

This allows a person to recall the letter of current statutes and to find examples of the law being used in practice. It is specific to the culture where the individual first learnt the skill.

### Special Spirit Magic

#### Compel Respect 1 point *Ranged, instant, passive*

This spell can be used on anyone, citizen or not, but outside the Glowline, it only works at the Full Moon. The spell forces the opponent who succumbs to it to either fall to his knees or snap to attention: the exact effect is up to the caster, as ordered in his statement of intent. Once the appropriate posture is assumed, the spell is over and the target is free to act as normal. In combat, the target can be attacked at +25%, while his own attacks are delayed by 3 Strike Ranks.

#### Detect Foreigner 1 point *Ranged, temporal, active*

The caster is led to the nearest person within 100 metres who is not an initiate of the Red Emperor. If the spell is still in effect, it will lead him to the next closest person. For obvious reasons, this spell is only ever used inside the Empire, with a specific target of questionable citizenship in mind.

### Moonson Imperator

The cult title is Red Sultan. These are the Satraps and Governors of the Empire.

The Heartland Sultans are hereditary within their ruling clans. They receive their right to rule by worshipping the founders of their clan as subcults of Moonson Imperator. Only members of these ruling clans can worship their founders. Governors will have been Rune Lords of the Red Emperor or an associated cult for at least five years before being appointed, by Moonson personally.

Once a noble has joined this subcult, the Citizens in the sultanate or province he rules must give him absolute submission. He must always support Moonson's divine order through personal emulation. He must be just and benevolent to his followers. He must give 10% of his time and 50% of his usually vast income to state business.

A member of Moonson Imperator checks for Divine Intervention with 1D10 rather than 1D100. He can obtain Rune Magic reusably.

## Rune Priest Membership

### Moonson Sage

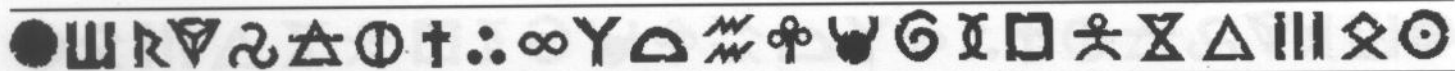
The cult title is Red Senator. The Senators are the guardians of the social structure of the Empire. They meet collectively in Glamour to advise Moonson and assist him in implementing his Mother's Will. They also co-ordinate the actions of other Lunar cults when necessary. Senators sit as Judges in cities throughout the Empire, act as ambassadors, and head commissions of inquiry into law reform and abuses of power. The Aediles are Senators who act as City magistrates in Glamour, keeping order and supervising festivals. All Red Senators are entitled to wear the Crimson Toga.

A Moonson Imperator may join this subcult immediately on retirement. This is standard procedure for a Governor, but it is very rare for a Heartland Sultan to retire from office voluntarily. A Senator who has been an Imperator keeps his 1D10 Divine Intervention, as does the High Priest. The other Senators roll for Divine Intervention on 1D100.

A Moon Lord can join this subcult if he has a 90% or better Ceremony skill. A Priest or Lord of an associated cult can join the Senate if he has a 90% or higher in Ceremony, Read/Write New Pelorian, Speak New Pelorian, Evaluate, Legal Lore, Orate and Search. There is a property qualification for membership: Senators must earn at least 100,000 Imperials per year from landed property. The cult teaches that those with so great a stake in the Empire are most likely to want to safeguard it, and less likely to be swayed by factional interests, greed or bribery. The Examiners of the Red Moon judge an applicant worthy for Senatorial rank.

Senators must preside over civic functions, lead worship of the Emperor, pay for parades, games and major religious festivals and so on. This costs at least 20% of their income. 90% of their time is spent up with these activities, attendance at the Senate in Glamour and performing other duties as ordered by the Emperor. The High Priest of the Red Emperor's cult is the Speaker of the Senate. He holds the title of "Chief Sycophant of the Empire."





## Cult of the Red Emperor Special Divine Magic

### Command Citizen

2 points

*Ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

The caster must be able to clearly see the Citizen, whose magic points must be overcome. The caster must give the commanded Citizen a clear set of instructions in New Pelorian, which must be carried out to the letter. The instructions must be in accordance with Lunar Justice and within the authority of the caster, or the spell will be ineffective. Commanding a Citizen requires the concentration of the caster for a full melee round.

### Compel Prostration

1 point

*Ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable*

This spell is only effective against Lunar Subjects (lay members or higher in the Red Emperor's cult). If the target's magic points are overcome, he or she falls to the ground in a full prostration, and must remain in this position for the duration of the spell. The spell effects are broken if the target suffers damage from any attack. Stacked points affect additional targets.

### Master Officials

1 point

*Ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

No Lunar official of lower rank to the caster is able to cast any Rune magic within the area of this spell without express verbal permission from the caster.

### Moonspear

3 points

*Ranged, instant, nonstackable, reusable*

An intense ray of moonlight is projected from the caster's spear to blast the brains of one target. The damage done by the spell is cyclical:

Full Moon	4D6
Half Moon	3D6
Crescent Moon	2D6
Dark Moon	1D6

The target gets no resistance roll, and takes damage directly to the head. Armour worn on that location will protect against this damage as usual; spells are ineffective.

### Proclamation

2 points

*Range up to 5 km, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

Casting this spell causes all Citizens within 2.5 km and all Lunar Rune Lords and Priests within 5 km hastily to finish immediate business and then stand to attention, when possible. They will then hear the Proclamation via Mindspeech. The Proclamation must be either within the authority of the caster or else authorised by their superior, or it will not be heard. The caster's recitation of the Proclamation cannot take longer than the duration of the spell. It is up to the hearers how far they choose to comply with the Proclamation.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.3] "It was with some trepidation I approached the Great Temple of Peace. The austere columned facade seemed designed to over-awe by its sheer inhuman scale. Its steps, walls and pillars, of highly polished white marble, were distinctively flecked and veined with red. Long red banners hung between its columns. Each one was emblazoned with the White Moon of Peace, charged with a black Death Rune made of Sickles. With a rapturous eye Auntie informed me they represented the scimitars that would be beaten into sickles when the Moon shines white across Glorantha. It was an emblem, she said, designed by the High Priest, Bellex Maximus, himself." - An excerpt from Dus Hanari's *Travails with my Aunt*, a young Tarshite curate's account of his often perilous journey down the Oslir as assistant to his relative, the Lady Dushan, a priestess of the Seven Mothers. [Lest it confuse the reader, note that throughout the work Dus Hanari continuously refers to Dushan as his 'Auntie', using the Lunar custom of feminizing all members of the priesthood, whether they be woman or, as is definitely in the hirsute and in all other ways chauvinistic Dushan's case, man.]



## Satrap and Sultans

by Nick Brooke

The official title for the most powerful territorial rulers of the Lunar Empire could be either Sultan or Satrap, depending on where you heard it.

The Lunar Empire was founded four hundred years ago on the ruins of the Carmanian Empire, which was ruled by Satraps; but the Goddess Herself spoke a Pentan-influenced dialect from Rinliddi, and the Pentan word for a great noble is Sultan. So when the Red Goddess said "Sultan," she was referring to the Satraps: the religious and secular words for the same officials were different. A Priestess might call a ruler "Sultan" (following the Sayings of the Goddess), while a Senator would refer to him as "Satrap" (following the current protocols); but both would address the ruler in person by whatever title he preferred.

Two centuries ago, the nomad leader Sheng Seleris spread Pentan influences throughout Peloria, and his subordinate khans, kurgans and hetmen took the title of Sultan. Then the Empire was refounded by the Emperor Magnificus after his victory at Kitor, and the reorganisation of its component parts was led by his Carmanian advisors, who established its current Satrapies.

This means that today there is little moral weight attached to either title. People referring to Sultans may be pious religious folk (using the Word of the Goddess) or dissidents (who find imperial rule oppressive and use the insulting Pentan term); those who speak of Satraps may be orthodox establishment types (using an official title) or dissidents (who deny the religious validity of their ruler). The Empire itself, being tolerant and all-embracing, uses both titles interchangeably, and both are value-neutral in New Pelorian: any special inflections can normally be communicated by adjectival prefix or syntactical context, as is typical in that language.

More advice on the correct etiquette for addressing the gods, demigods and heroes of the Imperial Court and Pantheon can be found in the third volume of my manual, *The Shorter Guide to the Protocols of Glamour*, from which this is a brief extract.

Lemidus the Purple Scribe of Raibanth.



## Subservient Cults

### The Black Mark

The Black Mark is the spirit of retribution most feared by junior Tribunes in the Imperial Cult, who may attract its attentions by even the most minor derelictions of duty. An initiate of Moonson Soldier whose career is blighted by the accursed Black Mark will find that he is ignored by colleagues and superiors: former friends are unwilling to continue their association with him, while promotion becomes much more difficult to obtain. The victim loses 1D6 points of APP for each Black Mark, becoming gradually less noticeable; once his APP is reduced to zero, the Black Mark becomes visible to all, as a disfiguring blotch upon the face and body of the culprit. The effects of the Black Mark can be invoked or dismissed through the intercession of an official's direct superior.

### The Red Tapeworm

The Red Tapeworm is a feared spirit of reprisal which may afflict anyone who abuses their position in the Imperial Bureaucracy. The chance of attracting its attention depends on the severity and persistence of the offences (roll vs. POW on 1D100, +1% for every 100 Lunars' worth of embezzlement). Victims of the Tapeworm find that all their transactions with Lunar officialdom take twice as long to complete, with half the normal chance for success: even normally automatic transactions succeed just 50% of the time, so that routine applications (e.g. for regular salary payments) may be bogged down, misfiled, or inexplicably rejected. The Red Tapeworm attacks indirectly, and a character may require Divination, Soul Sight or similar methods to determine if he is afflicted. Its attacks last for a number of weeks equal to the offender's POW.

### The Tax Demons

These fearsome members of the Four-Horned Family punish those Tribunes, Moon Lords, Red Sultans and Senators who have unwisely withheld the Emperor's due. They were first invoked by the Mask of Artifex to aid in reconstructing the Empire after the Nights of Horror. They appear as large men, in armour, with four horns and bat-like wings. However all their skin has been stripped from them, down to the muscles. Each Tax Demon has POW 3D6+12, and engages the victim in spirit combat. If it once reduces him to 0 magic points, it will magically seize all the target's moveable wealth and transport it instantly to the Imperial Revenue Service in Glamour. The Emperor's Clemency may decide to restore some of the property if this is found to be excessive.

### Proxies

(Emergency briefing by the Red Dancer of Power, for communication to the Etyries Cult)

Sometimes the Empire is ruled by a Proxy. The real Emperor is elsewhere. The Proxy rules in his stead, unknown to the citizens of the Empire, who perceive the Proxy Emperor either as the one he replaced or as a different Mask. Only when the real Emperor returns is the status of the Proxy revealed.



### Census and Censor

Two of the mysterious Egi perform complementary roles for the cult of the Red Emperor, acting as cult spirits. They are depicted as twins scrutinising scrolls, Census smiling benevolently as he adds names to a list, and his otherwise identical brother Censor frowning severely as he crosses them out. As is typical of the Lunar Way, the Empire is increased more than it is decreased by these apparently balanced actions.

#### Census

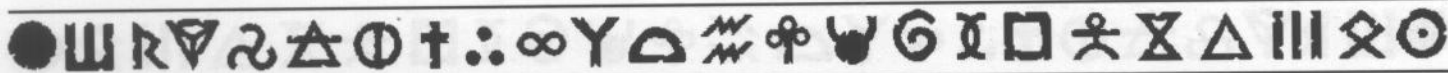
This spirit quantifies the number of Subjects and Citizens in the Lunar Empire each high holy day (in 7/50, Census reported that there were 2,347,955 Citizens and 8,442,137 Subjects of the Empire), and is said to keep a list of all the individuals who have ever worshipped Moonson.

Census also periodically oversees the gathering of other information from the people of the Empire: priests of the Imperial Cult direct the prayers of their worshippers on holy days, and the results are collated by Census. This reduces the number of magic points directed to the Emperor, however, and is only done in response to the most urgent requests from the Emperor and his closest advisers. Recent questions have included "What is your favourite Colour?" [Red 68%, Silver 23%, Others 9%] and "Are you ready to fight for the Empire?" [Yes 54%, No 37%, Don't Know 9%].

#### Censor

This spirit acts as a spirit of retribution against Priests of Moonson the Sage who fail to perform their duties, punishing them for immorality, dishonesty and corruption. Censor can be summoned by the assembled members of the Imperial Senate, and is directed by the Speaker of the Senate, High Priest of the Imperial Cult. Censor's attack is an irresistible Excommunication.





## Associated Cults

Almost all deities of the Lunar Pantheon are associated with the Red Emperor. Their priests may become Senators. The most important associated cults are:

### The Red Goddess

The Red Emperor is himself High Priest of his Mother's cult. Senators are permitted to become Initiates of the Red Goddess. Having already been examined before entering the Senate, they need not face the Examiners again.

### The Seven Mothers

This cult is dedicated to extending the Lunar Way beyond the current confines of the Empire. It provides the spell Resurrection.

### Yanafal Tarnils

The cult forms the Emperor's Army, fighting his enemies without. It provides the spell Oath.

### Irrippi Ontor

The cult of Knowledge and Truth runs the Imperial Scriptoria, the Emperor's Civil Service. It provides the spell Mind Blast.

### Danfiv Xaron

The cult is responsible for internal security and punishment in the Empire. It provides Coerce.

### Deezola

The cult runs the state farms and the Imperial Granaries. It provides the spell Moonripen.

### Jakaleel

This witch-cult's forces of elemental insanity are nonetheless subject to the Emperor's commands, and he may Command Lunes.

### Etyries

The cult of Imperial trade and Communication provides Mindlink.

### Hon-Eel

The Grain Goddess of the Empire provides Bless Maize.

### Hwarin Dalthippa

The cult of the Emperor's Conquering Daughter provides her father with Road Watch.

### Yara Aranis

Another of the Emperor's fearsome children, Yara Aranis provides Grow Limb.

### The Crimson Bat

The Emperor's ultimate weapon, the Crimson Bat provides Glow Spot.

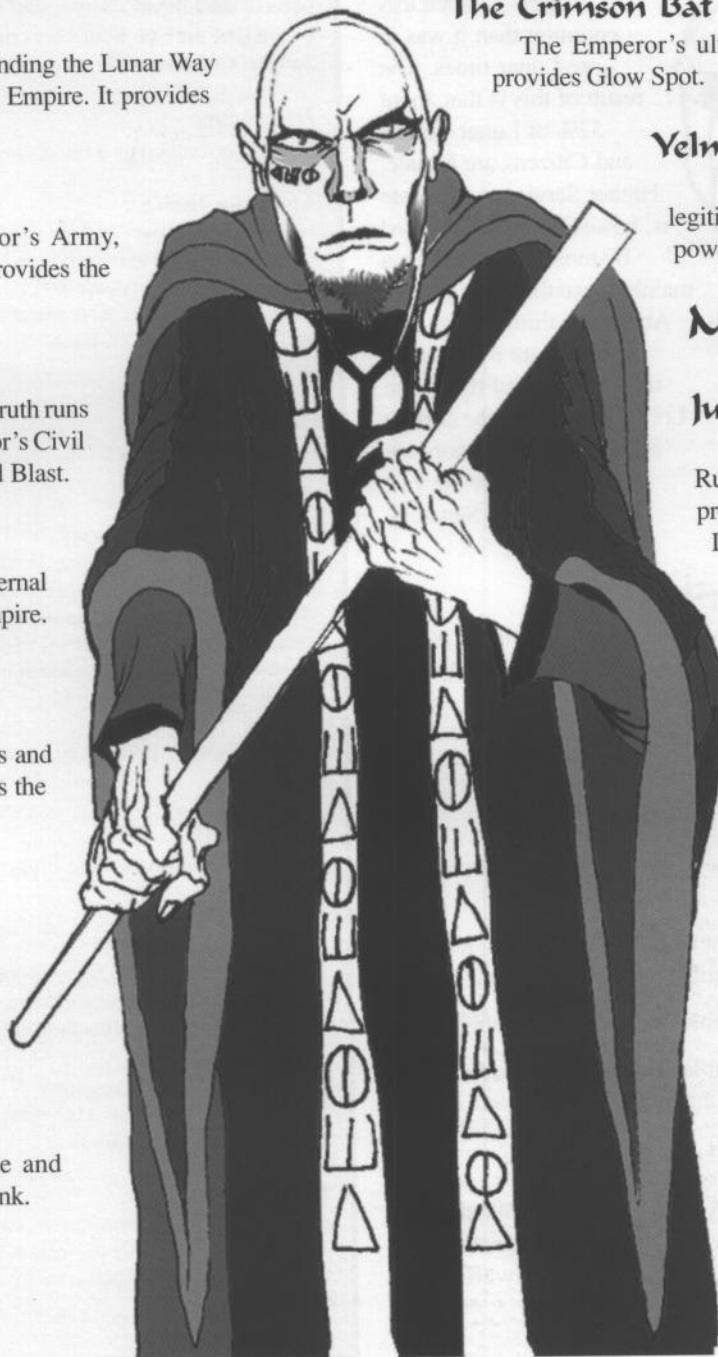
### Yelm

The source of the Red Emperor's legitimacy, Imperial Yelm grants him the power to Bless Worshippers.

## Miscellaneous Notes

### Justice and Law

In the Lunar Empire, the Law Rune is held by Irrippi Ontor. His Sages preserve and study the statues of the Law, including legal texts and codices from the Dara Happan and Carmanian Empires. However, the Law is only one of the considerations of Lunar Justice. Mercy has been an abiding tenet of the Red Goddess, and pragmatism or the interests of the State must also play their part. It is the responsibility of the Red Emperor and his cult to strike a balance between these considerations and the written articles of the Law. As well as these written statutes, Lunar Judges are often guided by case law, following the pronouncements of previous Judges, many of them now demigods or heroes of the Lunar Way. As these Judges include the illuminated, the chaotic and the insane, case law can provide a very wide variety of precedents to be cited.





## Sons and Daughters of the Motherland

The Cult of the Red Emperor is open equally to men and women. Indeed, one of Moonson's first acts as Emperor was to proclaim the equality of all women. For mythic reasons, there is a greater number of girl children born within the Glowline. Females are prized by the Lunar Way, and infanticide of girls is much less common than it was in pre-Lunar times. The result of this is that about 52% of Lunar Youths and Citizens are female. Higher Service to the State is, however, still considered by most Citizens to be a mainly masculine occupation. About two thirds of the Red Tribunes are men, as are three quarters of the Moon Lords. Almost all the current Sultans and Governors are male, and so are the vast majority of the Senators.



## Lunar Cyclical Magic

The changes in the Red Moon's phases affect the magical power of the Goddess upon the world. Spirit magic and sorcery are unaffected by the cycle for their power derives from within men, not within gods. All Lunar divine spells follow this cycle unless specified otherwise.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Effect</u>
Dark Moons	Only 1 point spells available, and no spells may be stacked.
Crescent Moons	Up to 2 point spells available, but no more than two compatible spells may be stacked.
Half Moons	All spells available and freely stackable.
Full Moon	All spells available and freely stackable. Temporal spells have double duration.

## The Glowline

The Glowline is a magical boundary which surrounds most of the Lunar Empire. Within the Glowline, the moon is always full, and all spells cast by Lunar priests are thus beneficially affected.

## Cult of the Red Emperor: Imperial Attributes

The cult does not provide one-use Rune Magic to ordinary citizens. Instead it allows Citizens to sacrifice POW to the subcults of the Imperial Attributes. The subcults provide one use Rune Spells called Appeals or Invocations. Appeals are similar to the cult's Divine Intervention, alerting an official to the caster's plight. Invocations give access to ordinary Rune Magic. The Attributes are personified in art. They are either shown alone or as accompanying the Emperor. They do not, however, manifest themselves. Some suggest they are parts of the Emperor's own soul and others that they form part of the Council of the Egi. Four very common Attributes are the Emperor's Justice, Clemency, Majesty and Victory.

### His Justice

This is personified as a blindfolded woman holding a scimitar.

#### Appeal for Justice

1 point

*Indeterminate range, instant, stackable, one-use*

The caster must be a plaintiff in an Imperial court who has lost a case. The spell ensures that his case will be brought to the attention of a higher court. Each stacked point or use of the spell appeals to a higher authority, until the Appeal comes to the attention of the Imperial Senate or the Emperor himself.

### His Clemency

This is personified as a kneeling woman with outstretched hands.

#### Appeal for Clemency

1 point

*Indeterminate range, instant, stackable, one-use*

The caster must be a defendant in an Imperial court who has lost a case or been summarily sentenced to punishment by some agent of the Empire. The spell ensures that his case will be brought to the attention of a higher court. Each stacked point or use of the spell appeals to a higher authority, until the Appeal comes to the attention of the Imperial Senate or the Emperor himself.

**NB:** Use of these Appeals in no way reduces the costs incurred by continued legal action.

### His Majesty

This is personified as a the Emperor, robed and crowned and ablaze with light.

#### Appeal to his Majesty

1 point

*Indeterminate range, instant, nonstackable, one-use*

If the caster has been turned down for initiation into a Lunar cult, this spell compels the cult officials to reconsider him.

### His Victory

Victory is personified as a bat-winged woman, holding aloft the three-pointed crown

#### Invocation of Victory

2 points

*Ranged, temporal, nonstackable, one-use*

This spell is substantially the same as Berserk. All the recipient remembers for the duration of the spell is his loyalty to the Empire and the vital need for victory.



## The Lunar Nobility

The Red Goddess declares the equality of all her children. The cult of the Red Emperor is one of the major mechanisms ensuring that all citizens of the Empire are eligible to reach the highest ranks. At the beginning of the First Wane, Moonson dissolved the old Aristocracy as it would not conform to the Imperial welfare, and created Administrators, the first Red Sultans, who commanded the new Provinces.

Old habits die hard, and there are numerous, perhaps 80,000, Lunar citizens in the Empire who describe themselves as noble. Nobility covers a variety of different ranks and titles. In New Pelorian these are nearly all translated by the terms "Duke" (leader, originally military), "Count" (leader's companion) and "Lord" (land owner). For example, Carmanian Satraps are now known as "Counts".

The first category of nobility is that inherited from states conquered by the Lunars. This includes Dara Happans from the upper ranks of the cult of Yelm, members of the old Pelorian nobility and so on. They are generally hereditary in the male line. This type of nobility, dissolved by Moonson, is not recognised by Lunar Law, but nevertheless commands respect in the society from which the noble hails. Thus Raus of Rone calls himself Duke of Rone, and is referred to as such by his household, although this title has no official status.

Next are the Honourable. The title 'Honourable' is bestowed on officials by virtue of their cult rank or office. This includes Moonson Emperor Governors, Senators, High Priests and Senior Rune Lords. Their particular title is governed by tradition or by the wish of Moonson. Thus Sor-Eel the Short is the Honourable Count of Prax; Raus is the Honourable Lord of Weis. The title is then inherited by their direct heirs. The status of Honourable is passed on to all of their descendants, unless revoked by Moonson or the Imperial Senate. Honourable status makes it easier to enter the cult in which the first holder was an officer, but it has no other legal benefits.

Next in status are the Illustrious. They are appointed by Moonson, usually following some distinguished personal service. Illustrious titles include Count of the Stables, Count of the Sacred Chamber and Duke of the Spear. Count Julian of the Coders is the Illustrious Count of the Imperial Bath. Descendants of an Illustrious noble have no automatic right to the title, though Moonson often re-grants the original title to heirs in memory of their ancestor's service. The Illustrious are permitted to reside in the City of Dreams and attend on Moonson in his court.

The Glorious are in the ruling clans of Heartland Sultanates. These clans are subcults of the Red Emperor. Children of the clan are initiated at birth. Only initiates are permitted to worship the Dynasty Founder. The Glorious have palaces in the City of Dreams. Sor-Eel, Bor-Eel and Jar-Eel are Glorious members of the Eel-Ariash clan.

The Radiant are the highest ranking Lunar Nobles. They all have the Blood Silver, being descended from Moonson himself. They are the Imperial family of the Empire. They worship the subcult of Moonson the Father, their own Dynasty Founder. It is said that some of the Radiant keep separate shrines to the particular Mask from which they descend. The Radiant can attend on Moonson in His Mother's Manse on the Moon. Princess Anderida of Raibanth is one of the Radiant.

*The Cult of the Red Emperor was written by Chris Gidlow, with the assistance of Nick Brooke.*



[XXIX.777.49.e/2.4] The Opet Festival - More from Dus Hanari's *Travails with my Aunt*: "I was lucky enough to arrive in Yuthuppa in time for the annual Opet festival. Our seats were booked on the ramp by the new Pylon, which gave us a fine view over the heads of the crowds thronging the public court. Everyone was in their best clothes (Auntie had even oiled her beard), and the court reverberated with happy shouts. The main focus of attention was the barque shrine. Its bas-reliefs, gaily painted against the golden sandstone, showed, Auntie informed me, the Heroquest of the first Sultan to establish his Yelmic pedigree. Young boys played excitedly round the feet of the colossi, which guarded the central gateway. The crowd hushed as the yellow curtain twitched. Then, with a clash of cymbals, the drapery was flung aside and the god's barque emerged. Borne on the shoulders of bearded priests, the electrum-plated boat lurched into the sunlight. The prow was shaped like Hippogryph and above it the falcon-headed image of Yuthu menaced evildoers with his javelin. At once the crowd shouted the name of Yelm, cheering and clapping. Temple musicians strummed their harps or struck their cymbals while acolytes cast gold dust over the crowd and barque. The priests, sweating under full robes, shuffled beneath the god's image. Covered with gold, the majestic statue of Yelm sat enthroned under a domed canopy. Youths beat feathered fans around him, while those nearest pressed closer to touch the carrying poles. The shouting increased as the Oslir priestesses ran to meet the barque. Singing, turning cartwheels and shaking aluminium sistra, they praised and enticed the god. The crowd cheered their performances excitedly, especially when the River Adoratrices cast libations of purified water over all and sundry, as these are supposed to cure all manner of illness and bad luck. The Sultan himself stepped from one of the side chapels, looking faintly ridiculous in his ceremonial winged triple crown. We gave the Lunar salute, hailing him as Yelm's representative. He burnt incense in a small golden bowl before the god, invoking him and blessing his union, before taking out the golden ring to be used in the symbolic wedding."

# SELERIC VERSES

KCH-96

Translated by Chris Gidlow

*Teelo took the hand of Doskalos,  
 For him she loved past any other.  
 His cradled head against her breast,  
 One word he whispered: "Mother."*

**The Song of the Seven Mothers, stanza  
 145.**

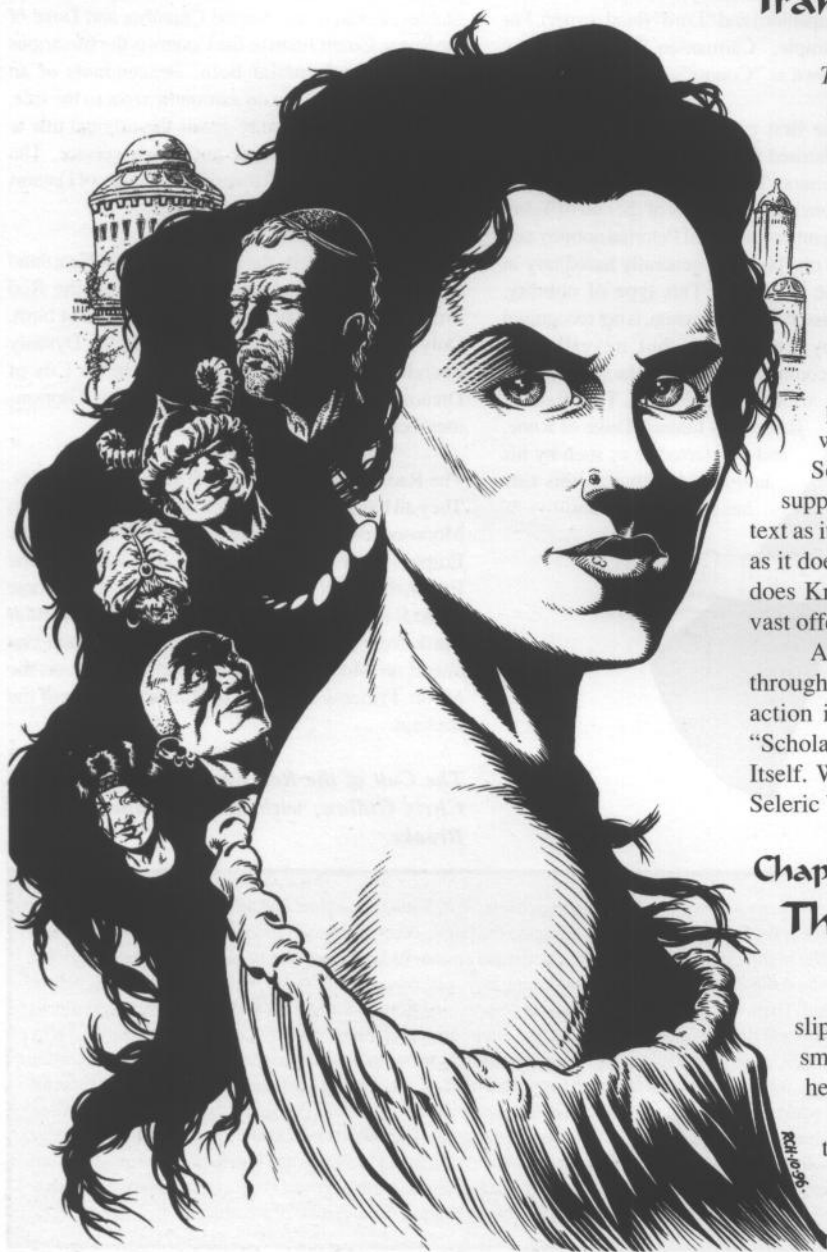
The Seleric Verses are a literary work of great notoriety. Their author, Krishnan the Varlie, seeks to criticise the current policies of the Empire by comparing the modern protagonists with key figures from the Zero Wane. It takes as its source the Song of the Seven Mothers, a Third Wane devotional text, supposedly heavily corrupted during the reign of Sheng Seleris. The text as it now stands can only be obtained by the Illuminated, imputing as it does human motives and desires to the divine Mothers. Not only does Krishnan make use of these heretical concepts, he also caused vast offence by his profane language and heavy use of erotic imagery.

After the opening description of "The Young Girl's" passage through the "Accursed City", as Krishnan calls Torang, the Pre-Lunar action is seen variously through the eyes of the "Nobleman", the "Scholar", the "Witch", the "Criminal", the "Mistress" and the City Itself. We make no comment as to the doctrinal unorthodoxy of the Seleric Verses, presenting them here for their literary interest alone.

**Chapter One  
 The Young Girl**

The young girl walks in the sunlight. She crosses the square, slipping her slim shoulders through the thoughtless crowd. She smiles as the traders offer her silks and suggestions. She tosses her red hair from her eyes and the dust-motes dance.

The Nobleman watches her, squinting his persistent eyes to follow her passage. He scratches his sweat-irritated beard and catches his wrist on the rams-horns curling from his helmet. And his ram, behind its cloth and iron barrier, presses insistently. He shifts his feet, shuffling the dust on the kerbside.







The young girl walks in the dappled light. She bobs under the awnings casting their nets of shadow crosswise on the pavements. Her teeth flash behind her deep red lips, as she teases the urchins tugging and touching. She skips aside as the ass-cart passes. Her red dress ripples above her bashful ankles, revealing and concealing, offering her white feet and crimson nails, withdrawing her dust-dark soles and charm-hung ankle-chains.

The Scholar swallows, his scrawny throat knotted and dry. He raises his horn cup, keeping his eyes level across the concealing rim, speculating as her flanks ruffle and snag the teasing textile. Unnoticed, white froth and warm beer dampen his beard, moisten his moustache. Slow drips dot the papyrus under his inattentive left hand. The mathematics are muddied, the formulae flow and those ankles, those feet flit by. At last, he licks his lips and looks for the Nobleman.

The young girl walks in the smoke haze. She pauses to tilt her enquiring shoulders towards the brass-ware. Her laughter is lost in the clash of hammers, shouts of bellows, roars of red fire. Firelight on metalwork ripples against her throat, catching the bite-mark above her shadowed collar bone. Almost unaware, she turns towards the beaded curtain. Questioning fingers reach to feel the leaden charms ranged above it. She rubs the dark shapes to silver, while her fingertips blacken on the soft warm metal. Her white arm is twined with the blue-grey smoke. Sweat dewes its russet hollow.

The Witch lurks in the darkness beyond the curtain. She flares her nostrils, savours the scents. The deep, damp musk of the fertile phase, the crisp alcohol of nostalgic perfume. Old silk, old sweat, dust and hair. The Witch's tongue flicks across her food-hardened gums. Tangs, salt, sour, sweet and unexpected, define the disturbance in the street beyond. Her old root-twisted hands seek the reassurance of her crutches. She lets her ears frame the picture. The crumbling of the leaden patina, the rasp of undecided feet, the crackle of cloth on downy skin. Anklets clang and breath gusts, then fades as the young girl turns and continues.

The young girl walks through the shadows. She casts a thoughtful glance at her red-tipped toes, missing the warm paving now they print the dry earth. Pensive fingers play with her earrings and tangle her tresses beside her pink-flushed cheeks. She tilts her chin away from the men on the corner, while her eyes seek them through long kohl-darkened lashes.

The Criminal leers at the young girl. He stretches his muscular legs wider and hooks his hinting fingers into his studded belt. Gold-tipped blackened teeth glint behind thin stubble-ringed lips. A connoisseur in this, he gives his critical appraisal of the young girl's qualities. He notes the swell and sway of her breasts, their peaks press at their monstrant fabric. The creases catch and define their rise and eclipse. His palm itches as he seeks his purse. Here the reassuring irregularity of hammer-struck coins cools and then warms him. He strides forward, following the cloven bounce of her buttocks. His boot-heel catches a passing foot and pivots slowly.

The young girl walks in the darkness. Thick hangings guard the privacy of the passage. Unlit lamps await the nightfall. Her finger-tips brush the unseen wall, relishing its familiarity. Half expected, silk ruffles against the brass-topped table, the twisted-cane chairs. She hesitates, hand outstretched to part the curtains to the courtyard. She is aware of the absence of watchers. Relishing the moment, she leans against the wall. Unseen, she smiles for herself then pushes the curtain aside.

The Mistress leans from the balcony. Distracted, she sees the young girl's hesitance. Then, from above, she surveys her circling silk,

the wheeling comet of red as she tosses the dust from her hair. The Mistress considers the woman the young girl has, unaware, become. Unthinkingly, she traces the wrinkle beside her mouth. Is her asset maturing or depreciating? Sometimes she sees the young girl as a burden. But today her failing sight shows her a Sultan's paramour. The artless motion of a grandee's secondary concubine, the casual grace of an outland Queen. Beneath her slumping bosom, she feels jealousy's insistent steel. Then, as the young girl's back stiffens at the curtain's swish, as her head tilts up in the knowledge of her power, she sees an Empress.

The young girl has moved through the city. The wash of sedentary humanity, breaking against the nomadic unpredictability of the steppes. Ripple streets, walls and districts trace the fall of the city square. Flotsam gathers in the crevices. Limpet shopkeepers are buffeted by shrimps and sharks. Now, drought and decline bring dust silt, sand eddies, grit-tides which rub and fray its fragile permanence.

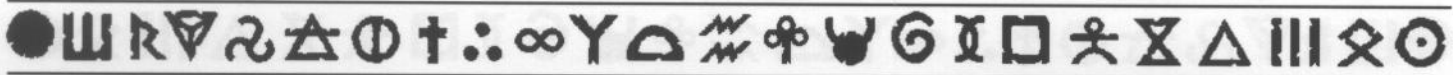
The City watches the young girl. Its eyes seek, pry, widen, blink, receptive and unreceptive. Its ears note her brief laughter, her private tears, even the transient footsteps on stone and earth. The City is waiting. Tensed merchant sinews, bunched and expectant, coiled human springs press against the confining streets. Circling hills, leading valleys, guiding roads and eager towns, all are waiting. The Wind's breath is held. The City enfolds the young girl in its lengthening shadows. Asking nothing, yet hinting gently, it sends its first bat flickering across its rooftops.

## Chapter Two The Nobleman

We are all ants, labouring under the sun, fulfilling our allotted tasks. One pushes sand, another disposes of the dead. Our paths twist and turn, seemingly without reason. We bear burdens larger than our heads, obscuring our vision. Yet by sunset we have built our cities, moved mountains and fought lions. We are all ants.

My limbs ache through idleness. Scars tug, eager to repeat their old stories. Sometimes they boast, today they complain.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.5] I asked Her, and She told me that the Lunar Dervishes dance in a wildly whirling spiral. This is the path on which the Goddess Herself trod when She "danced her last dream upon the face of the earth". When they finish spinning around and inwards, they're in a state of Balance or Lunar Consciousness (it only *looks* like frothing insanity), and you can get oracular answers from them. If you're ever in the marketplace and see the spiral-dancers starting inward, make sure you're not caught in the middle: it can get pretty confusing and frightening. But it's worth hanging around to hear what they say when the frenzy is on them at the end... You're still most likely to find dervishes in the East, out towards Torang where the old ways of Lunar Mysticism are still strongest. It's known that the Emperor's servants dislike giving oracular accesses to the people: just think about the way the Moonbroth Whispers have been sealed away! But it's in their nature to travel, and I hear groups and individuals have been seen as far away as Prax and Carmania. In the Redlands, the dervishes are one of the main sacred traditions to be found: they easily survive without the state-cult support that most Lunar religion requires within the Empire... In Karasal, I saw a dervish at the centre of her spin sink down to the ground, then levitate ten feet into the air, before starting to prophesy in a quite serene manner. She was speaking about how the Lunar Way is the New Way of Revolution: that the Storm Way was the Old Rebellion, whose time had passed. She talked about the Empire as an eggshell, protecting the people. It all made perfect sense when she spoke to us. That was the day I learned to stop worrying, and love the Bat. Of course, she died when the fit was over...



A scholar told me, as scholars will, that in the heart of an ant city there is always a Queen. Beyond the arsenals, stores, shops and monuments, beneath the schools and homes and barracks, a great shuddering Empress of Ants rules from her pillared hall. I think he spoke truly, for though I have never seen an ant queen, when I try to dig to her chamber, her warriors and courtiers hurl themselves against my fingers. They die in their droves, heedless of their own careers. Now, the Shah could act his own catamite before I would serve him so. But a Queen... Surely, for a Queen.

I saw her as she marched through this city. Her blood-red robe, spread by her outstretched arms, was a banner to lead men from their nests. Behind her, before her, heedless of life and livelihood. I have no illusions. Like the ant nation, she would need her strategists and tacticians. She would not, though, lack for followers. Those who today offered only their eyes would not, I think, withhold their weapons should she desire them. And I will make her desire. I will show her how, at a word, a thousand swords come curving from their sheaths. How, with another, life will seem a trifle to be cast aside and death a lasting monument.

Take that fellow, loitering at the meeting of the ways, or that one turning the cup list-lessly in his hands. They need that spark, that banner to turn them into the troops I need.

Take the Empire. That tottering minaret, over-burdened by its bloated crown of satraps, viziers, eunuchs and informers. Look closely at its mosaic-glazed shaft and you will see the spider-cracks crazing across the superstructure. If a man were to say, "Come, take up your hammers, break the foundation, set your backs to buttresses and topple the edifice," who would respond? What can that man offer but more labour and an inheritance of ruins?

What would a Queen offer? What would she not! Dreams unimaginable, pathways arching to the heavens, stairways soaring to the stars, these gifts she would offer to her insects, or I would offer on her behalf.

To see the Shah's face as we scale his walls, pushing through the cracks of his pavement, with our Queen fluttering before us, our boots and blades will redden in the stampe of our victory.

I speak from some experience. I tested my mettle against the bulwarks of the Empire. Without a Queen I was, naturally, doomed to lack of success. Not that I consider myself an exile, I who have entered this city which the Shah, for all his cataphracts, has never encompassed.

Now I have seen Her, moving unfocused and aimlessly exerting her influence. I shall guide her, channel her and coax her. Behind her, behind us, our swarming masses will engulf our enemies, grinding and crushing them. Like Ants.

## Chapter Three The Scholar

Naturally, there are cycles. In the affairs of men, as in the heavens, there are, if we allow ourselves the image, a series of interlocking wheels, forming a complex and yet constantly repetitive sequence of occurrences. Through my extensive years of scholarship, I have endeavoured to discern the workings of these unchanging gyres. Luck and Fate, Life and Death, are terms without meaning, except when viewed within the pattern of constant revolution.

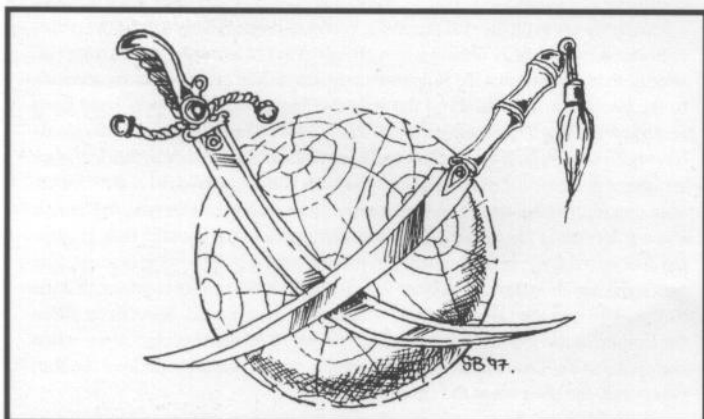
If we consider, by way of example, that most constant reminder of cyclical regularity, the Sun. Each day he bursts in blood from the womb of Earth. He struggles past mountain-tops and lofty minarets to his zenith. His triumph is short-lived. Before the day is out, he is torn down in blood once more. Thus it is with empires. Each one, though seemingly all-powerful and unassailable at its largest, falls wallowing in the blood of its own belligerence. Then, after a night of barbarity and illiteracy, another autocracy rises from the blood of its predecessor. Such iconography is obvious. I draw upon it only to set forth the argument. Empires, like the Sun himself, are indisputably masculine. Like men, their cycles range from impetuous youth to revered decrepitude.

Let us now turn life's coin, leaving its imperial face clattering beside the wine-cup. Behind the bright one, we contemplate the workings of the Moon. I, more than any man, have studied her dark purposes, but even I would hesitate to speculate on the nature of her unseen motions. By her revolutions she guides the turning of the tides, which, they say, rise and fall obedient to her phase. In harmony with her, also, women may conceive or linger barren. When a woman swells it is not in token of a bloated decadence, but to bring forth new life. She sheds blood not in wars of conflict and expansion, but at the prompting of the Moon, starting anew the cycle of fertility. Empires are not won in this wise, but they may be so sustained.

If we could but perceive the point of interlocking, where Sun and Moon, male and female, meet and thence depart to turn their separate ways, ah, that perception would make us masters of all fate. An Empire assembled with precision on these principles, self-perpetuating and ever-increasing, could stand against the world. Cycle and epicycle revolve and complement the one and the other, rising and ebbing, but never wholly engulfed in darkness. It could not avoid shedding blood, naturally, but discreetly and periodically, not wallowing in cataclysm and destruction. An Empire combining both male and female, light and dark, could turn first one face then the other, according to its own inexorable objectives. Such a state, founded on principles of unchallengeable mathematics, formulated by a penetrating mind, could be left to run its charted course unceasingly.

When we vacated our positions, my noble master and I, he professed an interest in my researches. No doubt he considered himself the initiator of a new cycle. As we traversed the wastes, the stars our cartographers and the planets guides, a comet blazed above us. A body, celestial and mysterious, trailing its tresses, shone redly towards the zenith. My master, in his vanity, perceived his own rise, trailing blood to Shahdom. I was not so deceived. A light neither sun nor moon, returning and departing constantly across the ages, yet never setting. How many times has it proclaimed its portents, unheeded in its regularity? It was the nearest I had approached to the point of intersection. Until I saw her.

The young girl blazed through the city. Every quality of womanhood was present in her, and behind them intimation of Empire.







Her beauty and allure, now blatant, now discreet, offered the missing factors of the formula. The comet, of course, had been her harbinger. Small, obscure and easily unperceived, yet once seen unassailable in her brightness. She could be the pivot, the nexus linking sun and moon, the creation and perpetuation of the new order. Taking her as my talisman, if you will, I could seize and direct the cycles she encompasses, twisting them to my intentions. My noble master, I feel sure, could set his shoulders to this wheel, driving the cyclic pattern towards our ends. His strength, his direction, will bear her to the apex. At that culmination, when the equation reaches its solution, I will be ready. I shall guide her through the intricacies, school her footsteps in the immutable paths. Then I shall be elevated above my master, even above the Shah and his magi. Naturally. There are cycles.

## Chapter Four The Witch

Good Evening, Granny, she bellows, silly girl. Behind her, the air enters, bearing the evening's oil lamps, fat and olive, raw meats charring.

Come in, come in, dear. Sit down and tell granny your troubles. She waits before replying. The speech rehearsed beneath her breath, without the curtain, is her betrayal. The sweat is cooling on her skin, stiffening her silk. She brings a man's smell, too, cloyed and jarring. Her toes clap and tap the floor, consciously clanging the chains on her ankles. Her hair, unbound, whispers about her shoulders. The curtain's draught trembles the smuts of cheap incense from the lighter breeze of her dress. The chair's screech across the tiles rasps my poor feet, anticipating the shudder of the seat.

Oh, a catch in her throat, a heavy swallow as she considers her opening. Granny, I have met a man. Noble and wise. There is wine on her breath, without spices. Violence is his trade. He is, in his own way, handsome. But he is a man looked up to, I think too high for my approach. Hot breath now, and heat beneath her arms, along her thighs, rising to neck and cheeks. He commands high prices and his friends are in the highest station. She pauses now, having savoured the words as they passed her tongue. Her heart's rhythm, quickening to excitement, counter-beats her murmured sentence.

Granny, I have seen this chance to change, to rise. Out, beyond, into the future. But oh, he is too high for my approach. I know I'll stumble to attain him. Her voice soars its frustration and a flush of warmth shivers about her.

Too high, dear? Too high! For your beauty men would drop from their pinnacles! Her laughter clatters. If only,

granny! Alone, I am just a girl, unnoticed, too low for him to stoop. But you, granny, you have the charms, the mixtures which will turn men's heads. You have the power to wake their eyes, widen them to what they overlook.

My charms are madness. The madness which lies between the thighs of women. Making men pliant to our direction, stiffening them to our will. Madness which inverts their certainties and expectations and shatters their fragile hold upon the wind-pipe of reality. Vortices of insanity, drawing the outer world within, warping and distorting. The madness which twists and shatters the confines of men's minds, stretching the borders of within and beyond. My dear, with granny's potions, you will drive men mad!

Just cross granny's palm with silver, now. She cools a little. The coin's weight has added its dull counterpoint to her silken rustle. Her hands are smooth, but the hairs on her arms prickle, raising her skin in rasps. Silver burns cold, craggy with inscriptions. Its tang is faint beneath the patina of dust, grime, cloth and leather, and, somewhere, blood.

Oh yes, dear, just a little touch of granny's specials and you can send him wild. Yes, cast her beauty into the air, throw her attraction in the pool and watch the eddies' swirls, turning irrational, uncomprehending reversals, searing the brains of the men who guide this accursed city. Watch the silken sycophants stare into the wild abyss. Men of power, plunged head-deep in the blood-red brain-fog. The mind-crippled, ruling over a contorted court of contradictions. Aim her high and wait for the catastrophe.

Holding my breath, I pass the preparations, though their writhing, discordant perfumes tug and beckon.

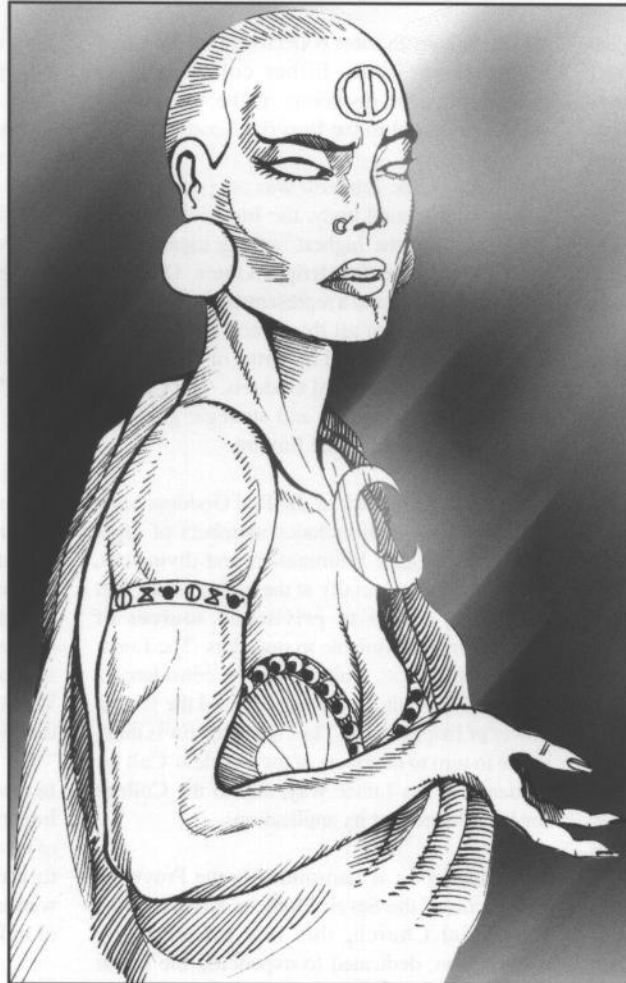
Just a little of this, dear, on the skin, here, or in the wine. Or in the palaces, on the marble mosaics, in the council chamber, in the dungeon and in the harem. At dawn, at dusk, before each meal and after, until each prop of male rule is struck out and ruined order rains down in confusion.

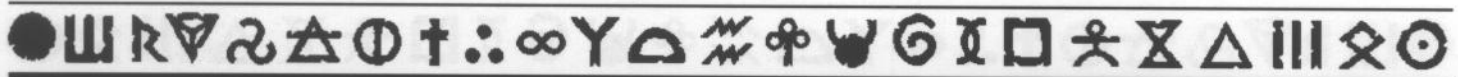
Laughing? No dear, just granny's little cough. You use these wisely, and who knows what might happen?

The slop and rattle are smothered against her breast. Stumbled thanks drown out her rising. Silk, dust and heat-dried residues hang faint about her. She does not know it, but she is my missile, my potions bow-strings taut and straining. The curtain rattles as it creases back. Beyond, the meats are cooking, savoury charcoal thickens the crisp wind's gust. Come forth, insanity. Tear down the highest men, raise up young girls. A glorious madness, levelling, evening. Good.

Granny?

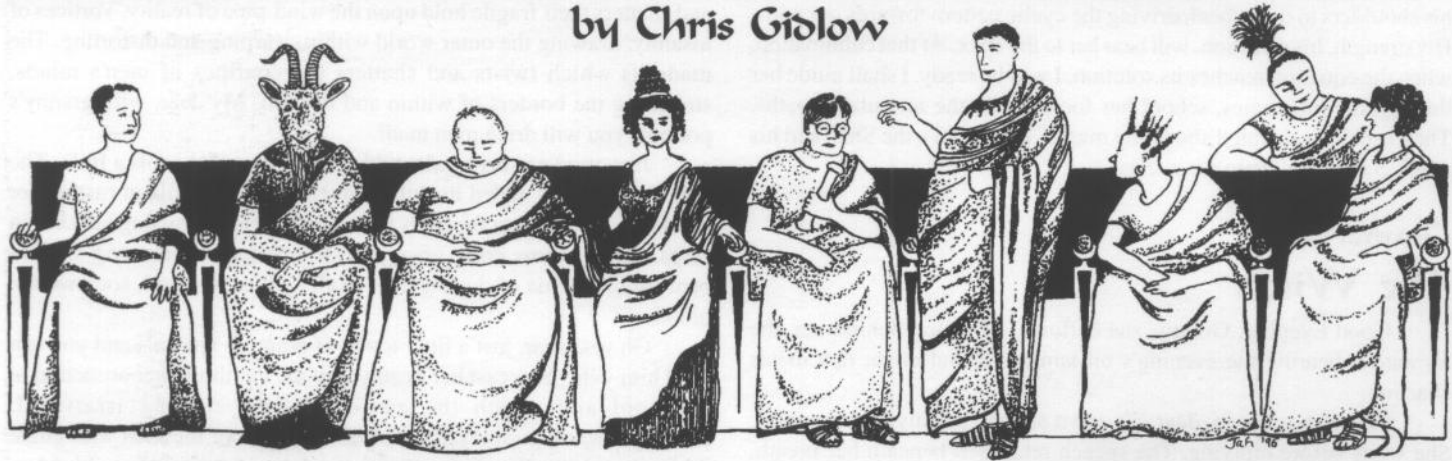
[To be Continued...]





# Lunar Government

by Chris Gidlow



## The Web of Mastery

**M**oonson, the Red Emperor, is an absolute ruler. There is no limit to his power over his subjects. He may take decisions alone, without consultation or approval from any source. He is answerable only to his Mother and the Council of the Egi on the Moon.

The structures by which he wields power are labyrinthine, with many over-lapping areas of jurisdiction. Lunar Theoreticians say this provides the necessary checks and balances to ensure the Empire takes the most harmonious path between conflicting alternatives.

The Cult of the Red Emperor is just one of the many chains of command. It represents stability, tradition and social cohesion. Its members inspect and co-ordinate the workings of other organisations, and modify their actions by the constraints of Imperial Justice.

Although Provincial Kings and the officials of Silver Shadow report to Moonson directly, most of the Heartland is under the sway of the Sultans. They head the Red Emperor's Cult in their own domains. Thus, within their own lands, their decisions command the same authority as those of Moonson. At the present, the Emperor only intervenes in the internal affairs of the Sultanates to enforce political decrees and raise troops. The Sultans enjoy access to the Emperor and expect to be consulted by him in major matters of economic and military policy. It has been known

for the Sultans to meet collectively, as the Court of the Silver Gate. Either collectively or individually, the decisions of the Sultans are subject to appeal to the Imperial Senate.

Traditionally, the Emperor was advised by what is now a moribund body, the Imperial Council. This contained the highest ranking members of the Cults of Yanafal, Irrippi Ontor, Deezola, Jakaleel, Danfive and a representative of the Poor, chosen by lot from all those receiving the corn dole. Moonson presided by virtue of his position as High Priest of the Red Goddess. The Council was to provide spiritual and strategic guidance for the government of the Empire.

**I**n practice, the Cult of the Red Goddess has a hierarchy which includes members of other cults. Through Illumination and divination, cult members, especially at the higher ranks, feel they have access to privileged sources of knowledge not available to outsiders. The Lunar College of Magic, which could be considered a branch of the cult, has rather eclipsed the former power of Irrippi Ontor. Thus the Emperor is more prone to turn to members of the Goddess' Cult for guidance in the Lunar Way, and to the College for knowledge and its applications.

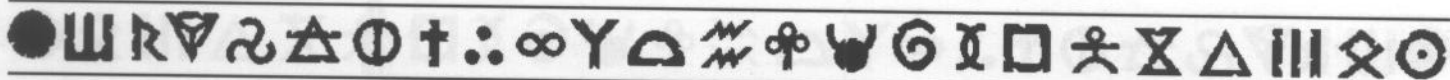
The Lunar spirit is transmitted to the Provinces by the cult of the Seven Mothers. Known as the Provincial Church, this is a proselytising organisation, dedicated to expanding the Lunar

Way and the physical bounds of the Empire. Whereas the Council contained balance in its divisions, the Cult of the Seven Mothers has expansion as its single over-riding objective. The cult is directed by its Superiors, led by Icilius Overholy, the General Guide of the Lunar Spirit. She intervenes in Provincial affairs, usually without recourse to higher authority. If called to account, she answers to the Red Dancer of Power, who, as head of the Etyries Cult, is officially the Chief Missionary of the Empire.

**T**he current Mask, Argenteus, acts as a focus for the love and devotion of his subjects. He works to calm and to unify them, ready for the end of the Wane. He does not usually interest himself in the day to day running of the Empire. When he does intervene in secular affairs, it is usually on the advice of members of the Imperial Household. This includes friends and confidants, close members of the Imperial Family, such as Great Sister, personal servants under the supervision of the Chamberlain, and the Spoken Word, the Emperor's own source of secret intelligence.

In recent years, an executive body, known as the Imperial Presidium, has taken up the guiding reins of power. All Imperial Agencies ultimately report to a member of the Presidium. They are the wielders of real Power, usually through control of military forces in the Empire.





## The Imperial Presidium

Presidium means *garrison* in New Pelorian. The function of the Imperial Presidium is to safeguard the Empire until Moonson again decides to take an interventionist role in government. The Emperor himself chairs the meetings of the Presidium when his duties permit. In his absence, his place is left vacant and Bellex Maximus presides.

The Imperial Warlord, Bellex Maximus, is Supreme Commander of the Red Army (some 52,000 strong, including the College of Magic and the Red Navy) and Leader of the Cult of Yanafal Tamils.

The only other Council member to sit on the Presidium is Grand Master Orsorkhon, head of the Order of Danfive Xaron. His feared forces of punishment, the Black Army, seek out sedition throughout the Empire.

The Demi-deity known as the Red Dancer of Power heads the Cult of Etyries and originates the economic and missionary policies of the Empire. She is Directress of the Half-Wane Economic Plan and offers the theoretical interpretation of Lunar doctrine.

Marshal Feodr Volkhovos is the Chief Assassin of Annilla, Commander of the Blue Army and Head of Military Intelligence. The Blue Army consists of the Imperial Assassins, the chief covert military force of the Empire, and the Blue Moon School which seeks out sedition within the ranks of the Red Army. Because many members of the cult of Annilla are Witches of Jakaleel, Volkovos effectively holds sway over them as well. Annilla, Mistress of Tides, is the patroness of the surface fleets which patrol the Oslir and Poralistor Rivers. These are collectively known as the Blue Navy, whose commander, the Blue Admiral, also reports to Volkhovos.

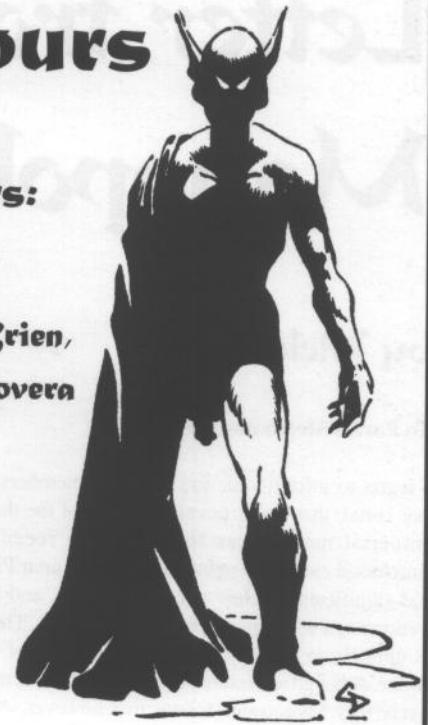
Tatius the Bright sits on the Presidium as Head of the Strategic Forces. Although subordinate to the Imperial Warlord, he has great influence in the Empire. He heads a powerful Dara Happan family, is the Dean of the Lunar College and commands the Chief Feeder of the Bat. He has taken charge of the direction of the Sages of Irrippi Ontor and the Scriptoria to search for new knowledge to be used for the good of the Empire.

Great Sister is also a Presidium member. She has taken upon herself the direction of moral guidance in the Empire and takes a keen interest in the workings of the granaries and the distribution of surpluses to the poor. No-one considers stopping her interference, as Great Sister commands 10,000 troops in her own army. Her views are generally inscrutable, but tend to the safeguarding of the Empire, especially its poor and down-rodren, against the factional interests of the powerful.

## Rumours

### Contributors:

Nick Brooke,  
David Hall,  
Michael O'Brien,  
Michael Rantovera



### Rumour

### Indicators:

- T True
- F False
- M So general as to be meaningless.
- R May or may not be true at the referee's option.
- B Generally true, but with a substantial false component.
- A Too awful to even think about.

The Red Emperor's goatee is the first sign of his impending transformation into a Broo. A

Who is Count Julian's (leader of the Lunar Coders, see Strangers in Prax) mysterious and powerful benefactor? Some whisper that he is an unacknowledged son of Moonson himself. B

Genert suffered from premature baldness. The Plateau of Statues was originally a place for Genert to stash his collection of wigs and toupees. The guardians were placed there to keep Genert's baldness a secret. B

When Genert fled from Wakboth, he couldn't take all his wigs with him, so he commanded Hyena to eat all of them. The hyenas laugh because the wigs tickle the insides of their bellies. A

Avalon Hill have paid up-front for the rights to Jack Vance's Lyonesse trilogy, and plan to use it as the exclusive setting for their new edition of RuneQuest. B/A

Pamalt is actually Genert without a wig. B

The Blind King of the Blind King's Castle wasn't blind; he was bald. He wore one of Genert's wigs but it was too large for him, so he couldn't see anything. M

Greg Stafford always meant to call the sultans of the Lunar Empire "Satraps", and feels rather silly for getting their title wrong in White Bear & Red Moon. T

Argrath of Pavis was actually a ruthless Black Fang leader involved in an underworld vendetta against his rival Gimjim the Grim. The liberation of Pavis was a rather unfortunate side effect. B



# Letter from a Monopolist

by Nick Brooke

To Furius Metabolus, greetings.

I regret to inform you, and the other members of our cartel, that the turnover from two of the three Imperial monopolies for which we recently purchased exclusive rights throughout Lunar Prax are significantly below our expectations, and the venture as a whole has dipped into the black. There is unlikely to be a dividend before the end of the Wane, although with corrective action the future may yet be rosy. My accounts follow; first, however, some words of explanation.

## Hazia:

The Cradles Valley is suitable for growing Hazia, a plant which the natives of Sun County profess to abhor, nonetheless inhaling its smoke behind every convenient palm tree. This is no more than we would expect given the repressive parochial religion, a degenerate form of the Yelm cult. Our imported supplies are significantly more expensive than the local weed, on account of import duties and sales tariffs: we have argued that the Heartland brand is of higher and more consistent quality, but this has yet to penetrate the bony skulls of the locals. Moreover, there is a widespread perception among the valley-dwellers that Hazia itself is illegal in the Empire: heavy-handed tactics by the Pavis garrison confiscating home-grown supplies for their own use have lent credence to this rumour, and in consequence our legitimate traders from the Heartland have been harassed for selling completely legal, tax-stamped bundles of the substance. I recommend direct intercession with the Red Dancer of Power to seek a temporary reduction in the duty payable on Hazia, so as to safeguard the profits from our monopoly; this, together with a public celebration in Pavis to advertise the legality of Hazia, would do much to turn the situation around. In the longer term, developing Hazia plantations in the Grantlands would reduce transport costs and help move our account-books back into the red. (I cannot support lobbying to have Hazia criminalised in the region solely to increase our profits on the blue market, although the suggestion has a certain superficial charm).



## Paper:

Our purchase of the Paper monopoly was almost ruinous: few inhabitants of the Valley are literate, while the Grey Sages of New Pavis despise our supplies of clean, papyrus-derived pages, preferring the local Impala-hide parchments (which are bulky, discoloured, and often improperly prepared). Sor-Eel the Short, Count of Prax has come to our aid, however, instituting a magnificent system of bureaucracy in Pavis which utilises at least three times as much paper as anything from the Heartlands: forms must be filled out in triplicate, licenses stamped, tax declarations completed and filed, every time a traveller passes the city walls. Thus, government purchases are slowly eating into our initial stocks, and we would now be turning a profit, were it not for the initial expense of persuading the Count; however, the zeal with which these frontier bureaucrats pursue their pointless make-work tasks may pose a threat to future free trade in the area.

## Salt:

To conclude with some good news, at least our Salt monopoly is profitable. The work has been subcontracted to the Sun Dome Temple, whose salt mines at Pent Ridge are run as a state prison: despite appearances, these men would have little to learn from the Cenobites of Danfive Xaron when it comes

to callous brutality and indifference to human suffering. Production is up for the third successive year. Although a secondary source exists in the Rubble of Pavis, the bureaucratic excesses described above ensure that these will be competitively marketed, a profitable synergy.

I confirm our initial assessment that the local monopolies on **Glass, Steel and Silver** would not be profitable. Enquire of Flavius how well the barbarians are taking to **Gin**: our fiery spirit (the "Seven Mothers' Ruin") could sell well to the Nomads, while at the same time leading them into a pleasantly torpid and passive way of life. Perhaps we could claim medicinal properties for our Moonshine and then distribute it throughout the miasmatic, malarial swamps of Corflu and the Lower Valley? I shall investigate such possibilities further, if sufficient funds are forthcoming. (Please do not send any more newly-minted silver: it makes certain locals unduly suspicious of the coins' provenance!).

All Hail the Reaching Moon!

Norbanus of Filichet  
Priest of the Etyries College





# Lunar Spirits of Prax



By Sandy Petersen, Stephen Martin, Scott Schneider & Greg Stafford

*After the fall of Sartar, the Lunar Empire invaded Prax in order to find a route to the sea. In the short time they dominated the land, the invaders were joined by a number of spirits whom they allied, awakened or created. Their influence was so entrenched in the land that these spirits retained their power even after the Lunars were driven out by Argrath White Bull.*

## Bronze Treasure

This planet is one of the largest in the sky, and is home to a warlike spirit worshipped by the Praxians. It is the colour of bronze. Because of its reddish colour, many of those who favour the Lunar Empire have begun calling it the Little Moon, though he remains a favourite of all the tribes. Bronze Treasure is associated with the runes of Sky and Death. Since the coming of the Lunars, many also associate him with the Lunar rune.

Any time before a battle is an appropriate time to call upon Bronze Treasure, especially when he is visible in the sky. He provides the spell of Weaponmight to his worshipers.

## Moonbroth

Moonbroth is an oasis in north-western Prax which somehow survived the trials of the Great Night as an enigmatic source of wisdom and power. Even before the rise of the Red Moon, it exhibited some of the cyclical nature of the Lunar Way, raising its steamy jets high each Wildday. The spirit of the oasis can be contacted at a permanent shrine there, although the Lunar forces at the oasis currently restrict access to Lunar priests and initiates. Moonbroth is associated with the runes of Moon and Water.

Moonbroth raises his waters irregularly, but always highest each week on Wildday, the day of the Full Moon. He can only be worshipped at the Moonbroth oasis, although his spell of Divination can be cast on any still body of water.

## Redwood

The Redwood is the last remnant of the once great forests that covered parts of northern Prax. When Oakfed came in the Darkness, the men of Prax fed him the forests to keep him and them alive. The northern tip of the forest was outside of Prax, and so escaped the devastation, but the main part of the forest died in flames. When the Lunars came to Prax, they befriended the spirit in an attempt to use its powers against the Oakfed cult, cultivating its hatred for the wildfire shamans. It has since been associated with the runes of Moon and Plant.

It teaches its worshipers the spell Spectral Forest.

## Twin Stars

Although these spirits have been known since the Darkness, they were not widely worshipped in Prax until Praxian skywatchers noticed them approaching Prax from the north, sometimes visible in the daytime, soon after they changed colour. This was long before rumours of the Lunar Empire reached Prax. By the time the goddess' troops first ventured into the chaparral, the red stars were familiar to the nomads, and were even worshipped by some of them. When the Sable Tribe adopted the Lunar religion, their shamans naturally favoured these spirits over others. They are associated with the runes of Moon and Sky.

The Twin Stars provide the spell of Benison to their worshipers, who become subject to the Lunar cycles only for as long as they know the spell.

## Special Divine Magic

**Weaponmight** 2 points

*touch, temporal, non-stackable, reusable*

This spell doubles the target's base STR, with no restrictions on maximum limit. This will increase the target's Fatigue Points, Damage Bonus, and appropriate Skills. It is not stackable with other strength-enhancing spells, including Strength (Spirit Magic) or Enhance Strength (sorcery).

When the spell is cast, the recipient must be holding a melee weapon capable of inflicting damage, or the spell will not work. If the weapon is broken, dropped, or otherwise rendered useless, the spell immediately ends.

**Spectral Forest** 2 points

*ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable*

This spell creates an illusory redwood tree anywhere within the spell's range. Each spell stacked doubles the number of trees created. The caster can pass through these trees as if they were not there, although to everyone else they are as real as any other physical illusion.

**Benison** 2 points

*ranged, temporal, non-stackable, reusable*

This target of this spell regenerates magic points extremely quickly. Its exact benefit varies with the phase of the moon. If cast on a shaman, the user must specify whether the shaman or his fetch is affected by the spell.

### Lunar Phase

Dark:	one point per five minutes
Crescent:	one point per minute
Half:	one point per melee round
Full:	1d6 points per melee round

### Regain magic point rate:

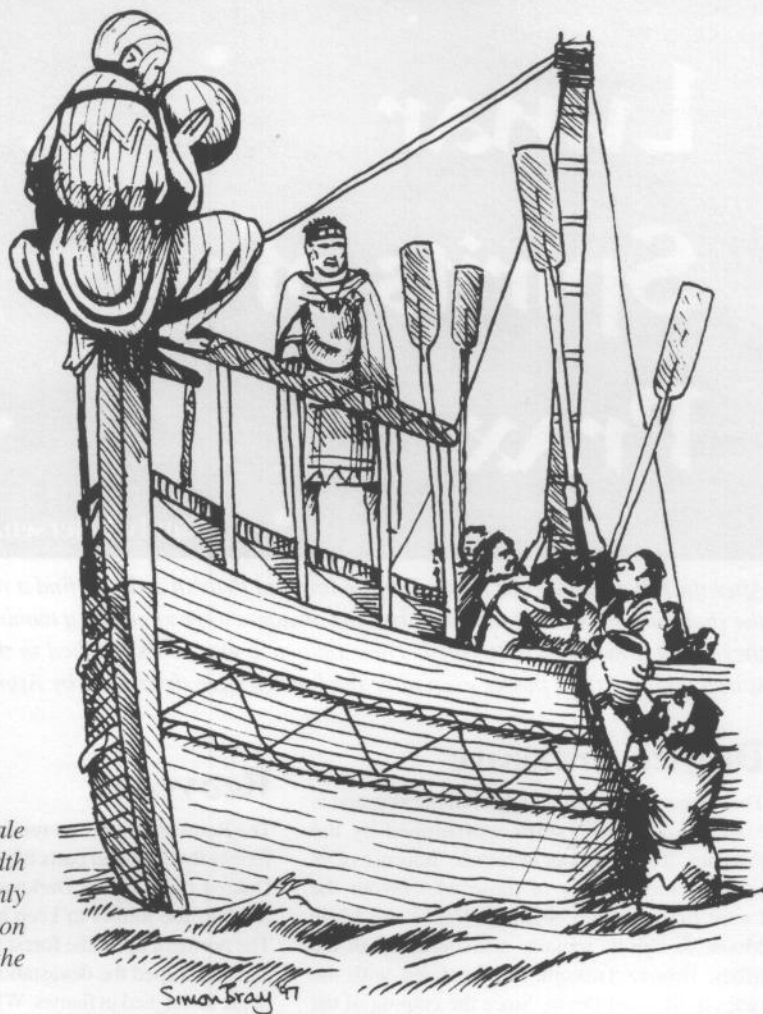
The user's magic points cannot be raised higher than his POW by means of this spell.



# Akritas's Heir

By  
Michael O'Brien  
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*This adventure provides the Gamemaster with a convincing rationale for his or her player characters to gallivant the length and breadth of the Oronin Valley: they are crew on board a river-boat. Not only crew, but unwitting partners in a tricky scam. This on-going situation can form the backdrop of other adventures and enterprises the characters find themselves in.*



The adventure begins in Kendesos, the largest city of the Oronin Valley (although the GM would have little difficulty altering the setting to another city on the Oronin, or any other river). Kendesos is at the gateway to the West Reaches, sitting on the west bank of the mighty Oronin River. Navigable along most of its length, the Oronin is an important trade artery of the Empire, and dozens of vessels ply its length. One such vessel is the *Karmanya*, a large, fairly new river-boat, with its papers registered at Kendesos.

The player characters are approached by Ismail Akritas, the ship's master and owner: a dark-haired, somewhat pudgy man, with pale skin and hands which he wrings nervously. He explains the difficult situation he has found himself in: Kendesos is governed by the ancient law-codes of the old Carmanian Empire, which are replete with peculiarities; Akritas's problem relates to the antiquated laws of succession.

Under Carmanian law, property and chattels (including river vessels) cannot be left to a benefactor after one's death by means of written

instructions: to put it simply, wills are not recognised by the law. Rather, possessions must be passed to an heir during the life-time of the benefactor. Any goods not passed over are forfeit to the local Satrap. (If asked why in Etyries' name did he have his boat registered here, Akritas replies that although their laws of succession are confusing, tax concessions and tariffs in Kendesos are quite generous; and when you're young, who thinks of their distant death?)

Akritas fears this is going to happen to his vessel, the *Karmanya*. He wishes to bequeath it to his niece (he explains that although he was married once – "She ran off years ago with a Sylilan ginseller" – he has no children of his own). The problem is that his niece is currently serving as a decurion in the Red Army, somewhere down in Dragon Pass. Her tour of duty finishes in three years.

Akritas says he is suffering from a terminal disease – "There's nothing the Healers can do, though I've spent a fortune on divinations and sacrifices" – and he doubts very much if he will survive until

the girl returns. Wanting to ensure she gets her inheritance, rather than losing it to the Satrap of Jhor, he needs a group to take part in a "feoffment", a legal contract the crafty viziers (lawyers, scholars, teachers and sorcerers of Carmania) created long ago to get around the restrictive succession laws. Upon swearing this feoffment, the group become the owners of the *Karmanya*, but this is in title alone: Akritas will still enjoy the use and profit of it until he dies. According to the contract, upon his death the person or persons enfeoffed will retain custody of the vessel until the heir returns to claim it.

In return for this service, Akritas will employ the party as crew on board his river-boat. If he dies, he instructs the group to look after the *Karmanya* until his niece returns. They can continue to use it for trade and profit if they wish; all he asks is that they keep it in good condition for her.

The characters may have some questions to ask Akritas: notes on the proposed replies (for the GM's information only!) are given in [square brackets].





## Questioning Akritas

### “What disease are you suffering from?”

“Don’t worry; it isn’t contagious. The Healers call it a ‘Cancer of the Soul,’ eating me up from the inside. I may look hale and hearty to you now, but they say my insides look like a man dead for a week. As it is, I can only drink buttermilk and eat soft butter pasties.” [If any character uses Second Sight or similar, they will see that there is indeed a black cancerous growth on Akritas’ soul, quite unlike anything they have ever seen before – note that this is a harmless effect produced by Master Bishan to confound such diagnoses, one based on the forbidden black sorceries of ancient Carmania.]

### “How much longer have you got?”

“Could be a week, could be a season. Maybe I’ll see the year out: who knows? That’s why I need your help.” [The players can hardly confirm or deny this claim!]

### “What do we have to sign?”

“You don’t have to sign anything: you just swear an oath at the Court of the Viziers. It’s all above board; these things get sworn all the time.” [True, if anyone asks.]

### “What crew positions do you need (we don’t want to be galley slaves!)”

“Don’t worry, I’ve got all the rowers I need (besides, they’re all freemen; cost a silver a day, and you don’t have all the trouble of keeping galley slaves). No, I need a master, a steersman or two, and a buyer-trader. The rest of you can act as lookouts and guards.” [Normal enough, and the wages quoted are standard.]

### “What do we get paid?”

“Until I snuff it, you get the standard shipboard rates, and I’ll give you a 25% cut in any profits we make. After I’m gone, any profit is yours; just look after the *Karmanya* and have it ready for my niece when she returns. I’ll leave her instructions to keep you on (with a cut in the profits) if you’re doing a good job!” [Akritas can be bargained up to an extremely generous 50% cut, though he will haggle over this for the sake of appearances; the exact deal agreed does not matter all that much to him, given his plans.]

### “Can we see your boat?”

“Certainly.” [The characters can be taken to the docks and shown the *Karmanya*, an almost new river-boat that looks sturdy and river-worthy. Any informed bystander or hired expert would confirm that the boat is in excellent shape, as good as new.]

## The Feoffment

If the players agree to Akritas’s proposal, he arranges to meet them at the Court of the Viziers in an hour. If they arrive earlier, they may have a chance to see another feoffment swearing ceremony take place. If they follow the captain, he first visits his boat to collect a sum of money, then makes his way to the residence of a vizier, Master Bishan. Akritas walks to his boat, but travels elsewhere in a hired sedan chair.

At the appointed time, they are met at the Courts by Akritas and his lawyer (a member of the Carmanian vizier caste with a forked beard, clad in ritual robes of black and white), who both arrive by sedan chair. They are ushered through the colonnades where lawyers and their clients hold their discussions, into a spacious private room tiled in a chessboard pattern. Here, the vizier invites those characters who wish to swear to step forward and declare themselves. (Note that women have always possessed full property rights in Carmania – the first Carmanian lords gained their title to the land from the goddess Charmain! – and are permitted to swear.)

The oath of feoffment is to be spoken in the Carmanian language, and is largely unintelligible to anyone with less than 80% Speak Carmanian. If challenged about this, Akritas blandly states that it’s just the agreement everyone goes through, and that *of course* it’s in Old Carmanian: “We’re in the heartland of the Carmanian Empire: what other language would you expect?” The vizier backs him up, adding that such feoffments have been sworn this way for countless generations: “Though they are not of the Black Law or of the White, being neither forbidden nor compulsory – another one of the many expedients my learned predecessors made in adapting the absolute and unyielding Laws to human usage.”

If the characters are a suspicious bunch and persist in demanding a translation, the captain and vizier take offence, and Akritas threatens to take his offer to someone else. A fluent Carmanian speaker could be hired by the PC’s to interpret the oath (at their considerable expense), but it simply states the character is taking part in an act of feoffment with Ismail Akritas and his heir, his niece Wyrllis. If your players are *very* suspicious, and hire their own expensive lawyer to explain what this means, they may avoid the rest of this scenario, but will be heavily out of pocket (and serves them right!).

After the swearing, the captain takes his partners to a dockside drinking club for a celebratory drink (although he refrains from partaking himself), and asks that they meet him at the *Karmanya* at dawn tomorrow. They are setting off for Dendeno, with a cargo of jerked beef from the Worian highlands.

## On Board the Karmanya

The journey to Dendeno and back can go without incident – it isn’t far, and this section of the river at least is relatively free from hazards. Let the characters get the feel of the boat and the crew. Akritas is an amiable companion, but spends much of his time in his cabin, leaving the running of the craft to the characters. When the boat reaches its destination, he assists with the selling of their cargo. If the Gamemaster wishes to run a local encounter in Dendeno (or cross the river to haunted Burntwall), he should feel free.

At one stage in the journey the craft is boarded by a river police galley, a boat from the Blue Navy, and the cargo is inspected by grim-faced customs officials. Akritas shows them his ship’s papers, which pass muster. When the customs boat departs, Akritas gives the characters a lecture about how important it is to keep the ship’s papers in order: the Oronin River is the frontier between the Empire’s Heartlands and the West Reaches, and both sides operate strict border controls.

When the *Karmanya* returns to Kendesos (with a cargo of Spolite prayer blankets and Graclodun religious icons) the time will come for splitting of the proceeds. Total profits for the trip were 1,640 silvers; true to his word, Akritas gives the characters the percentage share they agreed to.

## The Karmanya

A flat-bottomed river-boat, ideally suited for the Oronin and its larger tributaries. It requires fewer rowers when going downstream; however, Lunar law does give rowers some measure of security, in that they cannot be dismissed at the end of an up-river journey if the boat is to return downstream. This rule cuts both ways though, as rowers are paid the same amount (one Imperial Silver per day) whether they are making a strenuous up-river trip, or the much easier down-river journey.

<b>Hull Type:</b>	Barge
<b>Hull Quality:</b>	12
<b>Seaworthiness:</b>	12
<b>Structure Points:</b>	70
<b>Length:</b>	14 meters
<b>Beam:</b>	4 meters
<b>Capacity:</b>	9 tons
<b>Freeboard:</b>	0.5 meters
<b>Draft:</b>	1 meter
<b>Crew:</b>	24 rowers; one master.



When the time comes for the *Karmanya* to set off again, Akritas announces that he is not well enough to make the trip. He has hired a new rowing crew and has arranged for the boat to pick up a consignment of pottery at Meglardinth on Lake Oronin. The *Karmanya* is expected there in three days. If the players wish, they can find their own cargo to take to Brinnus (at their own expense), but the *Karmanya* must depart by noon.

Subsequent events on this trading trip are up to the Gamemaster. Meglardinth is on the shore of Lake Oronin, the sacred body of water from which Castle Blue rises; nearby is the holy city of Brinnus, where Carmanos the Lawgiver founded the first temple of the Magi. It will be at least a week before the boat returns to Kendesos.

Upon returning to Kendesos (indeed, as the boat docks), the group is approached by a runner bearing a message. It is an invitation for the party to visit the office of the vizier who officiated at the feoffment ceremony, Master Bishan.

The lawyer gives them the sad news: while they were away, Ismail Akritas died of his disease.

### The New Owners

Allow the characters a few moments to express real or feigned sympathy. Then drop the bombshell: Master Bishan announces that they now have legal possession of the *Karmanya* until the heir's return (give them a few seconds to cheer!), and, being the lawful owners, they are now legally liable for the debts Ismail Akritas left unsettled. These, it is blandly announced by the vizier, amount to some 12,845 Imperial Silvers!

Akritas's creditors include several merchant houses, a dry-dock, the Kendesos Tax Farm (the Satrap's tax office), the drinking club where they celebrated, at least one criminal organisation, and others. The ship's crew are owing for their journey to Lake Oronin and back too. Naturally, all want their money, and they want it fast! All have various means at their disposal to get it too. For example, the Tax Farm might insist on locking one of the party up in their debtor's prison until their payment is received. The merchant houses may refuse to sell them any of their stock, or deal in their cargoes. The dry-dock may try to get the port

authorities to impound the vessel. The criminals simply make threats, and if they're not satisfied, carry these threats out. The rowers will refuse to work until they are paid, and pass the word around to their fellows that the new owners of the *Karmanya* are not people of their word.

How the hapless players can possibly recoup this money and satisfy the creditors is up to the referee to develop. The first option the players may come up with is to sell the *Karmanya*.

Unfortunately, it is not worth even 50% of the amount owed; even so, it cannot be legally sold under the terms of the feoffment. The solution then, is to engage in trading with the *Karmanya*. Assuming they can talk the port authorities into letting the boat go, and can hire new rowers, this is their best bet. Note that if they try to make a run for it with the ship, it is probably just a matter of time before the river police (the notoriously efficient Blue Navy) catch them up. The criminal organisation might send agents after them too.

Perhaps several weeks or months later, the players have earned enough money to clear their debts.







In that time, they may have built up trade contacts along the river and (river pirates and the other hazards of the river aside) might see ahead a profitable few years or so for themselves, until Akritas's heir returns. That is, *if* she returns: rumour has it that the invasion of Heortland is turning into a bloodbath!

Unfortunately, before they get a chance to leave with their prize, they are met by a young woman dressed as a Red Army decurion, accompanied by Master Bishan and half-a-dozen of her army pals. She identifies herself as Ismail Akritas's niece and heir, Wyrllis Akritas, with documents which verify this. She curtly thanks them for their efforts in looking after the boat, and informs them that their services are no longer required.

If asked how come she is in Kendesos when she should be serving at the front, the woman curtly replies that she was given compassionate leave upon hearing the news of her uncle's death, and would they please get off her boat.

The player characters will probably assail her with tales of her uncle's debts and their strenuous efforts to pay them off. She simply thanks them for their efforts, and asks them to get off her boat. If asked what she intends to do with the boat she replies that she is going to sell it, and asks the players if they're interested. Her asking price is 12,000 L: about double its market value. She can be bargained down to 5,000L, but expects a cash payment within the week, and until that time orders that the group keep away from her ship.

## The Aftermath

The player characters could either end up buying the *Karmanya* or, more likely, deciding to cut their losses and depart. Whatever happens, sometime later they encounter a familiar face: Ismail Akritas! He and the young woman (who is actually his niece, his lover, his partner in crime, and a decurion in the Lunar Army – though she is stationed in Carantes, not Dragon Pass), planned this scam as a means of paying off their debts. He was not really sick. Master Bishan was in on the deal too, his morals corrupted by the money offered by Akritas.

Now, thanks to the hapless player characters, their balance sheet is even (or perhaps nicely in the black if the characters agree to buying the *Karmanya* from her); Akritas and his niece intend to leave the Oronin Valley and settle down to a quiet life somewhere in the Lunar Heartlands.

How events pan out is left up to the players. They might try to take the boat back by force and make a run for it. They might try to prove in court that they have been swindled. Master Bishan, with

his sorcerous and legal lore, could be an intriguing long-term foe. However it turns out, the characters could eventually gain full title to the *Karmanya*, a considerable prize for their efforts.

**Author's Note:** Feoffments were a legal practice in England during the medieval period, when wills were not recognised by law.

## Ismail Akritas

### Master and Owner of the *Karmanya*

Human male, age 45. Initiate of Diros the Boatman and Etryies

<b>STR</b>	12	Move:	3
<b>CON</b>	11	Fatigue:	23 - 4 = 19
<b>SIZ</b>	16	Hit Points:	13
<b>INT</b>	15	Magic Points:	13
<b>POW</b>	13		
<b>DEX</b>	9		
<b>APP</b>	9		

01-04	R.Leg	01-03	1/5
05-08	L.Leg	04-06	1/5
09-11	Abdom	07-10	1/5
12	Chest	11-15	1/6
13-15	R.Arm	16-17	1/4
16-18	L.Arm	18-19	1/4
19-20	Head	20	0/5

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>SR</u>	<u>A/P%</u>	<u>Damage</u>	<u>AP</u>
Dagger	8	45/39	1d4+2+1d4	6

**Spirit Magic:** (65% - ENC) River Eye, Glue 3, Heal 2, Farsee, Light, Countermagic 1.

**Sorcery Magic:** (FREE INT 4, Intensity 28%) Skin of Life 31%, Stupefaction 22%.

**Divine Magic:** (one-use) Float x2, Heal Wound x1.

**Skills:** Dodge 38% (-ENC); Swim 21%; Bargain 66%; Fast Talk 51%; Boat 73%; Evaluate 62%; First Aid 41%; Listen 37%; Scan 40%; Ceremony 26%.

**Languages:** New Pelorian 44/15; Carmanian 21/—.

**Armour:** None (thick boatman's garb).

**Special Items:** Silver pendant is a Repair matrix. It has a condition that only Diros cult initiates may use it.

## Wyrllis Akritas

### Ismail's niece, Red Army Decurion

Human female, age 23. Initiate of the cult of the Seven Mothers.

<b>STR</b>	15	Move:	3
<b>CON</b>	15	Fatigue:	30 - 23 = 7
<b>SIZ</b>	13	Hit Points:	14
<b>INT</b>	14	Magic Points:	17
<b>POW</b>	17		
<b>DEX</b>	15		
<b>APP</b>	15		

01-04	R.Leg	01-03	6/5
05-08	L.Leg	04-06	6/5
09-11	Abdom	07-10	6/5
12	Chest	11-15	8/6
13-15	R.Arm	16-17	6/4
16-18	L.Arm	18-19	6/4
19-20	Head	20	8/5

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>SR</u>	<u>A/P%</u>	<u>Damage</u>	<u>AP</u>
Scimitar	7	78/72	1d6+2+1d4	10
(Shield)	8	32/73	—	12
(Javelin)	3/10	76/—	1d8+1d2	

**Spirit Magic:** (85% - ENC) Heal 5, Mindspeech 1, Befuddle (2), Mobility 3, Bladesharp 1.

**Divine Magic:** (one-use) Madness x1, Heal Wound x1.

**Skills:** Dodge 68% (-ENC); Swim 24%; First Aid 67%; Listen 67%; Scan 55%.

**Languages:** New Pelorian 39/—.

**Armour:** Plate helmet and breastplate, scale elsewhere (standard Lunar army issue).

**Note:** Wyrllis's six army buddies are standard hoplites in the 50% skill range, armed with scimitars and wearing scale body and cuirbouilli limb armour.

## Laws and Lawyers in Old Carmania

Although it is unlikely the adventurers will learn much about these esoteric subjects until later in the scenario, these notes on Carmanian legal practice may help the Gamemaster to come up with useful descriptive or conversational chrome.

All Carmanian laws are based on the ancient scriptures of Carmanos the Lawgiver, and come in two basic types: Commands and Prohibitions, more commonly called the White and Black Laws. These rather absolute scriptures have since been interpreted by generations of learned scholars, the viziers of Old Carmania: teachers, lawyers, counsellors and sorcerers, schooled in the mysteries of Carmanian religious law.

In resolving disputes, the Carmanian court system is inquisitorial: a vizier is appointed by the local rulers to act as their investigator, and has wide-ranging powers to enable him to determine the Truth (including the use of imprisonment and torture). It is thus very important to consult a vizier before getting entangled in any legal proceedings, as a seemingly minor admission or omission can have severe consequences. Declarations and oaths sworn before a vizier in court have great legal force, and can readily be verified by elementary Divinations: the Carmanians have always striven to be keen upholders of the Truth.



## What the Overseer Beat into Me: The Way of Danfive Xaron

### Where did the world come from?

It was born from the sundering and division of the Creator; all we see around us, even the Gods themselves, are part of the Creator who made it all and destroyed himself in the process. He exits now in all of us, even unworthy scum like you.

### Where did I come from?

The Creator first made many Gods, and they made lesser beings to worship them. This process could not be stopped and the Creator became dissolved in the multiplicity of his creations. Without the guiding will of the Creator the Gods fought and divided the world. In doing so they also divided the Creator; who remains trapped in the fabric of the world, unable to restore his own unity. You are a part of that disunity, a separated part of the whole. Through the Red Goddess' compassion, you have been given another chance to restore your union with the Creator.

### Why do we die?

All forms are transient, everything is driven by the urge to change. That which is transient is subject to suffering, decay and death. Only the Red Goddess has accepted this and mastered the mystery of life. Follow her way and you will discover how to overcome the cycle of death and rebirth. First you must be purged and purified, so pay attention.

### What happens after we die?

If we have truly understood the nature of suffering and have made atonement for our existence we are able to transcend the limits of our mortal flesh and rejoin the Creator as part of the healed universe. If not, we are condemned to the cycle of death and rebirth once more. Some who have attained the bliss of immortality choose to return and help others along the path: theirs is a great sacrifice indeed.

### Why am I here?

To recognise the Three Noble Truths revealed by the Red Goddess, taught to us by Danfive Xaron and recorded for all time by his disciple Cenobius. The First Noble Truth is that suffering exists all around us, that pain lies at the heart of the world. The Second Noble Truth is that this suffering is caused by ignorance that manifests itself in greed, hatred and delusion. The Third Noble Truth is that there is a Sevenfold Path to the extinction of suffering. You are here to learn to follow this path.

### How do I do magic?

Only by strength can you hope to summon spirits, call on gods to help you, and learn manipulate energy by the force of your own will. You will become a vessel for holding power. A weak vessel will crack and be discarded, a strong one will become valued and useful. Remember that every act of magic brings something new into the world - and every birth is painful.

### I have heard of other powers.

#### Can you tell me the truth about them?

There are many gods. All have fought and destroyed the Creator, condemning themselves to death also. Only the Red Goddess is free from the taint of death and offers hope of restoring the Creator to life. Our task is to aid her by understanding and giving meaning to the world's suffering.

### ...Aldrya?

Aldrya flourishes in summer and grieves in winter. In her suffering we see the pain of the world and the endless cycle of death and rebirth. She teaches us that what cannot be cured must be endured.

### ...Chaos?

Chaos is the embodiment of Emptiness. It is the shapeless void against which our universe is form and substance. Neither can exist without the other. It is a dangerous servant and a terrible master.

### ...Kyger Litor?

The Mistress of the Dark holds many secrets. Her ways are perilous and must be followed with circumspection. Master yourself before you venture down them.

### ...Magasta?

The power of the Sea is that of both life and death. Here apparent opposites are as one. Consider this well, and you will be on the road to enlightenment.

### ...Mostal?

A hard god of a hard people. Take him as an example of unyielding strength.

### ...Monotheists?

They worship a broken god, the unhealed Creator. They seek to plunder his secrets and thus master the power of creation, becoming as gods themselves. They do not see that their actions weaken him further, driving the source farther from the seeker. The more they look the less they find.

### ...Orlanth?

The wind is empty, sound and fury signifying nothing. He and his brothers helped bring death into the world. He is an angry god, never still; thus his followers are unable to master the true strength which comes from within.

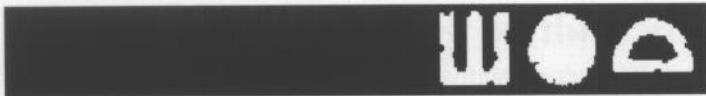
### ...Primitive Spirits?

There are many fragments of the broken Creator, some are more powerful than others. We can seek their aid but they help or hinder us depending on their whim. Remember them, but do not hope for great things to arise by seeking them out.

### ...Yelm?

Father Yelm, Lord of Light. A god who has welcomed the coming of the Red Goddess. From him we learn nobility of spirit and strength in misfortune.





# Danfive Xaron

Bridge for the Seeker

## Mythos and History

Born into poverty and squalor in the border city of Torang, his parents either unknown or uncaring, Danfivexaron grew up a child of the streets. Violence and cruelty were his constant companions; cut-throats, pimps and outlaws his only teachers. He played out his battles across the broken rooftops and abandoned houses, always alert for the sharp glint of knives down narrow alleys, manoeuvring through the darkened city with lethal patience and ruthless cunning. In time he carved out a territory among the tents and caravanserais of the city's margin, ruling through extortion and exploitation those weaker than himself.

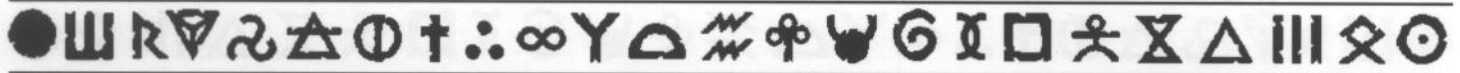
A willing convert to the conspiracy of the Seven Mothers, he volunteered for what was to be the most dangerous part of the ritual, perhaps believing he could in some way control the deity they were striving to re-create. At the climax of the ceremony, Danfivexaron confronted the nascent divinity of the Red Goddess: unable to face the overwhelming presence of her splendour, he turned his back upon her and fled in fear and shame, disappearing into the night.

Little is therefore said about Danfivexaron in the early history of the Red Goddess. He eventually made his epic journey down to the Underworld, seeking to hide from his 'daughter' and her growing powers. But feeling his absence from the world, the Red Goddess undertook her own quest, finding him at last dwelling on the banks of the River Styx. Revealing certain of her divine mysteries and offering both forgiveness and compassion, the Red Goddess asked Danfivexaron to return with her. Humbling his pride, he took her hand and acknowledged the Red Goddess as his own child, returning with her in triumph at the First Battle of Chaos to take his rightful place as Gatekeeper and Protector of the New Moon Queendom.

It became Danfivexaron's allotted task to explain the truth of the Red Goddess to those who either could not or would not listen, creating a shining path to redemption that even the most degenerate criminal could follow. When his divine spirit at last rose purified to take its place in glory with the Red Goddess, still convinced of his own unworthiness, he chose as his domain the dark side of the Moon, from where he watches over the Empire, ever vigilant.

Known as the 'Bridge for the Seeker', he provides a sure if narrow path for those who truly desire it and are willing to follow the cult's harsh and inflexible rules. Danfivexaron's flight and redemption are central to the cult's teachings and daily practice, allowing any criminal, no matter how wicked, a chance to return to the society he has rejected and preyed upon as a model citizen.





Danfive Xaron is portrayed as a stern and ageing ruffian in dark robes, often kneeling or bent over. His ubiquitous chains and shackles are signs of submission to the will of the Red Goddess, each link representing a Stasis Rune, and such chains are worn by all members of the cult, whether the heavy manacles worn by Penitents or the silver bracelets of a Chief Priest.

The cult's runes are Dark Moon, Mastery and Stasis.

## Cult Ecology

Danfive Xaron is the god of Corrections and Redemption through Suffering. His cult's temples operate as a system of prisons and labour camps, or 'Penitentiaries', which offer hope of rehabilitation for even the most desperate criminals, degenerates and social outcasts. Almost nobody who seeks membership of the cult is turned away, though the training is rigorous and some may not achieve full initiation for many years, if at all. People from all walks of life are drawn to the cult, usually those needing to purge themselves of some guilt or seeking meaning from life, for the cult provides a strict and inflexible code of conduct.

The penalties for infringement of the cult's rules are severe and can result in mutilation and dismissal: for instance even looking at a member of the opposite sex in the first year merits blinding and expulsion from the cult! While to outsiders this makes the cult seem harsh and often brutal, no punishment is ever inflicted without purpose, and the eventual rewards can be considerable for successful initiates willing to dedicate themselves to advancement in the cult.

The cult is responsible for protecting everyone in the Empire who does not enjoy the full privileges of a Lunar citizen. This includes fugitives, prisoners of war, and those against whom sentence has been passed by the Lunar authorities: for while the cult of the Red Emperor regulates all aspects of life within the routines of civilised life and commerce, Danfive Xaron holds sway over everything and everyone that threatens these valued routines from the inside, just as Yanafal Tarnils protects the Empire from outside aggression.

At its highest levels the cult operates a secret internal police force, the Black Army, often known by its sobriquet, "The Unspoken Word". It maintains a network of agents and informers from among the cult membership and laity who watch for potentially disruptive activities. Elite units stand ready to take action to ensure that the everyday life of the Empire proceeds in an orderly and cyclical pattern.

The cult joins the Seven Mothers in celebrating its High Holy Day on Godsdays of Disorder Week in Dark Season. Danfive Xaron's own Holy Day in all seasons is the Dying Moon day of Stasis Week.

## The Cult in the World

The cult of Danfive Xaron is primarily concerned with safeguarding the continuation and acceptance of the Lunar Way within the Empire, providing a path for those unable to live with the liberation offered by the Red Goddess. Its strict discipline and rigid codes of conduct support and influence many aspects of life within the Empire, channelling and directing the activities of those who would otherwise be disruptive and dangerous members of society.

It is also the guardian cult of the Lunar Heartland, responsible for preserving stability and civil order. Initiates are prominent in government at all levels, both local and Imperial, serving as law enforcers and in many roles where obedience and discipline are valued. Many a Lunar noble recalls with fond affection the instructive chastisements of his youth, delivered at the hands of his Xaroni tutor.

Similarly, the cult is responsible for the incarceration of all those who stand charged of fleeing the due process of Imperial justice, ensuring their apprehension, protection from unlawful prosecution or punishment, and finally their safe delivery to trial before a court of law. Captured felons are encouraged to take this period of enforced idleness to reflect upon the mercy of the Red Goddess. Confessions of guilt obtained during this time greatly speed up an often overworked legal system and provide some of the cult's most enthusiastic volunteers.

The cult is prominent in working on major construction or agricultural projects. Danfive Xaron work parties or 'chain gangs' are to be seen all along the Oslir valley, busy repairing the levees, constructing highways and digging irrigation ditches. These

Penitents spend much of their time in hard labour learning the skills of self-discipline and endurance, receiving instruction in cult theology as deemed necessary by the Overseers, who offer both chastisement and solace.

It is the responsibility of the High Priest or Irenarch to ensure that all sentences handed down by Imperial, Sultanate and local courts are carried out to the full letter of the law. Anyone who is a fugitive from justice or has committed a crime for which they have not been convicted can find sanctuary within the temple precincts. The criminal who so chooses may enter the long process of initiation into the cult rather than face prosecution.

Most city gates contain at least a shrine to Danfive Xaron, the Dark Watcher as he is often called. Nearly every Lunar city has a major temple to the God, where violent or dangerous criminals are usually confined at the request of local authorities. Every temple is a scale replica







of the famous Xaronea Prison in Glamour, the cult's headquarters; only those whose heinous crimes have drawn the attention of the Imperial Presidium are jailed there, awaiting judgement by Moonson himself. The city of Ulifilas in Darjiin Sultanate is a centre of power for the cult, having been founded by Cenobius, the first priest and disciple of Danfive Xaron.

## Lay Members

All those within the Empire who are beyond or outside the law are *ipso facto* lay members of the cult. The acts of denial and rebellion against the Lunar Way are seen as indications that the individual is following the example of Danfive Xaron himself. Every opportunity is given for lay members to take the next step toward full initiation into the cult should they so wish. Nevertheless, their wayward activities are not tolerated indefinitely and the Overseers take regular and frequent opportunities to encourage joining the cult. There are no benefits available to lay members.

## Penitents

Most penitents are criminals, either seeking sanctuary from the law, or else learning the discipline of the Sevenfold Path to cure their antisocial tendencies and make them reformed members of society. Others are moved by feelings of guilt, inadequacy or sincere religious feeling to seek out the certainties of Danfive's Three Noble Truths and the Sevenfold Path. The cult does not discriminate between these in any way.

No one is ever forced to join the cult of Danfive Xaron against their will. Some Judges will offer a convicted felon the choice of entering the penitentiary instead of accepting the due penalty of the law, especially if there is a confession of guilt or if sincere contrition has been displayed. In other cases, after an appropriate sentence has been determined by the normal judicial process, a representative of the cult will offer the convict a last chance to repent and reform – though any breach of the cult's monastic discipline may result in expulsion, with the original sentence being promptly carried out.

The cult considers all slaves, by virtue of their status, to be incapable of benefitting further from its instruction, and will refuse them admission to its Penitentiaries, instead returning fugitive or criminal slaves to their lawful masters for appropriate discipline.

The process of initiation into the cult of Danfive Xaron is long and arduous: it may take anywhere from a single season to many years, as determined by the wisdom of the cult's leaders, possibly in consultation with the judiciary. During this time the Penitent (as candidates for initiation are commonly known) is intensively instructed in the cult's teachings. These are called the Three Noble Truths, and are reached by following a set of disciplines known as the Sevenfold Path, said to have been mystically revealed to Cenobius, first disciple of Danfive Xaron. Candidates who gladly receive this instruction may attain initiation ahead of their more recalcitrant fellows.

The cult provides free room and board to Penitents; indeed, they are usually confined to a single cell, while the board can be as little as dry bread and water. The cult's teachings are primarily spiritual, involving long periods of solitary meditation, though they

can also be inculcated by harsh beatings and hard labour, and take up 100% of the Penitent's time. Penitents are usually taught no skills or magic by the cult, though they may require training for certain types of hard labour, or learn various skills from their fellow-Penitents (though the cult takes strict measures to prevent this getting out of hand). Every Penitent wears enchanted manacles which symbolise their submission to the will of the Red Goddess, and encourage them to meditate upon their own imperfections.

## Initiates

No Penitent is considered an Initiate of the cult until he can satisfy the Inquisitors that he has comprehended the Three Noble Truths. This involves passing a test which may be simulated by a roll against INT+POW on 1D100. Penitents may only take this





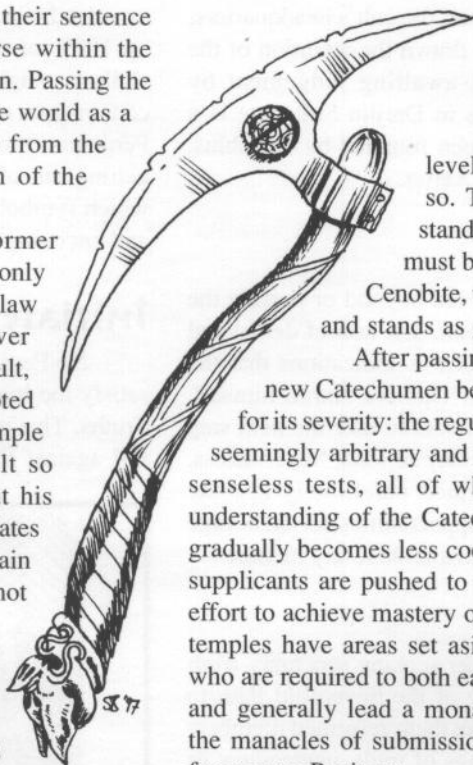
test when the cult permits, usually upon expiry of their sentence (unless they display exemplary piety and remorse within the Penitentiary), and never more than once per season. Passing the test merely makes them eligible for release into the world as a full Initiate: admission into the cult (and release from the Penitentiary) remains entirely at the discretion of the Inquisitors, and costs 1 POW as per usual.

Once he has passed their scrutiny, the former Penitent is free to return to normal life, devoting only 10% of his time and income to the cult. Imperial law considers him to be "reborn", shriven of whatever crimes may have prompted his membership of the cult, though the details of former offences are always noted in his citizenship records. He must attend at the temple every Holy Day (or more frequently, if the cult so commands), and is liable to be questioned about his activities at any time by the Overseers of the cult. Initiates are no longer shackled, though many choose to retain their chains as a focus of devotion, even if they do not wear them.

Initiates are, however, strictly required to follow the disciplines of the Sevenfold Path (most notably the final step: "living a righteous life"), and they may be summoned back before the Inquisitors if suspected of failing to live up to the high standards required of all cult members. Recidivists are liable to sent back to the Penitentiaries for a 'refresher course' in some of the disciplines they may have forgotten, though it is more usual in such cases for the Overseers to administer a summary chastisement.

Every Initiate will be found employment of some type to help in their return to society, though this may be menial labour earning a bare living wage; recruitment into the Army or Navy is not uncommon. Initiates who prosper may find that their cult duties involve assisting current Penitents to find the Three Noble Truths by offering them hard labour, supervision and instruction, or giving employment to those recently released from the Penitentiary.

Initiates receive free training in appropriate skills in the course of their duties. In return, they are expected to cooperate with the cult in all matters and provide information and assistance as needed. Many of the Black Army's best informers are former Penitents.



## Catechumens (Acolytes)

Some Initiates seek to enter the higher levels of the cult, and are encouraged to do so. They must have been Initiates in good standing for at least one year. In addition they must be nominated by an existing Overseer or Cenobite, who is then known as their 'Big Brother' and stands as guarantor of their conduct.

After passing once more before the Inquisitors, the new Catechumen begins a rule of training that is legendary for its severity: the regulations are uncompromising, with many seemingly arbitrary and pointless tasks, illogical questions and senseless tests, all of which serve to ultimately deepen the understanding of the Catechumens. While the level of discipline gradually becomes less coercive, it is by no means easier, and all supplicants are pushed to their physical and mental limits in an effort to achieve mastery over their own weaknesses. Most major temples have areas set aside for the use of these Catechumens, who are required to both eat and sleep within the temple precincts and generally lead a monastic lifestyle. Catechumens still wear the manacles of submission, and are generally indistinguishable from mere Penitents.

Catechumens may begin to learn the special cult skills of Intimidate and Sense Criminal, and the spirit magic spells of Bludgeon, Coordination, Demoralise, Endurance, Fanaticism, Heal, Ironhand, Silence and Strength. While Catechumens must devote 90% of their time to the cult, this is the first level of cult membership where the years of arduous service are rewarded by access to one-use Rune magic.

**Common Rune Magic:** Command Cult Spirit, Heal Wound, Mindlink, Worship Danfive Xaron. **Special Rune Magic:** Coerce, Enchant Shackle, Find Fugitive, Resist Pain.

## Overseers (Rune Lords)

Rune Lords in the cult of Danfive Xaron are known as Overseers. They are responsible for enforcing the cult's standards, punishing all breaches of discipline, dispensing summary justice, and aiding the Inquisitors in tracking down fugitives from the chain gangs. Exemplifying those virtues revered by the cult, self-discipline, strength and will-power, the Overseers are universally feared. They form the only publicly recognised military unit within the cult of Danfive Xaron, the Grim Soldiers, who are recruited almost exclusively from Overseers who have proved themselves zealous defenders of the Lunar Way.

Catechumens are eligible to become Overseers after five years of exemplary service, but can only do so when invited by their Big Brother. The candidate must have 90% in Intimidate and Whip Attack. He must also have mastered three of the following skills: any weapon attack or unarmed attack, Conceal, First Aid, Human Lore, Hide, Listen, Read/Write New Pelorian, Scan, Search, Sense Criminal, Sneak, Track. He must also pass a Test of Holiness (roll POWx3 on 1D100).

### Special Danfive Xaron Skills

#### Intimidate

This is the skill of extracting information and/or influencing action through the use of threatened or actual violence. To use it, one must be in a situation where intimidation is reasonable; threatening an angry Zorak Zoran Death Lord is not usually feasible.

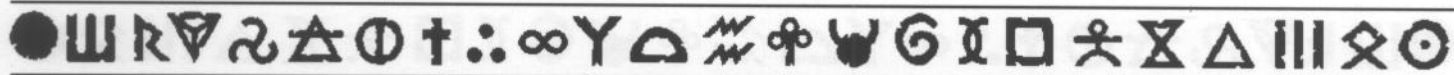
#### Communication (05%)

#### Sense Criminal

This special Perception skill can only be gained by Danfive Xaron Initiates, and begins at 5% plus Perception modifier. Success allows the user to sense that a nearby person (within 15m) intends to commit a flagrant breach of law or custom. Use of this ability requires concentration, and it will only single out the criminal on a special success; more normally, it alerts the Overseer to the existence of an uneasy conscience.

#### Perception (00%)





Overseers may sacrifice for all of the cult's Rune Magic, and obtain it on a reusable basis. Allied spirits are available and are frequently housed in either ritual tattoos or the Overseer's manacles, which are often used as Spell or Magic Point matrices. The Overseers are the favoured sons of Danfive Xaron and can call on Divine Intervention on a 1D10 rather than 1D100 on the Dying Moon day.

## Cenobites (Rune Priests)

Priests are commonly known as Cenobites, taking their name from Cenobius, an early follower of Danfive Xaron and founder of the austere and hierarchical tradition based upon the Cult of Yelm that the priesthood retains to this day. Cenobites are usually to be found with the chain gangs or in the Penitentiaries. The High Priest of a Major Temple takes the title of Irenarch, and is responsible for enforcing the decisions of the lawcourts and ensuring compliance to the Proclamations of the Red Emperor.

Catechumens may choose to take Cenobitic Orders after three years as an acolyte, but many wait longer, as failing the cult's Test of Holiness results in immediate investigation by the Inquisitors. Once accepted as a Cenobite, all common Rune Magic is available, as well as the special Rune Magics of Flay and Forlorn Hope.

## Subcults

### Rass-Koll-Nikov

The cult's spirit of reprisal which afflicts initiates who backslide and fail to observe the discipline of the Sevenfold Path is elementary: the former Penitent is tormented by feelings of guilt and shame, and any use of the cult's two special skills (Detect Criminal and Intimidate) against him has its chance for success doubled, until the initiate returns to the Righteous Life.

### The Grim Soldiers

The Grim Soldiers are the unit of the Imperial Bodyguard which protects the Citadel of Halfway during the Dying Moon (known as the "Black Watch"), an honour earned for services rendered to the Red Emperor at the Battle of Kitor. Membership is by invitation only, and is conferred only on Overseers who have displayed great heroism, unflinching courage and fanaticism in the service of the cult.

### The Black Sea Fleet

It is rumoured that the cult of Danfive Xaron maintains a fleet of galleys on the River Styx manned by the most desperate and hopeless criminals, for whom there is no hope of rehabilitation. No official cognisance is given to the existence of any such force, even though there are unexplained discrepancies between records of admission to the Lunar Naval College of Annillapolis and the final number of graduates serving in the recognised surface fleets.

## The Inquisitors

Like their counterparts the Lunar Examiners, the Inquisitors are responsible for approving all Initiates into the cult of Danfive Xaron and maintaining its rigorous standards. Every Inquisitor is a Cenobite of proven ability and carries rank equivalent to a Chief Priest. The Inquisitors are itinerant, and are appointed by the Red Emperor from a list of suitable candidates supplied to him by the Grand Master of the cult.

## Cenobius, the First to Follow

Formerly a priest of Yelm, Cenobius was blinded and cast out for prophesying the advent of the Red Goddess. He became a disciple of Danfive Xaron, and was instrumental in bringing the Lunar Way to the cities of Dara Happa. He rose in time to become a trusted lieutenant, keeping a record of Danfive Xaron's revelations, occasional parables and fragmentary conversations that has been handed down to posterity.

After his master's apotheosis, he received the divine inspiration that in order to withstand the cyclical patterns of growth and change that the Empire had set in motion it was necessary to reform the cult: while he met with some initial opposition from the leaders of the Streetgangs, he finally succeeded in instituting the changes that have resulted in the austere and monastic cult we see today.

Cenobius remains a figure of veneration among Penitents and his teachings form a major part of cult mythology. It is not uncommon for the current Grand Master to be hailed as a reincarnation of this hero.

### The Teachings of Cenobius

By far the most important contribution to cult practice has been Cenobius' codification of Danfive's numerous instructions into the simple rules of conduct known as the Three Noble Truths:

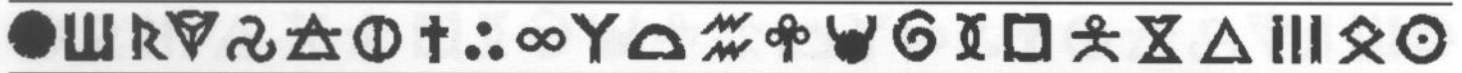
"There are three Noble Truths you must acknowledge: the *Existence of Suffering*, the *Origin of Suffering* and the Path to the *Extinction of Suffering*, which we know as the Sevenfold Path. They are as follows: the *Effort* that brings *Concentration* and from there *Awareness*, which promotes the *Understanding* that leads to *Knowledge*, which leads to *Action* and the *Righteous Life*. These are the steps of the Sevenfold Path. Follow them well!"

There are many other sayings that Penitents are encouraged to learn by heart for use as meditation exercises. A small selection follows:

"Servitude is no more than ignorance of the truth. He who values what is of no importance is truly a slave."

"The Goddess has brought us hope where once was despair and desolation. In her arms the sons and daughters of Yelm will once again rise triumphant. Those who languish in eternal night will see the light of dawn. Those who suffer will find release. Her tears will wash away the sorrow of time and an age of bliss will reign once more!"

"The enemy without has become the enemy within. A demon gnaws at the heart of the Goddess. Her pain is our pain, let us take it upon ourselves as a sacred duty. The suffering of the unhealed Creator is all around us: to master that pain is to master life itself."



## Special Danfive Xaron Rune Magic

### **Coerce** **1 point**

*ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable*

This spell allows the caster to force any individual to obey his will. It automatically succeeds against targets wearing enchanted shackles, but other victims' magic points must be overcome by the caster's. It takes a full round of concentration to issue new commands; this is done through a form of Mindlink and does not require the caster to speak aloud or the victim to share a common language. The caster cannot make his victim take any action that will directly cause injury: doing so immediately ends the spell's effect. Multiple Coerce spells stacked together allow the caster to affect several targets simultaneously. The spell does not function against cult members who hold superior or equal status to the caster.

### **Enchant Shackle** **1 point**

*ritual enchantment, stackable, reusable*

This spell allows the caster to enchant any set of chains or manacles, making them more difficult to break or remove. The enchantment must be performed during the cult's Holy Day, within the temple precincts, and costs at least 1 POW. The maximum POW that can be used to Enchant Shackles is equal to the points of spell that are stacked in a single casting. Such shackles are the foci for the cult's Coerce and Forlorn Hope spells, and are worn by all Penitents and higher members of the cult in token of their absolute submission to the will of Danfive Xaron and the Red Goddess.

### **Find Fugitive** **1 point**

*ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable*

This spell causes chains enchanted with the Shackle spell within range to emit a slight, identifying glow visible only to the caster. This glow is visible through up to a metre of stone, soil or metal.

### **Flay** **1 point**

*touch, temporal, stackable, reusable*

This spell must be cast on a whip, flail or knout. Each point of Flay increases the damage done by 1D6.

### **Forlorn Hope** **3 points**

*ritual ceremony, nonstackable, one use*

This hour-long ritual causes a body of up to a hundred cult members wearing enchanted shackles to fight fanatically for the cult. All those affected enjoy the benefits of the Fanaticism spell, losing any instinct for self-preservation. It lasts until either sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first.

### **Resist Pain** **1 point**

*self, temporal, stackable, reusable*

This spell allows the caster to withstand extreme physical discomfort, and even the pain of severe injuries or torture. Every wound suffered through natural or magical causes is reduced in its effect by one hit point, reflecting the additional toughness granted by the spell.

For the duration of the spell, the caster is immune to incapacitation, shock, unconsciousness or exhaustion, and will automatically succeed at any CON roll, as if under the effects of Berserk. Unlike the former spell, however, the caster does not suffer from exhaustion or fatigue when its duration expires, though any damage inflicted may cause his collapse at this point.

The caster can also endure hardships and tortures which would normally be unbearable, and will unflinchingly accept the infliction of personal pain and injury, whether by his own or others' actions.

Each stacked point of this spell doubles its duration.

## Cato Ninetails

In cases involving flagrant disobedience, open defiance of cult orders, or the apprehension of fugitive cult members, an Inquisitor has the authority to open a Commission of Enquiry, made up of himself and six others. Should the individual under question fail to give the Inquisitor satisfactory answers, the Commission of Enquiry is empowered to unleash the cult's ultimate spirit of reprisal, Cato Ninetails.

Even among practitioners of a cult that teaches mastery of suffering as the highest virtue Cato Ninetails is greatly feared, and is known as 'the Lash' in order to avoid invoking his name unnecessarily. Originally a chaos spirit, Cato Ninetails was bound to service by Danfive Xaron himself using unutterable oaths and unbreakable compacts. His attack takes the form of an agonising spirit combat against a POW 30 opponent: each time its attack succeeds, the victim suffers a number of Disruption attacks equal to the number of magic points lost.

## The Masters of Pain

These are Cenobites who chose to engage in advanced study of the mysteries of Danfive Xaron. They explore the nature of suffering through intensive practical research and experiments in arcane magic, seeking to experience the pain of the unhealed Creator. The few members of this sub-cult are isolated from the main stream of the cult's activities, occasionally handing down to the Overseers a refinement or embellishment to some punishment. Their appearance merely adds to their mystique, and has earned them the popular name of 'Grand Grotesques' among the citizens of Glamour.

## Associated Cults

### Red Emperor

Though he provides no Rune spells to followers of Danfive Xaron, it is through Moonson's munificence that Penitents who have been shriven of their crimes are not required to pay the due penalty of law. The Emperor recognises the cult's right to offer sanctuary, and supports its work of rehabilitation and reform.

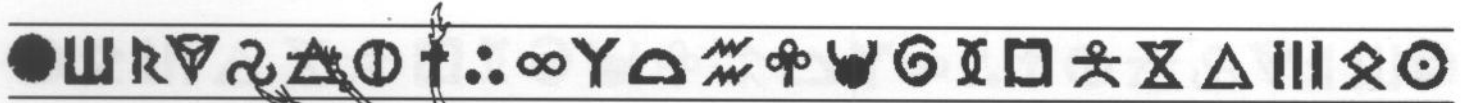
### Red Goddess

The Red Goddess offers her Chaos Gift to those who will accept it; within the cult of Danfive Xaron, the spell may only be utilised on the direct orders of a cultic superior.

### Yanafal Tarnils

Danfive Xaron enjoys a close relationship with Yanafal Tarnils, and the cults often work together in matters of discipline. If a unit of the Red Army is disgraced, its officers may be replaced by Overseers and the soldiers become Lay Members of Danfive Xaron as their unit is reduced to the status of a Punishment Battalion. Yanafal Tarnils provides the spell of Oath to all cult members above the rank of Initiate.





## Irrippi Ontor

To assist in their necessary work, Inquisitors may be taught to Mind-Read by the god of Lunar Knowledge.

## Miscellaneous Notes

### Street and Temple

The Overseers owe their origins to the street gangs of the early New Moon Queendom, and still form loose informal associations that are not entirely free from rivalry and mutual antagonism, such as the First Comers, the Knifemen, and the Red Hand of Raibanth. These, like the Elz Ast Head Gatherers' spirit Earbiter, are often nothing more than primitive spirit cults.

There exists a degree of open hostility between these factions and the tightly organised hierarchy of Cenobites. The Overseers do not often feel the same degree of loyalty to the priesthood as is found in many other cults: they claim that their power derives from an older, pre-Cenobitic relationship with Danfive Xaron. The Brotherhood of Cenobites does not choose to dispute this point, claiming instead moral superiority. No one would argue that Grand Master Orsorkon, the Arch-Cenobite, is obeyed unquestioningly by all members of the cult, regardless of their allegiances.

### Crime and Punishment

The cult of Danfive Xaron is not formally a part of the judicial or penal apparatus of the Lunar state, and the administration of justice need in no way be affected if the cult chose not to concern itself with a particular case. Felons may be apprehended, tried and punished by many other organs of the Empire. Moreover, there are several other institutions which maintain prisons or similar facilities, including the Imperial Revenue Service, the Army, the Sultans, and sundry others.

Most punishments under the old lawcodes still current in the Empire are sudden and brutal: branding, blinding, mutilation and execution (in various ways) are decreed for what might seem comparatively minor offences, while imprisonment *per se* seldom features in the old laws, which are concerned with the punishment of offenders, and not their rehabilitation.

Danfive Xaron offers the hope of reformation to criminals, as an alternative to the swift and certain punishment that may already have been decreed by the judiciary. Only in the event of a Penitent wilfully and persistently failing to respond to instruction would the offender be released prior to his initiatory rebirth and compelled to suffer the punishment determined by law.

### The Unspoken Word

The Lunar Empire is a peaceful and prosperous place to live, where the benefits of civilization are cherished and nurtured. Crime is contained and dissent confined to a few pacifists and religious extremists. Toleration of all traditions is the byword of an official policy that actively promotes diversity and innovation. The price of this freedom is eternal vigilance.

## Queen Deezola

The Binder Within provides the useful spell of Restore Constitution to those members of the cult who can sacrifice for Rune magics.

## Jakaleel the Witch

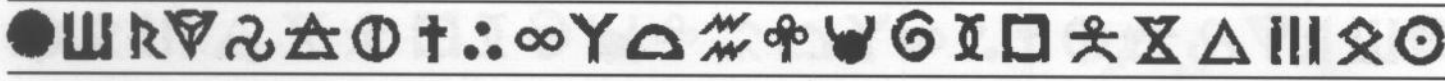
The Lunar goddess of primal insanity allows Danfive Xaron's worshippers to Command Lunes.

## Etyries

The herald of the Red Goddess freely gives her spell of Path Watch to assist Overseers of the cult.

## Ikadz the Torturer

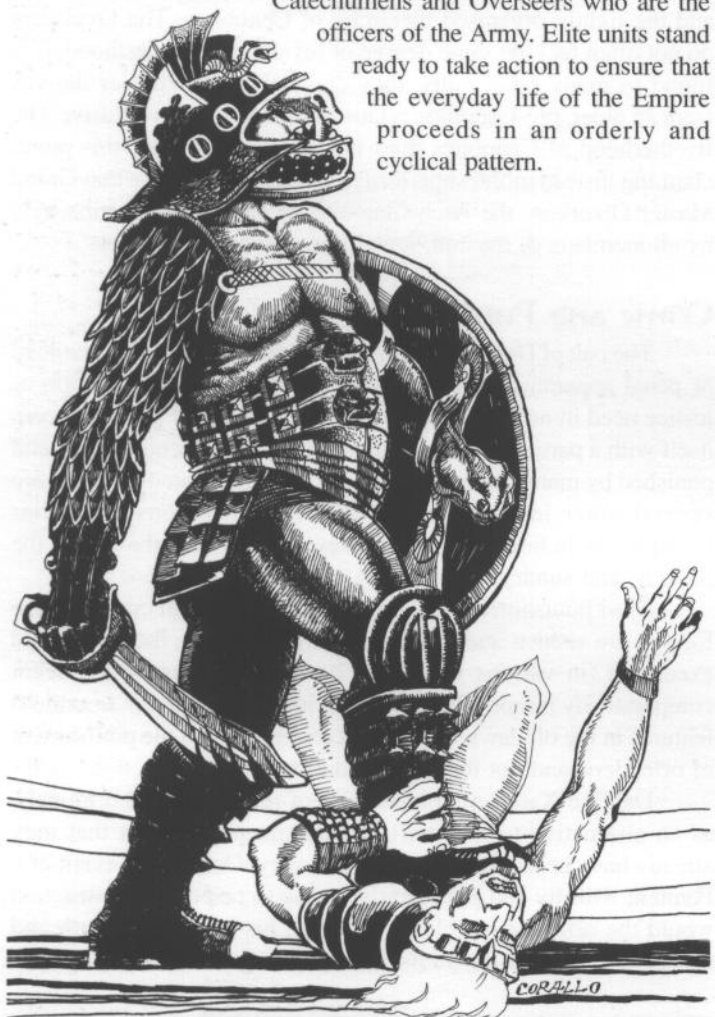
It is no secret that there are those in the cult of Danfive Xaron who seek to understand the nature of suffering, and the God of Torture is willing to assist them. Cenobites may learn his spell of Excoriation.



The Chronomancers, who monitor the cycles of the Moon and are privy to the secrets of Time itself, watch for the recurrence of calamities such as rebellion and disorder. Aware of the inevitability of change and disruption, the Lunar Empire maintains highly efficient covert agencies to nip such threats in the bud.

At its highest levels, the cult of Danfive Xaron operates a sub-cult called the Black Army. This is organised along military lines to provide an internal security force for the Empire. As the Red Army defends the Empire against attacks from without, so the Black Army defends it against threats from within.

Openly, it is represented by units such as the Grim Soldiers, responsible for keeping order in the city of Glamour. Covertly, it maintains a network of spies and informers, known as "The Unspoken Word" who watch for potentially disruptive activities. The agents are mostly Initiates, former Penitents who report back to the Catechumens and Overseers who are the officers of the Army. Elite units stand ready to take action to ensure that the everyday life of the Empire proceeds in an orderly and cyclical pattern.



[XXIX.777.49.e/2.6] The ancient Dara Happan Empire had separate courts for property, personal, civil, and religious offences. But whatever your legal needs in Nochet City, contact *Espius the Pleader*.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.6a] My learned friend fails to note that Dara Happan law is still in effect for non-citizens within the Lunar Heartlands. All offences are judged by social class: persons of inferior social class are usually found guilty, unless able to prove their innocence. I understand my colleague's sensitivity in this regard. *Belburo of the Golden Writs*.

## Cyclical Magic

Most cults of the Lunar Way are affected by the changing phase of the Red Moon, which reflects the waxing and waning power of the Red Goddess in the world. Danfive Xaron's cult is almost unique in that his Rune magics are unaffected by the Lunar cycle: because in his life the god rejected the Lunar Way, his followers will neither benefit nor suffer from the phase of the Moon or the influence of the Glowline. This also applies to spells learned from associate cults.

## Prominent Personalities

### Grand Master Orsorkon, the Emperor's Will

As Arch-Cenobite and the current High Priest of Danfive Xaron, Orsorkon is one of the most powerful individuals in the Lunar Empire; he sits on the Imperial Presidium and is answerable to Moonson alone. He seldom emerges from his official residence within the Xaronea, the cult's grim and cheerless Great Temple in Glamour, preferring to spend his time meditating upon the cult's higher mysteries. Orsorkon has the dubious honour of being the only man the Red Emperor has ever refused to play chess with.

### Appius Luxius, Provincial Overseer

The current Provincial Overseer, Appius Luxius, is only the second individual to hold this position; he has been in office now for 35 years. Originally from the Silver Shadow, he owes his appointment to blood ties with the Imperial family. His connections with the Imperial court have fostered cordial relations between Glamour and the Provincial Government, but this has inevitably brought his loyalties under close scrutiny. He is an initiate of Moonson Imperator.

### Edzila Tenfingers, Irenarch of Vlifilas

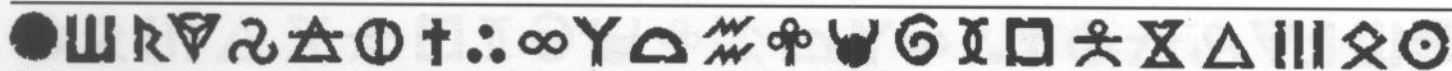
This redoubtable woman continues the tradition of austerity and humourlessness that has been characteristic of this city since its foundation centuries ago by Cenobius himself. She is an outspoken critic of the cult's ruling elite, constantly advocating a 'back to basics' movement, and decrying what she sees as fashionable decadence and moral laxity. Her behaviour merely adds to the rumours that she is one of the infamous Black Captains whose galleys patrol the River Styx, and other such nonsense.

### Mirros Conradin, Colonel of the Grim Soldiers

He once pursued a band of fugitives into the Mad Sultanate of Turk, somehow managing to escape after successfully apprehending his captives; for this feat of heroism he was picked to join the Grim Soldiers. Since becoming Colonel, he has instituted numerous reforms with the express intent of leading his regiment to victory in the Zasturnic Games: he aims to try and win the coveted Emperor's Cup from the invincible Full Moon Corps. He is an initiate of the Divine Moon Hunter, and has recently joined the cults of Sakkar and Deshkorgoros in preparation for performing the Hell Walk Quest.

*The Cult of Danfive Xaron was written by Mike Hagen, with the assistance of Nick Brooke, Chris Gidlow, and David Hall.*





# Danfive's Journey

## Who He Met, and Who Followed

by Mike Hagen

### Jeset, the Friend Below

Alone in the Underworld Danfive was befriended by the Ferryman of the Dead, who showed him many hidden ways and deep secrets. As the maker of the first boat, Jeset is believed to have helped in building the Black Galleys. Anyone who seeks a safe passage across the Styx may petition Danfive Xaron for help.

### Danfive Xaron, the Bridge for the Seeker

Danfive Xaron led the Seven Mothers in performing the ceremony that would bring the Red Goddess into the world. While they acted with one will, Danfive alone was seized by a moment of doubt. The Red Goddess, now born into the world, showed herself fully divine and Danfive Xaron fled from her to where no mortal could follow, taking refuge at last in the depths of Hell. She sought him out and showed him her innermost truths, the pain of the unhealed Creator and the suffering of an imperfect world. He agreed to return with her to help in the task of restoring unity, harmony and joy to the world. He offers a hard and unflinching belief in the role of redemption through suffering: only those that know the agony of creation can hope to attain release from its cycle of death and rebirth. When all else has failed, the way of Danfive Xaron offers a saving hand to those who have the courage to grasp it.

### Seven Mothers, the Ones Before

In coming together to participate in the recreation of a deity, each of the individuals present brought something unique to the ritual. It would not have been possible with any other combination of powers. The Seven Mothers are represented as manifest archetypes of human virtue and aspects of the mind of the Red Goddess: Yanafal Tarnils is courage, Irrippi Ontor is intelligence; while Queen Deezola provides worldly knowledge and compassion, Teelo Norri is innocence personified. Jakaleel the witch is intuition and She Who Waits the formless id. Danfive Xaron stands at the apex of the balance, providing strength of will to unify the whole into a divine consciousness.

### Styx, the Mother of Darkness

Filled with shame, Danfive hid in the Underworld. There he bathed in the River Styx, drinking deeply of her dark waters, hoping to cleanse himself of his anguish. Thus his cult is tainted with darkness and all who follow his way are forever sworn to it.

### Those Who Wait, the Old Ones

When the Spike exploded and the fate of the universe hung in the balance, an old order was destroyed along with the gods of the Celestial Court that ruled it. In the depths of Hell Danfive Xaron found the shattered remnants of the servants and retainers of the great deities, forgotten remnants of a lost age before time, broken and almost consumed by the hungry darkness. These spirits were given hope by the coming of the Red Goddess, herself a recreated deity, who offered them a place in the final harmony of a healed universe. Their secrets, gathered from ages of waiting, are known only to those brave few in the cult of Danfive Xaron who captain the Black Galleys.

### Red Goddess, She Who Is

The Goddess of the Red Moon works tirelessly towards the task of healing the universe. As the work progresses she becomes more powerful, yet at the same time more vulnerable as she takes on more aspects of the unhealed Creator, her power waxing and waning with the phases of the Moon. The cult of Danfive Xaron stands at the gate to the new universe, protecting it from destruction and helping to hold it together.

### Red Emperor, the Son of the Moon

The work of the Red Goddess is carried out through the actions of her earthly representative, the Red Emperor. The needs of the Empire have caused him to repeatedly sacrifice his material form defending or expanding his mother's demesne, manifesting himself over and over again through the cycle of death and rebirth. Such is the divine nature of each of his many manifestations, that even though he returns with the full knowledge and consciousness of his previous 'mask', that identity is not lost, but takes its place in the Council of the Egi who attend and serve the Red Goddess on the Moon. The Danfive Xaron cult is sworn to uphold and defend the Empire, as chief agency of the Red Goddess and the Lunar Way.







When scribe and orderly were gone the officer looked at the scroll's seal, which was the official seal of the Imperial Office of Barbarians, Crescent-Go in purple wax and silver. It had been broken and repaired – not well. She broke it again.

\* \* \*

It was the evening of Winds Day, Movement Week, Storm Season. A man stood on the crest of Pella's Stool, a plateau in the Autumn ranges.

Hala-tan Frigor, who had come a long way to interview this man, stood at the cliff bottom. Shattered white round things, neither rock nor timber nor snow, were thick on the ground around. A scorpion man stood beside him.

Hala-tan's large brown eyes showed the state of his nerves, although his white, rigid face did not alter. Roan-Ur had selected the time and place for their meeting, and insisted he leave his escort on the valley floor. Hala-tan did not like any of these arrangements. A meeting on a mountain top on Orlanth's high holy day was the work of a loon, never mind dark and skulls and Chaos-things.

A cautious man would have temporised, refused a meeting under such circumstances. A wise man would have insisted on being allowed his own precautions. Hala-tan had walked wide-eyed into such situations before, and he had always walked out again. His rivals did not know what to make of him, attributing his survival to a mixture of luck, astute observation and youthful charm, as well as a set of highly strung nerves that in crisis after crisis proved strong as iron.

The scorpion man fitted a loop of rope from a figure-eight around his narrow waist, and passed the second loop over to the clerk. The loops were connected with a brass pulley. "In," he creaked. Hala-tan eyed the arrangement, unhappily. "Is this how Roan-Ur gets up?" he asked. The scorpion man laughed in reply, an insect titter.

"How does he get up then?" Hala-tan persisted, "I could go that way instead." "He flies," the scorpion man said. His mirth ended abruptly, deliberately. "Of course – uh, what did you say your name was?" "Krakow," said the scorpion man, who had not previously given his name.

"Krakow, what's he like, this Roan-Ur?" Krakow's insect eyes glowed the fervent red of deep admiration. "Roan-Ur defeated my queen in single combat. Of all my tribe, only I was judged fit to live," he said. He cocked his weak-chinned head and grinned, showing the rasping mouth-piece of a mantis. "We climb now." He made the statement a threat.

"Of course," said Hala-tan, endeavouring not to whimper. He caught up his end of the loop, dubiously. Krakow completed the preparations with a swift slip-knot, then climbed, vertically.

Hala-tan did not want to look down. He kept his eyes fixed on the cliff until he came face to face with a broken corpse wedged in a crevice. After that he kept his eyes shut. The climb ended before his stomach ruptured from the pressure of the knot, but only just. He opened his eyes, to find a short gravel slope led through rocks to an open area at the plateau-top.

"That way," Krakow chattered, giving a helpful shove. The scribe completed the climb as the last light fled, with his eyes fixed all the time on the broad back of a large man who stood at the cliff's crest.

Roan-Ur surveyed his command from this post high in the mountains. Close, he was massive, of abnormal height. A purple cloak fell from shoulders not broad but colossal.

"Sir," the scribe said. He received an unexpected answer from the rocks by his side. "Boo," said the rocks, and then a small broo scrambled out.





Goat horns barely budded from the broo's skull, and narrow arms cradled an object that Hala-tan could not at first make out. A yellowed, stained lace shawl was tied around the broo's waist.

"Who goes there," the broo bleated, showing sharp-filed teeth in a goat's head that was otherwise as threatening as a snowball.

"Hala-tan Frigor, Sage of Irripi Ontor. I request an audience with Roan-Ur," Hala-tan said, almost pleased to find some formality. The broo turned to face the General's back. "Sir," the broo bawled. The massive shoulders shifted and a head as impassive as a slab of granite turned. "Miranda," a voice said, deep and slow and sure, laced with amused affection. "Someone to see you, Dad," the broo yelled. Hala-tan could see now that the object the broo cradled was a corn-cob doll, with a shrivelled head. A toy, and an unpleasant one. He took a step back. Then he saw the broo had breasts.

Roan-Ur turned to survey the new arrival. Iron mail and iron scimitar clashed, and the turn revealed across his barrel chest the Emperor's crimson sash. "Hala-tan Frigor, scribe of Irripi Ontor," the deep voice drawled. He was astonishingly handsome, with features carved from the same slab of granite as his shoulders. The broo lit the seven red-moon lanterns that were posted around the look-out. It was now completely dark.

"Sir," Hala-tan bowed, "I present General Fazzur's compliments. He sent me to ascertain your progress."

"He sent you to spy," Roan-Ur corrected Hala-tan, his deep voice unperturbed and lazy. Hala-tan shot a swift look at the General's face, but the impassive features defied analysis. Roan-Ur stepped forward, intimidating in height and breadth over Hala-tan, who was not a short man. Hala-tan did not step back, although he was forced to tilt his head up. A dark curl flopped over his white forehead. "Fazzur has heard stories of what I do to babies," Roan-Ur said, softly, "And he has sent you, scribe of Irripi Ontor, to ascertain the Truth." Hala-tan knew better than to lie. He nodded. Roan-Ur reached out one immense hand and smoothed the front of Hala-tan's robe, at heart height. He studied the movement of his hand, carefully, while behind the broo lit lanterns. A scrabble and a shower of stones indicated Krakow was above. "Without a wet-nurse," Roan-Ur breathed.

The dark was scored by a white lightning bolt in the middle distance. "Mark," said Krakow. Roan-Ur tilted his head. He turned from the scribe back to face the dark bulk

of the mountains, just as another two lightning bolts spat. Distant thunder rumbled, and a faint ozone scent gusted. "Ringing Swordwound," Krakow said. "Excellent," Roan-Ur said. The broo scribbled busily on a wax slate.

Hala-tan waited until he had got his breath back. Then for the first and last time in his life he offered a fervent, silent prayer of thanks to Orlanth. Then he cleared his throat, his voice sounding high and unsteady despite his best effort, "What work is this?" he said. "A Wind Priest," the broo said. "The fool has tipped his hand," said Roan-Ur. Another lightning bolt. Thunder, not so distant, growled. "Heading towards Pella's Stool," said Krakow. The broo nodded eager assent, then piped, "With only Lizardgate between us."

"Pella's Stool?" Hala-tan ventured. "Here," the broo said, affectionately patting the rock. Hala-tan gasped and paled. "It is unwise to be so high, on this of all nights," he said.

"I have taken away Orlanth's stamping-ground. He wants his playthings back. I am not frightened by the tantrums of a spoiled brat," Roan-Ur said. There was no real answer to this. Hala-tan cleared his throat and sidestepped, "How goes the campaign?"

Roan-Ur turned his handsome face back to the scribe. "There is no campaign," he said. "All this land is under my heel. The heel of the Emperor. Any dissent I crush with these." He raised to the night sky two huge fists.

"If the area is quelled, you will disband the army," Hala-tan persisted. Roan-Ur's eyes flared, and Hala-tan judged his anger genuine. "The rebels are still an annoyance," Roan-Ur growled, "This Wind Priest yet eludes me."

"So otherwise Kree mountain is under your control? Yet reports continue to reach Fazzur of over-judicious measures -" Hala-tan started.

"Over-judicious measures," Roan-Ur repeated, then, horribly, he smiled. "I tell you this. I kill people. I kill because I do not care what happens to their myriad pathetic, little lives. The dead go to their just reward. They go to the care of the gods. Is that the answer you seek?"

"Partly," Hala-tan said, concealing a gulp.

"Glorantha is a thin scum on the surface of a bottomless well. Prick the surface tension and Chaos floods forth," Roan-Ur said. He swept out a hand across the dark land, "As it always has and always will. In the meantime, plead to the gods, grovel like a good little soul. Perhaps they will help you. Perhaps they will not. I do not go on bended knees. I demand. And I get what I want.

Do not worry about the rebels, little scribe."

The conversation came to a second halt. Lightning lanced. "Mark," said Krakow. "Lizardgate," said the general. Thunder roared. Hala-tan cleared his throat a third time. "Doubtless the Chaos-vats are a factor in the continuing unrest," he said, "Perhaps if they were dis-"

Roan-Ur turned entirely, and strode to the scribe. His movement was so quick, and so predatory, so like a startled jungle cat, that Hala-tan, despite his best intent, stepped back. Hala-tan had crossed the length of the small plateau during the meeting, and the lip was now only scant yards from his feet. He remembered the white bones scattered at the cliff's base, and licked his dry teeth.

"Who told you of the Chaos vats?" Roan-Ur said, his face twisted, his mouth gaped in a snarl. An orange bolus played at the back of Roan-Ur's throat, so that for a moment the clerk thought he was going to spit fire. "My own eyes," he faltered. "Inconvenient witnesses," Roan-Ur purred. He put a wide hand on the scribe's chest and pushed. Hala-tan went backwards. Cliff crumbled beneath his feet. The broo and the scorpion man laughed. "This was a place for sacrifice to Orlanth," Roan-Ur said, "This has been a place of sacrifice for centuries. People flung into the void. And I am sure not one died of their own free will. You are afraid to die, little man, you all are. That is what gives me power over you. I am not afraid to die, so not even the gods can force me to acknowledge them. Why are you afraid? What rewards has your god laid up for you? I forget. Ah yes, now I remember, an eternity reading the scribble on the walls of the Palace of Knowledge. Why shun that?"

"I always preferred the sexual metaphor myself," Hala-tan said. Nothing yawned at his back. The hand pushing became a grasp. "What metaphor is that?" The red-moon lantern glowed in a halo around Roan-Ur's handsome, broad-browed face. "To bathe in the light of the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge is to spend eternity in her embrace," Hala-tan said. "I always liked that." It took all his strength to slow his speech from a babble, and not to obey the raw instinct screaming at him to brace himself against Roan-Ur's clasp. That would only throw his weight out over the abyss. Roan-Ur smiled a second time. "That is a young man's dream," Roan-Ur said, softly, "Lust for knowledge. When you are old, you seek her embraces only because you do not want others to have her. Out of habit. Not desire." He set the scribe back on his feet.





The storm washed over them. Lightning ringed Pella's Stool. Its fury was an anticlimax. Thunder screamed and ozone stank. Hala-tan crouched for shelter by the rocks. The general stood with sword upraised, daring Orlanth to strike. Regrettably, Orlanth did not.

"My compliments to General Fazzur," said Roan-Ur, turning away at the storm's end, the whole matter evidently dismissed from his mind. He instructed Krakow, "Send a force immediately to Swordwound. Broo, and scorpion-men in case they take to the hills. Get all the women and boys, surround them with broo, and tell the men exactly what will happen if the Wind Priest is not delivered immediately up to you. He might even volunteer himself, that is their kind of chivalry. Check for rune tattoos. One of his carls might decide to volunteer for him." "Look for Movement on his prick," the broo interjected. "Bring him here in a slave collar," Roan-Ur said. "Will we carry out the sentence anyway?" asked Krakow.

"I protest, sir," Hala-tan stuttered, white and terrified. "Protest noted," said Roan-Ur, "Not this time. Go." The scorpion man clattered off. "Sir—" "Return the scribe below," Roan-Ur said. He turned back to survey the night. The broo grabbed Hala-tan in a surprisingly strong grip and dragged him back down the short climb to the double-loop of rope. She fitted this around herself, and then over his head. Hala-tan shook with rage and fright. No wonder there was such widespread unrest. But he would see Roan-Ur was punished. In his report.

Broo and man climbed down together, in the dark. The broo braced each time Hala-tan lost his grip so he did not fall. This was often. But they reached the bottom intact. "You are the first that has gone up, and has come down on his feet," the broo said. "I thought as much," Hala-tan said. "He must like you," the broo observed. A tiny sound came from her breast. They looked down, then Hala-tan recoiled in disgust. The corn-cob doll had opened its black eyes, jet pin-points in its wizened face. It muttered something guttural, then sneezed. Too late Hala-tan leapt back. Spitte splashed his nose and mouth. He frantically wiped his face.

"Miranda likes you too," the broo said, her yellow eyes widening with wonder and respect. She lifted her skirt, revealing not only that she was indisputably female, but that a centipede was crawling out of a place where no centipede should be. "Want to—?" she said. Hala-tan did not hear her out. He turned and staggered for the safety of his escort.

\* \* \*

He travelled as quickly as possible, writing the report every night. On the first page he wrote, "Roan-Ur is a homicidal maniac". Then he scrawled the phrase out. He wrote an account that was lucid with the lucidity of brain fever. He wrote a warning that the least that could happen was that the ferocity of Roan-Ur's rule would not crush dissent but foment it; that the local people would be forced in self-defence to take up the worship of Malia, destabilizing a valuable buffer state. The worst that could happen was that Roan-Ur was intending to turn the area into his stronghold, raising a fanatically loyal Chaos-army, using a handful of pathetic hill-rebels as excuse. What was Roan-Ur's real intent? To carve a kingdom for himself out of the fringes of the Lunar empire? Or to march against Peloria?

It was a damning report.

When his sickness was too much for him to conceal, his escort abandoned him to the tender mercies of a subject hill-village. He lay there and raved in fever for a fortnight. He never heard whether they carried out the Abomination at Swordwound. His host, who owed nothing to the Lunars except two dead sons, was all for slitting his throat. Hala-tan owed his life to the professional rivalry of a local Lhankor Mhy sage who broke the seal then, in amazement, read choice excerpts to the assembled company. Hala-tan did wonder at the solicitude with which the local people speeded him on his way on his recovery, but had neither the strength nor, still ill, the mind to check his scroll seal. He was given no rest in the Kree Mountain camp, but was immediately, despite his poor health, sent back to his monastery.

\* \* \*

"That was the scribe General Fazzur was counting on to roast Roan-Ur?" the orderly inquired, returning to the room. The officer nodded, eyes fixed on Hala-tan's report. Then she sighed. "He has, too," she said.

"Glad to hear it, sir. We don't need butchers in the provinces. We're too far from help if — what are you doing?" the orderly shouted. He always shouted when he was surprised.

"That's obvious," the officer replied. The candle flame had already caught. Little blue flames ran up, and the edges of the paper went brown then black, and curled. The orderly floundered in panic. "Roan-Ur is too well-connected for even Fazzur," the officer explained, to calm him.

"Well connected! How?" The officer's eyes shifted to the icon of the Emperor, and then away. There was a moment of silence. Then the orderly drew a deep breath.

"Will that be all, sir?" he said.

"That will be all," the officer said. The orderly quickly left.

The paper burnt in the candle flame, burnt to ashes. Then the ashes were ground under a booted heel to dust.





## Letters Page

**David Henderson**  
Linlithgow, West Lothian

Just to reply to your comments about the Letter page last issue, I wondered if the increasing use of forums on the Internet to discuss games etc. was perhaps partly behind the lack of input. I was a subscriber to the two RuneQuest mailing lists that I knew about, Loren Miller's Glorantha Digest and the RuneQuest rules digest, for about 18 months, and there was a tremendous amount of discussion and information-passing in these. With more and more people having access to these forums, and a large proportion of role-players having such access, issues that would have been discussed over a period of a few months on the Letter pages of gaming magazines are now done to death in a matter of days.

It is a shame, I think, but inevitable, that the electronic media will dethrone the printed for uses such as discussion groups and mailing lists, since the turnaround time is so much shorter. People will still want printed material, I imagine, but clarifying points, discussing grey areas and filling in gaming world blanks will all move to the Internet. Perhaps the final products of these discussions will end up in print, but in the meantime a whole new class of electronically disenfranchised gamers will be created: the passive receivers of these products, as opposed to the "Connected", the creators.

New medium, new injustices, and new bigotry, I guess! Still, at least I'm not a newbie :-)

**Julian Lewis**  
Chingford, Essex

The reason I am taking out a subscription is that Virgin Megastore on Oxford Street seem to have stopped stocking Runequest items, along with many other materials and systems. I hope that this is not a reflection on the health of your enterprise as I regard Tales of the Reaching Moon to be a quality publication.

It now looks like Virgin are ceasing to stock all RQ products, and a number of other less popular or well-supported lines as well. It is bound to have a knock on effect on sales of *Tales*. However, I have been told that this might be down to a shortage of RQ3 items in the UK as a result of the UK distributor holding back ordering anything until RQ4 is shipped. This has been true for the last six months or so, with no sign of RQ4.

**Dave Anthony**  
Southfields

Just a reaction to your comment about Virgin and Orc's Nest - while I agree that it's a pain not being able to get hold of RuneQuest material, it's probably not entirely the fault of the shops. I have the impression that Runequest has now been largely supplanted by less detailed games designed to appeal to younger players - Vampire, Cyberpunk, and so on. That's where the market is, so that's what the shops will sell - they won't stock Runequest stuff unless it's worth their while.

Runequest seems to have done a pretty good job of slitting its own throat, with needless rules revisions and long periods with only reprints instead of new material. Hopefully, what your magazine is doing is helping to keep enough interest in Runequest alive so that when the publishers finally pull their fingers out, the die-hard fans will form the core of its renaissance.

**De Ed:** *I have a weird feeling of deja vu... isn't this what the Letter page covered back in issues #2 and #3? Well, I'm now counting on the new miniatures game from Stratelibri and the RPG from Chaosium to allow Dave's renaissance to come true. However, to do that we're going to have to try and ditch our nostalgia for RuneQuest. I believe that a game system which has a schedule of one product (or less) per year and fails to employ a full-time line editor is unworthy of our devotion!*

**Alejandro Fernández Giraldo**  
León, Spain

On the map of the Tunnelled Hills (issue #15) we see the Duck Valley, but there is no information about it. Could you tell us something about that place, or has a background not been developed yet?

**De Ed:** *Well, actually, it's a bit of a joke by our duck-loving graphic designer, Rick Meints. He likes adding duck related features to all of the maps he draws or contributes to. It's lucky that we managed to physically restrain him from adding a duck crater to the maps of the Red Moon!*

*However, we have been trying to develop theories as to exactly what is in Duck Valley. It could be a community of undead ducks or even a throw-back to the legendary Ganderland. We're not sure.*

*Perhaps y'all have a better idea of what is there? If you reckon you do then send your idea (no more than 150 words) and we'll publish the best one. The winner also gets to pick out a free copy one of our current or out-of-print publications as a prize.*

## Free Classified Ads

"We'd love to tell you how we do it, but that's classified."

**WANTED**, all of the Games Workshop hardcover versions for 3rd edition Runequest. In particular, I'm looking for *Griffin Island*, *Land of Ninja*, *RQ Rulebook*, *Monsters*, etc. Please contact Rick Meints on 0171-538-8639 or RMeints@aol.com for email.

**IS THERE** anyone out there running a RQ2 or RQ3 campaign in the Basingstoke area. If so would it be possible to join. Please E-Mail Smudge@highfield.demon.co.uk or contact Adrian on 01256 410 497.

**LOOKING** for RQ2 groups in the Nottingham area. Please contact Vicki on 0115 958 9435.

## On an Analysis of some Herdman bones... (Tales#15)

*A note by the translator*

It should be noted that the physiognomy of Herdmen (*Homo edibilis*) varied slightly from *Homo sapiens* and that the age range 7-9 noted as the first major cull corresponds to an age range of about 13-14 in the latter species. In addition, although sexual maturity would have occurred at about 7 years in *Homo edibilis*, infants are heavily dependent on their mothers for at least the first year, accounting for the relatively slow rate of reproduction. (Max Fuller)

## Hell Hound Scenario errata (Tales #15)

Sadly, we omitted Bel-Napishtim's stats:  
**INT:** 16      **POW:** 18      **MP:** 18

**Spirit Magic:** Bladesharp (2), Darkwall (2), Heal (2), Ignite. **Divine Magic:** Darkness (2)\*, Divination, Fear (1) x 2, Sanctify, Soul Sight, Worship Met.

\*This is a 2 point temporal, non-stackable, divine spell special to Met. It creates a 50, radius pool of pitch blackness. The darkness can be negated by any light spell powered by 4 or more MP (2 if divine magic), such as Lightwall or Sunbright. Whilst it operates, normal vision does not work within the radius of the spell (-75% to attack, parry & dodge if relying on sight alone). (Matthew Whelan)







## DEADWEED

(Albino Seaweed)

Mortus Herbae

I was tired and hungry when I came upon the most horrific sight of my stay on the moon. The coast of the Ocean of Despair lay before me in a black haze, with strange wispy dark shapes moving about the sky above it. Desperate for food in this arid wasteland, I pushed back my fear and made for the shore. There I found the sand littered with maggot-filled (rotting) corpses and piles of pale white seaweed covered with buzzing swarms of flies. Choking on the bile this situation aroused, I still remained true to my calling and closely examined the seaweed.

The white colour of the seaweed was not so much a result of any natural feature, but rather a lack of any apparent coloured pigments which in the light produces a ghostly white appearance. The surface of the seaweed was smooth and oily, with an ichorus residue that clung to my feathers. When the reproductive bulbs were opened, a white paste oozed slowly out. I was unable to categorise this paste in my hurry to finish my study.

Unlike regular seaweed, this stuff was chewy rather than crunchy. It also reeked too much of the rotting corpses lying nearby. The white paste in the bulbs tasted like a bland flour-water paste. Despite my distaste in this choice of entrees, I wrapped several of the vines over my wing and headed back out into the wastes.

### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

(1) As with the other inhabitants of the Despair Ocean, even the plant life is dead.



## PETALS OF THE GODDESS

(Crystal Flowers)

Dea Crystallum

My last week on the moon began with my escort leading me into the Ruby City. From afar the red walls and spires of the city shone with an incredible radiance, one that became almost blinding as we neared the gate. Waiting for permission to enter the most magnificent city I could ever imagine, I noted with curiosity the colourful vines growing on the ruby walls.

After slipping away from my guards, I was able to grab a low growing vine and hoist myself onto the wall. My climbing through the vines made an unexpected amount of noise. The small flowers I was brushing against would fall to the ground and shatter like fragile pottery. The guards noticed and dragged me down, but not before I gathered a wingful of leaves and several samples of flowers.

The leaves of the vine were nondescript, and could easily have come from any earthly species. The flowers, however, were incredible. They were clearly alive, yet at the same time they felt and looked like beautiful crystal. When held to the light a colourful rainbow of light would dance and play on the ground below.

After I calmed the guards I had time to taste my new find. The leaves were tender and fresh, with a minty aftertaste. I dare say, despite their dull appearance, they were among the tastiest of all the vegetation on the moon. The flowers were another matter. They tasted and had the consistency of the crystal they resembled.

Blood gushing from my beak alerted the guards to come to my aid, and with some medical aid I soon recovered.

### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

(1) The Crystal Flowers Rodin noted are magical. Each one can be used once to power one point of magical light.



## MOOD FLOWER

(Sensitivity Flower)

Sensus Floris

One of the most pleasant periods of my stay on the moon was my visit to the Fields of Serenity. There was a wide selection of tasty vegetation growing abundantly throughout the low hills. Most of these were common plants, but they seemed to taste sweeter or juicier than I remembered. My favourite among the new plants of the region was one presented to me by the happy natives upon my entry.

It was the Mood Flower, a variety of dandelion noted for its ability to change its coloration once picked. The colours reflect the mood of the wearer and vary from dark shades of red and blue for anger and sadness to bright yellows and greens for joy. I must say all the flowers worn by long time residents constantly beamed out a pure yellow-green light. Before the flowers are picked, they change their colour based upon the rotation of the moon.

The Mood Flower grows in plentiful supply in its native region and I was able to obtain as many samples as I needed. The leaf of the flower makes a healthy soup or salad, while the petals make a colourful garnish to any dish containing greens. The flower can also be used to wrap nuts or berries to avoid staining your feathers.

### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

(1) Rodin's description of the Mood Flower's abilities are accurate, with the additional fact that a flower withers about a week after being picked.





## MOONFLOWER

### Luna Floris

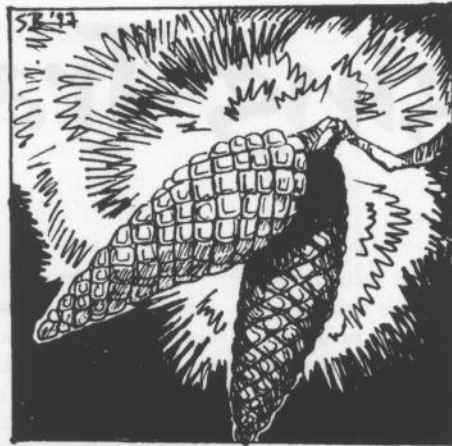
During my botanical studies in Peloria I found only one plant that mystified me. Studies of its life-cycle were inconclusive. The flower made seeds, but none could be made to grow. This was the variety of poppy the natives called a Moonflower, for it only grows within a day's walk of the Red Moon. A lucky stumble in a moss filled ravine on the moon finally solved my mystery.

In the cliffs along the walls of the ravine were dozens of small caves used by some ugly bird. Practically flowing out of the caves was a purplish moss with red circular spore clusters. The red clusters were identical to the empty husks I had found near every patch of Moonflower. I quickly ascertained that half of the life-cycle of the Moonflower was spent as moss on the moon. The matured spores would drop or be carried to the ground where a splendid patch of red Moonflowers would then grow. The ugly birds either eat or feed near enough to the Moonflower to contact the sticky seeds which then fall off in their caves and develop into moss.

The Pelorian natives became upset at my attempts to study Moonflower, so I was only able to obtain some of it. The greens were tasteless, but the red petals had a high sugar content and a very sweet cinnamon taste. The purple moss on the moon was easier to obtain in quantity, but is not as tasty. It resembled nothing as much as celery in taste, and as such would probably best be served as a colourful garnish with most dishes.

#### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

- (1) The ugly birds Rodin refers to are bats.
- (2) Moonflowers are holy to worshippers of the Red Goddess, for they will not wither for a year if kept within the light of the Red Moon.



## BATEYE (Bat Dung Reed) Vespertilio Harundinis

One of my great fears upon first arriving on the moon was that it would be filled with all kinds of chaotic vegetation and creatures. Fortunately, this is not the case. In fact, the only case of blatant chaos infestation in a plant species was that of the Bateye plant. This hideous aberration I discovered at an incredible zoological park. I was studying a huge, empty cage when I noticed that a strange reed was growing from the dung piles near the edges of the pen.

I slipped into the cage to examine the reeds with more accuracy. A I approached the reeds turned and swayed in my direction. At the top of each stalk was a bloodshot eye. Thinking this quite unusual I walked even closer, then the darn things began to spit at me. Several gobs hit me and burnt my feathers, causing me the exit the cage hastily.

Prudent behaviour on my part meant that I could not examine the reeds more carefully, not that I would have been able to stomach such disgusting things anyway. All I can note in passing is that the reeds appeared to only grow directly from the dung and seemed to have a low level of sentience I was unprepared at that time to deal with.

#### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

- (1) Bateye grows from any clump of dung left by the Red Bat, whether on the moon or the surface world.
- (2) Each Bateye has a spit attack that causes 1 point of damage with each hit. They can spit each round, but only have an accuracy of 10%.

## RED FIR (Tendarshan Fir) Rubere Arboris

I made it a point on my travels on the moon to visit the Tendarshan Forest, famous for its red trees. The rest of the forest has the natural coloration of flora consistent with the coniferous forests of the highlands of central Genertela. The indicator tree of the forest is indeed the red fir tree, and vast groves of it spread throughout the forest.

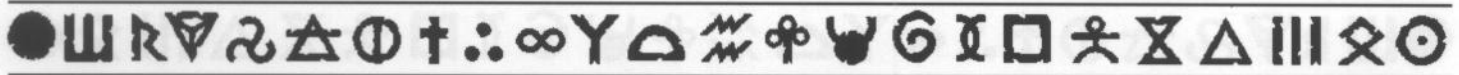
Closer examination of the trees produced notable findings. Not only were the needles pigmented with a red coloration, but the bark, the stems and even the roots were red. I mined the soil for the source of the coloration, but found no natural cause and am ascribing the situation to unknown magical sources.

The red fir tastes much like any other fir. The bark and stems are bland and woody, with the needles having a slight hint of tar in their flavour. Of unusual note are the red roots. They were plump with a raspberry flavoured syrup. I would recommend it as a sauce for any native inhabitant of the area. I never met any, but it seemed that the entire time I was in the forest I was being watched, and I assume someone must live there.

#### GAMEMASTER NOTES:

- (1) A unique species of Brown Elf lives in the Tendarshan Forest. They are coloured as red as the trees they guard and are unusually shy, even for an Aldryami.





# The Singing Trail

by Harald Smith

In 2/48 (1349 S.T.), Hwarin Dalthippa began her second road-building ritual. Some say that she did this to gain the blue furstones of Imther, or even that it was to impress the dwarfs of those mountains. Others say that her goals were simply to finish the conquest of the southern provinces of Peloria and reunite the ancient land of Saird. But there are some who whisper that she followed ancient trails of power to bind the serpents to her will, though they can say nothing more of these trails or those serpents.

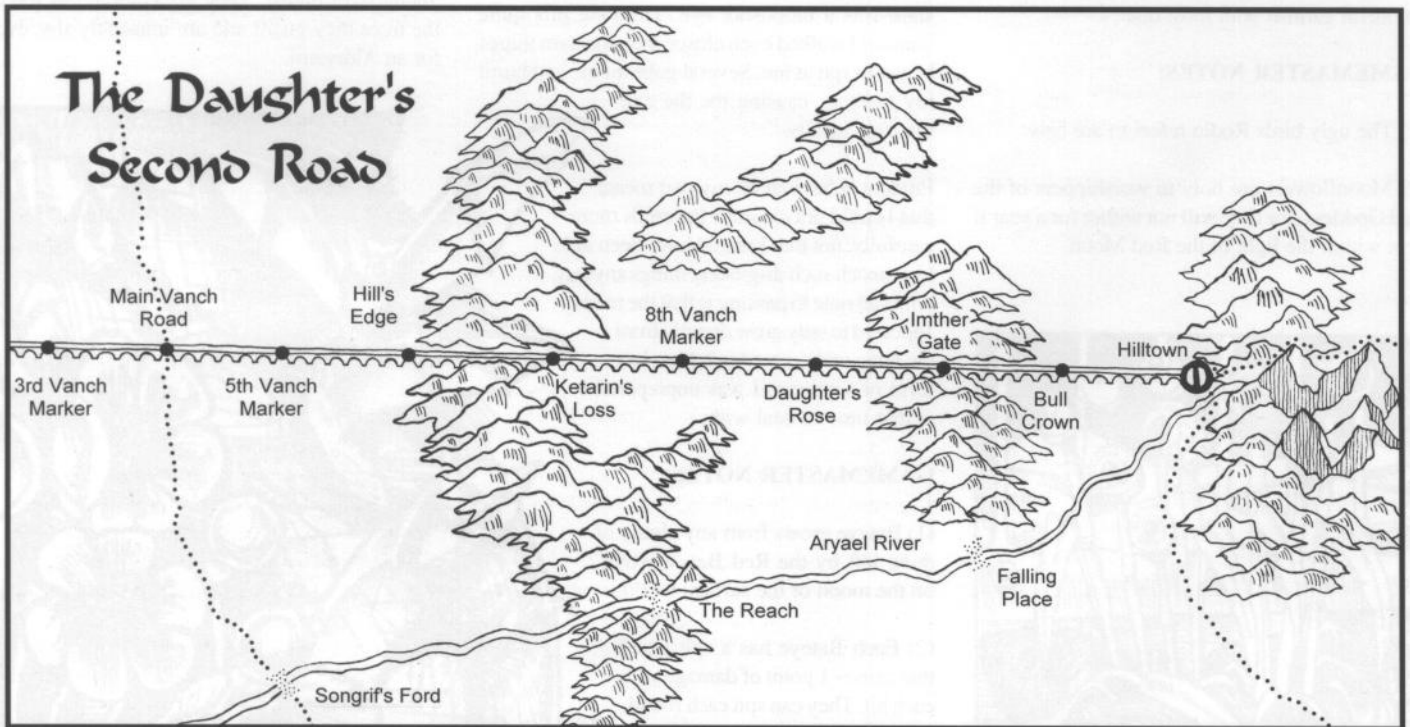
Regardless of rumour, Hwarin crossed the Oslir at the Bridge of Phirmax and defeated the tribes of Vanch. The first of these, the Pergeshi, are noted as the Singers of Birth, for they were turned into labourers and cut the first hill of Vanch for the Conquering Daughter. Their Dirge of First Labour is the ghostly song most commonly heard by those travelling the road. Other tribes and clans were also bound to the work, some merely to cut the roadbed or lift stones, others literally crushed beneath the giant blocks or sacrificed for their blood and tears. Many travellers have heard directly (or through local minstrels) The Lamentation of the Osseri, the Chant of the Hidenni (or 'Stonebreakers'), and the Last Lay of the Bentanni. And it is said that even Bazhik Jingarn, the Horseman-with-no-Heart, was moved to tears when he stood upon the roadway and heard the Ode of Ketarin, last king of the Sharigo.

From Hilltown to Calf-wool Stands, the Second Road of the Conquering Daughter runs its straight course through hills, over streams and meadows, and finally, across the mighty Oslir River where it intersects the First Daughter's Road. It is about 125 kilometres from Hilltown to Jillaro by way of the road and takes about four days to complete the journey.

The main roadbed, called the Imperial Road, rests upon arched supports and on average is three to four meters above the ground. It is eight wagons wide, though part of this width provides the arched supports for the upper roadbed. This whole roadbed is enchanted and dotted with magical Road Stones and covered with a fine red gravel that some say is the crushed remains of those Hwarin enslaved. The roadway is edged with foot high stones so wagons don't tumble off.

<u>Shrine Location</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Blessing</u>
Bull Crown	The Inner Fount	Health
Imther Gate	Hwarin and Imthus	Friendship
Daughter's Rose	Hwarin Peacemaker	Peace
Eighth Vanch Marker	Shielding Mother	Protection
Ketarin's Loss	Seeker of Foes	Recognising
Hill's Edge	Strong Armed Woman	Strength
Fifth Vanch Marker	Hwarin Teacher	Wisdom
Main Vanch Road	Warrior Woman	Valour
Third Vanch Marker	Potshaper	Crafting
The Binding Place	Roadbuilder	Perseverance
Pergeshi's Fall	Soothsayer	Divination
Phirmax' Bridge	Hwarin the Mother	Fertility

At intervals of three kilometres, ramps lead down from the roadbed to the ground below. This allows local traffic to reach the roadway and travellers to descend to local inns. There is a toll of 1 lunar per person, 2 lunars per animal, and 5 lunars per wagon for entry onto or departure off of the Daughter's roadway at every access ramp.





## The Road Less Travelled

The upper roadbed called the Sacred Road, is raised three meters above the lower roadbed along the roadway's southern side and is strictly for ceremonial and magical use. All of the great stones of this roadbed are visible and most are carved with pictures of the Conquering Daughter's triumphs over the barbarians of Vanch or her famous meeting with King Memnon of Imther. Large segments of the Sacred Road are protected by Warding spells, which affect all non-Lunar initiates. Some sections, particularly above the roadway's shrines, are protected by curses, which affect all but priests of the Conquering Daughter or Lunar Examiners. And some people have reported seeing ghostly horses, said to be the first steeds of Ingkot, racing along this road breathing fire from their nostrils and raising lightning with their hooves to destroy intruders.

Under the upper roadway at intervals of ten kilometres are various shrines to the Conquering Daughter. Each shrine represents a different aspect of the goddess and is said to provide a blessing for those who pray there. The shrines listed run from east to west starting 10 kilometres west of Hilltown to the Bridge of Phirmax. Other shrines exist along the continuation of the road to Calf-wool Stands, as well as along the First Daughter's Road running from Jillaro to Filichet in Holay.

Of particular note, the shrines at Daughter's Rose, Hill's Edge and The Binding Place are made of exquisite crystal and glass. When the wind rushes through these three shrines, a beautiful sound like birds in song can readily be heard. Wind chimes add to the eerie effect. The other shrines are made of fine marble, carved with the relevant images of the Conquering Daughter.

The Singing Trail is used by merchants to bring Lunar goods to Imther and to bring Imtherian copper, bronze, and marble into the heart of Empire. Pilgrims of the Conquering Daughter are also frequently found, usually congregating at the shrines where they can be seen praying for miracles. Occasional beggars or madmen are also found, though the highway patrols chase them off when they find them. And, at least once per season, Lunar priests can be seen atop the Sacred Road engaging in powerful rituals. When these latter occur, songs arise from the very stones of the roadways and some travellers even report seeing ghosts walking along or working upon the roads.



## A Storm upon the Singing Trail

A Cameo by Harald Smith

*This cameo makes use of Pendragon traits and passions. Those who do not use these should find appropriate substitutes.*

### Introduction

The PCs find themselves walking upon the Singing Trail. They may be soldiers heading for detail in Imther, merchants bearing goods in either direction, pilgrims following the path of the Conquering Daughter, or just adventurers looking for a new life.

They know, or have heard, that weather is Jillaro has been dry, very dry, this year and that the Oslir is running much lower than normal, for this is news that all travellers pass on. They also know, or have heard, that the passes into the Imther Mountains have been very wet and muddy, delaying the transport of the Imtherian King's tribute to the Empire. Rumours speak of Vanchite brigands waiting in shadows for those who leave the Singing Trail after dark.

### The Old Man

Between Bull Crown and Imther Gate, the PCs spot a lone man ahead who is walking east. (If the PCs are also travelling east, they will find that they quickly overtake the man from behind. If they are travelling west, they will quickly approach him.)

The man appears to be a poor pilgrim dressed in a hair-shirt tunic with a rope belt. He is old and bald, his skin heavily wrinkled and aged. His only possessions are two sticks he claps together to make a steady beat (clap-clap, clap-clap) much like the sound of a walking horse. He says nothing to the PCs, but smiles and looks at them with rheumy eyes (which seem vaguely focused on something far in the distance) while humming a tune to himself. If a PC looks at him with magical sight, they find that he glows with power and he seems to be wrapped in streams of cloud, as do his two sticks.



[The old man is nothing less than a Lunar storm focus, magically enchanted by priests in Jillaro for the express purpose of summoning the ancient storm horses to unleash their rains over the Singing Trail and funnel that water to Jillaro.]

## The Sudden Storm

Not long after they pass the man, they notice that the sky begins to darken. Looking west, they see that a storm is quickly approaching, black clouds racing quickly eastward. They hear thunder and then the clouds seem to be atop them. Any who have magical sight see a pair of gigantic black horses galloping eastward in the sky, shaking the air with their steps.

There is no way to leave the roadway here. The best they can do is shelter beneath the Sacred Road, though even there the sudden downpour catches them and soaks them through. The rain is heavy, pouring down in sheets so that visibility is minimal.

As they wait out the storm, anyone who makes a Listen roll hears a song refrain:

*"And the Bentanni come home no more. Yes, the Bentanni come home no more."*

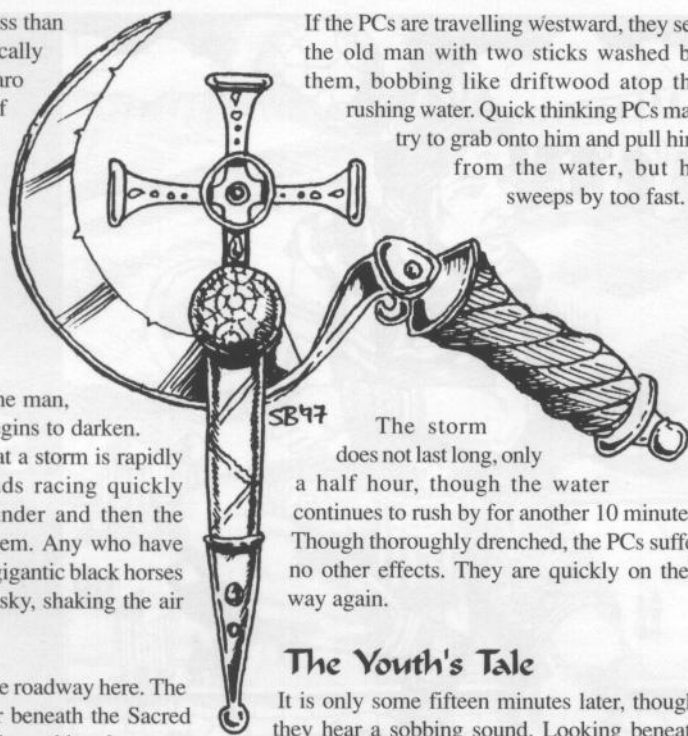
Those who make a special success here even more:

*"Aye, Gerath took up his spear. Aye, Gerath took up his shield. Oh, he cast aside plough and he cast aside sow And never again saw his field."*

Try though they will through the sound of the downpour and water rushing over the stones, they can discern no more of the song, though the melody seems to linger just on the edge of hearing. Those who succeeded at their Listen roll gain a cumulative 1% chance (2% for those with a special success) each day they are upon the Singing Trail of becoming haunted by the song. Should this happen, the PC acquires an overwhelming passion to either learn everything about the Bentanni or learn every verse of the song.

The rains continue. Anyone who makes a World Lore roll quickly realises that the roadway will soon be like a river course and that they should hold onto their goods. If the PCs don't think of this, everyone should make Luck rolls or find that something has been carried away to the west by the fast-flowing water.

If the PCs are travelling westward, they see the old man with two sticks washed by them, bobbing like driftwood atop the rushing water. Quick thinking PCs may try to grab onto him and pull him from the water, but he sweeps by too fast.



The storm does not last long, only a half hour, though the water continues to rush by for another 10 minutes. Though thoroughly drenched, the PCs suffer no other effects. They are quickly on their way again.

## The Youth's Tale

It is only some fifteen minutes later, though, they hear a sobbing sound. Looking beneath the Sacred Road, they find a boy around ten years old sitting and crying. He is distraught and it takes some time before they get his story out.

He tells them that he is poor, his father is dead and his mother is ill. He was given a magic arm-bone by an old woman who told him that the bone would make him rich. The bone, it seems, could divine the location of a water that would cure the King of Imther and make him fertile again, and for that cure the King will pay mightily. But with the sudden storm, the boy lost his grip upon the bone and it was carried westward. Now he believes it is lost forever, and his mother will surely die; unless, of course, the PCs can help.

The PCs can ignore the boy and his plea, but even they have heard how the King of Imther is barren and without heir, and has offered great riches from his treasury to the person who can cure him. If their Generous and Merciful nature is not invoked by the boy, surely their Greed will be.

## The Search

Obviously, the magic arm-bone has been washed westward down the road by the water. If the PCs just came from the west, they will be backtracking. They can search in any manner they deem appropriate, with whatever result the GM desires (since many odd things may have been washed down the trail), but eventually they find themselves approaching the mighty Imther Gate. This great marble arch soars over the Singing Trail. Enduring power radiates from each stone and the twin images of Hwarin and Memnon stand like giants keeping their eyes on all who pass

beneath. Curiously, though the roadway is wet, the Imther Gate appears dry, as does the rampway which leads down to the village below.

## The Old Man Again

Sitting under the entry of the Imther Gate shrine is the old man, looking as dry as can be, still beating his sticks together. But sharp-eyed PCs quickly note that one of the sticks is not a stick, but a bone! If the youth is with the PCs, he recognises it as his magic arm-bone when they point it out.

If the PCs ask the old man to give the bone back to the boy, the old man states that it is his. Arguing with the old man does no good, but if someone suggests a trade he replies that he'll accept nothing less than an equally good arm-bone while looking longingly at the arm of one of the PCs.

If the PCs try to seize the bone by force, they should first note that he does sit in the entryway to the shrine. Should they continue, the old man brings the bone and stick together quickly. Thunder booms and a force with a STR of 20 hits all the PCs. Those who fail a resistance roll with their SIZ are knocked down. If there are still PCs standing who try to leap or grab the old man, they find that touching the old man is like touching lightning, doing 1d6 damage each time they touch him. And should they cross the entry of the shrine, they are hit by the shrine's Warding spell.

Clearly, the PCs, if they are to help the youth, must find some way to trade for the magic arm-bone. There are any number of options the PCs could explore. Those who are particularly Cruel might seek out an animal or man whose limb they could use in exchange. Those who are Greedy might hunt up a nearby grave and dig up a bone. Someone who is particularly Generous might sacrifice their own limb. They might also offer a magic wand or similar item.

## Below Imther Gate

If the PCs are at a loss, they may think to ask the old man what he wants in exchange. He tells them that beneath Imther Gate, hidden by a great stone, is a cave in the hill beneath the gate and the roadway. Within the cave is darkness and water and five sets of bones. These are guarded by a great serpent. If the PCs free the bones from the serpent's lair, then the serpent will be transformed into a stick which he will accept in exchange.

The stone is not hard to find, but is harder to move, as it is SIZ 60. It takes two rolls of STR vs. SIZ to move the stone enough to reveal the hole. The hole itself is a half meter wide, large enough for one person only at a time. The cave behind is dark, with a small meter wide pool in its centre.





If light is brought in, the bones can be seen scattered about, as can the serpent. Collecting most of the major bones of each of the five victims is fairly easy, but it requires five successful Search rolls to find all the little bones.

The serpent is long, some eight meters, and its scales are all black. Though the serpent appears real enough, it is a spiritual manifestation of those who died here. The scales of the serpent convey an aura of Fear to any within two meters if its POW of 15 overcomes those within range. It bites anyone who disturbs the bones, once for each of the five skeletons and once for each Search roll attempted. Its bite is spiritual, not physical, and if it overcomes the target's POW, it eats 1d3 MP and 1d10 FP. The serpent can be affected by magic spells, but each attack upon it causes a black scale to flake off and attach itself to the attacker, making a black spot on a random location of the attacker's skin and randomly raising either the attacker's Vengeful, Lust, or Cruel trait by one. The serpent will not bite someone who successfully Sings while picking up or searching for bones.

If the PCs remove all the bones and bring them to the old man, the serpent sheds its skin to reveal a

foot-long wooden stick carved like moving snake. This stick is magical and has the power to Enhance Valour (at the cost of enhancing Cruelty).

### The Trade

Atop the Singing Trail, the old man is still in the same position as before sitting in the entry to the shrine, tapping the bone and stick together and humming a tune. If the PCs have an appropriate object to trade, the old man receives it in exchange for the youth's magical arm-bone. When the trade is complete, the old man smiles and shakes his head. He leaves the entry of the shrine and enters the shrine itself. The PCs do not see him again.

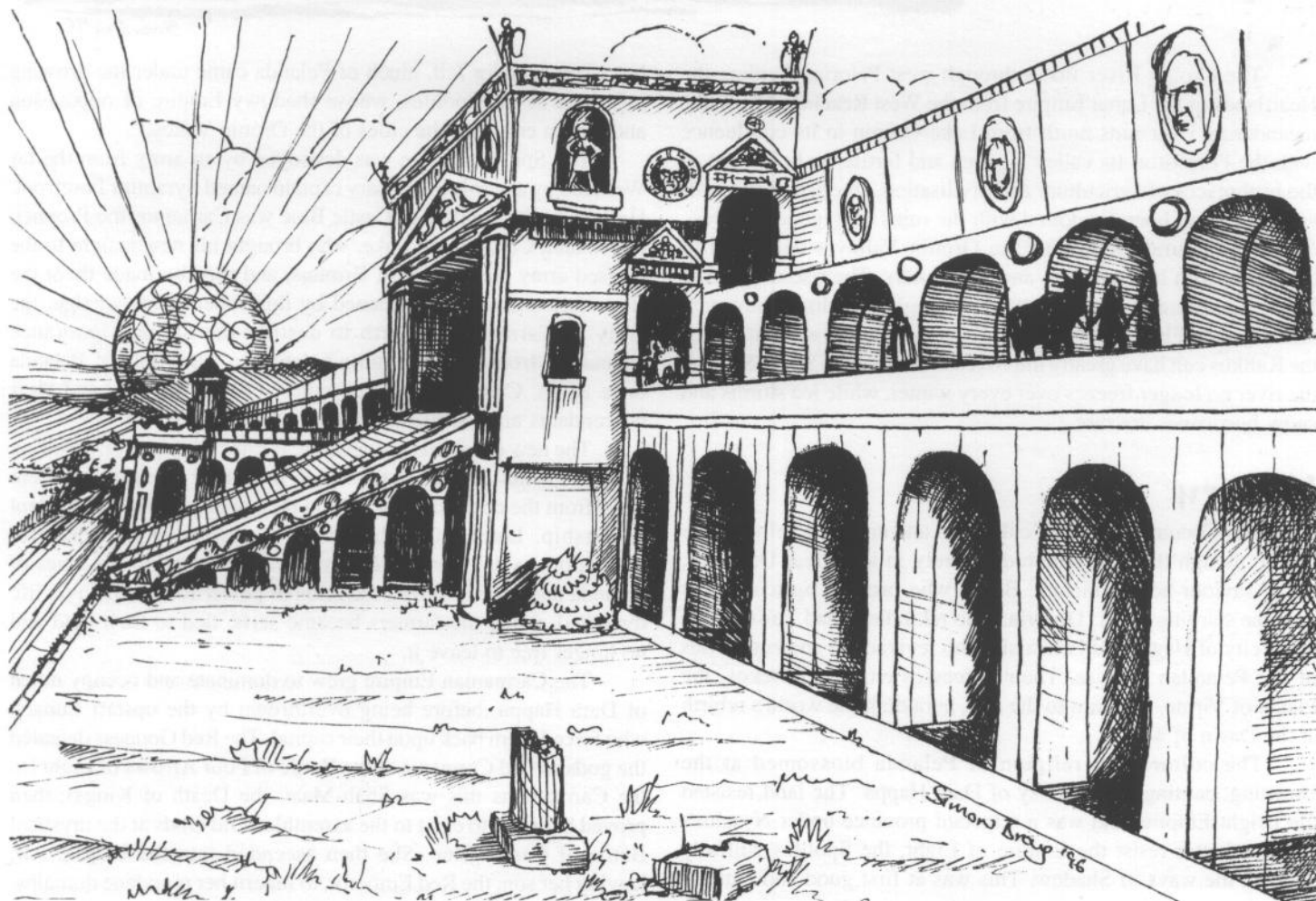
### Outcomes

Do the PCs keep the snake-stick and forget the exchange? If so, the youth yells after them that he hopes they get what they deserve. Do the PCs make an exchange but keep the magical arm-bone for themselves? The youth curses them to be devoured by the demons of their own desires if they do so. Do the PCs surrender something of themselves to make the exchange? If one does, then that person takes on the ability to Sense Storm at 1d10%. Do the PCs trade an object stolen to

make the exchange? If they do, they probably find themselves sought after by whomever they stole from. Do the PCs make the exchange and give the youth the magical arm-bone before heading on their own way? If so, the youth blesses them for their help. Do the PCs make the exchange and pledge to aid the youth in his quest? Then they follow the youth westward toward Jillaro.

### The Way to Jillaro

The magic arm-bone is drawn west, down the Singing Trail, across the Bridge of Phirmax, to the great city of Jillaro. There the magical arm-bone leads its holder to an establishment bordering Hwarin's Well called the Whispers. Within, exotic women dance upon platforms before crowds of men and women, periodically pulling someone forward to see and hear all. The dance of the exotic women is entrancing and passionate promises are whispered from the secret mouths the dancers reveal. How the PCs or the youth react depends upon their own Lusts and Passions. Should they find their way past this place of pleasure, the magical arm-bone leads down to the Oracle deep within Hwarin's Well, past the Terrors of the Pit. But that is another story...

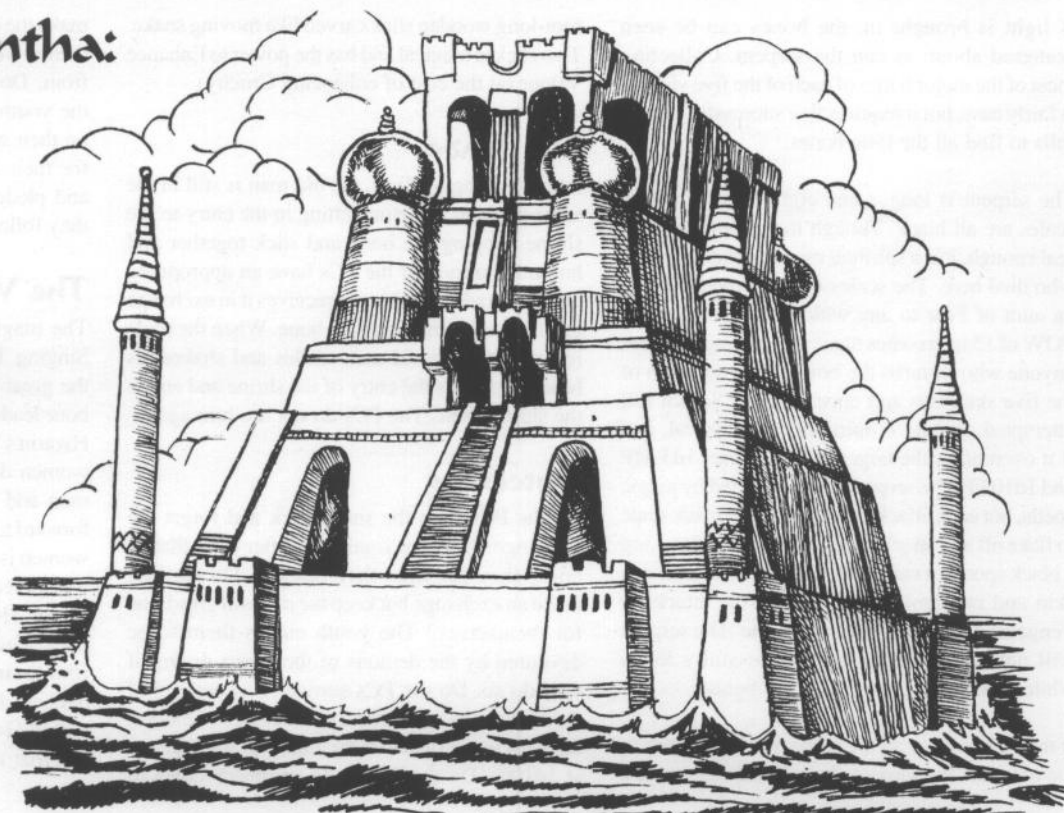




Holiday Glorantha:

# The Oronin Valley

by  
Nick Brooke  
and  
Greg Stafford



The Oronin River flows through west Peloria, dividing the Heartlands of the Lunar Empire from the West Reaches. The wide, meandering river runs north from Lake Oronin to its confluence with the Poralistor. Its valley is green and fertile, as befits one of the birthplaces of agriculture and civilisation, studded with towns and cities, and liberally dotted with the ruins of bygone empires.

The natural climate of the Oronin Valley would tend to extremes, with hot summers and icy winters. The rise of the Red Moon has altered weather patterns throughout Peloria, however, and since the Fifth Wane the successive Icebreaker expeditions of the Kalikos cult have greatly improved the climate in Storm Season: the river no longer freezes over every winter, while ice storms and snow hurricanes are rare.

## History

The Oronin Valley was cultivated and civilised before Time began, though the land suffered severely in the Great Darkness. Local saviour-heroes include Bisos, who brought agriculture to feed the starving cities; Deveria, who rekindled dead Tuross in the black city of Hagu; and Lendarsh, who revived the ancient glories of the Pelandan Empire. Their successes enabled Entekos, the Planet of Virtue, to return to the Sky, heralding the world's rebirth at the Dawn of Time.

The culture and religion of Pelanda blossomed at the Dawning, earning the jealousy of Dara Happa. The land resisted the Bright Empire, and was a reluctant province under Nysalor's rule. To better resist the Empire of Light, the Spolites willfully adopted the ways of Shadow. This was at first good and natural,

but when Nysalor fell, much of Pelanda came under the growing influence of the Spolites, whose shadowy Empire of oppression and gloom engulfed the cities of the Oronin Valley.

The Spolite Empire was destroyed by an army from the far West, led by a heroic mercenary captain named Syranthir Forefront. His son by the goddess of Castle Blue was Carmanos the Prophet, First Shah, Child of the Lake, who brought his new insight to the blessed army and people of Brinnus, and thereby made them the first 'Carmanians'. Strengthened by this superior knowledge, the army of Carmania set forth to destroy the Stygian ignorance emanating from Spol, bringing balance to the whole of Pelanda once again. Carmanos blessed other folks in his life, and their descendants are Carmanians too.

The new overlords changed the former social order: dwelling in lofty castles above rural estates, their new lifestyle set them apart from the common folk, whom they oversaw with benevolent leadership. Later, this relationship degenerated into prideful separation, as the Carmanian army ceased liberating the cities of Pelanda and instead seized the reins of power for itself. Civic life dwindled, while the farmers became serfs, tied to their land and no longer free to leave it.

The Carmanian Empire grew to dominate and occupy much of Dara Happa, before being overthrown by the upstart Lunars, who forced them back upon their capital. The Red Goddess defeated the gods of Old Carmania at the Battle of Four Arrows of Light (to the Carmanians this was Shah-Maat, the Death of Kings), then proved her right to exist to the assembled Old Gods at the mystical Battle of Castle Blue. She then ascended into the Middle Air, leaving her son, the Red Emperor, to inherit her mundane domains.





The Oronin River became the border between two hostile powers, the newborn Lunar Empire and the remnants of Old Carmania. Over the next half century, Lunar agents gradually eliminated the last heirs and claimants to the Carmanian throne in a campaign known as the Blood Kings' Wars, marked by courage and treachery, conversion and betrayal, vendettas and assassinations. The Great Houses of Carmania were formed in this period, as the oldest noble lineages surrounded themselves with only their most faithful retainers, defending themselves with seclusion, secrecy and suspicion.

Upon the suicide of the Prince of Worian, the last lineal descendent of the Bull Shahs, the two sides lapsed into a wary truce. For years the Magi of Carmania treated the Lunar Way as tantamount to heresy, and banished its temples and missionaries from the West Reaches wherever they could. Yet conflicts between the powers were henceforth fought by proxy. Most were feuds between converted and traditionalist Great Houses, confining themselves to the West Reaches. The last great conflict was the Bindle War of the mid-Second Wane, in the course of which vengeful Char-Un war-bands devastated much of Spol and Bindle.

After the conclusion of these wars, Aronius Jaranthir, a noble lord from Jhor who had seen the Lunar light, championed his beliefs before the Magi at Brinnus. His truth prevailed. The Red Moon Goddess won her place in the Carmanian pantheon, sitting at the left hand of Idovanus, and the Lunar Way won new followers in the west. Under the guidance of Aronius Jaranthir and his heirs, the cities and civic life of the West Reaches were restored and refined. This was accomplished with such success that in the Third Wane the Red Emperor awarded all the free inhabitants of the West Reaches the status of Citizen Foreigners of the Lunar Empire.

When the horse nomads of Pent invaded Peloria the cities of the lowlands suffered. The barbarians ravaged the Lunar Heartlands for almost a century, during which time thousands of refugees fled the Heartlands and Pelanda to the west, some crossing the Sweet Sea to found the Arrolian Colonies in Fronela. Others accepted the rule of Carmanian overlords and settled in the West Reaches, bringing a cosmopolitan mixture from the Heartland cultures to the cities of the valley.

Carmanians fought side by side with Lunars against the Horde led by Sheng Seleris. Aronius Jaranthir was born again, leading sorties down from the forts of the Brass Mountains to keep the nomads from the West Reaches. After a prolonged absence, the missing Red Emperor returned, wearing the mask of Magnificus, to fight and win the Battle of Kitor at the close of the Fourth Wane. Thereafter, Carmanian nobles helped him expel the remnants of the Horde from the Pelorian Bowl, and they were at the forefront of the Fifth Wane restoration of the cities, culture and life of the Lunar Empire.

Commerce with the Arrolian Confederation brought prosperity to the west, though when Arrolians returned to the Empire (fleeing the barbarous onslaught of the White Bear Empire) they were not permitted to return home, but sent instead to settle the Redlands, far to the east. But all such communications were broken when a magical catastrophe afflicted Fronela, making it impossible to cross the Sweet Sea, the Esel River or the Grey Mountains to reach the western lands.

Far to the east, Lunar settlements in the Redlands had provoked another desperate war against the horse nomads; the army of the West Reaches was deployed to fight in Pent, but suffered annihilation in the near-genocidal Battle of the Nights of Horror. This distant tragedy sowed the seeds of Carmanian decadence: deprived at one stroke of their most active members, and facing no immediate threats to their borders, the wealthier nobles of the West Reaches have retreated into luxury, devoting their lives to profitable frivolity, gambling and display. Their more traditional (or less successful) peers, incensed by the growing importance of "filthy lucre", keep alive the Old Ways of austerity, piety, and martial virtue.



## The Sacred Mountains of Wendaria

*Ancient Wendaria was defined by the Five Sacred Mountains: Jalardo in the north, Kagaran in the east, Gestinus in the south and Dobur in the west, with Mount Fire at the centre of their land. All five were prominent volcanic formations, thus sacred to Turos.*

**Mount Jalardo:** the largest of the Brass Mountains shelters the city of Kitor behind its precipitous cliffs.

**Mount Kagaran:** now known as Mount Jermotius, this peak in the Jernalf Hills is the seat of the Seven High Gods of Pelanda.

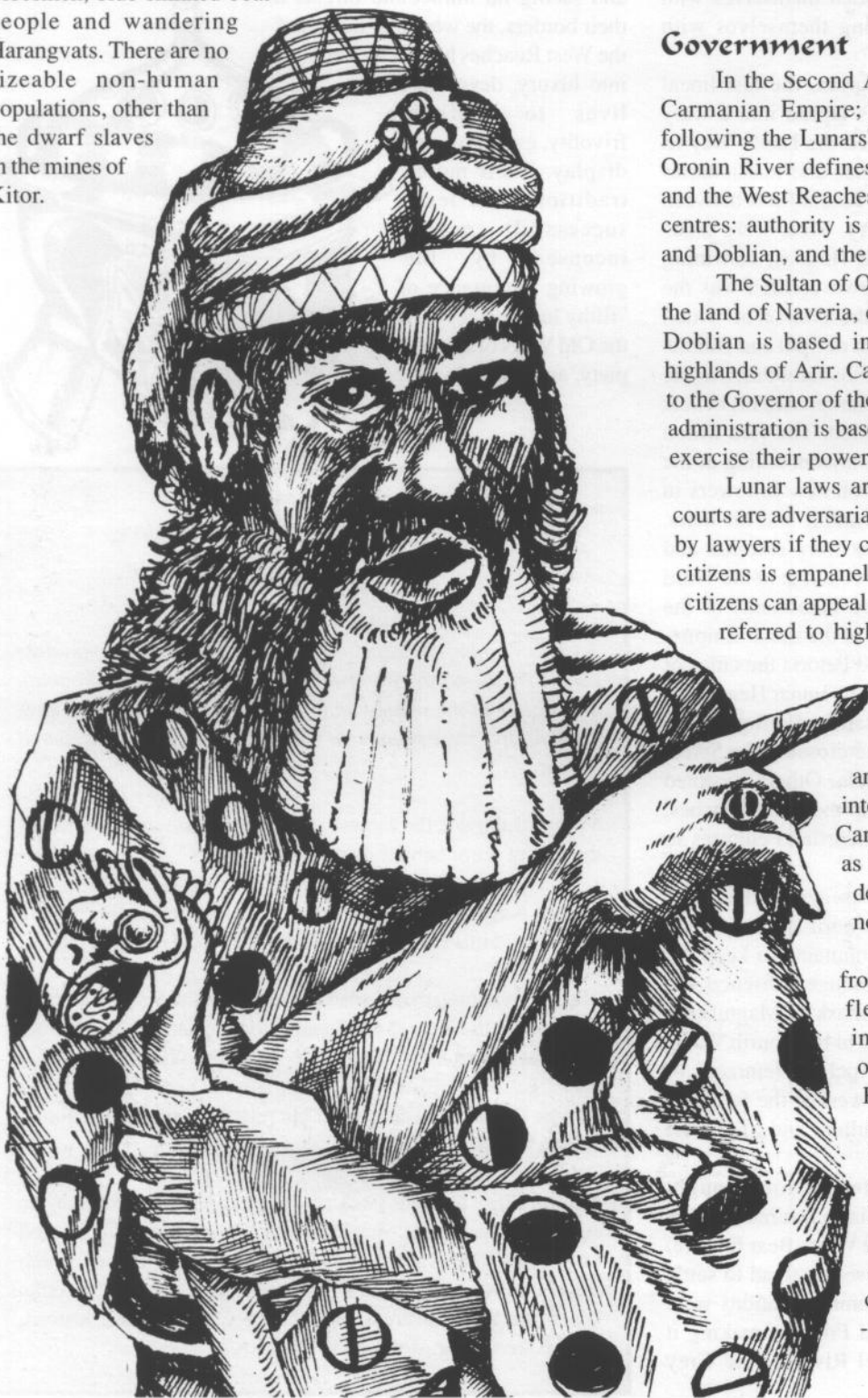
**Mount Gestinus:** the northernmost peak of the Yolp Mountains is no longer the highest mountain in that volcanic range, having been out-grown by its brothers in a Godtime rivalry.

**Mount Dobur:** this distinctive but relatively small rock dome-bubble is near Ajaak in the Worian hills.

**Mount Fire:** In early Godtime, a great volcano stood at the centre of Wendaria, mightiest by far of the Five Sacred Mountains. This was the home of Turos, God of Power, which stood until the assault of King Oronin and the Blue People. When the mists cleared, Mount Fire was no more: instead, deep Lake Oronin stood in its place.

## Inhabitants and Culture

Whether they are city-dwellers, valley farmers or highland freeholders, most natives of the Oronin Valley have similar ethnic origins. Their hereditary rulers are mostly Carmanian, with an administrative class of Lunar and Dara Happan officials east of the river and at Kitor. Significant minor groups include mountain tribesmen, blue-skinned boat people and wandering Harangvats. There are no sizeable non-human populations, other than the dwarf slaves in the mines of Kitor.



## Language

The native tongue of the Oronin Valley is Pelandan, a Pelorian farmer-language. New Pelorian, the official language of the Lunar Empire, is a closely related tongue, the most common second language in the Heartlands. Both Dara Happan and Carmanian are employed by the educated and noble classes. All four of these languages have well-developed written forms in everyday use.

## Government

In the Second Age the Oronin Valley was the heart of the Carmanian Empire; it has now been politically marginalised, following the Lunars' pragmatic policy of "divide and rule". The Oronin River defines the border between the Lunar Heartlands and the West Reaches. The valley is distant from political power centres: authority is split between the Lunar Sultans of Oronin and Doblian, and the Great Houses of the Carmanian nobility.

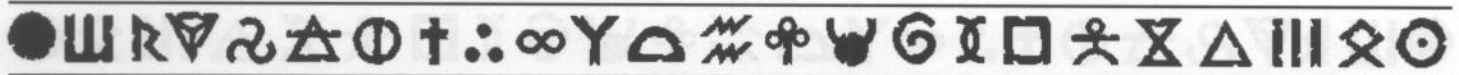
The Sultan of Oronin rules from the Red City of Carantes in the land of Naveria, east of Mount Jernotius, while the Sultan of Doblian is based in Doblian City, south-eastwards over the highlands of Arir. Carmanian nobles and satraps are accountable to the Governor of the West Reaches, an imperial appointee whose administration is based at Kitor. In practice, the Great Houses can exercise their powers with little restraint.

Lunar laws are overseen by appointed magistrates. The courts are adversarial, plaintiffs and defendants being represented by lawyers if they can afford them: in most civil cases a jury of citizens is empanelled to determine guilt or innocence. Lunar citizens can appeal against a court's decision and have their case referred to higher imperial authority: in the first instance, these would be the Sultans, or the Governor of the West Reaches.

Carmanian laws come in two types: commands and prohibitions called the White and Black Laws. These are based on scriptures interpreted by generations of learned scholars. Carmanian courts are inquisitorial: viziers act as investigators, with wide-ranging powers to determine the Truth. Citizen foreigners have no right of appeal against the outcome of a case.

Border controls exist on both sides of the frontier, to collect customs duties, apprehend fleeing criminals, and repel unwanted immigrants. Carmanian courts enforce their own traditional laws, which makes the West Reaches appear an attractive haven for fugitives from Lunar justice; on the other hand, serfs oppressed by harsh Carmanian masters may flee towards the comparative freedom of the Heartlands. Extradition procedures can be swift or lengthy, while disputes over which side has jurisdiction in a case can be curtailed or protracted indefinitely - for the right money, in every case.





## Military

The Lunar Heartland Corps rotates units throughout the Sultanates, and a permanent regimental garrison is stationed in Kitor (the Malachite Phalanx). Some of the Red Army's best troops are recruited in Pelanda. Border guards from the Black Army, the Empire's sinister internal security force, are present at all major frontier crossings. The Oronin River is patrolled by boats from the Blue Navy, making customs inspections and acting to suppress piracy and smuggling.

The Sultanates' private armies include militia raised from the local population, both brass-panoplied hoplites from the cities of the valley and highland skirmishers, the bisosae, in their bull-hide armour.

Each of the Carmanian Great Houses maintains a small force of cataphract cavalry armoured in coats of brass scale and armed with lance, sword and bow. These are supported by Pelandan infantry, similar to those found in the Sultanate militias, and by Char-Un light cavalry skirmishers from Erigia to the north.

## Religion

The native mythology of the Oronin Valley is highly complex and highly developed, and is described in Greg Stafford's recent book, *The Entekosiad* (available from the Reaching Moon Megacorp or Wizard's Attic). The most popular religions in the region today are the cults of Turos and Oriá, Charmain, the High Gods, Bisos and Eses, and the City Gods of Pelanda; these are described nearby.

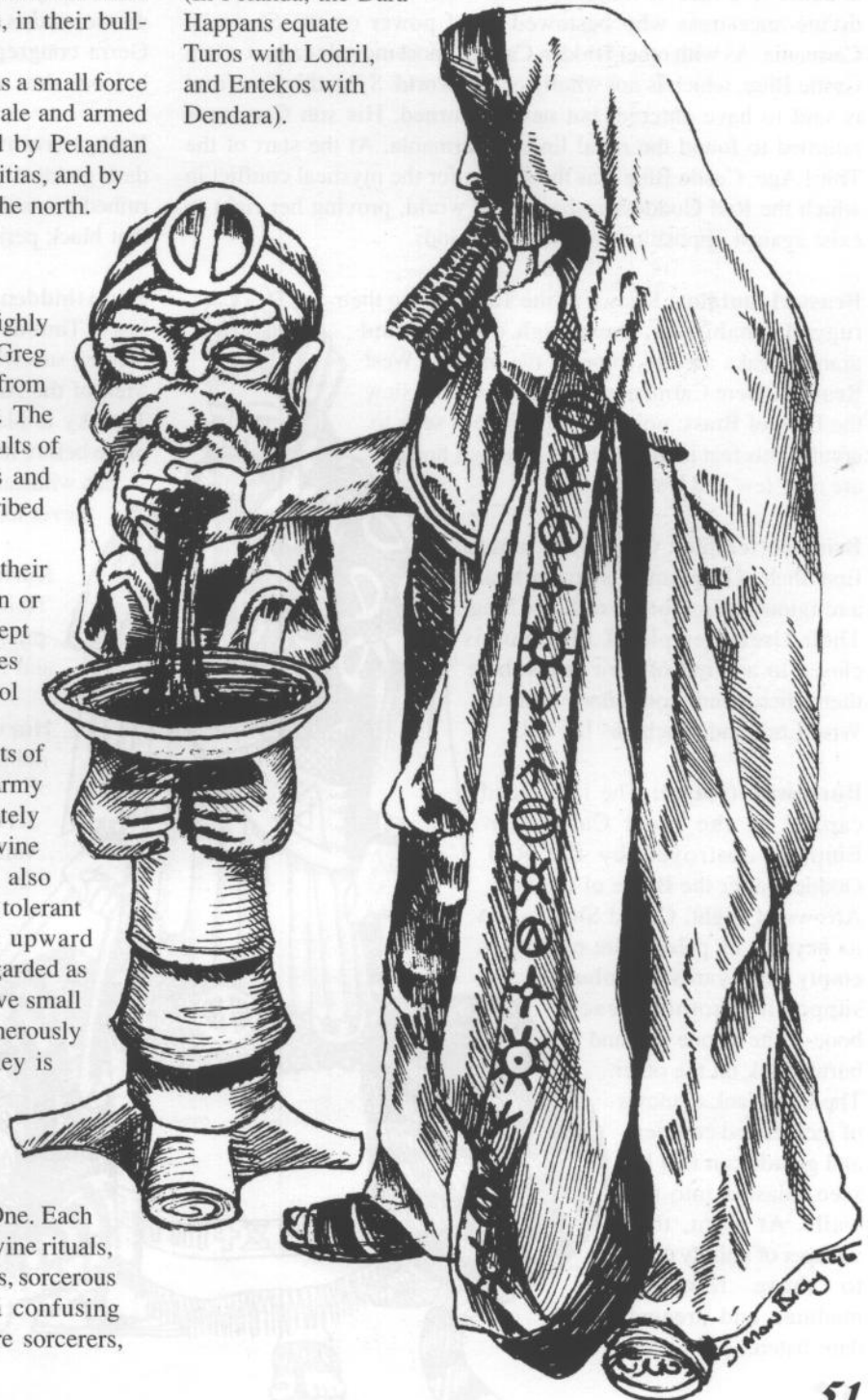
The ruling classes in the Oronin Valley follow their own religions, whether these are Lunar, Carmanian or Dara Happan. All three religions are willing to accept and incorporate the cults of Pelanda, though attitudes vary from open encouragement through strict control to neglect and even contempt.

Lunars may follow any of the various state-cults of their theocratic empire: though these range from army regiments to charitable institutions, all are ultimately devoted to the Red Moon Goddess and serve her divine son, the Red Emperor. Most Lunar worshippers also follow the gods of their homeland: the Lunar Way is tolerant and all-embracing, encouraging diversity and upward mobility. The local cults of Natha and Gerra are regarded as precursors to the Red Goddess, and though they have small followings, their congregations and temples are generously supported by the Empire. The whole Oronin Valley is within the Glowline, and Lunar cyclical magic is always at full strength.

Carmanians have a complex dualistic religion that centres around the conflict between Idovanus the Wise Lord and Ganesatarus the Evil One. Each Carmanian Great House jealously guards its own divine rituals, ancestor-cults, local spirits of place, mystical insights, sorcerous techniques and dualistic heresies, making for a confusing mixture of traditions. The Viziers of Carmania are sorcerers,

teachers and jurists. Only the Magi can worship Idovanus directly, and they strictly regulate the other cults of the West Reaches according to the will of the Wise Lord.

Dara Happan religion centres on Yelm the Sun God, ruler of the Divine World. The religion is centralised, hierarchical, patriarchal, and devoted to principles of purity and heredity that can seem absurd to outsiders. Peasants worship Yelm's brother Lodril, who is seen as an impure, inferior being. Other than Yelm's wife Dendara, most female deities are ignored, despised or feared. (In Pelanda, the Dara Happans equate Turos with Lodril, and Entekos with Dendara).





## Places of Interest

**Arir:** The highlands south-east of the Oronin Valley, part of Doblian Sultanate. This is a very rugged and broken country, unsuitable for agriculture.

**Balovius:** A small city on the middle Oronin. A single great pillar, the mighty trunk of an ancient stone tree, adorns its grand council chamber.

**Castle Blue:** This Hidden Castle behind the mists of Lake Oronin is home to a race of magical beings who include Charmain, the divine ancestress who bestowed royal power on the Shahs of Carmania. As with other Hidden Castles, most mortals cannot attain Castle Blue, which is not wholly of this world. Syranthir Forefront is said to have entered, but never returned. His son Carmanos returned to found the royal line of Carmania. At the start of the Third Age, Castle Blue was the setting for the mystical conflict in which the Red Goddess reshaped the world, proving her right to exist against opposition from the Old Gods.

**Brass Mountains:** Known as the Tarakolos to their rugged inhabitants, these high obsidian and granite peaks are the spine of the modern West Reaches. Here Carmanos tracked down and slew the Lion of Brass: noble hunting parties seek to emulate his feat in high summer, though lions are now few and wary.

**Brinnus (temple):** Capital of Carmanos, first Shah of Carmania, is now primarily a religious centre for the order of Magi. Their Great Temple of Idovanus is closed to any not of their ranks: here their Hierophant communes with the Wise Lord and proclaims his will.

**Burntwall (ruins):** The last proud capital of the great Carmanian Empire, destroyed by the Red Goddess after the Battle of the Four Arrows of Light. Called Shardash in its heyday, its palaces are now ruins, empty courtyards of columns supporting nothing, each bone-white on one face and burnt black on the other. The soot-black shadows of incinerated courtiers and guards can still be seen, blasted into the walls. At night, they whisper of unholy things to those few poets, madmen and dreamers who dare listen.

**Carmania:** Second Age manuscripts refer to the Oronin Valley as "Carmania". It was the heartland of the Old Kingdom. Nowadays, the term is more commonly used to refer to the West Reaches.

**Dendeno:** A city located where the Oronin flows into the Poralistor, with a view of Burntwall on the north bank. The wharves have prospered recently with the opening of trade across the Sweet Sea.

**Dezarpovo (temple):** This temple, called the Place of Tears, was restored by the Red Goddess in the Zero Wane after centuries of disuse, and is a centre for the Cult of Suffering. Worshippers of Gerra congregate at the Descending Pyramid to practice their hideous rites of self-mutilation.

**Enthyr (ruins):** Former capital of the Spolite Empire, where the dark goddess Oktaki was propitiated in the early Second Age: its ruined mausolea and sacrificial altars stand as grim reminders of that black period.

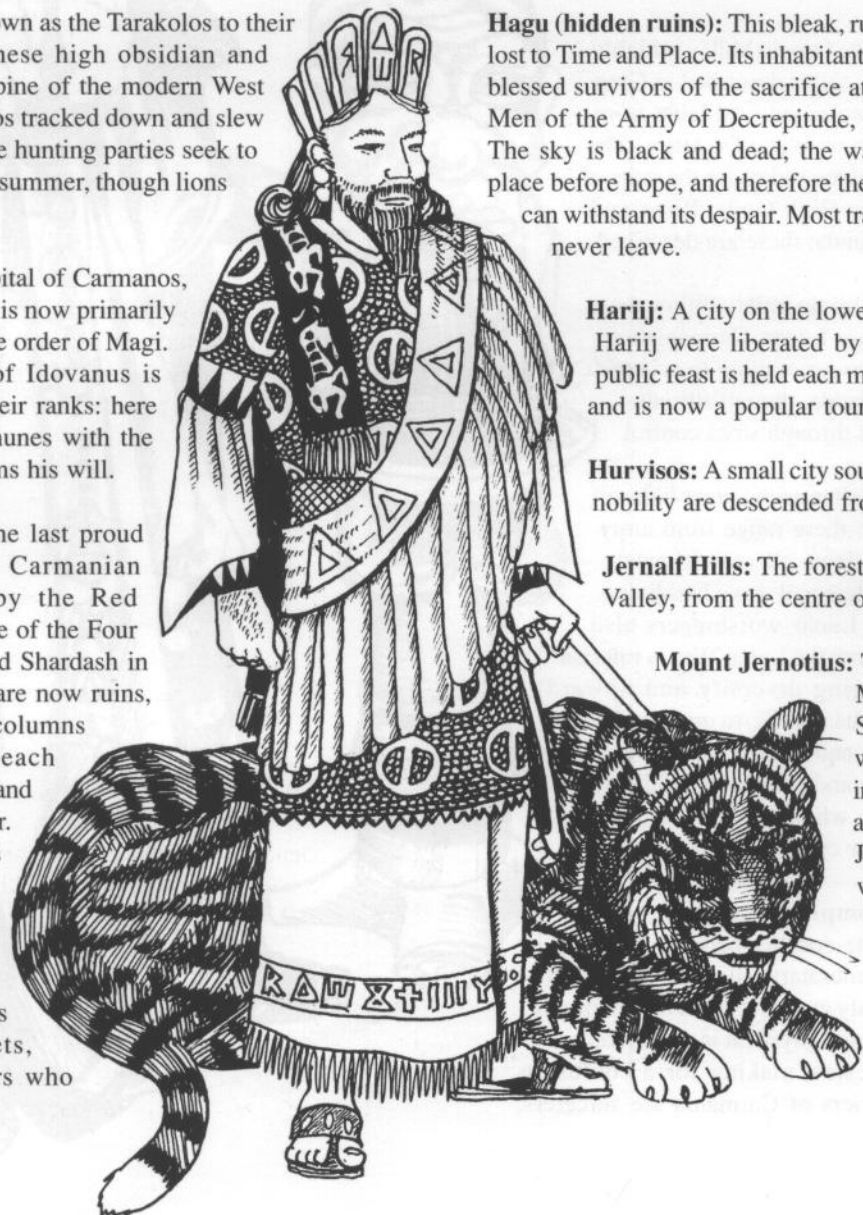
**Hagu (hidden ruins):** This bleak, ruined city of the dead is a ghost, lost to Time and Place. Its inhabitants are shades of the Underworld, blessed survivors of the sacrifice at Natha's Well, the burned Ash Men of the Army of Decrepitude, and others even more strange. The sky is black and dead; the waters dry as dust. Hagu is the place before hope, and therefore the source of Hope for those who can withstand its despair. Most travellers who chance upon Hagu never leave.

**Hariij:** A city on the lower Oronin. The Hungry Ones of Hariij were liberated by Lendarsh in the Grey Age: a public feast is held each midwinter to celebrate this event, and is now a popular tourist attraction.

**Hurvisos:** A small city south-west of Lake Oronin, whose nobility are descended from the bull-god Bisos.

**Jernalf Hills:** The forested highlands east of the Oronin Valley, from the centre of which rises Mount Jernotius.

**Mount Jernotius:** The seven peaks of this Sacred Mountain show the faces of the Seven High Gods, or so say their worshippers. Its slopes are inhabited by the mountain sages, ascetic devotees of the god Jernotius, an avatar of Rashoran who taught Illumination here in Godtime. An elect number become wandering monks, the embodiments of mystical peace and perfection. They are professional priests of the High Gods, respected throughout Pelanda.







**Jhor:** These bleak highlands west of the Oronin Valley were given by the grateful Pelandan cities to their Carmanian liberators in the early Second Age. The castles of Jhor, tucked amid forests and crags, are the oldest seats of the Carmanian nobility, and the austere values of old Carmanian tradition were shaped by this harsh country. This region is the heart of one of the four Satrapies of the West Reaches, ruled by Haraxalur the Bald.

**Karresh (temple):** This place in the Darsen highlands has been a sacred garden since Wendarian times, and is now celebrated in Carmanian religious poetry as the Paradise of Karresh.

**Kendesos:** This city on the upper Oronin was once the City of Torment, ruled by the Blue King, who was famous for inhuman cruelty. His sorcery prevented the High Gods from helping their people against him, until he was slain and his Blue People driven beneath the waters of the Sweet Sea by Jernotius, Daxdarius and Bisos. The city is home to the greatest legal school of Carmania, where viziers learn to interpret the Black and White Laws of the Old Kingdom.

**Keselia:** A small city situated where the Oronin River flows out from Lake Oronin.

**Kitor:** The legendary City of Brass is perched on the cliff-like slopes of Mount Jalardo. Its lofty minarets and brazen domes shine forth above defensive walls of granite, marble and obsidian, built by the greatest martial power of Second Age Peloria. Amid the baroque architecture of the outer city are scattered grotesque relics from the climactic battle of the Fourth Wane, when the Red Emperor lured forth Sheng Seleris and defeated him with Carmanian aid. Kitor is the centre of Lunar government in the West Reaches: Governor Palamtales holds court here, and the Temple to the Reaching Moon maintains the Glowline over all Carmania. Beneath Kitor is an underground labyrinth of mines, dug by dwarf slaves of a god known as Three-Eyed Piku. Bound by ancient oaths, their unceasing toil has equipped generations of warriors with arms and armour of shining brass.

**Meglardinth:** A city on the shores of Lake Oronin.

**Mintinus:** A small city on the shores of Lake Oronin, site of the largest temple to Bentus, the god of Pleasure, whose festivals are riotously popular.

**Natha's Well:** A great crater lies between Hagu and Gerra's Pyramid, with a steaming bog at its heart. In dire years, Natha's Well sends forth disease and death, unless its spirit is appeased by human sacrifice.

**Lake Oronin:** A caldera lake, in the shattered remains of Mount Fire's crater. King Oronin attacked Turos in his stronghold, and when the clouds of steam cleared, the mountain was no more: instead, deep Lake Oronin stood in its place. The waters constantly swirl with mists and steaming currents, fuelled by the fires that still burn beneath the earth in this, the former home of Turos, God of Power. In Syranthir's time the lake was home to magical fish of five colours, but none have been caught there since the Battle of Castle Blue.

**Oronin River:** In early Godtime the Blue People invaded Wendaria, streaming from the North towards Mount Fire. The course of their advance is now the Oronin River, which defines the boundary between the Lunar Empire and the West Reaches. This wide, slow, meandering river flows from Lake Oronin in the south to its confluence with the Poralistor in the north. The Oronin Valley is now a happy and prosperous region of the Lunar Empire, a popular destination for tourists, pilgrims, and the wealthy and retired. The banks of the river are decked with white-columned villas, ancient temples and picturesque ruins.

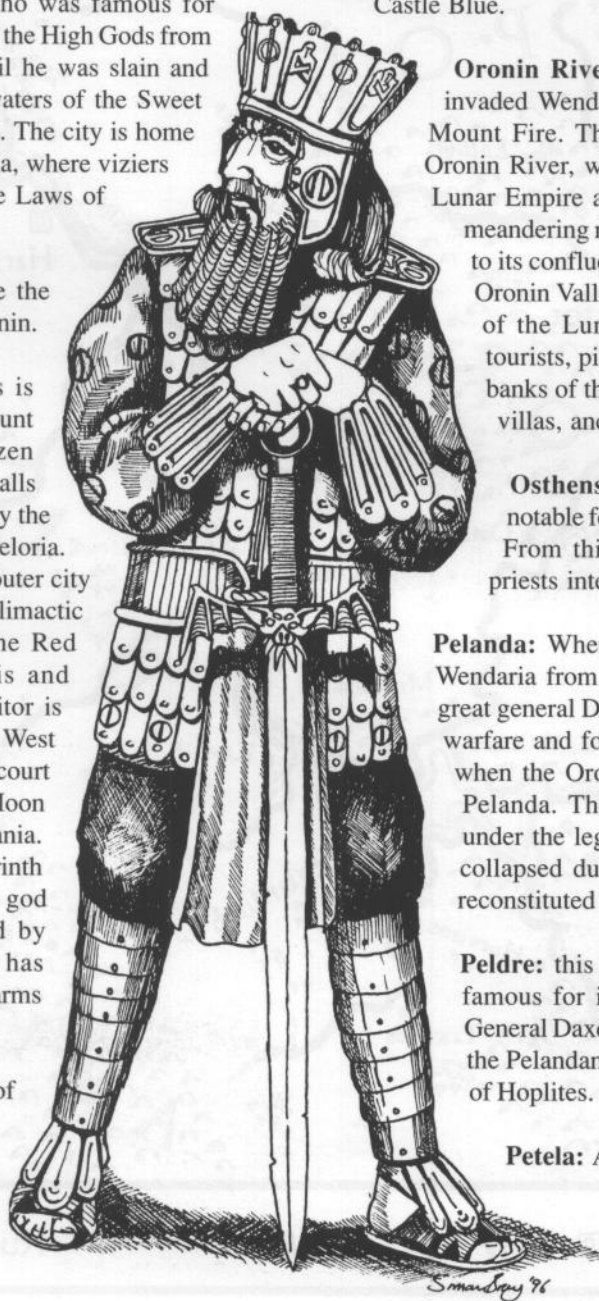
**Osthens:** A small city north of Lake Oronin, notable for a fissure split open by Turos the Shaker. From this the god speaks to pilgrims, and his priests interpret the oracles.

**Pelanda:** When the barbaric Andam Horde attacked Wendaria from the south, they were beaten off by the great general Daxdarius of Peldre, who invented hoplite warfare and forged an empire of city-states. This was when the Oronin Valley gained its modern name of Pelanda. The Pelandan Empire's culture flowered under the legendary King Garthemius the Wise, but collapsed during the Great Darkness and was only reconstituted at the Dawn by the great hero Lendarsh.

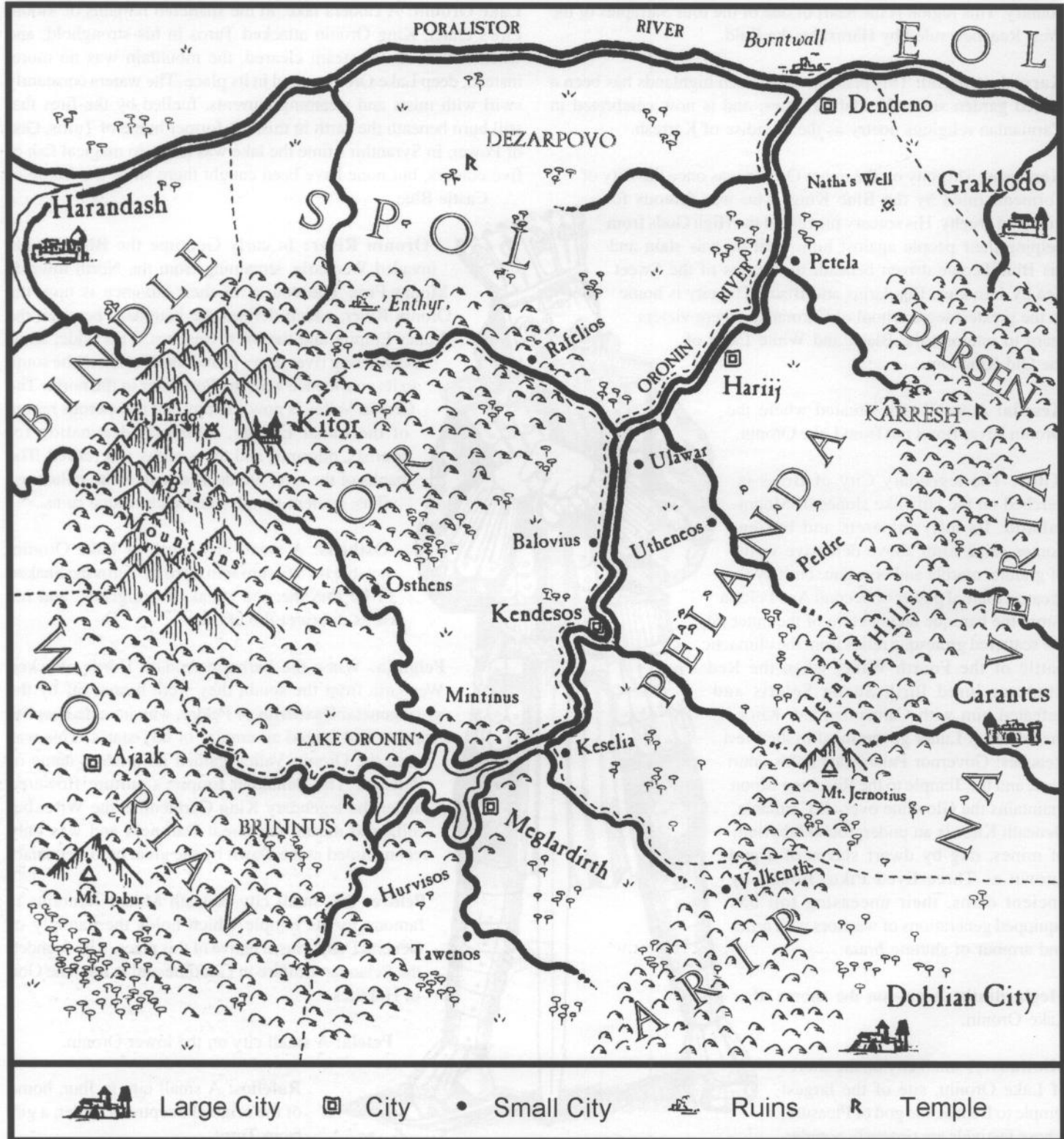
**Peldre:** this small city beneath Mount Jernotius is famous for its temple which holds the panoply of General Daxdarius, a native of this place, who founded the Pelandan Empire in Godtime and is now the God of Hoplites.

**Petela:** A small city on the lower Oronin.

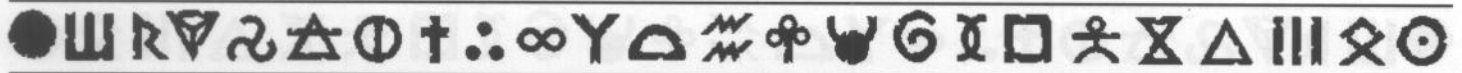
**Rafelios:** A small city in Jhor, home of the original Sceptre of Order, a gift from Turos.



# The Oronin Valley







**Spol:** The Carmanian satrapy north-west of the Oronin Valley, ruled by Yolanela the Taloned Countess.

**Tawenos:** A small city south-east of Lake Oronin, the ancient centre of the followers of Bisos and Eses, the Bull God and Cow Goddess, who brought meat, grain and beer to an oppressed land of starving cities and desperate survivors. They are still worshipped by highland freeholders, soldiers and nobles in Worian and elsewhere.

## Oronin Valley: Regional Events Table

*Determine weekly for every city. You may also use the Event Tables for Carmania (west bank) and Peloria (east bank) in the Genertela Book of Glorantha: Genertela, Crucible of the Hero Wars.*

### Common Events

- Wealthy tourists arrive from the Lunar Heartlands, sightseeing and enjoying the local festivals.
- Pious pilgrims pass through town, on their way to visit a nearby shrine or holy place.
- Priests perform a quaint ceremony: crowds attend, and the rite concludes with feasting and revelry.

### Uncommon Events

- A religious teacher passes through, mobbed by would-be students and old-fashioned critics.
- A boatload of fugitives crosses the river to escape justice, with border guards in hot pursuit.
- Outlaws raid nearby: military patrols are sent out, and towns become more suspicious of strangers.
- Local rulers impose new customs duties, tolls, tariffs and taxes to increase their revenues.

### Rare Events

- Castle Blue is glimpsed through the mists of Lake Oronin; lakeside cities offer prayers and sacrifices.
- A full-blown Dart War breaks out between two Great Houses, with assassinations and raiding.
- A foolhardy party of tourists disappears while visiting Burmtwall, Hagu, or a similar location.
- The Governor of the West Reaches holds court at Kitor: Carmanian nobles must journey to attend.

### Winter Events (Dark & Storm season only)

- Uncommon - deep snowfall blankets the land, making travel difficult or impossible.
- Uncommon - an Ice Demon stalks the hills nearby; locals assemble an expedition to hunt it down.
- Rare - the Oronin River freezes over, with ice thick enough to cross: frontier controls cease to operate.

**Ulawar:** This small city on the central Oronin River boasts the world's oldest temple to Uleria, goddess of Love, which has made it a favorite resort spot for the Lunar nobility. Few who can afford it can resist a visit to the House of Anomaly, where they can drink wines whose flavors can be described only in poetry, eat food which induces fantastic bodily reactions, have sex with a third gender, or perform ejem with creatures from other worlds. (Ejem is a sort of dance, mind meld or auditory banquet, whose completion induces an unexplainable, but very pleasant and long-lasting experience).

**Utheneos:** Small city on a tributary of the Oronin Valley, with historic ties to Ulawar. The younger citizens are famed for their beauty and passionate love affairs. Their elders devote their time to chess problems.

**Valkenth:** A small city in the highlands of Arir, on the trade road from Dobljan to the West Reaches.

**Wendaria:** The ancient name for western Peloria, including what later became the Oronin Valley. The Wendarians worshipped the god Turos, who dwelt within Mount Fire; four other Sacred Mountains defined the boundaries of their land.

**West Reaches:** The westernmost lands within the Glowline but beyond the Lunar Heartlands.

**Worian:** The Carmanian satrapy south-west of the Oronin Valley, ruled by Moralatap of the Anger. The highlands of Worian are a stronghold of the bull folk, worshippers of Bisos and Eses.





## Common Gods of the Oronin Valley

**Turos and Oria:** These popular deities are the two greatest gods of Pelanda, and are worshipped together by most farmers, commoners and crafters of the Oronin Valley.

Turos is the Great God of Pelanda, manifest in many forms and identities, and associated with columns, sceptres, spears and torches. Turos is the God of Power: he raised the mountains, carved the valleys, and shaped the first temples. He defeated Dardromus in the Underworld to liberate Oria and the other goddesses of Life: though Oria is his wife, he has children by many others.

Oria is the Great Mother. Her broad sweep includes all forms of nourishment, so she is worshipped with the cow, sow or ewe goddess as appropriate. Worship of Oria includes ancient rites forgotten powers of the Old Earth. She has many husbands and sons, and is usually worshipped in conjunction with them, making her one of the most widely worshipped deities in the Lunar Empire, with temples throughout the Heartlands and beyond.

**Charmain:** a mysterious goddess from Castle Blue. To the Carmanians, she is Mother of the Prophet and Spirit of Sovereignty; she gave Syranthir Forefront's Akemite army their identity as 'Carmanians' and their son Carmanos was given rule over all Pelanda.

The cities around Lake Oronin worship her as the inspiration of the Liberators: this group of heroes includes the first Shahs of Carmania, and in modern times Aronius Jaranthir and the Red Emperor.

The river people of the Oronin valley worship her for her command of the waters, praying for swift travel, favourable currents, and plentiful fish.

### The High Gods

These seven deities are worshipped together around Mount Jernotius, while the individual gods' cults and temples are found in most Pelandan cities. The Prophet Idomon taught the rituals of the High Gods, and though some of them were slain or displaced in Godtime, Lendarsh reinstated their rites when the world was reborn at the Dawning.

**The High Gods are:** Jernotius the Liberator; Dendara, Goddess of Virtue; Idovanus, God of Order; Uleria, Goddess of Love; Bentus, God of Pleasure; Oria, Goddess of Success; and Turos, God of Power.

Jernotius is the Great Teacher, an Avatar of Rashoran the Changing Deity. Both god and goddess, Jernotius changed sex often. No other deity could do this, but Jernotia considered it of little consequence, just one of many strange powers which she had, but did not use. Jernotius teaches self-restraint, austerities and penances to his devotees, the mountain sages.

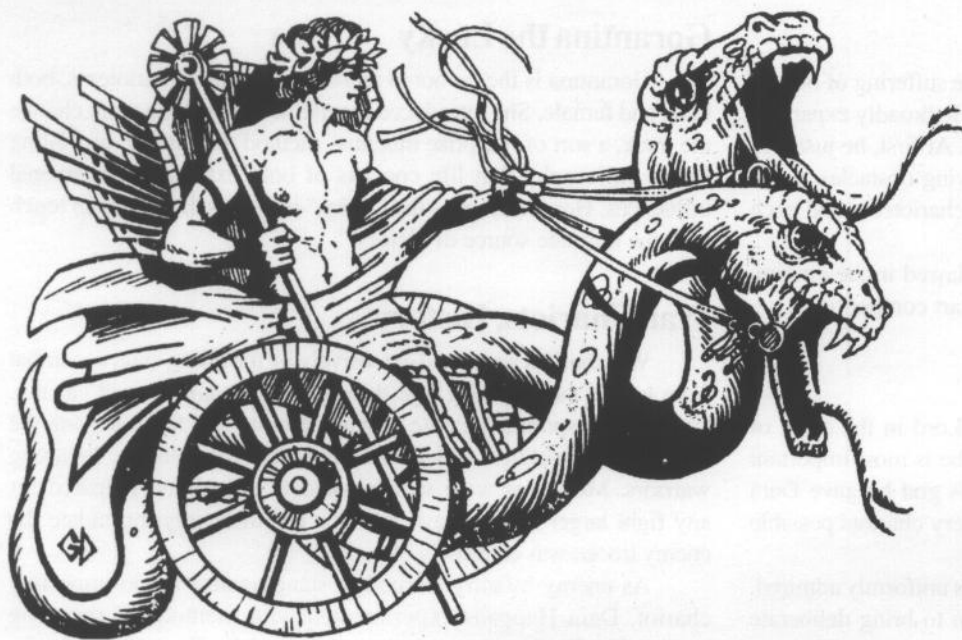
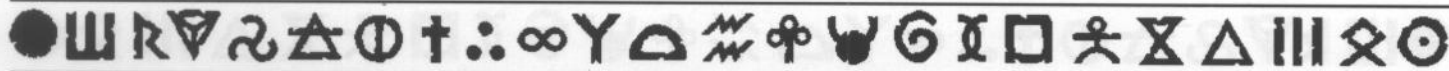
The High Gods were the ancient pantheon of Pelanda. In ancient times, the wisdom of Jernotius spread far, wide and thick. Other deities came to sit at his feet upon Mount Jernotius, and learn. They formed the Jernotian Ring, which preserved ancient Pelanda until the gods were betrayed and destroyed. Now the whole pantheon is worshipped only by the common folk who live around the mountain, though all of its members are worshipped individually elsewhere.

Daxdarius, God of War, and Natha, Goddess of Balance and Nemesis, forced their way onto the Ring during Godtime and are still considered High Gods by their devotees, though they fell from the pantheon when Lendarsh restored the ancient rites of Idomon.

**Bisos and Eses:** the worshippers of the Bull Father and Cow Mother are predominantly agrarian, although many nobles, soldiers and freeholders also worship the Sacred Pair: these can trace their descent from the god, and claim the right to bear arms and determine their own destiny. Bisos arrived late in the Darkness and is regarded by Carmanians as the Right Hand of Idovanus, one of the Creator's primary helpers on earth. He is the Noble Ancestor of many Carmanians and Protector of the Shah, and in that loyal service he continues to serve the Red Emperor. Bisos is also the Mediator, the sacrificial bull who carries messages between men and the gods.

**City Gods:** KetTuros and KetEnari are Pelandan city gods, with a shrine in every city dating to Carmanian times. They protect the walls and gates, and can be invoked by civic magistrates to uphold public order.





# Chariot Gods

by  
Greg Stafford

## Yelm and the Imperial Chariot

Yelm brought the first chariots to mankind. When Most High Yelm descended from the Sky World He paused upon the Footstool for the Enthronement Creation. Then He stepped down again, not upon the ground, but upon His Imperial Chariot, a vehicle perfectly made of fiery living gold and drawn by four angels and two others which look like six white horses. It is a poor imitation of the Chariot of God which traverses the sky each day, but as magnificent as the mundane world could bear. When the High One ascended again, the chariot called Living Gold was left behind to convey His magnificence to those who came afterwards.

The Imperial Chariot conveyed only Grand Murharzarm, Son of Yelm and the First Emperor. After his death the Living Gold bore lesser beings and was damaged every time.

When the Rebels began War, the brave sons and grandsons of Murharzarm made copies of the Living Gold for themselves. These sons of the Emperor and their sons used Hero Chariots which could sometimes speak, and were often drawn by celestial creatures which rode upon water or air as if it were land.

When War fell upon mankind, ordinary people were also armed, and aped their betters in manners and warfare. Under Lukarius the Good Land obeyed custom, so that only the descendants of Murharzarm rode War Chariots drawn by great white horses. Grays drew the vehicles of their married kin and of their households, and the many shades of brown were invented to bear the soldiery which Emperor Urvairinus developed.

Throughout the wars the Imperial Chariot was damaged, then chipped apart. No intact wheeled vehicles survived after the Dome broke. All knowledge (and life) was lost in the Darkness. Parts of the chariot were cherished by desperate people who did not even know the truth about the sacred item they bore. Jenarong the Awakener recognised the axle, and began the long reconstruction of the sacred vehicle. At last, Emperor Yelmgatha the Finisher found the final pieces, and Living Gold bore him to the Sky World.

## Jenarong, the Great Charioteer

Emperor Jenarong, who we call the Awakener and the New Murharzarm, found the axle pole of the Imperial Chariot, and had it installed in his personal vehicle and set six white horses to harness. For this great resurrection, Jenarong is the first and greatest patron of chariots, and receives sacrifice from all other chariot gods, as well as in his own right at the start of all races.

Jenarong instituted the first Imperial races between nobles of his cities. He set up the sun-rune shape for the race tracks, called a circus, with a tall pillar with a statue of Yelm in the centre. Different categories of races were determined by the number of horses and size of the track. Drivers used whatever natural and supernatural abilities they had. Drivers bore no weapons. Interaction between drivers is forbidden. A panel of judges always watches to decide on any irregularities, and is notoriously conservative in judging even against accidents.

## Khorisimus the Superior Racer

Khorisimus was one of the Superior Men who lived in the reign of Khorzanelm the Magnificent and the best charioteer that lived in that epic time. He instituted the style of racing called Severe Racing. (The traditional date for this is 111,380). In this style the track shape varied, but especially different were the obstacles which were set along the track to test the vehicles, steeds and drivers. Exotic creatures are allowed, and in earliest times even encouraged. Chariots of unusual design are allowed, as long as the wheels remain on the ground most of the time.

This style is also called Apple Blossom Racing. Since Khorisimus was the son of Hercine, a nymph of the apple trees in Darjiin, he planted those trees on all his tracks. Even today the Severe Winners still receive wreaths of apple blossoms as awards. The fragrant victory wreaths never fade until the winner dies.



## Fahyenharr, the Wrong Turn

Fahyenharr, a Spolite, cared nothing for the suffering of others. Death and sorrow were entertainment for him. He broadly expanded the spectacles of Shargashite sacrificial combat. At first, he just sent animals and prisoners out upon the track as living obstacles. Later he allowed them to be armed and to fight the charioteers and each other.

This style, Fahyenhite racing, is now outlawed in the empire, although a similar type of event occurs in the dart competitions.

## Deretinus the Combatant

Deretinus was a courtier and great War Lord in the court of Emperor Elmexdros (c. 111,775). Historically, he is most important for his application of chariots to war. From his god he gave Dara Happans the tools and spells which make artillery chariots possible (see below).

Deretinus impact on chariot racing is not as uniformly admired, since he was the first respectable Dara Happan to bring deliberate conflict to the race track. Deretinus changed racing by allowing charioteers to fight each other. The resulting form of combat racing was further complicated by Deretinus' innovation of the Circus Mutatus. In the Circus Mutatus, the judges who had formerly served only as arbiters of proper racing form are empowered to arbitrarily change the nature of the track with their own magics. At the peaks of Dara Happan decadence, judges of the Circus Mutatus tend to stop co-operating as a unit and compete with one another to rearrange the track.

Such excesses encouraged Emperor Karsdevesus' radical reform of racing during his Millennial Purification (in 112,000). Karsdevesus is noted for saying "The circus is not a battlefield," and he outlawed all forms of racing except an extremely straight-laced variant of circus racing called Harmony Racing which he claimed to have recovered from ancient times. In Harmony Racing, chariots race side-by-side in a straight line, "like the Harmony Rune." Ideally, the dignified panel of judges need only congratulate the victor.

Fortunately for the fans of the more exciting forms of racing, Karsdevesus' successors made many exceptions to his reforms, and Harmony Racing is only rarely practised in modern Dara Happa.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.6b] "A little learning is a dangerous thing," as Irrippi Ontor tells us. Our sublime Red Emperor has abolished automatic adjudication based on wealth and class for all Lunar Citizens, and guilt or innocence in the lower courts is nowadays established not by Dara Happan magistrates but by juries of seven good free persons, all Citizens and honourable. Lunar Citizens have also been granted the right of appeal, through a series of increasingly powerful (and expensive) courts.  
*Rumpilius of the Bay-Leaves*

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.6c] *Addendum by Petro Chelli, temple jurist.* Note that in Red Fish and a number of other Dara Happan cities, traditionalists have subverted this practise by instituting 'professional jurors', typically men of the highest caste, whose verdicts almost invariably mirror the ways of old.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.6d] *Rumpilius replies:* in some West Pelorian cities, the whole populace can sit on any jury, and cast their pebbles for guilt or innocence. Moonson, in his Perfection of Balance, has taken the middle path between these extremes.

## Gorantina the Lucky

Gorantina is the favoured patroness of Lunar charioteers, both male and female. She introduced the use of her own magic to change the track, a sort of "surprise mutatus" method that fits the prevailing Lunar philosophy that life consists of both external and personal influences. Her nickname, "the Lucky," indicates that she is in touch with the ultimate source of victory.

## War Chariots, History

War chariots were used extensively by the ruling class in combat from before the Jenarong Age through to the adaptation of cavalry. Chariots transported the elite warriors around and for scattering the hordes of foot soldiers which characteristically resisted the Jenarong warriors. Most foes were so inadequately armed and prepared for any fight larger than a brawl that this use to mainly intimidate the enemy troops was extremely effective.

As enemy infantry learned to stand against a non-impacting chariot, Dara Happans experimented with methods of restoring battlefield effectiveness to their sacred vehicle. For a time, chariot riders used longer and longer poles to spear the leading enemy troops. When this proved impractical, the blades were affixed to the chariot itself. Variants of this approach included a pitchfork-style horizontal sweep with multiple heads and a ram-style wedge-cutter with multiple scythe blades sticking out in front. Eventually a light wall was made to protect the horses, and the chariot's body functioned more as a counterweight to this moving wall than as a battlecab. None of these spectacular vehicles lived up to the glories of their predecessors; even the Elmexdros Roll's hymns to Dara Happan military glory fail to credit them with any victories.

Use of the chariot waned steadily after the adaptation of cavalry, particularly after the adaptation of stirrups. Eventually chariots were used only for ceremonial purposes and to transport some of the ancient battlefield regalia.

Deretinic chariots were a more successful experiment. Deretinus mounted heavy missile machines and multiple arrow shooters upon sturdy chariots that were capable of rapid movement and deployment. These are still used today, but rarely, since they require skilled technicians capable of using the unique magics necessary to stabilise the equipment.

## A Plea to All Artists!

We are looking for more Gloranthan artists to help illustrate the zine and our other books and publications. If you think you can draw for Tales then please send a photocopied sample of your work to David Hall at the editorial address. Remember that if your artwork sees publication you'll get a FREE issue of Tales as well as adulation and fan worship from the Gloranthan masses!



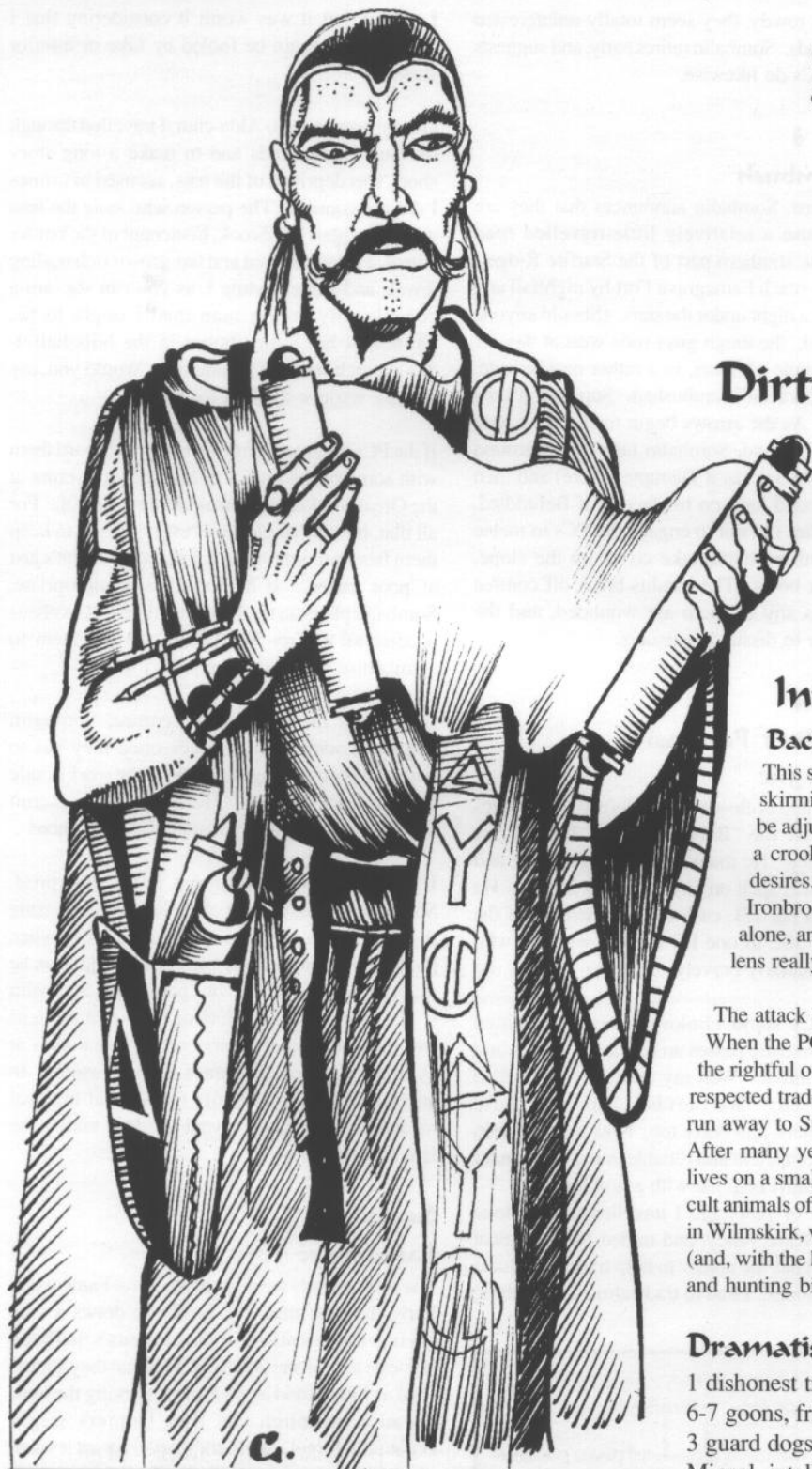
# Starry Eyes

Double Crossing

-&-

## Dirty Deals in Dragon Pass

By Torbjörn Andersson  
translation by MOB



### Introduction

#### Background for the GM

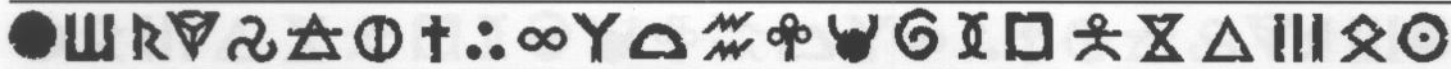
This scenario is designed for inexperienced characters. The first two skirmishes are not designed to test their combat abilities, and should be adjusted to the strength of the group accordingly. Sombalin Letor is a crooked trader who isn't always bothered to pay for the things he desires. This time he wants a magic lens, which belongs to Krontheus Ironbrook. Sombalin fears Krontheus enough to not want to tackle him alone, and has therefore decided to persuade some faithful jerks that the lens really belongs to him.

The attack on the second day is a ruse, stage by Sombalin's accomplices. When the PCs 'save' him, he then has a reason to 'trust' them. Krontheus is the rightful owner of the lens, which is a family heirloom. His is an old and respected trader family, but Krontheus is something of a black sheep, having run away to Sun County (Dragon Pass) as a youth to join the Yelmatio cult. After many years of devoted service he attained Light Son status, and now lives on a small estate on the border of Sun County breeding vrok hawks, the cult animals of Yelmatio. Currently he is with the six Templars of his household in Wilmskirk, where they are reinforcing the city guard during the Great Market (and, with the help of a Lokamos merchant selling their excess stock of hawks and hunting birds).

#### Dramatis Personae

- 1 dishonest trader, Sombalin Letor.
- 6-7 goons, friends of Sombalin.
- 3 guard dogs.
- Minzal, intelligent and talkative vrok hawk.
- Olos, the old hawkmaster.
- Tagbar and Fered, Olos's young apprentices.
- Ailena and Masyne, housekeepers.
- Jason and Genodel, Sun Dome militiamen.
- 1 enraged Light Son, Krontheus Ironbrook.
- 6 Sun Dome Templars, under Krontheus's command.

*Are your players of the kind who are always ready to help the misunderstood and maltreated? Who trust anyone they encounter who doesn't look shifty or hostile? This scenario is designed to make such players a bit more cautious when making new acquaintances.*



## Act 1

### The Troubled Trader

#### Scene 1

##### Tin Inn, Apple Lane

The player characters are contacted by Sombalin Letor, a trader looking to hire guards for a trip to Wilmskirk. He buys drinks all round, always a good way to begin negotiations. Sombalin has heard rumours about bandits on the road between Runegate and Famegrave Fort, a three day journey. Payment is 2L a day, 10L if there's trouble. Food is included. Sombalin tried to tempt them, by saying things like:

\*The weapon smiths in Wilmskirk are renowned for their quality weapons.

\*You'll get good prices on anything you want, as competition is real fierce during the Great Market.

Should the PCs express interest in any particular item, he assures them that it is available there (eg. "...know just the man to fix you up with a decent horse, owes me a favour too." ). He promises to spend some time with them at the market, helping them negotiate a good deal on anything they're after. Try to make the PCs accept his offer because they are tempted by his promises and like him, rather than just for the pay.

#### Scene 2

##### Travelling to Grey Dog Inn

Sombalin has two pack mules, one loaded with rolls of cloth, the other with assorted knickknacks. Like the PCs, he walks. The impression given is that he is not an especially wealthy trader. The PCs may think this is to fool potential bandits, but it is in fact true. Sombalin hopes though, that once he gets the lens his fortunes will improve. The first day passes without incident, and the party reaches Grey Dog Inn at dusk. Here the PCs can relax, quaff a couple of pints and chat with the locals (for more information on Grey Dog Inn, see "Holiday Glorantha" in *Tales of the Reaching Moon* #5). Apart from the locals, a group of tough guys is present. Although their presence is

somewhat rowdy, they seem totally uninterested in our friends. Sombalin retires early, and suggests that the PCs do likewise.

#### Scene 3

##### The Ambush

At breakfast, Sombalin announces that they are going to use a relatively little-travelled road through the southern part of the Starfire Ridges, in order to reach Famegrave Fort by nightfall and thus avoid a night under the stars. (Should anyone think to ask, the tough guys rode west at dawn.) After a couple of hours, in a rather narrow vale, the small caravan is ambushed. Surprise, it's the toughies. As the arrows begin to fly and magic crackles all round, Sombalin falls to the ground clutching his leg (as if Disrupted there) and then has that dazed look on his face as if Befuddled. Five rowdies run out to engage the PCs in melee while another couple take cover up the slope, using their bows. The bandits break off combat as soon as any of them are wounded, and the archers try to dissuade pursuers.

#### Scene 4

##### Sombalin's Persuasive Monologue

Once the fight is close to over, Sombalin manages to shake off the "Befuddle", and "Heals" his wounded leg. He thanks the PCs profusely, and uses his Heal spell on anyone badly injured. He then hands out 15L cash to each member of the party, and 30L to one PC if there was one who acted particularly bravely.

As the PCs stand clinking their new-gained wealth, Sombalin passes around the wineskin and clears his throat. "Well my friends, you handled that excellently. One can't help but notice you're canny fighters, and brave too. Now that I've seen just how competent and reliable you are, I wonder if you mightn't help me with a problem?

A number of years ago I travelled to the Stone Cross in Beast Valley, and traded for a magical lens which has the ability to help traders evaluate precious stones. I had to trade almost everything

I owned, but it was worth it considering that I would never again be fooled by fake or inferior stones.

On my way home to Alda-chur, I travelled through the Sun Dome lands and to make a long story short, was deprived of the lens, accused of crimes I did not commit. The person who stole the lens was Krontheus Ironbrook, lieutenant of the border patrol. He later retired and has grown rich trading jewels and stones, while I, as you can see, am a considerably poorer man than I ought to be. Krontheus has a nice house in the hills half-a-day's march south of Famegrave. Would you, my friends, retrieve the lens for me?"

If the PCs hesitate, Sombalin offers to reward them with some of the profits of his trading venture at the Great Market of Wilmskirk, up to 1000L. For all that, he still haggles over every copper to keep them from becoming suspicious; after all, he's just a "poor trader". If he considers it appropriate, Sombalin plays on the PCs' prejudices - Krontheus is after all a dirty Yelmalion - to get them to sympathise with his cause.

If the PCs turn down his venture, Sombalin dispenses with their services once they get to Famegrave, claiming that the Lunar road is safe enough from then on. He then tries to recruit another bunch of likely marks at the inn there.

If the PCs agree to take part in the enterprise, Sombalin spends the rest of the journey discussing the plan, and how his fortunes will improve when he gets his beloved lens back again. He says he might even need to take on "partners". Sombalin is also careful to drop lots of hints that the lens can only be used by someone with real skill at evaluating precious stones, and is useless to anyone who doesn't know the special magical incantation (he doesn't want the PCs taking the lens for themselves).

#### Scene 5

##### Famegrave Fort

The party spends the night at the inn at Famegrave. Early the next morning Sombalin draws a map giving the location of Krontheus's isolated homestead. He stresses to the PCs that they should shed as little blood as possible retrieving the lens, because although the Sun Domers might eventually forget a theft, they never forget it when any of their people are killed or badly mistreated. Sombalin himself is going to hurry on to Wilmskirk - "Y'saw how much use I as in a ruckus" - to set up some deals in the Great Market so he'll be able to pay them their reward. He'll meet them at the Sword & Sceptre, a well-known but low-class tavern.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.7] The viziers of Carmania work to perfect our interpretation of Holy Law, and arrive at the point where "Everything not Forbidden is Compulsory." There are no "grey areas" in Paradise. *Master Kishan.*

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.7a] A Carmanian vizier would argue that Black is White, if it suited his patron's interest. *Belgor Bolg-Broke - and I should know!*

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.8] Confine your legal wranglings to the courts! This is a Work of True Knowledge, and special pleading will not be entertained. Not all Truth spells are advantageous to lawyers... *Theo. P., Collator*

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.8a] The statement above is tantamount to libel. However, at the request of the Nochet Bar, we shall refrain from further comment, if Pandarus will do likewise. *Espius of Nochet, Belburo of Sun Dome, Rumpilius, Chelli, Kishan of Kitor.*





## Act 2

### The Raid on the Estate

#### Scene 1

##### Reconnoitre

Sombalin's map leads the PCs to Krontheus's secluded homestead, which lies nested in a small valley half-a-day south of Famegrave. From the surrounding hills one can see that the estate consists of a large villa and six outhouses, surrounded by a 2 meter high wall. There are three gates - a large main gate and two smaller ones - in the wall, all closed.

\*Successful Scan - one of the outhouses is a barracks, two are storehouses, another is a stable, and another is a hawk mews. The last is the kitchen, built in the Sun County style separate to the house (to reduce the danger of fire). Smoke issues from the chimney.

\*Special Scan - the barracks seem to be unoccupied.

\*Special Scan - three large black "lumps" lie in the shade by one of the storehouses (Critical Scan - they are guard dogs, asleep).

Should the party stay hidden on a hill spying for several hours, they notice the following:

\*Two men carrying spears leave the house at odd intervals and walk around the grounds (Scan: their gold helmets glint in the sun, but appear to be wearing no other metal armour).

\*Two women go back-and-forth between the kitchen and the house several times.

\*A older man and two youths carry out tasks in the stables and hawk mews. As dusk approaches, the PCs can observe the guards unchaining the dogs, who are then free to wander around the grounds.

#### Scene 2

##### The Robbery

Presently there are seven people at the estate: the elderly housekeeper Ailena and the young maidservant Masyne; Ailena's husband Olos, the hawkmaster, and his youthful apprentices Tagbar and Fered; and Jason and Genodel, two Sun Dome militiamen, who are guarding the estate while the master is away.

The player characters have three likely alternatives:

\*Attack during the day-time: At the first sign of trouble Olos releases several prize birds he is confident will return of their own accord, and makes sure the vrok hawk Minzal is free (Minzal is the awakened familiar of Krontheus, and is not cooped up like the other birds). Tagbar or Fered

see to it that the dogs are unchained. The militiamen try to cast as many spells as possible before melee, trusting that the dogs will buy them time. As soon as the dogs are freed the apprentices join the action, each armed with their spears (if handy), or a farm tool or cudgel. Olos doesn't fight. The women try to hide somewhere.

\*Attack or attempt to burgle at night: Things develop similarly to the day-time, but the dogs are already free and bark as soon as they hear or smell anything suspicious. Olos uses his Sunbright spell to aid the defenders.

\*Knock at the Gate: The militiamen have been ordered to let no-one in, except known Sun Dome folk. Should a PC succeed with an Orate or Fast Talk roll, they'll let one unarmed person inside the gate to talk with Olos. Otherwise the answer is, "You'll have to wait until the master gets home in a couple of days". If the PCs act suspiciously, the militiamen will put on the rest of their their armour (cuirboilli limbs, scale hauberk) and the household will be more alert until Krontheus returns.

In the event of a fight, none of the residents of the villa have a death-wish and will surrender when one of the militiamen or both the apprentices are incapable of continuing the melee. The women may attempt to hide in one of the cellars, locking themselves in. If they can, one of the apprentices may try to slip away to get help at the nearest Sun Domer settlement, a small village called Amberfield about a hour's run away. He will bring two dozen armed militiamen back with him.

#### Scene 3

##### The Aftermath

Hopefully the PCs can get the lens without killing anyone. Olos and Ailena know it is kept in a silver box placed on the mantelpiece in the main hall. If the PCs threaten violence, Olos tells them anything they wish to know. Questions might include:

\*How long has the lens been here?

- "It's a heirloom, the lens has belonged to this family for generations"

\*When will Krontheus return?

- "In three days" (assuming the PCs didn't spend more than a day scouting the place.)

\*Where is your master?

- "Away at the temple" (Olos wants the PCs to think Krontheus is relatively close-by, rather than miles away at Wilmskirk.)

\*Who is your master?

- "Krontheus Ironbrook, the most decorated Light Son in the County" (not exactly true, but it doesn't hurt to scare 'em up!)

\*Where's all the money?

- "Lord Krontheus has invested most of the family fortune in hunting hawks." (The homestead is furnished rather plainly, but there are a number of gold ornaments that could be filched. They are obviously of Sun Dome provenance, and easily traceable. There are 9 grown hawks and 14 chicks in the hawk mews, half of which are the especially valuable vrok variety.)

\*How many soldiers are there at the estate?

- "Lord Krontheus has six Templars in his household, but they attend him at the, er, Temple. We militiamen are farmers from Amberfield doing our cult service, and we are guarding the house until he returns."

The lens is small and delicate, and should be transported in the silver box (ENC 1). When a magic point is cast into it the lens boosts the user's Evaluate Gems and Precious Stones skills by 100% for five minutes. It has no user conditions, and despite what Sombalin told the PCs, doesn't require a magical password to operate.

#### Scene 4

##### Meetings in the City

The return to Wilmskirk should be uneventful. As there is a Great Market taking place in the city, large weapons must be checked at the gate and metal armour cannot be worn. The fee to enter the city is 3L on market day. The streets of Wilmskirk are very crowded, especially near the marketplace, and both the City Watch and Lunar occupation forces are highly visible.

The Sword & Sceptre is easy to find; waiting for them is Sombalin. He's anxious to hear what they've got to say.

\*If the PCs greet him in a friendly manner:

Sombalin greets them heartily and leads them to a private room ("we can't discuss things here, too public".) He settles the deal and hands over the payment as agreed. He declines any offer to celebrate, saying he's got some business to attend to. If he had to make overtures of going into a partnership with the PCs, he tells them to buy as many cheap stones as they can and meet him tomorrow at noon outside the Issaries Temple. Of course, he doesn't show.

\*If the PCs start accusing him:

Sombalin tries to placate them, and offers more money for their trouble, etc. He's sure they can solve their difficulties over a drink, and offers some wine. The wine is spiked, POT 18, 3d10 SR to take effect. It knocks the victim out for 20 - CON hours. Sombalin has taken the antidote before the meeting. Should this fail, four of his friends are standing by in an adjacent room armed with cudgels, knuckledusters and daggers.



\*If the PCs are aggressive from the start: Sombalin tries to herd them into the private room; if that's impossible he'll run through hoping the PCs give chase. The GM should try to make this encounter end with Sombalin getting away with the lens. If necessary, some of the local ruffians have been bribed, to help the "honest trader" handle some "ruffians".

## Scene 5 The Hawk Strikes

No matter what course the events in the Sword & Sceptre take, sooner or later the PCs must leave. As they attempt to go, a middle-aged man in resplendent golden armour and with a vrok hawk perched on his shoulder blocks their way. Behind him stand six capable looking soldiers. All are armed and armoured, as they are reinforcing the City Watch during the Great Market. Krontheus is very eager to have a word with them. The hawk Minzal is very pleased to announce to his master: "Master, these are the ones who killed.... (the PCs probably killed at least a dog) and stole the lens and.... (add any other crimes they committed)." Krontheus is not interested in a street fight, but to the PCs, it may seem like he wants to kill them on the spot and that they must convince him otherwise. Remember, Krontheus & co. are armed to the teeth; the PCs aren't. Krontheus has no real personal attachments to anyone at his estate except for Olos and Ailena, and if neither of them have been killed he may be ready to settle out-of-court. Anyone guilty of a serious crime though, such as murder or rape, is singled out by Minzal and arrested to face Sun Dome justice (which is swift and severe: there are no apologies for this, as the PCs were warned by Sombalin). The others Krontheus may be prepared to negotiate with.

### He issues the following fines:

- Each dog killed: 500L.
- Each Hawk killed: d10x100L each (double for vrok hawks).
- Each chick killed: 50L (double for vroks).
- Damage to his property: begins at 1000L, and rises sharply.
- Theft of his goods: immediate return of goods or double their value.
- Injury to Olos or Ailena: 1000L.
- Injury to Masyne: 500L.
- Injury to Tagbar or Fered: 250L.
- Death of a militiaman: 3000L (Krontheus is prepared to accept a fine for the death of a militiaman, but no one else).

Should the PCs have difficulty paying the fines, he suggests they borrow at their temples. If that prospect doesn't strike them as any good there are moneylenders at the market more than willing to take their business, at 5% per week.

Krontheus is prepared to waive some or all of the fines if the PCs catch Sombalin and retrieve the lens for him. If the PCs agree, they must visit the Humakt temple with Krontheus and swear an Oath. The PCs must meet the cost of casting it; Krontheus selects the leader of the group to swear the Oath with him. The Oath is to the effect that they will do everything in their power to deliver the stolen lens and/or Sombalin to Krontheus in person. The Oath expires at the end of the season - if it is not fulfilled by then it is considered to be broken. Once the Oath expires, Krontheus promises, he'll have the surviving characters declared outlaws and will hunt down them to exact his due revenge. Minzal will accompany the PCs on their search for Sombalin and his gang. Krontheus is unable to leave the city until the market finishes, and then wishes to return to survey the damage at his homestead. It doesn't take Krontheus long to learn which gate Sombalin left the city out of - the watch noted him heading along the road to Jansholm with four or five others.

## Scene 6 On the road to Jansholm

The PCs should not have too many problems tracking down Sombalin, but instead of just throwing them into each others' arms the GM should encourage the PCs to plan a concerted attack, as the Oath doesn't leave much room for mistakes. When captured, Sombalin offers the PCs the lens, his trade goods, his fortune, anything, rather than be taken back to face Krontheus, who he has cheated before. Krontheus is waiting for the PCs at his homestead, and will carry out his threats against the PCs if they fail to deliver. If they hand over Sombalin and the lens to him, the Light Son gives the PCs until sunset to be across the border, and threatens to kill them if they ever set foot near his lands again.

*"The more honest they are, the easier they are to fool"*

- adage of Sombalin Letor.

[XXIX.777.49.e/2.3a] "The more I ponder on it, the more I feel that this passes beyond coincidence. Consider; the goddess was dismembered by her foes in Godtime; she appears as a gaping wound in the world, from which all evils flow; her favoured sons are secretly notified of their status and can attain elevation only at the cost of fratricidal war. Yes, the parallels between Thed Broos-Mother and the Red Moon Goddess will certainly bear further investigation." *Baldrus the Black Reader.*

## The Shackles of Submission

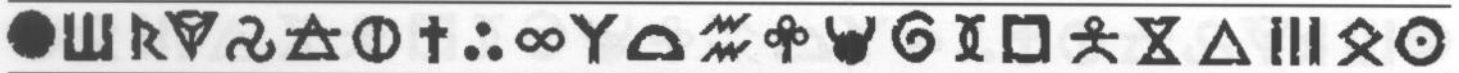
by Mike Hagen

All Danfive Xaron cultists wear enchanted shackles. These carry a profound religious significance to the cult, and are also the foci for much of its Rune magic. The most common form of shackles, enchanted with a single point of POW, have their natural STR and AP of 10 increased by an amount equal to the Magic Points placed into them by the maker, and subtract five times this number from the Devise skill of anyone attempting to remove them. Each point of POW used in the enchantment can have one of the following effects:

- increase STR and AP of the chains, and difficulty of removing them with Devise skill, by an amount equal to the MP expended by the enchanter (MPx5 for Devise penalty); this effect is cumulative, and can be taken multiple times if desired;
- inflict 1D6 damage to the person shackled for each round in which an attempt is made to free them (maximum of one attempt per round, using STR vs. STR or Devise skill);
- limit the Magic Point recovery of the person shackled: such shackles can be adjusted to allow their wearer from one to six Magic Points, above which limit no Magic Points are regained;
- prevent the person shackled from casting Rune magic, or regaining the use of their Rune spells;
- prevent the person shackled from calling for Divine Intervention.

The physical form of the shackles may vary according to the status of the wearer and the will of the enchanter. Penitents may wear heavy brass or iron manacles and collars; Overseers a token single manacle and chain upon one arm only; some Cenobites wear elegant silver bracelets, while others affix their chains to their flesh.





# The Body of Rufelza

## Geography of the Red Moon's Surface

By Greg Stafford

Rufelza invites us to inquire about Her. She promises that anyone who looks towards Her will find Her looking back. When we look at Her overhead we see Her benevolent face looking down upon us.

Rufelza is the Mask, and we should start our search into Her Being with that which we can see most easily: the Red Moon. We need to know what the face of Rufelza is. We look at Her in the sky and ask, naturally, "What are those marks?"

Before anyone can answer, we must first ask, "Which marks do you see?" Rufelza has taught us over and over that our perspective is important, and that not everyone always discerns all things to be the same.

These visible features are emanations of Her spirit into the Material World. They look different to the uninitiated, depending on keenness of sight and the modifications made to their natural vision.

### Physical Markings

This is to the place to both praise and chastise the Materialists. They provide us with the most consistent interpretation of our world, and we are thankful to them for their clarity - when it is in the right place. I take the following words of description from Aklaritus of Raibanth.

### Apparent Features

"The Red Moon is a physical object which hovers in the sky overhead. I have never met any one normal human, even among the hundreds of foreigners whom I have met, that can honestly deny its presence. Normal humans see it.

"We now know that quality of sight varies, even among normal humans. Some see only a dim blur of anything at any distance. Others have naturally superior sight, even seeing into the so-called 'magical spectrum.'

"Most often the Red Moon appears to be a round ball with shadows upon its surface, which are called its Apparent Features. To the ignorant, these

appear from below to form a lopsided face wherein the unusually bright spots of the Self Plateau and Ruby City are the eyes and the vast Os Mountains are the mouth.

"With our keen eye for seeing accurate details over a long distance, we have assembled a complete list of the physical features of the moon. Given here is a list of the largest highlands and peaks are, and where the level places lie." [Authors' Note: Aklaritus' list is incorporated into our own list of Places of Interest, below.]

### The Energy Net

"When we view the Red Moon with our best energetic magic, we discern a network upon it. They are first seen to be like large darker points which are connected by straight lines. These are sometimes called craters and canals. Those among us with the keenest eyes discern that these points are actually pulsing, with radiant waves flowing from them. These points of power are connected, not by canals, but by streams of force."

### The Living Moon

We do not refute the observations of the Materialists. The supernatural keenness which materialist seers can see does not differ greatly from observations made by some of us. Their crude geography helps us to analyse our experiences there, upon the surface of Rufelza herself.

But the Materialists can not reach beyond the 'facts' of their observations to grasp the truth that the surface they see as a series of 'features' and 'energy nets' is swarming with life. The "centres of power" spoken of by Aklaritus usually correspond with the great cities and holy places of Rufelza's sacred form.

The facts that follow have been obtained first from Rufelza and Her Son, and from Her Saints. They have been verified by thousands of visitors who have travelled to the moon, and journeyed back.

### The Divine Face

When we look at Her overhead we see Her benevolent face looking down upon us. Even the half-blind Materialists see a shadowy half vision of Her features. But any initiate looking upward sees more certainly.

People who look upward from directly below have the advantage of seeing the face of Rufelza most clearly. They look right at Her. She is beautiful and gentle, and She is decorated with the Jewellery of Liberation. She wears upon Her head a gleaming white diamond, upon which is held the Light Bird of Freedom. Upon Her brow She wears a band of gold, and upon its sides gleam two fiery red rubies. A pair of sapphire earrings glitter bright blue, while about Her throat is a pearl which is so black that it gleams. Finally, She wears a nose ring which is sometimes said to be rainbow coloured and other times to be pulsing, but in fact appears differently to different people.

### Features

More subtle observations have been made and recorded, and subsequently verified by observers. Any initiate, and many ordinary people with good eyes, can see more details on the surface of Her Body. Those of us who have been there can vouch for intimate details as well.

### Gross Portions

To the learned, the surface of the Red Moon is divided into eight parts, determined by the direction which it faces, and whether it is Above or Below. Each of these one-eighth parts has a directional abbreviation/name (such as SWB, for South West Below) and also an Official Designation, and finally, often has one or more popular names for the area.

### The Eight Surfaces are:

SWA	SWB, Verithuric; Drobe
SEA	SEB, Nathic; Rubes
NEA	NEB, Orogeric; Played
NWA; Scar	NWB, Lesillic; Pussy



## Vernacular Terms

Commoners use these terms when they talk.

### The South

The South is the part of the Red Moon which faces towards the centre of the world, or southward. The most prominent features of this side include: Ocular Palace, the Hero City, some of the Stellar Palaces, the Moon Wood, the Fire Palace, the Ruby Sea, the Pulsing House, the I-plateau, the Lunar Wood. (Also called: Palace Side, Front, Centre-looking, etc.)

### The North

This is the part of the Red Moon which faces north. Its most apparent features are: Occluded Sea, Ocean of Despair, Sheng's Scar, Os Mountains, and the Hunter's House.

### Blindside, The Topside

The top of the Moon cannot be seen from below. It is surrounded by the Crown Wall which cuts it off from all which is Below, and whose gateways are a mystery to all who have not been there. The area inside the wall is a perfect land, and is contiguous with the Sky World. The landmark in the centre is called Sedenya's Footstool.

### The Up Side

The Up Side is so-called because it is what we when we look up from below. We don't see the Face or North, but probably a part of each. These views are all called "upside views," even though

they are of the bottom of the moon. This habit was begun by the ignorant, propagated by the witless, and supported by the common.

## Places of Interest

Given here are the most common names of the centres of power and major features that are on the surface of the Red Moon.

**Arrow Wound (SEA).** From a distance, this looks like a single large mountain. From the surface of the moon we can see it is a huge broken arrow, its shaft only a stub, and with the stone head only partially buried into the surface. This is the arrow which Yelm's archer son shot at Her. She carries it like a badge now, and from the trickling streams around the wound grow the plants which can heal any arrow or spear wound.

**Bat Pen (NEA).** To those of the right mind, and with the right sight, from a distance this spot can sometimes be seen to be a huge bat rune. This occurs when the Red Emperor calls for his great pet to come to the Surface World. Closer up we would see that this is a zoological park where many odd and most often frightening creatures live, all of whom have been tamed by the Red Emperor or his Wilding Hunters.

**Birdland (NWB).** Sometimes this can be seen from a distance as a glowing speck, like a fallen ember. Rufelza granted this place to the ancestral gods of Her land to honour them, and so the eagles

and quails have made their nests here. Here live too the resurrected flocks of augner, a great riding demibird similar to dragonewt's mounts. It is sometimes also called the Moon Eagle's Eyrie or the Quail's Nest, or sometimes the Fire Palace.

**Conflict, Fields of (NWA, SWA).** In this wide expanse are many traps, natural and unnatural dangers, and hostile beings intent upon harm towards anyone else found within the region. Yanafal Tarnils regularly sends parts of his immortal Moon Corps here to train.

**Crown Wall (Around Above 1/3).** From the Surface World, the Crown looks like a fuzzy band around the topmost visible edge of the moon. Closer, we can see it as a strong crown atop the Red Moon. Up close, from the Below side, it is clearly a gigantic wall without any gates.

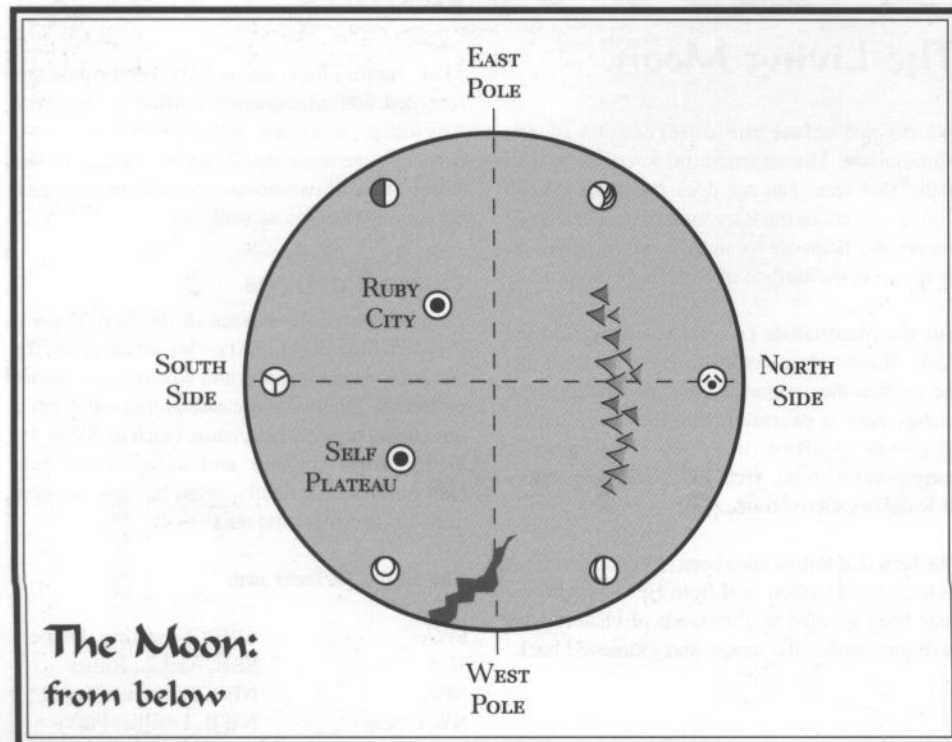
**Darinex (Precise centre bottom).** Here is the precise centre of the bottom of the moon. Darinex stands exactly there, turning upon that spot to always face his twin brother, Destix, at whom he points. This place is also called Pivot, because upon it Darinex turns.

**Despair Ocean (NE and NW Centre).** From our world, this wide expanse is slightly darker when in the light, and slightly lighter when in the dark. On the moon, it is a vast and sluggish sea whose winds are moaning souls, and whose denizens are swimming and floating corpses of people who have failed their own lives. Amid this is Grief Island.

**Emperor's Forest (SEB).** From our perspective, this is a featureless part of the Red Moon. But up close, it is a shifting forest whose very trees and land forms may change shape while we watch. The denizens include many creatures which are found only here. Some are too monstrous to be contained elsewhere, such as Harkazon; others are sacred, such as the sickle-horned Nosehorns. The Red Emperor loves to hunt here.

**Fenderian Parade, or Mountains (NEA and NWA).** One day the Emperor asked, "Mother, what is the most sorrowful thing here?" At that thought She wept, and the tear fell upon the surface of the moon. From it leapt a thousand cheerful and joyous sprites who ran out to entertain Her and change Her mood. She laughed so hard that they froze there for Her, that She may ever find delight, and they still are there. They look like mountains to outsiders, to but to us each one is a source of pleasure or comic antics.

**Fort of Spears (SWA).** Invisible from a distance, up closer we are delighted by a dense field of upward pointing spears of wondrous variety in substance and size, all crowded so closely together



The Moon:  
from below



**The Mystical Perspective**

*What does the moon look like from a mystical perspective?*

Any or all of the above. But the important point from a mystical perspective is entirely lost when we look at the moon at all.

I will tell you in another way: you're doing the wrong thing if you are looking at the moon to see Sedenya. Sedenya is the source of all power, whether cosmological, material, or Mystical. But you can never properly perceive the whole of the outer world. Rashorana has taught us that Sedenya lies within us as well as outside, and that we can more easily reach the infinite inside of us, for that contact with Sedenya is finite.

We cannot see behind the mask by looking at the mask, and any form of Rufelza is a mask. You cannot see Sedenya, because She is beyond visibility AND invisibility. She is beyond the duality of deity and not-deity, or of demon and goddess, or even of male and female. Sedenya, the source of the individual's Self, is. As are you. AS.

that no person could slip between any of them. Nearby is the New Fort. [This is the spot where the Orlanthi Jumper, who leapt off Mount Top of the World, landed. They are hoping another one will jump here.]

**Gerra's Pit** (At North Pole, where NEA, NEB, NWA, and NWB meet). From a distance, this appears to be a darker spot, even when the dark side covers this part of the moon. It is a deep four-sided pit, with many steps leading down to the bottom. At the bottom is the place where many of the Blessed Ones arrive when they are transported to the blissful life upon the moon. Surrounding the pit is a city of people who are never sad. This site is also called the Palace of the Black Pearl, the Pendant, and the Pit of Sorrow.

**Glory, Plain of** (At South Pole, where SWA, SWB, SEA, and SEB meet). Featureless from a distance, the Plain when we are upon it is dotted with innumerable camps of the blessed dead who have taken up residence in its pleasure.

**Grief Island** (in the Despair Ocean). Indistinguishable from a distance, this can be found only by sailing upon the Despair Ocean. It is a very large and barren, rocky island in the midst of which lies the Pit of Gerra.

**Hero City** (SEB). This is one of the power nodes, from a distance. From the surface of the Red Moon it is a large number of resplendent palaces where live many of the saints and heroes of Rufelza.

**Hospital** (SEB). From a distance or close up, this place appears as a different colour to different people at different times. Only Rufelza can know what pattern lies within it. A popular court game is to guess what colour the Red Emperor will see this spot to be each morning. Surrounding this is a peaceful and unattended wild area, wherein lives Rashorana and Her entourage. This is also called the Palace of Rashorana, House of the Nose Ring and the Pulsing House.

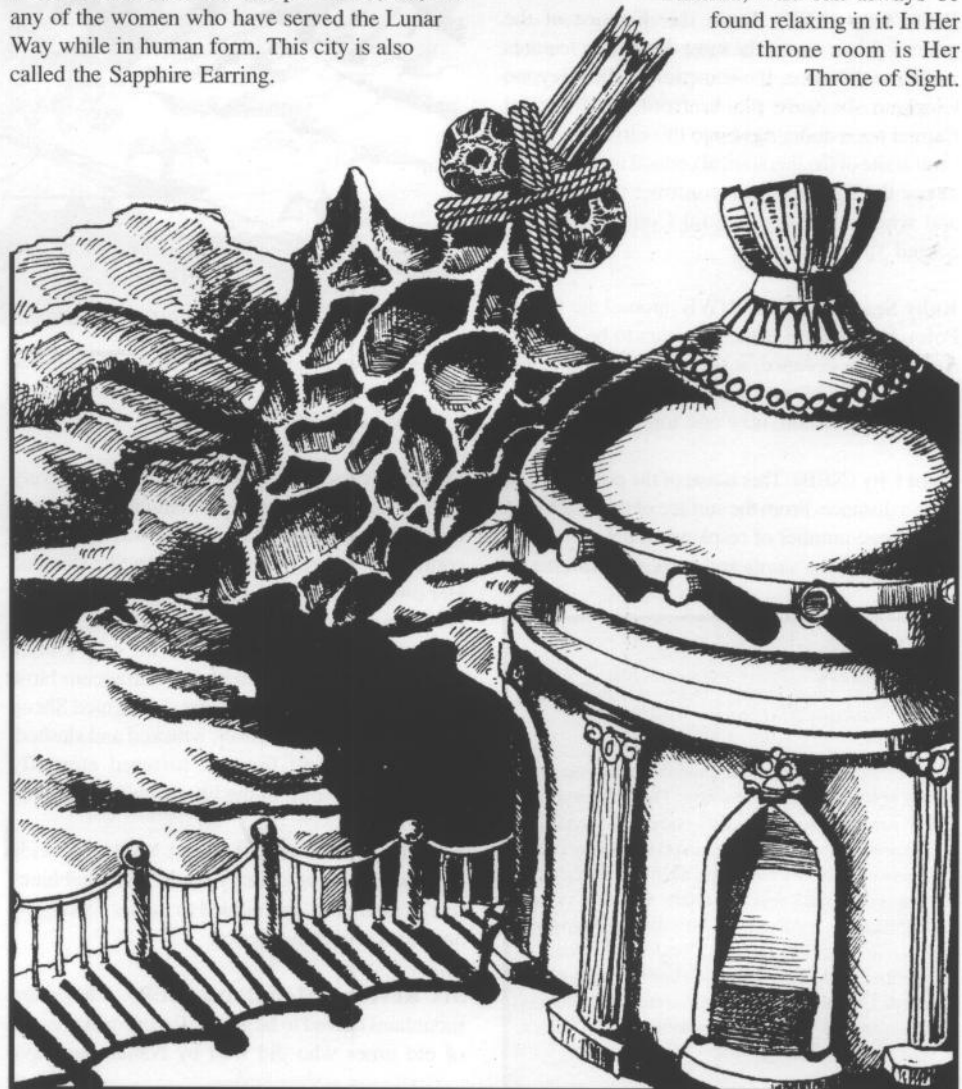
**Lunar Wood** (South Side). Featureless from a distance, this is a vast forest without any habitation larger than a village. Within this live all of the most superb creatures of our world, as well as an array of fabulous beasts normally found but rarely in our world. This is where the noble dead go hunting for their leisure.

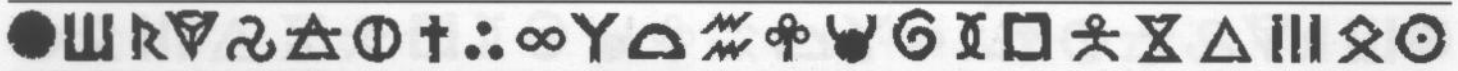
**Mernita** (NWB). From the surface world, we can see that this is a bright burning blue light. Here lives Queen Lesilla, hence its name of Palace of Lesilla. This ancient site was resurrected here when Rufelza recovered Her past. Here, too, live any of the women who have served the Lunar Way while in human form. This city is also called the Sapphire Earring.

**Natha's Fortress** (SEB). From a distance, this is a brighter red spot upon the Red Moon. Here lives Natha. Up close, the palatial city is surrounded by a great wall in which 17 gates are pierced. The particular aspect of Natha who can be seen therein depends entirely upon which of the gates the petitioner has entered. This is also called the Palace of Natha, and also the Ruby Crown. [Entering by going over the walls provokes a rapid appearance by Natha the Defender.]

**Occluded Sea** (SEA and NEA). Although actually a vast water which is covered by fog, this area appears from the distance to be flat and featureless. The purpose of the fog is to obscure, however, and to hide any of the things, creatures, beings, and desires which the sailors would normally prefer not to see. Lunar heroes therefore regularly go harpooning here for sport and personal development.

**Ocular Palace** (in the Ruby City). Surrounded by the Ruby City, this is the favourite palace of Rufelza, who can always be found relaxing in it. In Her throne room is Her Throne of Sight.





Whoever sits on it can see anything and anywhere known to Rufelza. Although mortals are destroyed by it, this is where Herendus sat when he saw Kerende, and began their doomed epic.

**Orogeria's Camp** (NEB). From our world, this is a bright blue spot upon the surface of the Red Moon, amidst the Tendarshan Forest. It is also called the Turquoise Earring, the Palace of Orogeria, and Deer Heart.

**Os Mountains** (NEB and NWB). From a distance, this is one of the most distinctive features visible to the naked eye. This is the largest range of mountains on the moon. Within it live the Outlaws of the Moon, who are those creatures that can find no other place to live. Here too is the Unfailing Oracle, in a cave; and also the Bottomless Pit, where the unprepared are cast down from the splendour of the Red Moon and into the world of mortality below. Also here is the Rebirth Chamber, where the people ready to be reborn are sent to a new life.

**Ruby City** (SEB). From the distance of the ground, this is one of the most distinctive features visible on the moon. It is sometimes called Beyond Glamour, because places from the Imperial Capital open doors right into this city. This is the central site of the theological council and is usually where the Egi meet to reconstruct the Emperor, and where the Supernatural Council meets at Sacred Time, and so on.

**Ruby Sea** (SEB, NEB, NWB, around the Below Pole). In its centre, which appears to be a power node from a distance, is the great red fish which Rufelza rescued, and which swims around and around after its tail, now and forever.

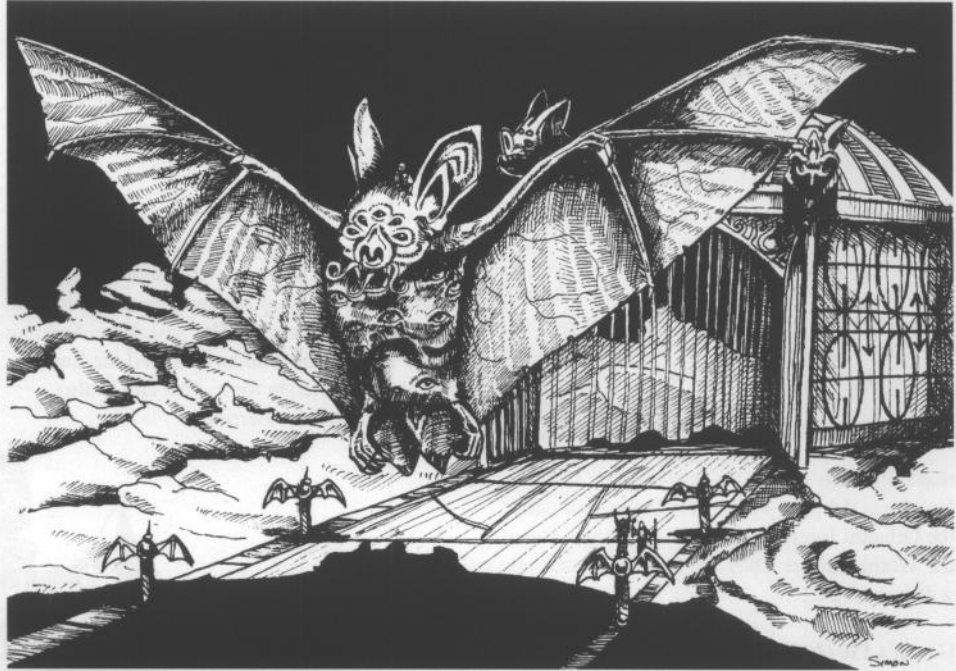
**Saint City** (NEB). This is one of the power nodes, from a distance. From the surface of the Red Moon it is a large number of resplendent palaces where live many of the saints and heroes of Rufelza.

**Sedenya's Footstool** (Top of the Above). The topmost part of the Red Moon is surmounted by a great pyramid, far larger than the ancient Imperial Pyramid in Raibanth. Upon it the fortunate among us may reside, as close to Great Sedenya as is possible while still maintaining identity.

**Self Plateau** (SWB). From a distance, this is one of the most distinctive features, being visible to most people with good eyes. It is a huge level plateau, in the centre of which sits Mirroreyes,

received reward here. Their names are Geogana, Isalatha, Oka, Nesthasalos, Jaganatha, and Bethana.

**Tendarshan Forest** (NEB, NEA). Featureless from a distance, this is a pleasant forest of red trees which is named after Tendarsha, a daughter of Orogeria and the chief forester. It is the place where all red creatures live after they die, and they may be hunted for pleasure and love by those who worship them and live among the trees.



who is prepared to explain the secrets of the Great Self. This place is also sometimes called the Right Eye, the I Hill, and Within Sight.

**Sheng's Scars** (NWA and SWB). These two very visible features are an ugly reminder of reality. Our Goddess, innocent and whole was drawn into conflict by nature of kinship. When She shielded Her own son, She was struck by his foe, who laid bare these great gashes upon Her head. Though stunned, She recovered (for no one knows suffering like Her), and with that outrageous blow Natha was freed to avenge Her. Tormented Sheng Seleris now suffers forever, wracked and slashed, reborn and burnt forever, tortured eternally without any chance of the liberation of Knowing.

**Serenity, Fields of** (NEB and NWB). A wide expanse of rolling country where the inhabitants live in utter ease, untroubled to gather food or by any form of inconvenience.

**Six Revenge Mountains** (SEB). These are mountains carved to be great palaces for six heroes of old times who did well by Natha, and have

**Transetan Ridge** (SWB). When Deka and Antara, the two house keepers of Rufelza, argued they raised this wall between them.

**Wardrobe** (SWB). From a distance, this centre of power appears to be a bright red spot of light. Upon closer inspection we can see that it is the wardrobe of the Red Goddess. From here may be chosen any suit of clothing which is desired to descend to the world. Nearby is the Well of Ease which erases memories from drinkers who have chosen clothes to wear. This place is also called the Palace of Verithurusa, the Crown Ruby.

**Zaytenara's Palace** (Plain of Glory). This is the only white spot which is visible on the surface of the Red Moon. It is also called the Diamond Diadem, and also the White Palace. Up close, we see that the palace is a huge crystalline structure whose only permanent inhabitants sit motionless in luminous meditation chambers.

**All Hail the Reaching Moon!**

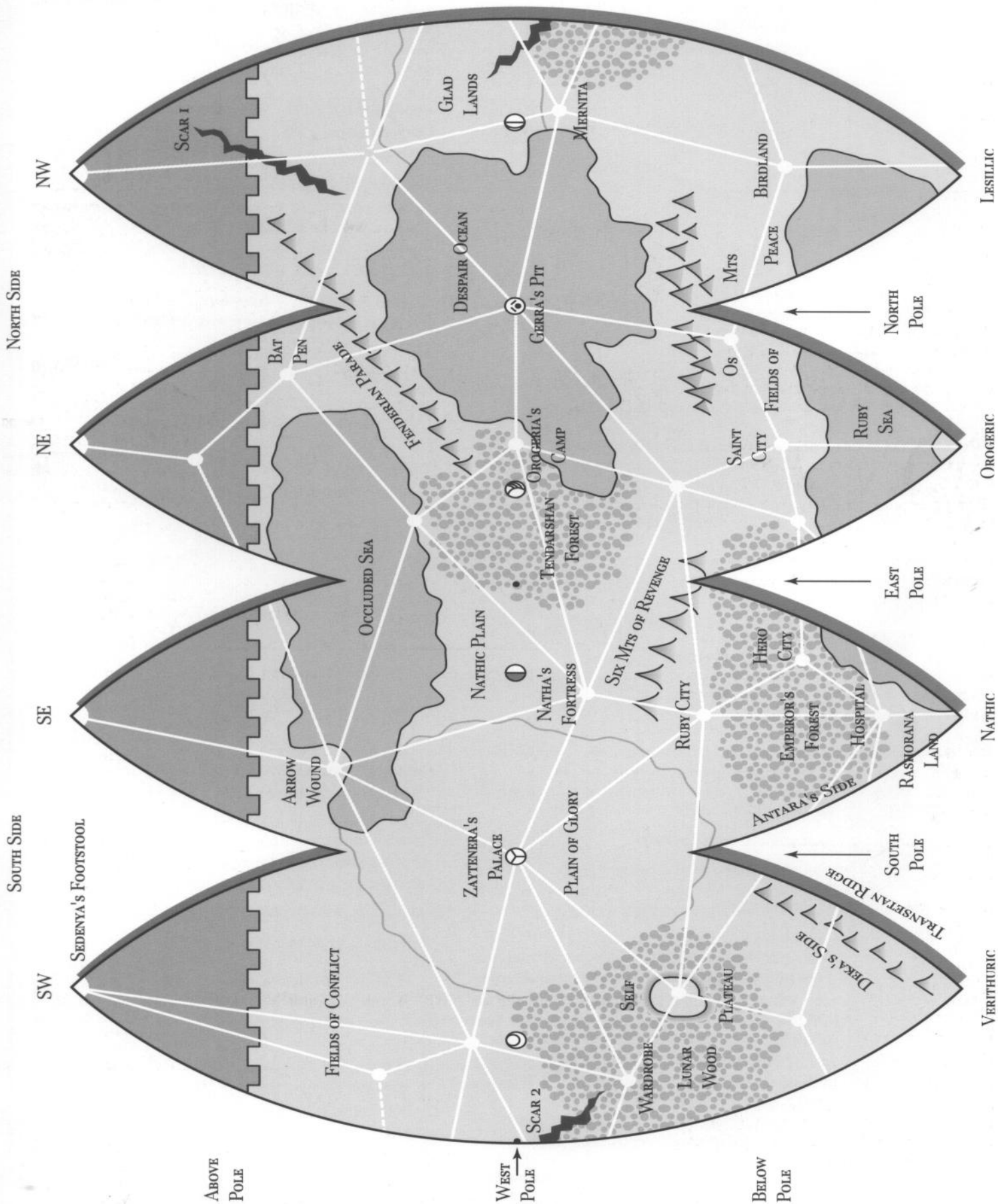
## Destix

### *The Radiant Shadow*

Destix is the source of the shadow which obscures half of Rufelza's body at a time. Destix appears, to the materialists, to be a tiny body which radiates darkness and which revolves around the Lunar body. Where its influence falls upon the Lunar surface the light is cancelled, making it dark. Destix is one of three brothers, children of Rufelza and born from parts of Her body after Her ascent. One died at birth and is unnamed (even though it was reborn instantly). The others, Destix and Darinex, are among the teachers of humankind. Destix teaches Balance, and Darinex teaches Direction.



# Map of the Red Moon

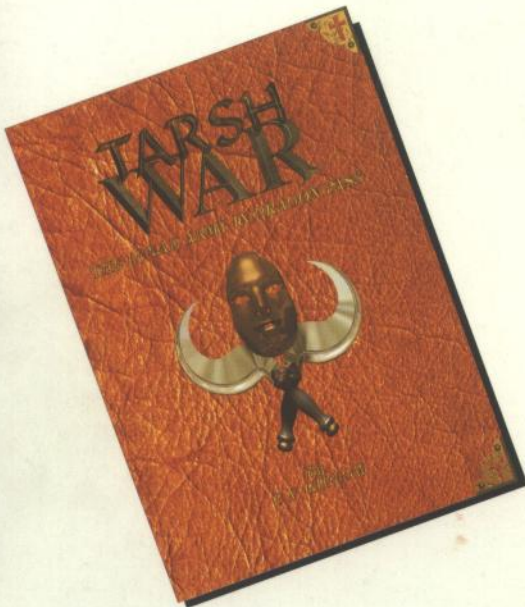


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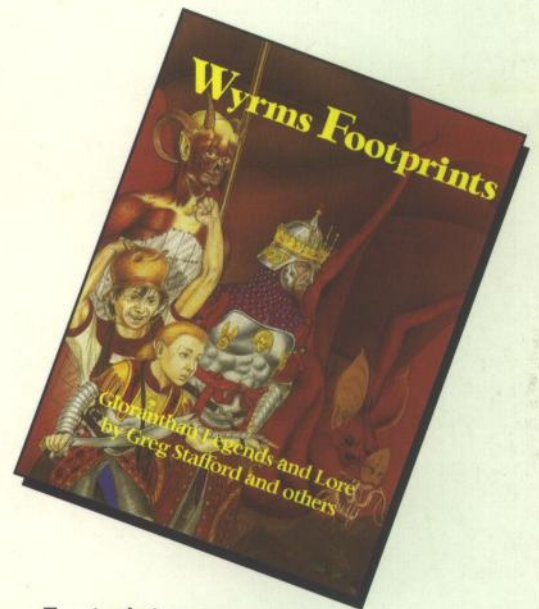
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