

Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

Issue 20

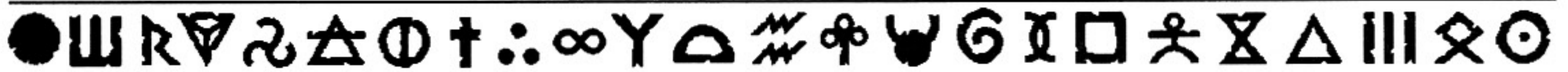


Farewell Issue!

The Righteous Wind Insurrection

Arrolian Church

The Greydog Inn



Tales of the Reaching Moon

The Gloranthan Magazine - ISSN 0960-1228

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Sneaky use of Space

A heartfelt thank you to all of the artists and authors since issue 14 who have provided me with a plethora of wonderful things. Laying them out into the best Gloranthan zine I have ever had the honour to work on is something I will fondly miss. Take care.

- Rick



Edict

The Final Curtain

And now, the end is near; and so we face the final curtain...

Well, the day has finally come when *Tales of the Reaching Moon* hangs up its hat and goes into graceful retirement. This is definitely the last issue of the magazine.

Whither the Megacorp?

The Megacorp will exist for a little while yet. The mail order bit will keep going until the end of February when I relocate to Australia. You might be able to grab stuff off me after that, but don't depend on it!

Please note that I can now accept payments by Credit or Debit cards using the Paypal system (check it out at www.paypal.com).

You can find out what's happening with the Megacorp at Rick Meints' new website (www.glorantha.info) or Nick Brooke's award winning website (www.etyries.com). Or just email me on davidandkaty@hotmail.com and ask!

Hero Wars News

The big news is that HeroQuest is finally about to be published! It is to become the new improved version of the rules, incorporating adventuring in the lands of myth and magic.

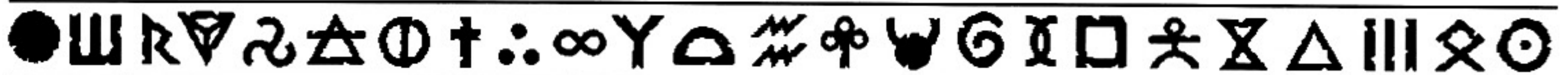
Now for Sale:

Orlanth is Dead! (*Sartar Rising, volume 2*) by Greg Stafford and friends. Winds stop. Air thins. Magic fails. Winter begins. Orlanth is Dead! The Hero Wars have begun...

Due out soon:

HeroQuest. Designed by Robin Laws, developed by Shannon Appel, Roderick Robertson, Greg Stafford & Stephen Martin. HeroQuest consolidates and improves the Hero Wars rules. It has been revised, re-edited, and re-formatted. It contains the complete rules for HeroQuest, including beginner-friendly Character Creation, new rules for Hero Bands, simplified Contest resolution, and streamlined Magic systems.

Hero's Book, Playing in the Hero Wars, by Mark Galeotti & Greg Stafford. Everything a player needs to know to play Hero Wars in Glorantha. Fully compatible with the second edition rules, but is also of immediate interest and use to players of the first edition.



Lunar Imperial Handbook, Volume 1; by Martin Laurie, Wesley Quadros, Mark Galeotti, and friends. Volume 1 details the Lunar Empire and the religion of the Red Goddess that holds it together. Future volumes will concentrate on the most important regions within the Empire, including Dara Happa, Rinliddi, and Carmania.

Sartar Rising, books three and four. Participate in the Dragon Rise, Raid the Sky, and help Kallyr Starbrow gain the throne of Sartar...

Somewhere in the works are:

A Promise of Thunder. A full length novel by Robin Laws about young Tarkalor, the forgotten son of the royal family of the Kingdom of Sartar. The young prince struggles with the burden of royal blood and divine descent during Sartar's war against the Lunar Empire.

Orlanthi Narrator's Kit. A gaming screen containing important tables from the revised Hero Wars rules, plus a full-colour map of Sartar, a Heortling wall calendar, Orlanthi-specific character sheets and a Clan Record Sheet.

Adventures in Dragon Pass (Sartar Rising, volume 3) by Greg Stafford & friends. Scenarios to explore the wondrous land of Dragon Pass, from Sartar to the Shaker Temple, from Beast Valley to the shadows of the troll land of Dagori Inkarth.

Sorcerer Knights, parts 1 & 2. By Jamie Revell. Two-book series to cover Loskalm, the Glorious Kingdom in all its idealism and practicality.

The Issaries Inc. web site is well worth a look (www.issaries.com). You'll find the latest news, a Heortling Clan Generator, world background, Hero Wars scenarios, and material cut from published products due to lack of space.

King of Dragon Pass Computer Game

David Dunham hopes to release an update (v. 1.6) of KoDP very soon, which will contain two new interactive situations and bug fixes. There are also new designs for the KoDP T-shirts, sweatshirts, and mugs featuring their award-winning artwork. Check all of this out at <http://a-sharp.com/kodp/>

KoDP won two of Issaries Inc. Best of Glorantha 2000 Awards.

Moon Design Publications

Following on from the *Pavis & Big Rubble* and *Griffin Mountain* reprints, Volume III - *The Cult Compendium* is now available in both hard and soft cover editions from Moon Design (www.glorantha.info). Its 352 pages includes 44 cults, including all of the material from *Cults of Prax* and *Cults of Terror* - basically every RQ2 Gloranthan cult published, plus some unpublished material, additional new artwork, and more extensive designer's notes.

Next on the blocks is a reprint of the *Borderlands* scenario pack and a map set of all the big second edition maps. Both are due out around the middle of 2003. Email Rick Meints at RJMeints@aol.com for more details.

Zine News

Tradetalk

Issue #11 is now available and is a Handra and the New Fens special issue. Authors for upcoming issues are always welcome. *The Legacy of Pavis* (the Tentacles *Pavis and Big Rubble* Companion, Volume 3) has also recently been published. Check out www.tradetalk.de for complete details on "what's out" or "in the works".

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Drastic Resolutions

Stephen Martin is still planning on doing Volume Water, but his duties at Issaries Inc. as well as other distractions (i.e. a paying job, wife, and kid) are conspiring to delay its publication. Or as Stephen says: "Drastic's ship has not yet come in, but we DO expect it to arrive before the Titanic does!"

The Unspoken Word

Simon Bray (long-time artist of Glorantha) and Mark Galeotti (author of the forthcoming Hero's Book) have launched a new Hero Wars fanzine, *The Unspoken Word*. The first issue focused on the land of Tarsh and is now out of print. UW2: The Thieves' Arm is now out and has a bandits and outlaws theme. Additionally, they have also produced a Hero Wars Uz book (see the back page advert) and a Map of the Lunar Empire. Recently they have decided to rationalise their books and magazines roll the planned future issues (such as UW3 - the Far Place) into their book series.

For further information, subscription details and extra material, see the UW website at www.celtic-webs.com/theunspokenword, at which you will also find information on subscribing to a free email news service.

eGroups

Most of you with internet access will have discovered these already. However, if not, then check out www.yahogroups.com. Here you'll find various Hero Wars and Gloranthan groups that you can join. Check out the HeroWars and HW-Rules groups especially.

Credit

Some UK subbers have credit with me from past orders. Checking your mailing label on the zine envelope (or ask me direct) to find out how much. Use it or lose it! However, if it's over £5.00 then you can ask me to send you a cheque (if it's under £5.00 then you'll have to get pretty stropky...). Please redeem your credit before the end of February 2003. After this I relocate to Australia and it might get difficult...

Errata

The Nilmergs were at work again last issue. We inadvertently omitted to credit Greg Stafford for the Delecti article and for the Upland Marsh Gazetteer and map. Our most sincere apologies for this. Also note that the Greydog clan article in *Tales #18* incorrectly stated when the Lismelder tribe was formed. It was actually formed in 1356 (per the Lismelder tribe article). Apologies in advance for anything we get wrong in this issue!

Big Thanks!

Lastly, a final thanks to everyone who has ever been involved in the production, promotion, writing, artwork, or distribution of the 'zine. I hope it's been fun for you too!

Oh! Yes! And thanks to everyone who bought a copy as well! Your support was very much appreciated!

Thh...Thh... That's All Folks!

The Seleric Verses

by CV Gidlow

One moment. A young girl's fingers insist upon the lattice. They rattle the dust to cataracts. The air retreats, returns noisily within the cloistered dwelling. The Man at his steel devotions has no need to pause. All is one, the girl, the time, the Man.

One moment. The priceless drop upon the slick-sheened leaf, anxious trembling on the springing tip. The profligate spray the fountain showers upon the court, caught in nascent rainbows by the frozen sun. A wealth of water and the water's single note. Concentric rings immobile in the bowl.

One moment. There is no division save the swordsman's willing stroke. The sword, the Man, the enemy, is one. If we divide the action from its will, the striker from the struck, the sword-blade from the eye, we do but open up our guard, disclosing soft unguarded target, and our heart.

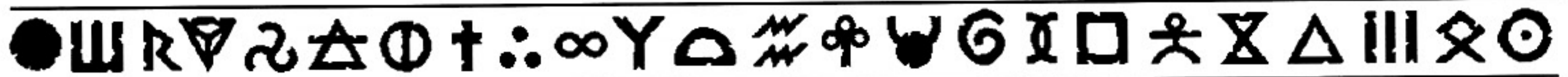
One moment. The torch aloft, alight, the girl, the Man upon the balcony. Noblemen unsheathe the streets, the scholars close the circle of their schemes. Before the gates the witches shriek their curse, within the criminals shake loose their bolts. On pavements slick with more than water's spill, spurned mistresses make vengeance sweeter still. Cities convulse, exhale and open their embrace.

One moment. The only moment now. Gasping, clawing, pushing to be born. His mother's thighs hold tight his dripping frame. Her hair, too, slick, her eyes upturned in rapture, crescent white alone revealed, and dewed with tears. He cries out too, her name his whispered lips begin to frame. Then one more shudder, he at last is free, born, once again, a Man.

One moment. The light descending as a crown strokes three spires across his crimson brow. A World of Gold laid out before his pillared throne prostrates itself. Pearl raiments, briefly tinged with crimson too, the hierophants fuss and settle on his shoulders' frame. The Reddened ranks shout back his single name and victory.

One moment. His sword blade cuts the water drop. A young girl's finger makes its second rap. Protesting inlaid lacquer shudders in its frame. No doorman starts to raise the spying blind. The Man's lips frame a curse, a thought, a smile.

One Moment.



Arrolian Timeline

Solar Events (<i>Pelorian events in italics</i>)	Lunar
1247 Rise of the Red Moon.	0/27
1356 Third Wane (Dying Moon)	3/1
1375 <i>Horse nomads win First Battle at Yuthuppa.</i>	3/20
1384 First Lunar refugees permitted to settle in Holvburg by the King of Valmark.	3/29
1388 Lunar refugees found Starvdyke.	3/33
1389 <i>Horse nomads' siege of Glamour begins.</i>	3/34
1392 Lunar Carmanian refugees seize rule of Holvburg, restoring its old name, Eastpoint.	3/37
1396 Norri Spliteye marries a Lunar priestess and allows refugees into Riverjoin.	3/41
1409 "Death of the Old Moon." <i>Yara Aranis creates the Glowline.</i>	3/54
1410 Fourth Wane (New Moon)	4/1
1450 Exiled Carmanian Dualists, apostates from the Lunar Way fleeing the rise of Magnificus, come to power in Eastpoint and begin persecution of local Lunar worshippers.	4/41
1458 Eastpoint captures Starvdyke, expelling more Lunar worshippers who flee to Riverjoin.	4/49
1460 <i>Battle of Kitor; defeat of horse nomads.</i>	4/51
1462 Riverjoin converts to the Lunar religion, due to influx of Arrolian refugees.	4/53
1464 Fifth Wane (Crescent Coming). Arrolian Confederation is formed, as Riverjoin and newly-liberated Starvdyke ally together against Eastpoint.	5/1
1470 White Bear Empire destroys Carmanian overlords of Eastpoint: "self-liberated," the city joins the Arrolian Confederation. <i>The defeated rulers of Eastpoint flee to the Empire and are mostly exiled to Oraya, together with their followers.</i>	5/7
1499 Loskalmi sorcerers conspire and murder the God of the Silver Feet in a blasphemous ritual, causing the Syndics Ban to descend. All of the Arrolian cities are isolated.	5/36
1518 Sixth Wane (Empty Half)	6/1
1572 Seventh Wane (Full Moon)	7/1
1589 Eastpoint liberates itself from the Ban, but is only able to contact the Lunar Empire.	7/18
1593 Area around Starvdyke freed from the Ban. (Most of Dona opens up in 1593-5).	7/22
1597 Riverjoin freed from the Ban by boatmen; Eastpoint is able to contact its neighbours.	7/26
1603 City of Starvdyke freed from the Ban. All dwellings on the north bank have been levelled to create farmland: the city is renamed Southbank, ruled by Golden Tyrant.	7/32
1612 The Kingdom of War breaks out of the Ban and begins its conquests.	7/41
1616 Jonatela is freed from the Ban.	7/45
1626 Eighth Wane (White Moon?)	8/1

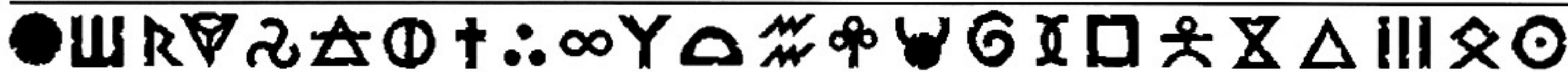
a Tale of Three Cities

by
Nick Brooke
with
Peter Metcalfe

Eastpoint

In the Second Age, the Middle Sea Empire founded Eastpoint to be the most easterly city of Loskalm, consolidating their power over the upper Janube. It was sacked in the tenth century by an unlikely alliance of the barbarian hero Jonat and a host of Carmanian knights during the overthrow of the Justeli God Learners. The barbarian town of Holvburg, built beside its ruined spires, was tributary to the Kingdom of Valmark when the first Lunar refugees arrived in 1384.

The King in Galastar permitted this influx of Pelorians to settle in Holvburg and rebuild the old town, but his generosity was to cost him dearly: in 1392, a cabal of Carmanian noble exiles seized the city by force, reasserting its former name and the associated pretensions of the Second Age. In 1450 these rulers were themselves ousted by a newly-arrived contingent of Dualist apostates from the Lunar Way, whose persecution of the Lunar priesthood led to further misery. As oppression increased, dissenters fled to the other Arrolian cities, which leagued together against Eastpoint and its imperial ambitions.



War between Eastpoint and Starvdyke flared throughout the 1460s. In 1470 the destruction of Eastpoint's army by the White Bear Empire of Rathorela freed the city from the Carmanian yoke. The citizens rose up and liberated themselves, expelling their former rulers, who fled to the Lunar Empire with their followers and were eventually resettled on its farthest eastern frontier. They warmly embraced the Arrolian Lunar Way and joined the Confederation, whose all-too-brief flowering was abruptly cut short by the Syndics Ban in 1489.

In 1589, Eastpoint partially freed itself from the Ban by using of clever (and arguably lucky) one-off magics for the outward journey, relying on Lunar Moonboats thereafter. The city communicated with the Lunar Empire for many years via Moonboats that required irreplaceable rocks from the surface of the Red Moon to enable them to fly. A native magic-worker named Corostis Swims-Like-Salmon came to Eastpoint in 1597 and challenged its sorcerers to a magical contest. He defeated their magics through shamanic trickery and stole some of the moon rocks, misusing their powers to burn away the Ban further upriver. This also liberated Eastpoint – some say unwillingly – to re-contact its Arrolian neighbours. Corostis, now named Jumps-Like-Salmon, is still considered a thief and an enemy by the eldritch Lunar sorcerers of Eastpoint.

The Red Goddess is the state-supported cult: the people of Eastpoint worship Rufelza, but still despise all Carmanians. The city is famous for its College of Many Arts, a sorcerous establishment which claims its roots stretch back to the Jrusteli God Learners of the Second Age. Any Arrolian sorcerer who studied at Eastpoint Polytechnic is proud to announce this.

Southbank

The second of the Arrolian Cities was founded in 1388 by a second wave of Pelorian refugees, on a virgin site which omens showed was especially touched by the Sun God, though none could divine the reason. The city they founded was named Starvdyke; after many peaceful years, it was attacked and briefly occupied by the Carmanian Dualist lords of Eastpoint in the 1460s. Émigré Lunar worshippers from Starvdyke were instrumental in converting Riverjoin to the Lunar Way, thereby founding the Arrolian Confederation.

Starvdyke once spanned the Janube, but the Ban cut it off from its farming hinterland. In desperation, all the buildings on the northern bank were razed, their land turned into farms to support the settlements on the south bank, hence the city's new name of Southbank.

Although its surrounding territory was freed of the Ban in 1593, the immediate vicinity of the city itself was not accessible for another decade. The few solar worshippers among the Arrolians somehow became dominant during the isolation of the Ban, and the city is now ruled by a Golden Tyrant. No outsiders understand how this came to pass, and most citizens of Southbank still worship the Moon and not the Sun.

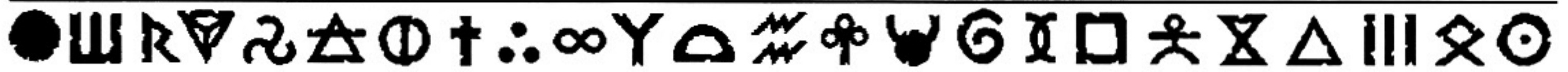
Riverjoin

Although the ancient city of Riverjoin had received Pelorian immigrants (most notably when Earl Norri Spliteye married a Pelorian priestess of the Red Moon in 1396), the Orlanthi and Lunar beliefs used to coexist peacefully, with the ruling Earls taking care to avoid offending either faith.

When Eastpoint's Carmanian overlords made war against Starvdyke in the 1460s, however, a further wave of displaced Arrolian colonists created a Lunar majority, and the city was converted to the Lunar Way. The Lunar pantheon was adopted intact, a new temple was built in the city square, but the general



Jimmy Almén- 2001



nature of the city, run like a mediaeval guild, was not appreciably changed.

Riverjoin is in a sense the heart of the Arrolian Confederation: its largest city, and the place where the alliance against Eastpoint was forged in 1464 (the first year of the Fifth Wane), uniting Starvdyke and Riverjoin. A local cult of the Seven Mothers was created at this time, their priestesses knowing they would bless any magical conspiracy

against evil Carmanian overlords. (In an uncanny display of synchronicity, at the same time in southern Peloria the New Monks Revival saw the previously minor cult of the Seven Mothers revitalised to convert the southern barbarians of the Provinces – no mundane connection between these two events is known). The temple of the Seven Mothers is still of great importance in Riverjoin, and is at the heart of Arrolian Lunar missionary activity throughout Fronela.

The area around Riverjoin was freed of the Ban in 1597 by adventurous boatmen working their way down the Janube river from Dona. The city council is currently working to find allies against the encroaching Kingdom of War, and reportedly has found some potential ones in nearby Southbank and Karstall County. During the Ban, the influence of the Orlanthe diminished to almost nothing.

An Arrolian Account of The Origins of the Kingdom of War

by Peter Metcalfe

Varnaro of Riverjoin, High Priestess of the Red Moon, was charged by the City Fathers with the task of lifting the Syndics Ban. Many predecessors had failed, for all their spells and sacrifices. Using her Minderkind philosophy, she found that when everyone said that the Ban was an evil curse, they erred. By proving that the Ban was a great *blessing* instead, she prepared a great ritual to summon GanEstoro, the god of Evil, to destroy it. A huge translucent demon appeared, which she subjugated and bound, but the Ban did not go away. Accepting defeat, Varnaro retired as High Priestess and returned to her library.

Many years later, in 1597, the Ban thawed from Riverjoin. By questioning travellers, the City Fathers learned that the Thaw had begun fifteen years before: the same year in which Varnaro had summoned GanEstoro. Despite appearances, she had lifted the Ban. By popular acclaim, Varnaro was dragged from her tomes and made Queen of Riverjoin.

Nine years ago, the price of Varnaro's summoning was revealed, when cruel raiders burst from the Black Forest. They later declared themselves to be the Kingdom of War, but the rulers of Riverjoin knew that they were slaves of GanEstoro. The menace has disturbed Varnaro greatly and she is trying to expand the Arrolian Confederation to oppose the Kingdom.

Note: this is only one of many such terrible tales of unexpected consequences from Fronela, all of which claim (with either guilt or pride) to have lifted the Ban, created the Kingdom of War or even been the cause of the Syndics Ban itself.

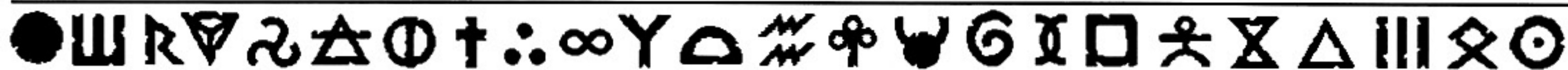
Notes from Nochet

Contributors: Marion Dbnude, Peter Erikson, David Hall, Bernie MacHail, Ken McCarron, Rick Meints, MOB, Mick Rowe, Gary Switzer, and Peter Tracey

[XXIX.424.544/capon] "The common Marsh Coot, often scorned as food, is actually quite tasty if prepared as the Durulz do, not plucked but skinned, for the fat lining of the skin, what there is of it, can be quite strong. Our Durulz host not only did this but soaked the birds in salted water with a

small amount of vinegar added, then prepared them in a stew. When asked if eating coot did not bother them, the Ducks all shrugged and said the birds were no relatives of theirs."

[XXIX.424.545/ni/ma/de] From *Laws of Other Lands*, by Peregrinatus: The rank of 'magistrate' is a powerful but often unpopular one in the Kralorela. You see, magistrates who wrongly punish a citizen suffer the punishment they themselves imposed. *Marginal Note by Rumpilius of the Bay Leaves:* Naturally, the Court of Appeal on the other hand, is considered a plumb appointment!



The Arrolian Lunar Church

**Nick Brooke,
with David Hall**

History

The Red Moon rose in the year 1247 ST, and hangs above the eastern land of Peloria. Her worshippers have spread from there across the whole face of the world, to wherever her light shines. In the fifteenth century, settlers came from the east, fleeing oppression by nomads and imperial forces, and following the course of the beautiful blue Janube. They made their home in three proud cities in the land of Dona: Riverjoin, Eastpoint and Southbank. Their land was known as Arrolia, and from it missionaries spread peacefully throughout the surrounding countryside, making many converts.

The jealous wizard-lords of Loskalm were alarmed at their successes, and performed a magical ritual known as the Ban to prevent the spread of Lunar doctrines. But philosophers from Eastpoint were easily able to fathom the rigid pattern of their sorceries, and (as is ever the Lunar Way) insinuated their way around the barriers of this spell. In 1589, the Arrolian cities won their release from the Ban, and in the generation since the Lunar Way has waxed ever more popular among the peoples of Dona and Junora.

Lunar History is divided into seven Wanes of 54 years each, with each Wane corresponding to a phase of the Red Moon. The first three Wanes saw the birth and decline of the Lunar Empire. At the end of the Third Wane, that of the Dying Moon, the old Empire was dead: everyone could see that the Moonlight had changed! The Fourth Wane was the Black Moon Wane, a time of sore travails which ended with a great triumph:

the conversion of Riverjoin, and the birth of the Arrolian Confederation. The last three Wanes have been a time of strength and expansion for the Arrolian cities, culminating in their liberation from the Ban in the current, Full Moon Wane. As the Seventh and Final Wane runs to its close, a time of great transformations looms.

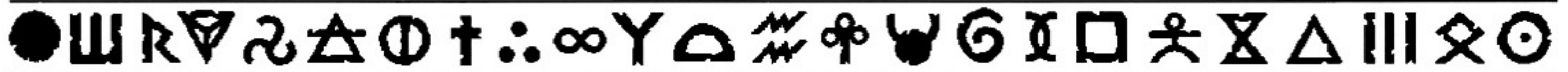
Theology

The world of Glorantha was fashioned from Chaos by the Creator. Everything in it was formed from fertile, ever-changing Chaos, and shaped by his stern, inflexible Law. The place where Chaos and Law come together is known as Nature. Within nature there are cycles: night and day, summer and winter, birth and death. Everything mirrors its opposite, and must pass from one side to the other of the created world.

Over time, mankind has fallen away from union and understanding with the Creator, who sent the Three Prophets to teach mortals how to find God through body, heart and soul. The first prophet was Malkion, who taught the Solace of the Body. The second was Hrestol, who taught the Joy of the Heart. The third was Rufelza, who teaches the Freedom of the Soul.

Even from this latest liberating message, so recently granted to mankind, there has been a fall. The Lunar Empire, weakened by Horse Nomad invasions, turned into a grasping and repressive state, oppressing its own sickly body, limbs and heart in the vain attempt to preserve





its swollen head. Only in Arrolia, beyond the clutches of the Dead Moon Emperors, can true freedom flourish.

The Arrolians do not follow the Ancient Laws of Malkion, or the Old Laws of Hrestol, but rather pay heed to the Lunar Way of the Red Moon, which replaces them in their entirety. They claim the example of their Goddess shows Death is not the end: like that of their mistress, mortal lives may wax and then wane, die and thence, in some form, return. They do not claim to know what comes after death, saying that this is a Mystery, and rightly so.



Apocryphal texts assert that the Lunar Way offers a sure path to Solace in Glory, as did Malkion's Law of old.

Many Arrolians believe that Glorantha now stands on the brink of a great Transformation: the Seven Wanes are all but completed, and a new era is about to dawn. They proclaim that the long-awaited White Moon is due to appear at last, ushering in an Age of universal peace, calm and beauty. All those who join in welcoming her advent shall find their reward, and bask in the glory of her argent radiance.

Hierarchy

The Arrolians reject the notion of a formal hierarchy, asserting that their Lunar Way is the way of freedom from control. While the Old Malkioni churches needed to have hierarchies because their faith was not self-supporting, and the Dead Moon Empire has built elaborate skeletons to hide the hollowness of its doctrines, they say their own living and vibrant Lunar Way is its own support: as witness they point to the Red Moon herself, as she hangs unsupported in the Middle Air. Each of the Arrolian cities can organise itself for political, military and religious ends as it sees fit; the confederation is a loose league, not a centralised and oppressive state.

The Arrolians know that there is an Empire underneath the Red Moon in Peloria, and say this was once ruled by the lover of the Goddess, a powerful wizard-king called the Red Emperor. He was slain in the Black Moon Wane by the evil Nomad leader, Sheng Seleris. Since that time, Arrolians assert that the Empire has been ruled by the Dead Moon Emperors, mere shadows of the original. By wanting to be someone who they are not, they all fail to recognise what they truly are.

While the free cities of Arrolia have voluntarily and piously sent an offering of tribute to the holiest Pelorian shrine of the Red Goddess

Heretics!

The Arrolians of central Fronela are followers of the Stygian Heresy, possibly in its Carmanian form. Their religion appears to be a bastard form of Malkionism, in which the Red Moon Goddess and her Celestial Pantheon of Lunar and Solar deities have usurped the rightful place of the Prophet Malkion and his Saints. This heresy is particularly virulent because of the successful missionary work which now sees it spreading throughout Junora and the Janube Valley, and because of the intellectual underpinning provided by the Minderkind Sages of Riverjoin (derived ultimately from Eastpoint's College of Many Arts). In central Fronela, the Arrolian Heresy is now an active and successful rival to our Hrestoli Idealist Church. We must redouble our efforts to propagate the virtues of Meritocratic Hrestolism in the region!

**– Jurgen Merriman,
Senior Praefectus of
the Watchdog Council**

each year since their liberation from the Ban, they stridently deny that they are in any way commanded by the so-called Red Emperors. Their Lunar Way is one of freedom and liberation: the confining structure of the Dead Moon Empire does not allow these tendencies free rein.

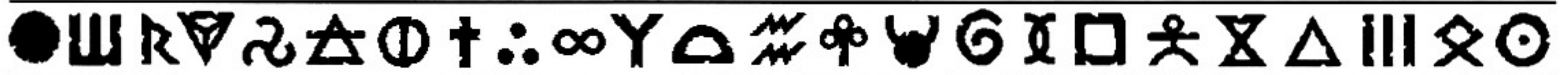
The symbol of the old Lunar Empire was the Crimson Bat, a monstrous creature of Death and War. In contrast, the Arrolian Confederation takes as its symbol the White Dove, a bird of Peace and Life.

Arrolian Society

The Arrolians have adapted the rigid Malkioni caste system to fit their own needs. Each occupational class has as its patron one of the Inspirations, the Seven Mothers of the Red Moon: The structure has been made far more inclusive – there are even patrons for Witches, Criminals, and Atheist Sorcerers, who would be outcasts from most Western societies. Mobility between the classes is treated as wholly unexceptional; sexual equality is found throughout Arrolia, though this principle is threatened by the Yelmic resurgence in Southbank.

Arrolian Occupations

Occupation	Arrolian Inspiration	Malkioni Caste
Citizens	The Blessed Teelo Norri, Ever Virgin	Farmers/ Commoners
Soldiers	Sir Yanafal Tarnils, the Knight of the Ram	Soldiers/ Knights
Priests	Master Irrippi Ontor, the Brown Wizard	Clergy/ Wizards
Politicians	Queen Deezola of the Lands	Nobles/ Lords
Witches	Dame Jakaleel, the Wise Woman	(Witches)
Criminals	Danfiv the Flagellant, Redeemer of Sinners	(Criminals)
Sorcerers	She Who Waits, Holy Ghost of the Moon	(Sorcerers)



Arrolian Lunar Sorcery for RuneQuest by Sandy Petersen, with Nick Brooke



The source of Arrolian Sorcery is the Red Moon; each of its Phases provides one of the Arts. An Arrolian sorcerer can sacrifice 1 POW to each of the Phases to gain its designated Art, in a religious ritual on that phase day. (Obscure sorcerous Arts can be provided by lesser Lunar planetary bodies, such as the Twin Stars, the Little Moon, or the dread Planet of the Bat-Demon).

Once they have started on this progression, sorcerers are tied to Arrolian Cyclical Magic, and are able to utilise Lunar elemental magic. Note that *only* Lunar sorcerers can use Lunar elemental magic.

Arrolian Cyclical Magic

LUNAR PHASE	Effect on Arrolian Lunar Sorcery
Full Moon	May use all Arts. In addition, <i>each</i> Art can be cast at a level determined by the caster's skill in the spell. (<i>Example: a sorcerer with skill 81-90% in a spell could normally use a total of nine Art levels when casting a spell; she could use nine levels of each of her Arts during the Full Moon</i>).
Half Moon	May use all Arts.
Crescent Moon	May only use Intensity, Multispell and Range.
Dark Moon	May only use Intensity.

Note that Arrolia is located far beyond the Glowline that surrounds the Lunar Empire. While an Arrolian sorcerer could certainly benefit from the influence of the Glowline (which affects cyclical magic as if the Red Moon was always full), they would need to travel far from their homeland to do so. No methods of creating local Glowlines or Glowspots have yet been discovered by Arrolian sorcerers, although many experiments have been carried out with this end in view. (The Arrolians' philosophical reluctance to embrace the Dead Moon Empire or its two most corrupt manifestations, the chaotic Crimson Bat and the demon-spawned Yara Aranis, may account for these repeated failures!).

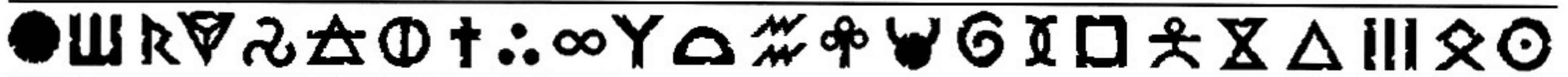
Arrolian Moonboats

The Arrolian cities make extensive use of Moonboats for internal communications, missionary work, and even occasional high-level religious missions to the Lunar Empire. These are sorcerously manufactured in Eastpoint, using sacred Moon Rocks for their propulsion, and generally operate in a similar fashion to those familiar in the skies of the Heartlands, but with one marked difference: the Arrolian Moonboat pilots are the most experienced in Glorantha.

Because they lack the "advantage" of working within the Glowline (where the Red Moon is always effectively full), they are far better than Imperial pilots at flying in the poor conditions that prevail everywhere beyond its influence, tacking and weaving to take best advantage of available moonbeams.

Few Imperial moonboat pilots have ever ventured beyond the Glowline: they are not used to working with the moonlight at less than its full strength, whereas the Arrolians necessarily sail under what for the Imperial Lunars are almost unimaginably bad conditions, *all the time*.

If the Lunar Empire were ever to recruit Arrolian pilots, or attempt an invasion of Arrolia, this could be a major plot consideration for the Hero Wars. One might even see Imperial Moonboats operating competently beyond the Glowline in Dragon Pass; or, on the other hand, a lumbering Imperial aerial invasion fleet cut to pieces by nimble Arrolian privateers...



The Phases of the Red Moon and the Arts of Arrolian Lunar Sorcery

Waxing Crescent Moon (crescent-coming)

Teaches the basic sorcerous Art of **Range**.

Waxing Gibbous Moon (empty half)

Teaches the sorcerous Art of **Ease**. This Art actually costs -1 MP per level used! However, each level of Ease adds 1 extra SR to those needed to cast. You cannot reduce the total MPs in the spell to less than the levels of Ease used. *Example: Thraxon wants to Palsy an unsuspecting guard, but sees no reason it should cost him a fortune in MPs. He applies Palsy 4, Range 2, Ease 3, for a total of $4+2-3 = 3$. It would be foolish to use Ease 4, because that would require at least 4 MPs, and he's already got it down to 3. The spell will take 9 SRs to cast, plus his DEX SR. And of course Thraxon needs a skill of at least 81%.*

The Full Moon

Teaches the basic sorcerous Art of **Intensity**. This is the first Art learned by any Arrolian sorcerer.

Waning Gibbous Moon (full half)

Teaches the basic sorcerous Art of **Multispell**.

Waning Crescent Moon (crescent-going)

Teaches the sorcerous Art of **Force**. This Art is only usable when the sorcerer is casting an attack spell that matches the caster's MPs vs. the target's MPs, POW, etc. on the Resistance Table. For each MP in Force, the caster's chance of overcoming the target are raised by 5 percentiles. If the caster's chance is nominally less than 5%, it must be increased sufficiently to overcome this handicap.

Dying Moon

Teaches the sorcerous Art of **Speed**. This Art lets you cast a spell more quickly. Speed does not count against the SRs needed to cast the spell (though it does cost MPs), plus each MP reduces the SRs needed to cast the spell by 1, to a minimum of 1 SR.

New Moon (black moon)

Teaches the sorcerous Art of **Hold**. This Art lets you hold a single sorcery spell ready to cast. The MPs in Hold must at least equal the highest other Art used. The spell pops onto the Otherworld, where it remains ready for release. This gives you an "emergency" spell. When a Held spell is loosed, it goes off on your DEX SR. Each Held spell counts 1 MP vs. the user's Presence until it is cast (when it counts normally). The MP cost of the spell is paid when initially set up, not when it is cast later on, so this makes a "free" spell!

References:

Printed Rules

Sandy's Sorcery Rules were printed in *Ye Booke of Tentacles, Volume #1*.

Websites

Sandy's Sorcery Rules are available on the Internet in several different versions and formats: try any of these links, or search for another!

www.snark.freemove.co.uk/sandysorcery.html
www.kerofin.demon.co.uk/game/sorcery/rules.htm
www.pensee.com/dunham/glorantha/sorcery.html
members.aol.com/Delecti/SandSorcery.html

Arrolian Attitudes to Tapping by Nick Brooke

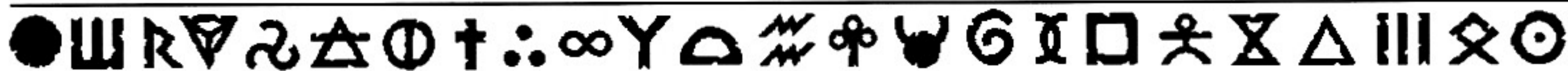
Old Malkioni churches' attitudes to the sorcerous curse of Tapping are usually based on a legalistic interpretation of the First Prophet Malkion's famous Law: Do Not Ruin That Which You Love. In Arrolia, we recognise Tapping as a Chaotic act, ripping vitality from the world; on the other hand, our doctrines teach that a Chaotic act is not necessarily evil or wrong. Although there may be many who would misuse such power, that does not mean that, if properly restrained, it should be withheld from the righteous. The question is thus not one of narrow legal construction, but one of basic morality.

The opinion of most of our sorcerers is that Tapping should never be taught or recorded in grimoires: the spell must be independently researched by any who would use it, in order to ensure they comprehend the nature of the powers they are dealing with. Once the spell is learned in this way, however, no legalistic impediments

should be placed on the manner in which it can be exercised, for to do so would be to constrain the free moral choices of one whose suitability to wield power has already been determined. This is a question of power, and freedom to choose: not merely a technical question of limiting abuses.

As to the words of the Prophet, they are scarcely relevant. In this changing world, the sayings of the First Prophet Malkion have been superseded by those of the Second Prophet, Hrestol, and more recently by the Third Prophetess, Rusefza. Our scholars rightly feel there is no purpose in further debating a statement of such dubious and general meaning, which may have had some relevance to the matter at hand two millennia ago.

– Varnaro of Riverjoin, Minderkind Philosopher



Prophecies of the Hero Wars:

The White Bear and the Red Moon

by Nick Brooke

Arrolian Sorcerers are divided in their interpretation of the *White Bear Prophecy*, a heretical scroll of Chronomantic origins, brought from the Heartlands by the first wave of Pelorian refugees.

Scholars from Riverjoin believe the *Prophecy* foretold the alliance between Arrolian Lunar worshippers and the White Bear Empire of Rathorela which expelled the Carmanian Dualist lords of Eastpoint in 1470. Using interpretative methods typical of their Minderkind philosophy, they “prove” that obscure references which, on the face of it, depict a “White Bear” overthrowing the Red Moon and ushering in a new dark age of barbaric savagery, were in fact harbingers of the dawn of Arrolian civilisation in Fronela. Minor scholarly factions hold that the *Prophecy* inspired the alliance, or was even forged to facilitate it!

Their rivals from Eastpoint Polytechnic hold that this interpretation is fallacious. They claim that the *Prophecy* foretells an event that is yet to come: almost certainly, in their view, a Rathori invasion of the Lunar Empire. From the lurid descriptions of wanton carnage and destruction in the scroll, this will doubtless be a turning point in the oft-prophesied Hero Wars!

The boxed sections of this article by Peter Metcalfe are extracts from his original manuscript for *Glorantha: Introduction to the Hero Wars*, which is copyright © 2000 by Issaries, Inc. and used with permission of the publisher.

Key Concepts in Sorcery

Spells: Each sorcery spell is learned as an individual skill which can be increased by study or experience, much as in *RQ3*. Each spell takes up 1 INT to memorise.

Arts: Each sorcerous Art is known or not known: there is no “skill” in Intensity, Multispell, etc. The way to learn Arts varies between sorcery-using sects, schools and races. When casting a spell, the caster may not use more Art levels than his skill in that spell divided by 10 (rounding all fractions up).

Ceremony: Increases skill (and therefore the total Art levels that can be used) at the rate of +10% to skill per round spent in Ceremony, to a maximum of the caster’s Ceremony skill.

Duration: Temporal spells cast by non-sorcerers have a duration of ten minutes. Temporal spells cast by sorcerers last until they are cancelled; they count against the sorcerer’s Presence for as long as they are in effect. A sorcerer cannot have more *total* levels of Art in effect than his Presence, including those used to cast instant spells. A sorcerer can cease maintaining a spell instantly: the spell’s effects last till the end of the round in which it was cancelled.

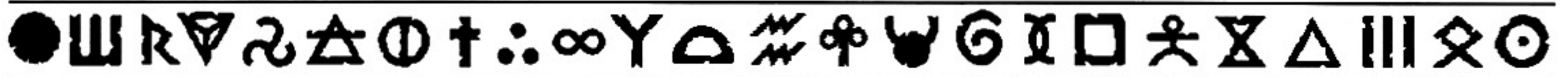
Presence: A sorcerer’s Presence starts out equal to his Magic Bonus (“The High Vow”), and is increased by his Free INT (“The Vessel”) when he has learned all three of the basic Arts (Intensity, Multispell, Range).

Vows: Additional Presence can be gained for various Vows. A sorcerer can take one Vow for every Art learned, plus one for every spell mastered (skill 90%+). These are like geases, and the Presence is lost if the Vow is ever broken. *Examples:* “Abjure Liquor” (never drink alcoholic beverages: +1); “Abjure Armour” (never wear any physical armour: +2); “Celibacy” (never engage in sexual congress: +2, or +4 for virgins); “Devotion” (sacrifice 1 POW to the Invisible God each year; +2); “Sacrifice Strength” (-1 STR, +1 Presence); others...

A Mystery of the Sunstop

by Peter Metcalfe

Southbank was where the pagan Sun God Ebilm mustered his army to march against the Fronelan Malkioni in 375 ST. When the Sun was stopped in the Sky by the Wizards, the place was abandoned and cursed by the barbarians, and it was still shunned by the Loskalmi Empire in the Second Age. The Arrolians, however, lacked this knowledge and understanding: what is more, many of their founders felt drawn to the site, as if in pursuit of the answer to some Nysalor riddle. One can only dread the ancient mysteries that may even now be coming to light...



the White Horse Herd

by Max Fuller

History

The White Horse Herd was created during the fifteenth century by Jardandarin Lifeshield. When he became Chief of the Grazelanders, plague was rife among the clans, and so Jardandarin undertook a vision quest in order to seek guidance from the gods. For weeks Jardandarin wandered alone through the woods and hills, eating nothing but roots and berries, exposed to the elements, until at last he was on the verge of death.

In the twilight world between life and death, Orenda the Dream Horse came to him through the morning mists, her mane shining like the sun. She whispered for him to climb on her back and then, with Jardandarin clinging to her glorious mane, she galloped towards the rising Sun, carrying him into the realm of myth and magic.

They galloped through the woods and valleys, which all seemed strange to Jardandarin, until, rising out of the mists and into the morning sunshine, they came to a stand of trees on the summit of a hill. There, amidst the grove, Jardandarin found the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, clad in buckskin, as white and pure as the driven snow and with braids as black as a raven's wing. She spoke to Jardandarin in a low murmur, like the wind through the trees, telling him that she was the White Horse Maiden, that every pure white horse born among the Grazers' herds was a child of Yu Kargzant, and that they must be allowed to roam free. In return, she would show Jardandarin how to tame the Sun God's children in times of need, and would continue to teach those who came to her at this place, providing that they showed appropriate humility. Then, seeing that Jardandarin was weak with fatigue, she bade him rest a while, and said that she would watch over him.

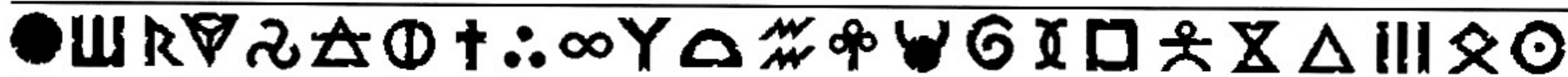
When Jardandarin awoke, the woman was gone and he was lying on a strange hill, far from where he had begun his quest. He



made his way back to his people as swiftly as he could, and told them to release all the pure white horses. Then he selected holy men from every clan and took them to the sacred place of the White Horse Maiden. There they made a cutting of a horse in her honour, which can be seen to this day. Afterward they prayed to the White Horse Maiden, and she came among them and taught them all that she had shown Jardandarin, as she promised.

The holy men then left to find the white horses and tamed some of those they found, returning with them to their clans and commanding them to drive away the evil spirits of Malia. The holy men continued to meet to celebrate the glory of the White Horse Maiden and taught others how to approach her in case such desperate times returned. They became known as the Cult of the White Horse.

Throughout the land the white horses formed one great herd which was considered sacred and allowed to roam with complete freedom. No pure white foal was ever born outside this herd among the Grazelanders from this time.



The White Horse Herd

The White Horse Herd is a physical entity consisting of several hundred pure white horses, which ranges freely throughout the Grazelands. It is never very difficult to locate, as it is a major event for the White Horse Herd to enter any clan's territory. The herd is special because each of the White Horses is in fact an embodied healing spirit (typical horse statistics but with a POW of 4d6). Among Grazers, it is absolutely taboo to harm or hinder one of the horses in any way, except by members of the Cult of the White Horse, who have been shown the proper rituals. In any other instance, such an offence is punishable by death.

The Cult of the White Horse

The Cult of the White Horse, created by Jardandarin Lifeshield, is a spirit cult worshipping the White Horse Maiden (an aspect of Chalana Arroy). In the time of Jardandarin it was largely made up of chieftains and ranking nobles from among the clans, though since his time it has declined in popularity. Members of the cult can be distinguished by the symbol of a white hand, printed on the right flank of their horses. The cult provides the spells Command White Horse Spirit and White Horse Spirit Binding Enchantment on a special success.

To tame one of the white horses, a member of the cult must follow a series of steps. First of all he or she must either possess or create an enchanted lariat, which is a medicine bundle, known as the Life Shield. This enchantment can only be created using the cult spell White Horse Binding Enchantment, which must be cast on a specially prepared lariat, wound around a hoop of willow and to which white feathers have been attached. Next, he or she must locate the White Horse Herd and attempt to capture one of the horses without harming it, using any reasonable means (normally this would mean capturing it with a lariat or driving it into a specially prepared corral). He or she then returns with the horse to his or her clan, where everyone attends it and it is treated with great solemnity and respect. It is tethered to a four-post scaffold carved with images of spirit horses, where it is offered gifts of food; the most courageous youths risk their lives attempting to place garlands of flowers about its neck.

This treatment lasts for several days, after which the horse is roped and led around the compound followed by the whole community, who chant songs of praise to the White Horse Maiden. The horse is finally taken back to the scaffold, where its halters are thrown over the beams and groups of braves haul the horse off the ground until it suffocates. This sacrifice is conducted with many prayers to the White Horse Maiden and thanks are offered to the horse itself for its noble and selfless gift.

The sacrifice releases the spirit of the White Horse from its body, and the cultist now casts Command White Horse Spirit to force the spirit into the binding. This actually involves the caster attempting to place the enchanted lariat around the neck of the spirit horse, creating an interesting spectacle for those viewing without the eye of faith, who can only see the White Horse cultist struggling to control an invisible entity. Once the spirit horse has been successfully bound into the lariat the Lifeshield is complete and the cultist may at any time release the spirit as if it were a normal Healing Spirit (with an INT of 4). The only restriction is that he may not cast a subsequent Command spell to force the spirit back into the binding, but must allow the spirit to return to the White Horse Maiden. The binding enchantment may be used again however.

After the binding, the whole clan takes part in a communion meal in which everyone partakes of the flesh of the White Horse. The Grazers believe that this will protect them from disease: all those who participate add +1 to effective CON the next time they must resist the effects of exposure to disease, or +1 to their effective magic points when they must next battle against a Disease Spirit.

Rumours

The White Horses are the descendants of the unicorns that were once ridden in ancient Prax.

The Cult of the White Horse has almost died out and now many clans have no representatives among its membership.

Few believe they have mythic ties to the Yelorna cult in Pavis.

Scenario Hooks

The son of a chieftain is dying from a disease, despite every effort to heal him. An elder remembers that the clan once sent representatives to the Vale of the White Horse, who returned with potent healing magic. Volunteers are required to travel to the site and revive the old custom. This could be easy, or extremely difficult. Of course, the volunteers will have to capture one of the White Horses and return with it to the clan.

Foreign travellers, ignorant of Grazer ways, try to capture or slay one of the White Horses, incurring the wrath of the Grazelands. Can they find a way to atone for such a vile crime?

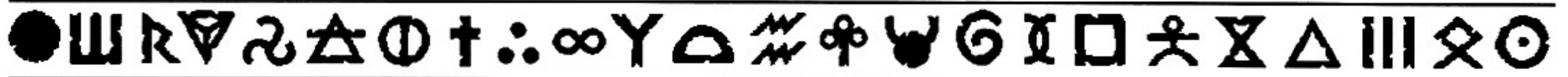
A Vendref clan faces a hard winter after exorbitant new taxes are levied by the Grazers. Then the White Horse Herd enters their valley, with the promise of plenty of fresh meat. Do they dare to kill a few horses?

Notes (continued...)

[XXIX.424.546/sim/exp] Gordius Silverus's daughter happened to be sufficiently good-looking for the world to believe that he owed his office to her royal marriage, rather than the other way about.

[XXIX.424.547.prop/93] As said by Tomas the Seer upon his visit to Lismelder lands in 1593: "When Bats fly all day, and a white bull is born/The Red Man returns, and the woman do mourn/A promise is broken, strange allies steadfast/Fire destroys all, the traitors unmasked."

[XXIX.424.549/mer] Myth would have us believe the Storm Gods swept the Mermen from the rivers and lakes of Genertela. I propose a more mundane explanation: rivers produce a reaction in Mermen akin to that termed 'claustrophobic' in humans. The effect of a river on Merpeople is like that of a tunnel on humans - only a short distance is visible. Bounded by earth and air this is at least uncomfortable to many species of Merfolk, and quickly fatal to others. Consequently, humans and otherwise unexceptional races as newtlings are able to rise to positions of power within major River and Lake cults. Mermen, the natural leaders of the water cults, cannot bear to compete in such places...



The Golden Guard

First Square of the Sun Dome Templars

by MOB & Colin Phillips

*with valuable insights from Jane Williams,
and more helpful input from Andrew Bean,
Nick Brooke & Peter Metcalfe.*

The First Square of Sun County

Of all the famed Sun Dome templars, the Golden Guard, the First Square, are the finest: an elite brotherhood who earn their name by standing watch over the temple and its lands while the good folk of the County offer their homage and prayers to Yelmalió.

When the Sun Dome was refounded after the Dragonkill War, Count Zolan and his Priests beseeched Yelmalió to send them a great spirit, one who could both purify and protect the temple. In response to their prayers, Feshoár, the “Soul of Light” appeared. But before he would purify the temple and its guardians, Feshoár demanded that the best soldiers of the County be dedicated to him, now and forevermore. In awe of this mighty messenger from the sky, Zolan gave his assent. From that time forward the best of the Sun Dome Templars, the Golden Guard, have been answerable to the guardian spirit of the High Altar rather than the Count of the day.

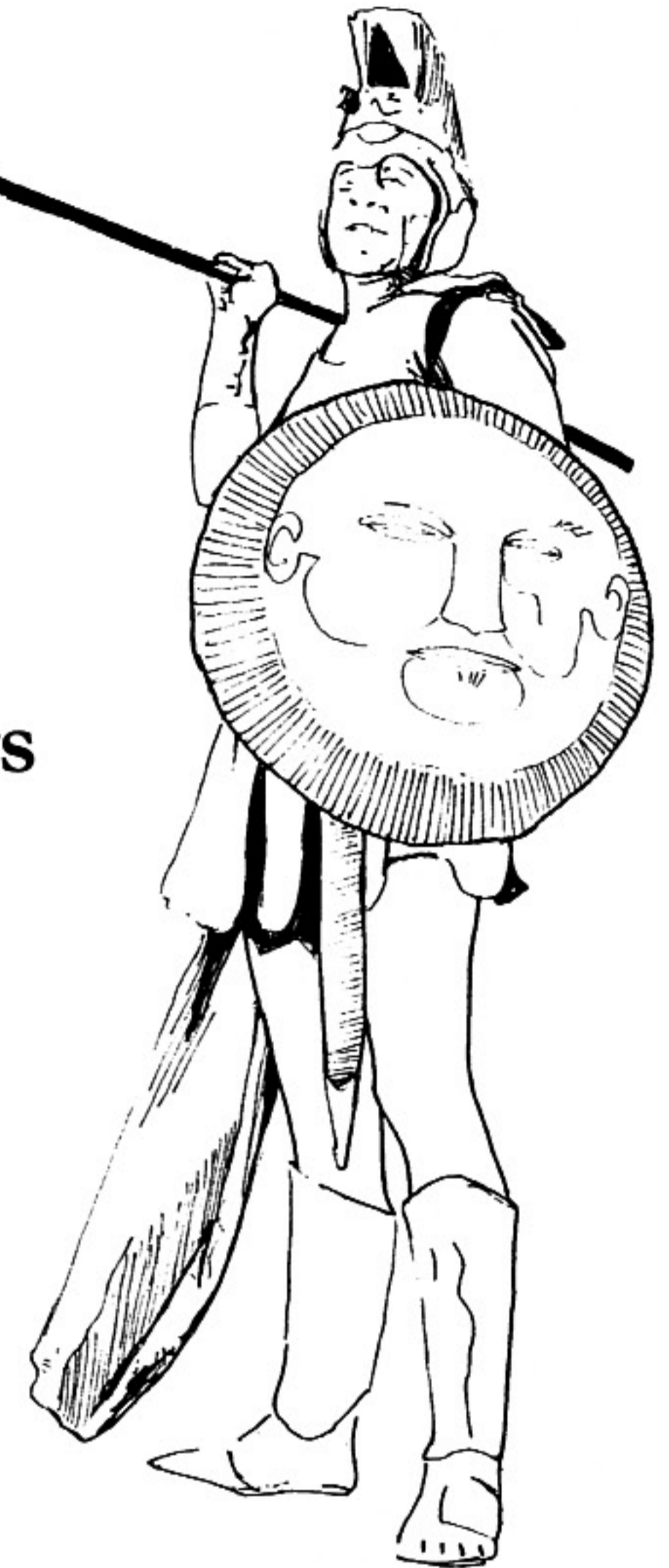
On cult holy days the Golden Guard literally turn their backs on the ceremonies to face whatever foes might wish to do harm to the People of the Sun. In recognition of this sacrifice, after all official ceremonies are safely concluded, the Golden Guard conduct their own rites at the Sun Dome.

As the best soldiers in a soldier cult, the First Square are revered as heroes, and their proud history and gallant exploits have stirred the hearts of the Yelmalió folk for generations. All Sun Dome boys grow up hoping to join this select brotherhood, whose magnificent gold ceremonial armour and panalopy of magical weapons make them stand out among the templars. Their symbol is a toothed sun-rune, typically mounted on lapis lazuli; the jutting projections around its edge signifying each individual brother, uniting in an outward-facing circle together to protect the centre at their backs. The blue of the lapis is evocative of the cold of night, when their vigilance is most needed [1].

Role in the County

As the First Square of the Sun Dome army, in times of war the Golden Guard march at the forefront of battle, and have the honour of being the last to withdraw. Only used for the defence of the Sun Dome lands, they are never hired out as regular mercenaries to fight other people’s battles.

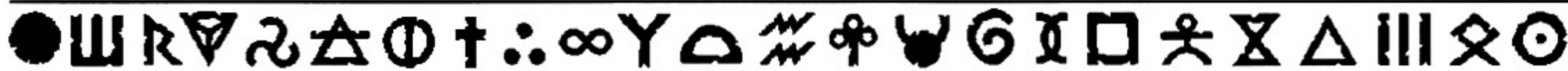
While the First Square regularly stand as honour guard for the Count, their true role is to protect the Sun Dome Temple itself.



Answerable to Feshoár, the ultimate magical defender of the temple (see *Sun County*, p39), they are led by the Guardians of the Four Directions, the four magical protectors of the Sun Dome.

While Feshoár usually remains aloof of mortal affairs, it manifests as a great, disembodied golden head tinged with fire, appearing for the Golden Guard when they gather together at the Sanctum for closed worship. The temple doors are locked at these times, even to the priests, leading lesser folk to endlessly speculate about what is going on inside.

Few know that in a secret ceremony held close to each of the cult’s seasonal holy days, Feshoár reveals to its favourite sons the Goldenblood Light. This is the solidified blood of Yelmalió, shed during one of his many battles in the Darkness. Symbol of the god’s lost fire powers, it is the holiest of holy relics and glows as bright as a star. Looking on the Goldenblood Light sends the brothers into an ecstatic state, girding their spirits during lonely times when they guard the Sun Dome while all others are at worship [2].



Origins

Like many aspects of modern Sun Dome society, the Golden Guard originated in the period of religious and social revolution following the Dragonkill War (1100 ST). Seeing the error of worshipping the great Sun Dragon of the EWF, the Sun Domers destroyed their old temple and returned to the unsullied pure light of Yelmalio. Fearing draconic reprisal, they built the dragonward towers that dot Sun County (now used as hermitages by retired priests) and set up the great spear-throwing machine at the Sun Dome (later moved to Harpoon) [3]. And at Feshoaa's command, they formed the Golden Guard.

As time passed, Sun County found it had more pressing enemies than the distant wyrms of Dragon Pass. Though they helped root out and crush several upsurgings of draconic sentiment, it was trolls and nomads who became the Golden Guard's most implacable foes during the long, difficult period known as the 'Solitude of Testing'. To survive, the Sun Domers had to become tough, and the First Square became the toughest of all. To defeat the trolls, they became adept night-fighters,

using Yelmalio's gifts of night-vision (Catseye) to fight the dark men on their own terms. Lacking mounts, the templars used their keen-eyed vrok hawks to outmanoeuvre nomad raiders, and developed their own desert-survival skills to take the fight out onto the plains themselves.

Even today, when a generation of relative peace has removed much of the grim edge from the Sun Domer struggle for survival, the Golden Guard remain an elite fighting force through rigorous training and discipline. Certainly the match of anything local trolls and nomads could throw against them, the sun folk claim their beloved First Square would even be the match of a like number of Lunar legionaries from the Heartlands [4].

Recent History

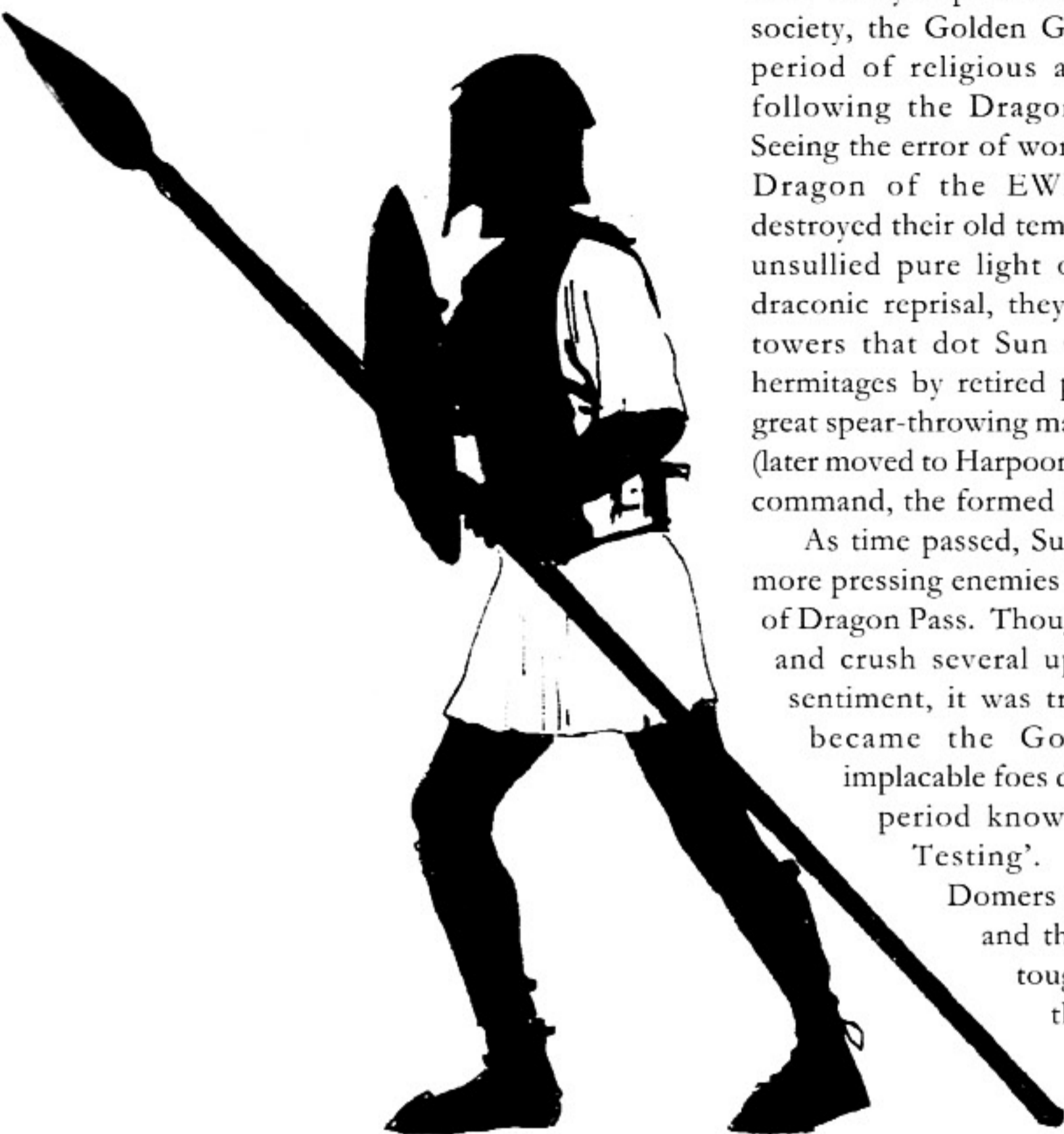
The role of the Golden Guard has evolved in recent years. In a controversial move, Lord Barthomet, Captain of the Golden Guard, cited the rule that the Golden Guard were only to be used in the defense of Sun County and refused to march his First Square out to Moonbroth in 1610. Here, the Sun Domers allied with the invading Lunars and defeated the nomads, bringing a long-lasting peace to Prax. Count Varthanis was enraged by Barthomet's refusal, but Feshoaa was unmoved. Varthanis's inability to censure the Golden Guard certainly helped lead to his downfall shortly after.

Ironically, since the coming of the Lunars, Sun County has never been more secure, and in recent years the Golden Guard's historic role as temple protectors has become less essential. In response, Lord Barthomet has sought to bolster the First Square's prestige by emphasising the mystique of the brotherhood. However, his obsessions with the lucrative Shield Push competitions and seeking out Lassiter's Reef appear to have deeply undermined the brotherhood with cynicism [5].

As with the spear-thrower at Harpoon, the original role of the guard - protecting the Sun Dome against the vengeance of dragons - has been all but forgotten. Nevertheless, the brotherhood does possess a number of surprises in its magical arsenal should the threat ever arise again. Unfortunately, many of the rituals surrounding some of these secrets have either been forgotten or become almost meaningless. It would take a scholar of the calibre of Hector the Wise to rediscover their full power.

Organisation

While in Sun Dome military parlance a 'square' comprises 64 templars, as the premier unit, the Golden Guard is double-sized, with 128 men on



Rumours

These rumours may be true, false or misleading at the GM's discretion.

Count Solantbos is looking for any excuse to pack Lord Barthomet off to a retirement tower; a temple official hints that any incriminating snippets of evidence should be well rewarded.

The talk in the barracks is that Varthanis Varthanison has made it no secret to his men that he covets Barthomet's position, and sees the rank of Captain of the Guard as a stepping stone to becoming the next Count.

Lady Vega Goldbreath is encouraging several of her female protégées to try out for the Golden Guard, says an admiring maiden at Haymon's Gate.

An old soak in a Suntown bar claims Lord Barthomet refused to march out to Moonbroth because he was "in the pay of New Pavis" - and still is.

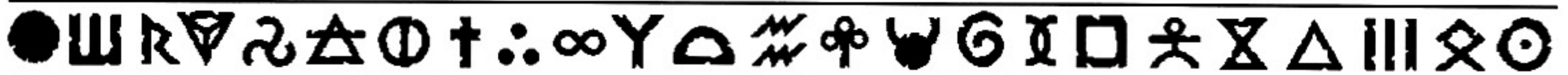
The Golden Guard hero Asphor has a long-lost "evil" twin, says an old, crippled veteran from Seven-Day.

A bookie's runner in Garhound whispers that Farrar Druskenee has been bribed to "play dead" in the upcoming match against the Lunar side.

An old desert tracker claims that "Lassiter's Reef" is just a ruse - Barthomet is looking for something else in the desert and nobody knows what it is, not even the Count.

By ancient custom, the Golden Guard are exempt from the high priest's ban on entering the Old Sun Dome. But, ponders a militiaman who has just finished a term of service guarding the ancient ruin, why have they recently insisted on asserting this right? What were they doing in there?

A junior acolyte is heard to grumble, why does the Sun Dome Temple always have to be ritually purified after the private worship services of the Golden Guard?



active duty. These are divided into 4 double-files of 32. In normal times, one half-square always remains on permanent station at the Sun Dome, while another group serves as ceremonial guard for the Count and the cult priests. The two other double-files tour the County or are available to undertake special missions on behalf of the Count or Lord Barthomet.

Each double-file has one of the Guardians of the Four Directions as their spiritual guide. These ancient spirits are gifts from Father Yelm himself, and actually predate the founding of the current Sun Dome Temple. Long ago, there were two more directions ('above' and 'below'), and two other guardians: these have been lost and all but forgotten. For more on this Sun County secret, see **The Lost Guardians**, below.

Each Guardian grants its own templar followers access to some special magic and abilities. Brothers sacrifice 1 POW to gain them, and must take on certain Yelmlio geases.

When inside temple grounds, the templar-in-command of each double-file is in a permanent Mind-Link with his Guardian; the Captain of the Golden Watch shares a link with all four.

The Guardian of the East

Recognised as the leader of the Guardians, the Guardian of the East is a manifestation of joyful rebirth and vigor, the 'Light of Dawn'. The Guardian of the East gives his templars protection (1/2 damage) from fire, and the opportunity to summon and bind their own personal salamander. They take the Yelmlio geas 'Never wear non-metal armour'.

The Captain of the Golden Guard always heads this group. Under Lord Barthomet, critics say he has filled it with his cronies, and there are whispers of disreputable deeds and even unnatural practices.

The Guardian of the West

The Guardian of the West is a manifestation of war, vengeance and death, the 'Light of Sunset'. Its templars are the grimmest, most implacably deadly warriors of the Golden Watch. The Guardian of the West grants its followers with the gift of immunity to such mind-affecting spells as Demoralise, Fear or Befuddle. In return, they take on the Yelmlio geas 'Never speak to or help non-Light worshippers in any way'.

The group's leader since time immemorial is the hero Asphor Venables (ironically probably one of the most affable templars in Sun County [6]).

The Guardian of the North

The Guardian of the North is also known as the 'Light Levin', a manifestation of the

awesome blast of the Sunspear: scorching, blinding, searing. It is famous for the virtual annihilation of the Founder of the Bison Nation two-a-half centuries ago [7], and its followers remain the terror of the nomads. The Guardian of the North gives its men the ability to attack as if under the effects of the

Fanaticism spell at will. They take on the geas 'never use any shield but hoplite shield', typically using it with the two-handed spear and shield-technique.

The leader of this group is Varthanis Varthanison, a grandson of the first Count of that name (reigned 1567 - 1593).

Notable Members of the Golden Guard

Lord Barthomet

Lord Barthomet [*bitter, driven, arrogant, ambitious*] has been Light Captain of the Golden Guard for the past twelve years. He might be a popular figure among the common folk of Sun County, but his decision not to lead the Golden Guard out to Moonbroth has cost him influence in the cult. While Invictus might be regarded as an old friend and ally, Count Solanthos' enmity towards Barthomet has grown into full-blown contempt. In response, Barthomet has drawn the brotherhood in on itself, closing ranks.

Cut out of the Temple power-structure, Lord Barthomet has diverted his energies into the Shield Push game, forming several unbeatable teams from among his men. These matches are enormously popular, especially when they take on and beat a visiting Lunar side. Seeking out the fabled lost gold mine at Lassiter's Reef is his other obsession, and he has sent several missions into the Wastes looking for it. Should he ever find the reef he will have both wealth and popularity, a potent combination. Solanthos distrusts the Captain of the First Square, but while the altar spirit Feshoaaar has confidence in him, the Count is reluctant to move against him.

Varthanis Varthanison

Scion of a famous Sun Dome family, Varthanis Varthanison [*disciplined, moral, just, aristocratic*] wears his ancestor's famous golden helmet proudly, and tries to keep his men apart from what he considers are the disreputable activities of Lord Barthomet and his cronies. He is obsessed with wiping away the stain on his family's honour caused when his uncle, the previous Count, made humiliating concessions to the invading Lunars.

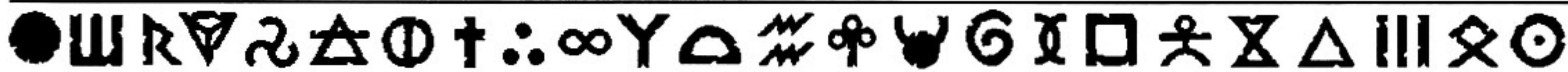
Asphor Venables

So long ago he cannot recall, Asphor Venables [*affable, genial, credulous, senile*] successfully completed the Hill of Gold Heroquest and is now effectively immortal. Unfortunately, down the long march of centuries he has seen much and suffered more. Among the victories and triumphs, he has suffered his share of hideous torments at the hands of trolls, nomads and other foes of the Sun People. Even though his body has always managed to reknit, the weight of his experiences has affected his mind, and despite being the greatest fighter Sun County has ever known, Asphor has regressed into a childlike state.

A Secret: Asphor's brother, known to all simply as 'Old Venables', is the second-in-command of the 'Old Guard', the Xth Militia file who guard the Old Sun Dome (see Sun County, p 113). The twins completed the Heroquest together, some time before they followed Arinsor, the First Count, to Prax. Like his brother, Old Venables too cannot be killed by normal means. He also once enjoyed the adulation of a hero, and even ruled the County at one very difficult point in Sun County history. His reign as Count (1387-1388) was a disaster, and since then he has craved only anonymity.

Farrar Druskenee

Star striker of the Sun Dome Eagles, Farrar Druskenee [*popular, egotistical, narcissistic, athletic*] is probably at the peak of his career. A close confidant and inseparable companion of Lord Barthomet off the Shield Push pitch, Farrar enjoys all the adulation but craves true glory on the battlefield. It is widely rumoured that he has had problems with both barley beer and hazia in the past.



Scenario Hooks

Inside the Golden Guard...

Putting oneself forward as a candidate to join the Golden Guard is an adventure in itself. Are the characters ready for the gruelling training regimen and terrifying initiation?

With the Harvest almost in, the Shield Push season is ready to roll! Lord Barthomet has a busy fixture for his teams, and a rematch scheduled against the Lunar army's Red Demons outside the gates of Pavis. If his team loses that one, he expects them to immediately volunteer for the next trek into Vulture's Country, looking for Lassiter's Gold.

The Captain of the Golden Guard is entitled to a ceremonial chariot, and Lord Barthomet has a fine one, some say even more resplendent than the Count's. But two centuries ago the original chariot was stolen by Birstarnif Awe, orange-skinned hero of the Pol Joni. It was then desecrated and is now said to be used as a temple for the tribe's Storm Bull worshippers. The Guardian of the South and its men swore to recover the chariot and avenge the outrage. Nothing serious has been attempted in nearly a decade now, but if the vow was fulfilled it is likely the Light Lambent would show its favours once again.

Lord Barthomet is looking for volunteers to undertake a new expedition to find the fabled Lassiter's Lost Reef. This one is going deeper into the desert than ever before. Having recently got his hands on a dwarven gold-detecting device, he's upbeat about the mission's success.

As experienced brothers in the Golden Guard, the characters are put in charge of running the annual selection camp, weeding out the unfit and undesirable, looking for suitably qualified new members (Lord Barthomet drops a hint that he's looking for a "stocky, yet agile likely lad", who could "bring up the tight end in a scrum"...)

Getting to Know the Golden Guard

Detained on a trumped-up charge while passing through the County, Farrar Druskenee challenges the adventurers to a Shield Push match, against his famed Eagles. He promises to release them after the game, but can they trust his word?

Rumours abound about what the Golden Guard really get up to inside the locked-up temple. If they really do secretly worship some sort of "fire demon", Lunar Intelligence needs to know. Can the adventurers find out?

Canot Rocknee, a master-artificer in the Flintnail cult, was arrested and briefly detained by the Golden Guard while passing through Sun County recently. Lord Barthomet confiscated a unique metal finder belonging to Canot, which he is very keen to get back. He offers a big reward for the machine's return, and can even loan a number of special Mostali devices to assist in the recovery.

Everyone knows of Lord Barthomet's obsession with finding Lassiter's Lost Reef. He is said to be outfitting an expedition right now. Following the brothers out into the Wastes might just lead the adventurers to a fortune, ripe for the taking...

The Guardian of the South

The Guardian of the South is the 'Light Lambent', a manifestation of the diffuse, translucent glow that frets the clouds of a sunless day. Its followers used to be specialists in subterfuge, infiltration and clandestine operations. These days, they seem to be little more than a source of reserve players for Lord Barthomet's Shield Push team. The Guardian of the South has not granted its gifts for a generation now, something the Golden Guard are deeply ashamed of.

While Farrar Druskenee is ostensibly the leader of the group, he is usually found at Lord Barthomet's side. Day-to-day command is usually left to one favoured subordinate or another, often changed at Farrar's whim.

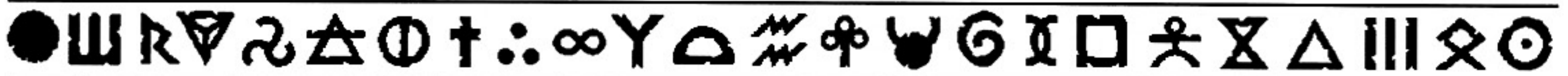
Joining the Brotherhood

Competition to join the ranks of the First Square is intense, and the selection process is rigorous. Candidates must not only be fit, skilled and of proven valour, but also have a reputation for piety, temperance and sobriety [8].

Selection takes place in the first week of Dark season, following the harvest. Recruiters are said to take a great interest in the Shield Push tournaments taking place during the Harvest festivals, on the lookout for likely lads.

Prospective candidates are taken away to a secret desert location where fewer than one in





seven last the first week, so demanding is the training regimen, which includes endless drills, forced marches, night fighting, starvation rations and religious indoctrination. A Golden Guard brother is expected to do more and fight longer with less food and water than a regular templar, to obey orders without question and lay down his life for the temple without hesitation.

Successful candidates are inducted into the brotherhood at a special ceremony that takes place at dawn following the winter solstice (Freezeday/Death week/Dark season). This, the holy night of Yelmalio's great nemesis Zorak Zoran, is the point when the Sun Dome is at its most mythically vulnerable to the forces of darkness. While the whole populace huddles indoors, praying

fervently with their priests for deliverance, the Golden Guard stand as sentinels, ready to repel and defeat any incursions. Prospective brothers also stand with those they hope to join, ready to face whatever comes. Many flee in terror at what they see, and a few even die [9].

Successful candidates are later that day taken into the inner sanctum of the Sun Dome and there, behind closed doors, are presented to Feshoaar and the Guardians of the Four Directions. They then have the Goldenblood Light revealed to them for the first time. Lying prostrate before it in a state of rapture, the new brothers swear great oaths to give not only their lives, but their spirits and souls to protect the temple [10].

New brothers take on a special gift and concomitant geas. In an arcane ceremony which even those participating no longer fully understand, a special mystic link is forged with Feshoaar which hearkens back to the days the Yelmalio cult purged itself of the sinister influence of Draconism. The great spirit can call on the brothers to come to the temple's aid if it feels the Sun Dome is threatened by terrible danger [11]. In return, the Golden Guard vow to never fight in combat with the left hand.

Feshoaar then gives each new brother over to one of the Guardians of the Four Directions - just how he decides who goes where remains inscrutable. All new brothers are then teamed together with an older member of the Guard,

The Lost Guardians

In an interesting mythological parallel with Umath's Camp of Orlanthi legend, Sun County too originally had Six Spirit Guardians - north, south, east, west, above and below.

When the Sun Domers purged themselves of draconic influences in the aftermath of the Dragonkill War (1100 ST), they abandoned their old temple and built a new one. Answering their prayers, Yelmalio sent the Sun Folk the great spirit Feshoaar to dwell in the altar of the freshly-consecrated Sun Dome.

Feshoaar subjected the original Spirit Guardians to Yelm's cleansing fire and found that of the six, five emerged from the flames pure. Together, they righteously drove away the sixth, the Guardian of Above, whose draconic urges were too deeply ingrained. The people instead placed their faith in the Dragonward towers and the Great Harpoon to protect them from danger in the skies [1]. This episode is now all but forgotten; Hector the Wise is probably the only person at the Sun Dome temple who even knows there was once a Guardian of Above. However, should the ceremonies to call the spirit back ever be revived, the Light Priests might be surprised to see they've summoned none other than Windwhistler the Wyrms of the Big Rubble, the current physical embodiment of the lost guardian [2].

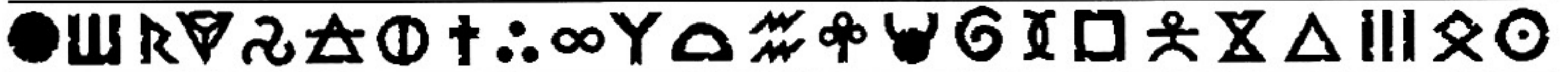
As befit its ties to the earth, the Guardian of Below had a feminine aspect and served to defend the temple from subterranean attack and, by extension, from trolls and other Darkness creatures. It was destroyed several hundred years ago during the horrors of the Solitude of Testing, defending the temple against rampaging Uz. However, its shattered psysical

remnants were carefully and secretly saved, becoming a magic artifact now owned by the influential Goldbreath family. What with the troll menace at the time, the 'Guardian of Below' continued on, this time as a new cult rank, the leader of an elite band of troll-killers. As the troll threat abated, the position evolved into that of the more general 'Guardian of Sun County', leader of the militia. Ironically, the current Guardian, the Light Lady Vega Goldbreath, also possesses the family heirloom containing the remnants of the original Guardian of Below. Combined together, Vega is in effect potentially a living avatar of the old Guardian of Below. This makes her a much more magically potent and powerful figure than she currently realises [3].

[1] For more information, see 'The Men with the Golden Gun' in *Ye Booke of Tentacles II*.

[2] Wind whistler is described in the new *Pavis & Big Rubble* reprint and the original *Big Rubble*.

[3] Lady Vega is described in *Sun County*; Jane Williams recounts her troubled personal life in 'The Secret History of Sun County' in *Questlines II*. The Goldbreath heirloom is a tiny golden shield, marked with curious runes and sigils. It gives her use of a Protection 10 spell once per day in return for a number of anti-troll geases. Should her full potential as avatar of the Guardian of Below ever be realised, greater gifts may become apparent - just lately, she's discovered that she can actually see in the dark...



who grooms the recruit as his replacement and has a great sense of fraternal pride overseeing his progress. It is this form of intense mentoring between man and youth that binds Golden Guard together into a cohesive fighting force and strong brotherhood.

Brothers for Life

Brothers serve for life, but active duty is usually for 10-15 years. Members of the Golden Guard on active duty are forbidden to marry, and in fact in similar fashion to Light Priests, new candidates must instantly divorce if accepted into the elite ranks, symbolizing the sundering of Sky and Earth when Air tore them apart. While some do marry at retirement and receive ample farming lands from the temple, many follow a time-honored custom and remove themselves to monastic retreats deep in the desert. Here they spend the rest of their days in reflective contemplation of Yelmadio and the immanent mysteries of the Goldenblood Light. However, all brothers maintain the mystic link with Feshoaar, and the great spirit can call on them to come to the temple's aid if it feels the Sun Dome is threatened by terrible danger. Curiously, several weather-beaten old monastics have come in from their desert hideaways in recent months, claiming to have heard the summons in their dreams. As all appears to be well in Sun County, no one knows what the 'terrible danger' is - yet [12].

Footnotes

[1] Note, the templar in the foreground on the cover of Sun County and the templar on the back cover are both members of the Golden Guard and display the symbol prominently.

[2] In game terms, contemplation, veneration and adoration of the Goldenblood Light blesses the recipient with an additional 1d10 Magic Points if they succeed in a Ceremony roll. These magic points are gone once expended, and in any case are lost at 1 point per week. At most, each brother might get to see the holy relic five times a year.

[3] For more information about the dragonward towers and the harpoon, see 'The Men with the Golden Gun' in Ye Booke of Tentacles II.

[4] Lord Barthomet has only met such troops on the Shield Push field (the result: a narrow win to the Sun Dome Eagles, the Golden Guard's premier team). Who knows if one day if this claim will be put to the real test?

[5] For information about the Shield Push game see Sun County, p.47. Lassiter's Reef is a legendary lost gold deposit, said to be somewhere deep in Vulture's County (see Sun County, p.128).

[6] Imagine, if you will, a sort of punch-drunk George Foreman.

[7] Pistolli, then Captain of the Golden Guard, seized the opportunity to overthrow the Bison Khan Orogurri, an outland interloper who had taken control of the County at one of the lowest points of its history.

[8] Though recently, many older brothers mutter to themselves that Lord Barthomet is willing to overlook these noble qualities if a prospective member has the makings of a fine Shield Push player!

[9] In game terms, a new candidate must face and defeat some sort of Darkness creature during the winter ordeal. This could be some sort of heroquestish/metaphysical conflict - a shade or other sort of darkness spirit - or a more mundane opponent such as a troll or a giant: have a wade through one of the various Troll publications and pick out something that takes your fancy!

[10] During this profoundly moving experience the new brother sacrifices 1 POW to the altar. This adds to the temple's magical defences (see Sun County, p.38).

[11] This link with the altar spirit also gives them a permanent Seek Sun Dome ability (see Sun County, p.25).

[12] Some whisper that the threat to the security of the County is none other than the brotherhood themselves! The high esteem in which they are held by the common folk and their many prerogatives has invoked jealousy in some lesser lights, and many people do wonder what they get up to at their private ceremonies in the temple. It is even rumored that the Golden Guard have turned away from Yelmadio and instead venerate a fire demon, which appears before them as a great glowing head!

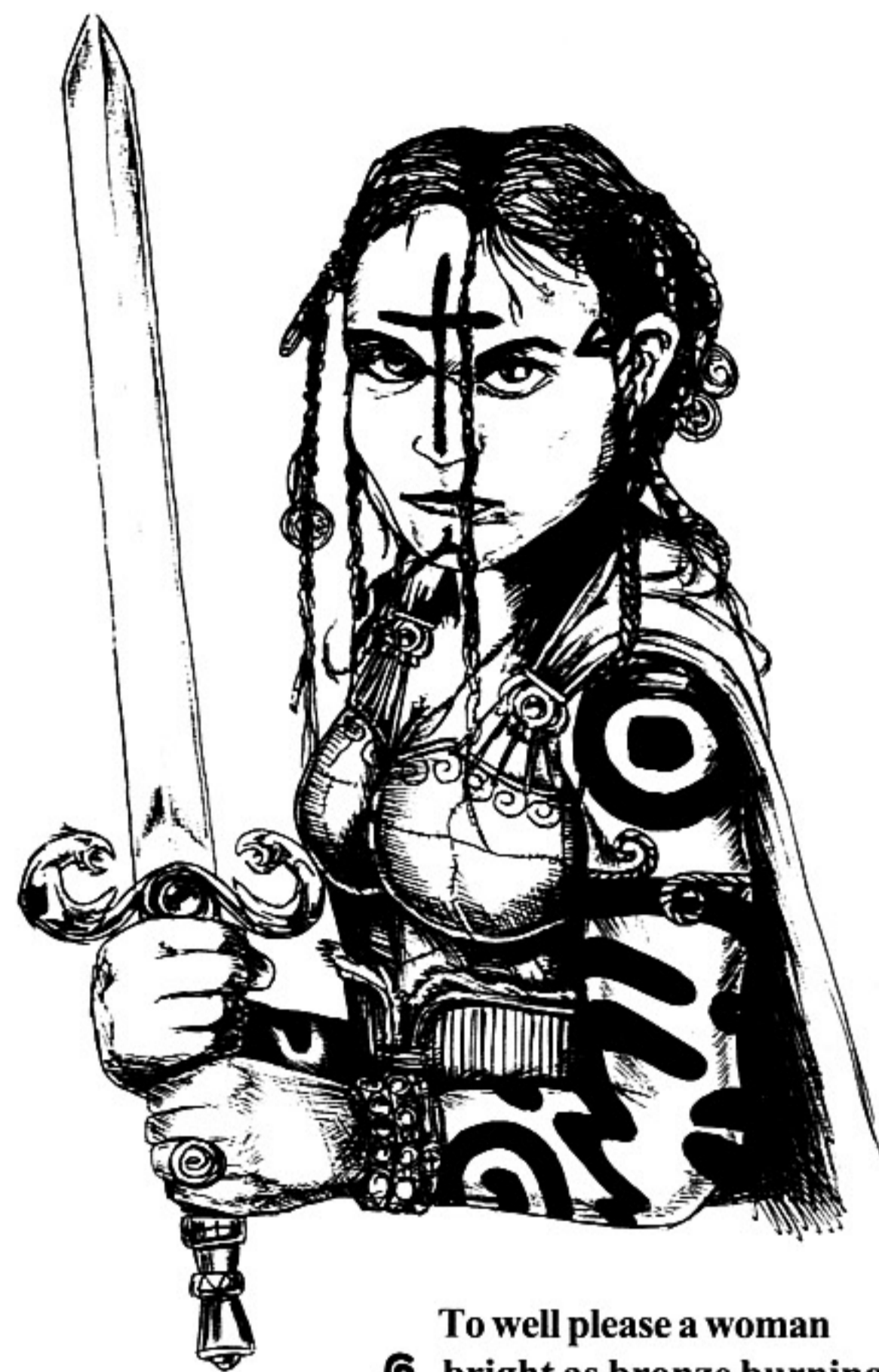


A Rope of Cedarbark

by John Hughes

The Far Place stands on the very edge of knowing. It is a realm of storm and stone and loss, upland fortress of the seven winds, an ancient dragon-land, hoarder of secrets, dark, rain-pelted and isolate. The Far Place is a bleeding land, ruled by animal clan and elemental court. Though human tribes and empires may rise a time, they are fated to crumble before the inexorable power of Storm and Dark. To breathe there is to be changed, to live there is to be moulded and shaped into the image of the land itself.

*The Witness of Balin God-Gift,
The Outer Court, Boldhome, 1648.*



To well please a woman
 6 bright as bronze burning
 6 when Far Point was fought for
 6 I have shed blood.

The First Runo: Memories and Other Falsehoods

Out of the south she came, as mysterious and violent as the blessing winds of Sea Season, and just as beautiful. Out of the south, through gors deep and gallt wide, 'cross ice-shielded streams and shadow-dark valleys. Out of the south, till at last she came to the stead called Lagerwater, home to the Bluefoot Tovtaros, the true Orlanthe folk at the very centre of the world.

Don't laugh you uncut stickpicker! You think it strange for an old man like Braggi to speak of heroes such as she, but I tell you, though neither lhankoring nor skald, my words are sacred, for I was there. I can still see her face in the flames before us, as though it happened but one season past. I was *there*.

Out of the south she came, twice warned and thrice blessed, this vingan called Cradledaughter, a woman proud and terrible, strange in dress, harsh in voice, rich in laughter and poor in giving praise. Henna-hallowed her hair, spun with knotted

copper coins, proclamation to all of the Goddess she served. Shieldless she ranged, with a spear so light, though even its shaft was bound in rune-wrought bronze. At her waist, a draw-wand of searing blue iron, pledge gift of the violence she carried like an unborn child. And she spoke of things we did not understand.

Who she was no one really knew, for she had no kin. Kierston the Lawspeaker first spoke for her, and called her cousin, but Kierston was Amad by birth, and claimed kin in places where even the North Wind would not blow. And honoured though she was, Kierston made *her* hearth in distant Ironspike, in the cattle-rich lowlands. *This* was Lagerwater.

Old Broddi Clapsaddle loved her, and trusted her, but Broddi was humakti, and therefore dead, no longer of the clan. No one should trust the dead in matters of the living, even though Broddi was otherwise much respected, for he was wise for a man — even the women said so — and he bred the finest fighting cuks in all the Far Place. Yet blood is blood only when it flows.

The Women's Circle took her in, and honoured her journey, but that is the way of

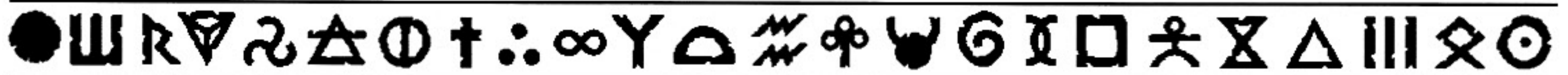
women; their ways are not the ways of men, and are sometimes strange.

As I remember, it was Orlstein Bluecloud's third year as chieftain of the Tresdarni clan, the year that Conla our tribal king knelt and kissed the golden ring of Harvar Ironfist, betraying every Orlanthe of his tribe. It was the year — though we did not then realise it — that the priestesses of Moon Woman imprisoned the Lord of the Middle Air, the year the free winds ceased to blow.

The Long Dark had been unending, bitter; a winter cruel and deadly. The black frost had caught us early, with cattle struck frozen in the fields before we could take them to the byrnes. A sacred bull disappeared from the chief's own stall, three children were taken by snowcreepers, and an entire band of bluefoot hunters were lost on Three Breast Mountain. As I remember, there were dragonewts *everywhere*...

Come FlamalTame, our joy in the Goddess' awakening was tempered by the mourning of our loss, by the dull ache in our swollen stomachs, and by omens foretelling blood-slaked bronze and raging gleed in seasons yet to come.

Then, this woman from the south.



Do not think we dishonoured her, for she was a guest in our stead, and hospitality is Orlanth's first blessing. More than that she was a Red Woman, a vingan, mistress of the kin-blade and maker of warriors and men. We accorded our guest all due honour and deference.

Lagerwater had been without a Stead Daughter since Reydalda Manyalves and her cousins fell in the Righteous Wind, so if Cradledaughter choose, as we grew to know her and to trust her, she might become one blood with the true folk. With patience, and with many giftings, she might take the role of Vinga on the clan ring, and teach the newly-initiated men respect for women and skill with blades, instructing them in both the ways of love and the ways of warrior in that time they weave a wedding blanket for their brides¹.

But Cradledaughter was a foreigner, and like all foreigners she was impatient and brash.

The vingan was honoured in the great lodge, she received the thane's cup, and a warm place by the fire in the outer hearth. Yet for reasons we could not understand, she wanted more, and she would not respect the traditions of our clan. The ways of Lagerwater are the ways of blood, of family and bloodline and marriage bond, worked out over generations in delicate balance, either in quiet words over a blazing hearth (the women's way), or in honest and bloody violence followed by gifts and oaths of loyalty (the men's way, the better way). As seasons are long,

and gifts are many, so the sons of the RidgeLeaper² are patient and slow.

I tell you, she was strange. It wasn't just the way she dressed, for we knew the ways of foreigners. As my name is my strength, even then I had walked the falling path to Ironspike and on to Alda Chur and sacred Wintertop, and some of us had been to distant Herongreen, or even sand-misted Pavis, where the men wear trousers and cohabit with all manner of beasts. Nor was it her looks, though she wore no tribal topknot and I swear her face was bare of tattoos like an untested virgin. It was not even her voice, though she spoke in that atrocious Sartarite way, all sizzle and splutter, sounds sliding past her tongue as a thieving otter midst the high-stream rocks.

No, we thought the woman strange because the Goddess cut for her a cape whose marns we could not recognise as our own. Vingan she was and true, but unlike any Stead Daughter of *our* knowing. She walked a different path. And the visitor held secrets, burdens of which she could not speak.

The yelmalions of the stead distrusted Cradledaughter from the first, for their memories of henna-dyed women were bitter, and unhealed. And she soon lost the ear of the elder warriors, for she was forceful, with little respect for white hair, relying too much on her voice and her wits and her charm. Then the male initiands began to whisper among themselves of this exotic woman whose rune duties included teaching spear play under the sacred oxhide as well as at the practice buttes. The bloodline elders didn't like this, for initiation is a serious and dangerous business.

As though it were Cradledaughter's fault the older boys saw the world through the eye beneath their kilts! Yet as surely as betrayal follows an oath, so was dissent sown upon them all.

Come SalmonTame, Cradledaughter Beyond-the-Blood would visit the warrior's lodge at Elmset. She joined in at the cuk fights, something a woman of the stead would never do. She bet and drank and argued with the men as their beloved fighting cuks battled with beak and bronze spur. The far-travelling vingan assisted old Broddi with his prize birds, Axe and Bladger, and soon enough mastered the ways of cukpit and of roost. Now such behaviour shocked the women, for they thought themselves above such things. It shocked the men as well, for Cradledaughter bet to *win*, as

though the skins and sticklepick she won actually *meant* something. She obtained without honour, without gifting. She simply didn't understand.

As the amber days grew richer and even the snows on Hard Edge retreated to the higher brans, it seemed that a mountain fog fell upon Cradledaughter's spirit, and her once life-rich laughter became forced, and seldom heard.

With Fire Season came the questions. Such strange questions too, and her not even kin. She asked of the dragonewts, their egg cities, and of the cursed ruins of the Youf. She asked also of the forbidden valleys, the animal tribes, the hunters and their high camps in the gors. She asked of the sacred stories, of Odayla and the ancient memories of Orlanth Dragonfriend. And her neither kin nor kayling!

Cradledaughter spoke of things we could not understand. She spoke of past glory of the Sartar high-kings, of Starbrow Kheldon-Queen, of the Far Place united again as part of a free kingdom, our land freed of Lunar taint. We listened, we tried to answer politely, but the woman was clearly too long on the mountain. We told her, "We are strong, the gors brings its own freedom." We said, "We are Tovtaros, the land herself is our shield." Did we not have problems enough of our own, what with kinstrife and harvest and Ginijji and the treachery of Conla our sun-swallowed king?

Harvar Ironfist we hated beyond death, but *he* dwelt in distant Alda Chur, and that glass-walled city was halfway to the edge of the world. And as for Sartar, well Sartar was cabbage land, no one had kin worth visiting there. What good ever came from Sartar? And the Lunars, well they were a strange folk granted, but predictable and weak. They could not touch our uplands, they needed roads, so what concern were they?

This woman had a lot to learn.

And for us, well, Cradledaughter was just too hard to think about. She gave the warriors skulldrums whenever they tried.

Come Earth Season, Cradledaughter's hearth-friends were few. Broddi remained stead-fast of course, and the Women's Circle were supportive though increasingly perplexed. Of the rest, six or eight only, younger male warriors for the most part, drawn to the life and beauty of this stranger, carried into dreaming by the power of her words or the silent longings of their hearts.

In GorsTame, the clan Ring met to discuss this outrageous guest. The elders debated in secret, far from the common hearth, for they knew that public argument would result in a moot, with the thunder of voices and the clanging of spear heads and pots. None wanted this, for Conla our tribal king waited like a hungry haggard, watching for any sign of kinstrife, eager for any excuse to intervene. In its wisdom, the Ring decided that Orlstein our chieftain would speak plain words



tucked beneath her cloak, well she will laugh, and lock gaze with Elmal's fiery eyes, and dryly proclaim a challenge of her own; "The women can protect *themselves*."

There is the shameful thing as well.

I've heard it on several tongues, all exiles out of Ralios or the tribes of the southern waste. They claim that among their folk, Vinga is known as the *daughter* of Elmal, with the High King cuckolded by his deceitful thane. It *must* be a lie! Vinga has the essence of the Storm within her, her rituals *work*, our stories are *true*. The Loyal Daughter *hates* Elmal, and how could any woman hate her own father? It is shameful, and I will say no more.

Now enough of such visions in the embers. Some of you will have joined in the Soup-pot Kitchen Quest during Sacred Time. You've *seen* how the Laughing Daughter gets the better of old Cold Coals as he tries to lord it over FirstStead, and you've *seen* how they argue and rage before the entire clan.

Well, when Bhorghil One-Eye came to Cradledaughter's fire, it wasn't Sacred Time, but they argued anyway.



I was *there*. I remember. We were swapping tales in the Twin Birches lodge — Cradledaughter, Broddi Clapsaddle, myself, Danwyr Can't-be-Moved... and a few forest kin, upland Odaylans come to dry their cloaks and sample the stead crimp.

Bhorghil appeared out of rain-sodden darkness, stark against the doorway of our tiny earth-abode. His greeting was not expansive. "Out. All of you, out. Except for *her*."

I guess he was in a hurry.

Bhorghil hadn't asked permission to enter the lodge of a bloodline not his own, humble and ill-smelling though it was. Perhaps that is why Broddi ignored him completely, cooing softly to his beloved Bladger as he bent forward to feed the *cuk* with honey-soaked bread from his mouth.

Finally seeing the humakti, Bhorghil gasped in shocked recognition. He paused, like a sword stuck in a shield ring. What he had to say was a matter for the living, so the Stead Defender would pretend the old warrior just wasn't there.

Good Broddi gave as he was given.

The rest of us made hasty exit, waiting outside in earth-piercing rain, the drenching marriage rite. The Rich-Wetter was generous that night, but none of us sought shelter. No, we huddled together 'gainst the night, straining to catch the prating play of sword-tongues within.

Bhorghil began cautiously enough, and by his own reckoning, politely. That, after all, was the way Orlstein had instructed him to act.

The clan elders were concerned, he explained, that such a gifted woman as Cradledaughter was wasting her time in upland, isolated Lagerwater. What were her plans? Did she have some particular purpose here? What of her journey? If she desired to travel north, then the market at Ironspike was a fine place to recruit guides. If she wished to make her hearth, well as an exile she could join the Priderni clan, where her ways might be better understood. And if she wished to enter fully into the life of *our* clan, well she could marry... Bhorghil himself would arrange a good match, and speak for her, and guarantee shelter and protection as though she were his own blood.

Broddi coughed, as though a thoughtbird had nested in his throat.

Cradledaughter listened in silence. Finally, with great seeming calm, the vingan asked if Bhorghil

spoke at the command of Orlstein his chief?

Bhorghil said that the truth is a mountain.

Cradledaughter asked if he spoke as messenger for the clan Ring?

Bhorghil said the truth is seen by all across a great distance.

Broddi, who knew a little about truth himself, cooed softly to Bladger, crumpling his nose against the *cuk's* fire-gold breast.

Cradledaughter, continuing in that same calm and measured tone, asked if Bhorghil's spear was as short as his god's?

Bhorghil *gagged*. He stuttered and stumbled and stammered, turning as pink as the demon moon. This was no way for a Stead Daughter to behave!

The vingan continued, asking if Bhorghil's mountain was not perhaps a molehill, as *elmali* were not known as being good with distances.

Broddi looked up, chewing honeyed bread 'tween ground down gum-skerries. He ceased his cooing, and asked innocently if Cradledaughter was still talking about Bhorghil's spear?

Cradledaughter tried in vain to disguise her grin as laughter spun from the darkness beyond the lodge.

Bhorghil's well-ploughed face now glowed like a beetroot fresh from harvest.

"What is wrong, noble carl?", soft fluted the vingan. "Drooping spirits?"

To the Stead defender, who knew much of Vinga's wiles, those words marked a threat of insult and injury, a threat to his very manhood.

And they *really* opened the gate. The Storm Bull called to Bhorghil. Bhorghil ran to meet the spirit halfway cross the *ffrid*, and he opened himself fully to its fury, the raging, battering wind of destruction. His knuckles clenched white 'gainst the gold-wound grip of his blade.

Battle-bright Bhorghil *raged*, shouting with fury enough to awaken children in the far-flung hunting camps of Godi Gallt. He twisted like a kolating in her fits, chopping his arms, pointing, pounding. He told the vingan *exactly* what she would do.

Cradledaughter did not laugh, did not reply. Vinga she was, but carved from a different wood to the Stead Daughters *we* knew. Kheldon Queen carved her, Kallyr carved her true.

Bhorghil spoke of the ways of Storm and Earth, of authority and tradition, of what was good and fair and right. Cradledaughter closed her eyes.

Bhorghil spoke of the *nyrd* befalling those who flaunt the will of the clan. Cradledaughter shot a glance like arrows showering.

Bhorghil spoke of the vingan's disrespect and arrogance, her ignorance, her atrocious way of dress, her manners fit for neither stickpicker nor stead trollkin. Cradledaughter *growled*.

In the corner, Broddi tickled Bladger 'neath

his beak, and cooed.

Cradledaughter asked if she had no guest-right, no honour price, no right to plead her case before the moot?

Bhorghil, surprised that his plain-speaking message was *still* not getting through, called the woman a beer-plank.

Cradledaughter hurled a heavy whetstone across the lodge.

Bhorghil allowed himself a self-satisfied grin. He pressed the attack, ranting of Kallyr Starbrow, the Kheldon bandit queen, landless, childless and exiled. A death-driven murderess, he declared, goaded by hatred and blind ambition to pursue impossible dreams.

And so the siege wall fell. Cradledaughter *glowered*. The very air rippled, charged with the power of pent-up rage.

Now a battered clay image of Ernalda Earthmother sat upon the hearthstone. As that anger grew, it cleanly cracked in twain, veil to sandal, breasts asunder.

Omen enough. Cradledaughter gave forth the thunder-shout, and leapt.

If anyone in the stead had somehow slept through Bhorghil's earlier ranting, they slept no more. With the thunder-shout, rain-battered sentries ran from the palisades. Spirits screamed, cattle bellowed, children bawled, trollkin squealed, and grown men and women came running from the lodges, clubs in hand. When they discovered the mighty hue to be no goat-kin ravagement but only their Defender and the vingan, they joined us in curious circle about the earthlodge entrance.

Both Bhorghil and Cradledaughter were experienced warriors, power full and practiced, dealers of death. Yet their swords remained sheafed, for all the rage and anger. Not even Bhorghil One-Eye dared to bare a blade in the lodge of a humakti, not even if the death master was bent forward by the hearth, clucking to himself, soothing and stroking a nervous cukbird. No, instead it was a match of wills and godi-magic, full of fists and feet and fury.

I swear to you, the lodge was not the same for seasons afterwards. Not even fat-tailed lambs would eat grass off the roof, and the stead alynx, for all their love of Vinga, shunned it like a vat of sticklepick too long in the sun.

Outside, a growing host waited in anxious though bemused silence, wincing and grimacing at every scream and squeal and hard-hurled obscenity. It was like a cattle yard at crotching time, all bellow and bawl and sharp hard **grunt** of physical pain. Then Broddi Clapsaddle peered out beyond the door drape, calling to Danwyr. Into the firstbeard raider's hands Broddi placed beloved Bladger, and bid the bird be taken quick to warm safe roost. Broddi then returned to the hubris hall, and a third hard voice joined the fist-



flailing, tongue-thronging fury.

Silence came suddenly, interrupted once, then silence complete. In the stillness, we heard only murmurings of the rainstream. As one, we drew breath and waited.

With broken nose and bloody ear, Bhorghil Sun Carl emerged stiffly from the lodge, kicking free from the mash-bucket about his ankles. Drawing on whatever remained of his dignity, the Keeper of the Gate threw a yellow carl-cloak about his shoulders, and began solemn march through the mud to his straw.

Then Cradledaughter emerged, her face set calm and white. I say she looked *magnificent*, despite the cow dung strewn across her hair. Glancing to the assembled steadfolk, she gave a fleeting smile, a smile then seldom seen. With the smile came a groan, and the Red Woman bent and clutched her ribs.

Bhorghil Brightson could not resist one final jab. He turned to face the vingan, knowing his lodge-kin were watchful. He bellowed a challenge to the adversary, a call that echoed back from distant valley walls.

"Obedience is *always* an option!"

Cradledaughter grimaced, out of pain or surprise I could not tell. Ever-swift, she hard-hurled her reply to the Stead Defender.

"There is *always* another way!"

The stead throng gasped, smiled, then *roared* its approval. It was no moot, but I say the vingan won new friends that night, for all her 'other ways'.

In time, the steadfolk returned to their straw. Cradledaughter re-entered the lodge, taking

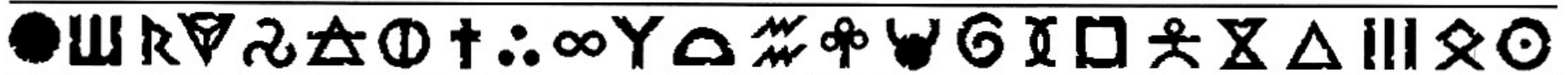
counsel with Broddi through the remaining hours of darkness. I watched and waited outside alone, rain-soaked and fearful.

I knew there were several paths the Laughing Daughter might yet take. She could appeal to the Women's Circle, or even to the open moot, and so embarrass Orlstein into accepting her as a stead-friend. She could take a marriage match. Or she could formally challenge Bhorghil according to first law, and give him a proper wounding, calling down a curse on Lagerwater for ill-dealing with a guest.

Yet Cradledaughter did what she did. No sooner had the Cold Sun stepped forth from the Doorway of Voria than she rose on silent, stone-soled sandals and made her way to the guarded gateway of our stead. It was that rare sort of morning when the southern sky is clear of cloud cattle, with the terrifying blue of the skydome shining down through gelid air. The Vingan's face was hard set, sorrow in her eyes, anger in the angle of her jaw. She carried naught but simple blanket pack and her strange bronze-bound spear, and the constant companion belted at her side.

Cradledaughter cared not for 'customed courtesy of chieftain's parting gift, nor blessing of wind-rite to speed the wayward guest. She *knew* what she had to do.

Much later, in the sword harvest, when Starbrow's Consort came out of the south, I realised the vingan had been granted a rune gift, the same that cursed her mistress, the Kheldon Queen. Their rune weaving was that whatever they could dream, they must believe it possible,



if only their actions be as strong as their dreams. The burden of such a gifting must be terrible indeed.

So Cradledaughter was leaving, I knew that whatever it was that called her from the north was calling still. I ran to catch her, and in fumbling anxiety, told her I would join her on her quest. Because of my name, I'd been forced many times to tramp the northern ways, even to the dark-bound banks of the Cholanti. I well-knew the paths and their many dangers.

Cradledaughter seemed genuinely surprised; she smiled in that superior, knowing way that women do, and shook her head in simple refusal.

She then made sacrifice at the rough-hewn boundary ward, whispering quietly to the spirits of her journey. To me she gave no word.

I blustered, tears suddenly hot on my cheek, desperate to break the silent wall between us. "You'll have to kill him, of course", I stammered. "They might have to bar you from clan feasts after that, but it can't be helped. It would be a service to our rune."

She turned to face me then, and finally gave answer. Her words shamed me, and for a moment I thought it was Broddi's counsel that she spoke. But no, it was Vinga speaking. It was Cradledaughter.

"Acceptance is always hard come-by for the Red Headed Daughters. A rune-truth that, much tested. Bhorghil did as the paths demanded. He is a fine warrior, loyal to the clan, and we will

have sore need of such when the hill beacons call the great hosting. If the elmal has learned from this night...", Cradledaughter gave pause, "then so have I. And if he occasionally needs his skull split to let some Air in...", the smile returned, briefly, "... then such are the ways of men. You my friend must wait with patience, and cultivate your power. The call is upon us all."

I met her eyes then, so warm, but also watching from a great distance. I nodded and stepped back, chastened, beginning at last to understand.

Glancing back to the outer palisade, I saw that Orstein watched us from the birch-spiked wall, impassive in his cape of cloudy grey. It seemed he understood the sacred stories better than I. Cradledaughter had planted a seed, and it would grow among us, though its harvest would be bloody and bitter.

So it was that thrice-warned, thrice-blessed Cradledaughter left Lagerwater alone. She faced the northern sky, where the storm clouds tumble and boil around the heaven-gash of Skyfall. Northwards she journeyed, seeking the forbidden heartlands of the Youf, through gors deep and gallt wide, 'cross ice-shielded streams and shadow-dark valleys. She lost her way of course, yet in doing so found something very precious, and began another journey, one that lead to herodum and infamy and the making of a kingdom.

But *that* is another tale.

Found appended to a bound collection of tribute receipts, part of The High King's Knowing, Alda Chur 1657. Attributed to Braggi Afraid-of-the-Dark, a Tovtaros thane. Spirits of knowing indicate that the original document was later altered and appended by a second hand.

Endnotes

¹See the accompanying Vinga article for an explanation of these customs.

²Taros RidgeLeaper is founder of the tribes, an Elmalian hero from Bilini who led the first settlers into Far Point after the Inhuman Occupation. That journey of the Far Walkers, their vision of the False Sun and the kinstrife that followed is told in the Taros Karla in Questlines I.

³A Sun Carl responsible for stead prosperity may also be called a reeve or harst. In more settled Heortling lands (where clan-based, fortress steads are unnecessary), Orlanthi reeves worship Harst, the Storm Reeve of First Stead, who stored up all manner of grains that his clan might survive the Lesser Darkness. In such places, a stead is often referred to as "hearth and harstings". In the uplands of the Far Place however, the cult of Elmal gradually expanded to include all aspects of stead survival, and Harst has become a minor mythological figure, often confused with Elmal himself.

Notes (continued...)

[XXIX.424.558.022/ga]

From a report to King Andrin's Chancellor, dated Waterday, Death, Fire, 1322:

"My Lord, We have pursued the thieves into the foothills beyond the Orshanti lands. It seems that they are well known hereabouts as petty brigands and we have gained much useful intelligence. The older of the two is called the Grey Dog, while the younger is called the Mad Dog. They have a small band of followers, which is held together by ties of blood and kin. Most people view this band as dangerous brutes, though one foolish old man claimed that they were fighters for freedom ? before I ordered his head struck from his body.

I now have information that the Grey Dog is expected to visit one of his many lovers in a nearby village (she is due to give birth soon). I plan to lie in wait for him here and either capture him to face the king's justice, or kill him. Alas, there is still no sign of the King's herd of cloud sheep. Our search for these will be unceasing.

I remain your servant, and the King's loyal thane, Gustand Kangolfsson"

The weaponthane Gustand did not survive long. In the Yearbook for 1322 he is reported as having been killed "by a mad dog with its blood up." Griflet Asread, 1617

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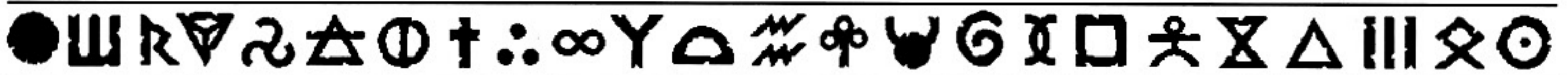
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The Spoken Words

(originally published
in Tales #1)

by Matthew Tudor

The Spoken Word functions as an internal security organization, essentially operating within the political and military spheres of the Lunar Empire. Inspired by the Emperor himself in around 3/17 (1372 ST), the Word's main aim is to protect the very base of Lunar control, to worm out those insurrectionists, progressives, and subversives that may undermine the continued existence and development of the Empire, simultaneously converting patriotism, in all its guises, into loyalty and service.



Origins and Structure

The precise origins of the Spoken Word are unknown. Documentation insists that it formed from the very breath ("The Word and The Wish") of the Red Emperor, and that its ranks were molded from parts of two existing and distinct bodies; the Imperial Bodyguard, and the Emperor's own stable of messengers and couriers. Initially created to secure and police the Emperor's personal bodyguard in a period of grim concern, the Spoken Word has since evolved into a semi-self regulating internal 'police' force with duties and responsibilities far out reaching the Emperor's initial concerns.

Unlike most Lunar Government 'offices', the Spoken Word is relatively free from the straitjacket of bureaucracy. The reason is that, essentially, the Emperor himself is solely responsible for organizing the force. However, it is often impossible and/or impractical for Him personally to closely oversee the Spoken Word. To facilitate the efficient and effective running of the force, a skeleton administrative body of 'investigators' was formed. In effect, this body acts as an intermediary between the day to day concerns of the organization and the wishes and requirements of the Emperor.

The Emperor does, however, reserve the exclusive right to recruit and promote - it is essential that only the most loyal Lunars are allowed amongst the Spoken Word ranks.

(In practical terms, the investigators select and vet prospective 'candidates' before seeking Imperial approval.)

The Spoken Word is therefore divided into two groups: the 'agents' (The Word) and the 'investigators' (The Wish). Both groups are ultimately responsible only to the Red Emperor.

It is important to recognize that the Spoken Word works both within and outside those departments responsible for provincial security. It is also important to note that whilst there is a degree of ill feelings towards the Spoken Word amongst the various aides to the Overseer of Provincial Security, the relationship with Appius Luxius is a healthy one, even if not strictly inviolable! ⁽¹⁾

The relationship with Lunar Army Intelligence is the closest of all their working links. Information is passed between the two offices, and cooperation is highly valued. It is not unknown for members of Army Intelligence to also be Word agents. Indeed, Dagius Furius, Chief of Army Intelligence, is rumoured to be a Word member of considerable standing.

The Word as Cult

In terms of operation and structure the Spoken Word appears to be essentially a secular body. It is more akin to the Army than to the state cults. However, because of its origins and the divine sanction of the Red Emperor, the Spoken Word enjoys some typical cult benefits.

The Spoken Word holds the Red Emperor (and literally His spoken word) as their deity. Information and detail of the religious structure and privilege is scant.

It is noted that some members, usually Wish investigators, are in full possession of peculiar and powerful magics. It is also rumoured that those responsible for policing the Imperial Bodyguard, although rarely noticed, are similarly possessed of powers typical of Rune Lord status.

Promotion and

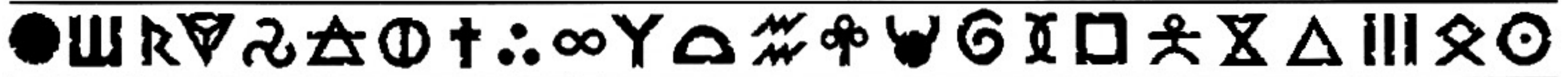
Membership Requirements

It is interesting to note that it is the quality of experience that most often determines selection into the Spoken Word. The Emperor insists that recruits be chosen for merit and overall suitability rather than status or birth (as is often the case elsewhere in the Lunar government). This, He believes, gives Him a stronger basis of trust in the Spoken Word members.

Despite the above, only candidates of Lunar parentage are considered, and even then a preference for born and bred within the Lunar Heartland is expressed. This often makes the investigators task of training recruits suitable for work in the Lunar Provinces more difficult.

Although not exclusively, the majority of candidates come from military background. Soldiers continuously prove their worth and dedication every day of their service. However, Spoken Word agents are often promoted from other areas, such as from civil office, the various ministries, positions of responsibility within Lunar state cults, as well as the public sector. On these occasions, recruits are typically considered for their ability to perform specialized tasks. Said recruits have previously demonstrated their loyalty to the Lunar state via religious conviction or membership in one of several patriot clubs. (There are a few exceptions to this, most notably in the recruitment of prostitutes. Here, loyalty is confirmed by other methods!)

The Spoken Word is no longer the preserve of men only. The Lunars have never been slow in appreciating the value of women in all the spheres,



especially with regards to spying where they are considered to be particularly advantaged. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that women feature prominently in those missions of the Word concerned with infiltration.

Responsibilities and Areas of Operation

In theory there are no boundaries within which the Spoken Word have to work. Representing the eyes and ears of the Red Emperor, they are free to 'investigate' any area of public or private life within or without the Lunar Empire. ('Investigating' the State Church is an exception. See below.) In effect, an 'investigation' can be anything from examining why certain individuals have not been attending temple meetings recently to seeking out groups undermine the government and/or incite civil unrest in the neighboring free-states.

As stated above, the initial aim of the Spoken Word was to enhance the personal security of the Red Emperor in exile. Primarily, this centered on offering physical protection while working alongside the regular bodyguard (composed of elite members of the Imperial forces). The Emperor believed it prudent to be watched by two separate and rival bodies. In addition, the Spoken Word are excellently positioned to police and screen the personal guard, which may on occasion be susceptible to heavy bribes. In effect, this is still the most prestigious job within the force.

This screening of personnel is extended throughout the military, concentrating primarily on provincial officers of long standing. There is perhaps a threat from such career officers. They are well trained, they command respect and love from their men. Being constantly subject to alien views and opinions, they are perhaps more prone to seditious ways. Whilst realistically there is little fear of such commanders actually rebelling (the benefits of such an action could never outway the consequent retribution), their behavior may encourage an inefficient or disabling attitude amongst the rank and file. The Spoken Word are required to keep such officers on their toes. They are regularly examined for strange and contradictory behavior, ensuring prior warning of any possible weakness in the armed forces.

This vigil is not confined to the military. Indeed, perhaps the greatest number of Spoken Word agents are working surreptitiously within the Lunar Government itself, both at home and in the provinces. Attention is especially paid to those administrators of tax and finance (Procurement and Disbursement), whilst taking the utmost care not to falsely accuse any honourable Tax Demons!

The most tedious tasks are those conducted in the public sector. Requiring agents to 'hang around' inns, brothels, meeting places, etc. looking out for those of peculiar dispositions. In recent years more agents have been transferred to working in this area.

In practice there are two areas that are liable to cause minor difficulties. A respect for Dagius

Furius and the functions of Army Intelligence, often make investigation and infiltration here awkward. Part of the delicacy of this problem derives from frequent shared membership of the two 'offices.' At times it would mean that Word members were investigating other Word members. And, whilst this is not totally unpalatable, it is for the most part felt to be unnecessary. Such is the confidence in the Emperor's Wish.

The second 'problem area' is the State and Provincial Churches. Freedom to act is severely curtailed and there is no room for initiative based investigations; the Emperor does not give reign to the Spoken Word here. This does not mean that the priesthood or other devotees are free, should they be tempted, to stray - the Spoken Word does investigate aspects of the Church, but it is always at the specific command of the Red Emperor.

The Red Emperor is so protective of the Church that any Spoken Word member seeking spiritual guidance must gain permission from a priest before even entering the temple.⁽²⁾ This often causes problems for future investigations - if, for some reason, an investigation is ordered, it is often the case that agents have to be brought in from half way across the Empire because local agents are all known to the priesthood. There is one more privilege that the temple holds over the Spoken Word. A priest may ask a Spoken Word agent to help with protection, for himself and/or the temple. An agent must oblige, even if it means revealing his station!

1612 and After

At a time of great flux, it is not surprising to see the Spoken Word abroad. Activity has intensified as the Red Emperor prepares for any and all occasions.

Yet, even in the Spoken Word, the corruption of partiality and bought interest eats away. Already the Fine House - a fierce conservative lobby - wins influence over investigators, who can move an investigation in a

predetermined way. Significantly, Fazzur Wideread, General of the Provincial Army, once irreproachable, finds the 'Finger of Sedition'⁽³⁾ pointing his way, as the right demand more incisive action in Esrolia. Tatus the Bright, champion of the right and rumoured member of the Spoken Word, initially succeeds as Fazzur's replacement.

The grip over the provinces is weakened as suspicion spreads amongst government and army staff. Replacement at low levels breeds contempt in officers and allies of higher standing. The systems of provincial government are altered at a time many would deem imprudent, if not disastrous. And all the time the Emperor, fuelled with poisonous lies and fabricated grief, gives rein to instigators' wish in the Spoken Word's pursuit of those (false) insurrectionists amongst the offices of the Lunar Empire.

Created to secure the Red Emperor a time of personal crisis, by the end of the decade the Spoken Word has come full circle. It is ironic that it's role in future years contributes, unwittingly, to many Lunar downfalls.

Footnotes

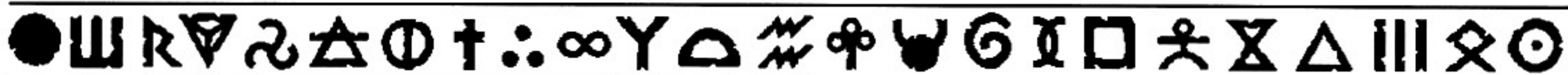
(1) Appius Luxius appears to enjoy much respect from the Red Emperor. (There are those who believe him to be one of His sons.) Appius is crucial to the successful and effective deployment of agents in the Lunar Provinces. Because of his position, he is able to pinpoint areas of concern and worry. He is not a member of the Spoken Word, although he has been approached on two separate occasions. His reasons for declining the offers have never been fully explained.

(2) There is an amusing tale that Nassi Nasus, a provincial tax collector, tells that relates to this ruling: "About five years ago in Ormsgone Valley, in Tarsh, a pack of fierce wolves attacked the village I was working in. The wolves were seen in plenty of time and so everyone, including myself, made a dash for the temple, it being the only building in full possession of a door. Staying in the village at the time was a soldier in the Army, an obnoxious sort with a predelection for spitting through the gaps between his teeth. He'd been granted leave on account of his father dying, and was now on his way back to Dragon Pass to rejoin his unit. The soldier was the last one to get to the temple, and started to fumble and fidget outside the doors.

As the first wolf entered the village compound, the soldier blurted out that he was a Spoken Word agent and that he needed permission from the priest to enter. The priest, a good friend of mine and a man of delectable wit and countenance, stroked his beard as he considered the request. All this time, the Word agent danced about like a child waiting for the pot to arrive. Eventually, as the first wolf came in sight, the priest declared that he'd considered the options open to him, and that in consideration of the way the soldier had behaved the last couple of days, had decided against granting him permission. With that, the doors were quickly shut. Racing to the second level of the temple, I was just in time to see the agent climb, minus his britches, into a tree. It was a peculiar time. The wolves stayed in the village for three days, and all that time the agent sat in the tree. We would move to the roof of the temple and eat our dinners in full view of him, and having learned that he hated olives threw him nothing but. Eventually the wolves left, and nobody was harmed. But, the priest later payed for his wit when the Word intercepted and confiscated a wagon bringing Heartland wine to the village. To make matters worse, it was wine that the priest had payed for out of his own purse."

(3) The phrase 'Finger of Sedition' is considered a metaphor, and sometimes a title, used to indicate persons and/or institutions that are detrimental to the Empire and/or the Spoken Word. Lunar philosophy often compares the Empire with a human body. A part of the body that is incurably diseased must be cut off before the infection has a chance to spread.

The 'Finger of Sedition' is said to 'point your way' when you are thought to be corrupt.



the Greydog Inn

by Rick Meints,
with David Hall & Jon Quaife



The Good Ale Path

The Good Ale path spans from Quackford to just outside the partially reconstructed ruins of Runegate Fort. It follows the route where, long ago before the Dawn, Odayla tracked Minlister through the Big Elm Valley. Minlister had stolen one of Mastakos' prized wagons to haul a large supply of his finest brewing ingredients; barley from his mother Esra, and hops from his cousin Voria.

Unable to catch the swift wagon, Odayla used his straightest arrows to pierce each of Minlister's sacks before he faded into the misty and rainy night. When he arrived at his destination, Minlister soon found that his journey had been for naught as he looked south and saw the long thin trail of his cargo that lay behind him. He left the soggy supplies amongst the puddles to grow or ferment where they lay, quickly devoured by the numerous Zymurgeists that were drawn to the valley.

Today, many small wild patches of strange hops and odd varieties of barley can be found growing along the path. Over the last few centuries, brewers from several clans have set up inns along the route to take full advantage of the excellent types of ale the special crops produce. From North to South, the notable inns are: the Weeping Swan, the Good Ford, the Greydog Inn, the Good Plate Inn, and the Duck in the Stream.

The Greydog Inn

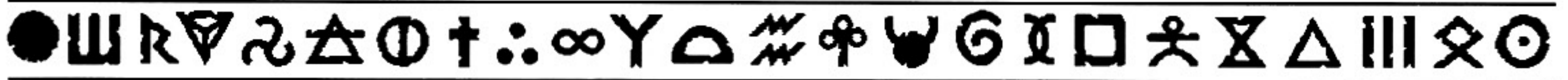
The Inn, last rebuilt after the Zombie Raid in 1592, is far larger than the previous structure. Earth Rune shaped with an inner courtyard, the current clan chief, Kornos Longbrewer, decided to build a more defensible building in these troubled times. Its oak beam and white plaster walls are topped with a steeply angled thatched roof, with a few windows mainly gracing the first floor. Most of the current landlord's (Bestaf Longbrewer) family live in one side of square, two are for the Inn and its guest rooms, while the remaining one is for the brewery and kitchen. The inner courtyard is multi-purpose, but is often used as a protected stable or common area. There are large cellars used for brewing and ale storage beneath the Inn, but this is not public knowledge.

The pub's interior has a large hearth which always has a warming fire, creaky hardwood flooring, a variety of wooden benches and chairs, a lazy shadowcat named smudge, and only square tables. Unfortunately, the one

round table reserved for wealthy guests had a full moon painted on it by Brigpiece, and it got consigned to the fireplace last winter. The family memorabilia displayed behind the bar adds a cozy feel to the main room, and stories abound for many of the items, like Edruf's hat, the little brown jug, and a souvenir gauntlet Beal brought back from Dwarf Ford. There are few valuable decorations adorning the walls, with the exception being the solid gold pig that sits on the bar. Whenever stolen, it always reappears on the bar before morning. If the thief ever enters the inn again, the pig squeals out his name. Only Brigpiece has managed to successfully steal it more than once, and often does so. He likes to have himself announced the next time he enters the bar, since no one else will bid him hello. The growing trophy collection of Pip the Odaylan hunter has begun to fill one of the walls of the common room; the large moose head above the hearth being the latest addition.

Sleeping rooms are available to paying guests, dignitaries, passing traders and foreigners. Accommodation is cheap and cheerful, but the meals and ale more than make up for any shortcomings.

The economics of the Greydog Inn are rather simple. While the Inn is clan communal property, the Longbrewers control it for all intents and purposes. Most of the cash it generates comes from outsiders and usually goes straight into the chief's strongbox. Surprisingly, the Inn does accept bolgs as payment when Pip is in need of sling stones. Clan households earn the right to use the Inn by providing it with most of its consumable items like milk, honey, meat, fruit, and vegetables, or payment in kind with hand crafted items or services. Those clan members that tend to abuse their privileges always seem to be asked to help with the most unpleasant tasks each year, or even barred if need be. The clan chief being the notable exception.



Notable Longbrewers

Great Grandfather Beal

Retired Master Brewer

The patriarch of the Longbrewer clan is a thin and quiet man who has seen 90 harvests. He was born in the birthing boom of 1520, which was regarded as one of Sartar's last blessings before his apotheosis. Beal became chief brewer of the Greydogs in 1541 when he produced his first batch of the now legendary Spectral Stout, which he hasn't made in almost 30 years.

In many ways, he feels he has lived to long and has had to bury too many of his children and other loved ones. He has been mainly somber and sentimental since he fought with King Jarolar at the battle of Dwarf Ford in 1565 and lost his eldest son Quintin (twin brother of Quentin). The death of two more sons (Hardy and Quentin) at Grizzly Peak in 1582 brought him out of retirement for a few years until Bestaf became a Vessel of Minlister in 1585. His most recent loss was his wife Hing; a lively whirlwind of a woman who always had a pie cooling on the windowsill

and sweets in her apron for all her grandchildren.

His days are filled with long afternoons spent playing his penny whistle in the Inn, wandering the fields of Barley, and supervising the brewing projects of his descendants. Occasionally, his great-nephew (and current clan chief) Kornos seeks his council, but he otherwise has little to do with the everyday affairs of the clan. His stories of the dragonewt's dream, the destruction of the Iron Maidens regiment, or countless zombie raids always keep the customers and children entertained. He presided at the opening of the newly reconstructed Inn and provided the mummified zombie hand they buried beneath the cornerstone. His eventual passing will be a time filled with great sadness for the whole community.

Bestaf Longbrewer

Landlord of the Inn, Vessel of Minlister

Bestaf has been the landlord of the Greydog Inn for almost all of his adult life and the burden shows on him. His master craftbrew is called Fine Feathered Ale, first made in 1575 to honor King Tarkalor's marriage to the Feathered Horse Queen. Ducks, who are occasional patrons, always order this when it is available, and have often purchased whole barrels to take back to their nests.

His large belly and butter-colored hair make him recognizable from long distances, whether he is on foot or making deliveries along the Good Ale path in his little wooden cart. Most of his children have inherited his flowing golden locks and love of brewing, but little else. He is ready to retire, but has had a very difficult time choosing which of his two sons to endorse to the chief. As a result, both have labored long and hard to prove their worth as his successor.

He is good friends with his cousin Kornos, although he can't abide Kornos' wife Kerna, whom Bestaf blames for his wife Ara's death during childbirth.

Quentin Longbrewer

Apprentice of Minlister

Bestaf's oldest son was named in honor of his uncle, who died at the battle of Grizzly Peak shortly before Quentin was born. He hopes that once he perfects his Auld Mutz Ale he will win the position of chief brewer. He is still a bachelor and there are rumors he favors another thane's wife. Always hungry for news of the outside world, he often spends long evenings in conversation with the Issaries traders that frequent the Inn.

Hardy Longbrewer

Apprentice of Minlister

Bestaf's second oldest son was also named after a dead uncle and also hopes to some day run the Inn. His Hillhaven wife is an Esran Grain Singer. They have one child. An avid whittler of wood,

Prices at the Greydog Inn

Drink	Jug/Mug*
King's Ale	4c/1c
Bulster's Fine Bluster Ale	4c/1c
Fine Feathered Ale	7c/2c
Weeping Swan Long Neck	7c/2c
Anmangarn Black Spear Stout	1g/3c
Antorling Harvest Cider	4c/1c
Starfire Scrumpy	8c/2c
Sun Spear Mead	9c/3c
Colymar Winter Mead (seasonal)	15c/5c
Konthasos Clearwine (seasonal)	4g/8c
Fine Furthest White	2g/5c
Esrolian Red	2g/5c
Madge's Gooseberry	1g/2c
Madge's Dandelion	14c/3c

A jug holds five mugs worth of beverage. Slightly more ornate and smaller jugs and mugs are used for serving wine.

Supper

vegetable broth, bread, sweetmeats, fish	7 clacks
with meat rather than fish	1 guilder

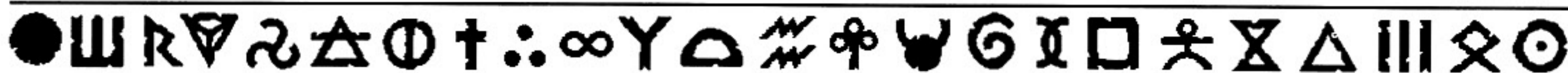
Breakfast

porridge, bread, cheese, ale, cider or milk	4 clacks
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Accommodation

Prices are not inclusive of meals or beverages. Bestaf usually adds this on when he quotes lodging prices.

Large Room	9 guilders
Smaller Private Room	4 guilders
Communal Sleeping Area	6 clacks



he carved the hospitality runes over the courtyard arch and the main door of the Inn.

Pip Longbrewer

Excellent Odaylan Hunter

Bestaf's youngest son has never wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, but is very dutiful to his family. He provides the Inn with the game they serve and also tracks down those who forgot to pay their bills. He was the Harvest King who wed the Harvest Maiden at the tender age of 15. His wife is an Ernaldan who often does the sprouting walk across the grain before it is kilned. He has two children, including the beloved harvest child Pipin, who is already a gifted apprentice and bodes great tidings for the future. Pipin is also the only child who doesn't seem to be afraid of Nanny Gorin, although she once spanked him with an Alder switch.

Lara and Vara

Maidens of Voria

Bestaf's two daughters have inherited their mother's good looks and whimsical nature. They took the vows of Voria at an early age, but also embraced their father's craft, albeit from a distance. Their knowledge of plants, herbs, and medicines has often aided the clan. Lara, the elder daughter enjoys music and often accompanies Grandfather Beal on her harp to help entertain guests in the evening. The younger Vara prefers to experiment in the kitchen, filling the role of their deceased mother Ara. Her cooking leaves much to be desired, but she always uses the freshest and finest ingredients she and her sister are so apt at finding. Vara has never been sick since she swallowed a cricket that also turned her eyes the color of midnight.

Thalani Longbrewer

Inn and Family Matron

Since the death of Great Grandma Hing over ten years ago, Thalani shared the matron role in the Inn with Ara, until her passing in 1605. Being a widow for over thirty years has not effected her spirits much. She dotes on all of her nieces and nephews and their children with an impartial kindness and warmth. She and her husband Quentin were so enamored with each other that she never could bear the thought of remarrying. It was her suggestion that her nephew Quentin be given the same name as her recently departed husband. While never showing it, you can see that her nephew has a special place in her heart, and she hopes that he can someday take over the running of the Inn, something her husband never achieved in his short lifetime.

Thalani runs a fairly tight ship. The Inn is always kept neat, warm, and cozy. Some attribute this to the small sylph she has help her with the dusting. She tries to help instruct her nieces in how to better accomplish their tasks every

Godsday, but her instructions often go unheeded. The only recipe she has managed to pass down to Vara is for her Spindle cakes, which are admired in the Women's House.

She is good friends with Kerna Highblossom and can always be found with her down by the river with the washing every Waterday. Thalani and Yrsa Osgosi fell out over Yrsa's desires to have more wheat grown instead of barley and their friendship has never recovered. Even so, Thalani has a knack a still knowing all of the women's gossip.

Old Beal's Journal:

From Beer to Eternity

No one is sure as to how long Beal Longbrewer has been keeping a journal. Selected entries:

□/III/𐌆/1610 - Most of the tilling was completed today. The Barntari outdid themselves this year in plowing the field to the correct depth. The furrows, grouped in threes, do our goddess proud! We cleared an extra hectare especially to plant my recently purchased Manirian Oats. The Issaries trader Jondor swore by their added value in many of the darkness ales he had sampled in Troll regions to the North. I have my doubts, but it did make it easier for him to settle his bar bill and for me to send him on his way.

𐌆/𐌆/𐌆/1610 - I told the grandchildren the story of the origin of Barley and how it's six kernels represent the six Lightbringers who saved our world during the great darkness. Little Hanar was the only one who guessed that the stalk represented Ginna Jar. There was a twinkle in her eye as she said it. Last year's barley seed was kept safe and dry thanks to Esra's songs. Her Grain Singers have spent the entire night flitting between the rows. Young Pipin swore he went to bed with the rest of the children shortly after Yelm sank into the underworld, but his constant yawning the next day proved otherwise. It reminded me of when my grandfather scolded me for sneaking out to watch their naked forms glistening in the moonlight. Grandfather was lucky, he had the gift of Yinkin's Eyes, much to Grandmother's distress.

𐌆/𐌆/𐌆/1610 - That free barrel of ale for the Helerite's wedding feast has paid extra dividends. My sons are grateful not to have to carry so much water from the cistern this season. The steady rain has made the oats grow strongest of all, as far as I can tell. Little Pipin has used his "Teach Vrimak" chant with surprising deadliness. The number of formerly thieving birds in the Inn's stew-pot has never been greater. I'll hate to lose Pipin from the fields when he goes through his initiation later this year.

Historical Events at the Inn

- 1518** During his historic visit, King Sartar downs a yard of ale as last orders are called. A small bronze disc in the courtyard still marks the occasion.
- 1541** *Spectral Stout* first served as a much younger Beal Longbrewer becomes the clan's brwer and landlord of the Greydog Inn.
- 1553** Flat-nose Edruf becomes a bartender at the Inn. His colourful demeanor and habits draw in the customers.
- 1554** *Edruf makes three-corner hats all the rage after an infamous brawl with 3 Uroxi who were "passing through". The hole in the wall he made with his head is kept as a window, in remembrance.*
- 1573** Beal's son Hardy succeeds him as landlord and brewer. A bad barley harvest leads to a beer shortage.
- 1582** *Hardy's early death at Grizzly Peak brings Beal out of retirement. He honors his dead sons by creating *Lethe's Gulp*, a powerful brew that helps the drinker forget their troubles.*
- 1585** Bestaf becomes chief brewer when he perfects his Fine Feathered Ale, which is served at the King's marriage to the Feathered Horse Queen. A surplus of jackrabbits in the hills leads to several new items on the Inn's menu, which is warmly received.
- 1592** *The Greydog Inn suffers extensive damage from a zombie attack. Beal's *Spectral Stout* helps carry the day for the clan warriors when he uses it to destroy an overconfident and unsuspecting vampire.*



☮/☩/☉/1610 - The orders for Feathered Ale are greater than ever this year. Even our chief has requested an extra barrel for his Sacred Time preparations. No one knows how to abuse a feast like he does. Note to self: close early and double-bar the main door on Wildday - the Uroxi will have finished their rituals and head this way before Yelm sets. They have yet to pay me for last year's damages and the back room still smells of burnt hair and Oakstead onions.

☐/☮/☉/1610 - The old Bee keeper from the Hodirsons over in the valley stopped by for another trading session. She gives me the creeps, but her honey is excellent. She isn't generally welcome in many places, but the larva loving ducks from Mallard Town used to swear by her talents. Her honey makes a wonderful mead, which the Colymar favor, so we usually name it after them. Vara double-checked each jar to make sure we didn't get stung like last year. It is rumored that Penemhwy's head can change into that of a bee, but no one I know has ever actually seen her do it.

☮/☉/☉/1610 - Hardy and Quentin were at it again this morning. I don't know if either one of them will ever find that magic mixture worthy of gaining their ally. Hardy has been using a variety of dried fruits in his recipes this last season. I wonder if it's because he fancies the fruit grower's younger daughter. Grandpa Beal has been down by the spring in the cellar caverns since late last night. The heat sometimes bothers him, but he seems to be waiting for something. His duck friend joined him early this morning. They did siphon all the water we needed into casks three, four, and five, so I'll leave them in peace.

☐/☩/☐/1610 - Preparations of the Sodnhus² are almost complete. It's smooth surface will soon provide a crackling cradle for this year's harvest. The Grain Singers chanted an extra prayer before it's final cleansing with the Black Horse hair brush. I wish they didn't have to

sprinkle so much goldenrod dust, for it always makes me sneeze. I'm glad I sent Pip to Swordvale ford to cut that extra cord of Willow wood for the Kiln. It looks to be a bumper harvest and the kilning will take longer than last time.

☉/☩/☐/1610 - Lara and Vara have just returned from the northern slopes. The Vorian Hops overflowing from their baskets smell as fresh as a newborn baby. Their prayers must have fallen on attentive ears for three times they sent Pipin back to the Inn with their cuttings as they continued to snip the tender cones of hops with their silver shears. I have always regretted their decision not to take husbands and remain followers of a spinster goddess, but I can weigh my regrets against the heaps of the bright yellow and orange blossoms of Voria's blessings. Seeing the occasional blue blossom in their baskets makes my heart race for the batch of Starfire Pale Ale it will enrich. I wish we could find such a variety outside of Poss lands. May Voria keep my daughters' charms safe from such men.

☮/☩/☐/1610 - Pip and cousin Hardy spent all day with Pipin lashing the barley sacks with hemp rope. Hardy knows all the good rocks to tie them to in Coldrush creek. Ever since Briggpiece the fool cut them loose 5 years ago, Hardy stands vigil each night. Last year, he was scared by a large salmon that was feasting on the grain. When Hardy almost speared it he was so startled by it's pleas for mercy he dropped his net. Bofrost came all the way down from the Starfire Ridges to see if it returns again this year. I should have Quentin keep an eye on him, but his mind seems elsewhere.

☉/☩/☐/1610 - Kilning day is here again. Minister's songs fill the valley as everyone from every corner of the valley smells our roasting Barley. Seeking a few pints of ale to quench his thirst, Tovar the Redsmith helps stoke the willow wood fire. The even heat he masters makes our task all the easier. The large flat wooden paddles spread the sizzling grain so it can dry evenly on

the Sodnhus' shiny surface. Lara warned Hardy not to stand so close to the rim, like he does every year. The Fire rune shaped scar on his forearm almost glows red on this day. She is afraid all of the children will want one. I am only unsure when it comes to roasting the oats. Their puffy kernels have absorbed far more water than the Barley did, and I couldn't get the grandchildren to stop from munching on handfuls of them. They did roast to a wonderfully rich color, though. Unlike the barley, part of which we roast to the color of each of the elements, we sacrificed all the oats to Darkness³.

☉/☮/☐/1610 - Old man Bostrop has seen fit to raise his prices again this year. His mill was raided again by the Uroxi who mistook it to be some chaos contraption. His wife, still sporting a black eye, hit Pipin with her broom when he hummed a Uroxi children's rhyme. Pip and Hardy unloaded the cart once a price was agreed. The Bottom Stream's swift current made the work quicker than usual. Pip made sure not a single rat got caught in the millstones, unlike last year. I opened a small barrel of Antorling Harvest Cider to help pass the afternoon while the mill did its work. Berga lets his daughters drink, so I brought along my mildest blend. Children love it because if you hum the right tune it will fizz and bubble over in your tankard, plus it lets them practice the loudest of belches, much to each others amusement. Berga himself got hit with his wife's broom when he recited five of his children's names during a single belch. So much for appreciating one's "inner wind".

☮/☐/☐/1610 - The chalk outline made by Bofrost kept the wild Zymurgeists⁴ away successfully this year. Mother never liked his naked and woaded form dancing around the circle, but he gets results, or should I say prevents them. The Copper Kettle has been filled three times today, and we shall do the same again tomorrow. The kegs are filled long into the night and are not taken to the cellar until almost dawn.

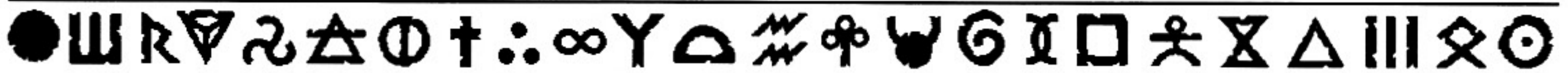


[1] The most pious of Orlanthi farmers traditionally plow their fields in straight furrows with a slight gap every three rows. These long harmony runes often dot the countryside in abundance when omens of a bad harvests have been foretold.

[2] A Sodnhus is a shallow Earth rune shaped stone or metal box that is used to dry roast grain. The Longbrewers have a larger than average sized one; being nearly 2 meters a side and covered with a thin layer of copper. They are engraved with Esra's and Gustbran's Runes along the rim.

[3] The five colors the barley is roasted to are: Pale = Water, Golden = Air, Red = Fire, Brown = Earth, and Black = Darkness. This is said to be symbolic only.

[4] Fermentation spirits summoned and bound by Minister's Vessels during brewing.



and intoxicating beverage that patrons will seek out and pay money to drink. Brewers master a number of skills: selecting/boiling/cooling the best water, growing/ malting/kilning the best barley, harvesting/preserving/ balancing the best hops, and aging/storing/serving the finished product. At its core, the steps for brewing are:

- Boil water*
- Add roasted barley*
- Add hops towards the end of the boil*
- Let it cool*
- Summon your Zymurgeist**
- Let it age in a cool place for half a season*

*In Brithos, the major material component for a Zymurgeist summoning is a powder called Yeast. Brewing is taught at several small abbey-like Universities sprinkled throughout the West, except in Loskalm, where it is state controlled.

After the beer has completed its half season of aging, the brewer should make a Brewing skill roll. Fumble = worst result, Fail -2, Success = no modifier, Critical +1)



Summon Spriti (Zymurgeist) 2 points
Ritual (summon), Non-stackable, Reusable
Works as per a normal summoning ritual. The Brewer has only a few hours as his beer cools when the conditions are optimal to attract a hungry Zymurgeist.

Zymurgeists

Fermentation Spirits

These relatively benign spirits roam most of Glorantha in their search for sweet liquids to consume. Because of this, some believe they are tied to the Water rune, although no proof has been found. Zymurgeists have 3D6 INT and 1D6+6 POW. They can only be taught spirit magic.

Most of the great vintners and brewers of alcoholic beverages learned long ago not to entrust the fates when it comes to fermenting their creations. They take great care not to leave their fermenting vessels exposed to a visit from an uninvited fermentation spirit. It takes half a season for the effects of the spirit to be known.

Zymurgeists consistently produce the same results if they are given the same ingredients to interact with and, as a result, are usually bound when a good one has proved its talents. Binding such a spirit into a fermentation vessel is not nearly as difficult as finding one that achieves the desired results. Most Zymurgeists are discovered in a random fashion, unless they are summoned specifically by name. The more experienced Vessels of Minlister often know dozens of these spirits by name and can summon the desired type of spirit based on what drink they wish to ferment next.

Zymurgeists are often passed down from father to son or from master to pupil when the master retires, although there is no obligation to do so. Since there is a limit to the number of bound spirits a brewer can control, most brewers settle into an established repertoire of their most successful creations. There are some brewers,

though, that prefer the novelty of the infinite variety available through randomly summoning a different Zymurgeist for each batch of beer they are brewing. They feel a few spoiled batches is a small price to pay. The Geo's Inn that supposedly employs a trickster brewer is one such notable place.

Being possessed by one has been described as an intoxicating experience. Anyone so possessed suffers a penalty of -1D6 INT and -1D6 DEX while possessed, plus a cumulative -1 CON per month. The victim will actively resist any attempts to free them from the Zymurgeist's control.

Miscellaneous Notes

Minlister's Head

This small sphere is preferably made of Kwok wood, a semi-rare tree that grows throughout most of Glorantha. The sphere is carved to resemble the face of Minlister on one side, with a gaping mouth being the most prominent feature. When placed in an alcoholic beverage, an experienced user can gauge the relative alcoholic strength of the drink by seeing how much "Minlister" keeps his head above the surface. "The more he sinks, the more he drinks", being the operative chant (higher alcohol content).

Mostali have been known to fashion very intricately ornate heads from blown glass instead of wood. They refer to them by the Mostali term *hydrometer*. Some say they also have a very accurate scale for measuring alcohol content. It is based on the relative benchmark of the amount of alcohol it takes to ignite their crude gunpowder. There is no proof of this, however.

Wort Hogs

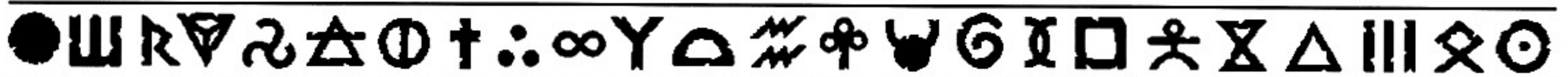
Since the waste from brewing is considered both potent and sacred, but not really fit for human consumption, most Orlanthe brewers raise one or more hogs that live on the brewing slops. Such hogs are reserved for consumption at special clan feasts, usually at harvest time. The blood of a wort hog is used to cure the sodnhus used for roasting the barley. Drinking a wort hog's pungent blood increases the imbiber's alcohol tolerance significantly, but this is not common knowledge.

The fat piglets produced from the mating of a wort hog and a Barley Sow are highly sought after and are a solid source of income for the brewer that tends the hogs. Wort hog litters are often large and consist of very healthy piglets.

In Troll society, Trollkin fulfill the role of the wort hog. Unfortunately, the highly toxic brewing slops often prove to be fatal. Still, those trollkin that do survive the fattening are highly prized at Troll barbecues and are a prominent vendor sold item at Trollball matches. The left-handed Troll brewer of Adari has several Argan Argar representatives that scour the nearby clans for continuous source of promising trollkin slaves that allow him to continue his experimental brewing.

Beer Quality - Roll 1D10:

- 1-3** Throw this away, serve it to freeloaders, or insult your enemies with it. The beverage is irretrievably disgusting in flavor to humans, although some batches are seen as ambrosia to Trolls and others with distinctly inhuman tastes.
- 4-5** Generally weak in flavor and fairly low in alcohol. Passable, but often passed over. Low grade Inn fare served to Storm Bullies and other lowlifes.
- 6-8** A flavorful and well balanced beverage. Worthy of praise and very quaffable. Quality Inn fare at a reasonable price.
- 9** An outstanding example of taste, color and headiness. Top-shelf quality reserved for special occasions or high-paying customers.
- 10** A rare magical combination of drinking perfection with a minor magical benefit for the imbiber. Such effects are up to the GM's discretion. Suggested benefits include: rapid regain of fatigue, spirit magic spell effects that last 5 minutes (shimmer/light/vigor/etc.), or harmless (temporary) ones like green skin, droopy ears, or helium voice.



Different Views

What others say about the Greydogs...

Bofrost's Apprentice

by David Hall

Bofrost Hillhaven, Breath Shaman of Umath, speaks to his apprentice:

Listen well, Hjorlath, we of the Hillhaven have not always been beholden to the Greydogs or needed their protection. Once we were a proud tribe, the first settlers of the lands around the Marsh. We farmed the fertile lowlands and grazed our cattle herds where the Lismelder King now sits. We were not the clan you see today, scraping a poor living from these hills and from the leavings of richer clans like the Goodhaven and the Greydog.

It was Hodir Blackheart, Chieftain of the Greydog, who brought our tribe to its knees. With his falsehoods, his tricks, and the foul ambush that killed the flower of our warriors and good King Andorth. By the time Indrodar slew the Blackheart and put a stop to his killing and his plundering, Andorth's widow was only too happy to swear allegiance to the Lismelder tribe, and to pledge our daughters present and future in marriage to the men of the Greydog. The same men who'd killed ours.

Aye, I suppose I am bitter! But I have spoken to those they murdered (as will you), and they still remember. Listen well to what they tell you, for they have a wisdom we have since forgotten.

Yes! Yes! If truth be told, the Greydog *are* an honourable and brave clan, who have supported us since that time. Though, mind you, it is they who have the fine farmland now while we have these hills, and it is they who have the King's ear in the council – while we hang on to their coat-tails.

Of course I trust the Greydog! Have I said I don't? They are our blood kin now, whether we or our ancestors like it or not. Though I do say beware of the Hodirsons, for they are the descendants of the Blackheart and they carry his curse within them.

Hmm... yes. Well, it is true that Hodirsons also live in the hills and support us against the Orlmarth, but do they not also gain from this, eh? And of course they did help us against the Garthi last Storm season, but what kin would

not? I just say that blood will out, and they have the Blackheart's blood in their veins. So, while we are weak we must always be wary and on our guard.

But... come closer... that won't always be so. The wind whispers to me, and on its breath I can smell the future. There will come a time when the Greydog need our protection, and on *our* terms. And when the Stranger returns we shall become a tribe again, for this was agreed when we sheltered him from the Red Moon. Yes, the Hillhaven will rise again, and you must be ready for it...

The Esrolite View

by Simon Bray

By Hetia of the Loam, Acolyte of Esra

I once had the misfortune of gracing my presence upon the wild Sartarite people called the Greydogs. I had been sent at the request of Martiach Vadiol, with the intention of gaining knowledge of the local Hop Goddess. For it is only she that lifts the Greydogs above the pig slurry that are the Sartar clans.

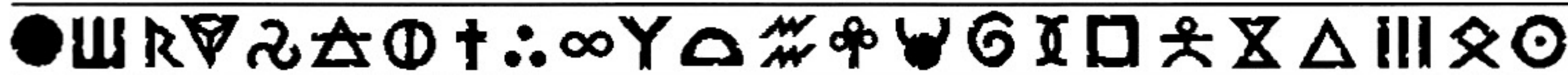
The squalid village is small and sits amidst the rain drenched hills of the Big Elm Valley. At first glance any good farmer could tell that Esra did not bless the people. Their fields are small and weed-ridden, and they have not even ventured to clear the trees from those parts of the valley that could be converted to good crop production. There was no community: each family scabbled in the mud to eke out an existence from the poorly nourished soil, and no granaries were noticeable amongst the ramshackle houses of the village. The lack of religious buildings was of greatest concern. What passed for a shrine to Ernalda was little more than a crude hut with an ugly bloated statue of the goddess within. It was no wonder that the people were so dour and unfriendly.

The priestess of the people was called Kerna Highblossom. Her greetings were crude, and she made none of the correct offerings to me. I had been led to believe by my guide that she was the 'spiritual heart of the community,' and yet if she was so, then why was she shackled to serve the wretched chieftain? When first we met she was

standing above a great cauldron with her daughters. I had thought that she was preparing for a divination, but instead she was preparing a stinking stew of lamb and barley. This was not to feed the village: no, it was only destined for her chauvinist husband and his greedy warriors. When I queried Kerna's actions she claimed that it was an important ritual, proving that the goddess was a good wife to her husband and master. I became enraged at such heresy, but my preaching on the 'Many Husbands of the Goddess' fell upon deaf ears. It was then I realised the truth of the clan. How could the earth grow when the duties of farming were left to the men? I had heard such practices occurred, but did not believe them. The Earth Woman tried to explain that she blessed the earth at the beginning of the year, saw to the harvest and warded off the winter. I could only retort that this was not enough: her duties were to the land and the village, not to the bellies of husbands!

Kerna knew little of the Hop Goddess, the myths she said were a secret of 'the Brewer.' I had at least expected this role to have been held by an Elder Woman. Instead I was led to meet with a drunken sot of a man. He proclaimed that his 'god' held the secret of the 'Hop Woman' who had been enslaved from the wilds for the good of the clan. I was so alarmed by his statement that I almost forgot to stop my Axe Sister from planting her weapon within his skull. At this point the negotiations fell apart. I think that the murderous men of the clan did not wish to hear the truth of the goddess. Blood would have spilled between us if the red-haired woman Esta Spearsister had not intervened. The warriorress was the only woman within the village that was not chained to a man, and I was glad that she guided us out of Greydog lands. Her company was Sartar's only blessing.

I returned to the arms of Esrolia without hops or allies. Disheartened at such abuse of the Goddess, I have vowed never to return to Sartar. Esta Spearsister listened to my words, and I hope that the seeds of truth that I gave her will serve her well. Perhaps she will bring those barbarians screaming into the 1600's, rather than the age of darkness that they now dwell in.



A Lunar Traveller's View

by Michael O'Brien

Excerpts from the travel journals of Jaxarte Whyded, 1621 (footnotes by his biographer, Floriat Fedora)

...for all the silvers I paid them, my local guides – a pair of ignorant and uncouth Lismelder crofters, returning from market at Runegate – nevertheless got us lost, and we wandered around in dank woods in what seemed to be circles for two days. When they fervently insisted that to find our way we should all take our clothes off I realised that these fellows were truly touched, and I took the opportunity to sneak away while both were distracted pulling their breeches and nether garments off (strange, I thought the Carmanian vice was peculiar to the Sun Domers in these parts). By a curious coincidence, almost immediately I stumbled onto the path we'd strayed from after clearing a small rise (1). An hour or so later I arrived at the Greydog Inn, a place my guides had spoken of incessantly, speaking in almost reverent tones about the fabulous liquor brewed there, the so-called "Clearwine". Though no connoisseur myself, I was nevertheless eager to sample it and, hearing laughter and sniffing on the wind a roasting joint, I made my way in...

...so much for "traditional Orlanthi hospitality", if that's what they call it! One would think with a bag of freshly minted Imperials, these folk, whom the Lunar Resident in Runegate assured me were "completely pacified" and "learning to become loyal subjects", would welcome a traveller from the distant Heartlands with money to spend and tales of his own to tell. But the landlord cut his song in mid-stride the moment I strolled in, and his wife who served me, a surly, shrew-faced woman, without asking poured me a mug of a weak, sippy liquid she called "The King's Ale" which quenched my thirst but little more. She simply glared at me when I gave the drink my most forced compliments, and scurried away when I asked if Clearwine was available. Denizens in the darker reaches of the bar chuckled as the barkeep himself came over bearing a small jug, and I must say for all its name, this "Clearwine" proved (like many things barbarians enthuse about), to be most overrated; a cloudy, almost silty concoction that tasted like cooking vinegar (2). I was still picking the lees from between my teeth for hours after, and you know, as I later trudged away from the Greydog lands and their stinking, unfriendly inn, I began to suspect that it is not indeed an "old Lismelder custom" to spit into a stranger's drink as part of a welcoming toast, and that the barman and his friends were having me on...

(1) The "Carmanian vice", such as Jaxarte calls it, is unknown among the Lismelder, who even refuse those who follow the path of Nandan into their steads. There is a much less sordid explanation:

the Lismelder know that when lost in the Hare Woods, one can appease the mischievous hare spirit who leads travellers astray by removing all their clothing and then putting it on backwards.

(2) Having had the good fortune to taste Clearwine myself, I suspect poor Jaxarte was given nothing of the sort!

Longbrewers' Droop

by Steve Thomas

As told by Osmar Claybeard of the Poss clan: Listen now, and I'll tell you what's wrong with them Greydogs. It's all down to one thing – all that ale they drinks. Oh, they're great drinkers, the Greydogs, and it's that as makes 'em no cursed good for nuthin' else, if you gets my drift...

Oh all right, if I has to spell it out for you. They likes to drink right? And you know the old story: "When Uleria comes in the hall, Minlister's passed out by the fire." Well, that's their problem, I reckon. We calls it Longbrewers' Droop.

It's all because of that chief Vortinen's wife left him for Big Man Poss. Like any woman, she wanted fine strong sons to till the good earth, and all old Vortinen could say was "Sorry, dear, but I have a brain-fever tonight." No wonder she slipped out one night and came to Poss Village.

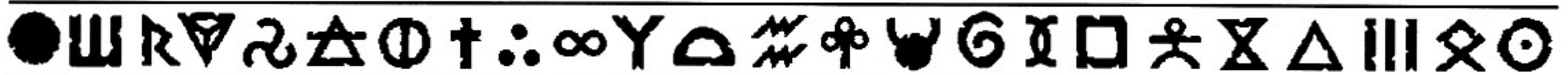
That was what caused the feudin' between us, you know, 'cause Vortinen was too ashamed to admit why she left 'im, and took to claiming that we raped her and stole her away. Mind, he was probably too drunk to remember what actually happened anyway.

And another thing, what with all that drinking and, you know, being embarrassed about the Longbrewers' Droop, it makes 'em bad-tempered as well. Like Gagarth on a bad night they are, all huffin' and blowin'. And there's some of them that even I wouldn't be keen to face up to. That Cornard Deathdealer, he's a terror in a fight... when he's sober of course. Mind, they do protect us from them bastard Colymar, you know. Oh, they don't want to, but since they live between us and them, they ain't got much choice, y'see.

And you should see 'em at their sacred ceremonies. Ridiculous, they look, all standing around Indrodar's Ring, solemn as you like, wearing them stupid bunny rabbit ears. Some of 'em even has pretend whiskers made of straw, so I've heard. By Eurmal's many-coloured balls, what's the point of that then, eh? It's got to be the drink!

So, you want to know what the Greydogs are like? Strong in t'arm, thick in t'head, and lacking in the netherworld - that's all you need to know.





The Greydog Clan Chieftain List

By David Hall

"The Greydog" d.1322

The first Chieftain of the clan. His death led to the migration to Dragon Pass.

Edruf Greydogsson 1326-1351

He was Mad-Blood Malan's right-hand man and Champion. All mourned his passing.

Frodhi Greydog 1351-1355

His foul slaying at the hands of the Mad Dog's whelp led to the formation of the Lismelder tribe.

Lornar Greydog 1356-1378

Malan's favourite brewer. He followed Queen Lismelder after his cousin was slain. He led our clan to the fine lands in the Big Elm valley.

Alfgar Greydog 1378-1393

He fought Delecti at his brother's side, befriended Durulz and Beastman alike, and founded the Greydog Inn. During his retirement he brewed fine ales.

Vortinen Greydog 1393-1408

He was unlucky in marriage. His first wife was kidnapped and forced to marry a Poss. His 2nd bore him no children.

Hodir "Blackdog" 1408-1413

We do not speak of him.

Kestin Greydog 1413-1415

His marriage brought the Hillhaven into the tribe, but the happy couple were killed soon after by the treacherous Poss.

Kogall the Brewer 1415-1426

He was famed for his skill at brewing ales and ciders. His most famous brew was served only once – at the funeral of his mother.

Kornos Longbrewer 1594-1621

He was a wise and generous chieftain.

Yanbaum the Steadfast 1426-1448

He served his tribe and his king loyally. He was also a famous brewer.

Garigern Longbrewer 1448-1457

He was the tallest man in the tribe. He fought many times in the Upland Marsh.

Ernstand Longbrewer 1457-1479

He built the feasting hall and smithy in Greydog Village and did not brew beer.

Vargath the Unlucky 1479-1482

Many times he bravely fought the Woodpeckers, only to die drunk in his own Inn.

Marlena the Wise 1482-1514

She was called Ballbreaker for the vengeance she wrought upon her husband's killers, and Peacemaker for the prosperity she brought to the clan.

Korlmar the King 1514-1541

He became king of the Lismelder tribe and a friend to the Royal House.

Engorn Longbrewer 1542-1565

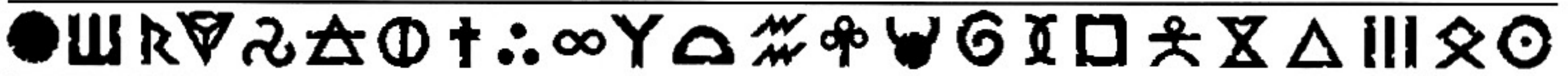
He raided the Poss and won the Red Sow. He was killed at Dwarf Ford at his Prince's side.

Gunnar Roving Sword 1565-1582

Son of a king, brother to a king. He led the Roving Sword Clan to its glorious death upon Grizzley Peak.

Torvald Gunnarsson 1583-1594

He spent his life in fear of those who killed his father. He died cursing their names.



Secrets of the Lismelder Campaign

(GM's Only)
by David Hall

Here are some secrets from the Lismelder campaign. Use or abuse them as you will!



Queen Lismelder

After being defeated in the Upland Marsh by Delecti, Queen Lismelder betrayed her tribe by being adopted as a Daughter of Darkness. She also became a favourite lover of Delecti. Indrodar Greydog hunted her down remorselessly and eventually released from her Undeath. The Lismelder tribe and the Indrodari do not know this secret. Only Delecti and a few of the durulz (including Webbed-Foot Walt) know of this.

Indrodar's Sword

Indrodar's Sword was a magical iron weapon, forged by the durulz, and renowned for its powers against the Undead and Chaos. Common belief holds that Delecti has it hidden in Upland Marsh, and many brave warriors have sought to find it (either returning empty-handed and battered, or not at all). However, while Delecti does hold an iron sword once used by Indrodar, the real sword went to Pavis with a Greydog who followed Duke Dorasar.

Only Indrodar's direct descendants can access or potentially use the sword's full powers.

Indrodar's Curse

Indrodar Greydog's bloodline is said to be cursed by his break with Humakt (see *Tales #18 - Sartar Special*, page 10). This first manifested itself when Indrodar's only child, Siobhan, married her cousin, Hodir, in blatant disregard of all marriage customs – and to the disgust of most of the tribe and her parents. As chieftain of the Greydog clan, Hodir "Blackdog" caused the troubles of 1413 (see *Tales #18*, pages 10 & 53) and eventually Indrodar was forced to kill him in single combat to end the conflict (as well as finally bringing the Hillhaven into the tribe).

The player characters are descended from the only child of Siobhan and Hodir – that child being Snorri Hodorsson. Theoretically they have inherited any curse, but they are also Indrodar's only direct descendants. Note that the PCs will not automatically know any of this since Snorri's parentage is never talked about in the clan (or is covered up by white lies) due to the shameful events of that time.

For details of Snorri Hodorsson see the *Old Hare's Riddle* in *Tales #7* or the forthcoming *Best of Tales* on CD.

The Death of Indrodar

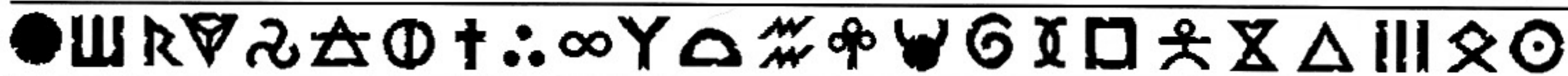
When Indrodar Greydog finally passed on the tribal kingship he retired to his temple, though he never sought to be accepted by Humakt again.

He spent his final years exploring the Marsh and the Ducklands. On his last expedition into the Marsh he was betrayed by his durulz guides and captured by Delecti – becoming Delecti's host for a time. His body may still be held somewhere in Delecti's ruins. As for his soul, it is not in Humakt's Hall.

Swords of Indrodar know that Indrodar was killed in the Marsh and does not reside in Humakt's Hall, and see this as just, if severe, punishment for Indrodar's break with Humakt. However, conversely they also revere him for making this ultimate sacrifice to save the tribe. They do not know he was betrayed by the durulz, or that his body might still exist and/or be under the control of Delecti the Necromancer.

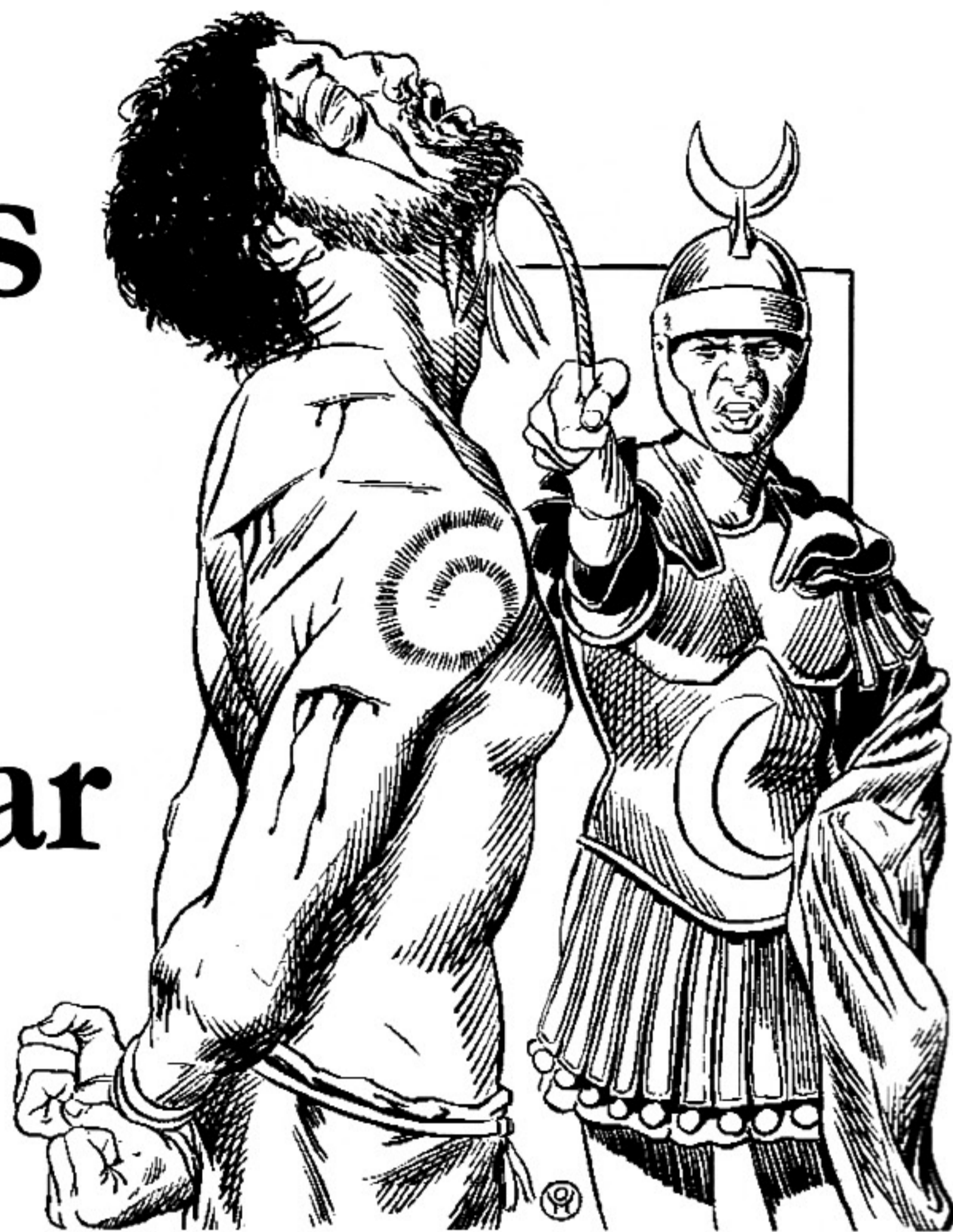
Kogall's Brew

The Greydog clan chieftain list is incorrect. Kogall's Brew (called the Peacemaking Brew) has been made and served three times. First, at his mother's funeral, second at his father's funeral, and third when the Lismelder tribe joined the Kingdom of Sartar. Old Beal knows this and still has the recipe.



A Righteous Wind Over Sartar

by
David Hall



Introduction

It is late Earth Season. So far, the full force of the Occupation Laws of the Lunars has yet to be felt by the Lismelder. Lunars are not often seen about the land, except in strength. Lunar taxes are not onerous, and they are collected by King Thanos in Swordvale (and not by Lunar tax collectors).

In the north of Sartar, the conflict between the worshippers of Orlanth and the followers of Yelmalo (and ultimately the Red Moon) looks to be moving towards a violent confrontation. Harvar Ironfist of the newly converted Vantaros tribe leads the faction seeking to halt the anti-Lunar purges of the Righteous Wind Movement, and it is said that he is supported by the Lunars and the King of Tarsh.

At this time there comes to Greydog Village a leader of the Righteous Wind Movement, Edruf Longnose, who is seeking aid from the Orlanthi tribes of southern Sartar.

The Plot

In part one of the scenario Edruf is having little success in recruiting warriors, or firm pledges of support, from the southern tribes. The tribes are still wary of the Lunars, and do not want to give them an excuse to intervene militarily. It is likely that he will have a similar lack of success with the Greydogs.

However, while under the hospitality of Kornos Longbrewer, Edruf will be foully murdered by other guests, led by Egrid the Enlightened, a nephew of Harvar Ironfist. The Greydog warriors

pursue the murderers, only to run into an ambush laid by Sun Dome supporters of Egrid. In the confused fight that follows some of the Greydog warriors (probably NPCs) are captured by the Sun Domers.

Part two of the scenario concerns the legal consequences of Edruf's murder and the capture of the Lismelder warriors. King Thanos seeks justice from the Lunar Governor, Eugylptus the Fat, in Boldhome, and learns what Lunar justice is.

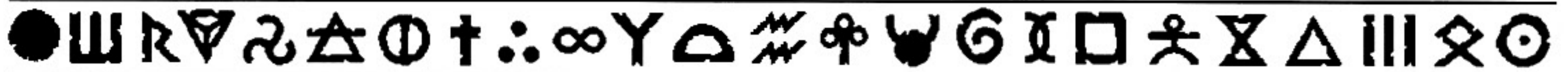
The third part of the scenario concerns the Lismelder tribe's reprisal raid on the Sun Dome County, and the immediate repercussions of this.

The fourth part of the scenario concerns the aftermath of the Righteous Wind Insurrection of 1611, and the potential long-term effects of the oaths made by the Greydog clan to Edruf in part one. It is designed to be open-ended, based on the actions of the characters.

Lastly, loose ends are tied up and potential future events outlined.

How to Play this Scenario

The events of this scenario are designed to run over three or four game years of play, though the repercussions are likely to last many years more. Part one is best played somewhere between 1607 and 1610. Part two follows early in the next year. Part three occurs during the Storm Season following the visit to Boldhome. The events of part four occur towards the end of 1611 or early in 1612. Other adventures can and should be played in between the main parts.



With that, the Yelmalianians are directed to the coldest part of the hall. Here they sit talking to each other in low tones as the feast continues.

Edruf's Plea

Much later in the feast the time comes for Edruf Longnose to make his speech. He rises to the clamour of fists upon tables. Most of the Greydogs are not only drunk, but also wish to show off in front of the Yelmalianians.

"Fellow Orlanthe! I see before me a magnificent feast, and bountiful hospitality. I am honoured. The Greydog are surely a pious clan blessed by Orlanthe and Ernalda. Your cows are fertile and fat, and your sheep burdened with fine fleeces.

You are lucky, for it is not so in the North...

In the North, we too are pious, we are generous, we are proud and brave, and we know wisdom. But we are cursed with a scourge, the scourge of the vile and treacherous Yelmalianians, led by the vilest of them all, Harvar Ironfist. We harboured them in our clans for many years, they were our loyal thanes, and we treated them with honour and generosity. They were part of us, part of our clan, our household, and our bloodline!

But then came the missionaries of the Red Goddess, of Chaos, and of the False Sun. Their insidious message fed on the greed of weak men, and they have treacherously broken their ancient vows. They have allowed Chaos into the Ring.

For too long, we in the North have tried Law and sought Justice to gain redress. But where can you find Law under the Lunars? How can Justice be sought from an Oath-breaker? The time for talking is at an end, we must wipe this scourge from our clans before Lokamayadon can arise again, in Iron-gauntleted guise...

We need YOUR help. Your pledge of support. Are you not brave and generous Orlanthe like us? Will you not help your kin against Chaos?"

As he shouts this Edruf points his finger at the Yelmalianians.

There is pandemonium: many Greydogs jump up and wave their fists at the Yelmalianians. Before Kornos can intercede and speak on behalf of the clan, there are warriors jumping up and shouting oaths of support. Most of the Storm Bulls, and many hotheads, shout that they will fight by Edruf's side for the Righteous Wind and that they will never strike a blow against a true Northern Orlanthe. Others pledge their support for the Righteous Wind. Then, as the mood becomes more calm others pledge never to fight against the Righteous Wind, or never to give sustenance to enemies of the Righteous Wind. The player characters should be encouraged at this point (if they haven't done so already) to pledge their own oaths. Those who make weak oaths will be heckled by the hot-heads, but Triock will quietly pat them on the back. Those who make strong oaths will be cheered and their mugs filled with ale.

At some point Kornos regains control of his clanspeople. He calls for quiet and congratulates Edruf on a rousing speech. He then

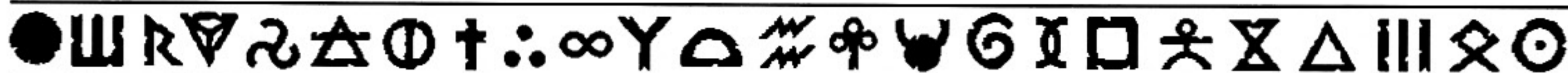
pledges that the Greydog will give what support they are able to give. There are some muted boo's from the hot-heads at this, and Edruf looks none too pleased.

At this point the GM should ask the players to note down any oaths that they made.

The feast continues into the early hours of the morning. Various drinking games are played, from tests of endurance, to games of mumbledepeg. The players can join in with these, their performance is dependant on how much they have drunk so far (various CON, DEX and Luck rolls should be made to see who does best at these games, and who succumbs to the drink!).

Later on, Kornos and his family retire to bed in the right-hand wing, and Edruf and most of his followers retire to the Guest Wing. Clanspeople who live in the valley return home (as do Triock and the more sober Hodirsons earlier on in the evening). However, those Hodirsons from Snorri's Stead who stayed late, including Marlan, Hralf, and the player characters, can sleep in the main hall and return home the next day.





Murder!

The characters sleep soundly, especially those who have drunk too much ale. Allow the characters to make Luck rolls – those who joined in the drinking games must roll under POW x 3% or less. If they succeed they wake up before dawn (it is still dark). They vaguely remember being woken by horses riding off in their sleep. If they fail, Branduan (or Hralf) wakes a character up and tells them the same thing. Looking around they see that the Yelmalions have gone. Another Luck roll allows them to remember that the Yelmalions didn't arrive by horse.

If the characters look around where the Yelmalions slept they will see a few spots of blood on the floor. There are also spots of blood near to the Guest Wing.

If the characters explore further, then just inside the Guest Wing lies the body of one of Kornos' serving wenches, her throat cut, and her platter of fruit strewn across the floor. Further down the corridor a housecarl of Edruf sleeps at his station; a closer look reveals the sleep of Death – his throat is cut too. Inside Edruf's quarters, his carls and thralls sleep noisily, while his headless body lies in a pool of blood. A silent assassin has been at work!

When the alarm is raised, there is great anger and outrage. Kornos calls together all his housecarls and all of the able-bodied men he has. His hospitality has been broken in the foulest of manners, his honour and the honour of the clan has been impugned. The thanes and carls with horses are sent ahead (half-a-dozen men), while Cornard Deathdealer and Kornos leads those on foot (twenty warriors, including three Indrodari Swordbrothers, plus the characters), who are to make as swift progress as they can.

Before he rides off, a breathless and only half-armoured Marlan, explains that four horses rode south, one of them lame. Cornard Deathdealer expects the murderers to take refuge with the Yelmalion mercenaries who guard the Old Mill of the Bostrop clan – or at least to get fresh horses from them. The characters are to go with the party on foot.



Ambush!

Those on foot jog south for an hour, those with hangovers feeling very much the worse for wear. As dawn approaches there is a sound of a horse's hooves approaching. It is Marlan's horse, riderless and foaming at the mouth. Cornard doubles the pace of the jog and then as they approach the next hill he halts the group.

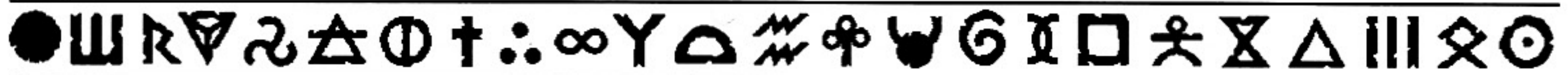
Kornos and Cornard confer for a while. Then they explain that the valley ahead is the perfect spot for an ambush. They order half-a-dozen warriors to climb the slope to the right to provide warning on that flank, and order Hralf to take the characters and Branduan up the ridge to the left to protect the left flank.

It is still dark, and as the characters clumsily climb up the ridge they can hear the main body move forward slowly, in parallel with them. After maybe ten minutes they hear a sudden series of shouts out toward the right, followed by the clanging of many swords and spears on shields. Obviously, the main body has been attacked. Almost immediately arrows fly towards them, followed by the screams of warriors charging at them from the ridge above.

The characters are being attacked by Yelmalion Sun Domers, who number in total one more than the PC's party, including two experienced Templars – though it will seem more in the darkness and confusion. At first 2D4 arrows from Short Bows are fired at them: each has a 30% chance of hitting and will do 1D6 damage if it hits. Then the warriors drop their bows and charge in with spear and shield. The two Templars will hold back one round to cast *Bladesharp* on their Spears (they already have *Catseye* cast).

There is likely to be a short and bloody fight. If both Templars are killed or incapacitated, or if more than 50% of the total are killed or incapacitated, then all the surviving Sun Domers will flee (wounded Sun Domers will surrender).

After seven rounds of combat, the characters hear the sound of Cornard's hunting horn: the signal to retreat and regroup. If they are still in combat, they must disengage, as Hralf or Branduan will order them to do.



Defeat

When the characters rejoin the main body, they see many wounded warriors, and much despondency amongst them. One Storm Bull berserk has been killed and Cornard is wounded, as are a dozen more warriors. Furthermore, one of the right flanking party is missing, as are all of the riders, including Marlan who rode ahead. Kornos decides they must return to Greydog Village and get more warriors at once.

The march back is uneventful. When more warriors are raised from the households and from the nearby Goodsword and Hillhaven steads, the host marches into Bostrop lands, only to find that the Yelmalions have fled south to Sun County. Berga Bostrop seems as angry as Kornos, as all his Sun Dome mercenaries have left with them.

Kornos Longbrewer must gain justice in some other way.

Part Two: Lunar Justice

Background

Word arrives of the missing warriors a few weeks after the events in part one. They have all been captured, and are being held in Sun County. A ransom of 2,000 Lunars per man has been set by their captors. If the characters managed to capture any of their opponents in the fight then one-for-one exchanges are possible, or reductions in ransom. However, Kornos will wish to hold on to these hostages until there is a legal ruling.

The demands for ransom are unacceptable to Kornos: not only has his honour been slighted and his hospitality been broken, but now he is being asked to pay for it. He takes the case to the king of the Lismelder in Swordvale, King Thanos. He asks him to intercede on his behalf, and reluctantly they both agree that the matter can only be settled under Lunar justice.

Word is sent to the Lunar Governor, Euglyptus the Fat, in Boldhome, demanding justice for the murder of Edruf, the breach of hospitality and the taking of the hostages. News arrives at the end of the year that an audience has been set for Waterday/Truth week/Sea season. Both parties, and all hostages, must present themselves at the Great Hall of the Tribes in Boldhome on that day.

Since the characters were involved in the fight against the Yelmalions, and no doubt discovered the body of Edruf, they are expected to accompany Kornos as witnesses.

The Home of the Bold

The journey to Boldhome is uneventful – unless you wish to sow paranoia by having the party attacked by mercenaries (hired by the Sun Dome or perhaps the Lunars). Kornos has with him Cornard Deathdealer, Ornar Greyman, six housecarls, the characters, ten other witnesses, and twenty thralls and servants. King Thanos has his lawspeaker, Salokin Bluebeard, one Sword of Indrodar and ten Swordbrothers, as well as twenty-four servants and thralls. King Thanos also has with him a representative of the ducks, Webbed-Foot Walt, with whom he often confers.

The Lismelder set off on Windsday, arriving in Boldhome two days before their case is to be heard. On arrival the entourage is split

into two parts, and each is escorted through the city by a full company (100 men) of the Granite Phalanx. Both groups are escorted to the Lismelder Manor, which sits next to Duck Island. The Manor is somewhat overcrowded as a result of this sudden influx of people.

For the next two days the characters may explore Boldhome. However, the laws of Boldhome require them to go about their business unarmed except for a knife or small axe (unless they are a Humakti Sword or Swordbrother). If they do wear their swords then they are likely to be challenged by the town watch or Lunar troops, and arrested if they do not have a licence. As punishment they will be thrown into a dungeon for 2D6 days, and their weapon(s) confiscated. If they use the weapons to resist arrest, mutilation or crucifixion is the usual penalty.

See *King of Sartar* or *A Rough Guide to Boldhome* for further information on the city.

The Great Hall of the Tribes

On the appointed day the Lismelder and the Sun Domers arrive at the Great Hall of the Tribes in the Top Pocket. This hall was traditionally the place where any tribesman could call upon justice from the King of Sartar. Since the fall of Sartar's line, the Lunar Governor has presided here.

The Lismelder group stands on the right of the Hall as the Accusers, and the Sun Domers on the left as the Accused. Each group is watched over by fierce looking hoplites of the Granite Phalanx.

The characters can see that the Lismelder hostages are within the Sun Dome group, chained and guarded. They can see Marlan, his head bowed. Also amongst the Sun Domers are two men dressed in Lunar garb; the more poorly-dressed of the two carries many scrolls.

Some time later Euglyptus enters the Hall. He is extremely fat, so fat that he is carried on a palaquin by half-a-dozen red-faced thralls. He is followed by his advisors, two military officers in gaudy uniforms, and various thralls with silver platters of food and jugs of red wine. Eventually, he collapses into a massive throne at the head of the Hall, and calls the proceeding to order.

"In the name of our just and merciful Lady in Crimson, I, Euglyptus Assiday, Governor of Dragon Pass in Her Name, call this court to order. Let the Accusers read the charges and present their case."

He then settles back in the throne (which gives an ominous creak) with a goblet of wine and most of a roast chicken.

Each side must now present their case. Unlike modern day courts, there is no cross-examination of witnesses, except when Euglyptus himself asks a question of a witness. Euglyptus will decide on the verdict, and on the punishment, based on the testimony of the witnesses, and the arguments used.

Presented below are the basic arguments and tactics of each side:

The Prosecution

Salokin Bluebeard begins by stating the charges against the Sun Domers. He then calls witnesses to prove that Edruf Longnose and Egrid the Enlightened were both under the laws of hospitality. Then the characters must recite what they saw on the night of the murder – let them roll Orate rolls to see how clearly their testimony comes across.



Salokin then deals with the ambush of the Lismelder warriors and the taking of the hostages.

His closing arguments concern the dangers of the flagrant breaching of the laws of hospitality. He argues that if these ancient laws and customs can be breached with impunity, no one can be safe, host or visitor, within the lands of the Lunars.

The Defence

Instead of a Sun Domer presenting the defence, the more richly-dressed Lunar presents the case. He introduces himself as Pulbicus the Advocate. He speaks only in Pelorian, which is then translated for the Lismelder, and constantly uses dramatic gestures or facial expressions to expand on his arguments. He also uses humour, which Euglyptus seems to appreciate, but which doesn't translate well.

The defence case is at first hard to comprehend. Pulbicus states that while there existed a "contract" of hospitality between Egrid and Kornos Longbrewer, and a "contract" of hospitality between Edruf and Kornos, no such "contract" ever existed between Egrid and Edruf – indeed, they never spoke. Therefore, when Egrid's thrall Darin killed Edruf, this was a matter between Darin and Edruf, and there was consequently no breach of hospitality.

When Salokin realises what is being argued he will be confused and angry. He is not used to procedural or technical wrangling. Orlanthi law is one of custom, precedent and plain speaking, and this situation is almost inconceivable to him. The Lismelder group begins to get agitated, especially as Euglyptus seems intrigued and amused by Pulbicus's argument.

If the characters can now make an INTx2% roll – or if the players can work it for themselves – then they can see a flaw in this argument. The serving wench who was killed was Kornos' thrall and therefore in her case hospitality *was* breached – if you accept the Lunar argument in the first place. (Real lawyers can probably find further flaws too, but ask them first if their character would understand the argument!)

If the characters do see the flaw, they must somehow bring attention to it. Remember that no cross-examination is allowed: their only course is to shout it out, so that Euglyptus hears. Allow one player to shout out one sentence before his character is clubbed to the ground by a hoplite (2D4 damage). Decide if what he shouted was lucid, and note this down.

Pulbicus then deals with the ambush, which he explains was only made in self-defence. The Lismelder were unlawfully pursuing Egrid in order to do harm to his person, and the Yelmalion hoplites acted purely to avoid a breach of the Lunar Peace.

He then rests his case.

The Judgement

Euglyptus comes to a decision within half-an-hour. In that time he also manages to drain four goblets of wine, and eat (rather messily) three jellied eels, while he ponders the case.

He begins his judgement by stating that there is right and wrong on both sides. If a character managed to shout out lucidly about the flaw in the Sun Dome argument, then he says that there has been a minor infringement of hospitality by the murder of the serving thrall, and he orders Darin crucified and Egrid to have four lashes. This will

make the character who shouted this out Egrid's sworn enemy.

If no one pointed out the flaw then he says that there was no breach of hospitality, as no contract existed with regard to Edruf and Egrid. This causes much anger amongst the Lismelder.

Then he says:

"Even if there was no major breach of hospitality there was a great deal of misunderstanding, much of it innocent. Therefore, it is unclear if the subsequent ambush and the actions of the Lismelder were lawful or not.

I therefore rule that no monetary gain be made from this unfortunate incident. All hostages (including any taken by the characters) are to be handed over to my keeping, and I shall be pleased to collect a ransom of 1,000 Lunars for each of them."

There is a shocked silence.

(If any character made a special or critical success on their Orate when they were on the witness stand he adds: *"However, I will freely release one of the Lismelder, as a gesture of goodwill, and to show the Lady's bountiful mercy."*)

Otherwise, he continues:

"I hope this will illustrate the need for strict observance of the Lunar Peace, and of the Divine Justice of our Lady in Crimson.

This court is closed."

Note: If any player characters were captured during the ambush, then they are the ones released by Euglyptus as a gesture of goodwill. Otherwise, if one hostage is released then it will be Marlan Windsblade.

Lunar Justice

The Lismelder are shocked and angry by the events of the court. There are many mutters of what would have happened if there had been a true King of Sartar in the Hall. They are then hustled out of the Hall by the Lunar hoplites.

As they leave, King Thanos fixes his gaze on a random player character and says bitterly: *"So this is Lunar Justice!"*

Part Three:

The Raid on Sun County

Introduction

The Lismelder return home from Boldhome without the hostages. A thousand Lunars per hostage is a lot of money to pay. However, King Thanos feels that his honour demands justice for the Greydog clan, and he pledges to help raise the money.

Later that winter, King Thanos comes up with a plan to get the money. He decides that Sun County will pay! He will take a host of Lismelder warriors, raid their lands with surprise, and seize the ransom. He has called in a number of favours that the ducks owe him, and they have agreed to use their boats to take the host to Sun County. Surprise should be complete.

The rest of the information presented here gives the relative sizes of the forces involved and details of the Yelmalion town that Thanos decides to raid. The players should take on the roles of Thanos and his military advisers and plan and implement the raid.

The Lismelder Host

The host consists of:

- King Thanos, his tribal champion, and 20 of his housecarls (including all ten of his Storm Bull berserks)
- 20 Swordbrothers of Indrodar, led by two of his Swords
- Kornos Longbrewer, Cornard Deathdealer and eight clan housecarls
- 30 Greydog clan warriors, including the PC's
- 20 Hillhaven clan warriors (including four housecarls)
- 10 Goodsword clan warriors.

In all, some 110 warriors. This is the maximum that the ducks can carry without drawing attention. They can also carry up to five horses to use for scouting, if the players ask.

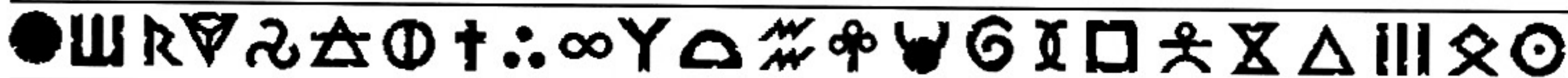
Getting to Sun County

The element of surprise is vital to the success of the raid. Therefore, the suggestion is that the warriors leave their homes at intervals and make their way to the Upland Marsh in Marshedge lands, there to be ferried by the ducks to Lookout Isle.

From Lookout Isle, the trip up the Stream is fairly fast. The warriors are hidden in a number of the duck barges. These barges ply the river trade route which eventually takes them to the Holy Country as far as Nochet. The trade route is a monopoly granted to the ducks by King Tarkalor.

The Lismelder host is landed three hours before dawn on the Sun Domer bank of the Stream. The ducks will wait on the other bank until mid-day (seven hours after dawn) before leaving the Lismelder to their fate. From here, it is only an hour to the town of Barleymow.





Part of the price (apart from a cut of the proceeds) for the Ducks' help is that the Lismelder don't burn the town or kill or capture any of the merchants. The ducks do not wish to spoil future trade with the Yelmalions.

What Scouting Might Reveal

It is up to the PCs to organise scouting, and whether to land an advanced scouting party some days before the host arrives. If they don't do this then any scouting must be done before dawn – at night!

The town of Barleymow is surrounded by a 12 foot, thick, wooden wall, and stands on the top of a small hill. Ramparts allow the defenders to shoot arrows and missiles down upon any attackers.

Every dawn cows and sheep are herded out of the town to graze on the lands around. Each night the cows and sheep are herded into the town for safe-keeping, and the town gates are barred until dawn. On Freezeday every second week a livestock market is held outside the town.

At night there is a standard Warding spell which operates at a distance of about 50 metres from the wall and extends around the town. However, this Warding does not cover anyone who approaches the town along the bed of a stream which flows into the town (it provides a source of water – though not the only one).

During daytime, the only possible unobserved approach is along the stream bed, which will allow a half dozen attackers to get within 70 metres of the main gate, though there is a good chance of being spotted by travellers and herders if they remain there during the day.

Where the stream enters the walls it is protected by a enchanted bronze gate. Careful scrutiny of the gate shows that a small person might (with luck) squeeze through.

In daylight a larger force will only be able to approach to within 400 metres without being spotted from the walls – allowing plenty of time for the defenders to close the gates. The gates are never be opened at dawn until a circuit of the town walls is made to ensure no attackers lie in wait.

Barleymow (Referee's Information)

The town of Barleymow is a market town that is growing in importance due to the local river trade with the ducks (Ambertown, close to the Amber Fields is the major river-port used by the duck barges). Barleymow has a population of some 800, but this has been rising steadily over the last decade. The town is circular in shape (as are most Yelmalion towns and cities) and is built on a hill. It is rumoured that the hill covers the ruins of an ancient Empire of the Wyrms Friends city.

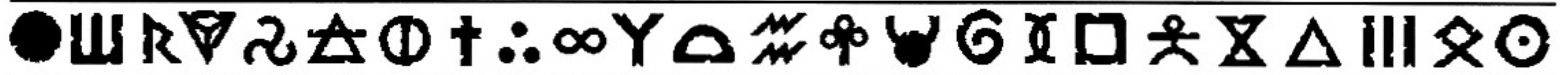
The town has a permanent garrison of 30 Templars led by two Light Sons. The militia numbers some 70 and is well-equipped. At a pinch maybe 10 or 20 more able bodied men and boys could be pressed into service (though unarmoured and poorly equipped). This is plenty to defend the town walls against most frontal assaults.

At night a Warding 6 spell extends some 50 metres from the town walls around the town. During the day the warding is moved into the temple of Yelmalio and increases the protection for the inner sanctum.

At night the gates are kept barred and are opened to no one. Any activation of the Warding Spell leads to the guard being called out and the use of the Catseye spell to see what has activated it.

At all times the guard consists of ten Templars and fifteen militiamen, of which only one half man the walls and the gate. The





rest are kept in reserve, or patrol the town streets. At night, each Templar and militiaman is issued with a bugle to use to call upon aid.

Another ten Templars are always available on standby at the barracks at the main gate. At least half of them will be fully armoured if they are called out at short notice. The rest of the garrison will either be sleeping, or are with their families in town. It will take ten minutes for all the other Templars to be mustered and armoured, and a further twenty minutes for all of the militia.

Inside the Town

If the assault is successful then once inside the town the characters must grab as much loot and important prisoners as possible. Remember, they can't take merchants. If they ask potential prisoners if they are merchants, then some quick-thinking townsmen will reply "yes", even if they are not! Eventually, word will get around that townsmen are safe if they claim to be merchants. Even so, there is plenty of portable wealth, livestock and thralls to be had.

Possible encounters while looting:

1. A group of Orlanthi hotheads are attempting to set fire to the temple of Yelmali: from inside come the screams of women and children who have taken refuge there.
2. A group of Goodsword clansmen is arguing with some Hillhaven over their spoils. The argument will turn violent unless someone intervenes.
3. A group of desperate Yelmalion militia suddenly burst out of a house and attack the characters.
4. Desperate local townsmen drive a herd of cattle down a narrow street towards the characters. The characters must avoid being crushed by the stampeding herd.
5. A group of Storm Bulls are butchering the servants of a group of screaming women. The berserks are obviously going to rape, and perhaps kill, the women. Branduan dashes forward to stop them...

Give the characters plenty of opportunities to loot. Let them decide when they should perhaps stop and think about leaving before Sun Domer reinforcements arrive, or the ducks leave. Mark off one hour for each encounter or looting opportunity they have in the town. Only remind them of how much time has passed after two hours of looting.

For each hour of looting the players can grab goods to the value of 250 Lunars. There is also 5% chance per hour of picking up a valuable or magical item.

What Happens Next...

The garrison of Ambertown will march straight to Barelymow to confront the attackers (having received word by magical means). They number 50 Templars, 50 militia and 100 assorted townsmen and farmers. They will send half-a-dozen mounted scouts ahead. The scouts will arrive two hours after the Lismelder assault and will only be spotted if any lookouts that have been posted at one of the player's instigation. The main body will arrive one hour later and will easily be spotted by the Lismelder.

If the Lismelder are taken by surprise (e.g. if lookouts never saw the mounted scouts) then these troops will immediately attack the town through the north gate. These troops are well-armed but badly armoured (they had to leave quickly and travel light). The fighting in the town will be confused and sporadic, allowing the Lismelder time to escape the town, though not without casualties and the loss of half of everyone's loot. The players should have to escape from at least one skirmish (and if they want to keep all of their loot they should get negative modifiers on their skill rolls). The Yelmalion commander will not pursue the fleeing Lismelder until he has more reinforcements from the Sun Dome Temple, though he will send scouts to watch them.

If Lismelder are ready for the Ambertown garrison then their commander will wait for reinforcements from the Sun Dome Temple before attacking the town. In another three hours he will be joined by 20 cavalry, 200 Templars and 150 militia. If the Lismelder leave the town then he will re-occupy it and send scouts to watch the Lismelder retreat. Again, he will only pursue once he has reinforcements.

If the Lismelder host fails to make it back to the river in time then they will find the ducks gone. *They have four choices:*

1. **Fight their way through Yelmalion territory.** This is likely to end in disaster when the Sun Domers mobilise their full manpower and bring the Lismelder to battle.
2. **Surrender.** Only the leaders, thanes and housecarls will be ransomed. Other tribesmen will be made thralls and put to work on the land in chain-gangs, or forced to convert to Yelmali. Storm Bulls will be killed on the spot.
3. **Cross the river into the ducklands.** This requires three Swim rolls to accomplish. If a Swim roll fails, use the drowning rules. All booty must be left behind. If characters have ENC of 4-6 then an additional Swim roll is made, ENC 7-10 two more Swim rolls must be made, over 10 ENC, three more rolls. About one third of the host will be drowned if this is attempted.
4. **Go west and then north toward Duckpoint.** If the host has much booty, they will be slowed down and forced to fight rearguard actions, or even a pitched battle, against the Yelmalions. Even if they leave their booty, the Yelmalion cavalry will harass them and attempt to slow them for long enough for the Templars to catch up.

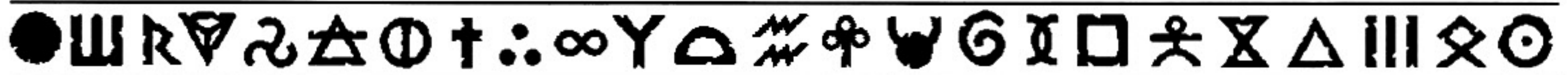
Notes (continued...)

[XXIX.424.548.113/a] It is claimed that Kralorelan artisans from Chi Ting make the finest paper in the world, a blend of silks, ground rice and other plants.

[XXIX.424.550.113/b] I was at the port today hoping to buy some silk paper from the Kralori merchantman Ox Nos Toos whereupon I met his passenger, the scholar Restless Hueng An, out from the city Goropheng. I have asked him to stay for a time at the temple.

[XXIX.424.551.graf.sar] Found scrawled on a Humakti shrine in Duckpoint in 1427: "A warrior betrayed, a great hero cut down. They blame the undying, a chain of clacks lies in its shadow."

[XXIX.424.552.113/c] Hueng An exhibits most peculiar gustatory habits. He drinks only seawater and subsists entirely on sea urchins, udder of sow and - I shudder to even write it - all manner of bird dung.



Aftermath

If the host gets back to Lismelder territory with at least two hours worth of booty, there will be enough to pay Eugylptus to return the hostages. The Lunars will lodge a strong protest with King Thanos over the raid, but they are in fact happy for the Lismelder and the Sun Domers to feud with each other, as long as they can profit by it monetarily and politically.

The Sun Domers swear vengeance.

Part Four:

The Righteous Wind Insurrection

Historical Background

The region of Far Point was originally part of the Kingdom of Tarsh. However, the region split from the Tarsh when the Lunars subverted the kingdom through the wiles of Hon-eel the Artess in 1490. Far Point was able to stay independent of Lunar or Tarsh control for many years, and was ruled by a High King elected by all of the tribes.

In 1582, after the Battle of Grizzley Peak, Far Point was invaded by the Lunars and Alda-Chur was besieged. The city was only saved by the intervention of Prince Terasarin of Sartar: in order to protect themselves, the tribes of Far Point joined the Kingdom of Sartar. Terasarin married a woman chieftain of the Tovtaros tribe to cement the treaty. The city of Alone was founded by Terasarin as a new home for all the Tarsh Exiles made homeless by Grizzley Peak.

However, unlike the southern Sartar tribes, the northerners of Far Point had sizeable populations of Elmal and Yelmatio worshippers within them, and, over time, the schism that existed between the two groups widened.

The seeds of violent conflict were finally sown when the Lunars successfully invaded Sartar in 1602.

Around 1606 many priests of Orlanth in the Far Point region of Sartar agitated for the violent expulsion of the Yelmation worshippers within their tribes. The Yelmations were increasingly seen as supporting the Lunars, and even spreading their message. As a result lawsuits and feuds arose as tribes split between religious groupings, and began manoeuvring for control. Often brother turned against brother, and father against son.

In Earth season of 1611 many tribal moots broke up in disorder. The Orlanthi supporters raised the Righteous Wind and took up arms. In Storm season of the same year the city of Alda-Chur was torn asunder by rival mobs of Orlanth and Yelmatio supporters. At last, Harvar Ironfist, a noble of the Yelmation Vantaros tribe, attacked the Orlanthi with his Gagarth-worshipping housecarls and destroyed his rivals inside the Orlanthi holy site. He made himself Prince of the Alda-Churi, and declared the Far Point part of Tarsh. There was no overt Lunar involvement in this, but many suspected their covert support.

Then Harvar ordered the clans to purge themselves of all Orlanth worshippers. As a result the Bachad tribe was split in two, and large portions of the Tres and Tovtaros were forced to leave. The remote, sheep-herding, Amad pledged half-hearted allegiance to Harvar and were left by Harvar for later. Only Alone resisted, but

it too fell to Harvar's fyrd in Fire season of 1612. The streets there ran with Orlanthi blood.

Elsewhere, many Orlanthi turned to the worship of Ernalda and thus escaped persecution, but the ruling bloodlines had to submit, or be killed, enslaved, or forced to flee. A flood of refugees streamed south.

News of the Rebellion

News of the rebellion first reaches the Greydog clan in Storm season of 1611 from the Issaries Goldentongue, Bardour Bondsmith. The news is of the Orlanthi clans rising to cleanse the land of the treacherous Yelmations and of great victories in the cause of the Righteous Wind. A few of the most impetuous Uroxi in the tribe leave to help the rebels – they do not return.

In early 1612 news of the defeat of the Righteous Wind Movement in Alda-Chur begins to filter through.

The Deadwood Clan

The GM will need to find a reason for the players to be absent from the clan in late Fire Season of 1612 – preferably via a scenario. They might escort a wagon of beer for the Ducks' Dinner Inn at Quackford (and fight off an ambush by thirsty Gagarthi outlaws), or go on an expedition into the Upland Marsh to kill zombies.

While they are away, the remnants of the Deadwood clan of the Bachad tribe arrive in Lismelder lands. They have fled from northern Sartar and are seeking shelter with a friendly clan or tribe. Throughout their travels they have been harassed by Lunar soldiers, attacked by outlaws, and have had little sympathy from the southern tribes. Each time they have been forced to move on. They are now bitter and desperate.

The Goodsword clan gave them some food but encouraged them (with a show of force) to move on further south. Chancing upon a Poss clansman from Fox Ford Stead, they were directed to the Greydog lands along the Old Track near the Big Elm and Hill Stead. These they occupied under cover of darkness by travelling through Poss lands.

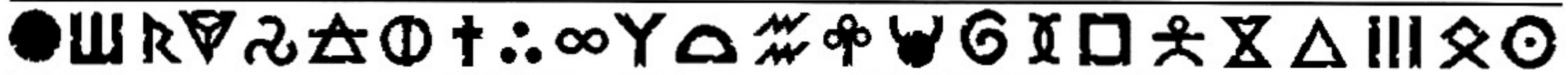
The following morning there was surprise and consternation at the appearance of the refugees. At first they were welcomed, with Yrsa Osgosi tending to their ailments and ensuring they were fed. However, after a few days it started to become clear that they might be planning to stay. Also, they were getting visits from members of the Poss clan, which made everyone suspicious. Then, last night, two Osgosi cows went missing from near Hill Stead.

It is at this point that the players arrive back from their adventures.

Bad Day at the Big Elm

The players arrive in time to learn of the events of the last few weeks, after which they are summoned, along with the rest of the clan, to a Moot. This has been called to discuss the arrival of the Deadwood and what the clan should do about it.

The moot begins with uproar. Household Heads are shouting to be heard, many warriors are bashing spears, women are seen pleading with their husbands, and Triock sits shaking his head in bemusement.



The GM must now present the various views of the clan through various clan members. The boxed quotes should help set the tone and the prejudices of those people and arguments. Encourage the players to argue with and question these people, for they must take on the role of the Clan Council and decide themselves what the clan's response should be.

However, note that as soon as the more belligerent members of the clan begin to gain support then Ornar Greyman will remind everyone of the oaths they gave to Edruf Longnose all those years ago (see Part 1). At this point many of the supporters of a violent solution (perhaps including the PC's) will realise that this might result in a breach of their oath (see Cornard's quote).

Eventually, the GM will need to call a halt to the debate and

ask the players to decide what the clan should do. This might be a consensus of the player's views or a vote.

The Moot has Spoken!

Once the decision is made the following might happen:

Sending a polite delegation: The players should role-play the delegation, and their reactions will be important in resolving this. The Deadwood will receive them with full hospitality, but they are unwilling to move on. They will regale the players with tales of their terrible journey, the many times they have been forced to move on, and the poor health of their women and children. They will seek to make the players feel guilty enough to give them (or find them) land.

The Moot is Afoot

The major arguments are:

Send a delegation to the Deadwood asking them to move on

This is supported by many of the women of the clan, tradesmen, and elders.

< Yrsa Osgosi: "We must talk with them and try and help. If we do help them then they will be happy to move on peacefully."

< Bestaf Longbrewer: "We won't solve anything by fightin'. I'll not see Greydog blood spilt when we haven't even talked with them about moving on!"

< Rungar Gorin: "We should send brave and powerful warriors to treat with them. When they see our mettle, they'll see it's better to be on their way, rather than have our swords in their bellies!"

Assemble the Clan Fyrd and force the Deadwood to move on

This is favoured by many of the warriors, the younger clanspeople, and most of the Osgosi household.

< Trondi Goodaxe: "We have to move them on, and the only way is to show them we are serious. I say that we take the fyrd, surround them, and make them leave!"

< Hralf Brightblade: "There is no honour in killing and enslaving the weak. But they must move on, for there is not enough land for all. We must be seen to be strong."

< Korlmar Osgosi: "They stole my cows! They're nuthin' but thieves and outlaws. We should send them on their way with their tails between their legs!"

There's enough land for all, let them stay

Ornar Greyman, Kerna Highblossom, many other clanswomen, and a number of the rabid Lunar-haters support this (the latter see the Deadwood as more allies against the Lunar scourge).

< Kerna Highblossom: "There is always another way! We must welcome them into our clan and show them we are just and honourable."

< Ornar Greyman: "They are good Orlanthe! We cannot slay them! Remember the oaths we made to Edruf. We must help them."

< Morigan Hodirson: "They have good cause to hate the Lunars as much as we do. If they join us we will be stronger when the time comes to throw down the Red Moon!"

Attack the Deadwood with the Fyrd, kill the men, and enslave the women and children

The Storm Bulls, hotheads, and a large part of the Osgosi from the Hill stead are clamouring for this loudly.

< Raffin Blood of the Bull: "They are weak! Kill the men and take the women!" (this is this group's slogan – it is to be shouted out by the GM at regular intervals!)

< Orlgarth Sidesplitter: "We should capture them all and sell them as Thralls – this will make the clan strong and rich! No one challenges the Greydog!"

< Kestin Longbrewer: "The Deadwood and the Poss are laughing at us while we sit here talking! We must show them all that we are a strong clan, who will fight for our lands and our rights!"

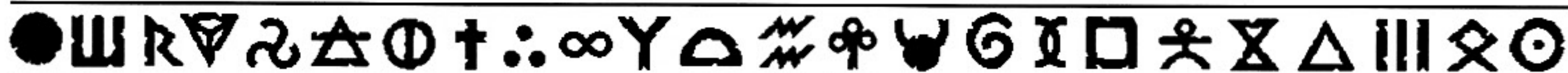
Other random quotes:

< Triock Straightblade: "Aye! But is there enough land for all?"

< Cornard Deathdealer: "I cannot fight them, I pledged I would never strike a blow against the Righteous Wind" (this is echoed by a number of other warriors)

< Fergus Windbag: "We should invite 'em all down the Inn and buy 'em a pint of King's Ale!", to which Hralf retorts: "Yes! And if you play them a tune on your bagpipes they'll soon be off our land and half-way to Nochet!!" – which causes much amusement for all except Fergus.

The GM should improvise further in-character quotes and arguments!



If the players insist that they move then the Deadwood will seek help from the Poss. This will lead to the whole problem being taken to King Thanos, with the Poss supporting the Deadwood. If the Greydogs win the dispute, Thanos' housecarls will help move the Deadwood on.

Use the Fyrd to move the Deadwood on: Many warriors will not be able to muster because of their oaths. As a result, the fyrd can raise around 70 warriors in total. Only 25 badly armed and armoured Deadwood warriors oppose them.

If they are taken completely by surprise then there will be little fighting, and it will be possible to force them to move on. If they get enough warning then they will seek Poss help, which will probably lead to a stand-off and the dispute being taken to King Thanos. Otherwise, they will fight, causing a dozen Greydog casualties before they are disarmed and forced to leave.

Allow the Deadwood to stay on the land: The gratitude of the Deadwood will depend on how much land they are given. If they are given too little, they may take a dispute to King Thanos (via the Poss). If they get a generous amount then, in time, they might join themselves to the Greydog Clan, becoming the Deadwood household.

The Osgosi household will not be pleased by this, as it is likely to be their land that is handed over – and they will demand recompense from Kornos. All the other households will have to contribute to this – the equivalent of 200 Lunars per cottar or carl, and a cow for each thane or godi. The Osgosi will continue to grumble about this for a long time afterwards, souring relations between households (and probably costing the Longbrewers their support in the next clan chieftain election).

Attack the Deadwood, killing and plundering: Many warriors will not be able to muster because of their oaths. As a result the fyrd can raise around 60 warriors in total (including all of the Storm Bulls).

Only about 25 badly armed and armoured Deadwood warriors oppose them. If they are taken completely by surprise then there is

one-sided bloody battle. The presence

of the PCs may save some of the outnumbered Deadwood warriors, otherwise almost all are killed mercilessly.

Almost all of the women and children become thralls, and an amount of plunder is collected. A few escape into the hills to become outlaws.

If they get enough warning then the Deadwood will seek Poss help, which will probably lead to a short bloody fight, followed by a stand-off and the dispute being taken to King Thanos (with dire consequences if any Poss were killed).

Otherwise, they will fight, killing or wounding a score of the fyrd before they are killed, captured or flee.

Wiping out the Deadwood brings a great deal of wealth to the clan from the additional thralls (either sold or kept) and plunder. The reputation of the clan as a strong warrior clan is also enhanced. However, it also leads to the enmity of all Far Point Orlanthi, and is the subject of a special report on local threats by the Lunar regional commander.

It is possible that outcome of the moot will not be one of those above, and in this case the GM will need to improvise.

Loose Ends

The Sun Domers

Sun Dome County will not forget the Lismelder raid, and will seek to gain vengeance, whether militarily or politically (through their influence with the Lunar authorities).

Egrid the Enlightened is likely to become a sworn enemy of the PCs, and he may become a regular villain to throw at them. It may be possible to bring in mythical elements to this, e.g. the PCs and Egrid vying for the affections of an Ernaldan acolyte (as did Orlanth and Yelmalió). If Egrid is ever killed, the PCs will also gain Harvar Ironfist as an implacable foe!

The Lunars

After the Sun County raid, the Lunars will keep an eye on the Greydogs and the Lismelder. If the Deadwood are wiped out, they will pay even closer attention to the Greydogs, with more patrols of the area. If the Greydogs cause enough trouble, the clan might be made a scapegoat after Starbrow's Rebellion.

The Deadwood Clan

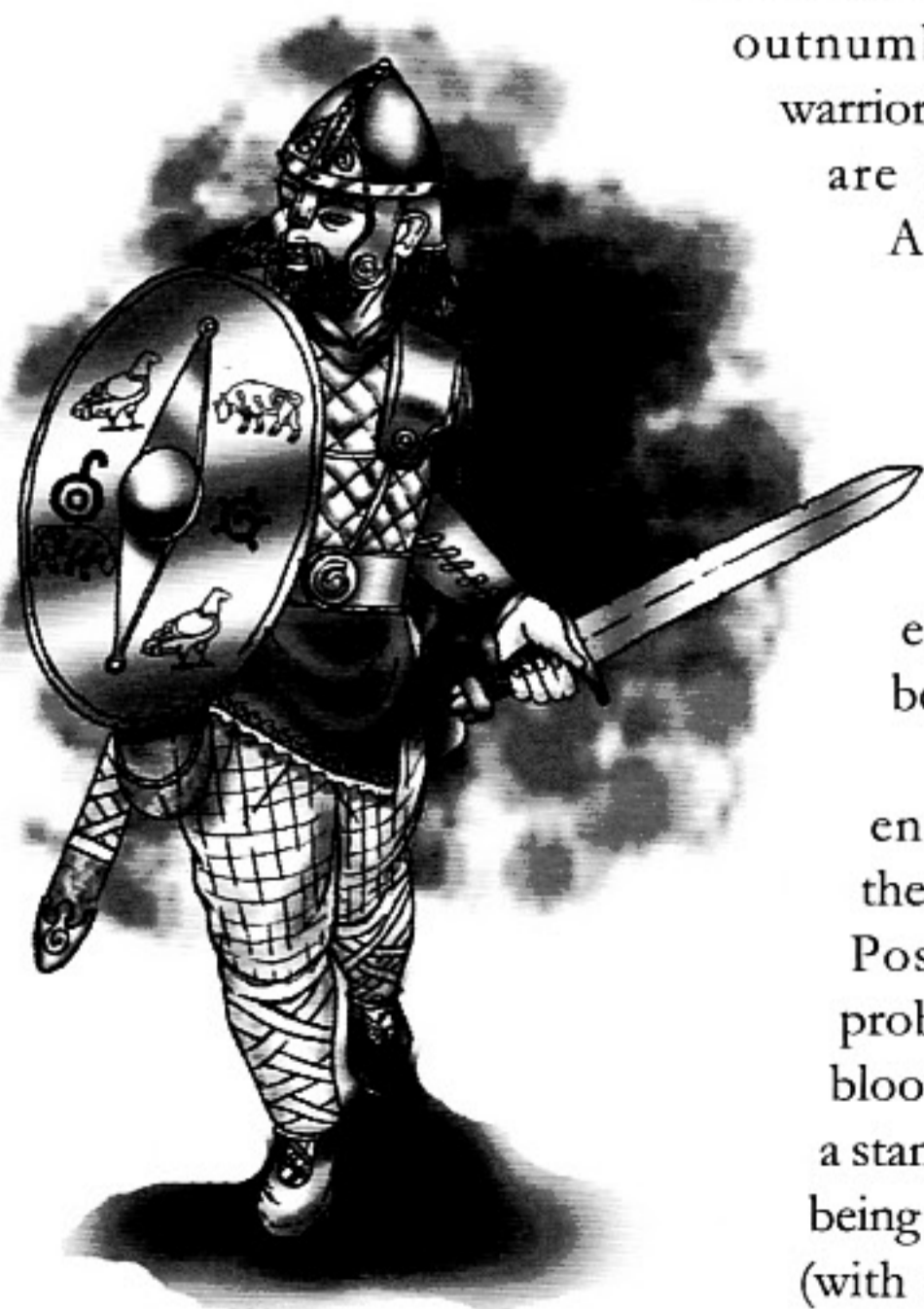
If the Deadwood are given land, they might eventually be incorporated into the clan. If they have to fight for it, they might ally themselves with the Poss and become a thorn in the Greydogs' side. Or perhaps they will see the gift of land as weakness, and plot to one day seize the remaining land and enslave the Greydogs!

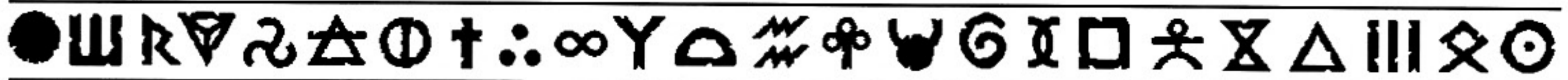
With a gift of too little land, the Deadwood will struggle to support themselves, needing hand-outs to avoid the starvation and death of many of the women and children. If the gift is more generous (e.g. Hill Stead and its lands are handed over to the Deadwood), then the Osgosi will struggle as they absorb the displaced population and attempt to re-start farming of lands in the south. They will also need hand-outs to avoid starvation (though to a lesser extent).

If the Deadwood are forced to leave, they will probably disappear from the campaign. However, they (or their allies) might be encountered on the PCs' travels – and they will no doubt be hostile.

If the Deadwood are wiped out, the survivors will take to the hills to live as outlaws, vowing to have vengeance on the Greydogs and to free their lost kin. How they fare is up to the GM and the players!

The Righteous Wind scenario is based on Greg Stafford's history of Sartar.





Loyal Daughter

The Vinga Traditions of Dragon Pass

Hearth-fire tales from John Hughes, Ian Thomson, & Jane Williams

With thanks to Greg Stafford.

As we call you
So you come
Gale Defender
Hearth Protector

Loyal Daughter
Grim Red-Tressed One.
Shield of women
Vengeance won.

Stead Wall Champion
Bold Path Finder
Great-Heart Goddess
Laughing Sister

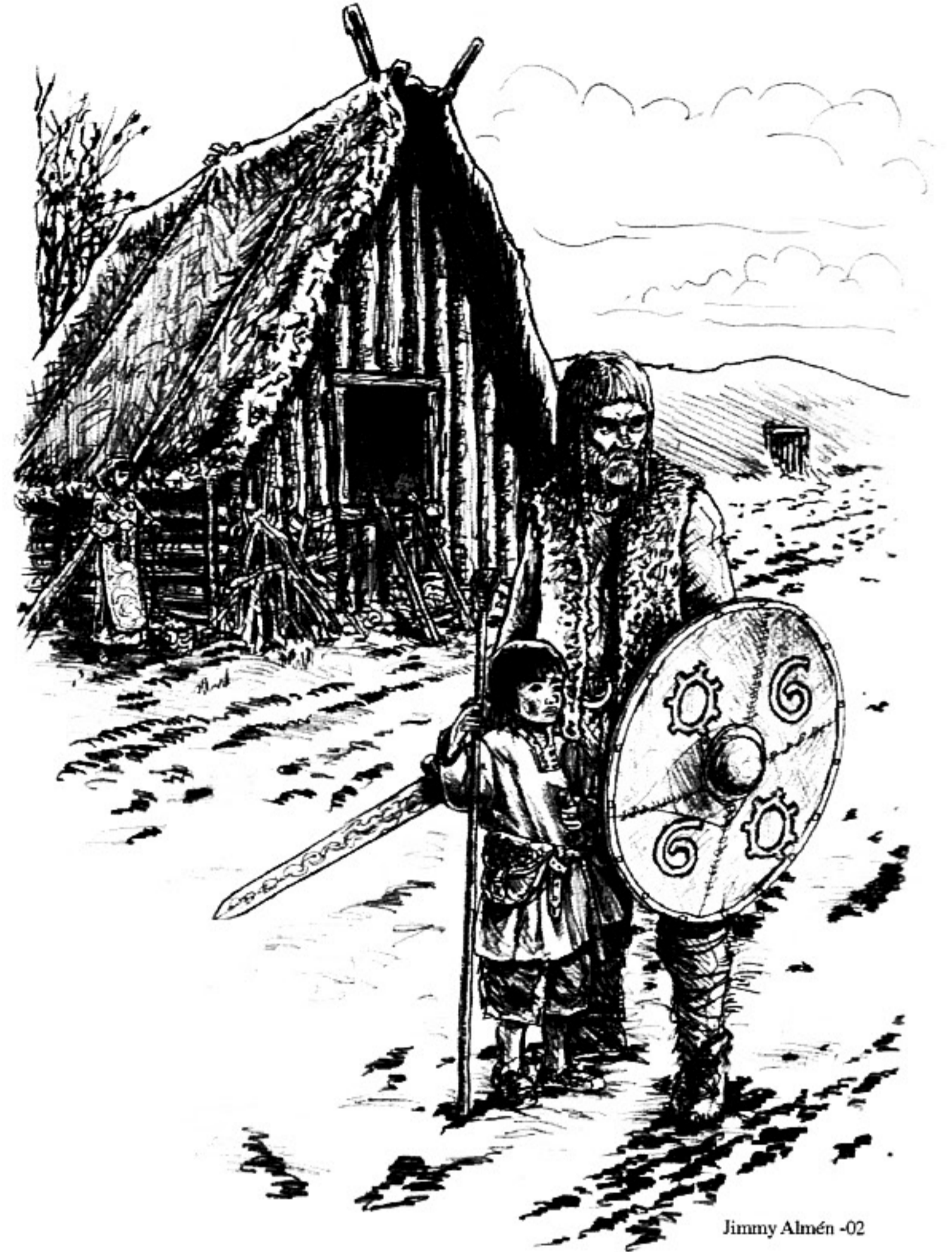
Spear-bright Daughter
Called, You Come.
Friend of women
Victory won.

— *A Kheldon Palisade Chant, 1623.*

Called, she comes. As the first flames of the Hero Wars engulf the sacred tulas of the Heortlings, men and women of courage fight for their lives, for their kin, and for all that they hold familiar and true. And in the struggle unfolds, many women turn to Vinga Orlanthdotter — protector of the helpless, Hearth Defender, grim Avenger.

With the publication of *Storm Tribe*, we at last have detailed knowledge of the Loyal Daughter in her power and diversity, and can understand her key role in the pantheon of Earth and Storm.

Vinga rises up whenever the tribe is threatened, defending the hearth of her mother Ernalda and sharing with her *kaylings* the strength and power of Orlanth her father. As a warrior goddess and Thunder Brother, she is protector of the helpless and defender of the hearth against enemies and powers of Darkness. As grim Avenger, she cleanses the tribe of murderers and rapists. As the Defending Storm, she battles the icy gales of Valind. As Gateway, she allows women access to the cultic powers of the StormFather, be it as adventurer, skald, lawspeaker, reeve, chieftain or champion. As an Aspect of Orlanth, Vinga represents the Allfather's compassion. As Pathfinder, she opens the way, even as she did in the Great Darkness. And as one of the War Women, the Loyal Daughter offers a place for women whose *nyrd* calls them to a life of adventure and danger.



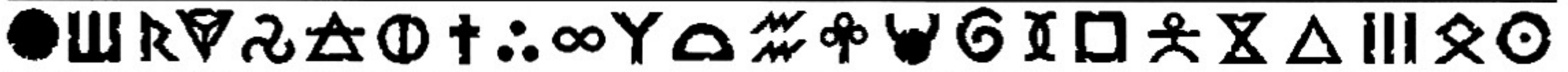
Jimmy Almén -02

*Favoured Daughter
Wilful woman
None may own you
Wit your weapon
And your gifting
Peace of kin all
Dark Avenger,
Strength of widow,
Vow relentless
Justice seeker
And your gifting
Retribution*

*Loved and loving
Laughing loud.
None divert you
Skill your shield.
Favoured gifting!
Safe in stead.
Sword-Arm Vinga
Woman's blade.
Hearth Protector
Storm-black rage.
Sorrow's gifting
Vengeance hard.*

Vinga's Hope and Laughter Songs are oft-repeated favourites when the bloodlines gather about their hearth fires for their evening's entertainment. As much campfire yarn as sacred myth, they celebrate the Loyal Daughter's desperate life-or-death struggles during the Greater Darkness, and her more light-hearted, bawdy and amorous adventures during the Silver Age.

Through these stories and songs, clanfolk know Vinga as a courageous warrior, a laugh-gifter, defender of the helpless, reckless but always artful, bawdy, direct, unrestrained, a deadly adversary when



provoked. Resourceful and cunning, Vinga can transform her anger into a fierce and focussed compassion. As both peacemaker and bloody avenger, she mediates the cunning and wisdom of the Earth with the power and violence of the Storm, embodying the qualities of both.

Yet for all the love Heortlings feel toward Vinga, there is often ambivalence and a degree of distrust directed to her followers. Vingans may face resentment, embarrassment, or strained hostility from their clansfolk. Stories are one thing, but some men are fearful of women who might publicly best them in combat. And certain women, for all their gratitude for the goddess' protection, cannot understand why some vingans give up the security of hearth and harstings to carouse, boast, and fight among men. And as the Gateway to otherwise male Orlanth subcults such as Andrin, Jarani, Dar, Drogarsi, Harst or Vingkot, the Vinga cult attracts many women of unusual talent and determination. The wealth, power and reputation such women acquire may also yield a harvest of petty jealousy and resentment.

Vinga Traditions: Subcults and Hero Cults

As Gateway to the male realms of Orlanth, Vinga gifts Heortling women with the opportunity to join Orlanth subcults usually open only to men. Because of the diversity of these Orlanth cults, Vinga herself has only a few subcults. The most common of these traditions — Avenger/Red Woman, Spearwoman, Defending Storm — are detailed in *Storm Tribe*.

In times of relative peace and prosperity, some aspects of the Vinga tradition seem to disappear for generations at a time, and specialised cult knowledge may be retained and passed on by only a few Devotees and heroes. Yet when the clan is threatened, the Loyal Daughter rises up in power, and her *kayling* sisters dye their hair and arm themselves against the foe.

Vinga is also worshipped through a number of regional traditions which vary in focus and custom, and through clan or warband-based hero cults. Some of the most important are detailed below.

Vinga The Pathfinder

As is known to all, when Vinga was young she was not content to stay behind with the other goddesses, and was intrigued by the tales told of travels by wandering male gods. When she asked to join these others in their journeys, they told her that their ways were not suitable for a woman. The young goddess resolved to see the world for herself, and find her own path.

In the woodlands near the stead she encountered Odayla the Hunter, and asked if he might teach her his skills so that she could feed herself on the way. Odayla growled, and said he was too busy setting traps. Nevertheless Vinga followed him and watched in order to learn what he was doing.

As she travelled on, Vinga came across Tatouth the Scout exploring the furthest borders of their territory. He too refused to help her, claiming it would be too dangerous to show her how to avoid their enemies. Once again Vinga followed and watched, and was able to learn much.

Travelling in another direction, Vinga came across Gultha Goldentongue, the son of Issaries. Gultha at least stopped and talked to her, sharing tales of the many wonders he had seen. Inspired by this, Vinga journeyed further and further from home, finding ways into lands that none of her people had even heard of before, and each time returning safely.

When the world changed, and the lands were split asunder in Darkness, Vinga used these skills to advantage, travelling the dying lands, gathering survivors to still-flickering hearths, uniting isolated steads in hope, seeking new lands where the remaining few might shelter in safety. In her stubbornness and compassion, she always found a path, no matter what the obstacle.

Followers of Vinga Pathfinder are scouts, explorers and hunters. While many Vingans will join the Orlanth subcults of Destor or his son Tatouth, some are called to follow the ancient paths forged by the goddess herself.

Affinity: Pathfinder (Find Trail, Read Trail, Sense Ambush, Speak with Nature Spirits, Talk with Strangers)

Movement Feats: Silent in Nature, Unseen in Nature.

Secret: Always Know the Way (Even when all landmarks are lost, or in a completely foreign land, this ability operates as a magical feat to sense the best direction in which to travel to reach the Pathfinder's clearly stated goal.)

Hareva The WayMaker

(Sartarite Hero

Cult of Vinga Pathfinder)

Hareva was a Black Spear weaponthane who guided Colymar and his followers beyond the dragonewt Crossline into the long-deserted land of Kerofinela. She and her sisters journeyed ahead, exploring the wild countryside and making contact with the Elder Tribes who dwelt there. It was the WayMakers who discovered the white snow grapes for which the Colymar tribe is famed, and it was they who made the first Vinga shrine at Clearwine Temple.

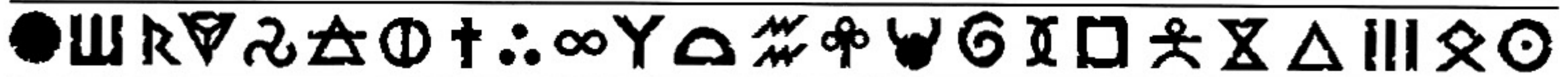
Feat: Vinga's Eye (This feat allows a WayMaker to find her way across inaccessible or unknown country. She may also return to any point in the wilderness where she has carved a Vinga Eye and conducted a day long ceremony. Other WayMakers may also detect these locations.)

The WayMaker hero band acts as guides, explorers and guards in the Quivin Mountains and southern Sartar.

Anratha the Frontierswoman

(Praxian Hero Cult of Vinga Pathfinder)

Red Anratha was a niece of Dorasar, and was part of his expedition to found the city of New Pavis. Both the journey across the Praxian wilderness and the initial days of settlement were fraught with danger. Anratha raised a band of women who joined the male warriors in tracking and defeating nomads, bandits, trolls, chaos, and other foes who opposed the establishment of their settlement. Anratha was noted for her endurance and fierce will, and boasted that she could walk



further, ride harder, fight longer, and drink more than any man.

Feat: Keep on Going (A devotee of Vingana may continue any nominated physical activity without tiring or needing sleep. Once the task is accomplished, however, the full effect of the exertion is felt.)

The worshippers of this recently established Hero Cult to help defend the settlements in Pavis County, and they formed a small independent mercenary unit based in New Pavis.

Vingana Uzfighter

During the Long Night, Vingana fought against the Uz many times as she defended the tribesfolk of Orlanth's stead. The great Tribes of Darkness threw themselves repeatedly against the palisades or ambushed steadfolk when they scavenged through the cold and blasted land.

Through determination and ingenuity, Vingana learned to successfully fight the Uz and defend against their magic. The Uz too learned to respect the Big Woman power of Vingana.

Unlike some other troll-fighting cults, Vingans do not especially hate Uz or their Darkness powers. The subcult of Vingana Uzfighter exists in areas where relations with Uz can erupt into armed conflict, or where the Dark Folk are powerful and the Heortlings need to show that they are not intimidated.

Affinity: Fight Uz (Break Bludgeon, Block Bite, Hidden from Darksense, See in Darkness, Stand Against the Dark)

Movement Feats: Evade Leaper, Walk in Shadows.

Secret: Obey the Female (In fighting the Uz, Vingana learned that the male troll warriors are conditioned to obey their female leaders. Using this secret a Vingana can command male trolls or any trollkin, usually by shouting taunts and confusing commands during battle. It acts as an integrated passion spirit, giving a bonus of 1/4 the secret's ability rating to any ability, and is not treated as a separate action.)



Vingana Stead Daughter

In the Far Place, there exists a loosely-organized godi band of proud and often solitary women who worship Vingana through the hero cult of Enyarna. Called Stead Daughters, they are skilled weapon mistresses devoted to strengthening the entire clan. For the most part, such women command honour and respect as teachers, weapon trainers, negotiators, and problem-solvers, and may hold the place of Vingana on their clan's Lightbringer Ring.

A Stead Daughter has a special role in the making of men from boys, and preparing selected male initiates for adult responsibility and married life, just as Vingana instructed the Cattle Orphans in the Great Darkness. In the five-season span following initiation, she will instruct her pupils in weapon skills, pride, wooing, sex, wisdom, and respect for women.

What this actually entails varies enormously, but Stead Daughters enjoy a reputation (mainly among over-eager initiands) for sexually initiating young men, instructing them in the proper ways of love beneath the sacred hide blanket of Ernalda.

Enyarna the Stead Daughter (Far Place Hero Cult)

Enyarna was a Vingana hero from Bilinni, a mistress of the Spindle Wind, and one of the Far Walkers who resettled the wild uplands of the Far Place. Enyarna was greatly respected as a teacher and mediator, and as a powerful speaker before the moot. She teaches the feat 'Listen To This'.

Feat: Listen To This (Acts as an integrated passion spirit giving a bonus of ~ the feat's target number to any ability involved in a concentrated effort of instruction or persuasion for the good of the clan).

Masks of the Daughter

*Heortling
Diversity
in Cult & Myth*

by John Hughes



Sister, you have seen the widows who call to the Red Woman in their desire for vengeance. You have watched our spear sisters on the palisade, and training with the fyrd. And you heard our Loyal Daughter as she spoke before the moot. How the warriors were shamed!

But did you watch the Colymar War Women as they rode in strength to Whitewall, all blooded axe and bronze-bright spear? Have you seen the grim Kallyrii, those martial hero bands of the exiled Kheldon Queen, calling clans to vengeance!? Have you heard the tales of the War Daughter, Natalina Vingasdotter, who quests the Vinga paths of the Other Side, searching for secrets of an ancient sisterhood?

Do you know the solitary Stead-Daughters on Snakepipe's edge? The far-ranging Pathfinders of the Quivini, the great-breasted Uz Fighters of the wild lands? Do you know of the Laughing Daughters, the Red Clan of Pavis, the Spindle Spears who roam Lismelder lands? Sister, these women serve the Daughter too, though their ways are strange to us. They are all faces of the goddess.

As we call Her, so She comes.

In *Hero Wars*, *Thunder Rebels* and *Storm Tribe* we can read many of the sacred myths of the Heortlings, and descriptions of a wide variety of cults. These writings are not intended to be all-encompassing or final, for it is impossible to draw neat lines around a diverse, living tradition.

Glorantha is a vast, magical world, teeming with mystery and wonder. The clans of the Heortlings each differ in their understanding of the great myths and the actions of the gods. These variations and

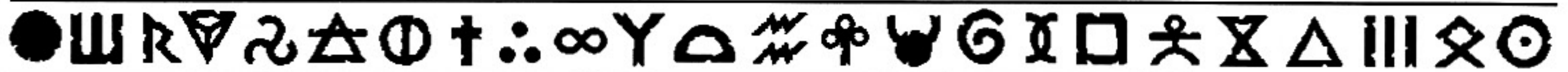
differences are usually subtle, but can at times be extreme and seemingly contradictory. The Wind is never the same!

The reasons for such diversity are many. Deities who are prominent in local tradition and history may usurp roles and responsibilities usually belonging to other gods. A deity's identity might be confused, or conflated with another. In their journeys to the Other Side, clan heroes may reveal (or lose, or misunderstand!) secrets or feats that then become incorporated into clan tradition. Relatively minor deities may gain a greater mythic and ceremonial role if they command an influential body of worshippers within the clan. And a relatively minor feat by a god may have crucial survival value to one clan.

Ceremonies and traditions might be lost in times of war, or different traditions may combine through joint ceremony when tribes come together. Godar may forget or incorrectly recall some of the less-important myths, and clansfolk journeying abroad will return with stories from distant lands, which will then be explained and interpreted according to local tradition.

There is an equal diversity in the organisation and structure of individual cults within clans. And cultic practice will vary as godar and cult elders lay greater or less emphasis on certain ceremonies, feats, and secrets.

The Heortlings have no central religious authority to proclaim 'This is true!' or 'This is the way!', no Seedmistress-General or Uroxi Inquisitor to uphold a unified, orthodox tradition. Such an idea is alien to the Orlanthi Way.



Orlanthi deal with their world through action rather than contemplation. Clansfolk may be surprised when they hear peculiar versions of their myths from other clans, but they are never unduly concerned by them. From their own ceremonies and mysteries, they know that mythic truth is elusive, and that Devotees must spend years of their lives in mastering the dangerous and powerful secrets of the Other Side.

The Orlanthe are a pragmatic people: any myth *will* be tested. How effectively does it serve the clan in ceremonies based upon it? Does it bring good cabbage harvest as it should, or tiny yellow birds to eat the grubs, or a warm wind to melt the black snow? How safely does it guide heroes along the treacherous paths of the Other Side? Does it lead them safely through danger to the desired destination? Can the heroes claim the sacred boon, and bring magic or power back from the gods? If so, then the myth is true! A clan with bad myths will weaken and die.

'Who cares what stories those stupid Maplebarks tell, or what they do in Sacred Time—*our* ceremonies work, so *our* myths must be true!'

Despite their abhorrence of abstract principles removed from immediate action, Orlanthe *do* have a very sophisticated view of what myth *is*, a view unpolluted by our own notions of 'literature' or 'fiction'. They understand in a very practical way that mythic truth is poetic truth, never mere description; that myth is a vehicle, and that it always points beyond itself. They understand that the meaning of a myth changes as you bring greater experience and understanding to it. When rooted in clan tradition and practice, the sacred stories exist to challenge and expand what is possible, never to limit or confine it!

Orlanthe also understand that some truths are too subtle for words; they can only be expressed in ceremony and ritual. Why talk about the weather when you can run naked through a hailstorm?

So is Vinga a goddess, a storm, a spear, a symbol of Orlanthe? Some claim her as a human hero from the Age of Vingkot! Perhaps she is divine feminine energy, long hidden in the sacred myths, in the temple-hearts of Earth and Wind, in the very landscape itself: an energy nurtured by a daughter's courage, a mother's endurance in labour, a widow's searing cry for vengeance.

Yes, all this and more. The path to understanding is Devotion to your deity. As you understand the secrets of the goddess, so will your strength and power grow.

In the long seasons ahead, all truths will be tested in the hurricane gale of the Hero Wars. What do you believe in, Loyal Daughter? Can you live and die for the ways of your clan? Do you feel it in your heart, in your breath? Then take up your spear and follow the Freedom Winds! A Great Storm is upon us all.

Come the Hurricane!

Layers of Mythic Meaning

A fact of mythology is that every meaningful tidbit has more than one meaning. Lhankor Mhy says, "Mythology is the art of Meaning." The spiritual being sees the meaning, and the devotee sees then beyond that to a new meaning. Every answer is a clue to the next meaning. The devotee is not lost, for his practice defines his selected true meaning, and he need only hold to it as the stable point in an otherwise shifting set of ideals.

- Greg Stafford.

Rumours

Contributors:

Dario Corallo
 Nick Davison,
 Greg Fried,
 David Hall, Sandy
 Petersen, Jonas
 Schiott, Nils
 Weinander



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.
- G You've been Gregged.

- The main Moonboat docking station on the Red Moon is called Moonbase Alpha. **B**
- A huge waterspout circles the island Mokato, so no one ever leaves there. **F**
- If you stay too long on Mokato, you are never allowed to leave, upon penalty of death **T**
- The Mariner's Curse never affected the Mostali – the Closing was just their way of shutting down the Ocean for urgent repairs. **B**
- There is a secret island on which the inhabitants routinely plant in the ground any human visitor. Such planted bodies produce a crop of fungal, mindless homunculi, called manukin, which the Vegimen harvest for the food they call vegemite. **R**
- If everything is magical, then nothing is magical. **M**
- The worst insult a Greydog can give a fellow clansman or woman is to call them a "Blackdog". **T**
- The Golden Breath, the fabled magical artefact which helped Mokato rise to imperial power, was in fact a piece of the dead Sun, brought up from Hell by the admiral Tiruvallan. **B**



many times been gifted with the red woman's magics, and he could move through the shadows as quickly as any troll.

This man had hunted Dirk. Dirk, ever careful, had felt the enemy like a spider feels a fly in her web and had gone to ground, first at Ronegarth to carry out some work on behalf of Sor-eel, and then into the desert with the nomads. Eventually returning to Pavis three seasons later. By then the hunter was gone, no sense of him remained in Pavis. Dirk should have been safe. However the hunter was a patient man and he had done his research carefully and cleverly.

When the children started going missing in Pavis, Dirk could smell them in the wind. He began to hunt. Hunting for the children. A group of parents even got together to offer him money to look. Not knowing of course he was already on the scent. Dirk took the money anyway, offering neither thanks nor platitudes, and continued on his course.

Now the path was set, Dirk had entered the final dance. It took a little over a month to find the men responsible and Dirk and Drax had gone alone to deal with them.

Deep in the Rubble they had tracked them and patiently they waited until they had all gathered. At this ceremony only the human ones appeared. As though some sixth sense told the other brood to stay away.

As they began to work themselves up into the necessary frenzy, Dirk and Drax had struck. It had been a slaughter they had whirled and danced around the soft pudgy bodies of the wannabes – and death was all they left. As the last one lay dying but still screaming, Dirk had found the children

There were three children left alive and Dirk decided to take them back that night. As he and Drax parted, neither knew it was for the last time, they had talked of another trip into the desert. But as Dirk headed back to the walls he realised they were being followed and trying desperately to protect the children, he pushed them on hard, giving them no rest. Eventually he realised he couldn't outrun their pursuers and so he had turned and waited for them. Trying to buy the children time to reach the wall.

Only one man stepped into the ruin where Dirk was waiting and in that moment Dirk knew. He had been the target all the time. Dirk had unhurriedly stripped to the waist and just as the other had, brought only his dagger to the duel. They both knew the ceremony, each performing their parts in perfect symmetry. Combat between them should have been forbidden but Dirk had broken his vows many years ago so now it was permitted.

They circled.

Dirk, the winner of many battles, showing white scars in the moonlight, the hunter appearing to absorb the darkness around him. For every attack they was a parry, for every foothold gained the reverse known and used. The fight lasted for what seemed to both men an eternity, the night had been cool but now both men were covered in a sheen of sweat. They fought backwards and forwards, each trying desperately to out-manoeuvre the other and gain the advantage.

Eventually, Dirk began to tire, as his opponent knew he must. Dirk was in his early fifties and a fitter man would be hard to find, but youth will out and eventually the block was not quite so hard and not quite fast enough and the cut was made. That was all it took, one cut. Dirk, realising he was already dead, tried to finish his opponent but the younger man kept his distance until the elder man began to sag to the ground. Then he turned and walked away. Not a word had been spoken, not a sound made. The problem was resolved.



The drumming stopped. The trollkin, ever scared of Mama, scampered out of the way as she checked for a pulse. He was gone. With a loud keening, which was quickly taken up by all of the tribe mothers, her jaws clamped shut upon the head, the large molars grinding the skull until it popped with a sickening sound. Mama began the death frenzy, she would feed until the corpse was no more and that would be all she ate for a season. She wanted Dirk to be reborn and so she needed to adhere strictly to the ceremony.



Outside in the Rubble, not far from the entrance to the Troll's caves, stood a man. He heard the Drumming stop and the tribal howl begin. Then he turned and walked away. Job complete.

From the darkness the whisper of a mosquito heard, the man half turning even upon realising what he had heard, but too late: the three bolts of the Talking man's repeating crossbow hit. Knocking him off his feet. He tried to rise, desperate to cast his healing magics, only to see the shadow within a shadow. Drax was standing over him. He just had time to give up his soul to the care of the goddess as the maul struck.

Darkness.



Notes (continued...)

[XXIX.424.553/kok] During the last year I have travelled extensively through the forests of Western Maniria collecting and cataloguing samples of wild herbs. My most bizarre find though had nothing to do with woodland plants. Near the edge of the great Arstola forest I found a small community of friendly and hospitable farmers. These people were refugees from the country of Ramalia. They offered me free food and shelter during my time with them, whilst I carried out my research in the fringes of the Arstola. What is remarkable about these villagers is that they worship an unborn god, whom they call 'the messiah'. They believe that on the day he is born, the heavens will signal his coming by the appearance of a new star. Part of their ideology decrees that they should not use magic, and that if they have faith in their god magic cannot affect them. This I discovered to be true one day. I tried to heal a girl of the settlement who had injured her arm in a fall. Although she said it was no use - her lord, the messiah, would watch over her arm so that it would heal naturally - I was compelled to try to help her, and almost passed out after repeatedly casting my healing magic. Any disciple of this cult can be recognised by the rune they wear on their clothes and jewellery. It looks like three entwined law runes, which symbolises the new star.

Shamasb Greenhand, wild sage.

[XXIX.424.554.113/d] The Chi Ting silk paper lives up to its reputation.



far and wide – I caught snatches of Pavic, various Praxian dialects, raucous singing in Sartarite – but sadly, no Lunar voices. I was left on the cold-stones of the bank, hog-tied until morning. No one seemed to take much notice of me; then again, no one harmed me either.

Just as dawn approached, a roar of excitement woke me up, and I became aware my stiff legs were not just numb with cold, but with water. The river was rising! I rolled as best I could further up the bank, and managed to slightly dislodge my blindfold. And that's when I saw it, riding on the crest of white water: a huge boat; so big, its passage down this shallow part of the Zola Fel looked all but impossible.

The great swell of water in front of it suddenly broke (drenching me completely), and the boat silently drew to a stop, directly in front of us. Another cheer broke out, and, after a long, completely incomprehensible ritual, the warriors started climbing on board, singing and shouting.

I was none-too-gently hauled up on a rope after them. After thumping against the hull a few times my blindfold finally fell free, and, looking down at the water far below, I was able to appreciate for the first time just how large this vessel was! [4]

If I was unsure where I was and what was happening, this was dispelled the moment I landed on deck: looking into the vast, cavernous

hold of the ship was the unmistakable sight of a beautiful infant, curled up asleep. A beautiful, *giant* baby, defenceless and innocent. This had to be one of the fabled Giant Cradles, mythic vessels built to take the children of giants to the Underworld, or so the stories say.

As I lay there, unceremoniously dumped in dark room below decks, I pondered the incredible situation. Those tedious hours uncle forced me to spend in the New Pavis Knowledge temple reading room finally came in use: I recalled that the old city of Pavis didn't earn its other name – “Robcradle” – for nothing [5]. In fact, I read that the furious giants came and destroyed the ancient city in retaliation for their looted vessels and slain children. Obviously, Onar and his crew were here for the same wicked purpose!

I had to get news to my uncle. Surely he could stop them, even though he was always complaining that Mirin's Cross was starving him of troops and resources [6]. The way I saw it, the fate of New Pavis was in the balance. I had little doubt he could drive off Onar's band of freebooters with the forces he had at hand, and let the Cradle and its precious cargo go safely on its way. As the bringers of the ways of civilization to Prax, I saw it as our Lunar duty. More than that, I was sure Sor-Eel would not want to risk destruction of his capital by the furious giants, through the rapacious actions of a small band of greedy looters.

Of course, lying hog-tied below deck, surrounded by enemies and miles from the nearest Lunar outpost, I wondered just what I could do. The Cradle lurched forward again shortly after I was locked up, but after many hours, all I managed to work loose was one little finger. That was when the door opened. I had heard nothing in the meantime, so I didn't know what to expect: Onar, drunk on the spoils, up to his arms in baby blood? Lunar liberators, telling me the child (and thus the city) was safe? Instead, it was one of the oddest creatures I have ever seen, a short, squat man-shape, apparently made of pebbles.

“Blorn,” it said solemnly. Was that a greeting? Was that its name? I thought best to reply back the same way, but I think that just confused it.

“Pinching?” it then said, this time obviously asking a question.

“Pinching,” I replied, trying to sound positive. I just succeeded in confusing it further. Despite being half my size, he picked me up with one huge hand, and with no effort at all, carried me off, deep into the bowels of the Cradle...

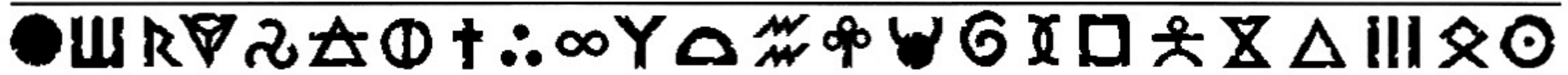
RYO

As it turned out, Blorn was its name, though I never found out exactly who or what Pinching was [7]. Through a confusing sequence of bulkheads, walkways and rooms, he took me to his mistress. I saw many strange and wondrous things inside the Cradle: a room full of giant feathers, and another stacked with arcane scrolls the size of carpets, a chamber stacked with metal balls, each holding visions of far-off lands, another with a huge set of lenses. There was a monster pig, which gobbled up a never-ending gush of slops from a huge horn, and a deck stacked with man-sized wooden chess pieces, which may or may not have been alive. But nothing was stranger than Nemolayope herself.

Blorn pushed me through a ceiling hatch into a warm, earthy-smelling chamber that, if I was not on board a boat, I would have sworn was underground. Still tied up, I was lain on the floor.

Suddenly, rising out of the dirt beside me, appeared a beautiful creature, a woman – or a spirit in the guise of a woman – I wasn't sure. Clad in a translucent gossamer, her radiant white skin was almost blinding. She cradled my head in her lap, her silver hair floating about me if as blown by an invisible wind. Looking at me with argent, strangely featureless eyes, I was enraptured. I don't think I was ensorcelled by magic, just taken in by her sheer beauty and radiant presence. I wanted to say something, but found I could do nothing more than just stare back. Suddenly, she bent down and kissed me, fully on the lips. I swooned, as I felt her touch reach deep into my soul.





I don't know how much time went by, and when I try to remember what passed between us, my heart beats faster, and I yearn for it over and over again. All I know is awoke, and I was no longer bound. In fact, my clothes lay strewn all over the burrow! Somewhat embarrassed, I gathered them up while she put a tiny, fragile hand on my chest. She stared at me again, with those curious, blank eyes.

"I am Nemolayope, the Nymph of Life," she said. "I have touched your soul, Jaxarte, and I see that you are a friend of the Cradle."

Excitedly, I told her of the looters that had boarded the Cradle and taken me prisoner. Smiling, she put a finger to my lips and beckoned me to follow her. We went up on deck, where I saw that Onar and the others were in defensive positions around the bulwarks. Arrows and other litter on the deck indicated that they had recently repelled some sort of attack [8]. Rather than raid the Cradle, it appeared these outlaws were its defenders!

Their leader, an imposing man openly wearing the iron armour of an Orlanthi Wind Lord, bowed to the nymph. In return, she told him I was under her protection, and free to wander. I was amazed to see he instantly demurred, but resolved to keep out of his way regardless. Orlanthi are no friends of my uncle, but I still wanted to get news to him, for I was sure the Lunar army could do a far better job of protecting the vessel than this rag-tag bunch.

RYO

I spent the day playing with the giant baby. I used one of the giant feathers to give her a tickle, until I was almost knocked out by one of her massive limbs as she shrieked with delight. It was then the Cradle approached Pavis, and I got a most unpleasant surprise. Thronging the banks were literally thousands of Lunar troops, more than I thought Sor Eel had at his command in the whole province. At first I thought my uncle had brought them to honour the Cradle's passage, until I heard the signal trumpets and saw the war banners unfurl, the archers preparing missiles, and the priests on platforms, working on their magic. No doubt we were planning to seize it, just like the looters of old!

I couldn't believe my uncle had anything to do with such a monstrous, barbarous act until I recognised, high up on the bank under a crimson awning and surrounded by his staff, the distinctive dull gleam of Sor Eel's bald head.

The Cradle defenders started hefting their weapons, casting their own spells and praying to their gods. Nemolayope stood on the deck, her perfect face a picture of dread, anguish and fear. The baby slept, blissfully unaware of the terrible danger. With the first arrows whistling overhead,

I resolved to stop this madness. Leaping up onto the top of the bulwarks, I screamed at my uncle, waving frantically so he'd notice me. Unfortunately, Sor Eel had other things to occupy his gaze, and my actions only drew the attention of the priests, and the archers. It seems I fell, peppered with arrows, and knocked senseless by Mind Blasts. I had done my best to stop this monstrous deed, and I failed [9].

RYO

I awoke, in the hospital tent, surrounded by an admiring throng of Deezola nuns and wounded soldiers. As I opened my eyes, they applauded.

"Well done, son," said a grizzled veteran on the pallet next to me. Both his arms ended in bandaged stumps. "It's not anyone who earns one of those." He thumped a medal, pinned to my chest. "Gather round lads," he continued, "Here's the boy who won the governor's prize: 'First atop the Cradle.'"

As they continued to congratulate me, I looked out of tent and across the busy camp to the river. There, run aground was the Cradle! Battered and listing to one side, it was slowly being dragged further up the shore by teams of sweating soldiers, stripped to the waist. I groaned, and I reflected that never was there a less-deserving recipient of the Emperor's "Sword and Sickle" than me [10]. Someone mentioned I'd probably get to march in the first rank of Sor Eel's triumphal procession in Glamour, or maybe even ride with the victorious governor in his chariot. I simply groaned again.

RYO

That night I was visited by Princess Anderida, one of the Coders, the red-cloaked government agents sent to thwart my uncle's ambitions. She was furious. For once, their fabled intelligence network failed them, and Sor Eel had managed to lure the Coders away to Sun County on some pointless diplomatic errand [11]. He wasn't sure what their reaction to the Cradle would be, and didn't want them round to find out. By the time they got back to Pavis, my wily uncle made sure his forces were both committed and roused by the prospect of prodigious plunder. With the legions' blood up, reining them in now was sure to provoke a mutiny.

So, Anderida explained, now that Sor Eel had completely outmaneuvered them, the Coders' primary interest would have to be the welfare of the Giant Baby. Looting parties were being organised: the Coders also planned to go aboard and put the child under their protection. Despite all the bad things uncle has said about Anderida and her friends, I found myself trusting her

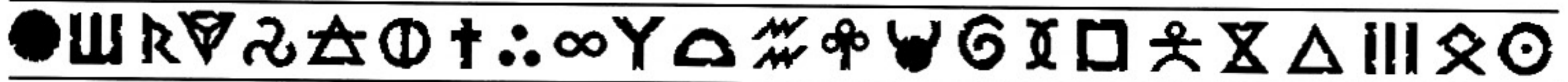
completely, and told her all I could about the insides of the Cradle and its strange cargo. To my amazement, I even found myself frankly discussing all the things I did with the beautiful nymph, Nemolayope! [12]

RYO

As it turned out, the Coders had the last laugh. Later that night, just as the looting parties went aboard, a huge storm made the river rise and refloated the Cradle. My uncle watched his men leap for their lives and his prize float away under his eyes. To add insult to injury, the Cradle even took away the new Lunar bridge [13].

But uncle was not thwarted yet, and planned a last, desperate strike at the Cradle at our seaport of Corflu, near the river's mouth. Sor Eel gambled a lot on this venture, and saw victory as his ticket back to a position of fame and power in the Heartlands. He wasn't going to let the Cradle slip from his grasp lightly!





I was surprised to learn that the Coders in fact volunteered to join the Imperial Wyvern Riders in their aerial assault. And I was shocked to learn they requested I join them, which is why I found myself plucked from my sick-bed early the next morning and strapped to the back of a wyvern flying south. Anderida explained that they needed me to guide them through the Cradle to the child: if the ship was to be taken, they wanted to be at the baby's side.

Despite his horrific visage, Anderida's fearsome companion Nose Ring had apparently already found a place for the giant child in a Teelo Norri children's home, where she could be raised in the Lunar Way [14]. Once the Cradle was taken, he was going to personally escort her back to her new home in the Heartlands.

RYO

Wildday

Sor Eel risked everything on the final attack. I flew in with the fearsome Nose Ring, while Count Julan, leader of the Coders, launched a furious flying assault on the Cradle. Distracted by the Wyvern Rider attack, the defenders didn't notice Nose Ring and I slip off our flying mount and make our to the Giant Baby. Nemolayope was there with the child, singing a liling song to try to calm her as the Cradle was buffeted by the desperate fighting. She cried out in alarm when she saw Nose Ring, and immediately all manner of defenders – magical and mundane – rushed to the baby's aid.

Nose Ring fought them all, a look of perplexed anguish on his face, bawling out that he was here to *save* the baby, not kill her! The wooden chess pieces I saw when Blorn carried me through the Cradle had come alive; these he chopped to matchsticks. He also disabled three human defenders – one of them my old friend Onar – before I convinced Nemolayope that Nose Ring was indeed a friend (or at least

no threat to the baby). She stilled the fighting, and Nose Ring collapsed before her, weeping copiously. I left him, cradled in the nymph's arms.

Above, the battle seemed to be reaching its climax [15]. The cost to both sides seemed horrific, but for every Lunar killed, uncle had several more to throw into the fray. I thought he finally had his victory, until I heard hoarse cheers rise up from the few remaining knots of defenders. A hum resonated through the air, and suddenly the Cradle was swathed in magic. Several fliers were incinerated by a glowing shield that began to surround the ship; meanwhile the Lunars on deck leapt for their lives. With a heavy bump, we were moving again!

We floated downriver, towards the sea. Behind us lay the ruins of Corflu and my uncle's wrecked ambitions. I wasn't sure I wanted to be there when he tried to explain the debacle to his superiors, especially if the Coders were arguing the case for the prosecution!

Nose Ring appeared on deck, arm in arm with Nemolayope – and a Healed Onar Onari! Behind them, the strange Cradle inhabitants danced merrily and the surviving defenders cheered and slapped each other's backs. Down below, the giant child gurgled with delight. "Well, young Jax," said a grinning Onar, "My new friend Nosey and I both swore to the protect the kid, and in our own way we have. We've now decided to finish the job and ride with her down the Pool to the Underworld. What do you say to a quick trip to Hell and back?"

Floriat Fedora:

Jaxarte's manuscript abruptly finishes here, and so end his adventures in Prax. While many of the Cradle defenders left it here, laden with riches as their reward, Jaxarte prudently chose not to return to Pavis and possibly share in his uncle's downfall.

Whatever happened on the last part of the Cradle's epic voyage, several seasons later Nose Ring, Onar Onari and Jaxarte were all seen back in the Lunar Heartlands, though in different places to each other...

Footnotes

[1] I don't know what Sable Rider joke it was Jaxarte heard, but it might well have been this one which I heard of my well-travelled friend, Ekoorb Two-chin: "What has six legs, two heads, and an arsehole on the middle of its back?"

[2] A Yelmatio cultist perhaps? Followers of the Sun God are forbidden by their religion to see horses suffer. This stricture has been largely academic until recent times, for until the Lunars brought them back to Prax, horses were all but extinct there.

[3] Several years earlier, Jaxarte was rescued from a chaos nest by Onar Onari, who had been hired to track down a missing Lunar nun (see "Jaxarte and the Chaos Fiends" in *Tales of the Reaching Moon* #8). As a native Sartarite, Onar wasn't born with the Praxians' ingrained hatred of horses, so his enthusiastic demonstration here was probably done more to impress his new friends. Certainly when Jaxarte last met him, he and his trollish companion had no qualms about riding horses.

[4] Estimates vary, though at the least it was a good 18 meters high, almost the height of the cyclopean walls of Old Pavis.

[5] Jaxarte could have paid closer attention to the ancient sources: the Jrusteli settlement "Robcradle" in fact predated Old Pavis. In the twenty years it existed before being destroyed by the giants in 800 ST, the three cradles that came down the river were all stopped and plundered.

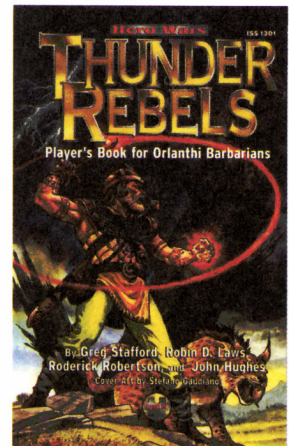
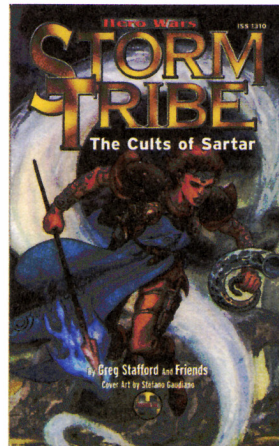
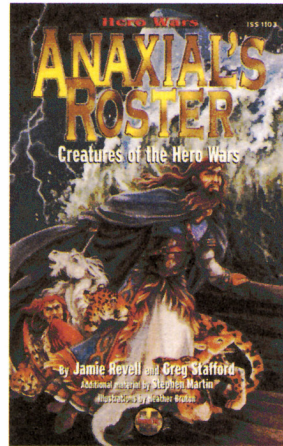
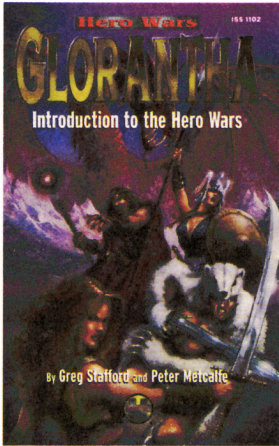
[6] It can be argued that Sor Eel's problems were all of his own making. After Moonbroth (1610), he quarrelled with his second-in-command, and had him sent in disgrace back to Tarsh. That second was none other than Fazzur Wideread, who of course rebounded from this temporary setback and rapidly rose to the rank of Governor-General of Dragon Pass. Fazzur then ensured his ambitious former CO was left to rot as governor of far-off Prax, a troublesome, unimportant backwater with little opportunity

A Word of Thanks

Despite being somewhat extroverted, I often find it difficult to talk about certain parts of my life. This is not because I wish to remain an enigma, nor do I overly value personal privacy, but I do have a distinct fear that what I say will be misinterpreted as bragging. Even so, I want to state publicly that I am a very lucky person. For the past six years I have had the immense pleasure of being part of a wondrous circle of friends collectively referred to as the Reaching Moon Megacorp, aka the "Tales Crew". Under the guiding force of David Hall, we have had the privilege of inflicting our brand of Glorantha on the rest of you. More specifically for me, I got to help produce seven issues of a magazine that I once only aspired to subscribe to. In return for assisting David, he helped introduce me to the large global Gloranthan community of newsgroups, conventions, fanzines, and friends. He helped me publish my Index to Glorantha, encouraged my fledgling graphic design skills, patiently edited my articles, and bought me a pint or two along the way. Without his efforts, the world of Glorantha would probably have just remained on my games shelf gathering dust, and I'd be all the more one-dimensional. In the end, saying thank you seems inadequate for showing my gratitude and respect for the man who truly proves that "doing" is far more important than "talking". This final issue of Tales is so late in being finished because I did not want it to end. Yet, here we finally are.

- Rick Meints

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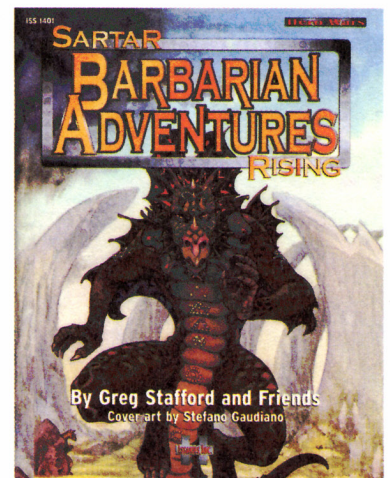
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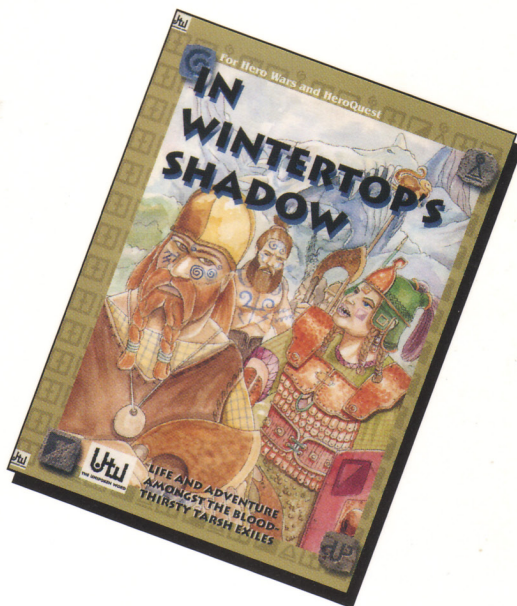
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