

# TRADETALK



## BROOS IN THE EAST

# EDITORIAL

## Redaktionelle

Willkommen bei Tradetalk: "Broos in the East". In Deinen Händen liegt nun ein Wälzer voll von RuneQuest-Qualität, übersetzt aus dem Magazin Free INT - dem Magazin der deutschen RuneQuest-Gesellschaft. In dieser Ausgabe befinden sich Artikel über Götter, Kulte und Religionen, Bruus und Orlanth's Ring, als auch einige gute Szenarien und der innovative Glorantha-Kalender.

Als Erstes möchte ich meinen Dank gegenüber Greg Stafford aussprechen, für die Erschaffung der Welt Glorantha, mit der sich alle Materialien in diesem Heft beschäftigen. Im weiteren möchte ich dem Team von Autoren und Übersetzern meinen Dank aussprechen, die soviel geschrieben und übersetzt haben, ohne deren Hilfe all dies nicht zustande gekommen wäre. Mein besonderer Dank gilt Etna für deren exzellente Illustrationen, ohne die wir kaum solch ein Heft hinbekommen hätten, und Ingo Tschinke für dessen Hilfe und Unterstützung bei diesem Projekt.

Glorantha ist eine wunderbare Umgebung für Fantasy, reich an Mythen, Historie und kontroversen Auseinandersetzungen. Tradetalk bleibt dieser Tradition treu und ich freue mich auf die hitzigen Diskussionen, welche über viele der Artikel ausbrechen werden. Also beteiligt Euch daran, denn auch wenn wir stolz sind auf unsere Arbeit, so heißt dies nicht, daß dies die einzig wahre Sichtweise der Welt Glorantha beinhaltet. Es ist nur eine unter Vielen. Habt Spaß daran, treibt Rollenspiele damit und widersprecht uns!

## Editorial

Welcome to Tradetalk: Broos in the East. In your hand you hold a tome of RuneQuest excellence, translated from the pages of FREE INT, the excellent magazine of the German RuneQuest Society. Within these pages are articles on Gods, Cults and Religion, Broos, and Orlanth's Ring. In addition are great scenarios and an excellent and innovative Gloranthan calendar.

Firstly may I thank Greg Stafford for his creation, the world of Glorantha, in which all the material in this publication is set. Secondly may I briefly thank the team of authors and translators who wrote and translated all the work within. Lastly may I thank Etna for her excellent illustrations, without which we wouldn't have such a vibrant tome, and to Ingo Tschinke for all his help and support during this project.

Glorantha is a wonderful milieu for fantasy, rich in myth, history and controversy. Tradetalk follows this tradition closely and I look forward to many a heated discussion over many of the articles. Feel free, we are proud of this work, but never let it be said that it is the only or true view of Glorantha, just one amongst many. Have fun, role-play and disagree!

Tom Zunder

● III ✕



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## Introduction

This mini-scenario was originally written for a group of beginners, all playing 16 year old villagers. As simple country folk, the characters should be equipped with nothing that cannot be found in a tiny farming village. Thus their weapons should be hammers, hand axes and knives, and their armour leather jerkins and trews with perhaps a thick cloak thrown over the top. It would be helpful for at least one of the group to know the spell "Disruption".

For a reasonable chance of success in the adventure, there should be at least six characters in the group. If there are insufficient players, the GM may allow multiple characters, of which the more successful (i.e. longer surviving) can be used in further play. No-one in the village knows any enchantments beyond good old Spirit Magic, and for this reason the PCs should not be permitted any more powerful spells, dice rolls notwithstanding.

The adventure is set in Glorantha, in East Sartar near the Praxian border. However, with a little modification to the introductory sequence the adventure may be translated to any other location. Although there may be some loss of atmosphere if the adventure does not take place in a Gloranthan setting, the playability should not suffer. The coinage used in the adventure is the Lunar (L), a silver piece which is worth approximately one RuneQuest penny, and the Wheel (W), a gold coin worth 20 Lunars. The same adventure has been played with a more experienced group of characters, and notes and statistics for this tougher version are given at the end of the text. Finally, it should be added that this adventure was originally written for RuneQuest 2 and the plot can be

considerably disrupted by the use of sorcery. Again the GM should not allow the players too much choice in their choice of magic. So much for the introduction: on with the plot.

## Bedside Stories

Fire Season (Summer) is drawing to a close, and everyone is busy bringing in the harvest. Although all hands are needed for this heavy work, one of the community must remain in the village to look after a sick old man and take care of his housework. Of course the unwilling nurse is one of the player characters, who is given the dubious honour of sitting out the scorching days beside his elderly uncle's straw mattress, fanning him with cool air, holding drinks to his quavering lips and listening to his groans and mumbles. Everyone knows that the old boy is heading towards his end and will not live out the next winter, afflicted as he is with a (non-contagious) form of



consumption. The player characters only relief is when his friends (the other PCs) drop by at noon each day with food cooked in the communal field kitchen. The entire group usually spends the midday break at Dorik's house, away from the heat and dust of the harvest.

The whole geriatric business has been extremely tedious for the last three days, but today old Uncle Dorik seems a bit more together than he has been for a long time. After eating his midday meal he does not collapse into his usual stupor, but instead struggles up onto his elbows, props himself against the wall and fixes the PCs with an unusually calculating stare. After a few seconds of thought Uncle Dorik attempts to strike up a conversation, asking the PCs about their ambitions and interests. If the PCs react in a friendly manner Dorik immediately launches into a disjointed but enthusiastic monologue of memories from his youth and the exciting days before he came to the village. This should surprise the PCs, as they will have assumed that Uncle Dorik, like everyone else, had spent his entire life in the village with perhaps a single trip to Jonstown. After as much role-playing as desired, the following story should emerge.

## The Fools' march

Almost thirty seven years ago, before any of the PCs were born, a man called Dorginius was serving in the Lunar occupation force in Sartar. The son of poor farmers, he had been raised in Tarsh, a Lunar-controlled kingdom lying to the north-west of Sartar, and had joined the Imperial forces as a simple soldier. Of course, being a lowly Tarshite he was not permitted to serve in one of the illustrious Legions, but instead joined a "native" support troop as a lightly armed peltast. Even so, his service would entitle him, on the completion of his term, to a parcel of land, a lump-sum of accumulated wages and Citizenship of the Lunar Empire. With such rewards at the end, what did penniless Dorginius care if the standard service period as a support trooper was a substantial twenty years? As the years passed by most of his original comrades disappeared from the ranks as death or crippling injury claimed them. Dorginius, however, always managed to keep his head well and truly down. He

showed no particular enthusiasm or initiative, and never distinguished himself through bravery or feats of arms, although he was involved in numerous minor skirmishes as well as the campaign which eventually conquered Sartar.

After the close of hostilities, Dorginius became a treasury guard in the Army Reserve Administration Headquarters for Occupied Sartar. All should have ended



well, and with seventeen years of service behind him Dorginius had already started to look for that special patch of land, when the Sartarites sprung up behind this Starbrow character and started a rebellion. Dorginius' cohort mustered out, and met a company of rebels near Swenstown. In the ensuing battle the cohort was pushed north-eastwards, eventually being cut off from retreat into Tarsh.

The commander, Cassius Incommodus, decided that his company should withdraw to the north and meet with a group of heavy infantry from Jonstown. The Lunars set out across the trackless country, but were repeatedly ambushed and the survivors eventually driven south by companies of mounted barbarians. The situation had become hopeless. Almost all the men were lame, wounded, and on the edge of starvation. They were trapped deep in rebel territory with no avenue of retreat and a superior enemy force dogging their steps.

In this situation Cassius Incommodus decided to dare the impossible. He

gathered the exhausted survivors of the rout and announced that, as the enemy expected an attempted breakout to the north-west, he intended to march in the opposite direction. He planned to abandon all but the most vital equipment and set out across the Praxian plains to Pavis, a city safely in Lunar hands. He then ordered the immediate construction of a grave for the fallen Lunar officers. Using their fortification skills and trenching equipment, the company laboured to raise a long barrow over their dead.

The soldiery worked all day on the grave, after which the Scouts and Officers completed the work overnight, intending that no-one but they should know the true contents of the barrow. Dorginius did not believe for a moment that Cassius would waste so much time simply to bury the dead, but at the time he was too exhausted to waste energy worrying about it. Instead he focused his attention on the pain of an ugly flesh wound in his left leg. After a last warm meal (the hapless baggage animals) the remainder of the once proud cohort started the long trek eastwards.

When night fell, the company marched onwards in an attempt to put as much distance between themselves and any pursuers. Limping through the darkness, Dorginius reached a decision. He had been around long enough to know that only a fool would try to cross the plains of Prax with a cohort of infantry, and he was damned if he had survived seventeen years in the Legion to let some inexperienced officer lead him to a thirsty death. So at the next rest-stop he used the oldest excuse in the book to slip into the bushes. As soon as he was out of site of his comrades he ran off into the night, ignoring his leg wound and charging without thought or direction until he collapsed exhausted and totally entangled in a thornbush. There he was found by a Sartarite widow who tugged him free of the brambles and took him home. And since the stars, not the Red Moon, guide the course of love, he married his rescuer and Dorginius became Dorik.

For several years Dorik lived in constant fear that the Lunar authorities would come looking for him now that the rebellion had been put down. However, no-one came asking questions and when he finally heard the news that Cassius Incommodus and his

men had never emerged from the Praxian plain, Dorik slowly settled down to his new life. Now and then he would think of his last days with his Unit, or of the remarkable grave which they had built. He remembered a chance dawn meeting with the cohort Paymaster, Pecunius Plectum, wearing an expression like a man who had lost his only son. And he thought of the horses who carried the heavy cases full of documents and gold, the wages for the company. The horses who were slaughtered and eaten later that day.

And then the brave Tarshite realised what this grave must really cover. A good part of the wages were made up of coins. Heavy coins. Too heavy to be carried across the Praxian plains with mounted Barbarians breathing down your neck. Cassius was a conscientious man and would have taken steps to ensure the safety of the regimental records. And he would have known that the barbarians have a superstitious awe of graves and normally leave them well alone. And of course a barrow grave would be much easier to find than a simple hole in the ground, if anyone were to come looking for it after the rebellion. Dorik was certain. The entire monthly payroll of the Cohort had been lying there for almost twenty years, waiting to be dug up. A Peltast's wages were close to 220 Lunars, from which the Paymaster would subtract about 100 for various expenses, leaving 120 Lunars. At the start of the expedition there had been four hundred soldiers in the cohort. 400 lots of 120, that makes..... Neither Dorik nor the player character are in the position to imagine such sums of money!

## Ask Uncle Dorik

- "Why didn't you dig up the money yourself?"

"Well now, I thought about it often enough. But at first I was afraid of getting caught, or of being seen near the barrow. Then it came out that none of the boys would be coming back. When I heard this I spent many a night lying awake and thinking of those piles of money. But your Aunt, the Gods rest her soul, was always against the idea. 'Dorik, you daft old sod', she'd say, 'the Gods let you get away with your scrawny hide intact once already. Do you want to push your luck again? What do

you want with so much money anyway? It only brings trouble!' Well, perhaps she was right. I mean, I joined the Legion to get myself a bit of land and be a farmer. And here I am a farmer today. It all turned out for the best in the long run."



- "Would it be dangerous to open the Barrow?"

"Now I couldn't say exactly. But if the money is really there, then I expect the Scouts would have tried to secure it with a couple of traps. A weakened floor over a pit or somesuch nastiness. And now and then I remember Incommodus' right hand man, one Atrax Immanis. We all knew he was an evil hearted bastard, and that morning he came out of the barrow with a grin like he used to wear after a public flogging. I'd rather not think of what made him so happy. I mean, it's pretty clear that they'd worked out a way to make life difficult for anyone who wanted that gold. On the other hand they only had one night to set things up. The company Chaplain was certainly involved in whatever tricks they were up to, although he never struck me as much of a magician. I should think it'd be possible for a few determined folk to get into the barrow, but it won't be a pushover."

## Now What?

If the PCs doubt the authenticity of Dorik's story he will direct them to look in the pigsty, where he has hidden his "gear". The gear is wrapped in an elderly, ragged cloak which might once have been red, and

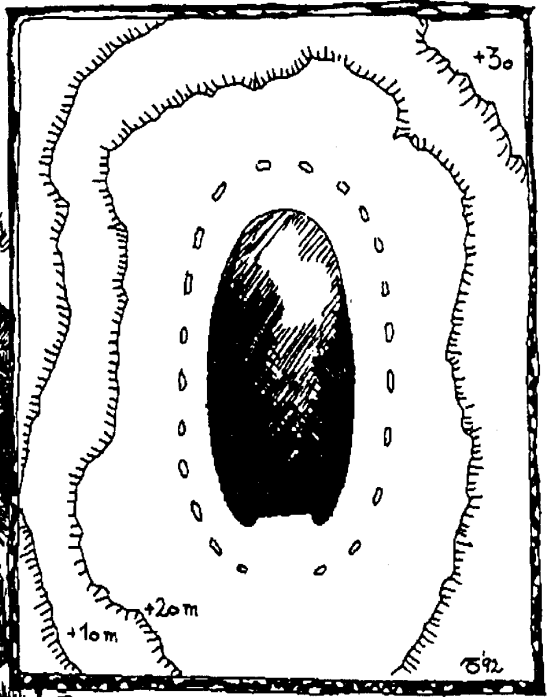
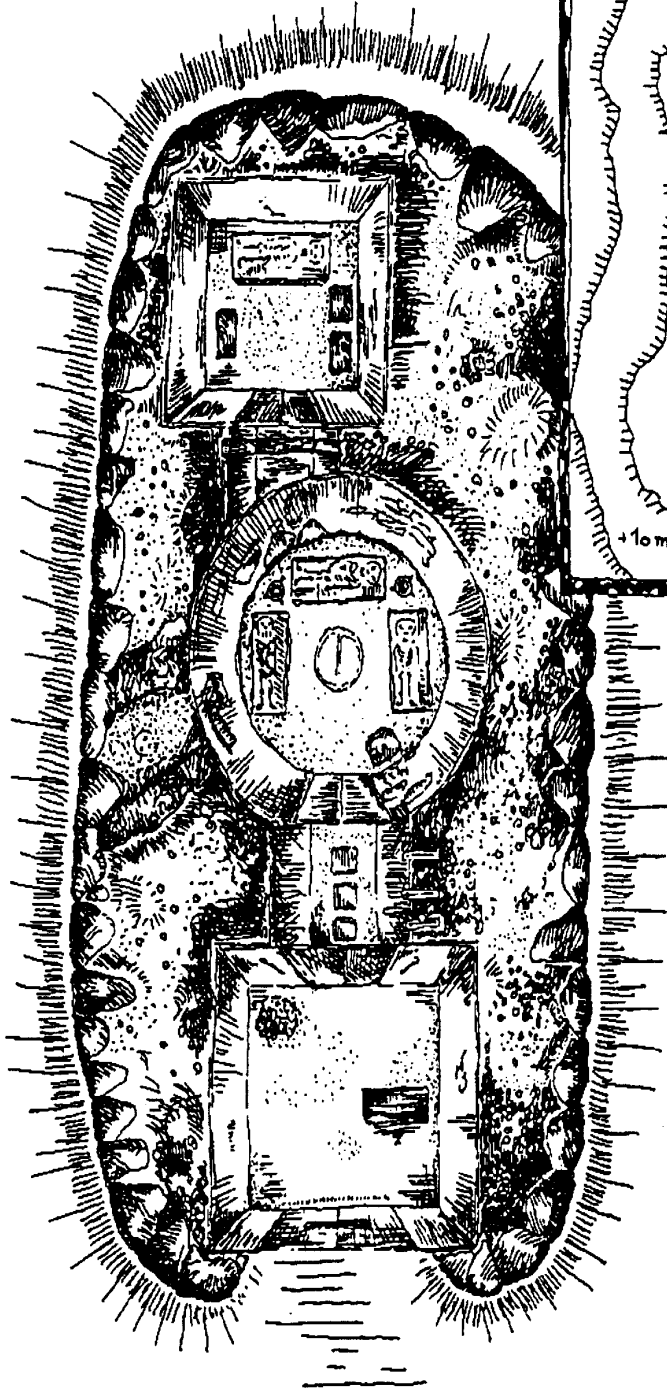
comprises a rotten leather sling, three lead sling bullets, a light infantry sabre (scimitar) with only 8 AP left, and a dented bronze helmet (6 AP). Dorik is able to give a relatively accurate description of the route to the barrow, and with a little luck the PCs

should be able to reach it after a three hour march through the hills south of the village. Of course the PCs' parents will not believe a word of Dorik's story, evidence notwithstanding, and under no circumstances will they let their children go off on some ridiculous treasure hunt in the middle of the harvest. The PCs will need to come up with a more credible reason to be absent, or simply go without permission.

## The Barrow

The barrow lies hidden in a small copse and is thickly overgrown with bushes. Nonetheless the entrance area is still accessible, and it is easy enough to work out that the barrow is a good twenty metres long, nine metres wide and three metres high. A ring of mossy standing stones circles the barrow, each irregularly shaped but about one metre high. Further stones have been leaning against the mound on all sides and have sunk into the earth somewhat. A short slope leads down to the recessed doors, which are half below ground level.

As soon as anyone starts down the ramp and comes within three metres of the narrow, weathered doors, they will hear a voice which seems to come from the walls of the barrow. "Hold, Mortal! He who seeks sport with the ghosts will soon join them! Go back!" The listener will always hear the message in his native tongue. If he continues towards the doors he will be engaged in spiritual combat by the ghost of a soldier, which seems to step out of the barrow wall. If the ghost wins the spirit combat it will possess the body of the PC and use it to defend the door of the barrow against any who would enter. The ghost is unable to move more than four metres away from the door, and if a possessed person is brought outside this range the possessing spirit will leave him.



1 Meter





### **Ghost of a Peltast**

INT 9            POW 10

MP 10

Cannot be hit with physical weapons; bound to it's body which is buried in the wall of the barrow; attacks only through spiritual combat.

### **1) Door**

The door is coarsely made of thick wooden planks. It is barred from within with a horizontal spar and must therefore be broken down. The door has 7 AP and a STR of 19. A PC trying to break it down with a shoulder charge must roll against the door's strength on the resistance table. For each successful roll the character does twice his rolled Damage bonus to the door (minimum damage 1 point if no damage bonus). However, for each unsuccessful attempt the character must roll under CONx3 or take 1d3 damage (armour protects). Of course the door is not only vulnerable to shoulder charges, and a ram improvised from a tree limb will solve the problem in short order.

### **2) Entrance Chamber**

This room is approximately 4m square and 1.7m high. As everywhere in the barrow, the floor is made from stamped clay and the ceiling from roughly finished wood. Although the construction looks quite precarious it is in fact very solid. This should not prevent the GM from having occasional showers of earth fall on the PCs, and letting the rafters emit ominous creaks and groans. The chill air is damp, stale and smells of earth and decay. The light entering through the open door is not sufficient to reveal details in the room, and an artificial light source is needed for further exploration.

Hanging on the right-hand wall is the half-rotted standard of a Peltast Century, it's emblem a silver boar on a red field. A lance, decorated with feathers and animal skulls, hangs on the opposite wall. On either side of the entrance are the skeletal remains of two Barbarian riders which have been unceremoniously left to rot here as a warning. The bodies are wearing mouldering leather armour and lie across

their broken bows and spears. In the north-east corner is a small shrine dedicated to the Seven Mothers, a Lunar cult. A cheap silver drinking bowl and plate (Incommodus' own tableware, 15L) still hold the remains of a food offering, now crumbled to dust. The shrine is consecrated, and thus any theft of the silver is an insult to the Seven Mothers.

Under good light, a section in the middle of the north wall is revealed to be made of wooden boards disguised with daubed clay. This is the access to the next chamber. On the floor beside this disguised door (in the Northwest corner) twinkles a small pile of coins. This is, of course, a trap. The floor in this area is a thin layer of clay which has been spread over weakened wooden boards. These hide a two metre diameter, three metre deep pit. The "pile" of coins is in fact a mound of earth covered with just 40 Lunars. As soon as more than 10 kilos (SIZ 2) additional weight is placed upon the false floor it will collapse, dropping everything on it into the pit below. The floor of the pit is lined with wooden stakes, and anyone falling in will be wounded by 1d3 of these stakes for 1d3+1+1d6 damage each. Hit location should be rolled with 1d10, armour protects normally. This trap will not be sprung by knocking on the floor with a spear or similar object. However, a successful Listen roll (at +15%) will allow the PC to notice the hollow tone of his knocks. PCs who thus suspect that the area is trapped are allowed to attempt a DEX x 2 roll to save themselves from falling when the floor breaks. Don't forget to check the affects on any lamps which are being carried when the PC suddenly plunges 3m down a pit...

### **3) First Passage**

After the clay is knocked off and the boards removed, a narrow (1m wide, 1.80 high) passageway is revealed. This continues for just 3 metres before ending at a second wall of wooden boards. The air in this area is very stuffy and stagnant. Halfway along, a thread is stretched across the passageway. If this is disturbed it will snap and trigger a light crossbow (80% chance to hit, 1d6+2 damage) which is built into the wall at average chest height. The bolt was once poisoned, but the venom has long since lost

its effectiveness. Similarly, the whole trap has a 40% chance of simply not working.

If a lot of noise is made when the boards at the far end of the passage are removed (if they are just shoved through into the space beyond, for example), the inhabitants of Room 4 will be activated and will rise as soon as a living being enters that room.

#### 4) Burial Chamber

This circular room has a diameter of just over four metres and the ceiling is slightly domed (1.70m at the wall, 2.00m in the centre). On entering the room, the PCs will see three slightly-decayed corpses of Lunar Peltasts, each of which lies on a separate wooden bier. Standing between the biers (see plan) are two promising metal-bound cases. A Moon rune (a circle with a central vertical bar) is still visible on the floor in the middle of the room, although the paint is now fading with age. This rune is completely harmless, but paranoid PCs will nevertheless avoid stepping on it.

An area of wall behind the left hand bier can be seen to be a concealed door. A second secret door lies directly opposite the entrance passage, and is much better concealed than the first. PCs will need to make a Search roll to notice it. Alert players should notice that the bodies here are not as fully decayed as the (skeletal) Barbarian corpses in Room 2. A successful First-Aid roll will reveal that these bodies appear to be only a few days dead.

If the PCs have entered the room quietly, or have come in from Passageway 5, the Zombies (as the Peltasts now are) will remain in their deep trance. They will only be awakened if they are directly attacked, the chests are disturbed, or a lot of noise is made in the chamber. If one of these events occurs, they will slowly wake up and then jerk into action, each attacking the nearest character with a rusty sabre.

The speed of the zombies' activation depends on the amount of noise which the PCs make entering the chamber. A cautious, stealthy group will have at least one chance to attack the helpless Zombies before they are fully activated. The PCs may attempt an INTx2 roll to recognise the Zombies' temporary weakness, or the GM may choose to inform them without requesting a roll.

The locked chests (8 AP) contain 560L and 607L plus 15W respectively.

#### 3 Zombies

		<i>Melee</i>		<i>Missile</i>		<i>Pts</i>
STR 15	Move 2	01-04	01-03	R Leg		2/5
CON 15	HP 16	05-08	04-06	L Leg		2/5
SIZ 13	Fat 23	09-11	07-10	Abdom		4/5
INT 6	MP2	12	11-15	Chest		4/6
POW 0		13-15	16-17	R Arm		2/4
DEX 7	Dex SR 4	16-18	18-19	L Arm		2/4
APP 3		19-20	20	Head		4/5
<i>weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>attk/parr</i>		<i>damage</i>		<i>pts</i>
Sabre	8	35/18		1d6+1d4		8
Fist	9	35/-		1d3+1d4		-

**Armour:** Hard leather limbs, bezaunted elsewhere

**Notes:** Sabres are old, blunt and rusted and so do only 1d6 damage instead of 1d6+2.

Zombies must be cut to pieces to be destroyed.

Loss of all points in Abdomen makes legs useless.

Loss of all points in chest makes all limbs useless.

Loss of all points in head destroys zombie.

Impaling weapons, such as arrows, do only one point of damage (2 points for a special success) after reductions for armour.

#### 5. Secret Passageway.

A secret passageway begins behind one of the stone slabs which line the outside of the barrow and leads into room 4. A combined strength of at least 20 is needed to topple this stone, so two characters must work at the task together. Alternatively, the slab can be excavated in 15 minutes by a single PC using a shovel. The passageway itself curves slightly to the left and is about 3 metres long. It is only about a half a metre in diameter, so the PCs will have to crawl or wriggle through it. If a lamp is used, the PCs will notice a white stone which protrudes slightly from the floor about halfway down the passage. This is actually the roof of a skull which has been buried in this position and contains a ghost. This spirit attacks all living things which crawl over it and which are not at least Initiate level in a Lunar or Solar cult.

### Ghost of an Initiate

INT 12

POW 19

MP 19

This ghost is able to move up to 10 metres away from its skull, but it will only move so far to prevent someone from destroying the skull with missile attacks etc. Its usual tactics are to engage its victim in Spirit Combat, possess the victim's body and then use it to defend the passageway physically. The ghost surrenders possession if the possessed body is taken more than 10 metres away from the skull, or if somebody tries to crawl into the passageway while the possessed is fighting outside.

This secret passageway was built by the Scouts to allow them to leave the barrow safely, and to facilitate access for later collection of the gold.

### 6. Second passage.

This passageway is constructed exactly like the first (see section 3) and also contains a trap at the end. When any weight is placed on the floorboards of the next room, a heavy weight is dropped onto a jar of acid (POT 5) which is hidden in the ceiling. This acid pours through three small holes in the ceiling to attack the head of the person triggering the trap, splashing over the last 1.5m of the corridor as well. This trap can be deliberately triggered if the floor board is firmly probed with a wooden stake, or thwarted if the three holes are spotted and well blocked. (The acid will eat through almost anything eventually, and needs ten minutes to drain into the earth floor.)

### 7. Officer's Tomb

This is a 3 by 3 metre room with a 2 metre high ceiling. A figure is stretched out on a roughly built bier which lies with one long side facing the door and the other abutting the north wall. Hanging on the walls are three hastily written scrolls which, in New Pelorian, wish the soul of the deceased a fair journey to the land of the Dead. The skeleton on the bier is wearing bezainted armour and is wrapped in its old red cloak with its unsheathed sabre across its chest and a buckler hanging from its belt. This is the fallen Centurion, Nixus Minimax, whose

corpse still bears four silver armrings (30L each) as a mark of valour. Although the soul of this doughty warrior is long since departed, his skeleton still guards its final resting place, and the heavy cases which are built into the bier.

### Centurion's Skeleton

		Melee	Missile		Pts
STR 11	Move 3	01-04	01-03	R Leg	4/1
SIZ 13	MP1	05-08	04-06	L Leg	4/1
DEX 11	Dex SR 3	09-11	07-10	Abdom	4/1
		12	11-15	Chest	4/1
		13-15	16-17	R Arm	4/1
		16-18	18-19	L Arm	4/1
		19-20	20	Head	4/1
weapon	SR	atk/parr	damage		pts
Sabre	7	55/55	1d6+2+1d4		8
Buckler	7	55/55	1d4+1d4		8

**Armour:** Bezainted

**Skills:** Dodge 55%

**Notes:** Like the Zombies, must be cut to pieces to be destroyed. Unlike the Zombies, the skeleton is destroyed if the chest is reduced to 0 points.

Takes no damage from stabbing weapons, except if a critical or special success is rolled.

This horror may also be successfully dealt with through the spell "Disruption", as it has only one magic point with which to resist. Wise players will blast the skeleton with spells and watch it fall to bits. If the players want to fight the skeleton physically, they will do well to lure it into room 4 where it can be more easily surrounded. This is still a fairly risky exercise, as the skeleton never tires

The bier covers two heavy stone slabs which may be inched aside with not a little effort. Two locked chests (9 AP) will then be revealed. One box contains the payroll and similar administrative documents of the company. The other contains bundles of rectangular papers, all of which state;

*Boldhome,*

*In the name of the Reaching Moon we pledge to pay the bearer 1 century of lunars upon presentation.*

*Gaius Arriptom*

Characters who succeed in an Evaluate roll will realise that they are now in possession of (now invalid) military scrip with a face value of 40870 Lunars.

## Further Developments

Several plot lines could be developed from this adventure. For example, PCs who do not guard their tongues about the source of their new-found riches may find themselves in hot water with the Lunar Administration. Or perhaps another Peltast, younger than Dorik, survived the journey into Prax and now shows up in the village, accompanied by his sons, and claiming his share (i.e. all) of the loot.

## The Adventure for more experienced groups.

The groundplan of the Barrow remains the same, but it is now the relic of an unsuccessful Troll expedition force from the Dagori Inkarth. Details differ as follows:

**Room 1.** An additional ghost lurks here, INT 11, MP 14, POW 14; both were Troll warriors.

**Room 2.** The shrine is dedicated to Zorak Zoran, the savage Troll war god. The standard is made from human skin and shows a black Death rune (☞) on a red field.

**Room 3.** With considerable effort, the wooden wall has been made airtight. When it is breached, a wall of invisible, unbreathable gas floods over the PCs. This gas has been formed by the decay of special plants and is slightly heavier than air. It will take nine rounds for this gas to sink, flowing into the pit trap in room 2 and forming a thin layer across the floor. During these nine rounds standard suffocation rules should be applied. After this period, the gas will be pooled in the pit trap, and anyone inside the pit is effectively "underwater". Furthermore, rapid movements in rooms 2 or 3 will stir the gas up, causing 1 point of damage to any PC who fails a CONx6 roll.

The crossbow only has a 20% chance of malfunctioning.

**Room 4.** The inhabitants of this room are three dark troll skeletons. They are not nearly as sleepy as the Zombies were. The sign on the floor is, of course, a Darkness rune (I).

**Room 5.** This room is identical.

**Room 6.** The acid is POT 8.

**Room 7.** Instead of the skeleton, the Mummy of a Zorak Zoran warlord waits here. The chests contain a further 600L and several scrolls with obscure Ritual Magic spells (Mummy creation?) as determined by the GM. The scrolls on the walls are written in Darktongue.

### Three Dark Troll Skeletons

(Room 4)

		Melee		Missile		Pts
STR 10	Move 3	01-04	01-03	R Leg		4/1
SIZ 17	MP 2	05-08	04-06	L Leg		4/1
DEX 11	Dex SR 3	09-11	07-10	Abdom		4/1
		12	11-15	Chest		4/1
		13-15	16-17	R Arm		4/1
		16-18	18-19	L Arm		4/1
		19-20	20	Head		4/1
<i>weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>atk/parr</i>		<i>damage</i>		<i>pts</i>
Mace	6	55/55		1d8+1d4		6
Shield	7	55/55		1d6+1d4		12
<b>Armour:</b> Bezainted						
<b>Skills:</b> Dodge 55%						

### Mummy of a Deathlord

(Room 7)

		Melee		Missile		Pts
STR 34	Move 2	01-04	01-03	R Leg		4/6
CON 20	HP 20	05-08	04-06	L Leg		4/6
SIZ 19	Fat 49	09-11	07-10	Abdom		4/6
INT 13	MP 8	12	11-15	Chest		9/7
DEX 7	Dex SR 4	13-15	16-17	R Arm		4/5
		16-18	18-19	L Arm		4/5
APP 1		19-20	20	Head		9/6
<i>weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>atk/parr</i>		<i>damage</i>		<i>pts</i>
Mace	7	75/75		1d8+2d6		6
Fist	8	50/-		1d6+2d6		-
<b>Armour</b> Ringmail made from magically hardened lead on head and chest. Trolls will pay up to four times standard price for this armour. Beneath the armour the mummy has 1 point skin and 3 points of bandages and resin.						
<b>Magic:</b> Divine Magic: Fear, Crush						
<b>Notes:</b> The Death Lord will cast his Fear spell on the most powerful character, magician or torch bearer (in this order of priority) and then cast Crush on his mace (+10% to hit, +1d4 damage). Mummies are very flammable and individual locations may be set alight with an Ignite spell.						



# Broos! †

by Ingo Tschinke  
translated by Ralf Engels and Harald Wagener  
illustrated by Etna Radl

## Jonstown Compendium # 235.677

*Gustron the widetravelled sages Compendium of the collected knowledge about the Broo folk. Gathered for Lyris Goodspeech, Earl of the City of Jonstown, Priest of Issaries and Clans Chieftain of the Arsgol clans of the tribe of Malani.*

*This document was created by me, Gustron the widetravelled sage, under the greatest difficulties. For the investigation of these horrible creatures and the collecting of information, I have been travelling to Prax, Generts Wastes, and the Lunar Empire, faced greatest dangers and risked my own life to allow the Forces of Orlanth and his worshippers to fight against these creatures by using this knowledge so the forces of Chaos are diminished and destroyed.*

*-Gustron*

## Introduction

"Scourge of mankind and essence of Chaos" is a widely used phrase for describing the Broo breed, whose actions miss any logic or motivation. In many eyes they are an uncontrollable force with no society or structure.

Unfortunately, this is only true for a small minority of the Broo. Broo are the physical embodiment of destruction, ruin, depravity and chaos. Although they have been hunted for centuries and many have tried to eradicate, they have proved to be one of the most resistant and hardy races of Genertela. No other being lives in regions as unwelcoming and yet grows and prospers nonetheless. This document investigates and explains the reasons why.

## Mythos and History

My mythological research trace the origins of the Broo back to the gods Ragnaglar and Thed. Accordingly their fate is

irrevocably connected with those gods. Thed, Mother of Broo, and Ragnaglar, God of Disorder parented the Broo after Ragnaglar raped Thed. The birth was so agonising for Thed that she swore to never bear children again. So the first of the Broo stayed alone, fertile and powerful, but without the possibility of mating and



creating offspring.

The first Broo was born in the Golden Age, during the deceptive peace of Yelm's rule. Hykim, Animal Father asked his children, the animals, to help the Broo and mate with it. Ragnaglar gave it the ability to mate with other races, and soon there were bison, buffalo, eagle, and goat-Broo. All Broo remained closely tied to their primal mother, Thed. This way, the Broo bred and prospered, but they were only one among many races in the Golden Age.

When the Broo had grown in numbers, their god Ragnaglar made the goddess of fertility Malia his mistress. Malia learned she was more powerful if the races of the world feared her. So she became the Goddess of Plagues in the Storm Age and spread dread and terror. The Broo eagerly learned the new abilities of Malia and gave their best to spread illnesses and plagues among the other races. Malia thanked them by granting them immunity to all illnesses and diseases.

The Broo's life was shaped by their gods resentment, jealousy and greed. Ragnaglar was driven to honourless and disgraceful action against his blood relative, The Storm Bull. But despite the vituperations of other gods, Ragnaglar, Thed and Malia (later known as The Unholy Trio) knew no limit. They killed Rashoran, the last born of the gods and stole his Secret. Using the stolen knowledge and driven by an insatiable greed for power they performed a rite so the Devil could enter the mundane plane of Glorantha.

Despite all the wrong that the Broos had done before this event, the entry of the Devil changed the Broos forever, binding them to chaos for ever. Before they had not been any more evil than the wild trolls or the untamed sylphs. Being slaves of

Wakboth, the Devil, the Unholy Trio taught their children torture, rape, slaughter and other revolting skills. These the Broos learnt with delight and used to glorify their gods.

The Broos were now the Devil's Slaves, and they became the leaders and troops of the armies of chaos.

When the Devil tried to destroy the world, and the Spike imploded, the Broo armies looted and raped the world. They ate man, aldrya and troll, fathering hideous abominations. As the world spiralled towards destruction the Broos fought against the sapient races in the I Fought, We Won battle, and lost.

The remaining sane gods led by Arachne Solara forged the Great Compromise, Orlanth restored Yelm

to the sky and thus Time began. The Compromise kept further chaos from the world, but could not banish those tainted by it. Broos were scattered about the whole of Glorantha. Ragnaglar the Insane was slain in the Chaos Wars, Kyger Litor skinned Thed and Wakboth was crushed beneath the Block.

Since Time began, Thed has been worshipped only by the Broos, but they also worship Malia. Broos with a social structure also worship demons, spirits, as well as other chaos deities.

In the First Age, there are no great events associated with the Broos, save their endless raping and looting. This extends Not until the rise of Gbaji do the hordes of Broos come under the command of the Deceiver and in the wars with Arkat Humaktson, tens of thousands of Broos supported the chaos god.

In the Second Age the Broos fought with and against the Empire of the Wyrms taking advantage of the weaknesses of all and any. The soulless Godlearners awoke the



chaos in Dorastor, which has been the realm of the undying Broo Ralzakark ever since.

## **Subspecies and distribution**

Two types of Broo exist, which differ in culture and ways of life. On one hand there are the feral Broo, on the other the wild Broo. Since Broo naturally differ in appearance, there is no physical similarity. Difference is mostly found in lifestyle and reproduction. This classification is a simplification of facts, because the subtypes can mingle, a group of feral Broo could become a tribe under some chaotic leader, a tribe may collapse into a feral life.

## **Feral Broo**

This Broo have no society, living only by emotions and instincts. They wander through scarcely populated lands alone or in small bands. Again and again they come upon wild and domestic animals and use their horrible fertility to infect and impregnate them. Many weeks later, the surviving animals give birth to dozen or even hundreds of small Broo larvae. Those, immediately after they see the sun, try to escape their place of birth and crawl into the wilderness.

The Broo who succeed live as their begetters and always are on the trail of edible things the possibilities of reproduction. On rare occasions, this type of Broo bands with other chaos beings. They know little of magic, culture or history and they have no real language. For this reason, they are nothing more than intelligent monsters.

They are equipped with items they can build themselves, for instance wooden clubs or pointed sticks. Should they be forced to fight, they won't avoid it, but it is also worth trying to scare them away by loud shouting or magical powers.

## **Broo tribes**

The wild Broo are very different indeed. They have a rudimentary social structure with leaders and shamans, contacts to their gods, traditions and languages. This type of Broo inhabits inhospitable areas where a greater population of their type rules the environment. Good examples are large swamps or bogs, mountain ranges,

deserts, and barren lands. Most of the wild Broo live in clanlike structures, but in difference to human clans, kinship is of no importance.

## **Habitats**

Broos live in rough lands all over Genertela. Their three main habitats are swamps, wastelands and mountains.

Swamp Broo can be found in almost every bog, moor or marsh of Glorantha, making habitation for any other kind most difficult. The bad reputation of these places as being dangerous and inhospitable is mainly based on the Broo living there.

The infamous Krjalki Bog is infested with Broo and other creatures. Other Swamps with a great population of Broo are the Dillis Swamp in Fronela, the Sodal Marsh of Ralios, the New Marsh and the Trachodon Marsh of Maniria. Oddly is, there are only few Broo in Delekti's Marsh in Dragon Pass.

Mountain Broo can be found more often than not in the Rockwood Mountains, in the widely known Tunnelled Hills, and everywhere they are not driven away by curt Mostali or Uz. They live in caves hunting and raiding in the mountain valleys below. Living in mountainous regions does not seem to be preferred by the Broos, whether this is due to climate or the powerful Elder Races is not clear. Due to this mountain Broos are often the first to swarm over a land in times of trouble or disorder.

The Broos of Genertela's deserts and wastelands are the most numerous and scattered of their kind. They live in Prax, Pent and other similar areas. These Broos are nomads and go where they can to create the most mayhem and destruction. Often, they gather in small groups and raid settled human steads and villages. On the Wastes and in Pent, Broos and nomads fight an endless war of murder and revenge.

## **Way of Life**

Primarily, Broo live by hunting and raiding. They take what they can get. It conforms with their view of the world to rob, murder and pillage. For them life is pain and torture. They are convinced their gods want to see them hate and suffer. They do not know of a Meaning of Life, only of destruction. They long for the emptiness of chaos. Rebirth they see as the curse of life, and they hate

the force of life in every creature, even in themselves. To fill life with anger and hate is a Broo's sole goal. Empathy, sympathy or love are unknown to the Broo.

It is however a grave mistake to think Broo enjoy the suffering they inflict on others and this is their motivation. For them, pain and suffering are natural; they do not care if anybody suffers due to their acts. They think it is better that others suffer than them. Their principle is abuse or be abused. Chaos is a possibility for a Broo to gain power - it is very important to be in charge of more people in the tribe than there are people in charge of them.

Broos living in tribes and bands develop their chaotic abilities, they are greater skilled in their understanding of their inherent powers. For this reason tribal Broo are one of the deadliest menace presented by Broo kind. Broo society is selfish, venal and destructive, but it still imparts great benefits.

The same way the worshippers of Urox or Zorak Zorani see Broo as absolute evil, Broos perceive and recognise those cultists as their quintessential foe. Broos take great care in singling out and destroying Uroxi, Zorak Zorani and other acolytes dedicated to destroying Chaos.

Broo do not produce anything, they are bound on vandalism and destruction. If a Broo gets hold of a precious item, its first instinct is to destroy or spoil it. Broos have no use for money, they think it is fun to infect it with plagues. As long as a Broo has no use for an item, its fate is sealed. While travelling across the country, Broos defecate onto flowers, urinate on seedlings and burn and raze woods. Broos recognise the fertility of Aldryami and despise it as the stuff that makes their life a misery. They delight in leaving their chaotic excrement in forests and glades, to kill the plants or warp them into chaotic forms.

## Chaotic Features

Many Broos possess one or more chaotic feature, either from birth or as a corrupt pact with a chaos demon. I have seen Broo with clearly visible scales or thickly encrusted skin, and once I observed a Broo that was able to reflect magic and had a mirror-like skin. Not always are chaotic features sources of power, since chaos can lead to severe physical deformities which can end a being's life. Due to their reproduction and chaotic features, you can be sure that no two Broos will be similar, let alone the same..

## Social Structures

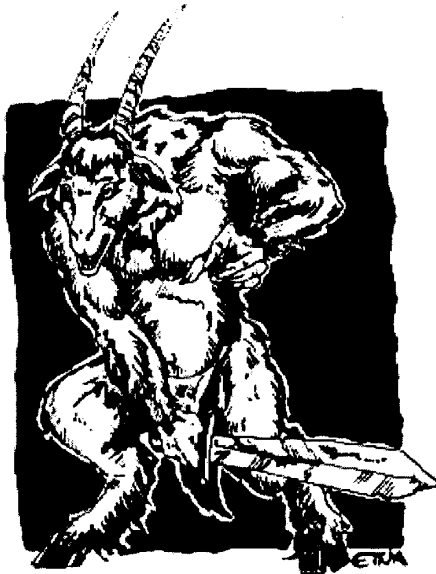
Tribal Broo society is structured by a sort of pecking order similar to that observed with chicken. Only the strongest and most brutal Broo has a chance to become a tribal leader. The social structures of a tribe are based upon fear, greed and egoism. Broos are driven by emotions and those emotions are destructive. For a Broo the basic instincts are, in order of importance;

- Surviving
- Breeding
- Killing
- Spreading disease.

The relationship between two Broos is always formed by envy and hate, Broos always try to suppress others by force.

However, I could, much to my own astonishment, observe that Broo leaders do care for their subordinates. A chicken does not care if the lowest chicken gets pecked to death. Broo are intelligent enough to keep the lowest Broo alive, even a moron can be of some use. Broos therefore live in a cruel parody of clan life, with a cruel Chief who protects his subjects only as long as they are of use to him.

My colleagues in Nochet believe that Broos live by the principle of help in exchange for respect.





These terms have other meanings than we would normally think. In Broo language help is the sound a Broo larva makes when it feels hunger for the first time after devouring its host body. So help means that the leader feeds and commands his subordinates.



Respect equals absolute obedience of a slave to its master. Only when lead by a strong hand, is a Broo is willing to show respect. Every slave is allowed to challenge its master for a fight to the death in order to take the master's position. If a tribe or clan gets a new leader, he usually is challenged three times. If he kills all opponents, the slaves' desire for resistance vanishes. A master may keeps his position until crippled or old, but he never dies a natural death.

Most Chieftains keep their tribe or clan in constant battle and war, this way the Broos have no time to challenge the leadership. Broos have been led by females, and if the fear and strength is great enough, such a female Broo may command male Broo. Broo females, however, seem to prefer to travel alone or in the company of each other, and most are raped and defiled by male Broo when young.

## **The Language of the Broos**

According to the findings of some well-known Grey Sages all the different Broo dialects originate with an earlier colloquial language in the Golden Age that Ragnaglar taught their children. But as a result of the wide dissemination of the Broos across the whole of Genertela and the influences of both other languages and the various "host creatures" the vocabulary and pronunciation of this (primal) Broo language has been modified and changed. Nevertheless, testimony of Lunar emissaries indicates that all feral Broos, even when living separated by great distances, are able to communicate with each other through grunting and sign language.

The destructive nature of the Broos prevents the existence of a written form of their language, and the spoken version of

the Broo language consists of a mixture of syllables and words in combination with different intonations, gestures and grunts, lacking any logical coherence. Yet, if one credits the studies of Irippi Ontor sages, this language is one of the most complicated languages in the whole of Genertela. They claim that through the influence of Chaos and the resulting madness of the Broos any linguistic structure or logical basis of their language has been destroyed. Some scholars, being thwarted daily in their research by contradictory results, have already torn their beards in their futile attempts to find an underlying structure in the Broo language.

Despite all this Broos are quite capable of learning and speaking human languages. The tribal shaman, his assistants and the tribal chieftain usually learn the local human language to communicate with creatures of Chaos and their human allies who, like Ogres, lurk within human society. The shaman usually knows an additional chaotic language, with the language of the Scorpion-men apparently favoured.

## **Gestation and Sexual Habits**

The random appearance of the Broos betrays their close connection to Chaos. Many Broos possess hooves for hands and have strange heads, i.e. of goats, sheep, antelopes or horses. There have also been reports of rhinoceros-Broos or bison-Broos, though there are few Broos descended from large carnivorous animals like lions or tigers (there is however an unsubstantiated rumour of an allosaurus-Broo).

Male Broos possess the ability to produce offspring with every other creature approximately their size, regardless of being male or female, and thus need only

few or no female Broos for their procreation (only 15% of the Broo population are females). Because of their astonishing fertility Broos are wantonly lecherous, and for obvious reasons they have no sexual and very few social taboos. If a Broo experiences sexual hunger, he grabs the nearest person or creature and violently satisfies himself on it without any moral scruples or feeling of shame.

Unless already pregnant, the impregnation by a Broo results for unknown reasons in the development of a Broo foetus, which is able to survive within every creature. This parasitic being feeds on and very often causes the death of its "host creature". This pregnancy lasts for about 20 weeks, after which the larva simply bursts from the abdomen of its "host" causing considerable damage which is only healable by magic.

Broos need no weaning as they are able to eat and digest meat directly after birth, and earlier. A Broo larvae eats their way out of their "host".

Immediately after birth a Broo has to fight for its survival, because only by stealth or strength is it possible for the Broo to acquire enough meat. This applies especially to Broos raised in a tribe, as the older Broos will not feed the offspring. Some Broo starve, but the survivors are hardy and strong. A month after birth a Broo is able to walk and after 5 years he reaches maturity. After three years the average Broo possesses all of the linguistic knowledge of his peers (which doesn't amount to much), and this knowledge usually does not increase afterwards.

My own observations indicate some Broo tribes keep herds of goats or sheep for breeding purposes. Some Lhankor Mhy sages claim that Broos also keep humans captive for this purpose, though their Irippi Ontor counterparts stress the fact that this is far less common than generally alleged.

## **Clothing, Dwellings and Food**

Broos do not produce for themselves clothing or armour, partly because they need no protection against the elements due to their heavy body hair. They only clothe themselves in a hodgepodge of clothing or pieces of armour they have either stolen, pillaged or rarely have been provided with (by e.g. the Lunar Empire).

These things are often highly symbolically important for Broos, as they display their proficiency in stealing and pillaging.

Broos do not build, and they never bother about shelter against rain or wind. Instead, they use caves or take over ruins built by other races, where they occasionally set up camp for longer periods of time. They don't possess tents, houses or similar structures, and therefore there are no villages or towns that have been built by Broos. Even in Dorastor the Broos squat in the remains of other people's buildings.

Broos are known to be vicious man-eaters, and they feed on any type of meat available to them. Like all chaotic creatures they eat any kind of sentient being, disdaining not even their own kind. If possible, though, they avoid eating other chaotic creatures, unless in times of great need. The reason for this particular behaviour is unknown, but members of the Wild Sages faction at the Lhankor Mhy temple at Nochet presume the Broos just want to avoid the dangerous fight with these creatures.

## **Customs**

According to Kevinus Hasallus, Irippi Ontor scholar at Raibanth University, the Broos have some peculiar and highly symbolic practices, apart from their religious worship ceremonies. His studies indicate that every tribe enacts an annual "death" ceremony for the tribe, where the weakest member of the tribe is forced into the middle of a circle formed by the other tribe members. Then these members slaughter the victim and tear it to shreds. This ceremonial victim is supposed to symbolise the tribe or clan. Hasallus concludes that this annual symbolic destruction or annihilation of the tribe using a scapegoat is meant to prevent an actual destruction.

Another example of practised symbolism supplied by Hasallus is the custom that Broo hunters or warriors carry a part of their preferred game with them (like a jawbone, antler, hoof etc.). This is supposed to convey special success in hunting or killing said game. The same applies to the custom of head-hunting, whereby a Broo displays in the number of scalps at his belt his standing as a warrior. Broos cut off the head of a slain enemy and tie it with the hair to their belts. There the head is left to rot until it falls off, and afterwards only the scalp

remains at the belt. Usually a Broo carries at least one of these heads (Hasallus then strongly advises against confusing these heads with the dreadful severed heads of the Tien Atyar cult).

## **Cults and Religious Affiliations**

Their origin and subsequent history link the Broos inseparably with Thed and Malia, vile goddesses shunned by all right-thinking folk. All Broos are automatically lay members of Malia and Primal Chaos in addition to any cults they later join. All male Broos are at least lay members of Thed, while female Broos are excluded from worshipping her because she is said to be a very jealous goddess and scorns her female children. Thus females and the occasional male disgruntled by such male favouritism turn mostly to Malia for their spiritual needs, and among her worshippers there is a discernible tendency to form lasting relationships. Most Broos despise any relationships, relying on the camaraderie of the tribe and increasing their numbers by incubating victims.

## **Religious Ceremonies**

The religious ceremonies of the Broos are aptly described by the term "bloodbath". The Broos are aware that their gods delight in suffering and pain, and to satisfy their gods and avert their painful wrath from the tribe they let others suffer in these ceremonies.

The Thed shaman orders the tribe to supply him with the necessary "gifts" for the ceremony, i. e. sacrifices and victims. The shaman prepares and sanctifies the site for the ceremony and summons helpful spirits. When the tribe has delivered the demanded gifts the shaman immediately begins to prepare the victims with torture and pain for the ritual. At the start of the ritual half of the victims are slaughtered and consumed by the tribe, their blood being used to mark the spot where the shaman will summon the "chaosvoid", into which another part of the victims are thrown. Here the symbolism described by Hasallus again surfaces, because in this sacrifice the Broos equate the victory against their foes with the

ultimate victory of Primal Chaos over this world.

This gruesome ceremony is usually followed by a summoning of the goddesses Malia and Thed, who will grant divine spells to their worshippers if they are supplied with an ample amount of sacrificed victims on whose souls they can prey. The worship concludes with the infection of the last captive in honour of Malia who is released in the hope that he will spread the diseases to surrounding human settlements.

In his treatise on the ceremonies and customs of the Broos Hasallus especially mentions the fact that, apart from the truly chaos infested areas like Dorastor and the Footprint, even small temples to Malia and Thed are rare, as the relatively low number of tribal members (rarely more than thirty) makes it impossible for a tribal shaman to maintain a worship site larger than a shrine.

## **Disease and Infection**

Because of their close ties to Malia, goddess of disease, Broos are immune to every disease and poison, and instead actively try to spread diseases in service to their vile mistress. On average one out of two Broos carry one or more diseases, and all of its possessions and previously touched items are possible sources of infection. Even if a particular Broo does not carry any major disease, anyone getting in contact with said Broo, his blood or possessions is often exposed to a nasty variety of diarrhoea.

## **Relations with other Races**

### **Chaotics**

Relations and co-operation between the different chaotic races are rare, unless enforced by a group in a position of power. Only in chaos dominated areas like Snake Pipe Hollow, Dorastor and the Tunnelled Hills do these hierarchical power structures exist on a more or less permanent basis. In other areas the nomadic Broos are seldom subjected to the rule of another, more powerful group or able to dominate other groups. Relations are always rife with intrigue, hate, envy and aggression.

Apart from the cults of Primal Chaos, Thed and Malia there are few other chaos cults where Broos form the majority of the cult's worshippers, the cults of Tien Atyar and Pocharngo being the most prominent examples. Thus even in religious matters the Broos remain apart. Nevertheless there are a some exceptional examples where Broos have joined non-chaotic cults without a strict anti-chaotic bias, such as ; Chalana Arroy, Humakt and others. Thredbo the Wanderer, a wild sage, has reported much of the famous White Healer of the Rockwood Mts., a Broo who became legendary even during its lifetime because of it's perfect peacefulness.

## Lunar Empire

The Lunar Empire has always been accused by its opponents to make common cause with the evil of Chaos. Some sages qualify this accusation with the rather more accurate statement that the Empire uses the forces of Chaos and Entropy for its own twisted ends, as evidenced, e.g., by the Crimson Bat. As another facet to this part of the lunar way, there are persistent rumours that part of the Imperial Army consists of Broos.

According to Griflet Asread, scholar at the Lhankor Mhy temple in Jansholm, there is at least one regiment of light infantry made up exclusively of Broos and trained according to lunar military regulations. Asread notes that the lunar officers have adopted the rules of the tribal social hierarchy to discipline the Broos, employing severe measures to receive the necessary "respect". Without this barbaric method the Broos would be uncontrollable and the

officers would be in danger of being eaten by their unruly soldiers. Another Broo-regiment is rumoured to be part of the Imperial Bodyguard, but this rumour is as yet as unsubstantiated as that of the Vampire Legion said to exist somewhere in the Empire.

Here endeth the tome, no doubt due to the assassination of the author by Gorox Broo Slayer, for his association with the forces of evil.

- I

### Sources:

"The Broos" by Greg Stafford and Steve Perrin, in Borderlands, 1982.

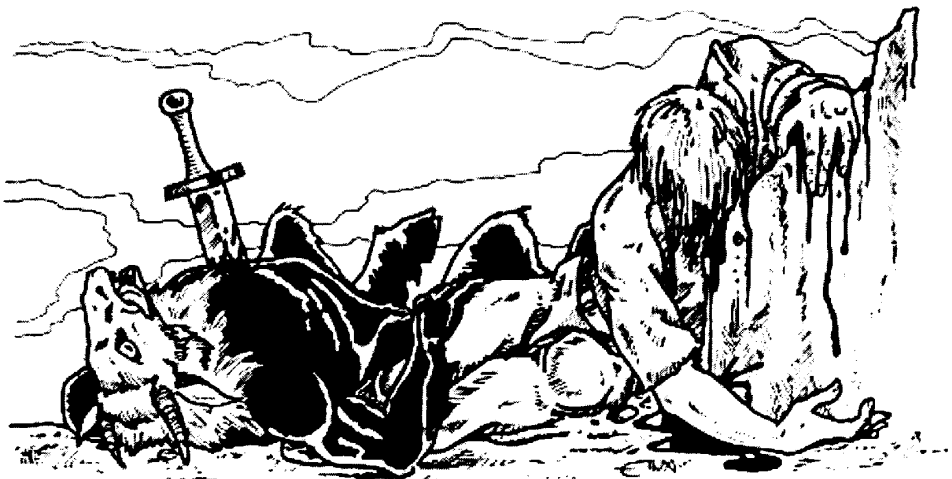
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"Disease in Glorantha" by Oliver Dickinson, in Different Worlds No. 46, 1987.

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"Broos Society" by Mark Holsworth and David Hall, Tales of the Reaching Moon No. 8, 1992.

(! The articles about Thed and Malia, and especially the one about Diseases and infection in the new supplement Lords of Terror, 1995, contain new information about some of the aspects dealt with above !)



# Spirits of Glorantha



Tom Zunder

by Tom Zunder

Spirits, be they simple magic spirits or ghosts are often bland and undeveloped in many games of RuneQuest. This devalues the true enjoyment of spirits as dramatic devices. One of the strongest characters in the Elric fiction of Michael Moorcock turns out to be the spirit Stormbringer, and we can gain a lot from viewing spirits in a similar light. A character and personality with a previous life history, should be developed for all spirits. Spirits talk to those they possess; bestial spirits snarl and growl; mad spirits gibber and rant; a passion spirit should have character.

With character, a spirit becomes an active persona. By making interaction with a simple spirit of intellect a role playing experience, we make our role playing richer and more involved. This article presents a new group of possible spirit types, each one with the potential to develop into rounded and interesting characters in your game.

## Spirit of Compassion

*In role-playing games healing can become a mechanistic exercise, devoid of any rationale or significance. Healing spirits can be diminished to pale providers of hit points. In order to bring healing to a role as a story device, we have developed a spirit whose whole essence is to bring health and well being, but at a price. We call this the spirit of compassion.*

This spirit appears as a smiling beatific figure, male or female, dressed in white flowing robes. The spirit is attracted to injured or dying people and moves to embrace them in his or her arms. Should a person resist the spirit will cajole them, explaining that they only want to help, to heal the wounds of the suffering. A spirit of

compassion will not enact a forceful possession; it must be welcomed by its recipient.

A compassion spirit passively possesses a character, and will seek to heal and succour that person at all times. To that end it may at any time transfer its magic points directly into healing hit points, as if casting the divine spell "Heal Wound". A compassion spirit will do this until it has but one magic point left. A compassion spirit will use its last magic point and lose its personal existence, but only if the possessed character is dying.

A spirit of compassion is usually the spiritual soul of a healer who has continued in this world to help and aid the suffering. A spirit of compassion has strong feeling about violence, and will actively prevent a character from attacking and fighting others. This is role-played as the spirit preventing a sword from swinging, or a spell from being cast. To break free of the spirit's control, a character must overcome the spirit's magic points. Whilst the spirit is "pacifying" the character, the character behaves as if under the influence of the spell "Demoralise".

Should a spirit of compassion be summoned and controlled in some way it will remonstrate with the dominator, but its nature will prevent it withholding aid. A spirit of compassion who was a Chalana Arroy worshipper in life will withhold aid to any shunned by that cult. Dominance of a spirit of compassion is seen by many White Healers as grounds for such excommunication.

A spirit of compassion is a mixed blessing for an aggressive character; some will actively seek out exorcism; others will see it as a wonderful partnership. The relationship can offer support and help in exchange for benevolent and non militant behaviour. A spirit of compassion has strong and moral

views, and will often appear sanctimonious. Such a spirit will stay with a violent character and remonstrate with them, but it will leave a person should it regard the behaviour of a person as beyond repair.

## **Spirit of Compassion**

INT 2d6+6

POW 2D6+6

### Character

Kind and gentle but given to moralising and hectoring on occasions.

### Special Abilities

May heal as if using the divine spell "Heal Wound" without need for the actual spell as often as desired.

May actively possess a character to prevent violence, causing effects as the spirit spell "Demoralise"

### Skills

Many spirits of compassion have skills of First Aid, Plant Lore, or Treat Disease that they may use through the body of a possessed character.

## **Spirit of the Beast**

*In the world of Glorantha the earliest people lived and worshipped animals. In many cultures totemism and a spiritual affinity with nature has led to animal cults and religions. Even today we attribute human qualities to such animals as "Lassie", "Flipper" and "Free Willy". To that end we can construct a spirit type that reflects this animism. We call such an entity the spirit of the beast.*

This spirit appears to be an enlarged and virile example of an animal species. Often it will be indistinguishable to a normal animal save for some supernaturally different feature, such as red eyes, golden feathers or some distinguishing feature. Many such spirits appear to have corporeal form, and may be touched. A spirit of the beast will possess a character for many possible reasons. Carnivorous beasts may attack the character, friendly creatures may come to lick or nuzzle. In such cases the spirit will attempt to possess the character.

Once possessed by a spirit of the beast a character's appearance and mannerisms change and become more like the beast that the spirit represented. Certain abilities may become available to the character, dependent on the type of creature concerned. The important point to note is that the spirit

initiates such abilities, and in accordance with its nature not that of the character. A character possessed by the spirit of a bird may be able to fly, but perhaps only when the bird feels threatened and only in retreat. A character possessed by a lion spirit may be able to partially transform into a lion, but only when his body is hungry and the lion spirit decides to hunt! The struggles between spirit and possessed will be caused when a spirit wishes to actively possess the character and follow its natural instincts and the possessed wishes to follow its own course of action.

Spirits of the beast are usually found possessing animistic shamans and people who live in totemic relations with animals. It is recommended that such spirits are used by such characters as the Hsunchen of Glorantha, although any referee might well enjoy the light-hearted mouse possession of a Storm Bull.

Examples

### **Bull Spirit**

INT 6

POW 2d6+3

### Character

Aggressive, lusty and easily distracted.

### Special Abilities

May transform the head of the possessed into that of a bull, as if using the Hsunchen spell Transform Head. The ability has a 15 minute duration, is usable only once per week and costs the spirit one POW permanently.

### **Heron Spirit**

INT 5

POW 2d6+3

### Character

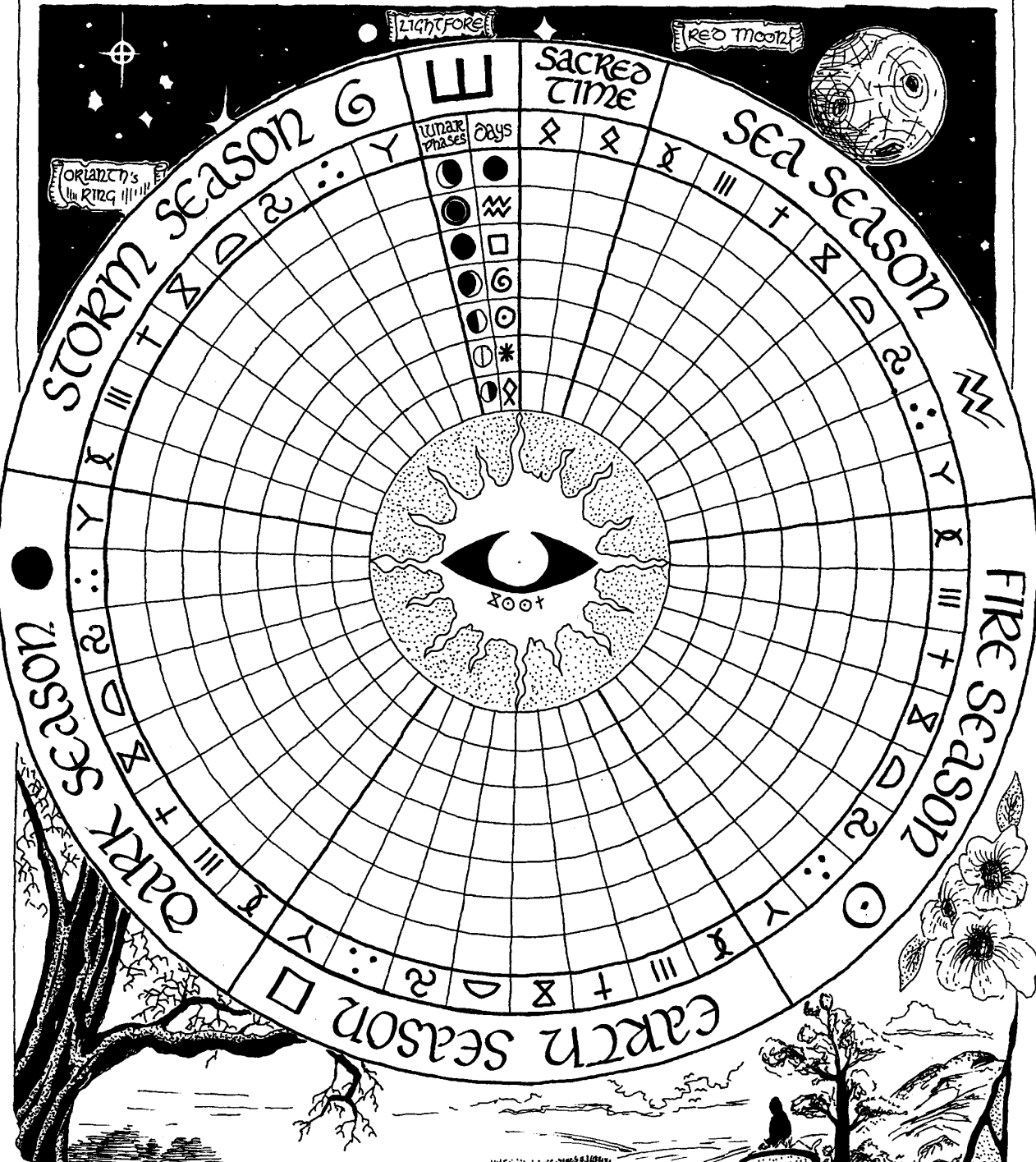
Inquisitive, sharp billed, easily frightened and prone to flee.

### Special Abilities

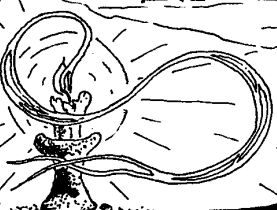
May allow the possessed to fly as if a heron for 15 minutes, but only to flee. The ability may be used once per week, and costs the spirit one POW permanently. As the character flies those around him will perceive a shifting image of possessed and heron flying through the sky.



# Glorantha Rune Calendar



- I. DISORDER
- III. HARMONY
- + DEATH
- X FERTILITY
- Δ STASIS
- ⌘ MOVEMENT
- ⋮ ILLUSION
- Y TRUTH



year

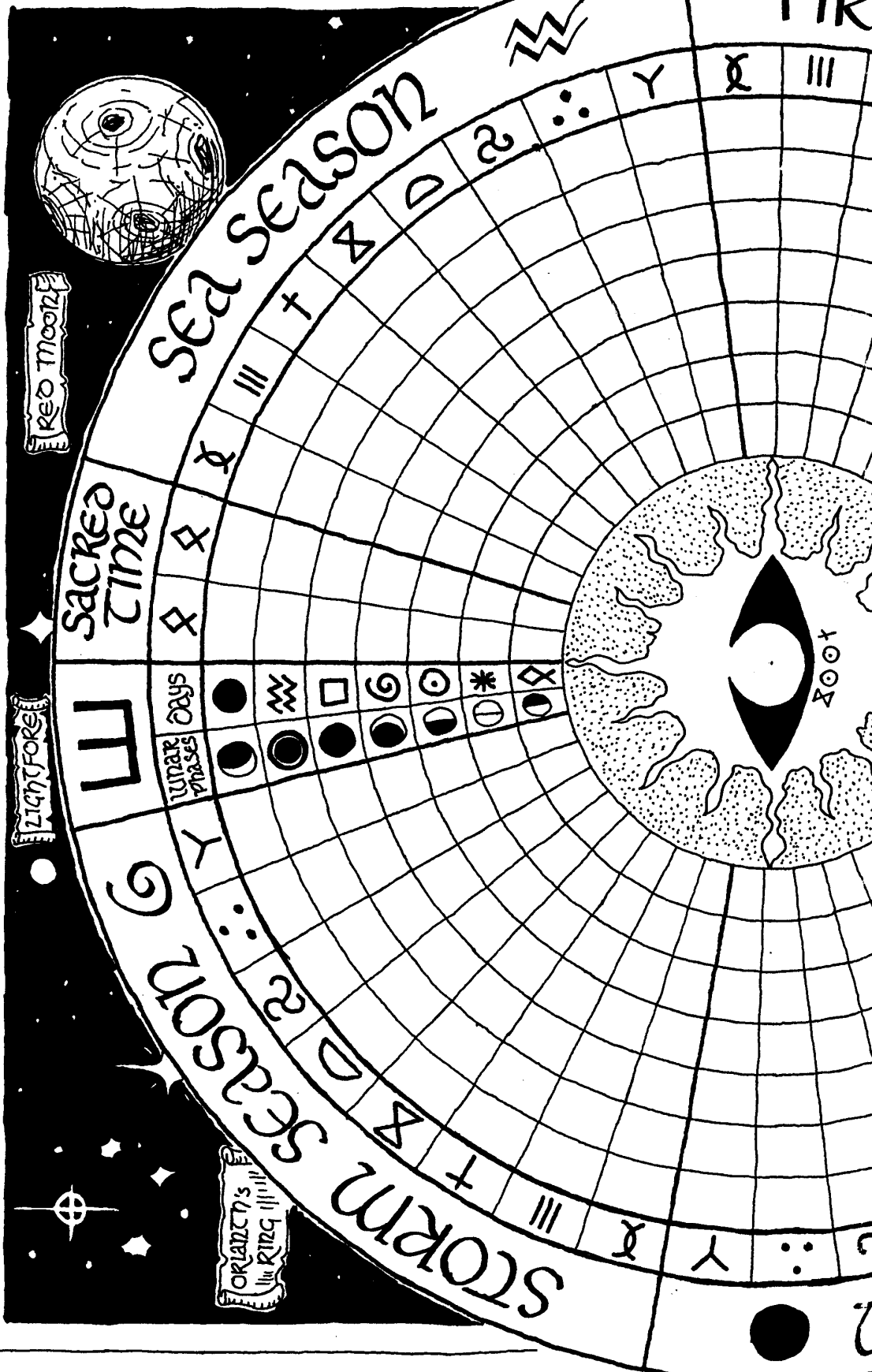
moon phases

- CRESCENT ●
- DYING ●
- black ●
- CRESCENT ●
- empty half ●
- Full moon ●
- Full half ●

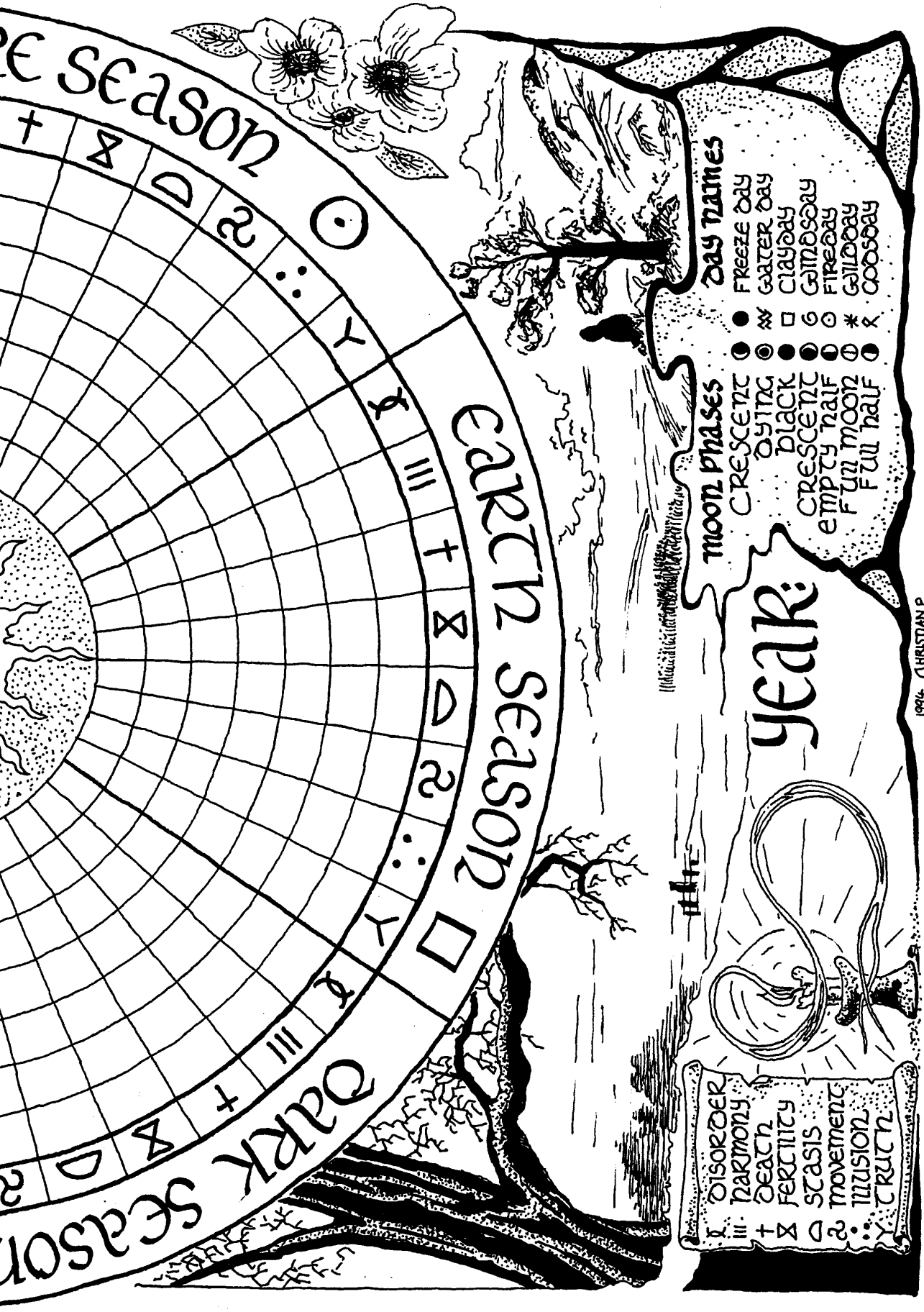
Day names

- FREEZE DAY
- ⌘ WATER DAY
- CLAYDAY
- G GAMESDAY
- FIREDAY
- ⊙ \* GAILDAY
- ⌘ COOSEDAY

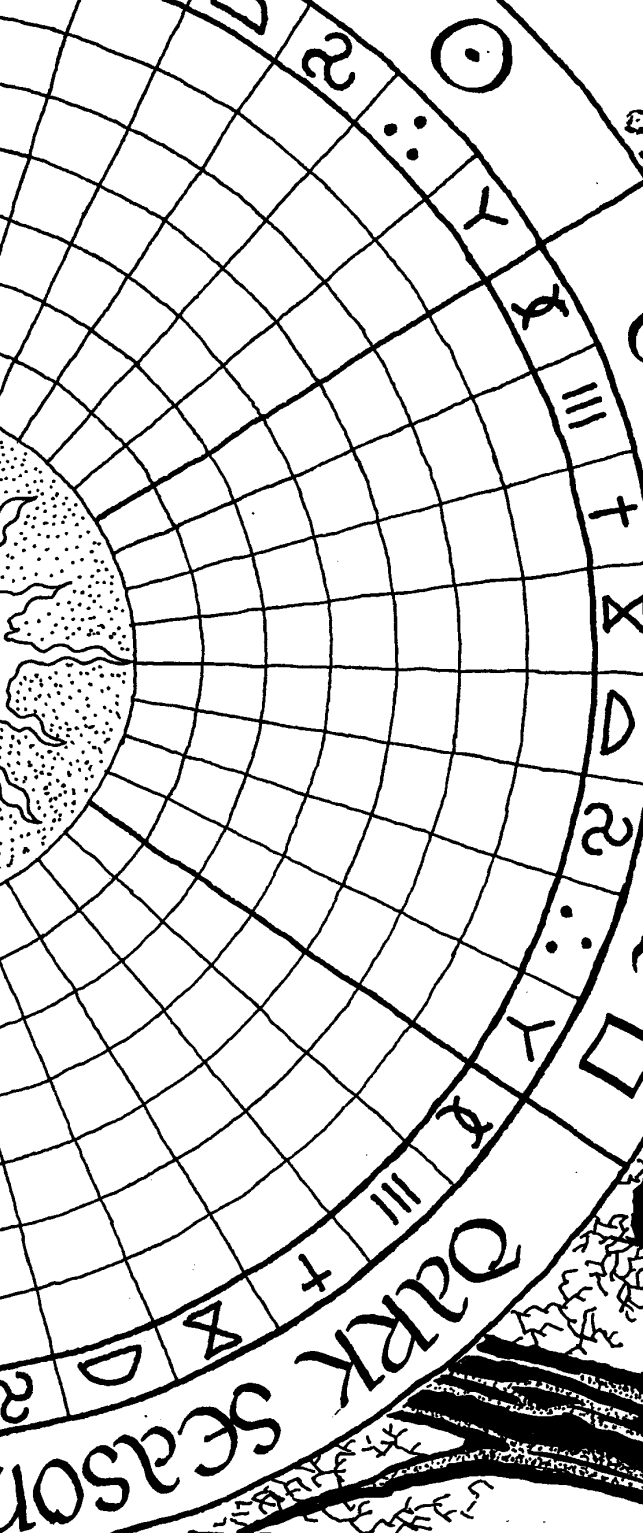
# QORANTHA RUNE CALENDAR







Light Season



Day Names

- FREEZE DAY
- ☉ WATER DAY
- ☼ CLAY DAY
- ☽ GIMSOBAY
- ☿ FIRE DAY
- ♁ GILLODAY
- ♂ COOSDAY

Moon Phases

- ☾ CRESCENT
- ☽ DYING
- ☿ BLACK
- ☾ CRESCENT
- ☽ EMPTY HALF
- ☾ FULL MOON
- ☽ FULL HALF

YEAR

- ☾ DISORDER
- ☽ HARMONY
- ☿ DEATH
- ☾ FERTILITY
- ☽ STASIS
- ☾ MOVEMENT
- ☽ ILLUSION
- ☿ TRUTH

# The Abduction

An Adventure With Loose Ends by Lutz Reimers.  
Translated by Harald Wagener and Revised by Tom Zunder  
Illustrated by Corel

## Background

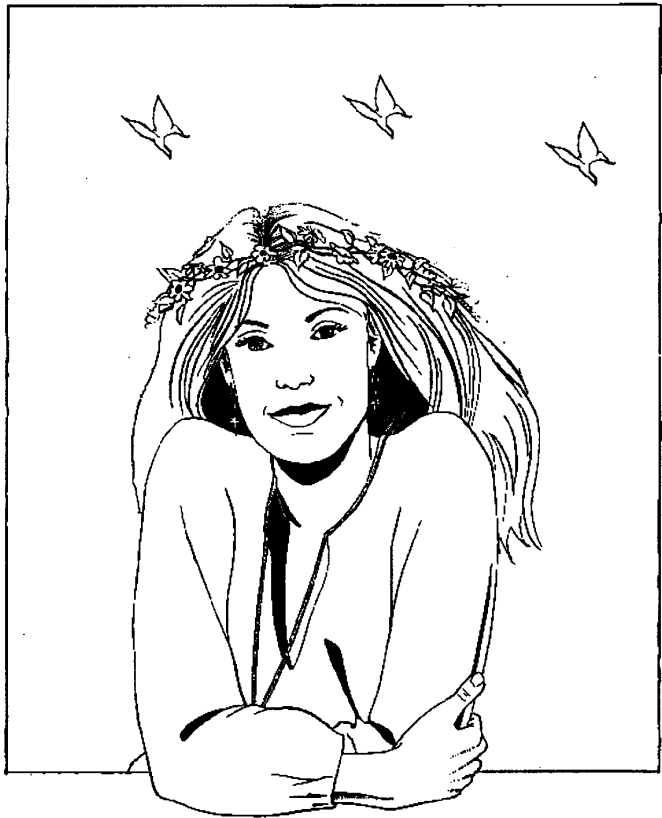
This adventure is set in Apple Lane, but may be set in most Gloranthan villages of Genertela near a wood. It is necessary that the player characters are friendly with the wise woman of the village, named Kareena.

Kareena is a loving woman, and given to acts of generosity. So it was that she took pity on a young girl, maybe ten years old, wandering in the woods. That was two seasons ago and since then the girl has lived with Kareena.

Kareena calls the girl the "Idiot Girl", as do all the villagers. This is due to the silence which the girl keeps at all times and the distracted and distant way in which she wanders the village and woods. She often is seen talking to plants and animals, swimming naked in woodland pools and behaving as a naive and innocent idiot. Despite the name she gives her, Kareena loves the Idiot Girl greatly and most of Apple Lane are fond of her and tolerate her ways.

## A Cry For Help

One Waterday evening Kareena, wise woman of the village, enters the Tin Inn.



She is upset and seeing her old friends, walks to them.

"Good friends," she starts, "I need your help in a terrible matter. My child, the Idiot Girl, has been stolen by trolls and I need your strength to help me save her."

Kareena explains that returning to her home last Clayday, she found that the Idiot Girl was missing. Whilst worried she knew of times past when the strange girl had

vanished, and let time go by so that she might return. To her shock and concern, she found the girl's hairband and a scrap of parchment wedged into her door the next day. With it was an animal skull, chewed as if by troll teeth.

Most people know of the Idiot Girl's habit of disappearing and will be sceptical at first. As facts unfold the other villagers will be ever more helpful and supportive. It is presumed that the player characters are concerned enough to help Kareena, and if so the following facts may be ascertained;

- The parchment has runic writing on it, if the players have no skill in reading, then a request to the village lawspeaker or to the local merchant will usually result in a translation. People wish to help Kareena, so no money need change hands. A successful read roll show the parchment to have scrawled the following message;
- "Do two hundred silver in basket and put an evening with not moon next from trunk of twice tree on clearing behind brook north three hours. Go away or eat girl."
- Any native of Apple Lane has a doubled World Lore chance of remembering a copper beech tree which forks into twin trunks some three hours north of here. Anyone who criticals will remember that the stream itself flows from the Rainbow Mounds and is known for strange objects of copper found in it. Anyone new to Apple Lane will only know of the tree with a halved World Lore chance.
- Most people will presume that the phrase "evening with not moon" means the evening of Clayday, when the Red Moon is dark.
- The runes are badly drawn with charcoal on a scrap of parchment with burnt edges.
- The Idiot Girl's headband is one of the Idiot Girl's favourites, bearing a series of flower shapes made from

sewn beads. Some of the bead flowers have become unpicked and the beads are lost.

- The animal skull is the head of a sheep with large crushing bite marks from a large beast. A successful Troll Lore roll will confirm that the bite marks could be that of a dark troll.

From all the above the player characters, with the help of the shaman, local chief, lawspeaker and passing villagers, will have drawn some conclusions. It is the feeling of most people that the Idiot Girl has been abducted, probably by trolls, and is being held in the Rainbow Mounds. To any who have adventured in the Hills, or who were instrumental in dealing with Whiteye the bandit (see Apple Lane), will presume that some members of the original troll gang have returned.

## The Truth

The Idiot Girl was abducted but not by trolls, she is not an idiot and the referee should have as much fun as possible resolving this.

The Idiot Girl is a young priestess of Vcria, a woman who has chosen to stay forever in the body of a young girl, and to talk only with the plants and animals she loves. She may be insane, but it is a religious insanity that many in Glorantha will recognise as piety.

Whilst walking through her beloved glades the Idiot Girl was unfortunate enough to stumble across the camp of three vagabonds. These were the two Sartarites Gust and Borko and the Grazelander exile, Tscho-Reko. These three, having passed through Apple Lane a season before, recognised the Idiot Girl and knowing of Kareena's affection for her, decided to hold her for ransom. Binding her to a tree they then crept to Apple Lane, leaving the crude note, headband and an old skull they had found before Kareena's door. On returning they were disappointed to find the girl gone, and her tracks leading upstream to the Rainbow Mounds.

The vagabonds followed her tracks to the Mounds, hoping to recapture her. Whilst Bork entered the caves to find her, Tscho-Reko and Gust headed back for the rendezvous, intent on collecting the



ransom, captive or not. Bork and the Idiot Girl have not been seen again.

## The Kidnapper's Plans

Tscho-Reko and Gust are fairly desperate for cash, and yet also fairly cowardly. They therefore are hoping that the villagers will pay the ransom in the manner requested, thinking that the Idiot Girl has been taken by trolls. Tscho-Reko will hide in the forked copper beech and watch the money being left. Then, without leaving cover, she will lower a fishing line and "reel in" the basket. She believes that if necessary she can leap from tree to tree if she needs to escape in the event of a trap or ambush.

Should Tscho-Reko need to do such leaping from tree to tree, the referees should roll her Jump skill for each tree she leaps to. As she leaps to each tree, each PC must make a Scan roll to see her. If she makes three such successful jumps without being seen she may be considered to have escaped. If anyone falls from a tree, they take 2d6 damage to a random hit location, ignoring any armour.

If the kidnappers are caught they will fall back onto their usual set of lies. They will admit to having seen the girl, and having watched her enter the Rainbow Mounds. They will claim they hatched up the abduction story as a cover for their patriotic

activities as members of the "Sartar Liberation Front", the SLF.

Tscho-Reko and Gust will enthusiastically tell everyone of their heroism as fighters against the Lunar oppressors. They will tell of how they fought with Starbrow, and of the tax collectors and missionaries they have put to the sword. They apologise but say that in hard times hard acts must be done and ask the player characters to forgive them and join them.

## The Rescuers' Plans

The player characters, as the people most trusted by Kareena, will be most influential in devising a plan to rescue the Idiot Girl. This should be arbitrated by the referee, since many options are open and any can be role-played with great enjoyment.

Kareena can afford the ransom, but she is a hard headed woman and will be quite ready to aid with her powers in any way to firstly rescue her ward and secondly capture the abductors. If she and the player characters are convinced that the Idiot Girl is a captive she will insist that the ransom is paid before any attempts are made to find the kidnappers. If she and the player characters start to doubt that the Idiot Girl is being held, she may sanction other action. Kareena will be able to reward and aid the player characters in various ways, as befits her powers and position in the village.

Sherriff Donlan, with his militia, will wish to come with the player characters. A referee may use the Sherriff and his men as a comic counterpoint, or as a force of some power to support weaker characters. Sherriff Donlan should be a viable source of active support, and it is recommended that he should be an NPC accompanying the players at the beginning of the adventure, but perhaps injured or lost later on.

The player characters will probably visit the site of the forked tree before the arranged time for the ransom to be paid. A rope, gnawed through, will be found near the base of the tree, next to the remains of a fire. The fire is obviously several days old. A successful Track roll will reveal the tracks of four to five bipeds, only a special roll will reveal that some of the feet were shoed. It is not possible to ascertain tracks leading from the glade in any one direction, allow Track rolls, successful ones will reveal that

tracks lead in and out of the glade in many directions, but will also find some of the beads from the Idiot Girl's headband by the tree.

It is likely that the players will decide to try and capture the kidnappers, and having resolved the action in the woods with Climb, Jump, Scan. Search and Hide rolls, it is again quite probable that the players will capture Tscho-Reko and Gust. If this transpires then play up the SLF, reproducing the idiocy of the rebels in the film *Life of Brian*. If this angle appeals to you and your players you may want to give the SLF some credibility, or you may decide it is a pathetic excuse for brigandry. If the player characters decide to accept the tale, they will still have to convince the authorities, in the form of Sheriff Dronlan, who will wish to extract hard penance from the pair.

Whether the player characters capture the kidnappers or not, they will still need to recover the Idiot Girl.

Many end solutions and resolutions are possible and since much enjoyment can be had from expanding and developing just such loose ends, we'll leave you with a satisfying handful...

- The Idiot Girl was rescued by newtlings from the Rainbow Mounds, and is their honoured guest. Unfortunately they may confuse the player characters with more kidnappers.
- If the Rainbow Mounds haven't been explored in your campaign, then it may well be that Whiteye the troll stole the Idiot Girl from the tree and took her to the Mounds.
- The Idiot Girl freed herself, asking a mouse to gnaw through her bonds. She travelled to her glade shrine and is quite safe.
- The Idiot Girl freed herself, asking a mouse to gnaw through her bonds. Traumatized she has turned to a darker side of nature. She has summoned powerful plant spirits, sinister dryads and intends to defend herself and the woods from all humans.
- The Idiot Girl freed herself and wandered into the Mounds, or another cave system detailed by the referee.

Bork is also loose in the caves, as is a further third force..

## Character Statistics

### Gust

#### Sartarite Bandit and Rebel

#### Age 21

Gust is one of the many young Sartarite warriors left homeless by the Lunar wars. He is of the Culbrea tribe, but following defeat in battle, he has wandered south. He is ashamed to have not died with his brothers on the battlefield and has a cynical and hedonistic character. He often calls himself a coward and a traitor in his moments of self pity. He is a lapsed initiate of Orlanth, since he is ashamed to present himself before an altar.

Gust, bandit and rebel, age 21					
Str	12	Move	3	R Leg	2/4
Con	8	HP	11	L Leg	2/4
Siz	13	FP	12	Abdo	2/4
Int	15	MP	11	Chest	2/5
Pow	11	Dx SR	4	R Arm	2/3
Dex	9			L Arm	2/3
App	13	Enc	8	Head	0/4
<b>Weapon</b>					
	<u>SR</u>	<u>Att/Parr</u>	<u>Dam</u>		<u>Pts</u>
Fist	9	65/45	1d3+1d4		3
Dagger	9	65/10	1d4+2+1d4		6
1H Sword	8	75/30	1d8+1+1d4		10
T Shield	9	30/75	1d6+1d4		12
Sh Bow	4	35/-	1d6+1		5
<b>Skills</b>					
Dodge	27%		Jump	35%	
Hide	35%		Scan	55%	
Search	55%		Climb	55%	
<b>Spirit Magic (52%)</b>					
Beffudle (2)			Bladesharp 1		
Heal 2					
<b>Equipment</b>					
Leather clothes (enc 3)			Furs (enc 2)		
Sword (enc 1.5)			Bow and quiver (1.5)		

## Tscho-Reko

Grazelander Bandit

Age 20

Unlike most Grazelander *vendrefi*<sup>1</sup>, Tscho-Reko could not bring herself to a life of servitude and turned to violence and robbery. She is strong and healthy but has spent the last three years away from the Grazelands and cannot return. She is estranged from her people and religion and is in many ways a lost soul looking for a purpose in life.



### Tscho-Reko, Grazelander and bandit, age 20

Str	13	Move	3	R Leg	1/6
Con	18	HP	16	L Leg	1/6
Siz	13	FP	26	Abdo	1/6
Int	11	MP	11	Chest	1/8
Pow	11	Dx SR	3	R Arm	1/5
Dex	14			L Arm	1/5
App	8	Enc	5	Head	0/6

Weapon	SR	Att/Parr	Dam	Pts
Fist	8	75/45	1d3+1d4	3
Dagger	8	75/10	1d4+2+1d4	6
1H Axe	7	55/30	1d6+1+1d4	10
T Shield	8	30/45	1d6+1d4	12
Sh Bow	3/9	35/-	1d6+1	5

#### Skills

Dodge	27%	Jump	35%
Hide	35%	Scan	55%
Search	55%	Climb	55%

#### Spirit Magic (55%)

Heal 2                      Bladesharp 1

#### Equipment

Leather clothes (enc 3)

Axe (enc 0.5)                      Bow and quiver (1.5)

## The Idiot Girl

Acolyte of Voria

Age 16

Silent, waif-like and looking about 12, the Idiot Girl is a loved member of the Apple lane community. She is thought to be "touched" by the gods, and as such is allowed to wander freely, talking to plants and animals. Whilst most Orlanthi would see her as a "child of Voria" they have not realised she has indeed become one with the goddess of children and flowers. She can talk, but no longer chooses to.

Statistics are not provided for her, it is not necessary. She can talk to animals, cause swathes of pretty flowers to appear at the wave of her arm and she has a deep symbiosis with nature. If required a referee can have animals, plants, dryads or other woodland beings leap to her defence. As a child of Voria she cannot fight or defend herself.

*NB: If the Idiot Girl should have turned to a darker side of Nature after her abduction, then the referee should detail her new character as an acolyte of Gorgorma, Babeestor Gor or a mixture of both.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Grazelander underclass, see *King of Sartar*.

<sup>2</sup> This reflects the way that women who worship Earth Goddesses may change deity of choice and magic as they pass through life's changes. Note that the Idiot Girl will shortly become a woman, with consequent mythic and personal changes.

# Orlanths' Ring



Jonstown Compendium # 241.854

by Ingo Tschinke

translated by Harald Wagener

illustrated by Etna Radi and Christian Plep

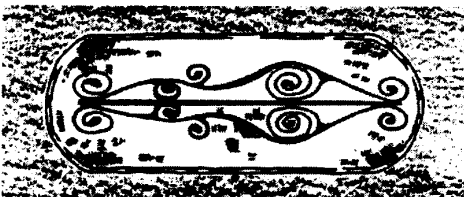
*Dedicated to the loyal and devout disciple of Orlanth, King of the Culbrea, Ranulf Frightblade, Warrior of Orlanth Rex and follower of Orlanth true. May ever be Humakt, the Northwind, guide his sword. May Orlanth, by his storm powers, grant him the Strength and Wisdom to show the Culbrea and the Orlanthi of all tribes the true Way of Orlanth.*

*Bospishyn the Truthful, High Priest of Lhankor Mhys Temple of Wisdom of Jonstown. Written on Storm Season Movement Week Wind Day 1617 S.T. on the high holiday of Orlanth in Lhankor Mhys' Temple of Wisdom of Jonstown. Honoured be the King of Gods, Orlanth.*

## To Begin

Soon after his birth, before his first deeds and experiences, Orlanth founded the first clan. To rule the First Clan, Orlanth formed Orlanth's Ring, the council that ruled with Orlanth as advisors and compatriots. All other clans and rings are founded in the image of the First Clan and Orlanth's Ring.

But not all clans are close to Orlanth's clan. God Time, History, Gbaji the Traitor and the God Learners have warped the clans and their councils. In this way many tribes, and clans have not been able to



use the Strengths and Powers of Orlanth's Ring, and have been undermined by enemy gods, the latest being the Red Goddess in Tarsh.

There, the hellish powers of the Lunar Way has brought degeneration, decadence, and greed. Using this essay, I, Bospishyn the Truthful, High Priest of Lhankor Mhy at the Temple of Wisdom in Jonstown, will give back the true history of the clan ring to all Orlanthi that are under the spell of the decadence and the vice of Nysalor. I shall show all Orlanthi our strength is found in faith and in the old traditions. With this lore and belief, I aid those clans who have gone astray to find again the power of Orlanth's Ring.

## Origins of the Ring

All those clan councils that worship Orlanth and do not succumb to other fiendish cults are called Orlanth's Ring. The clan rings are found in three different shapes - the Local, The Traditional, and the Ring of Lightbringers. They always have an outer and an inner ring.

The outer ring has many more members than the inner one. Their number is not strictly ruled and often is composed by the clans' Thanes or the leaders of 25 most influential families. The ceremonial term for the members of the outer ring is Thunder Brothers - sons of Orlanth.

Members of the inner ring are selected from the ranks of the outer ring by the clan chief. The inner ring makes the important decisions and counsels the clan chief. The

clans ring leads the clan in times of war and peace, administers justice, and fulfils every other political function the clan demands. The clan chief determines the structure of the Ring of Orlanth, but he is and should be led by the old traditions.

### Local Clan Rings

These backwoods rings barely deserve the name. Mostly they consist of small families that have changed the Ring of Orlanth to fit their personal needs and in terms of the powers of Orlanth, they are very weak. These do not exist in Sartar or other regions adjacent to Maniria. Certain records report of them existing in the areas of distant Fronela and Ralios.

### Traditional Ring of Orlanth

The traditional ring resembles that Orlanth formed before the Lightbringers Quest. The Ring was formed by allies and relatives of Orlanth. They reflect Orlanth's Pantheon, consisting of Orlanth the Chief supported by life giving and protective deities. It may be the sinful work of the God Learners but this ring has the same number as the Lightbringers' Ring, which has seven members.

Usually these are Orlanth the Chief, three goddesses and three gods. These gods are Barntar the Ploughman, Voriof the Shepherd, and Odayla the hunter. The goddesses are Ernalda the Earth, Eritha the Cow Mother, and Esrola the Goddess of Corn. In some clans other deities are represented; Heler, God of Rain, Urox, Storm Bull, Harst the Trader, Yinkin Alynx, and others.

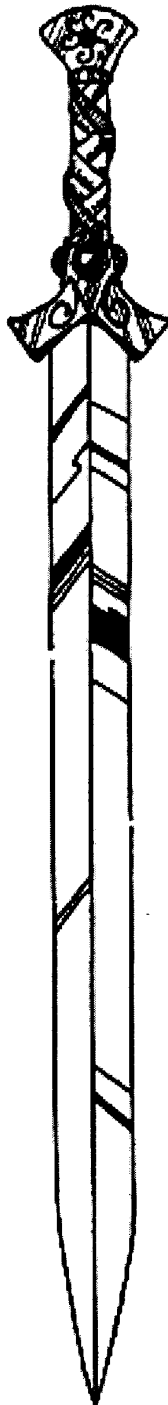
As far as I know, this is the purest Ring of Orlanth, neither twisted by Gbaji nor the God Learners, neither warped by Sartar nor the Lunar Empire. The powers of these pure and primal deities are strong and thus lack weak spots, that enemies of Orlanth can use. The traditional ring, for this reason, is difficult to break from the inside. The most dangerous enemies of this circle are the cities and the correlating higher degree of civilisation. To break with the traditional ring does not necessarily mean to break with Orlanthi tradition, but mostly it is connected with the Traditional Ring shifting into the Ring of Lightbringers. The Lightbringers' Ring, glorious and holy as it is for the Quest for Light, includes members tainted by weakness, and subversion. For such a Ring to rule a clan, opens the clan to danger.

### Lightbringers' Ring

The Ring of Lightbringers can be divided into two different forms. The first is the Quest Ring, consisting of all the members of the Lightbringers' Quest (some in differently represented forms, for example Ginna Jar and Fleshman).

The second Ring of the Lightbringers can rather be called an imitation of the original, also called the Small Ring of Light. The Small Ring of Light includes the key participants of the Lightbringers Quest. They are;

- Orlanth, leader and protector of the Lightbringers
- Lhankor Mhy as pathfinder, source of knowledge and judge.
- Issaries as merchant and herald.
- Chalana Arroy as healer.
- Eurmál as Trickster.
- Ginna Jar and Fleshman are often replaced by locally preferred deities.





This way, often priestesses of Ernalda and worshippers of clan ancestors, Humakt, Storm Bull, or even Elmal join the ring. This is the symbol of the Lightbringers' bond and their power of unity.

Examining the history of the Orlanthe in the Dragon Pass, it is seen that the Lightbringers' Ring is most often seen as the Small Ring of Light in rural areas. This form of the Council replaces many of the members of the Lightbringers Quest with worshippers of other cults that only have symbolical character.

Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Chalana Arroy and Eurmali are usually represented by others. This reflects the growth of cities, and the way that scholars, traders and healers have moved to the new metropolis, leaving the rural clans without regular worship these gods. Almost no clan can afford to tolerate a true Eurmali because he is too great a danger for a small clan.

Altogether the Lightbringers' Ring in its true form is only of any sense when located in a city. Nonetheless the roots of this religion and culture is found in the clan. Thus it can be seen that the Lightbringers' Ring contradicts the rural culture of true Orlanthe. Big markets, Libraries, Universities, Hospitals, are of no use for a clan or even a tribe.

Cities are evil. Before Time and since time the only cultures with cities are evil and fall into sin and chaos. That our culture is being warped to one with growing cities and worship of gods whose home is in cities, we must look for the subversion of our culture.

## **Degenerations and Distortions**

All Orlanthe knew the true way of Orlanthe at the beginning of Time, i.e. they lived in clans, initiations were made without incursions, and all gods had their rightful place in Orlanthe's Ring. Since then the history of the Orlanthe is full of suppression, expulsion, and distortion.

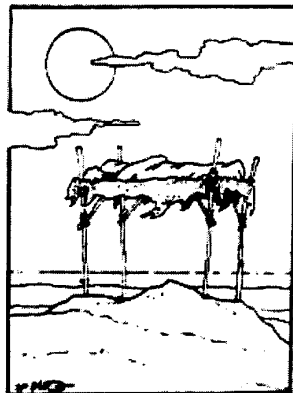
It must be the accursed Second Council that led to first confusions, beginning with

the attempt of Lokamayadon to purge the Orlanthe culture. I do not want to discuss the deeds of the Second Council, but just the results: it became almost impossible to worship Orlanthe.

This was possible because the leader of the Orlanthe in the Second Council, Lokamayadon, seized power during the Storm Wars. Only the Hendrikki of Heortland were able to resist. Everywhere else Lokamayadon succeeded in the ending of Orlanthe-initiation, because his abuse led to many mortal victims amongst those participating. It was not until the successful Lightbringers' Quest of Harmast Barefoot that Orlanthe culture could be saved from the dripping claws of Nysalor.

It is obvious to me that much of the knowledge of the true worship of Orlanthe was lost in the generations without true initiation and that it was difficult to regain it and revive the true faith. Traces of the true faith could only be found between the Hendrikki of Heortland. As far as I know the reconstruction of the Orlanthe culture was faulty and thus the foundation was laid for a distortion of our religion. Only in Heortland, the origin of the tribes of Sartar, did the pure religion exist.

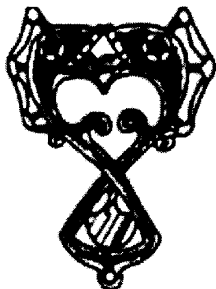
Then came the God Learners. Contrary to those supporting Nysalor, they did not want to destroy belief in Orlanthe, they were more devious. Using the gift of Hero Quest, granted the world by Arkat the Destroyer, they sought to change God Time and reform our gods as they wished them.



It was these soulless sorcerers who warped the worship of my own lord Lhankor Mhy, changing our clan lore speakers into dry librarians. With subtlety they warped Issaries to a cult of messengers and heralds, and in many lands there myth threatening work warped Orlanthe culture as much as that of strange and foreign gods.

Once more it was the Hendrikki who held on to the true faith, but even they did not survive the time of empires without harm. Their

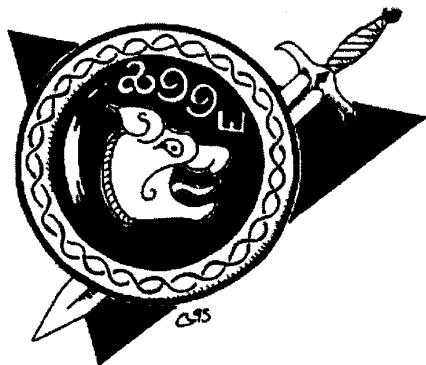
belief was not only assaulted by the God Learners - whose influence was in the plane of heroes and the plane of gods was inescapable - but also from the north by the Empire of Wyrms Friends. For all true Orlanthis it proved to be a long and tough fight. After the Dragon Kill, the sinking of Slontos and the Closing, pursuit of knowledge was feared for the most obvious reasons and again knowledge of the true worship of Orlanthis got lost.



Orlanthis tried to return to the old values and destroy all bonds to the God Learners, but the world was changed, and as can be seen in Esrolia, this was only partially achieved. The Lhankor Mhy did not want to let go of the libraries built for them by the God Learners and thus isolated themselves from the clans of Orlanthis. Even now we must ponder why Issaries can trade magic, a concept so Justeli that it has to be questioned.

From all sides unknown influences crept up on the Orlanthis of Maniria. Finally the Stygian Wizards inveigled their way into Heortland and with them brought the "Aelion Church". At this many traditional tribes fled into Dragon Pass which was free of all settlement. Those tribes were the last pure Orlanthis of all the world. Dragon Pass was free of cities and the influence of urbanised societies. Here they could return to the roots of being Orlanthis and find again the lost mysteries of the Storm King.

Then, and it will sadden many who hear me say it, but Sartar came. A man of change and peace, he nonetheless forced the foundation of cities. In the following century the tribes were inevitably torn between the traditions of Orlanthis and the



temptations of city life. An example for this is the Arsgol Clan of Jonstown. The clan always elects a priest of Issaries as chief because for them, profitable trade is more important than true belief. Sartar has done much, but one must not forget that many of the old traditions were destroyed by his changes. Only few amongst the

Lhankor Mhy recognised this destruction of traditions. Most of them returned to their old positions in the clan councils, while the others stayed in <Khnheim> acting as councillors and judges for the Kings of Sartar.

But even there the Lhankor Mhy were not safe from the long forgotten influences of the God Learners, because about one hundred years ago, Balthor SilverQuill and his idea of a 'Library' caused a schism among the Lhankor Mhy of <Khnheim>. He was sent into exile to Jonstown by Saronil, to protect the true Lhankor Mhy from his ideas and yet he still was able to begin his dangerous project here. This growth of God Learner scholarship is one of the causes of the decline of Sartar and the fall to the Lunar Way.

## The Dangers of the Lunar Way

The latest and worst threat to our culture is the invasion from the Lunar Empire.

It is common knowledge that the Lunar Empire's policy is bound to pragmatism. Everything is accepted if it seems to be of use for the Empire, even Chaos, Madness and Destruction. The Empire's methods of war are characterised by brutality and deceit.

The worship of Orlanthis is suppressed and banned under Lunar rule because the Red Goddess desires Orlanthis's throne in the Middle Air between Earth and Sky. Under this oppression many good Orlanthis are forced to hide their religion behind another god, such as Barntar or Voriof.

With the end of the military invasion, the means of suppression become subtler and more subversive. The Lunars seek to tempt Orlanthis by suggesting the

similarities of the Seven Mothers to our gods. The Lunars claim that many of their gods are traitorous Orlanthei, that Irippi Ontor was a Grey Sage, that Yanafal Tarnils was a Sword of Humakt and Etyries the daughter of Issaries. I doubt these to be truths, but lies to subvert the good into evil. That they are supported by crude bribery, the remission of trade taxes for Etyries converts, the use of free libraries for Red Sages, only adds to my belief that the Lunars plot to subvert Sartar into a pale shadow of Tarsh, where now the good Orlanthei live only in the hills.

We cannot let this happen!! We are obliged to leave the paths of the God Learners and go back to the roots of the culture and religion of Orlanthei.

### **Annotation by Frindil Goodword:**

*This document contradicts the dogmas of the cult of Lhankor Mhy in flagrant ways. It consists of heretical theories and disparagements regarding the libraries of the Lhankor Mhy and especially regarding our venerable temple founder, Balthor SilverQuill. However, this document already has been included in the Jonstown Compendium and it would contradict the principles of Balthor SilverQuill to remove a document once included in the compendium. Therefore it will furthermore stay within the confines of the 'Royal Sartar Library of Jonstown'.*

*Nonetheless, this document may only be given to the chief librarian with the permission of the high priest of Lhankor Mhy of Jonstown. All other copies of this document have been destroyed by the author on command of the*

*high priest Frindil Goodword.*

*Frindil Goodword, high priest of Lhankor Mhy and head of the Royal Sartar Library of Jonstown. Sea Season Movement Week Wind Day 1618 S.T*

Lhankor Mhy, go back to your Clans! Your power lies in the spreading of knowledge, not in books and libraries, there you suffer from the temptations of the empire.

Leave the libraries, give your books to the Lunar Empire so it may perish with this knowledge as the God Learners did!

Remember the Ring of Orlanthei, it is only as strong as its weakest member. Only Unity equals Strength - may the Empire meet its predestined fate without you!

### **Decree of Censorship**

This document is censored, because it indisputably includes anti-imperialistic tendencies. Due to the fact that it cannot be removed from the 'Jonstown Compendium' because of its structure, it is forbidden for the chief librarian Systrom (and all his successors) to hand it to anybody or suffer maximum penalty.

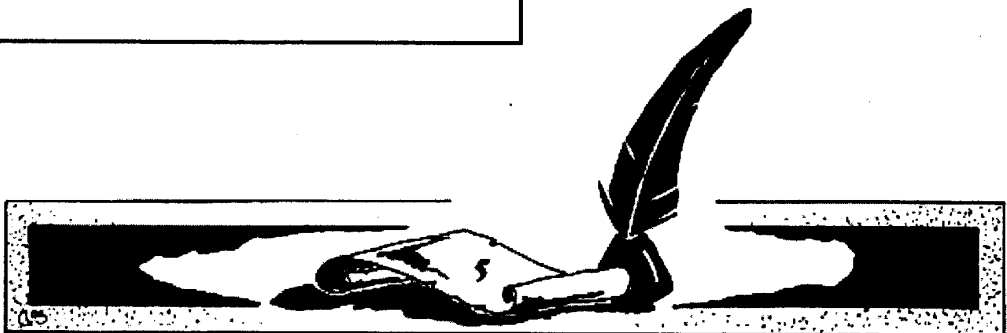
Excluded from this censorship are naturally, all persons authorised by the lunar Inquisitor Octavian Suppositorius.

signed

*Moulinourius the Bright Wisdom,  
High Priest of Irippi Ontor*

*Octavian Suppositorius,  
Inquisitor of Jonstown*

Ⓞ All Hail The Reaching Moon! Ⓞ



# The Beast of Gren Dahl Moor

by Tom Zunder

illustrated by Etna Radl, Jerry Krämer, and Corel

## R Introduction

This adventure may be set anywhere in Glorantha, but is written primarily for the "Barabarian Belt" of central Genertela. It is based somewhat loosely on the classic Anglo-Saxon tale of Beowulf, but with enough variation that few should notice, and those that do may well enjoy the retelling of the tale.

It is preferable that the characters who play in this tale are of a common background, from the same clan or tribe. A group of adventurers who have come together and over time developed a bond would play well.



*"You are standing on a high hill and can see far over moors and dales. In the near distance is a copse and around it fly crows and ravens, as if around a battlefield.*

*As you approach, you see before you a great beast, shrouded in mists, but calling with two voices. It's roars and bellows are punctuated by the screams of dying warriors, calling on their Lord to aid them. You hear swords snapping, shields cracking, and around you the crackle of magic fills the air.*

*From the mist runs a woman, a child, but no men. The woman and child smile at you kindly. To your surprise strip you of your armour, take from you your sword and thrust you, naked, towards the beast..."*

## Y To Begin At The Beginning

The foundations of a good campaign lie in laying the groundwork well in advance. To that end the referee should decide in advance that a character will be privy to a dream of prophecy which will aid them in this tale. It may be that the character has had this dream since childhood, it may be that a soothsayer or skald told of the dream at his birth. Be imaginative, be subtle, try and ensure that you introduce the dream many adventures in advance of running this tale.

The dream is a crucial plot device, and one you should ensure is commonly shared amongst the characters. From it the weakness of the Gren Dahl beast can be

found. This prophecy will have troubled and dogged the character, waking him at nights, troubling his mind and nagging at his psyche. Priests and diviners will be able to tell that the character has a *wyrd* or destiny hanging over him, but beyond advising strength, honour and piety, they cannot help.

## ● A Winter's Tale

In Storm Season, as Orlanth's gales blow over the cold land, good people gather around a blazing fire and talk the tales of the year and of the past.

This year many people talk of the widows of Gren Dahl, and the terrible privations brought upon them by a beast of the moors. No man can stand against the beast, and although many great warriors had travelled to their help, the women and children now live alone, with no menfolk to aid them.

It is such a tale since many heroes have died fighting the Gren Dahl beast. Bruga Muttonchops was slain and eaten, Erik of the Culbrea escaped with his arms torn off and Solarius of SunDome was literally ripped in two.

The characters should be intrigued by this tale and a figure in authority, maybe their clan chief may suggest that they help the widows. It would bring great fame on the characters, probably a wife and most likely land. That the clan would itself grow and prosper will be a consideration for any good clan member. To that end it is hoped that the characters will decide to set out to Gren Dahl.

## ♣ Gren Dahl

The people of Gren Dahl, good honest folk, live some days away in hilly land, rearing sheep and cattle. Place Gren Dahl in a location some distance from the character's home, preferably close to some troll lands or settlements.

If the players travel in Storm Season then they should experience rain, snow and howling winds. Orlanthi will have great delight in such weather, and indeed you may wish to have them joined by joyous sylphs, friendly Sky Bulls and other Air beings. In Dark Season the characters should be beset

by snow, dark and short days, trolls and darkness spirits. Make the journey strange and surreal, over strangely uninhabited land.

As a prelude to the adventure, let the characters notice that their armour straps are breaking, that in any fights their greaves fall off without a fumble and their swords leave their hands. Unbeknownst to the characters, the *wyrd* is starting to have it's effect.

After 3 or 4 days the characters should mount a tall hill and looking from the brow, look down upon the village of Gren Dahl. The village is a typical barbarian settlement, several separate steads along a valley, with an impressive central hall by a village stockade.

As the characters look down on Gren Dahl, describe a mist rolling down along the river, spreading out to engulf the steads. As they follow the mist to it's source they see that it is a high copse of oak trees, *crows and raven circling above it*. As they watch a wind will begin to blow through the hills and in minutes the mist is blown away and the village can be seen again.

As the characters enter the village they will be met with the sight of the women and children of the steads. Carrying sword and shields, the women have died their hair red, the Orlanthi symbol of widowhood. The women will be silent and sad, should any of the party make attempts to announce themselves the women will shake their heads in sadness. In time a taller woman, dressed in a long white gown and with berries woven in her red hair will greet the visitors. She is Meera, priestess of these people. Her welcome is bitter sweet;

*"Strangers, Meera, wife of dead Yurik, daughter of Freya is sad to see you here in the red haired lands of the Gren Dahl. Long have we missed men, but never could I bid you welcome to our doomed halls.*

*We are cursed, lest you know of it not, and whilst I must offer the welcome of a host to you, if you turn now and leave I shall not begrudge you it."*

You should encourage the players to respond in like fashion. Presuming they do stay, then Meera will lead them to the long hall. There they will be seated at the long table and with the melancholic women they will eat. The food is good and plentiful, the wine sweet and heady. After food women will sing old and happy ballads, play flute and lyre. Not 'til all is over and the visitors are well fed will Meera allow any talk of their troubles. By now the shadows will be drawing in, and you should point out the nervousness of the women, the barring of the hall's doors and the way the women are strapping swords and shields on. Meera will begin her tale.

## **† The Tale**

Sad to say the story begins with the death of Elorna, priestess of Ernalda and wife of Yurik, Chief of the Ring of Gren Dahl. Grieving in the slaughter of his wife, Yurik found comfort in her acolyte Meera, and after a season of mourning, married her. This Sea Season in honour of his new wife, Yurik built a great Long Hall, and invited all kith and kin to celebrate their union therein.

That night, whilst the guests slept, a terrible beast with two heads, one of a broo and one of a troll, came to the hall and tearing down the doors, slew every man in the room. Dragging many bodies with it, the beast departed into the night.

Horrified and outraged at this, Yurik and his strongest carls<sup>1</sup> searched the hills and found no trace of the beast. So, that night, as their remaining guests stood with them, Yurik and his men stood guard on the hall. Sure enough the beast came again, a giant creature with long vicious claws and two heads, one of a troll and one of a broo.

Hard did Yurik and his warriors fight, and yet they were slain, and again the bodies were taken, including that of the fallen chief. Next day, on the brow of the hills at the source of the river, had grown a copse of oaks. Fearful, the remaining men of Gren Dahl entered the copse and to their horror found the bodies of their kin, their eyes plucked

out, their genitals torn out and their hands eaten. Where the river had sprung from the ground they found a lake, deep and dark.

That night the beast came, and every night it came until every man over the age of puberty was dead. Some women died, a warrior maiden of Babeestor Gor was slain on the second night, but it was obvious that the beast only took men. No child or women who stood still and offered no violence was ever harmed. The bodies of the few women killed were never taken.

As time passed the women of Gren Dahl lived as widows. For safety's sake they sent all young men children to foster homes in neighbouring villages, and they turned their hands to ploughing and sewing as the men had always done. Heroes came, great Bruga Muttonchops was slain and eaten, Erik of the Culbrea escaped with his arms torn off and Solarius of SunDome was literally ripped in two. No man has spent a night in Gren Dahl without the beast coming from it's misty copse of oaks and slaying them.

## **⓪ The Night**

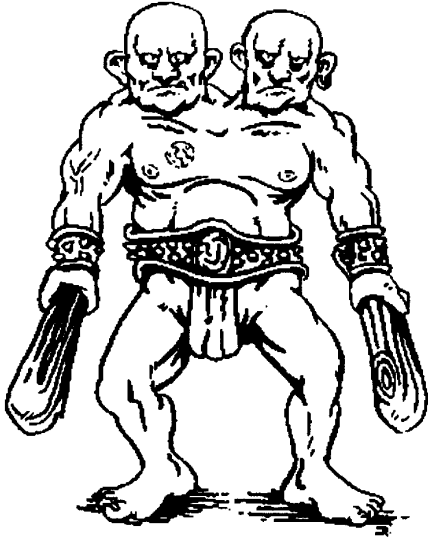
Meera will end her tale. She will sigh a sad sigh and wish that the men should leave the village now. She says that even though dusk has come they may be able to escape before the beast comes. She will entreat them, but most likely they will refuse to leave and stay to meet their fate.

She will then tell them more, that no warrior has ever drawn blood from the beast, let alone harm it. She will describe how it often attacks at the groin, how it takes perverse pleasure in mutilating the bodies, and how it always tears away the genitals and eyes of a corpse even if it does leave a body.

By now the dark and eerie light of the Red Moon will be all that illuminates the hall. The fire will have died to embers and the other women will leave. As they leave they approach the men, one by one, and bid them goodbye and the blessings of the Earth Mother. It will be a sad and menacing moment.

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<sup>1</sup> Elite warriors, often Humakti.



The PCs may choose many plans of action this night, they may simply wait for the beast, they may try and ambush it, they may even head upstream to the oak copse. Whichever plan they take they will face the beast. Indeed should they decide to flee, a dense mist will confuse and drive them back to the village. Wherever they are a raucous howling and screaming will suddenly jerk them from drowsiness. Rolling down the river will come the mist that they saw before, and in it they will hear the approach of the beast.

Both it's heads will roar and scream, sometimes uttering words of intelligence, it will largely howl like an animal. The few words they will hear are "Mother", "Hate", "Betrayal" and "Men". If any understand Darktongue they will hear these words in that language as well.

In the half visibility of the mist the PCs will have to face the beast and fight it or die. For dramatic purposes, the beast will only slay or capture two men this night. If the PCs do not discover it's weakness it will fight until it has downed two, then seize them and stride back through a wall of mist. In this mist the PCs will need to make Scan rolls just to see the creature and follow. The beast will stalk back to the copse of oaks at the valley head and disappear into the dark.

## **✠ The Unsleping Copse**

The copse of oaks is guarded at all times by the undead corpses of the beast's victims. Whenever anyone attempts to enter it, rotting zombies will rise from the earth and fall from the branches and attack.

The undergrowth of the copse is dense and difficult to clear, and within an hour or two it will have regrown. As people make progress through the magical brambles and bushes they will be attacked regularly by undead creatures.

As a referee you must make a judgement as to the number and ferocity of attacks, but it is intended that the characters should be sorely tried and tested. The Beast has no such difficulties, and can travel through the copse in little time.

## **✠ Cool Deep Waters**

At the centre of the copse is a lake, strangely larger than would seem to fit into the copse's outer boundaries. The water is cool, deep and blue. By the lake is a stone plinth, into which has been carved a hollow. In the hollow is some water and green algae. The tracks of the Beast can be seen quite clearly leading from the copse to the plinth and then into the water.

The Beast lives beneath the water of the lake in a cavern. So that he may travel through the water and reach the cavern, he scoops algae and water from the plinth and rubs it into his eyes. The plinth continually draws water up from the lake and is rarely empty for long.

## **△ The Beast's Lair**

The cavern in which the Beast sleeps by day is large and filled with the buckled weapons, armour, trinkets and jewellery of the dead heroes and warriors. Before a large polished bronze mirror the latest victims will hang by their ankles, dangling through the day, awaiting their mutilation by the beast at nightfall.

The cavern is filled with air, and can be reached only by those who can breathe water or who have used the plinth's algae.

To leave the cavern one need only hold one's breath and strike out for the surface.

## ▼ The Beast

<u>Beast of Gren Dahl</u>					
Str	18	Move	3	R Leg	*/6
Con	15	HP	17	L Leg	*/6
Siz	18	FP	33	Abdo	*/6
Int	5	MP	18	Chest	*/8
Pow	18	Dx SR	3	R Arm	*/5
Dex	11			L Arm	*/5
App	5	Enc	0	Head	*/6
<u>Weapon</u>	<u>SR</u>	<u>Att/Parr</u>	<u>Dam</u>	<u>Pts</u>	
L Claw	6	65/45	1d6+1+1d6*	3	
R Claw	9	65/45	1d6+1+1d6*	6	
<u>Skills</u>					
Dodge	27%	Jump	35%		
Search	55%	Scan	55%		
<u>Notes</u>					
The Beast cannot be harmed by any weapons save natural weapons. The Beast's damage ignores all armour.					

## ∴ The Beast is Dead

Should the Beast be slain in combat, defeated by bare hands and pure strength then the widows of Gren Dahl will be delighted. With the Beast's heads on display the women will hold a great feast in the Long Hall and all will be joyous.

As the evening draws to it's height, and Meera makes a toast to "our saviours", the door of the Long Hall will be suddenly blown in by a great force. Floating eerily in the entrance will be the haggard and faintly translucent figure of a woman. The air will fill with the smell of charred flesh and the room will become as cold as a snowbound night.



Meera will stand, her face aghast. She will faint, and as she does her cry will echo around the room;

*"Elorna!"*

The apparition will then begin to move up the hall, slowly screaming silent screams, pulses of lightning flashing from her fingertips. As she comes closer, her voice will become clear, and she will say, very slowly and clearly;

*"Spawn of Lodril that you are, I shall rip your gonads from your loins and pluck your eyes from your heads. None shall lust after that bitch, nor shall the death of my son prevent me taking my vengeance on him."*

With that she will attack the nearest male, attempting to drive him into a coma and steal his soul, before fleeing like the wind. She will return to the cavern beneath the lake and there deposit the soul of her victim into the bronze mirror.



## ⌘ Elorna: A Ghost

INT 9

POW 18

MP 18

Elorna's ghost will initiate spirit combat and drive it's victim into a coma. Elorna can then take the soul of her victim with her to her lair.

Once at the lair Elorna can entrap the soul of her victim in the Bronze Mirror, leaving the body in a coma.

### ○ A Bronze Mirror

This circular mirror is made of polished bronze. It is one metre in diameter and has Earth runes painted in red paint around it.

The mirror belonged to Elorna, and the Beast took it from the village early in it's reign of terror and placed it in it's cavern.

As a ghost Elorna may seize souls from victim and place them into the mirror. If one looks into the mirror one will see the victim lost and bewildered in a bronze landscape. By reaching into the mirror, one can pull the soul free, whereupon it may rejoin it's body. If it's body is dead and not sleeping then the body becomes an undead creature devoid of reason.

It is not easily discovered how to place souls in the mirror, nor what is on the other side, but a Quest may discover this secret.

### III What On Glorantha is Happening?

As a referee you may well have begun to piece together the strands of this tale by now, but in this section we must pull together the strands of the tale and explore possible character strategies and outcomes. From this it is now your responsibility to bring together a dramatic and satisfying resolution to this tale. To aid you, here are the pertinent facts;

Yurik murdered his wife Elorna, blaming her death upon ambushers, probably trolls or broos. As she died, Elorna turned not to Ernalda but Gorgorma, goddess of barren

vengeance. Gorgorma took Elorna's anguished soul and wrapped it in the flesh of the Beast, a hideous monster (*a draugr*) of both troll and broo parts.

The Beast took vengeance upon the men of Gren Dahl. In her obsession with vengeance it continued to attack, kill and mutilate males of all kinds. Whilst it would not harm females, it's anger was also at Meera.

The characters have been chosen by Ernalda to bring reconciliation to the village of Gren Dahl, and in doing so has offered in dreams the solution to the epic.

Upon the death of the Beast, Elorna's ghost will continue to follow it's *wyrd* of vengeance against men.

Elorna is driven by hate and violence. Only love can heal her. The Beast could be slain by bare hands, but even then the ghost will return. Only by facing the ghost, and offering to love and comfort the tormented soul can Elorna find peace. This should be terrifying to any who try it, indeed Elorna will drive the victim into a coma before freeing the person's soul and changing to a rational and benign spirit with whom the knots of this tale can be unravelled.

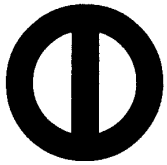
### ⌘ Endings

There are several ways that this scenario may work its way out. The characters may or may not defeat the Beast easily. They may or may not pick up on the possible mythical nature of the Beast and follow investigations at the village.

It is likely that Meera knew nothing of the death of Elorna, it is also possible that she did.

It is likely that the widows of Gren Dahl will choose to remain without men for ever, sending their male children to allied clans at puberty, bedding only passing strangers. In my campaign the Widows of Gren Dahl are a permanent feature, a source of independent healers, axe warriors and travellers. Whatever the outcome it is now time for my writing to cease, for you to close the book, and tell the the tale anew.

Enjoy!



# Roleplaying Gods, Cults and Religions in Glorantha



By Ingo Tschinke

Translated by George Winter and Harald Wagener

## Background

Many have wondered what it is that makes Glorantha stand out from all the other fantasy game worlds. Primarily it is the fact that Glorantha is a thoroughly thought out magical world, where gods, cults, and religions are of paramount importance.

In our world the peoples of different cultures don't have much in common, they have different customs, lifestyles, eating habits, and technology. As a generalisation one could say that it is the belief in one or more god, that provides a common ground.

This is also the case in Glorantha, where most RuneQuest campaigns are set. Glorantha is one of the few game worlds where the religious background makes cultural differences significant. Without it's gods, Glorantha would not be what it is.

The question remains how one can introduce a powerfully religiously motivated background into a RuneQuest campaign, or how, as a player, one should apply these beliefs to roleplaying the character.

## Glorantha and Gods

Similar to our world, Glorantha has different cultural and belief systems. But no matter from which civilisation or culture a person originates, the belief-system permeates the life of an individual, to such an extent that it is almost impossible to disguise or abandon. The gods of Glorantha are a unavoidable reality and make up the heart of the world. If a god dies or loses his worshippers, this has noticeable consequences in the inner

world, where the player characters live. An atheist from our world could claim that the gods are an invention of mankind, this is not possible in Glorantha<sup>1</sup>.

In Glorantha the gods created their own races, and exist in a symbiosis with their worshippers, where one could not exist without the other. This is most clear with the Elder races. A dwarf in Glorantha is not a dwarf because he is small, bearded, and built like a brick, more significant is that he sees himself as a Mostali. He has a concrete relationship with his deity, he is a tool of his god, lacking individuality. Similarly an Aldryami would be hard to convince that he is not a mobile plant and that despite being a vegetarian, he views himself a cannibal, who lives off his brother plants.

With the different human cultures on Glorantha these structures are not as clear and simple to define, and thus as a player one is inclined to play ones character without a strong connection to his or her religion. Most adventurers could be described as nuisances to their gods. This has the unfortunate consequence that the richness of Gloranthan religions is lost, and the game degenerates from true roleplaying to powergaming. In order to keep the Gloranthan essence it is important for the players and the game-master to keep the game within the context of the Culture and Religion. To reach this goal, the history, culture, and religion of a character should be

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<sup>1</sup> Or is it? - TZ

developed as early as possible, and studied by the player and game-master.

Towards this goal a general introduction to the major human cultures of Glorantha follows.

## **The Primitive Culture**

A member of Glorantha's primitive culture (called Hsunchen) is challenging to play due to their deeply superstitious nature and belief in the spirits of nature. For these peoples even the simplest accomplishments of civilisation are creations of unknown magic. The first reaction towards anything not understood is fear.

This applies, for example, to the male ignorance towards the female mysteries, and vice versa. The knowledge of the other sex's mysteries are taboo. In the primitive culture, to break these taboos would invite the anger of the spirits, which no-one can afford. Besides these spirits, there are the bad sprits who desire to drag you to your doom, and who can only be avoided with the assistance of the Shaman.

The Shaman is the member of the clan who is learned in the ways of the spirits, and who the spirits accept into their company. He is the only specialised person in this society of hunter gatherers, and through his skill in magic is in the position to equip his associates, his family, or even his clan with magics. What he does is not possible for his clansmen or family members and is a great secret. This can be reinforced with some clever hocus-pocus on the part of the shaman such that he becomes a creature shrouded in mystery. He delivers magic to his clan in the form of magical matrices, usually in the form of amulets, enchanted animal teeth, rabbits feet, etc.

For a Hsunchen there are spirits everywhere, which he worships as mini-gods. He does not believe in the fire god Lodril, rather he worships the spirit that lives in his little hearth who makes it possible for him to use fire. The religions of other cultures are much too abstract to pursue.

Given these considerations it is almost impossible to conceive of a primitive leaving

his wood or mountain, home, for whatever reason, joining an adventuring group and dealing with each and every one of them in an unprejudiced and open manner. Due to his superstitions, anxieties, and taboos, such a player can be quite a hindrance to the smooth progress of a campaign. But only in this fashion can one, as a player, see what drives a primitive.

## **The Nomadic Culture**

The Nomads, that populate the deserts and steppes of Glorantha are grimmer than their earthly counterparts (the Tuareg for example), this is due to the fact that their land (Genert's waste) is more hostile to life than the Sahara. For them everything is a question of life and death, even their religion.

Their pantheon mirrors their society, they have a Khan who rules the other gods in a functional equivalent of a tribe, and ensures their survival. The specialisation of the gods reflects the breakdown of specialisation required by the tribes. The men worship Waha, the Butcher, who shows them how one can peacefully kill the herd beasts, and how to defend the tribe from enemies. The women worship Eiritha, the herd mother, who shows the women of the tribe how one nurtures the individual beasts and cares for the herd. The Storm Bull protects the tribe from the unspeakable Chaos which roams the wastes.

The nomads have no use for gods who will not help them in the day to day task of survival. For them life is kill or be killed, moral posturing is of secondary importance. Members of other cultures are mostly viewed as weakling children of decadence, and nomads take no pains to hide this view from them. Because of the harsh requirements of the wastes no nomad will break with their gods as they are what makes life possible.

This discrepancy is most noticeable with the cult of the Storm Bull, whose members lay no worth in the acceptance of others, and behave accordingly. They can afford this attitude due to their role as the tribes pre-eminent chaos fighters, they destroy chaos

whenever, wherever they find it. In contrast, the followers of Storm Bull among the Orlanthe behave in a much more civilised fashion. This change is reflected in the name of the deity, Storm Bull is known as Urox among the Orlanthe. In the Orlanthe civilisation, Urox is a secondary god, who has a purpose, but is not as essential as among the Praxian nomads.

When role-playing a Prax nomad one should recall that a nomad grows up in simple but harsh conditions, which implies that civilised accomplishments may appear a mystery, and that they are without compromise in their actions and thoughts. In the Wastes one rarely has the luxury of long consideration, not when daily survival is the overwhelming concern. A terrestrial counterpart of this culture can be found in the nomadic Indians of North America, the Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, of course also the nomadic tribes of Asia, the Mongols and Huns.

## **The Barbarian Culture**

The barbarian culture is considerably more specialised than those of the primitives or the nomads. It is also more formal and structured, there are gods of healing, knowledge, trade, and even a scapegoat deity<sup>2</sup>, who can be blamed for any wrong. The culture also allows for temples, in which larger numbers of worshippers can gather and discharge their religious duties. The culture of the Orlanthe is the best example of a dominant feudal religious system. In the minds of Orlanthe, only their god is capable of ruling the air, the space between heaven and earth, without Orlanthe the sky would fall on their heads. Without Orlanthe their would be no air to breathe.

This means for a barbarian a life excluding the worship of Orlanthe is absolutely impossible. This also explains the influence of Orlanthe on the life of the Orlanthe. Orlanthe's virtues (courage, wisdom, generosity, justice, and piety) and his attitudes form the basis for the day to day life of the Orlanthe culture.

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<sup>2</sup> Eural

For an Orlanthe, religion appears more differentiated than, for example that of a nomad. For the nomad, due to their clan & tribal structure, each person's tasks resemble the others. An Orlanthe trader or healer have significantly different tasks and needs from those of a warrior or smith. The Orlanthe live their religion, it is a sign of godlessness not to live in a strongly structured religious community. A terrestrial example of the Orlanthe Culture would be pre-Christianity Vikings.

## **Civilised Culture**

In Gloranthe's civilised culture religion becomes abstract and less personified. This results in a separation of secular & religious life.

The religion is too abstract for the ordinary man and it creates group of professionals who deal with religion full time, the clerics<sup>3</sup>.

Despite this alienation, in most civilised cultures the majority of the social structures are determined by the church. The religion exists in a symbiosis with the dominant social forms, for example the feudal social structure of Seshnela which is required by the local Rokari church and supported thereby. A character from a civilised culture grows up with the knowledge of the almighty power of the church, believes in eternal damnation brought on by a life of sin, and knows of the heresies and unholy beliefs of the godless pagans which will plunge them into perdition. Malkionism is much like that of medieval Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

## **Cults & Religions in Role-Playing**

I hope that the preceding examples have made clear how significant cults and religions are in Gloranthe. Please keep in mind that my examples are rough, but you can use them to fashion a picture of the

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<sup>3</sup> (Monks, nuns, priests, bishops, and cardinals).

<sup>4</sup> See *Tales of the Reaching Moon* no.13

larger culture. How do we translate this into good role-playing?

The process begins with the creation of a Gloranthan character where we must take the character's religion into account. This kind of character is more than a collection of abilities and statistics, it is impossible to "roll up" such a character in 15 minutes. To generate an Orlanthe character, for example, we need to know which Tribe he is from, which Clan, which God his parents worshipped, and what their occupations were within the clan.

But the player needs to grasp the deep kinship feelings of the Orlanthe, what it means to belong to an unruly clan with its old vendettas, grandfathers who boast of the deeds of your ancestors, and where your parents steer you to your position in the clan.

One can assume that a young character will lack the capability to stand up against all the rules of the culture and thus will have to wait till adulthood to select the religion of his choice. So most characters, who grew up Orlanthe, will be initiated into Orlanthe's cult. Free choice of religion will appear absurd to the parents, baffling to their sensibilities.

Of course it is every character's option, later in life, to worship additional gods from Orlanthe's pantheon, or even to leave the religion. Initially it will fall to the GM to provide the colour and background of the character's native culture. He must try to introduce the player to the richness that the cults and religions provide.

This means that the character must see the active role religion plays in the culture. He sees how his clan participates in the Orlanthe ceremonies, what roles the priest plays, and in this fashion sees the Orlanthe Pantheon as a mirror to his society.

In large part this must be accomplished through small scenes and important occasions. If an adventuring group comes into town on the holy day of the trade god, they should experience a procession in honour of the god, and learn to view the following market as a cultural festival of Issaries. As a GM one should allow the players a chance to interact with the culture

and religions, after all one cannot expect that the players, who usually have less experience with the nuances of Glorantha, will immediately play their characters as pious members of their cults, if the expected behaviour is not demonstrated by the NPCs they interact with. Religious life must be presented in a lifelike way, especially the many small encounters with members of cults, ones one as well as alien cults.

If for example a character comes to town totally broke and meets a distant relative, who nonetheless belongs to the same clan, who helps him out, it is up to the GM to make sure that the character later encounters the relative when he needs a hand. The GM must ensure that the players want to be a part of the society. If this is neglected the GM invites the misuse or abuse of cults.

The characters must realise that much of their goals and motivations stem are cult inspired. If for example a player chooses to have his barbaric character belong to the Orlanthe pantheon, and chooses the cult of Humakt, interactions and encounters must make it clear that this choice implies more than improving his fighting prowess with rune magic, or obtaining better spirit magic. The character must realise that he only gets benefits from the cult when he acts in its interests. First of all this means cleaving to the Humakti code of honour, never to fight dishonourably, and to keep to the ways of truthfulness.

Should a player, in spite of the game master's efforts to convey to him the behaviour expected from him by his cult, let his character continuously behave dishonourably, his cult and kin will react disapprovingly to the character. A Humakti dishonouring his God will be known soon. The local population will fear and distrust him, and his colleagues and leaders will offer him the stark choices of compliance or expulsion. With a death cult, the sanctions could often prove more terminal than some others.

The players have to realise the gifts of magic, power, and glory are not attained from the cult without the expectation of some service in return.

They have to stand for their god's ideals and have to act as their emissaries in the inner world. They are bound to duties and should not act to further their own, egotistical desires.

## **Significance of Religion**

Comparing Gloranthan cultures with earth cultures, as can be done with the Celts and the Orlanthe or the Lunar and Roman cults, it is easily seen that the personal relation to one's cult was almost as strong on Earth as on Glorantha.

On Glorantha though, everybody knows of the existence of gods and spirits, and that their will is fulfilled in the inner world by their worshippers. This should lead to a deeper commitment of faith in a religion than on Earth.

For example, a follower of Orlanthe would think twice before raiding an Issaries merchant. If he does, he can count on his god - in the role of protector of Issaries - to send his spirits of vengeance after him.

Thus it is not surprising for the Orlanthe to be very devout people. Nonetheless, Orlanthe never forbade his worshippers to bash in their fellow worshipper's heads, so it is no wonder the clans and tribes do so with ever increasing enthusiasm!

Religion in civilised society is an instrument of the powerful and has become a specialised activity. In the description of cults this abstraction can be seen very clear. The cult of Yelm, for instance, is a very elevated thing in the urban culture of Dara Happa and thus reserved to the aristocracy.

A character grown up in a city of Dara Happa for instance, will know of the pride and honour of worshipping Yelm, but also will have experienced the power and intrigue connected to the cult.

He will be confronted with philosophies and abstractions that a priest of Orlanthe, for instance, would never discuss or even be able to think of.

There is a difference in the religions of Glorantha's west. In contrast to the central Genertelan religions, the Invisible God

cannot be reached directly by the worshippers. This is possible only through his prophets, which, in turn, can only be reached by clerics. Here the relationship is similar to the position of a Christian in the early twelfth century.

Belief has no impact on the simple bondsmen's work in the fields, who can hardly understand the religion. Here the core understanding is that observance, obedience and ritual will ensure a better life.

## **Role Playing Gods**

The referee takes on the position of a deity in a roleplaying-game. He sees and hears all the character does and says. He knows if the character is a devout worshipper or not. In this role the GM should judge the character's actions and instruct the priesthood as to their attitude to the character. Here a GM should be partial and subjective, role play the god!

Since gods provide clear and definite moral codes and roles for their worshippers then players should look to recreate their god's key characteristics, even duplicate events in their myths.

An Orlanthe should be like his god, independent, headstrong, violent and yet kind, a good leader and able to put right his own mistakes.

## **Conclusion**

Difference breeds friction, and friction leads to exciting times. Role playing games thrive on conflict, adventure and the interaction of alien cultures.

Religion is a deep force for difference in Glorantha. It details a character swiftly, providing a depth of characterisation guaranteed to make play enjoyable. As a referee you should help your players understand their character's deity and the moral code by which they should live. As a referee you must then role play the deity itself and present interesting and mythically important adventures for your players to resolve.



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## Source Material

*Broos!*  
*Orlanth's Ring*  
*Gods, Cults and Religions in Glorantha*  
*Spirits of Glorantha*  
*Glorantha Calendar*

## Adventures

*All Quiet on the Eastern Front*  
*The Abduction*  
*The Beast of Grendahl*

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